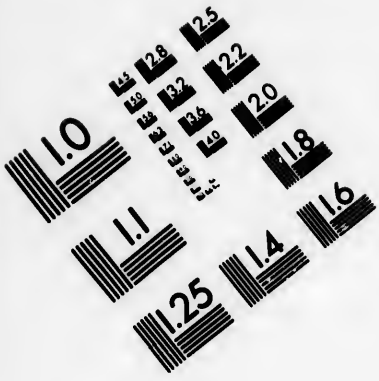

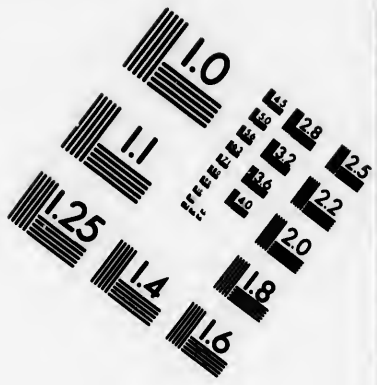

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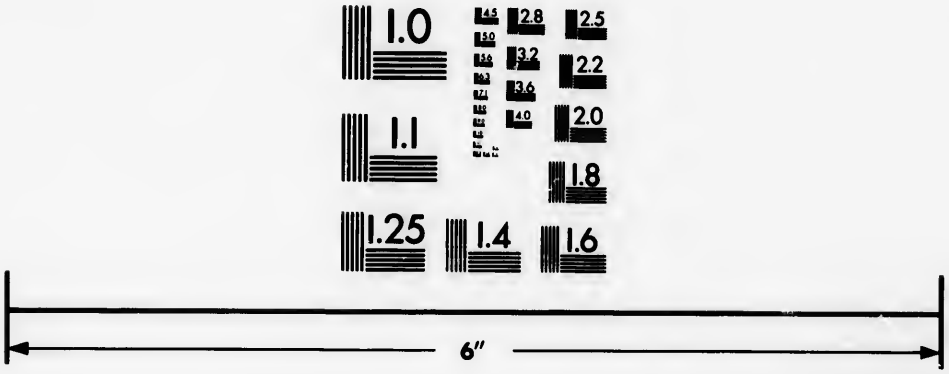

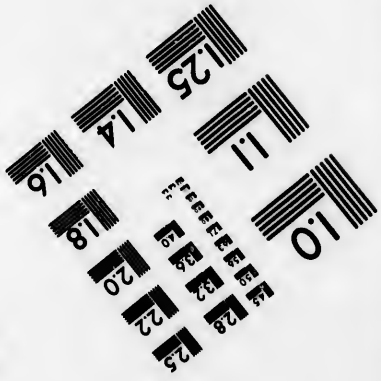

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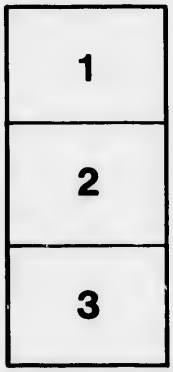

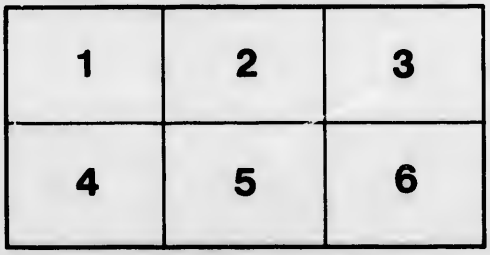

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Victoria

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VICTORIA

AN APPRECIATION

GRIFFITH FARRAN BROWNE & CO.
35 BOW STREET, LONDON

Prefa

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Preface

OF books relating to Queen Victoria there have been many, particularly in recent days. This work is not addressed to those who have leisure to read the lengthy biographies of modern times, but rather to persons whose lives are filled with occupation, and to whom the idea of the late Queen as a hard-working woman may come as something of an unexpected surprise. And that such she indeed was may be seen by those who have patience to glance through these pages, not because of anything the author may think—that would carry no weight at all,—but because of what is here shown to have been the views of those

who make history—the great statesmen and writers of the reign!

Since 1887 the author has read many works relating to her late Majesty. In these pages, however, he has relied upon the *Greville Memoirs* for the first period of the reign, and afterwards, up to 1861, upon Sir Theodore Martin's *Biography of the Prince Consort* (Smith, Elder, & Co., popular edition), while later he has chiefly depended upon *Lord Malmesbury's Memoirs* (Longman & Co.), and for the facts relating to the Disestablishment of the Irish Church to the *Life of Archbishop Tait* (Macmillan & Co.). The other authorities he has referred to are, he hopes and believes, all duly noted in the pages of this volume, wherever they are cited.

In dealing with the life of the Queen, the author confines himself almost entirely to the working part of it. He has done this for the benefit

Preface

f those who have been brought up ith the idea that the Sovereign's uties in these days are purely ominal. And that this was indeed the iew of many, not merely uneducated ersons, but of those who should have nown better, the writer has had mple, and at times almost amusing, xperience. "The Queen work!" or "You do not think she reads the despatches placed before her really!" were remarks he has heard again and again. It is to this class of people, then, that this volume is directed. In it they will find a sketch—an imperfect one, indeed—of some of the political duties, to all of which she so faithfully devoted herself, down to the last hour of her reign; together with occasional glances at the private and homely life. These last have been gathered from the letters of those who, in their lives, were permitted to approach Her Majesty, and whose

correspondence since their deaths has been opened to the public in memoirs or other like works.

It should perhaps be added that this volume does not pretend to be in any sense a history of the reign. No one can be more fully aware than the author how much better it would be if all would read for themselves the great works mentioned above. Nevertheless, as at the end of a day's work many are apt to think the perusal of large volumes a task beyond them, he ventures to hope that this small volume may be found to supply a want.

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VICTORIA :

AN APPRECIATION

THE premature death of the Princess Charlotte of Wales, whose stately tomb es to the left of the great west door of t. George's Chapel at Windsor, was e cause of the marriage of the Duke Kent to the widow of the Prince of einingen, and the sister of the King of e Belgians. This union resulted in the rth of our late beloved Sovereign on e 24th May 1819. A few months later d the Duke of Kent died after a short ness, leaving the Duchess the guardian the heiress of the Crown.

How well she filled the position is cognised now in history, but it was obably long before the kingdom in neral quite comprehended the great

debt it owed to the Duchess of Kent. Those in authority, however, early recognised her worth, and Her Royal Highness was named Regent in the event of a demise of the Crown before the Princess Victoria was of age. Fortunately the last-named event had taken place before King William the Fourth expired, on the 20th of June 1837. In the hush of the summer dawn of that memorable day Lord Conyngham, the Lord Chamberlain, and the Archbishop of Canterbury left Windsor in haste, bearing to Kensington momentous tidings indeed! The sun had risen ere the journey was accomplished, and then came that loud knocking at a palace door which has since become historic. One can picture the pretty scene which followed: the sun-lit room —the song of the birds without—the bowing forms of the two men — the figure in the white draperies, with the blue eyes open wide to hear the wondrous fairy tale that she, a girl of eighteen summers, had become "the Queen"!

For sixty-three years she bore it, this

proud title, until there grew around it an almost hallowed sound. How quickly she realised the dignity of her position may be seen in the account given by Lord Conyngham to Mr. Greville. He told the latter that as soon as he uttered the words "Your Majesty," she put out her hand, meaning that he should kneel and kiss it before proceeding further, which he at once did. The Archbishop followed suit, and then, after a few solemn words from the latter, she retired, leaving the courtier and the churchman alike astonished at the quiet dignity and immense self-possession with which she had received the announcement. Eighteen! and the mightiest throne in the world! Eighteen! hardly more than a child! What wonder, then, that she passed the hours that immediately followed in the silence of her own chamber; nor is it difficult to imagine how much of that time must have been spent!

For the benefit of those not in the habit of reading memoirs we must explain who Mr. Greville was, and why,

like everyone who writes of the Queen's accession and the early years, we go direct to his journals. It is because he is the great authority for the period. He had been Clerk of the Privy Council through part of the reign of George the Fourth, and he held the post right away till 1859, when failing health compelled him to relinquish it, attending his last council in April of that year. The journals, though their author speaks in a slighting way of them, are in reality the history of those times.[1] The writer of this work is not old enough to remember the storm of controversy which arose when those dark blue volumes first appeared, but he has heard from others something of it. No one is infallible, and it was shown in many cases, that Mr. Greville was wrong. With that we have nothing to do, and the matter is only mentioned here because of the great lesson to be learned from those errors. If the writer of those famous memoirs, whose pos

[1] *Greville Memoirs*, second series, vol. iii. p. 67.

pened to him all sorts of means of nformation, went astray at times, how ow should people be to take as gospel he gossip concerning the Court, etc., as ecorded in some of the cheaper weekly apers. One other remark and we have one. It is not an original one. Others r more competent to do so have dealt dequately with the matter, but briefly is this. Every word Mr. Greville says praise of the young Queen is worth onsidering, since, as a rule, his refer-nces to royalty are the very reverse of omplimentary. We have now finished, nd return to our subject.

At two o'clock[1] on that memorable oth June, of the opening hours of hich we have already spoken, came the mous First Council. Everyone knows he picture of it. There is in it some-ning peculiarly touching—the young irl, unsupported by any single member

[1] Dean Stanley states that Her Majesty gave the our as "2 p.m." (*vide* the *Life of Dean Stanley*, ol. ii. p. 127). Mr. Greville gives 11 a.m. in vol. . p. 408 of the first series of the *Greville Papers*. he *London Gazette* is silent as to the time.

of her own sex, and surrounded by the first men of the realm, to whom she must have appeared almost a child. That she bore herself with the same dignity with which she had received Lord Conyngham and the Archbishop, we learn from Mr. Greville.[1] "Never was anything like the impression she produced," he writes. Once only was she observed to be nervous, and that was when her uncles came to kiss her hand; then, as they knelt before her, the same authority records, "swearing allegiance, and kissing her hand, I saw her blush up to her eyes, as if she felt the contrast between their civil and their natural relations."

It was on that first day of the reign that an incident occurred which, though it has often been told, and is almost outside the scope of this volume, the writer cannot help referring, since it was so characteristic of the Queen's sympathetic nature. Directing a letter of condolence to the widowed consort of William the Fourth, she was reminded

[1] *Greville Memoirs*, first series, vol. iii. p. 406.

ounded by the
to whom she
most a child
with the same
had received
he Archbishop
ville.[1] "Never
impression she
Once only was
vous, and that
me to kiss her
elt before her
ords, "swearing
er hand, I saw
s, as if she felt
ir civil and their
lay of the reig
which, thoug
and is almos
is volume, th
ng, since it wa
Queen's sympa
g a letter o
wed consort o
was reminde
s, vol. iii. p. 406.

at she should have styled her "The Queen-Dowager." To this objection he simply replied that it would be becoming in her to be the first to recall to the sorrowing lady her change of style.

