

discharged it for twenty-one years without a fault. It is hard to say which most to admire—his goodness, his wisdom, or his fortune. In no respect has he been wanting to his difficult post, and we should have to ransack forgotten stories for a hint that he had exceeded its duties. All at once he is gone, and by what precedent shall we frame the terms of our loss? England once lost a boy king, of whose virtues we read much from his tutors and guardians; she has several times lost the heir to the throne while in the midst of progresses and pageants, gayeties and intrigues; she has lost royal cyphers and children of promise; she has lost statesmen in mid career, or baffled and heart-broken. The hand of the assassin has sometimes added wrong and horror to a national loss. Forty-four years ago, in a day of darkness, when discontent and disloyalty had taken root in the land, and there seemed but one solitary pathway of light to a purer atmosphere and to happier times, it was suddenly extinguished, and all the hopes of the nation were borne to the tomb. It is not easy to compare the fulfilment with the hope, things known and things unknown; but for the suddenness and blankness of the loss, and for the dismay struck into every thoughtful mind, there can be no nearer parallel than the death of the Princess Charlotte and her child, in 1817, and that of Prince Albert in this already fatal year.

#### THE PRINCE OF WALES AND HIS FATHER'S DEATH.

If anything could increase the respect which the bereaved family now command, it would be the devotion with which all its members have endeavoured to aid and comfort the Queen in her affliction. We believe the Prince of Wales has not fallen short of his sister, the Princess Alice, in this respect, and that he has already taken his place by his mother's side, as her stay and support in her distress. We have, indeed, as a people, every reason to hope that this good beginning may be followed by a career equally meritorious, and that, as the Queen has, within a few hours of his father's death, endeavoured to associate him with her in the arduous work of the British Monarchy, the Prince may feel all the solemnity of his position, and fit himself for the part to which he is destined. It must be obvious that for the Prince of Wales the period of nonage is past. Though legally a minor until November, 1862, his Royal Highness is nearly as old as his father was at his marriage, and more than two years older than his mother was when she ascended the Throne. If we add to this that he has been specially educated to wear the British Crown, to which he has been Heir Apparent from his birth, and that he has had opportunities of seeing the world which were denied to his parents, not to speak of their predecessors of the House of Hanover, the Prince ought now to shew the faculties which will make a good King. It is, no doubt, a sudden change which has come upon him. But a few days ago he was a youth at the University, without a thought of public life, and now he finds himself on the steps of the Throne as its first friend and counsellor. From being restrained even beyond what is usual at his age by the care of a prudent father, he finds himself to some extent the head of his family—at any rate, its oldest male representative, and in some sense the guide of his younger brothers and sisters. The destiny of one so young is, indeed, a great one, but it is at the same time weighted with the heaviest cares. To bear these cares the Prince must now make up his mind, if he wishes to gain the affection and esteem of the country. The national good will is not to be obtained without some sacrifices, and the Prince has before him, as in the fable, two paths—those of duty and pleasure. The next few months will decide whether he is to stand in popular estimation where his late father stood—whether in the King who is to rule over us we are to look for one who, like his parents, will take an interest in all that benefits his people, and will show ability and energy in the study of it, or one who will only receive the conventional respect which belongs to his rank and office. Exposed to many temptations, his Royal Highness must resolve to earn public applause by resisting all that will draw him from the side of a mother and a Queen who requires his help, and from the service of a nation which needs every counsellor it can find.

#### THE PRINCE OF WALES—THE HOUR OF HIS DESTINY.

Her Majesty herself, with her accustomed readiness and composure, appealed at once to her family to undertake the great charge thus suddenly thrown upon them. In that family there are two upon whom the eyes of all England will naturally be attracted at this juncture. The Prince of Wales is rapidly approaching the age when a man is held to be capable of every responsibility, and by the measure of years he should now be as competent to assist his mother as the Prince Consort when he assumed that duty. He has been so educated as to bring him into contact with a large variety of men, of minds, of peoples and of manners. By a happy forethought he has visited the very nation that now threatens to escape from worse difficulties by a war with its mother country. If the Prince of Wales

