

to so joyous and so prosperous :—It is the loss of a public man whose services to this country, though rendered neither in the field of battle nor in the arena of crowded assemblies, have yet been of inestimable value to this nation,—a man to whom more than any one else we owe the happy state of our internal polity, and a degree of general contentment to which neither we nor any other nation we know of ever attained before.

THE MARRIED LIFE OF THE ROYAL PAIR.

Twenty-one years have just elapsed since Queen Victoria gave her hand in marriage to Prince Albert of Saxe-Gotha. It was an auspicious event, and reality has more than surpassed all prognostics, however favourable. The Royal marriage has been blessed with a numerous offspring. So far as it is permitted to the public to know the domestic lives of Sovereigns, the people of these islands could set up no better model of the performance of the duties of a wife and mother than their Queen; no more complete pattern of a devoted husband and father than her Consort. These are not mere words of course. We write in an age and a country in which the highest position would not have availed to screen the most elevated delinquent. They are simply the records of a truth perfectly understood and recognized by the English people.

THE PRINCE'S GOOD SENSE AND TRUE NOBLENES OF CHARACTER.

It has been the misfortune of most Royal Personages that their education has been below the dignity of their position. Cut off by their rank from intimate association with young persons of the same age, they have often had occasion bitterly to lament that the same fortune which raised them above the nobility in station had sunk them in knowledge and acquirements. Thanks to the cultivated mind and sterling good sense of the Prince Consort, no such charge will be brought against the present generation of the Royal family of England. Possessing talents of the first order, cultivated and refined by diligent and successful study, the Prince has watched over the education of his children with an assiduity commensurate with the greatness of the trust, and destined, we doubt not, to bear fruit in the future stability of our reigning family and its firm hold on the affections of the people. Had Prince Albert done no more than this, had he limited his ambition to securing the happiness of his wife and children, this country, considering who his wife and children are, would have owed him a debt which the rank he occupied among us, and the material and social advantages attached to it, would have been quite inadequate to repay. But there is much more which the Prince has done for us. It was a singular piece of fortune that the Queen should find in a young man of twenty years of age one whom a sudden and unlooked-for elevation could not elate, nor all the temptations of a splendid Court and a luxurious Capital seduce; who kept the faith he had pledged with simple and unswerving fidelity, and in the heyday of youth ruled his passions and left no duty unperformed. But it is still more singular that in this untutored youth the Queen should have found an adviser of the utmost sagacity, a statesman of the rarest ability and honesty of purpose. Perhaps all history cannot afford an instance of the performance of high and irresponsible but strictly limited duties, with a dignity and singleness of intention comparable to that which has made illustrious the reign of Queen Victoria.

THE QUEEN A RARE EXAMPLE OF A TRULY CONSTITUTIONAL SOVEREIGN.

The Constitution of England has this inherent defect,—that the powers intrusted to each of the Estates of the realm are so great and ample that it is difficult for their possessors to resist the obvious temptation of employing them to obtain more. The long reign of George the Third was devoted to a struggle of this nature, and to the pursuit of this chimera the interests of the nation and of the Crown itself were repeatedly and ruthlessly sacrificed. It has been the peculiar merit of this reign that the Crown has uniformly shown itself superior to this vulgar ambition. It has comprehended that the powers of the Crown are held in trust for the people, and are the means, and not the end of government. For this enlightened policy, which has entitled the Queen to the glorious distinction of having been the most Constitutional Sovereign this country has ever seen, we are indebted to the wise counsels, sterling good sense, and thorough honesty of the Prince. Recognizing in him, not only a person united to her by the nearest and dearest of all earthly relations, but one on whom the happy fortune of this country had bestowed extraordinary talents, Her Majesty found in her husband a wise and true counsellor, and rose far superior to the petty jealousy which might have prevented a mind of less elevated cast from availing itself of such invaluable services. The result has been a period of progress and prosperity quite unequalled even in what may fairly be called the happy and glorious history of England. The rancour of contending parties has never assailed the Crown, because all have felt alike that they were treated with the most loyal impartiality.

