

Whilst he lived she was happy in a domestic life ideally perfect ; his premature death has been the great sorrow of her life. She has had the joy of seeing all her children grow to maturity and marry ; and the sorrow of the untimely loss of two of them.

It may be that we shall honour our august Sovereign more in making the celebration of this joyous event an occasion in which to cherish our national glory, than by limiting it to mere personal pæans. If penitential psalms to our own shortcomings be omitted, our unconsciousness of the largeness of this subject need not be assumed.

Called to the throne by right of birth, our Queen is the link that binds the past to the future ; the reminder ever present in all our public acts that we are knit to and carry them with us. Descended from Egbert and from each House that has occupied the throne since his, she inherits the glories of the past, its mistakes, and some of its difficulties. Like the House of York she represents legitimacy, but she is also of Lancaster the Duchess, and has a Parliamentary title to the Crown. That title has not been challenged, nor is the question of the succession likely to arise. The State, as such, has been at peace with itself, and none of its servants have faltered in allegiance to its Sovereign. The last word is hers, but her infallibility is official, and, as the term loyalty implies, it is as the embodiment of law and order, of the forces that gather by continuous duration, and as the representative of her people's best selves, that we kneel to her. She has chosen the better part of being the first servant of the State, not its master. All other functions cede to that of the chief magistracy. Her virtues as a woman are of lesser moment. To have worn the Crown through all these years without adorning it, to have kept the oath made at her Coronation, and to have conformed to the usages of those who went before her, were surely all that could have been asked. She found the hazy question of the Royal prerogative legally what it had been for almost a century and a half ; and it is Her Majesty's highest honour, by acting in the spirit of the Constitution, to be our first strictly Constitutional Sovereign. The records of this reign contain no such incident as the summary dismissal of Lord Melbourne's ministry by her uncle ; and certainly no such thing as the political party of "King's Friends," that resulted so disastrously to the fortunes of the Empire upon this continent during her grandfather's reign. The "Bedchamber" question that arose the year after the Coronation might, were the true facts known, be a case in which a party preference was shown ; though it is certain that no political motive prompted the course. At no other time have the powers vested in the Crown been personally used by the Sovereign whilst with Parliament and the Constituencies there has been no interference. Remembering also the passionate devotion of the Jacobite party to the Stuarts for generations after their misconduct had forfeited their title to the Crown, no thanks to Her Majesty for her wise course can be excessive. All the great States in the world have been convulsed during this reign. We have seen war waged by each of the other Great Powers of Europe, and their boundaries altered as the result thereof. We have seen a sixth Great Power arise there upon the ashes of armed revolution and conquest. At our own doors, in that great nation without a name, of our race and language, with a form of government differing little from our own save in the matter of headship, we have seen a question of succession lead to a woe-ful civil strife of vast proportions—their own fair soil their battlefields—their brothers their foes ! But no storms have come nigh a throne broad-based upon a people's love.

Her Majesty's sex lost her the Crown of Hanover, a kingdom well lost from every point of view. Ireland, however, she inherited, and with it the problems that for centuries have proved insoluble. It was there that our colonising began, and a considerable part of the population of that island consists of the descendants of our early colonists. Yet upon the Queen's accession little more than half her subjects there spoke the language of the Empire. Now the number of those who do not is trifling. Parliament has given an inordinate share of attention to the affairs of that Kingdom ; it has even tried to remedy evils beyond the reach of politics ; and though these efforts have necessarily failed in their intended objects, the causes of unhappiness are laid bare and understood. Education is doing its work, and that country, bound to us by the closest ties, never had so bright a future.

The reign has witnessed changes in internal government, peacefully made, that amount to a revolution. Fifty years ago the effects of the first Reform Bill were hardly realised ; since then two further bills have become law, and it may now be said that the whole nation shares in its government. In Canada responsible government is not yet fifty years old ; it rests upon the same broad foundations. Confederation is being tried, and the care of wide north-western territories undertaken by it. The extreme east and west are tied together with steel. Wherever it has been practicable, the principle of local self-government has been extended, even to townships.

