

The funeral service in St. George's chapel took place on the following day. The Eton boys, with their masters, were allotted places, and the procession outstripped all that had ever been seen of mournful magnificence.

But the sadness of the scene was deepened by surrounding circumstances and reflections not to be avoided. The new king was absent from alleged indisposition, and his unpopularity as regent was now increased tenfold by the incident of the judicial proceedings against the Queen. In his place the Duke of York acted as chief mourner, followed by his royal brothers, the Dukes of Clarence, Sussex and Gloucester. At the close of the service Handel's funeral anthem, composed for the obsequies of Queen Caroline, was sung by the choir. The semi-chorus for boys' voices, unaccompanied, had a moving effect upon those present. Then the titles of the late monarch were read by the chamberlain, and the procession retired. That year of sadness for England, with sedition at home and perplexity abroad, found no consolation for the death of George III in any surrounding circumstances. His successor had lost reputation and popularity; the ministry had no hold upon national confidence, led by the blind Toryism of Lord Eldon; the splendid national triumphs of the Peninsula and Waterloo, so recent in point of time, seemed forgotten.

How different the scene of Queen Victoria's ending, the sunset of a glorious day, with one cloud upon the horizon, indeed, with so much of the heavens serene and beautiful. To pessimists, at the present day, we can surely appeal in the well known words:

"O passi graviora"

And to those seeking grounds for confident hope we can urge the stability of a royal dynasty which has endured such sorrow and such stress, and yet still can establish a firm hold on a nation's allegiance and affection.

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