

also very artistic and accomplished ; the Gûle Palais was filled with her paintings and embroideries. The young Princess was strictly and systematically educated along with her brothers and sisters — Frederick (Crown Prince of Denmark), Dagmar (Dowager-Empress of Russia), George (King of Greece), Thyra (Duchess of Cumberland), and Prince Valdemar, who married Princess Marie of Orleans, and to-day occupies the old Gûle Palais. Masters for special subjects attended daily at the Palais to instruct the young people, and all studies were supervised by their parents. Alexandra, with her eyes of deep Scandinavian blue, glossy brown hair, and brilliant complexion, was the acknowledged beauty of the family, and early showed a taste for personal adornment. The story is told that the music-master one day gave a ring—a mere toy ornament of no value—to the little Alexandra, and for the succeeding days she was discovered by her brothers and sisters trying it on her pretty hand in quiet corners, and was well teased for this bit of vanity.

The ever-youthful grace and beauty of our beloved Queen are largely attributable to the natural training of her youth. She was not pampered by luxury, and her soldier-father insisted that his daughters should share the gymnastic exercises of their brothers, be equally well trained in the saddle, and have a large share of outdoor exercise in the early morning. We may picture the young Princess passing her early years between the Gûle Palais, Copenhagen, and her father's country house of Bernstorff, seven miles distant on the Sound. I have seldom seen a more beautiful spot than this childhood's home of Queen Alexandra, and to which she yet returns year after year. It is a white château embowered in woods, and having a deer-park adjacent. There as a girl she galloped about on her pony, boated, picnicked in the woods, and lived a merry, happy, outdoor life. She was early trained to deeds of charity amongst the people of the neighbouring village of

Gjentofte—which struck me as very English-looking—and attended the rustic church without formality each Sunday. She was piously reared in the Lutheran Protestant faith, and at the age of sixteen was confirmed, along with her eldest brother, in presence of the Royal Family, at the Chapel Royal (*Slotskirken*) Copenhagen, by Pastor Paulli.

Her life was varied by visits to the Palace of Rumpenheim, near Frankfurt, the old seat of her mother's family, and where amongst other Hessian cousins she frequently met Princess Mary of Cambridge (the late Duchess of Teck), and began a friendship which was consummated by the union of their respective children. There was practically no Court life in Copenhagen during the Queen's girlhood, owing to the *mésalliance* of the then reigning King, Frederick VII, with the Countess Danner, and the little experience which she had of the kind was gained in occasional visits to the Belgian Court. She had only reached the age of seventeen when the meeting with the Prince of Wales took place.



The courtship, begun so auspiciously in the autumn of 1861, was clouded by the death of the Prince Consort in the following December, and the sorrowing Queen could not enter into marriage arrangements for her son, who now proceeded on an educative tour to the Holy Land under the guidance of Dr. —afterwards Dean—Stanley. After the return of the Prince of Wales, he joined his mother, who was visiting on the Continent ; and at the Palace of Laeken, near Brussels, he was formally betrothed to the Princess Alexandra in the presence of Queen Victoria, Leopold I of Belgium, and the parents of the intended bride, September 9th, 1862.

The news of the betrothal was received in England with universal delight, and the sentiments expressed privately by Lady Palmerston convey the feeling of many people at the time. "I like the idea of a Danish connec-