

A JUBILEE ADDRESS.

On the morning of June 20, 1837, England's King lay dead, the unproclaimed Queen slept. "The King is dead—long live the Queen." The sceptre fell from the hands of an aged man to be grasped by a girl of eighteen summers. As Carlyle put it: "At an age at which a girl can hardly be trusted to choose a bonnet for herself, a task is laid upon her from which an archangel might shrink." Fifty years have passed, the furrows of age, the wrinkles of care, have marked that brow, the then maiden is now approaching very near the threescore years and ten of life; but the promise of a reign which began in prayer, and was ever strengthened by a strict regard for the Sabbath, has been fulfilled during the fifty years just closed.

It is not well to speak evil of dignities, and "*De mortuis, nil nisi bonum,*" is a just sentiment; yet truth is not evil, and we are not called upon to write continually lies upon the tomb. Truth demands the simple statement that the Hanoverian princes that preceded our sovereign on the throne added no lustre thereto; three of the five positively disgraced it. Nine years before, the fair-haired, blue-eyed child saw the light in the old palace at Kensington, George III. had celebrated with great pomp the jubilee of his reign. Personally virtuous, officially obstinate, the kingdom lost nothing by his death, save that it brought a princely black-guard to the throne. William IV., an impetuous, sailor prince, with all his personal faults, had a heart, and ruled with some regard to the wants of the people. The Dukes of Kent and of Sussex were the best of the Third George's children, and in Victoria Marie Louise of Saxe-Cobourg—our Queen's mother—Edward, Duke of Kent, found a wife whose virtues would render any home happy, and which have been perpetuated in the reign whose jubilee we celebrate. There are lives that gain by contrast, and certainly the court of William IV. was a decided improvement upon the preceding one. There are lives, contrast or no contrast, which stand clear in their own light, and shine benignly on all. Such a life is that of our Victoria. We shall just glance at that life: first as a citizen, and secondly as a Christian.

As a citizen.—The Victorian age has for the British Empire been one of constitutional government. The Third George kept his ministers irre-

spective of the will of the people; indeed his entire political life was a struggle to uphold the prerogatives of the crown; those prerogatives coupled with his obstinacy lost for us the American Colonies. His successor, fourth of the name, judged of his Parliament by their willingness to take his part against his queen, and their readiness to provide for the debts his vices and extravagances had incurred. William was a great advance on his predecessors, and governed by his ministers, though his summary dismissal in 1834 of Lord Melbourne from office showed that the old prerogative claim had not forsaken the Hanoverian house. It is safe to say that Victoria has ever ruled in accordance with the manifest desire of her people. Her age may be characterized as that of the beginning and of the establishment of strictly constitutional government. She has had her preferences, no doubt, and has made her influence felt, but her reign has been in strict accord with the principles now so potent, and known as representative government. Victoria is our first true constitutional monarch, ruling by, through and for the people. She has made the monarchy stable for another generation; we trust the Heir Apparent will be as his mother.

We hear at times of a "power behind the throne." Apart from the higher power of which we shall soon speak, there soon appeared one upon the scene whose influence for good upon the maiden heart of the Queen remains unto this day. Three months after the baby blossom opened at Kensington Palace, a bright-eyed boy looked out upon the world in one of the German petty states. The cousins met more than once even as children; at length Albert stood by the side of Victoria a husband, as well as a subject. Wise, noble, Christian, England little knows the debt of gratitude she owes to Albert of Saxe-Gotha. How well he comprehended the difficulties of his future position—an alien by birth, yet the closest adviser of the Queen of a proud and jealous people—is shown by the words he wrote to his friend, Baron Stockmar: "With the exception of my relations to the Queen, my future position will have its dark side, the sky will not be ever unclouded blue. Life has its thorns in every position, but the consciousness of having used one's powers and endeavours for an object so great as that of promoting the welfare of so many, will surely be sufficient to support me." The names of Victoria and