

## OUR SOVEREIGN LADY.

(By the Author of "English Hearts and English Hands.")

## CHAPTER III.—THE COURT AND THE COUNTRY IN PEACE AND IN WAR.

The married life, thus happily begun, was full to the brim of varied interests and incessant occupations, not unmixed with many anxieties; but all the pleasant things were doubly pleasant, and all the cares were lightened, when the loving and trusting husband and wife could share them together.

Prince Albert, no less than his beloved Queen, desired to raise the character of Court life; and to this end he so lived,

"In that fierce light that beats upon a throne," that no breath of slander was ever able to dim the lustre of his pure life. The day's routine in the Palace was carefully arranged. The royal husband and wife breakfasted together at nine o'clock, walked together afterwards, then attended to business together, and, when time allowed of it, they drew, and etched—a taste shared by both. Luncheon was at two o'clock; and then an interview with the Premier generally occupied the Queen until between five and six o'clock, when she drove in her phaeton, either with the Prince or with the Duchess of Kent, or one of her ladies, the Prince then riding beside them. Almost every day he read aloud to the Queen. The dinner hour was eight o'clock, and there was always company to be entertained. In the evening there would be music, in which Prince Albert excelled; and in these early days he and his beloved Queen often played and sang together. The Prince also generally enjoyed a game at chess. The Court set an example of early hours, and the party had usually dispersed before eleven o'clock.

The Prince, who was a very abstemious man, appeared almost to grudge the time given to eating and drinking. His life was so full of purpose that amusement, for mere amusement's sake, had no charm for him. He was a fearless and skilful horseman, but he only cared for hunting as an occasional recreation, and wondered that men could make that, or any other sport the chief business of their lives.

Fastor was spent at Windsor; and then the Queen and the Prince partook of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper together, for the first time. "The Prince," the Queen tells us, "had a very strong feeling about the solemnity of the act;" and he and the Queen generally dined alone on these occasions, when in the evening he would read aloud to her from some religious book and they enjoyed sacred music together.

Amongst the many royal guests entertained at Windsor Castle, was the gentle, widowed Queen Adelaide, who could even bear to re-visit the stately home, once her own; and who rejoiced to see how well her beloved niece was filling the throne. The Queen and the Prince occasionally visited the houses of some of their nobility; and it has been truly written that "they went nowhere but that they made things better for the people," and that "no opportunity of doing real good was lost." The children of the scattered inhabitants of Windsor Forest had been left almost without education. The Queen and Prince organized schools for them, in which they took a great interest, and which cost them £1,000 a year. In these schools the children were taught, besides their religious and secular education, to make their own clothes, cook their meals, and to attend to the gardens.

On the first of June Prince Albert took the noble step of identifying himself with the friends of freedom and humanity, by taking the chair at a great meeting for the Abolition of the Slave Trade. His speech on that occasion made a marked impression on his audience.

The news of the birth of the Princess Royal, on the 21st of November, was received with joy throughout the country; the safety of the royal mother and her infant counterbalancing any momentary feeling of disappointment that the child was not a son; and on the 10th of the following November, the joy in the Home, the Court, and the Country, was made complete by the birth of the Prince of Wales. When he was about a month old, his royal mother wrote to her uncle Leopold, King of the Belgians—"I wonder very much who my little boy will be like. You will understand how fervent are my prayers, and I am sure everybody's must be, to see him resemble

his father in every respect, both in body and mind..... We must all have trials and vexations, but if one's home is happy, then the rest is comparatively nothing. My happiness at home, and the love of my husband, his kindness, his advice, his support, and his company, make up for all."

By a careful husbanding of their time, the young parents managed to see a great deal of their children, and of each other. An artist employed on some fresco paintings in Buckingham Palace gardens about this time, writes of the Royal Family: "The Queen and the Prince have breakfasted, heard morning prayers with the household in the private chapel, and are out at some distance from the palace, talking to us in the summer house, before half-past nine o'clock. After the public duties of the day, and before the dinner, they come out again, evidently delighted to get away from the bustle of the world, to enjoy each other's society in the solitude of the garden. ... Here too the royal children are brought out by the nurses; and the whole arrangement seems like real domestic pleasure."

Public duties were as sedulously attended to as ever; and from time to time the dry details of State business were lightened to our Queen by an opportunity of throwing the weight of her royal influence upon the side of mercy.

Thus we find her, when a treaty was being arranged between England and Madag-

ascars, writing with her own hand on the margin. "Queen Victoria asks, as a personal favor to herself, that the Queen of Madagascar will allow no persecution of the Christians." Good success attended that effort, for in the return treaty these words occurred: "In accordance with the wish of Queen Victoria, the Queen of Madagascar engages there shall be no persecution of the Christians in Madagascar."