The next morning came the Proclamation from the Presence Chamber at St. James' Palace, with the details of which we shall not trouble. There is, however, a point in connection with it which is of interest, showing the complete revolution which the Queen accomplished in her life. Watching the carriage procession, the Clerk of the Council tells us that it passed, not only without exciting enthusiasm, but that scarcely a hat was lifted.[1] When we recall the character of the "First Gentleman of Europe," we cannot be surprised at the indifference shown. Only a short while ago we came across, in a weekly newspaper,[2] an interesting extract from a leading article

[1] *Greville Memoirs*, first series, vol. iii. p. 409.

[2] The *Tablet*, 9th March 1901. Being away from London, the writer has been unable to search the file of the *Times* for the date.

in the *Times*, written shortly after the death of this monarch. "The truth is," the *Times* records, "and it speaks volumes about the man, that there never was an individual less regretted by his fellow-creatures than this deceased King. What eye has wept for him? What heart has heaved one throb of unmercenary sorrow? Was there at any time a gorgeous pageant on the stage more completely forgotten than he has been, even from the day on which the heralds proclaimed his successor? Has not that successor gained more upon the English tastes and prepossessions of his subjects, by the blunt and unaffected—even should it be grotesque—cordiality of his demeanour, within a few short weeks, than George the Fourth—that leviathan of the *haut ton*—ever did during the sixty-eight years of his existence? If George the Fourth ever had a friend—a devoted friend—in any rank of life, we protest that the name of him or her has not yet reached us."

Still, to us of a later generation accustomed to witness the block in

yde Park when there was the ightest chance of beholding the late overeign, this anecdote of Mr. Greville's rikes us as very curious. The change me; and came quickly too, in the ople's loyalty, and it was brought out by the personal character of the rl Queen.

The Proclamation ended, came the cond Council of the reign, and we are iven to Mr. Greville's[1] account of it, nce he was naturally present. "She esided," he writes, "with as much ease if she had been doing nothing else all r life; and though Lord Lansdowne nd my colleague had contrived between em to make some confusion with the ouncil papers, she was not put out by She looked very well, and though small in stature, and without much etension to beauty, the gracefulness her manner, and the good expression her countenance, give her, on the hole, a very agreeable appearance, and, ith her youth, inspire an excessive

[1] *Greville Memoirs*, first series, vol. iii. p. 409.

interest in all who approach her." Th... mi
Clerk ... Council then goes on to giv... d o
an instance of the young girl's dee... ted
consideration for Queen Adelaide, an... ne
concludes by adding: "In short, sh... ys o
appears to act with every sort of goo... kin
taste and good feeling, as well as goo... t wa
sense; and, as far as it has gone, nothin... g
can be more favourable than the in... iting
pression she has made, and nothing ca... th
promise better than her manner ar... me
conduct do, though it would be rash ... Melb
count too confidently upon her judgme... ueen
and discretion in more weighty matter... es."
How sound that judgment, how admi... es
able that discretion, will be seen as t... d he
tale unfolds itself. ... ve bi

Lord Melbourne, the Whig Prin... e ple
Minister, was in office at the time ... ouble
the accession, and from him the Que... uld
began to learn the art of governme... d the
From the first, he devoted himself ... ce be
her, even spending his evenings ... Let
the palace, till we find Mr. Grevill... e wor
recording of him: "I have no dou... *Grevi*
that he is passionately fond of her, ... is was

[1] *Greville Memoirs*, second series, vol. i. p. 130. ... 8.

An Appreciation

might be of his daughter, if he
d one." That this loyal devotion
ted his life, we know from the
ne authority, for long after the
s of Prime-Ministership and Cabinet-
king were over, when there were
t wanting very many steps before
great change, Charles Greville,
iting of some conversation[1] he had
th him, in which Her Majesty's
me was introduced, records that—
Melbourne never can speak of the
ueen without tears coming into his
es." To this statesman the country
es much. As has been well said,
d he been less scrupulous, he might
ve bidden the young Sovereign enjoy
e pleasures of her Court, and not
uble with business which Ministers
uld manage for her; but, instead, he
d the whole Foreign Office correspond-
ce before her for her consideration.

Let us pause for a minute to see what
e work of this one department of the

[1] *Greville Memoirs*, second series, vol. ii. p. 292. This was in August 1845. Lord Melbourne died in 1848.

State is. It formed, not many yea
ago, the subject of an attack by th
Gladstonian party on Lord Salisbury'
undertaking to combine, in his ow
person, the offices of Prime Minist
and Foreign Secretary. The writer o
this memoir remembers to have hear
the late Lord Granville on that occasio
assert, in the House of Lords, his beli
that such a combination was beyon
the powers of one man—giving, as a
instance, that when he himself firs
held the Foreign Office seals, th
annual average number of despatch
was some thirty thousand, and th
the numbers subsequently increase
during his second and third tenures
office, first to forty thousand, and final
to nearly ninety thousand documen
per year.[1] It is difficult, when co
sidering the matter, not to agree th
the Gladstonian party had good grou
for objection.

[1] These figures are given from memory, and bei
in the country while this work is being prepar
for press, the author has been unable to refresh
memory on the subject.

An Appreciation

There was, of course, no idea at first
he young girl altering the despatches
e power of doing that wisely could
come after much experience, and
hat she was as yet wanting.
he Prime Minister was not content
t the Foreign Office despatches
ne should be submitted for the
een's consideration. Every import-
document connected with the
er departments of the State was
uired to be laid before her, and
mass of memoranda made on the
ject by the Queen, Lord Clarendon [1]
rmed Mr. Greville, were all pre-
ved for future reference.
he afterwards Secretary of State
Foreign Affairs gave Mr. Greville a
st interesting picture of the diligent
nner in which these duties were
formed, and though it relates to
eriod subsequent to her marriage,
is thought best to insert it here.
larendon," [2] the Clerk of the Council

[1] *Greville Memoirs*, second series, vol. ii. p. 424.
[2] *Greville Memoirs*, third part, vol. ii. pp. 125 and

writes, "then talked of the Court, an
confirmed what I had heard befor
going into more detail. He said th
the manner in which the Queen,
her own name, but with the assistanc
of the Premier, exercised her functio
was exceedingly good, and well becam
her position, and was eminently usefu
She held each minister to the dischar
of his duty and his responsibility to he
and constantly desired to be furnishe
with accurate and detailed informatio
about all-important matters, keepin
a record of all the reports that we
made to her, and constantly recurri
to them: *e.g.* she would desire to kno
what the state of the navy was, a
what ships were in readiness for acti
service, and generally the state of eac
ordering returns to be submitted to h
from all the arsenals and dockyard
and again, weeks and months aft
wards, referring to these returns, a
desiring to have everything relating
them explained and accounted for; a
so throughout every department.
this practice, Clarendon told me

encouraged her strenuously." Mr. ...ie goes on to remark that this ...k had been quite neglected by her ...decessors, and he attributed her ...tude to the influence of that Prince, ...cerning whose marriage we shall ...sently treat.

...t is far more than half a century ...ce Lord Clarendon gave this picture. ...ring that period, till the actual ...proach of him before whom prince ... pauper alike must yield, the work ...nt on increasing. It does not need ... great powers to comprehend what ... the cause of this increase. The ... expansion of the empire, and the ...reased facilities of communication at ...e strike us.

...o those who have hitherto supposed ...t the Queen's life consisted in driving ..., occasionally holding a drawing-room ... the month of March, receiving the ...mbers of the Diplomatic Corps at a ...rly Court, or presiding at a Privy ...ncil, and signing State documents ...hout any knowledge of the contents ... the same, it may be of interest to

learn something of her habits till t
last moments of her life. Always
early riser, the Queen liked to do
much of her work out of doors as t
weather permitted. At Windsor, s
frequently drove to Frogmore, whe
she would breakfast, afterwards workin
in her tent at the vast pile of documen
which awaited her consideration. Du
ing the hours that she remained ther
grooms were kept mounted, who we
constantly passing and repassing b
tween Frogmore and the Castle, carr
ing the despatch boxes to the Priva
Secretary, who, in his own apartme
was assisting in the labour of the da
How heavy the task was we kn
from Mr. Arthur Balfour's speech
the House of Commons on the aft
noon following the Queen's dea
There would be Foreign Office despatch
which had to be considered and alter
such alterations leading to letters
Ministers, giving the reasons for
proposed changes, besides drafts re
ing to India, the Colonies, the na
and so forth, to say nothing of the t

An Appreciation

e formality of affixing her signature
prodigious number of papers. And
then the work had hardly begun.
ond the public documents had to
considered a correspondence of an
ost overwhelming nature of which
late Lady Waterford[1] gave a picture
letter dated some few years back.
side me," she writes, speaking of
journey across the Solent, made in
dience to a summons to Osborne, on
rd one of the royal yachts, "were two
rmous bags, each as big as an arm-
ir. These contained the letters to
Queen for that day!" And even
the materials for further work were
all complete. Throughout the day
e flowed in a constant, a never-
ng stream of telegrams, many of
h had to be dealt with as they
ed. Perhaps no more pathetic
ure has ever been given of the aged
ereign than that presented by Mrs.
hant,[2] in which she told a wondering

e *Two Noble Lives*, by Mr. Augustus Hare.
ueen Victoria: Personal Sketch (Cassell & Co.),

public what Her Majesty herself ha… unfolded to her,—that it was often tw… in the morning before the day's wor… was done, and she was able to lie dow… to rest! Tales are numerous of dis… tinguished persons, and it is difficult t… know what is really true, but one ca… well believe the story of her success… during the first few days of his reig… exclaiming again and again, as th… work poured in, his amazement tha… his beloved mother had even foun… time to deal with it all. What wonde… after such a life of labour, that when t… summons came, the tired eyes close… very easily, or that a short while befo… she should write to a distinguishe… Minister leaving office on account … age, "Your old Queen is weary to… and longing for her rest."[1]

But to resume. Of all the work tha… the Sovereign has to do, that in connec… tion with the Foreign Office is the mos… important. It is in relation to this depart… ment that monarchy has advantage i…

[1] We give this story from the columns of the publi… press a few days after Her Majesty's death.

An Appreciation

ty herself ha
was often tw
the day's wor
ble to lie dow
merous of dis
t is difficult t
e, but one ca
f her success
ys of his reig
again, as th
mazement tha
ad even foun
What wonde
r, that when t
ed eyes close
ort while befo
a distinguishe
on account
is weary to
t."[1]
l the work tha
that in connec
ffice is the mos
on to this depart
as advantage i

columns of the publi
ty's death.

ope over a republican form of govern-
t. Allied, as has been well said, by
rimonial ties or family connections
his or that potentate, ways of know-
e are unfolded which cannot be
n to Ministers of more democratic
stitutions. We have in a neigh-
ring country an example of this,
the till lately somewhat isolated
ition of France, whose Foreign Office
writer remembers a few years back
ring described, by one connected
h the Diplomatic service, as "the
rst informed in the world!" We
ll see, as we progress, more than one
tance of the influence of the Crown in
eign politics.

