

QUEEN VICTORIA.

We have great pleasure in presenting in this number of Pleasant Hours the accompanying fine portrait of Her Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria, who sways the sceptre over wider realms than ever monarch did before. Not Semiramis or Zenobia kept equal state, nor Caesar or Alexander ruled over such vast domains. The morning drum-beat of her garrisons keeps pace with the rising sun around the world, and their sunset gun accompanies the closing day. Forty colonies, many of them many times vaster than the motherland, pay her allegiance.

Never was monarch so universally beloved, and never "in the fierce light that beats upon the throne, and blackens every spot" did any live so pure, so blameless, so noble a life. Not for her pomp, her power, her crown and sceptre is she so beloved; but for the gentle womanly virtues which as maiden Queen, as wife, as mother, and as sorrowing widow she has shown. Well might Tennyson dedicate his poems in the following beautiful lines:

Revered, beloved! O you that hold
A nobler office upon earth
Than arms, or power of brain, or birth
Could give the warrior kings of old,

Victoria, since your Royal grace
To one of less desert allows
This laurel greener from the brows
Of him that uttered nothing base;

And should your greatness, and the care
That yokes with empire, yield you time
To make demand of modern rhyme
If aught of ancient worth be there;

Take, madam, this poor book of song;
For though the faults were thick as dust
In vacant chamber, I could trust
Your kindness. May you rule us long,

And leave us rulers of your blood
As noble till the latest day!
May children of our children say,
She wrought her people lasting good;

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 statesmen at her council met
Who knew the seasons when to take
Occasion by the hand, and make
The bounds of freedom wider yet.
By shaping some august decree,
Which kept her throne unshaken still,
Broad based upon her people's will,
And compassed by the inviolate sea.

We have all heard the story how, when
the Archbishop of Canterbury came to
announce her accession to the throne,
her first act was one of prayer to God



OUR WIDOWED QUEEN.

for grace and wisdom to bear the burdens thus laid upon her. This has been the secret of her beautiful life. Soon after the youthful Queen was crowned with royal state in Westminster Abbey, and soon after that the same venerable fane witnessed the pageant of her marriage to "Albert the Good."

These events are thus beautifully referred to in Mrs. Browning's fine poem entitled

CROWNED AND WEDDED.

When last before her people's face her
own fair face she bent,
Within the meek projection of that shade
she was content

To erase the child-smile from her lips,
which seemed as if it might
Be still kept holy from the world to
childhood still in sight—

To erase it with a solemn vow,—a princely
vow—to rule;

A priestly vow—to rule by grace of God
the pitiful;

A very godlike vow—to rule in right and
righteousness,

And with the law and for the land!—so
God the vower bless!

The minster was alight that day, but not
with fire, I ween,

And long-drawn glitterings swept adown
that mighty aisled scene.

The priests stood stoled in their pomp,
the sworded chiefs in theirs,
And so, the collared knights, and so, the
civil ministers,

And so, the waiting lords and dames—
and little pages best

At holding trains—and legates so, from
countries east and west.

So, alien princes, native peers, and high-
born ladies bright,

Along whose brows the Queen's, new
crowned, flashed coronets to light,

And so, the people at the gates, with
priestly hands on high,

Which bring the first anointing to all
legal majesty.

And so the dead—who lie in rows be-
neath the minster floor,

There, verily an awful state maintaining
evermore;

The statesman whose clean palm will
kiss no bribe whate'er it be.

The courtier who, for no fair queen, will
rise up to his knee.

The court-dame who, for no court-tire,
will leave her shroud behind.

The laureate who no courtlier rhyme
than "dust to dust" can find.

The kings and queens who having made
that vow and worn that crown,

Descended unto lower thrones and
darker, deep adown!
Dieu et mon droit—what is't to them?
—what meaning can it have?
The King of kings, the right of death—
God's judgment and the grave.
And when betwixt the quick and dead,
the young fair Queen had vowed,
The living shouted "May she live!
Victoria, live!" aloud.
And as the loyal shouts went up, true
spirits prayed between,
"The blessings happy monarchs have,
be thine, O crowned queen!"

But now before her people's face she
bendeth hers anew,
And calls them, while she vows, to be
her witness thereunto.

She vowed to rule, and, in that oath, her
childhood put away.

She doth maintain her womanhood, in
vowing love to-day.

O, lovely lady!—let her vow!—such lips
become such vows,

And fairer goeth bridal wreath than
crown with vernal brows.

O, lovely lady!—let her vow! yea, let
her vow to love!

And though she be no less a Queen—
with purples hung above,

The pageant of a court behind, the royal
kin around,

And woven gold to catch her looks
turned maidenly to ground,

Yet may the bride veil hide from her a
little of that state,

While loving hopes, for retinues, about
her sweetness wait.

She vows to love who vowed to rule—
(the chosen at her side)

Let none say, God preserve the Queen!
—but rather bless the bride!

None bow the trump, none bend the
knee, none violate the dream

Wherein no monarch but a wife, she to
herself may seem.

Or if ye say, Preserve the Queen!—oh,
breathe it inward low—

She is a woman, and beloved!—and 'tis
enough but so.

Count it enough, thou noble prince, who
tak'st her by the hand,

And claimest for thy lady-love, our lady
of the land!

And since, Prince Albert, men have
called thy spirit high and rare,

And true to truth, and brave for truth,
as some at Augsburg were,—

We charge thee by thy lofty thoughts,
and by thy poet-mind

Which not by glory and degree takes
measure of mankind,

Esteem that wedded hand less dear for
sceptre than for ring,

And hold her uncrowned womanhood to
be the royal thing.

And now upon our Queen's last vow,
what blessings shall we pray?

None, straitened to a shallow crown, will
suit our lips to-day.

Behold, they must be free as love—they
must be broad as free,

Even to the borders of heaven's light and
earth's humanity.

Long live she!—send up loyal shouts—
and true hearts pray between,—

"The blessings happy peasants have, be
thine, O crowned Queen!"

In our picture we have a portrait of
her Majesty after her great life-sorrow
had darkened all her days. To this be-
reavement Tennyson refers in the fol-
lowing touching lines:

"Break not, O woman's heart, but still
endure;

Break not, for thou art Royal, but endure.
Remembering all the beauty of that star

Which shone so close beside thee, that
ye made

One light together, but has past and left
The crown a lonely splendour.

"May all love,
His love, unseen, but felt, o'ershadow
thee,

The love of all thy sons encompass thee,
The love of all thy daughters cherish
thee,

The love of all thy people comfort thee,
Till God's love set thee at his side again."

Fingle—There goes a woman with a
history. Fangle—That woman who just
left your office? How do you know?
Fingle—She worked for an hour trying to
sell it to me.



THE QUEEN'S PRIVATE APARTMENTS, OSBORNE HOUSE.