Any one who would thoroughly appreciate the degree of merit which this impartiality implies should study the history of our Colonies under their Constitutional Government, and observe how impossible the ablest Governors have found it to maintain that impartiality between rival leaders which during the reign of the Queen has never been forgotten for a moment. If faction has almost died away among us, if the nation is united as it never was united before, it is because every shade of opinion has had full and fair play, and the powers of Government have not been perverted to oppress one side or unduly to elevate the other. In the Prince, notwithstanding his German education, we have had as true an Englishman as the most patriotic native of these islands. He has had the sagacity to see and feel that the interests of his family and his dynasty had claims upon him superior to any other, and at no period has our foreign policy been less subject to the imputation of subservience to foreign interests and relations than during the last twenty years.

THE PRINCE AS A GREAT INDUSTRIAL REFORMER.

We have hitherto spoken of the manner in which the Prince has acquitted himself of the duties which may be said to have been cast upon him in virtue of his position as husband to the Queen. We have yet to speak of another duty which he may be said to have assumed of his own accord. As a foreigner of cultivated taste and clear judgment he saw defects in us which our insular pride probably had prevented us from discerning in ourselves. He saw that our manufactures, with all their cheapness and durability, were strangely wanting in the graces of colour and form, and that the whole life of the nation, public and private, had something of a sordid and material tint. The Prince set himself to correct these evils with indefatigable diligence; he laboured to create the Great Exhibition of 1851, and has been the principal patron of those public establishments which are giving a new impulse to the Arts of Design, and are probably designed to regenerate the taste of the country, and bring our powers of decoration to a level with our astonishing fertility of creation. Even now there is rising under his auspices in a suburb of this metropolis a building destined to receive the products of the industry of all nations, and to give, we doubt not, a fresh impulse to the creation of whatever may serve for the use and enjoyment of mankind. But, while we are on every side reminded of the benefits which the Prince Consort has been the means of diffusing among us, their author is no more. In the prime of manhood, in the zenith of his great intellectual capacity, in the midst of a career of unbounded usefulness, the Consort of the Queen has been stricken by the hand of Death. Now and for long to come the heart of Her Majesty can find room but for a single thought; but when the first agony has spent itself, we trust that it may suggest some slight conclusion to reflect that she as implicitly commands the sympathy and sorrow as she has always commanded the loyalty and affection of the subjects who have had the happiness to live under her rule, and to be instructed by her example.

POLITICAL EFFECT OF THE DEATH OF THE PRINCE.

The death of the Prince Consort has come upon the nation with an unexpectedness which defeats every preparation of thought or of feeling. In a moment every loyal subject of this realm—and who is not loyal?—is driven to his memory for examples, and to his forethought for consequences, and can find none. It is the sudden extinction of a light, and an interval must elapse before we can penetrate the darkness. The inseparable friend and adviser, and, in the course of nature, the mainstay and staff of the crown, is suddenly wrenched away, and there is not a man in the country who would venture to boast that he had considered the contingency, and was prepared with anticipations. The Prince Consort himself was the only man, as it seems, who had within him the presentiment of what was to happen. For more than twenty years his name has been every day before the public, combining in a singularly uniform routine works of public utility with dutiful devotion to his wife and sovereign. Though precluded from public discussions and seldom brought face to face either with general society or the world in a still larger sense, he has yet been more prominently and unintermittingly before the British people than any other man in these isles. Instead of fretting, as others might have done, against the constitutional etiquettes which met him on every side, he found a compensation in that world of art and science, and won for himself there a noble realm, of which even death cannot deprive him. At this moment it is impossible to say how much awaits the decision of his fate and the exercise of his skill, to select or to arrange. Yet these were only trifles of the hour in comparison with the office of comforting and sustaining the heart of a woman to bear the mightiest empire in the world. We have only to look round at the host of men among us, and a glance will remind us how few, even of them, would endure the monotony, the restraint, the self-denial and subjection of will necessary for such a position. Prince Albert has