There is a point in connection with
e Queen's reign which, though it is
mewhat outside the scope of this work,
is desired to touch on, because perhaps
no other matter are so many persons
dly informed. An idea existed that
e late Sovereign was enormously rich
in reality nothing was farther from
e truth, as has been shown again and
gain by those in a position to speak

with authority. On her accession
the throne, the Queen, as all the wor
knows, made over to the country for h
own lifetime—she had no power to
more—the hereditary revenues of t
Crown. Parliament, in return, voted
income of three hundred and sixty-eig
thousand pounds, undertaking at t
same time, in the event of marriag
the provision of each one of her childre
Again and again Ministers of both partie
answering Radical objections on t
occasions of royal grants, pointed to th
agreement, and explained that to retre
from it, after for years taking the mon
from the hereditary revenues, would
an absolute breach of contract of a di
honourable nature. The sum voted ma
sound ample, but it is small when com
pared with the incomes of other Europea
potentates ; and it will perhaps be a su
prise to many to learn that out of it onl
about sixty thousand pounds reached th
Queen's privy purse! Nothing is mor
difficult than to convince persons who
without sufficient data, have formed a
opinion on any subject. This was the

An Appreciation

her accession
, as all the wor
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no power to
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return, voted
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unds reached th
Nothing is mor
ce persons who
have formed a
This was the

with the extreme Radical party till
hin the last few years.
One would have thought the idea
uld have been for ever disposed
when the then leader, for whom
y expressed so great reverence,
lared at the table of the House of
mmons that an extraordinary and
oneous opinion existed that the
vereign was possessed of great wealth.
s a matter of fact no savings exist
atever," were, we believe, Mr. Glad-
ne's exact words. Still the small but
sy band persisted. From time to
e paragraphs appeared in the press
pporting the before-mentioned idea,
the happy inspiration arose, when
e question of a further provision
the children of the Prince of
ales necessitated a select committee,
placing upon it one who could not fail
have the confidence of the Radical
rty in the shape of Mr. Labouchere.
t this committee all the pecuniary
fairs of the Queen were disclosed,
nd it is to this gentleman's credit that,
ter the conclusion of the business, he

inserted in a weekly paper a frank
manly paragraph, as honourable to l
self as it was satisfactory to others
the effect that hitherto he had b
altogether mistaken on the subject.
is not necessary after this to pursue
subject further, but it may be mentio
that an interesting paper appeared s
time ago, drawn up, we believe, by L
Playfair, in which he went very f
into the matter, and pointed out tha
the arrangements made at the time
the accession, and the increased va
of the properties then made over,
Crown had become almost practica
self-supporting.

It would be outside our sphere to d
with the gorgeous ceremonial of
Coronation. Who does not know
story: the grey abbey—the shafts
sunlight—the young girl in her swee
ing robes—the trembling voice of t
Archbishop presenting "the undoubt
Sovereign of this realm," and the gre
shout of "God save Queen Victori
which arose in answer? One could ling
over the tale in its almost fairy-li

splendour, but space and purpose do not allow. All agree that it was a never-to-be-forgotten sight, and he who was afterwards to be the Dean of that fabric, which he knew and loved so well, whose future wife[1] was to be among the closest friends of that charming central figure, has given undoubtedly the best description of the day.[2]

It seems curious to us of a later day, who grew up with the knowledge of the Queen's impartiality—whatever her private predilections may have been—towards both political parties, that in those early days she was mistrusted by the Tories, and this distrust was not decreased when, on the 7th May 1839, Lord Melbourne's ministry found themselves with a majority of only five, in a division on the Jamaica Bill, and, in consequence, resigned.[3] The Queen, on the advice of the Duke of Wellington,

[1] The late Lady Augusta Bruce, for many years lady-in-waiting to the Queen's mother, the Duchess of Kent, and afterwards in Her Majesty's own household till her marriage with Dean Stanley in 1863.

[2] *Life of Dean Stanley*, vol. i. pp. 199 and 200.

[3] *Memoirs of an Ex-Minister*, vol. i. p. 100.

sent for Sir Robert Peel, and intruste
to him the formation of a Ministry
Lord Malmesbury tells us two thing
in connection with the interview, bot
characteristic of Her Majesty, namely
that she received Peel kindly, di
not attempt to disguise her sorrow a
parting with her late Ministers, bu
showed that the good of the countr
superseded every other considerati
with her.[1] But when Sir Robert pr
posed that the Whig ladies of the Cou
should retire, and Tory ladies take thei
places, it was altogether too much
and the Queen declined. The affai
is generally spoken of as the "Bed-
chamber Question." Mr. Greville has
written of it—Lord Malmesbury has
dealt with it—the tale has been told in
every life of the Queen, and it is only
brought forward here for two reasons.
First, it shows how much more power-
ful the Crown is than some persons
suppose, and, secondly, we tell the
story because the Queen was entirely

[1] *Memoirs of an Ex-Minister*, vol. i. p. 101.

'eel, and intruste[d] g, and we do not wish it to be
n of a Ministry [sup]ed that we are representing her late
ls us two thing[s] sty as a person who could never
e interview, bot[h] into error. It would be ridiculous
Majesty, namely [t]hink that the Queen, at the early
'eel kindly, di[d] f twenty, could have been possessed
se her sorrow a[t] ll the wisdom that undoubtedly
e Ministers, bu[t] e to her in riper years, and after
l of the countr[y] h experience. From the first she
ier consideratio[n] great good sense, but on this
Sir Robert pro[p] sion she let herself be influenced
dies of the Cour[t] er feelings. She was willing to let
ladies take thei[r] men of the household go, but not
ther too much[ ] ladies; and to that she stood firm.
ied. The affair[ ] re is something, too, which is very
f as the "Bed-[C] active in the line she adopted—
Mr. Greville has [s]ething the very opposite, in her
Malmesbury has [l]alty to her friends, to the traditional
has been told in[ ]ratitude of princes—that leads us to
, and it is only[ ] her the better for the incident. It
for two reasons [w]s characteristic, too, of Her Majesty
ch more power-[f](om Mr. Bright once described as
some persons "[t]e most truthful woman he had ever
, we tell the [k]own in his life") that she should
en was entirely [i]n after years bluntly have declared
to Lord John Russell that the "Bed-
er, vol. i. p. 101. [c]hamber Question" was entirely the

result of her own "foolishness."[1] if the Crown had no power, as suppose, the matter could not ended, as it did, with a victor the Queen. The Conservative Pre departed from the palace, and Melbourne returned to power. Sir Robert Peel was again summ to the counsels of his Sovereign, had come to her that wise couns who, for two and twenty years, wa be her guide and friend, and then, she was competent to stand alone, withdrawn! In after years, glanci a list of the late Queen's ladies, it w have puzzled anyone to say whic either party of the State, Her Maj favoured. The only lady directly af ed by a ministerial change ultima was, we believe, the one who held historic office of Mistress of the Robe

It is time to refer more directly that counsellor of whom we spoke now. The marriage was the great ev of the Queen's life, and the one wh

[1] *Greville Memoirs*, third part, vol. i. p. 132.

nded most to the welfare of the nation. s the late Laureate truly said [1]—

We know him now: all narrow jealousies
Are silent; and we see him as he moved,
How modest, kindly, all-accomplish'd, wise,
With what sublime repression of himself,
And in what limits, and how tenderly;
Not swaying to this faction or to that;
Not making his high place the lawless perch
Of wing'd ambitions, nor a vantage ground
For pleasure; but thro' all this tract of years
Wearing the white flower of a blameless life,
Before a thousand peering littlenesses,
In that fierce light which beats upon a throne,
And blackens every blot."

Ambition! the world said concerning his marriage; but it was wrong, for all hat, as it so often is—above all in its udgments of those in high places. From he first hour down to that last one, when, s far as this world is concerned, it ended n the hush of a winter's night, the story of Victoria and Albert is a love story as pure and simple as that told in Mrs. Cravin's exquisite *Récit d'une Sœur*.

We shall pass by the marriage ceremonies, which took place in the Chapel

[1] *Idylls of the King*, Dedication.

Royal of St. James' Palace, but th... allo... is a letter from Lady Lyttleton[1] wh... thin... is of interest, since it shows the welco... ce ... change in the Queen's life which l... ccu... union at once produced. ...riag...

"The Queen's look and manner," s... ct, ... writes, a few days after the ceremo... en i... "were very pleasing; her eyes mu... we ... swollen with tears, but great happin... tin's ... in her countenance; and her look ... was ... confidence and comfort at the Prin... Mi... when they walked away as man an... of ... wife was very pleasing to see. ... you ... understand," she continues, "she is ... tics. ... extremely high spirits since. Such ... With ... new thing for her to dare to ... with ... unguarded in conversing with anybod... s of ... And with her frank and fearless natur... aim ... the restraints she has hitherto bee... abr... under, from one reason or anothe... eville ... with everybody must have been mo... erwhe... painful." ...er th...

It would have been but natural if He... ding ... Majesty, still in the heyday of youth... e t... and united to the husband of her choice... glan...

[1] Sir Theodore Martin's *Life of the Prince*, vol. ... p. 11, and always afterwards referred to as The *Life*. ... [1] *Grev...*

Palace, but the allowed herself, at least for a time,
Lyttleton[1] wh think only of pleasure; but with
hows the welco ce Albert at her side this was not
's life which l ccur. From the moment of his
ed. riage, the Prince had but one
and manner," s ct, and that was to assist the
er the ceremo en in her *work*. How well he did
her eyes mu we know now from Sir Theodore
great happin tin's five great volumes. At first
and her look was not admitted to the interviews
rt at the Prin Ministers, but after a time, at the
ay as man an of the latter, he was present, and
ing to see. young pair were soon deep in
nues, "she is tics.
since. Such With every magnificence around them
to dare to with every temptation to indulge in
g with anybod s of ease and pleasure—how lofty
l fearless natur aim of this royal pair! At home
hitherto bee abroad there was trouble, and Mr.
on or anothe eville[1] tells us that Her Majesty was
have been mo rwhelmed with anxiety by, amongst
o er things, an outbreak of the never-
t natural if He ding Eastern Question, which for a
yday of youth e threatened the peace between
d of her choice gland and France. But in all her

of the Prince, vol. i
rred to as The *Life*.

