

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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Victoria! Victoria!

BY ALFRED AUSTIN.

Now ring the joybells loud and long!
Now let the cannons roar!
And lusty cheer and loyal song
Resound from shore to shore!
From rustic lane and garden croft
Your summer roses bring!
Fling out the triune flag aloft!
And loyal verses sing:
Victoria! Victoria!
Long may she live and reign!
The Queen of every British heart,
And the Empress of the Main!

Come, loyal brethren from the east!
Come, kindred from the west!
Capo and Australia, join the feast,
And be Britannia's guest!
And ye who own another way,
But one in speech remain,
Be heart and soul with us to-day,
And swell with us the strain:
Victoria! Victoria!
Long may she live and reign!
The Queen of every British heart,
And the Empress of the Main!

With wisdom, goodness, grace, she filled
For sixty years the throne,
And whatsoever her people willed,
She made that will her own;
More long, more nobly, reigned than all
The kings of days gone by;
Sceptres may fade and empires fall,
Her name shall never die!
Victoria! Victoria!
Long may she live and reign!
The Queen of every British heart,
And the Empress of the Main!

THE QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY.

BY THE EDITOR.

The personal character of Queen Victoria has been well epitomized in the expression of one of the Boston Artillery Company, who received such a royal welcome in Great Britain. "Victoria, a type of the highest womanhood as Queen, and queenliness as woman."

There is something that appeals to our feelings of chivalry in this daughter of a hundred kings uniting in herself the blood of the Saxon house of Wessex and the Celtic house of Argyle. Hers is a tiny hand to sway a sceptre over realms wider than those of Semiramis or Zenobia. But not the wide extent of her empire, not the strength and valour of her armies, not the might and majesty of her navies, are her sovereign claim to the homage of our hearts, but her true and pure and noble womanhood.

This has been shown in every great crisis of her life. In the night of June 19th, 1837, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Lord Chamberlain rode through the darkness to the Palace of Kensington to announce to the young Queen her accession to the throne. The first words to the Archbishop of Canterbury of this maiden of eighteen years, called to such high estate, were, "I ask the prayers of your Grace on my behalf." In the silence of that early June dawning, the Queen and prelate knelt together, and Victoria began her reign with prayer at the footstool of the King of kings. And the reign thus begun has been continued for sixty years in the fear and love of God and in dependence upon his guidance and grace.

One of the noblest characteristics of the Queen has been her love of peace. More than once the silken rein of her authority and influence has restrained the impetuosity of her advisers. In troublous times, when war-clouds lowered and a hasty word might draw their lightning from the sky, as notably at the time of Lord Palmerston's hasty action in the Trent affair, by the counsel of the Queen and her consort the message of Great Britain to America was so softened that peace was happily maintained between the mother and the daughter land.

But more deeply are our feelings touched by her messages of love and sympathy to her humblest subjects. To the stricken wives of shipwrecked mariners or fishermen, or death-doomed miners and plimen, to the sick children in the



OUR GRACIOUS QUEEN.

hospitals, and in homes of want, her heart has gone forth in loving sympathy, and her private purse has been opened in generous aid. And when the whole American nation was bowed in grief over the untimely fate of its martyred President, Lincoln and Garfield, no deeper sorrow was felt, no truer words of sym-

pathy were uttered, than those which our widowed Queen wrote to the widows of those great men. Her autograph letters smote chords of feeling that vibrated in the remotest hamlets of two continents.

This sixty-third year of her reign is not without its elements of pathos. Successive bereavements have come to her tender and loving heart. The removal of the husband of her youth, of many beloved kinsfolk, and tried and trusted servants, has left the crown to her "a lonely splendour." Of all the great statesmen who stood about her when she ascended the throne not one remains. The friends of her youth, and many of her riper years, have passed away.

Never was sovereign more worthy to be loved, never had ruler stronger claim upon the loyal sympathies of her people than our revered and honoured Queen. Of all the tributes to her character, none, we think, is nobler than that paid by the English laureate, over forty years ago, to which the passing years have only added emphasis and truth.

"Her court was pure; her life serene;
God gave her peace; her land reposed;
A thousand claims to reverence closed
In her as mother, wife, and Queen."

And that love,—the love and loyalty of her people,—has not been withheld. Upon no human being have been converged so many prayers. Throughout the vast Empire, that with its forty colonies engirdles the world, wherever prayer is wont to be made, go up petitions to Almighty God on her behalf. The patriotic devotion of a loyal people finds utterance in the words, "God Save the Queen." For our gracious sovereign we can offer no more fitting prayer than that voiced by the sweetest singer of her reign:

"May all love,
The love of all thy sons encompass thee,
The love of all thy daughters cherish thee,
The love of all thy people comfort thee,
His love unseen but felt o'ershadow thee,
Till God's love set thee at his side at last."

GOLD AND DIAMONDS.

The greatest hole ever made in the crust of earth by the hand of man is in South Africa. It is so large that an inhabitant of the moon could detect it with a telescope. But the question whether it is a natural or an artificial orifice would probably be as puzzling to our lunar neighbours as that concerning the canals on the surface of the planet Mars is to us. The excavation is fourteen acres in extent, and six hundred and fifty feet in depth. It is the diamond-mines of Kimberley. The gems taken out of this huge pit would fill an ordinary-sized hall bed-room from floor to ceiling. The total output of this and adjacent mines in the last twenty years is said to be nigh fifteen tons (!), and be valued at \$375,000,000. Among the notable gems are the "Star of South Africa," eighty three and a half carats, valued at \$125,000; the "Tiffany," the largest yellow diamond in the world, one hundred and twenty-five carats, \$100,000; "the Porter Rhodes," four hundred and four carats and the "Excelsior," the largest diamond known, nine hundred and seventy-one and three-fourths carats. No one doubts but that the De Beers Mining Syndicate are the fortunate owners of the diamond storehouse of the world.

There are those who believe this to have been the Land of Ophir of the Scriptures. There are prehistoric remains of quartz crushing and fortifications apparently for the defence of the mines.

It should be a most grateful pleasure for those who have much of the joy of life to take thought for those who have been given less. Thought so spent is like money at a high rate of compound interest. It doubles on itself. The oftener we seize a chance to turn a kind thought into a deed the more chances we have, and each chance brings its own reward.—Forward.



HER MAJESTY'S MEDITERRANEAN FLEET APPROACHING CONSTANTINOPLE.