So the years passed on, years of great progress in the Nation, in the spread of education, and in the knowledge of the arts of peace and civilization; railways, steam navigation, electric telegraphs, the penny postage, and other beneficial changes were being rapidly developed; and during the same period many useful and merciful alterations were made in the laws of the land. Slavery was abolished, the punishment of death was restricted to the crime of murder, and the treatment of prisoners was vastly improved. These great benefits were brought about mainly by the ceaseless exertions of a noble band of workers, whether in or out of Parliament—names that will be for ever remembered, such as William Wilberforce, Thomas Clarkson, Sir Fowell Buxton, that great and devoted woman, Elizabeth Fry, her brother, John Joseph Guernsey, and other friends of a kindred spirit. Greater activity began now to be shown in all mat-

ters connected with religion; the Bible, the Missionary, and other excellent societies, receiving an impetus which has since gone on ever increasing, and many new charitable and Christian agencies sprang into existence.

Early in Queen Victoria's reign, that dauntless champion of the poor, the weak, the oppressed, the miserable—the young Lord Ashley of that time, now known wherever the English tongue is spoken as "the great and good Earl of Shaftesbury," began his gallant crusade against cruelty and wrong. His first efforts were directed to carrying through Parliament a bill to reform the laws concerning lunatics, who, up to that period, were subjected to horrible maltreatment. Soon afterwards he became Chairman of the Board of Lunacy, and continued to occupy the post as long as he lived.

Lord Shaftesbury, and his benevolent friends and followers, then proceeded to the deliverance of little chimney-sweeps from their fiery dangers and other miseries; and having now fairly set forward on the campaign of rescue, they found that each step revealed to them more sufferings to be alleviated, more wrongs to be righted.

The groans, from dark and dreary mines, of the women and children subjected to worse torments than any inflicted on beasts of burden; the wail that rose above the din of machinery in crowded factories, where children, as well as men and women, were worked like slaves for sixteen hours a day—

flower-girls, and others, were set on foot under his guidance and with his generous help; and his never-wearying support was given to every organization that might conduce to the spiritual and moral elevation of the masses. In these, and in all other philanthropic and Christian efforts, which have graced her reign, Her Majesty has taken the deepest interest.

During these years, while the domestic life at the Court was a model for the subjects, friendly relations were also kept up with foreign powers. The Queen and the Prince paid visits to France, and to the King and Queen of the Belgians; and at different times in their own country, they visited Cambridge, and other places of interest, and they showed their sympathy in everything that concerned the people. At home, the Queen received, and entertained right royally, three of the crowned heads of Europe.

In alluding to these hospitalities the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Peel, in his speech at the beginning of the year 1845, paid this remarkable tribute to Her Majesty:—"In the course of last year three sovereigns visited this country, two of them the most powerful sovereigns in the habitable globe—the Emperor of Russia and the King of the French. Those visits of necessity created a considerable increase of expenditure, but through the wise system of economy, which is the only source of true magnificence, Her Majesty was enabled to meet every charge, and to give a reception to those sovereigns which struck everyone by its magnificence, without adding one tittle to the burdens of the country. And I am not required on the part of Her Majesty to press for the extra expenditure of one shilling on account of these unforeseen causes of increased expenditure. I think that to state this is only due to the personal credit of Her Majesty, who insists upon it that there shall be every magnificence required by her station, but without incurring a single debt."

When two more children had been added to the royal nursery, the Princess Alice, now of beloved and blessed memory, and Prince Alfred,—the need of a quiet, and, if possible, a seaside home, was felt; and the choice fell on Osborne House in the Isle of Wight. "It sounds so pleasant to have a home of one's own," wrote the Queen to her uncle, King Leopold, "quiet and retired.... It is impossible to see a prettier place." On the evening of the day when they had taken possession, Prince Albert said: "We have in Germany a psalm for such occasions:

"God bless our going out, nor less  
Our coming in, and make them sure;  
God bless our daily bread, and bless  
Whate'er we do, whate'er endure;  
In death unto His peace awake us,  
And heirs of His salvation make us."

So the merry "house-warming" was made really gladder, by the father's thoughts of God and of prayer.

(To be Continued.)

## HARMONY AT HOME.

1. We may be quite sure that our will is likely to be crossed during the day; so let us prepare for it.
2. Every person in the house has an evil nature as well as ourselves, and therefore we must not expect too much.
3. Look upon each member of the family as one for whom Christ died.
4. When inclined to give an angry answer, let us lift up the heart in prayer.
5. If from sickness, pain or infirmity we feel irritable, let us keep a very strict watch over ourselves.
6. Observe when others are suffering, and drop a word of kindness.
7. Watch for little opportunities of pleasing, and put little annoyances out of the way.
8. Take a cheerful view of everything, and encourage hope.
9. Speak kindly to dependents and servants, and praise them when you can.
10. In all little pleasures which may occur, put self last.
11. Try for the soft answer that turneth away wrath.—*Congregationalist*.

IF THERE IS TO BE WORK accomplished, it is to be done through human as well as divine efforts. God could put a man on the top of an Alpine peak, and have him preach one sermon that would convert the whole world; but that is not His way of doing things. God wants our hearts.—*Moody*.



THE QUEEN AT THE TIME OF HER MARRIAGE.