[1] *Greville Memoirs*, second part, vol. i. p. 312.

troubles she turned for consolation to her husband. And that he was competent to give advice on matters political we know beyond doubt. By constant study he sought to be ready at points to advise the Queen rightly as any question that might arise respect the affairs of her empire. It is small wonder, then, that Her Majesty should have told us somewhere that, with such a lofty aim as this, and looking at it in the serious way that the Prince did though a good shot and sportsman himself, he should never have been able to comprehend anyone treating shooting except as a relaxation.

It will be of interest here, the knowing how largely the Prince was responsible for the growth of her mind, to turn aside for a moment to contemplate one whom the outside world of that period judged "high self-contained, and passionless," but who in reality was the kindest and gentlest of men. Already in those early days the work was so heavy as to leave but scanty leisure for the

for consolation ment of art and music, to both
that he was cc ich the Prince was devoted, while
on matters p Majesty herself was an apt pupil
l doubt. By c e artists of the day. Indeed her
to be ready at g powers received the warm en-
Queen rightly as m of no less an authority than
ht arise respect elssohn himself. Lady Lyttleton[1]
pire. It is sm iven two pretty pictures from her
r Majesty sho of the Prince's devotion to music.
re that, with su first is dated from Windsor Castle
nd looking at ctober 1840.
t the Prince d Yesterday," she writes, "as I was
and sportsm ng comfortably after the drive, by
er have been a lelight, reading Guizot, suddenly
treating shoot e rose from the room beneath—oh!
sounds! . . . It was Prince Albert
erest here, the ear Prince Albert—playing on the
the Prince w an, and with such master skill, as
growth of H appeared to me, modulating so
or a moment medly, winding through every kind
m the outsi base and chord, till he wound up into
judged "hig most perfect cadence, and then off
assionless," b in, louder and then softer: no tune,
he kindest an I am too distant to perceive the
ready in thos ecution or small touches, so I only
as so heavy a
leisure for th

[1] The *Life*, vol. i. p. 15.

heard the harmony ; but I never listened with much more pleasure to any music. I ventured at dinner," she goes on to record, "to ask what I had heard. 'Oh, my organ—a new possession of mine. I am so fond of the organ ; it is the first of instruments—the only instrument for expressing one's feelings.' I thought," Lady Lyttleton continues, "are they not good feelings that the organ expresses !"

And ten years later we have another picture, this time dated from Osborne in the month of July.

"Last evening," she records, "such a sunset ! I was sitting gazing at it, thinking of Lady Charlotte Proby's verses, when, from an open window below this floor, began suddenly to sound the Prince's organ, expressively played by his masterly hand. Such a modulation—minor and solemn, and ever changing, and never ceasing—from a piano, like Jenny Lind's holding note, up to the fullest swell, and still the same fine vein of melancholy. And it came on so exactly as an accompaniment to

the sunset. How strange he is! He must have been playing just while the Queen was finishing her toilet, and then he went to cut jokes and eat dinner, and nobody but the organ knows what is in him, except, indeed, by the look of his eyes sometimes."

The *Early Years*[1] has a picture of the Prince in the sickroom, which seems to make a sequence to Lady Lyttleton's two letters—a picture so vivid and natural that we seem almost to see the form of the slight, handsome young man bending over the couch to whisper words of love and sympathy, or drawing the curtains of the windows to shut out the glare, and, consequently, to promote the healthy slumber which, at the periods spoken of, Her Majesty stood in need.

"During the time the Queen was laid up," Her Majesty records, when speaking of the birth of her eldest daughter, "the Prince's care and devotion were quite beyond expression. He refused to go to the play or anywhere else, generally

[1] The *Early Years*, p. 365.

dining alone with the Duchess of K
till the Queen was able to join the
and was always at hand to do anythi
in his power for her comfort. He v
content to sit by her in a darken
room, to read to her, or write for h
None but himself ever lifted her fro
her bed to her sofa, and he always helpe
to wheel her into the next room. Fo
this purpose he would come instantly
from any part of the house. As years
went on, and he became overwhelmed
with work," the Queen continues, speak-
ing of her other confinements, "this was
often done at much inconvenience t
himself; but he ever came with a sweet
smile on his face. In short," she added,
"his care of her was like that of a
mother; nor could there be a kinder,
wiser, or more judicious nurse."

We have wandered somewhat from
the political duties of the reign in giving
these domestic pictures of the Queen's
early married life. They seemed, how-
ever, to fall in with the remarks made
that when Lord Melbourne's Ministry
was defeated for a second time, he

o was to influence in so judicious a nner the life of the Sovereign was hand to bring home to her the true sition of a monarch in a constitu- nal State, which doctrine had already en preached to her by the King of e Belgians, when the "Bedchamber uestion" had first arisen, but on that casion, it must be admitted, without fect.[1]

We have seen the self-possession of er Majesty when presiding at her first nd second Councils. The one con- ened for the transfer of the seals from he friends who had been with her since er accession called for an immense effort n the part of the Queen; and that she ose to the occasion may be seen in the ivid account Mr. Greville gives of this istoric scene.[2] "Her heart," he writes, was evidently brimful, but she was omposed throughout the whole of the roceedings; when her emotion might very well have overpowered her, she

[1] *Vide* the *Life*, vol. i. p. 7.

[2] *Greville Memoirs*, vol. ii. pp. 37 and 38 (second eries).

preserved complete self-possession and dignity." The Clerk of the Council, whose journals, up to the time of Her Majesty's accession, contain really insulting remarks respecting his previous royal masters, finishes the account by describing the conduct of the Queen as a remarkable exhibition of self-control in such a young woman, and stating that her firmness "excited his admiration."

There had been more than a foreshadowing of these great qualities of dignity and self-possession, so necessary in a sovereign, in the interview with Lord Conyngham and the Archbishop in the sun-lit room in old Kensington on the day of the Queen's accession. They had been displayed, as we have just mentioned, on other occasions; but at those times there was nothing to try her as when parting with old friends, and about to enter into close relationship with Ministers of a party she cared little about. It is impossible to doubt who it was had helped thus to develop these qualities to so high a pitch, so that the Sovereign was able to meet

this trying emergency in a worthy spirit. The explanation comes in the touching letter of Lord Melbourne, which the Queen copied with her own hand for King Leopold, in which he spoke of the lofty opinion he had formed of Prince Albert—of his judgment, of his temper, of his discretion, and the sense of security he felt in leaving the Queen in his care.[1]

One other point we should like to mention. It is dealt with on the same page of Sir Theodore Martin's great work as the letter just cited. It relates to Sir Robert Peel's admiration for the Prince's conduct towards himself. The new Prime Minister, from the highest motives, had opposed the original grant suggested for the Queen's husband, and he expected to be coldly met in consequence; but such was far from being the case. It was the Prince who tried to put him at his ease—the Prince who at once began to treat him as a friend. Sir Robert, however, seems to have been some little time in getting quite at home

[1] The *Life*, vol. i. p. 20.

at Court, if we may judge from M
Greville's amusing, but rather ill-natured
account of a dinner-party at Windsor
Castle in the September following the
accession of the Tory party to power.
It is not every man who, having lost
some twenty thousand a year by the
action of another, yet attributes it, as
the Prince Consort did, only to a high
sense of duty. When we reflect upon
this, we cannot wonder that the late
Laureate should write that, to himself,
the Prince seemed—

"Scarce other than my king's ideal knight."[2]

The administration of Sir Robert Peel
was, as all the world knows, famous for
the repeal of the Corn Laws. It came
to an end in 1846, and long before
that date all prejudice had vanished on
the part of Her Majesty. Indeed the
Premier had not been in office two
years when the Queen paid him a
high tribute, speaking of him as "un-
doubtedly a great statesman, a man

[1] *Greville Memoirs*, vol. ii. p. 44 (second series).
[2] *Idylls of the King* Dedication.

who thinks but little of party, and never of himself."[1] Higher praise from his Sovereign surely no man could desire. The close of the administration was a time of sorrow for her Majesty.

"Yesterday," is the record of the Queen[2] in a letter to the King of the Belgians, "was a very hard day. I had to part with Sir Robert Peel and Lord Aberdeen, who are irreparable losses to us and to the country. They were both so much overcome that it quite upset me. We have in them two devoted friends. We felt so safe with them"; and going on to say how, during all the five years of office, they had never acted without regard to party, setting before themselves but one object to be attained, namely, what was best for the Queen and for the country.

Peel was succeeded in office by Lord John Russell, with Sir Charles Wood at the Exchequer, and Lord Palmerston at the Foreign Office. Mr. Sidney

[1] The *Life*, vol. i. p. 28. [2] Vol. i. p. 56.

Herbert, the afterwards distinguished Secretary for War, was invited to join the Government, but declined. The seals were handed over on the 6th July 1846, and the Ministry remained in power through a period of distress and revolution. Millions were voted by the Imperial Parliament for the starving Irish in 1847, who showed their gratitude by attempted rebellion; while the following year, with blood flowing in the streets of Berlin, and the Orleans family in full flight from France, the Chartists attempted a demonstration in London; but the Throne was in a very different position to that which it had occupied before the Queen's accession. Indeed it was not many years prior to the last-named event that Mr. Greville had expressed regret in his diary that the office of king had not been got rid of altogether! Now, however, at the period of which we are writing, Her Majesty was able to inform the King of the Belgians that the newspaper reports of riots meant nothing at all,

and that the hearts of the English people were in reality loyal enough. The quiet work, and the devotion to duty of the royal pair, together with the lofty aims of the Prince, were already bearing rich fruit. That the clear intellect of the latter had fully grasped what the true position of the Sovereign should be, we know from Mr. Greville, who, if he was at times wrong in his judgments, certainly understood the British constitution thoroughly. All the Prince's views, he declares, were in perfect accord with what the constitutional position of the Monarch in this country should be.[1] To him was due, he states, the fact that the Crown began to discharge properly the functions which belonged to it. Prince Albert, in a memorandum, dealt with in Sir Theodore Martin's great work, has shown what these duties are.[2] A passive indifference to politics, he declares, on the part of the Crown is a gross misconception.

[1] *Greville Memoirs*, third series, vol. ii. p. 126.

[2] The *Life*, vol. ii. p. 27.

That a royal person should be denied the credit of having political opinions, based upon anxiety for the national interests, appeared to him monstrous. The Sovereign, he lays down, is the natural guardian of the honour of the country. Ministers out of office lose access to information, the monarch remains, and to him it is ever open. No party considerations warp the judgment of the latter. As the *permanent* head of the nation he has only to consider what is best for its welfare, and his accumulated knowledge and experience are available in Council to the Ministry of the time, without distinction of party. How valuable the last is may be seen from an observation once made, we believe, by the great Lord Derby. "People speak," he said, "of Ministers guiding the Queen. Who among us has the experience of Her Majesty? It is as often the Queen who guides her Ministers as Ministers guide the Queen."

It is small matter for surprise, after considering the memorandum just

spoken of, to find Lord Clarendon[1] telling Mr. Greville that Prince Albert had rendered most important services to the Government, or to find him declaring that His Royal Highness had written some of the most able papers he had ever read.