is ever to be a wise and good sovereign, he will now be a wise and good son; and if he will ever feel any call to devote himself to his country as his parents have done, he will feel it now. This is the time for that self-sacrifice on which the greatness of a crown, as well as the glory of a statesman, a soldier or a priest must be founded. This, indeed, is the occasion such as historians and dramatists have loved to describe in the lives of their favorite princes, when the Prince of Wales will have to make a solemn choice between a life of frivolity, perhaps of trouble and misery, and a reign of usefulness, to make his name blessed for ever. He must resolve, if he would do; and renounce if he would win. It is an awful thing to say "now or never;" but experience proves that they who reject the first solemn call are seldom more affected by any that come after. From all accounts the Princess Alice has shewn herself fully equal to the occasion, receiving her dying father's confidence and giving her mother timely comfort and aid. That the Queen should gather her family around her, and address them at such a time, for such a purpose, itself proves her confidence in them. That all, and above all the Prince of Wales, may be deserving of that confidence, is now the prayer of this great country. We know not how much the destinies, not only of the British empire, but of the whole human race, depend on the youthful prince of whom we have seen so much yet seem to know so little. Like the rest of us, he has position, and honour, and power to win. He may be a true king or a shadow of royalty; and by the laws of human nature and testimony of experience, the decision is to be made this very hour.

#### THE QUEEN AT THIS GREAT CRISIS OF HER LIFE.

But the Queen, if we are rightly informed, shows herself at this supreme crisis of her life worthy of her high station. As if her own experience and penetration led her to divine what no one at such an hour could obtrude upon her, the Queen has declared that the present is the time which will not admit of mournful inaction, and that it is her duty to attend without delay to public business. That Her Majesty should be capable of such an effort will gratify every one; but it need not be a matter of surprise. Even in ordinary life nothing is more common than to see women who during marriage have been accustomed to depend wholly on their husbands, and who have thought it impossible that they could ever face the rough struggles of the world, assuming in their widowhood a courage and independence of character seemingly foreign to their natures. The singular powers of mind possessed by the late Prince Consort induced the Queen to confide to him many duties, both public and domestic, because he could perform them more efficiently than herself, particularly during a period of her life when she was necessarily withdrawn at intervals from the world, and always much engrossed with family duties. But now Her Majesty has the strength and the knowledge to undertake public business herself. Though relieved much from the labors of Royalty during 22 years of married life, she has acquired an experience which will make her resumption of them not difficult. And to this it may be added, that the advance in years of her elder children will lessen the merely household cares which have hitherto pressed upon her, and leave more time for the study of public questions. Having, no doubt, these considerations in her mind, the Queen has, we are happy to say, already begun to dissipate the sad remembrance of her loss by attention to matters of public importance. With a feeling which we readily understood and appreciated, the Queen had more especially set herself to the task of mastering those subjects in which the late Prince Consort took an interest, believing it to be the best mode of shewing devotion to his memory. We may therefore hope that even those matters of national concern in which the Prince's judgment and good taste were particularly useful will not suffer so much as was feared by his loss. But in this hour of political suspense there are questions of still greater importance to be thought of, and it is indeed satisfactory to the country to know that we have on the throne a Sovereign whose nerves have been braced rather than paralyzed by the chill of adversity.

#### UNIVERSAL SORROW FOR THE PRINCE CONSORT, AND SYMPATHY FOR THE QUEEN.

If the Royal House of England required any new proofs of the nation's profound respect and affection, it would have found them in the manifestations of the last three days. Never in our remembrance has there been such universal sorrow at the death of an individual, and such deep and anxious sympathy with those left behind. The public have expressed not merely the conventional regret which attends the death of Princes, but the real pain which they felt at hearing that a man of activity and genius, with high purposes and with the opportunities and the energy for realizing them, had been suddenly cut off in the vigour of life and in the full career of usefulness. But it need hardly be said that anxiety for the Queen has had much to do with the general sorrow for the