

accidental" one, took place in the Cathedral, at Sperier, in Germany, where the Prince with his escort happened to be viewing the frescoes just at the identical moment that the Princess and her father were likewise instructing their minds. The young people were allowed to wander off and compare notes on the frescoes. At this meeting for the first time the orbits of the two royal planets intersected, and the admiration which the Prince had felt for the beautiful portrait deepened into love for the still more beautiful original.

The young couple met the next day at Heidelberg, but did not see each other again for several months, the death of the Prince Consort, and the trip of the Prince of Wales to the Holy Land, intervening in the meanwhile.

Act VI.—The royal pair next met at the Belgian Court, where they became acknowledged lovers, and two months later, in September, 1862, the formal betrothal took place.

The wedding-day was set for the 10th of March, 1863. On the 7th of March, the young Princess, on board *The Victoria and Albert*, under the escort of a British squadron, was awakened from her dreams by the booming of guns. The yacht was in British waters, and from Margate a deputation came out in a boat to present a loyal address. As her yacht moved on majestically up the Thames, the welcome of the English people grew in volume and intensity. Flotillas of boats, decked with flowers and flags, and crowded with anxious sight-seers, seemed to cover every inch of the river.

Southend and Sheerness were decorated and jubilant, and when at length the big yacht anchored opposite the pier at Gravesend, such a mighty shout went up from British throats that the Princess, standing on deck, in sight of all, her white dress fluttering in the light breeze, started and caught the arm of her mother, who was at her side. She had not been so petted and fêted that she could consider this new tribute as her mere due,

and so she said, "Oh, mother, is it possible that they mean all this for *me*."

Suddenly it was signalled that the bridegroom was putting out from shore, and when this news reached the yacht, the bride-elect instantly vanished into her cabin. The simple white frock was quickly discarded, and when she appeared to greet the Prince, who came on board with a brilliant suite, the Princess wore by way of specially complimenting her adopted country, a dress of mauve Irish poplin, "very becoming to her dazzling complexion and bright hair, a flowing cloak of purple velvet, edged with rich sable, and a most bewitching "poke" bonnet of white rosebuds, which framed the youthful face deliciously."

The lovers met in full gaze of the nation, but they forgot, apparently for a moment, that there was anyone in the world save themselves. The Prince drew the Princess to himself, and gave her such a kiss that a ringing cheer went up from the watching crowds. This brought the two young people back to realities, and the principal actors in the drama gave the audiences at that moment no further scenes which called for applause.

As the Prince led his bride, who was pale with excitement, along the pier adorned with orange blossoms and Danish mottoes, sixty maids of Kent, dressed in the red and white of Denmark, strewed roses beneath her feet.

The Princess was taken to London under the charge of the flower of English nobility, the Earl of Caithness driving the engine.

Dukes, Princes, the Lord Mayor, and Sheriffs of London and foreign ambassadors received her at the station.

Writing of the reception accorded her by the London people, Thackeray says: "Since womankind existed, has any woman ever had such greeting?"

London overdid itself on that occasion, and there has never been a greater or more popular demonstration. There was no pageant, although over a million dol-