To occupy, then, the correct position which the Crown should fill in this country requires no slight labour. A Minister has to be conversant chiefly with his own department; not so the Monarch, who must be ready at a moment's notice to turn from a Foreign Office despatch to one relating to India or the Colonies, with an equal knowledge of either. To discharge the duties of her high office, and to assist her "whose other self he was,"[2] being the aim, we can understand, when Sir Theodore Martin, writing of 1849,[3] tells us that "Already the days were beginning to be too short for the vast amount of work" to be got through. Leisure there was hardly any, except such as health or

[1] *Greville Memoirs*, third series, vol. ii. p. 126.
[2] The *Life*, vol. ii. p. 27. [3] Vol. ii. p. 27.

social duties absolutely compelled. "The mere reading of the English, French, and German papers," the Prince writes to his stepmother, "absorbs nearly all the spare hours of the day, and yet one can let nothing pass without losing the connection, and coming, in consequence, to wrong conclusions."[1] Seven o'clock, even in winter time, saw him at his writing-table; and before Her Majesty joined him, which she did at an early hour, he had done much to lighten her task. Their writing tables—even as, alas! their tombs are now—were side by side, and for hours the pair would be immersed in business.

It was not alone foreign politics that engrossed attention, but all that tended to the welfare and prosperity of the people. The Exhibition of 1851 was the Prince's own idea. How he toiled for its success, in the face of coldness and opposition, we know from a letter of his to the Dowager-Duchess of Coburg, in which he describes himself as "more dead than alive from overwork."[2] It

[1] The *Life*, vol. ii. p. 13. [2] Vol. ii. p. 60.

must have been a consolation to the Queen to see, from a letter of Lord John Russell's,[1] that those best able to judge knew the real truth. "The grandeur of the conception," he wrote at the close of the enterprise, "the zeal, invention, and talent displayed in the execution, and the perfect order maintained, from the first day to the last, have contributed together to give imperishable fame to Prince Albert. If to others much praise is due for their several parts in this work, it is to his energy and judgment that the world owes both the original design and the harmonious and rapid execution. Whatever may be done hereafter, no one can deprive the Prince of the glory of being the first to conceive and to carry into effect this beneficent design. Nor will the monarchy fail to participate in the advantage to be derived from this undertaking. No republic of the Old or New World has done anything so splendid or so useful."

The ceremony of opening the Ex-

[1] The *Life*, vol. ii. p. 68.

hibition lies beyond these pages, but we cannot forbear one glance at it, because of the religious note, characteristic of the Queen in great moments, that appears in her journal of that day. She declares that it was more impressive even than the stately event of her Coronation. And that this was not an exaggeration may be seen from the fact that the Home Secretary (Sir George Grey) altogether broke down during the scene. "One felt," she writes, "so thankful to the Great God who seemed to pervade all, and bless all."[1]

The letter just quoted from Lord John Russell to the Queen is dated the 17th October 1851, and two months later occurred what is generally known as the "Palmerston episode." We give, as shortly as we can, the whole history of the affair, and if we deal with it at some little length, and in a manner some may consider out of proportion to the size of this volume, it is because no more striking instance can be given of the

[1] The *Life*, vol. ii. p. 61.

care with which Her Majesty devoted herself to her political duties; nor can, we think, be found a better example of the power of the Crown, when we recall the fact that the then Foreign Secretary was one of the most powerful Ministers this country ever had.

As far back as 1849 the Prince Consort had drawn the attention of Lord Palmerston to the fact that the Foreign Office despatches had all to come before the Queen.[1] It was a neglect of this duty which brought about the incident. Not for a moment is it hinted that there was any intentional disrespect to the Queen on the part of Lord Palmerston, but simply that his nature was impulsive and impatient of control—in a word, he liked to do everything off his own bat. That this is not beyond the truth may be seen from what the Duke of Wellington relates of his line of action in 1834, when the conqueror of Waterloo succeeded him in office. Before his retirement Lord Palmerston, Sir Theodore Martin tells us,[2] had

[1] The *Life*, vol. ii. p. 11. [2] Vol. ii. p. 72.

made an offer of the mediation of England between France and the United States, which the latter Power had accepted. When, however, this came to the knowledge of the Duke, and he desired to see the exact terms of the proposal, no papers relating to it could be found at the Foreign Office, the fact being that Lord Palmerston had arranged the whole matter by private correspondence. After such an experience, it is no wonder that the Duke should declare that this distinguished man "could at no time be trusted, as he was always anxious to do things by himself,"[1] or that Sir Theodore Martin should describe him as not trying to keep in touch with his fellow Ministers,[2] and only making things known to them when "some serious embarrassment resulting from them could no longer be concealed."[3] It was the impulsive

[1] The *Life*, vol. ii. p. 72.

[2] Mr. Greville speaks, too, of Lord Palmerston's audacity, and the endurance of his brother Ministers, and gives a striking instance in the *Memoirs*, second series, vol. iii. p. 62.

[3] The *Life*, vol. ii. p. 51.

nature of Lord Palmerston which led to the episode. Constitutionally the King can do no wrong. When a draft despatch has been submitted by a Minister for consideration, the Crown amends or alters, if possessed of information beyond what the Minister of the department appears to have. But, as writers on the constitution have pointed out, the duty of the Sovereign is finished if the Minister finally objects to the suggestions made by the Monarch. He, and not the occupant of the throne, is responsible, and the Crown acts under the advice tendered. It is not difficult to realise how often sources of information must be open to a European Monarch which cannot be open to a Minister. The Sovereign, too, is advantageously placed, as we have before seen when quoting the words of the Prince Consort, to the effect that regal office is never quitted, and access to the best information thereby lost, as in the case of party politicians. Nothing more admirable can be conceived than the check this function of the Crown affords to any-

thing like a hasty decision, whereby the country may be committed to a course of action for which it is not in reality prepared. But to one of the character of Lord Palmerston this control must often be irksome. No doubt, had the question been submitted to him, as to the advisability of getting rid of this check, he would have been among the first to object, but a rule admirable as of general application probably assumed a wholly different aspect when the seals of the Foreign Office were in his own hands.

"The Queen," wrote an extreme Radical some few years ago, "is a most acute foreign politician"; and that this was no exaggeration anyone who knows anything on the subject will at once allow. It is indeed impossible to read the five volumes of Sir Theodore Martin, crammed as they are with State papers, and not to realise this; added to which one cannot fail to be struck with the number of times the Queen's view of a question turned out to be a wiser one than that of her Ministers, who, how-

ever superior they might be in some respects, lacked her extraordinary store of information, her quick intuition and well-balanced judgment, especially in all questions of foreign policy.

Such being the case, it was not unnatural there should come a falling out between herself and this impulsive statesman. It was, as others have shown before, by no means the result of a moment's anger. The character of the Queen was not such as to be betrayed into a hasty act, particularly in so grave a matter as the dismissal of a popular Minister from his post, and that in relation to a part of her duties least known to the general public. Indeed, it was not till the explanations made in the House of Commons, on the enforced retirement of Lord Palmerston, that the ordinary world appears to have understood at all the position of the Sovereign in relation to Foreign Office despatches.

The actual breach occurred in 1852, but as far back as 1848 the Queen had been dissatisfied with Lord Palmerston's

impulsive ways, when he sent off a hasty despatch to the British Ambassador at Madrid, for communication to the Spanish Prime Minister, the Duke de Sotomayor, advising that Queen Isabella would do well to "strengthen her executive government,"[1] by "calling to her councils some of the men in whom the Liberal party reposed confidence." With the question of Spanish reforms we have nothing to do. The result was exactly the same as if the Russian Ambassador in London arrived at the Foreign Office with a despatch from the Government of the Czar, suggesting that England should grant Home Rule to Ireland. The result may be guessed. Spain rejected the advice "as offensive to the dignity of a free and independent nation."[1] The English note was returned, and Sir Henry Bulwer received his passports! The Queen was naturally indignant at the position in which this country was placed, while Lord Aberdeen declared in the House of Lords that the return of a British despatch by

[1] The *Life*, vol. ii. p. 12.

a foreign Government as "unfit to be retained was unexampled."[1] But Lord Palmerston's was not a nature to be easily controlled, and in 1850 there had been so many misunderstandings between the Court and the Foreign Secretary that a memorandum was drawn up for his future guidance. It was not issued till it had become unavoidable. In it the Queen laid down the principle that, "having once given her sanction to a measure, it be not arbitrarily altered or amended by the Minister,"[2] and stating that if this were again done, she would exercise her constitutional right of dismissal. Lord Palmerston was greatly concerned at the idea that he had been thought wanting in respect to the Queen, and in an audience on the subject the Prince Consort writes of him that he was "much agitated, shook, and had tears in his eyes, so as to quite move me,"[2] who had never seen him "save with a bland smile."

All was supposed to have ended well

[1] The *Life*, vol. ii. p. 12. [2] Vol. ii. pp. 51 and 52.

when, not long afterwards, Lord Palmerston again committed an act of extraordinary indiscretion. It is not necessary to go at length into the question of General Haynau : sufficient to say that the conduct of the mob in London led to the necessity for an apology being made to the Austrian Government. A draft note was submitted to the Queen, containing a paragraph which the Court and Lord John Russell considered derogatory to the honour of this country. When this was pointed out to Lord Palmerston, he had to confess that he had taken it for granted Her Majesty would approve the despatch, and had sent off a duplicate to the Austrian Ambassador! That despatch had to be recalled! The Queen insisted, and though the Foreign Secretary at first resisted, in the end he was compelled to give way, and another note was substituted. The Kossuth incident followed, Lord Palmerston's indiscretion placing the Queen, as Sir Theodore Martin writes, " in a most painful position towards her allies, who would find it

difficult to understand that her Minister had acted without her knowledge, and contrary to her wish."[1]

It will be obvious to the reader, if he reflects for a moment, that it would be extremely difficult for foreign sovereigns, possessing almost despotic powers themselves, and unlearned in the British constitution, and consequently in a knowledge of the checks imposed by it on the Crown, to comprehend how really without power Her Majesty was in the matter. That affair came to an end. Lord John Russell, writing to the Queen, hoped that what had happened would have a good effect upon Lord Palmerston, to whom, he went on to say, he had written, "urging the necessity of a guarded conduct in the present very critical condition in Europe."[1] How little that hope was justified may be seen from what followed. On this very day the news of Napoleon's *coup d'état* on the 2nd December reached the Queen at Osborne, who at once wrote to Lord John, urging that our

[1] The *Life*, vol. ii. p. 69.