Education has been recognised as the duty of the State. Through such changes as these the affection of the people for their Queen has been the sure bulwark of her throne.

At the heart of her empire that freedom which has long been the boast of our race has taken a step forward. Free Trade has been ventured upon, and persevered in, too, for forty years, though none have dared to reciprocate it. Free service has been adhered to in the Army and Navy, whilst compulsory service is the rule of other nations. The Army has had active work of some sort to do almost continuously throughout the reign ; but as the revenues of the Empire have never been strained, the whole period may be termed peaceable. The revenues of that amply endowed British Temple of Janus—Greenwich Hospital—have, for the first time, been diverted to happier uses. The supremacy at sea, won finally at Trafalgar more than eighty years ago, has remained unquestioned. The Navy has not been idle. Its ships have been controlled by scientific men, bent on wresting from Nature her secrets, and the titular captains of such ships have performed the humbler duties of sailing-masters. For commerce it has rid the ocean of piracy, and the smallest vessel is now as safe on the remotest sea as it would be on Lake Ontario. If its humane crusade against slavery has not entirely abolished that trade, the transport of slaves by sea is too hazardous to be profitable. The world has shared in the benefits of these unheroic but not inglorious services ; they are not, however, the only results of Her Majesty's naval supremacy. The rapid growth of a Southern Empire has become possible. That growth is as marvellous as a fairy tale. There was no colonist in New Zealand upon Her Majesty's accession ; and the most populous colony in Australia happily bears her name ; its capital—the finest city in the Southern Hemisphere—that of her first Prime Minister. Freedom thrives in the happy homes of the millions there engaged in the good work of turning wildernesses into gardens ; and the throne has a new buttress in their loyal devotion.

The dark cloud that burst on India thirty years ago proved to be a passing one, and we have since seen its silver lining. The Mutiny led to the extinction of the East India Company, and to the transfer of its powers to the Crown. The responsibility of the Government of one-sixth of the human race by a people thousands of miles distant is stupendous and unparalleled. We can look with pride upon the beneficent spirit of Her Majesty's rule there. No spoil from conquered provinces fills her general coffers. The revenue collected by each Government is limited to its own needs. The control of these vast dependencies is a triumph of statesmanship, and an evidence on a large scale of what trained intelligence, animated by a love of justice, can do. That it may never be decided whether those possessions are a source of weakness or a vast reservoir of strength, is the prayer of all who love our country or our race.

Ships, Colonies, and Commerce have retained their old, almost paramount, importance during this reign, and it is not surprising that the demands of ever-widening interests should have led to some extensions of territory. The surprise is that successive Ministries should have succeeded so well in resisting the ceaseless pressure from so many quarters. Excepting the one European War, every other may be called a commercial one. The romantic expedition to Abyssinia, although undertaken in pursuance of the *Civis Romanus sum* doctrine, is hardly an exception. Glory has not been sought in war. Territory has not been acquired by it, except where other and larger interests rendered it necessary. In the Russian War our interests were not directly involved. We drifted into it, ostensibly to enforce treaty obligations. The glory of it belongs to the troops alone. This was a soldier's war, and never did British troops show greater intrepidity. In every battle, even when opposed by much greater numbers, sheer courage and firmness rendered them magnificently triumphant. Unaided by marked tactical skill, devotion and faithfulness to duty were found in every tent and every hospital.

Thoroughness of service has characterised all walks of life during this busy reign. That no one, in any calling, however great his merit, should have overshadowed his fellow-workers, clearly points to a very high average of excellence. It was not always so. In the glorious reign of Elizabeth, though the one man who had no equal did not take his place, the fame of Sir Philip Sidney was bright enough to throw a halo round his Queen ; and it has shone with undimmed lustre through three centuries. As he did little, it may be said to rest upon the promise of usefulness rounded by a death entirely noble. The man placed in command of our Army in the Crimea served his country for fifty years, and left us the example of a life devoted to truth. No mediæval knight of strictest vows ever served honour more faithfully or with more success. Nor was his death less noble or less pathetic than that of Elizabeth's hero. Ill served by a Government weak and dispirited by reason of divided counsels, attacked