

teen years of struggle with poverty gave Princess Victoria an insight into life's troubles that was a nobler, more fruitful lesson than living years amid Court splendour ever could give. When she, and her beautiful mother, the Duchess of Kent, visited Earl Fitzwilliam at his Yorkshire seat in 1836, the simple, unaffected, girlish frankness of the Princess roused popular feeling to enthusiasm. Walking in the garden alone, after a frosty night, an old gardener said to her: "Mind your steps, Miss; its varry slape." The Princess thanked him, and asked what "slape" meant, which is Yorkshire for "slippery." The Princess was soon on another slippery path where she so minded her steps as to avoid the slightest accident in a walk extending over 64 years. Under "The white light that beats against a throne," the young Queen commenced her regal career in 1837. On, through innumerable temptations, provocations, dangers from unwise and some from treacherous counsellors, she has kept her own fame as bright, as unsullied as the stars.

To narrate the life of the Queen would require a large volume, for it covers the greater part of the most wonderful century in the history of Her realm, with most of the principal incidents in which she was associated, and those most fruitful in benefits to the people she did much to promote. Her father, the Duke of Kent, bade those who saw his baby, Victoria, in 1819, "Look at her well, for she will be Queen of England," which then was far from certain. She had reached her eleventh year before being aware of her destiny being the English Throne. On realizing this, the Princess said: "I will be good," a vow never for a moment forgotten, for her life is an unbroken series of good deeds. On the 20th June, 1837, her uncle, King William, died. In a few hours later, four great dignitaries of State announced to the Princess that she was Queen of England. On the same day she presided at a Privy Council, where formal homage was paid by that august assembly. On the 17th July she prorogued the first Victorian Parliament. On the 28th June, 1838, the coronation took place, amid a scene of splendour and an outburst of popular acclamations promising to the stability of the Throne, the foundations of which had been threatened by the wickedness, the folly, the inanity of previous rulers. It seems almost incredible,

but it is true, that there were hundreds of republican clubs in full swing in all the large towns in England when Her Majesty assumed the sceptre of royalty. These died out under the gracious influences she exercised. It is no hyperbole to affirm that to Queen Victoria the United Kingdom chiefly owes the perpetuation of the monarchy, as to her wisdom and to her example it also owes the development of that constitutional liberty which has so long kept England in political peace. She was, indeed, as a ruler, what Waller said of an earlier Queen:

"Joy of our age and safety of the next."

On the 10th February, 1840, the Queen married Prince Albert, who, for years, though wearing the "white flower of a blameless life," was scurrilously attacked in the radical press, as well as slighted by the aristocracy to whom his pure life was a rebuke. By pursuing a career of strict observance of constitutional usage, by never obtruding his views or his personality, by taking every opportunity to identify himself with the people, in their aspirations for social reforms, by his active interest in movements and enterprises inaugurated to advance the industrial and mercantile interests of the country, Prince Albert at last silenced his detractors and became one of the idols of the British people, who, at his death, gave him the superb title, "Albert, the Good." The Queen and Her Consort, from the first, established the Throne in righteousness by frowning upon all, however elevated, who set an immoral example by their lack of private or of public virtue. The Court was purified as never before. The vices of the upper classes, which had been rampant in preceding reigns, became unfashionable by the marked disfavour of the Court, by the virtuous example of the Queen and her husband, and by her express censure of some titled offenders. These happy influences filtered, as it were, throughout all classes, until a moral revolution took place in England, which is directly attributable to Queen Victoria and Her gifted as he was a most worthy Consort. From brazen glorying in their shame, the titled and idle classes began to cleanse their circle as the Court had been purified, until the people at large recognized that "Righteousness exalteth a nation and sin is a reproach to any people." Yet the Queen was never an ascetic or Puritan in objecting to