Ambassador "should take no part whatever in what was passing. Any word from him might be misconstrued at such a moment"[1] was the wise warning. To this the Prime Minister replied, "Your Majesty's directions respecting the state of affairs in Paris shall be followed."[1] The Cabinet came to the conclusion that we should make no change in our relations with the French Government in consequence of what had taken place, and Lord Normanby was instructed to that effect. "Here, so far as Her Majesty was concerned," writes Sir Theodore,[1] "the matter rested" till she received a copy of a despatch from Lord Normanby, in which he gave an account of his interview with M. Turgot, when he had expressed regret at the delay in making the communication, but was informed it was of no moment, since, some days before, Lord Palmerston had expressed to the French Ambassador in London entire approval of what had taken place! "Startled," continues the biographer of

[1] The *Life*, vol. ii. p. 69.

the Prince, "by a statement so inconsistent with the resolution of the Cabinet,"[1] Her Majesty wrote to Lord John Russell "enclosing the despatch from Lord Normanby"[1] in which the "French Government pretend to have received the entire approval" of "the British Government, as conveyed by Lord Palmerston to Count Waleswki. The Queen cannot believe in the truth of the assertion, as such an approval given by Lord Palmerston would have been *in complete contradiction* to the line of strict neutrality and passiveness which the Queen had expressed her desire to see followed."[1] To this letter Lord John replied that the instructions to Lord Normanby had been in exact conformity with Her Majesty's desires, and that he had "written to Lord Palmerston saying 'that he presumed there was no truth in the report of Count Walewski.'"[1]

It is not necessary to pursue the matter. Enough for the purpose of this work has been said, and it is suffi-

[1] The *Life*, vol. ii. p. 69.

cient to mention that the explanation of this splendid but impulsive statesman, when at last it did come, was quite inadequate. The Queen exercised her constitutional right, and dismissed the Minister, and a few days later the Cabinet met and condemned Lord Palmerston's conduct "without a dissentient voice."[1] It is pleasant to reflect, in closing this matter, that the quarrel left no permanent bitterness. At an early date Lord Palmerston, at the Queen's express wish, again took office, and finally became one of her most distinguished Prime Ministers.

There is a point which, if this were intended for a large work, it would be interesting to deal with at some length, namely, the subject of national defences, and the great debt which the country owes to the late Queen for the endeavours which she made to rouse her Ministers on this subject. It is the fashion to speak as if one of the political parties were more to blame in the matter

[1] The *Life*, vol. ii. p. 71.

than the other, but in reality such is not the case, and, however energetic an Opposition may appear to be, once the floor of the House of Commons is crossed, a curious blight seems to fall on Ministers. Whether, as has been contended, national defence is sacrificed to the desire of cheap and popular budgets, whether the fear of political opponents, and the party uses to which expenditure in the matter might be turned at the next general election, are the causes, it is not needful to consider here; but none who really go into the question can doubt that we are living in a fool's paradise. As far back as 1852 the state of European politics led to one of those periodical panics which such neglect must, from time to time, naturally give rise to, and the late Prince Consort took the matter up, and spoke the royal mind clearly to Lord John Russell. In 1857 also Her Majesty visited Cherbourg, and noted that the French defences were "treble" our own; while Prince Albert wrote that what we ourselves had attempted by way of

return were simply "childish;"[1] and energetic warnings from the Court were once more addressed to Ministers. Such a line of conduct was an additional proof, if any were needed, of the truth of the Prince's contention, in his admirable note on the constitutional position of the Sovereign, that the opinions of the latter must naturally be based upon anxiety for the national interests, and that, unlike a Minister, the Crown cannot be swayed by party proclivities, or liability to its judgment being "insensibly warped"[2] by like considerations. A similar clearness of view was taken by the Court in 1857, when the lethargic attitude of the Government was a cause of consternation to the former. The royal diary at that period is filled with allusions to endeavours made to induce the Cabinet to send out reinforcements to India before it was too late. In 1860 came another panic! Lord Palmerston was in office at the time, and, fortunately, took the same view as the Court. Nine millions were

[1] The *Life*, vol. iv. p. 21. [2] Vol. ii. p. 27.

to be expended on national defence, this sum to be raised by loan. The late Mr. Gladstone, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, objected, and threatened resignation. Lord Palmerston — perhaps no great admirer of his colleague! —seized the opportunity to write an amusing letter to the Queen, in which he said that he hoped to be able to overcome the scruples of the then holder of the Nation's purse-strings, but that in the event of his not doing so, it would be better to lose Mr. Gladstone than for Her Majesty "to run the risk of losing Portsmouth or Plymouth"![1] The susceptible conscience of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was, however, in the end quieted, when it was decided "to raise the necessary funds as they should from time to time be required for the works by means of annuities, terminable in thirty years."[1] We have said that the Court in 1857 took a clearer view than Ministers of the state of India, and we shall refer to it again when speaking further of the Mutiny. We shall also have

[1] The *Life*, vol. v. p. 17.

occasion to remark later, how, when the Queen stood alone, and the assistance of the Prince's ripe judgment had long been withdrawn, her view of a military matter, had it prevailed, would have saved this country from a dire calamity, just as her caution, as we shall presently see, five years after being left a widow, saved us from an immense national disaster.

It is no secret that down to the last hours of her life the Queen regarded with consternation our lack of preparation in the matter of defence. With her proudly patriotic spirit and cautious nature, this extraordinary folly must have been a source of almost hourly irritation; and it will be a matter of the deepest interest to read, when the time comes for their publication, the memoranda which for many years past she must have addressed to Ministers on this momentous subject. Before we close this short sketch we shall have to refer to this on more than one occasion; meanwhile we will resume the narrative of some of the royal work.

In 1854 came the Crimean War. With regard to the negotiations prior to the actual declaration, the writer recalls hearing it said, by the late Lord Granville, that it was during that period that the phrase, so often heard since—"drifting into war"—was used for the first time. Certainly no more accurate description of the then course of events could be given. As to the cause of the war, it may be briefly said that Russia desired Constantinople, though the actual cause of quarrel arose, more or less, over a dispute connected with the Holy places. As a distinguished writer has truly said, a better site might have been discovered over which to war than the sepulchre of Him who has been styled the "Prince of Peace."

Till the matter had gone beyond all stay, none was so anxious as the Queen to avoid war; but when once the declaration was made, the success of her beloved troops, as she was wont to style them, became everything to her. She herself was, as she often proudly remarked, "a soldier's daughter." She

gave a pathetic and striking proof of her devotion to the army, of which for sixty-three years she was the head, when she commanded for herself a military funeral. From the outbreak of the Crimean War till its close, the Queen's heart was with her troops. Perhaps in history there is no more stirring picture than the departure of the Guards from London. In the grey light of a February morn the Scots Fusiliers drew up in line in front of Buckingham Palace; the band thundered "God Save the Queen," and Her Majesty stepped forth amid a scene of never-to-be-forgotten enthusiasm, in which the men pressed forward, waving their bearskins on their bayonets. "My best wishes and prayers will be with them all,"[1] she wrote to King Leopold. That she believed fully in the justice of our cause may be seen in her letters to Lord Aberdeen respecting the proposed Day of Humiliation, in the first of which there is a sentence so characteristic of her love of truth that the writer

[1] The *Life*, vol. iii. p. 6.

cannot forbear quoting it, where she urges[1] that there should be no prayer saying it was the sinfulness of this nation which had brought the war, when in reality it was "the selfishness and ambition and want of honesty of one man. It would be," she went on to say, "a mere bit of hypocrisy to say otherwise." The second letter too was peculiarly worthy of a Christian sovereign. "Inculcate on the mind of the Archbishop," she wrote, "that there be no Jewish imprecations against our enemies, but an earnest expression of thankfulness to the Almighty for the immense blessings we have enjoyed, as well as of entreaty for protection of our forces by land and sea, and to ourselves in the coming struggle."[1]

On the horrors of the Crimean War we need not dwell. The heroism which displayed itself when the heights of Alma were stormed, and dying voices proudly asked, "What will they say at home?" culminated when, around the stone walls of Sebastopol, men, gaunt

[1] The *Life*, vol. iii. p. 11.

with watchings, still stood to their posts, even when perishing from hunger and cold. How it was with the Queen we know from Sir Theodore Martin's testimony. Her letters to Lord Raglan, the Commander-in-Chief of our forces in the Crimea, reveal how all that concerned the army concerned herself closely. There is much pathos in the remark of the royal children to a distinguished soldier, when, on a brief visit to England, he was bidden by them to hasten back and take Sebastopol, or else it would kill their mother! Her Majesty spoke her mind fully at the negligence displayed in the commissariat department, and her strictures did much to improve matters; while her letter to Lord Panmure,[1] the Secretary for War, written after her visit to the wounded at Brompton and Fort Pitt, exhibited the most intimate knowledge of hospital hygiene. Her ideas were not allowed to drop, and the military hospital at Netley was the result of her proposals. The chapters in Sir Theodore's great work

[1] The *Life*, vol. iii. p. 39.

are filled with interesting allusions to her line of action during the war, which only came to an end in 1856, when, in the month of March, the Peace of Paris was signed.

It was during the trying period of the struggle, when there were not wanting whispers that the country of our gallant allies would have been glad to retire from the war, that the Queen made one of her tactful moves, and visited the Emperor of the French in his capital. Nothing could have pleased the last named better. His beautiful consort had not been born in the regal purple, and he was consequently sensitive as to her position. That the mighty Sovereign of Great Britain, whose own ancestors dated back to the dark ages, should hold out the hand of friendship, and treat the illustrious lady as an equal, was a source of gratification to him. It placed the Empress at once in the position of a recognised royalty of Europe. Mr. Greville is kind enough to speak of the Queen playing her part with "propriety and

success";[1] but the visit lies outside our sphere. There is, however, one picture from Her Majesty's diary of such interest that one cannot but quote it here. It relates to the visit to the tomb of our ancient enemy, Napoleon the Great.

"We drove,"[2] the Queen writes, "straight to the Hôtel des Invalides, under the dome of which Napoleon lies, late as it was, because we were most anxious not to miss this, perhaps the most important act of all in this very interesting and eventful time. It was nearly seven when we arrived. All the *invalides*, chiefly of the former, but some of the present, war, were drawn up on either side of the court into which we drove. . . . There were four torches which lit us along and added to the solemnity of the scene, which was striking in every way. The church is fine and lofty. . . . The coffin is not yet there, but in a small side chapel *de St. Jerome.* Into this the Emperor led me, and there I stood, at the arm

[1] *Greville Memoirs*, third series, vol. i. p. 284.
[2] The *Life*, vol. iii. p. 57.

of Napoleon the Third, his nephew, before the coffin of England's bitterest foe; I, the granddaughter of that King who hated him most, and who most vigorously opposed him, and this very nephew, who bears his name, being my nearest and dearest ally! The organ of the church was playing 'God Save the Queen' at the time, and this solemn scene took place by torchlight, and during a thunderstorm. Strange and wonderful indeed! It seems as if in this tribute of respect to a departed foe old enmities and rivalries were wiped out, and the seal of heaven placed upon that bond of unity which is now happily established between two great and powerful nations. May heaven bless and prosper it," are Her Majesty's concluding words in the description of this fine scene.

The close of the Crimean War did not, as might have been supposed, usher in an era of peace. As far back as 1844 whispers of dissatisfaction had been heard from those far-off shores of our Indian Empire. In May 1857

the storm broke. Many can recollect the horror of those hours. Her Majesty's agony of mind was great. "India,"[1] she wrote to the King of the Belgians, "engrosses all our attention. Troops cannot be raised largely or fast enough; and the horrors committed on the poor ladies, women, and children are unknown in these ages, and makes one's blood run cold." When we recall the massacres, we feel the truth of these last words. But out of evil came good. In that dark hour of England's need her sons came forth and took their places silently to defend the brightest jewel in the crown of Britain. For all time the names of Lawrence, Havelock, and many others associated with that great struggle will be remembered by their fellow-countrymen. As in the present weary conflict on the African veldt, all ranks had their representatives among those who fought for England's cause. But the glory of the deed was purchased at a price of blood and treasure. At

[1] The *Life*, vol. iv. p. 22.

Court the anxiety was terrible. The lethargic complaint, which seems to be the curse of every English Ministry in the opening weeks of a campaign, had attacked the then Government with its customary virulence. Again and again Her Majesty and her husband sought to rouse Ministers to the critical condition of affairs.

"We are expending all the resources which are within our command,"[1] the Prince wrote at this period; and again, a few days later, "We are tortured by the events in India, which are truly frightful."[1] Reinforcements were sent, needless to say, but by driblets. In June of that year, the Queen, in writing to Lord Panmure, pointed out a truth which has not even yet been properly realised. "The empire," she wrote, "has nearly doubled itself in the last twenty years, and the Queen's troops have been kept at the same establishment."[2] When we reflect upon the vast expansion which has taken place since this letter was written by her

[1] The *Life*, vol. iv. pp. 23 and 24. [2] Vol. iv. p. 13.

late Majesty, we cannot but be surprised at the suicidal policy which has almost uniformally been pursued by successive Governments in relation to our wretchedly small forces. That the Queen's words of warning were felt to be weighty may be seen from a letter of Lord Palmerston's, dated the 18th July 1857, and which was drawn forth by a further serious expression of concern on the part of the Sovereign at our neglect. In it he congratulated himself that the Queen was not a member of the House of Commons, since, to use his own words, "Those from whose opinions your Majesty differs would have had to encounter a formidable antagonist in argument; although, on the other hand, those whose opinions your Majesty approves would have had the support of a powerful ally in the debate."[1]

The result of the struggle in India is well known. The East India Company was abolished, and the Crown assumed the direct government. In the negotiations in relation to the Proclamation

[1] The *Life*, vol. iv. p. 14.

which was to be addressed to the people of India, we have one of the most striking pieces of Her Majesty's good taste and political sagacity. "The Queen," said Lord Salisbury, in the never-to-be-forgotten debate on the afternoon which followed her death, "had a most extraordinary knowledge of what her people would think." As far back as 1858, she seems to have known exactly what her Indian subjects would feel. The Queen was in Germany, near Potsdam, when the draft of the proposed Proclamation reached her. When we think of the strong feelings on caste and religion which surround Eastern people, we cannot but give a start of surprise at the tone of the despatch laid before her by Lord Malmesbury, the Minister in attendance, the Conservative party being then in office. It dealt with the power of England to "undermine native religions and customs."[1] Small wonder, indeed, that the Prince Consort, who, as we have seen, made a deep study of all that related to the affairs con-

[1] The *Life*, vol. iv. p. 49.

nected with the empire, wrote in his diary: "It cannot possibly remain in its present shape."[1] Curiously enough, sagacious statesman as he was, the then Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs hardly seems to have realised the importance of the matter, if we may judge from an entry in his journal at this time.[2] He transmitted the royal objections to Lord Derby, together with a letter from the Queen, who urged the Prime Minister to write it himself in his "excellent language"[3]—a sentence which recalls to us "the pure Saxon of that silver style."

"Her Majesty," Lord Malmesbury wrote[3] in his communication to the Government at home, "disapproves of the expression which declares that she has the power of undermining the Indian religions. Her Majesty would prefer that the subject should be introduced by a declaration in the sense that the deep attachment which Her Majesty feels to

[1] The *Life*, vol. iv. p. 49.
[2] *Memoirs of an Ex-Minister*, vol. ii. p. 132.
[3] The *Life*, vol. iv. p. 49.

her own religion, and the comfort and happiness which she derives from its consolations, will preclude her from any attempt to interfere with the native religions, and that her servants will be directed to act scrupulously in accordance with her directions." And in her own letter to Lord Derby,[1] the Queen begs that he will bear "in mind that it is a female Sovereign who speaks to more than a hundred millions of Eastern people on assuming the direct Government over them, and, after a bloody civil war, giving them pledges which her future reign is to redeem, and explaining the principles of her Government." The Proclamation was in the end drawn up exactly as the Queen had wished, and when it was again submitted for her consideration, the only alteration she made was to add those two last lines, which, as has been well said, were worthy of a Christian Sovereign: "May the God of all power grant to us," she wrote, "and those in authority under us, strength to carry

[1] The *Life*, vol. iv. p. 49.

out these our wishes for the good of our people."[1]

In the opening pages of this work we stated the intention of leaving on one side the ceremonies of the reign, and dealing only with matters which related to the Queen's work, together with occasional glances at the private life. We turn here for a moment to the latter. Hitherto we have seen the assistance rendered to Her Majesty by that wise counsellor to whom this country owes a debt of gratitude it can never repay. The time has now come in which to refer to the period from which the Queen had to stand alone.

Sorrows rarely come singly — so rarely that one cannot but often feel there is a special dispensation of Providence in the matter. "The one blow softened the other," is a phrase so common that it has become almost a proverb. But in 1861 it was not thus with the beloved Queen; nothing could soften the second blow with her. In

[1] The *Life*, vol. iv. p. 49.

the month of March, the Duchess of Kent expired somewhat suddenly at Frogmore. "The way seemed so long,"[1] is the entry in Her Majesty's journal, speaking of the journey from London to Windsor, made in answer to a hasty summons from Sir James Clarke. Anyone who has read the sorrowful account in the diary of that night-watch beside a dying mother—"the heavy breathing—clocks striking—dogs barking at a distance,—each sound seeming to strike the inmost soul,"[1]—cannot fail to agree that the Queen possessed very graphic powers of description. The closing scenes are so pathetically given that the writer cannot forbear a few brief extracts.

"At four o'clock,"[1] Her Majesty records, after lying sleepless on her sofa till that hour, "I went down again. All still—nothing to be heard but the old repeater, a large watch in a tortoise-shell case, which had belonged to my father, the sound of which brought back all the recollections of my childhood, for

[1] The *Life*, vol. v. p. 54.

I always used to hear it at night, but had not heard it for now three and twenty years. I remained kneeling and standing by that beloved mother, whom it seemed too awful to see hopelessly leaving me, till half-past four, when, feeling faint and exhausted, I went upstairs again, and lay down in silent misery, during which I went through in thought past times and the fearful coming ones, with the awful blank which would make such an inroad into our happy family life." Five hours later, and the end came. "Meantime the dear face grew paler," the diary records, "the features longer, sharper —the breathing easier. I fell on my knees, holding the beloved hand, which was still warm and soft, though heavier, in both of mine. I felt the end fast approaching. . . . I only kept gazing on that beloved face, and feeling as if my heart would break."

The Queen's sorrow was terrible. "On this the most dreadful day of all my life,"[1] were the words she used in

[1] The *Life*, vol. v. p. 55.

a letter to the King of the Belgians, dated from Frogmore, the night of the mournful event, and written prior to the departure of the Court for Windsor Castle. In the dark hours which followed, the Prince Consort was the Queen's sole earthly support. "The children," he wrote to the trusted and sympathetic Baron Stockmar, three months after the death of the Duchess, "are a disturbance to her, and she remains almost entirely alone."[1] Her sole earthly support! In less than seven months he was to be taken from her, and she was to be left desolate.

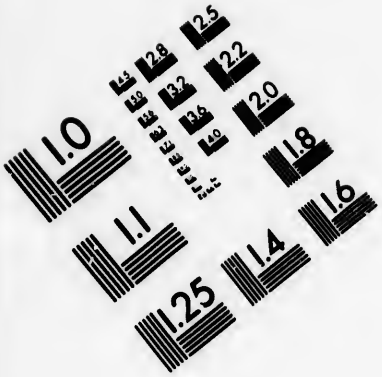
It is the knowledge of this impending calamity which makes everything of special interest that took place in 1861. Space, however, prevents one dealing with affairs as one would wish, but there is a matter which the writer desires to point out, because, though few reflect upon the subject, it must be one of considerable annoyance to the royal family. It may of them be said, indeed, that they are the only

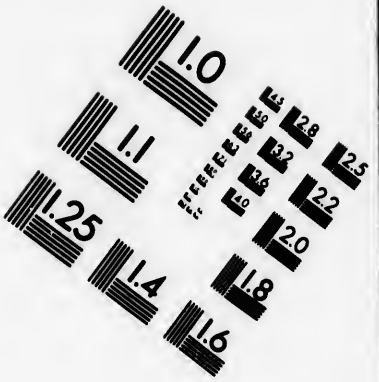
[1] The *Life*, vol. v. p. 57.

individuals of whom it is perfectly safe to say anything in the press. It would, it is obvious, be impossible for royal personages to descend to an action for libel. And if this is true of the most slanderous imputations—and how many such are there not in these days!—how much more is it true where there is only innuendo, and such innuendo relates to purely political matters? The latter observation refers to what has been published in the *Life of the Prince*, relating to the article which appeared at this period in the *Times*, while the Court was at Osborne in the month of April, insinuating, to quote the exact words, "not for the first time, that the Italian policy of the Government was thwarted"[1] by the influence of the Queen and her consort. Into that policy we have no intention of entering. No one knew better than the Ministers of the day how utterly unjust the accusation was, but none the less did it cause vexation to Her Majesty and Prince Albert in the closing months

[1] *Vide* the *Life*, vol. v. p. 57.

of his life. This was not like the scurrilous journals of these later days, whose worthless and contemptible statements are palpable to every well-informed person. The *Times* was then, as it still is, the first journal in the world. The matter is merely alluded to here, because of the manifest injustice which was done to the Court on this occasion, as on others. It had to be borne with that dignified silence with which every erroneous judgment has to be met by a crowned head in this country. But there is a lesson to be learned from the affair. If the *Times*, with all its resources for obtaining correct information — with its great reputation to maintain for accuracy,— was on this occasion led into a belief so erroneous, surely people should attach far less credence than they are in the habit of giving to those minor and worthless papers whose columns are literally filled with misstatements. It is for the sake of this lesson that the article in the *Times* is alluded to here.





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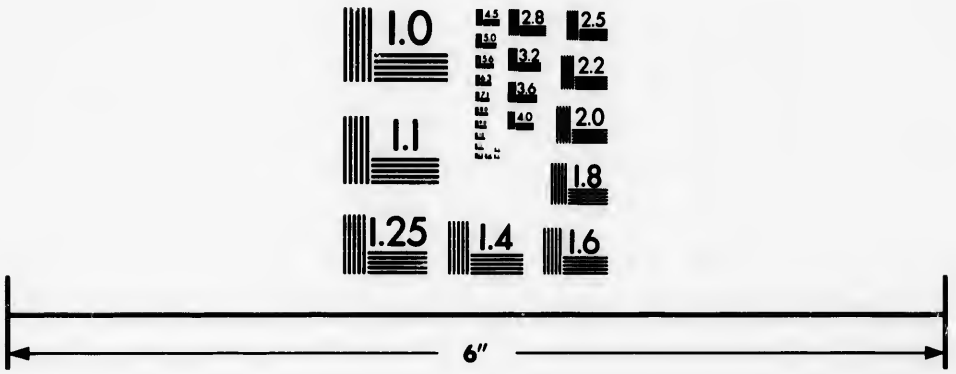

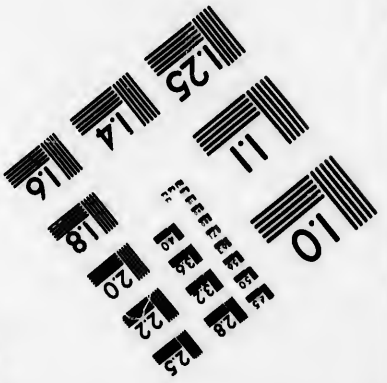

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But to resume. In the autumn of the year with which we are now dealing the Queen visited Ireland, and it was at the beautiful lakes of Killarney, at the residence of Lord Kenmare, that Prince Albert spent his last birthday. He had seen, as has been truly said, with feelings of consternation, how deep were the Queen's powers of affection, and perchance the thought had more than once crossed his mind: If her sorrow is so great for what after all is in the course of nature, what if *I* were taken from her! He had no thought of self. There is in a sentence which he once used to Her Majesty something that indicates that his hold on life was weak, and it would, we feel sure, have been so comprehended by a medical man. "I do not cling to life," he said to her,[1]—"you do; but I set no store by it. If I knew that those I love were well cared for, I should be quite ready to die to-morrow." He was not morbid, but his manner of living brought its natural result. He looked beyond this world. He did not

[1] The *Life*, vol. v. p. 71.

do right, as the Queen recorded, because of the future reward, but he did right because, as he said, "it *was* right."[1] Of him it may be surely said he was—

"Content to live, but not afraid to die."

The Court had gone to Balmoral after the conclusion of the Irish visit, but returned to Windsor in October. Here grief came to the Queen and Prince in the deaths of the latter's cousins, the King of Portugal and Prince Ferdinand. In both cases it was the same malady —typhoid fever! Prince Albert, we learn from the *Life* so often quoted from in these pages, was not himself in a condition to stand up against anything. The anxious eyes of the loving wife saw but too clearly how things were, and early in November she wrote to Sir Charles Phipps, pointing out that the Prince was being overworked. It was not, however, the fault of Ministers. Doubtless there was that within which told him that the time left for labour was short, that the night was at hand,

[1] The *Life*, vol. v. p. 71.

"when no man can work." In the case of the Prince, the sword wore out the scabbard.

It was in the midst of the Queen's anxiety respecting the failing state of her husband's health that the *Trent* Question arose. For the benefit of those not acquainted with Sir Theodore Martin's great work, we tell the story with some detail, since it bears most closely on the object of these pages. Nothing in the whole history of the reign shows more clearly than this affair the beneficent action of the Court. To the Queen and Prince was due the fact that the direst calamity almost which could befall this nation was prevented. The s.s. *Trent* was fired at by an American man-of-war, and the envoys from the Confederate States to England and France arrested and carried off! The moment the news was known, public excitement went beyond all bounds. "War with America" were the words on every lip. The Attorney-General notified that the matter was a breach of inter-

national law, and the Queen was advised that the Cabinet were of opinion that she should "demand reparation and redress."[1]

The draft despatches were forwarded to Windsor Castle for the Queen's approval. The contents did not meet with the approbation of either herself or her husband. It was obvious to them that the defiant tone could only produce one result, and that result the most terrible to contemplate. Very ill, as we know now that he was, the Prince was at work by 7 a.m. the morning following the receipt of the draft ministerial communications, and before eight o'clock he brought the Queen a memorandum of objections to the chief despatch. He was so weak, he told her, he could "scarcely hold the pen." It was these alterations, so moderate, so dignified, that saved us from war! We know this now beyond all doubt. It wa

[1] The particulars of this affair, as well as the details of the Prince's last illness, are entirely taken from the *Life*, vol. v. pp. 71 *n.* 77.

brought to the knowledge of the late Mr. Foster[1] during his visit to the United States in 1874 in a letter, which was read aloud amid great enthusiasm at a political gathering held in his honour. That letter was from Mr. Thurlow Weed, who during the struggle between North and South, had been sent to England by the American Government. In it he gave the whole credit to the Court for saving the two countries from dire calamity.

That was the last assistance in public affairs that the Prince was ever to render to the Queen. His work on earth was done. It was the calm note of the despatch which, as we have seen, prevented war. "Everything," said Mr. Seward to Lord Lyons, "depended upon the wording of it." So well was the importance of this understood, that he asked, as a personal favour, to be allowed to read the document before it was officially communicated to him, and this was done. As we know, the English

[1] See footnote on p. 74, vol. v. of the *Life*.

demands were fully granted. Fourteen days after the Prince's death, the news reached London, and was communicated to the Queen at Osborne the same evening. In her answer, Her Majesty wrote[1]—

"Lord Palmerston cannot but look on this peaceful issue of the American quarrel as greatly owing to her beloved Prince, who wrote the observations upon the draft to Lord Lyons, in which Lord Palmerston so entirely concurred. It was the last thing he ever wrote."

And in his answer the Prime Minister said—

"There can be no doubt but, as your Majesty observes, the alterations made in the despatch to Lord Lyons contributed essentially to the satisfactory settlement of the dispute. But these alterations were only one of innumerable instances of the tact and judgment, and power of nice discrimination, which excited Lord Palmerston's constant and unbounded admiration."

If further proof were needed, surely

[1] *Vide* the *Life*, vol. v. p. 74.

the extracts given here from Sir Theodore Martin's work would be sufficient to show that the Crown is no mere ornamental part of the constitution, but that, on the contrary, the work attaching to the office is both extraordinarily heavy and filled with responsibility.

At Windsor Castle, as the December days crept on, the anxiety respecting the Prince increased. The sad announcement of fever was made to the Queen by Dr. Jenner, and through the dark hours that followed, the late Grand-Duchess of Hesse—"Princess Alice," as she will ever be fondly styled by the English-speaking race—was not only her mother's support, but the good Prince's nurse. Throughout, his mind was rarely clouded. He liked being read to, and followed closely, as was shown by his remarks, taking notice, too, of all around him—admiring a picture on china of the Madonna, "ever loving," as Her Majesty recorded, "what was beautiful." "It helps me through half the day," he said. But on the 13th

there came a change. It was noticed that he no longer glanced up at the painting, and that he "would not be turned, as he had previously been, with his back to the light, but remained with his hands clasped, looking silently out of the window at the sky."

This was the great crisis of the Queen's life, and we may be excused for dwelling on it for a few moments. Early on the morning of the fatal 14th December, one of the medical men informed the Queen the crisis was over, and the Prince better.

"I went over at seven," Her Majesty's journal recorded, "a bright morning, the sun just rising. The room had that sad look of night-watching—the candles burned down to their sockets,—the doctors looking anxious. I went in, and never can I forget how beautiful my darling looked lying there, his face lit up by the rising sun, his eyes unusually bright, gazing, as it were, on unseen objects, and taking no notice of me."

Throughout the day the Queen rarely

left the sickroom. The Prince was reluctant to have her absent. "Good little wife," he whispered more than once, and laid his head upon her shoulder. "It is very comfortable so, dear child," he said; and then came the story of that little moan, "not of pain," as the Queen recorded, "but as if he felt that he was leaving me." Before the daylight waned it was known to the household that the favourable diagnosis of the morning was a mistaken one. No more beautiful or more authentic description of the closing scene can be found than that given by Sir Theodore Martin, and for that reason we give it verbatim from the abridged edition of the *Life* from which we have throughout quoted.

"As the evening wore on, Her Majesty once more retired to give vent to her grief in an adjoining room. She had not been long absent when Sir James Clarke, noticing the great change, not to be mistaken, asked the Princess Alice to request Her Majesty's return. The import of that summons was but too

plain. When the Queen entered she took the Prince's left hand, which was already cold, though the breathing was quite gentle, and knelt down by his side. On the right of the bed knelt the Princess Alice, while at the foot knelt the Prince of Wales and the Princess Helena. Not far off were Prince Ernest Leiningen, the physicians, and Lolein, the valet. General the Hon. Robert Bruce knelt opposite the Queen, and Sir Charles Phipps, the Dean of Windsor, and General Grey were also present. In that chamber was grief such as has rarely hallowed a deathbed. A great light, which had blessed the world, and which but yesterday the mourners had hoped might long bless it, was waning fast away. A husband, a father, a friend, a master, endeared by every quality by which man in such relation can win the love of fellow-man, was passing to the silent land, and his wise counsel, his firm, manly thought, should be known among them no more. The castle clock chimed the three-quarters after ten. Calm and beautiful grew the beloved

form; the features settled in serene repose: two—three, long but gentle breaths, and that great spirit had fled to seek within the veil a wider scope, where the spirits of the weary are at rest, and the souls of the just made perfect."

. . . . .

With the death of the Prince Consort we come to the second half of the Queen's life. When the blow so unexpectedly fell she was but just over forty, and many doubted her ability, after so crushing a stroke, to stand alone. Writing in his diary on the evening of the 15th of December, the late Lord Malmesbury, records that[1] "the greatest anxiety is felt on the Queen's account, for it is feared that this affliction may be too much for her health or mind to bear. She has lost everything," he goes on to say, "that could make life valuable to her, as all her happiness was centred in her husband, who was not only most devoted

[1] *Memoirs of an Ex-Minister*, vol. ii. p. 265.

to her, but her best friend, advising her in all her difficulties, consoling her in all her annoyances, and saving her as much trouble and anxiety as possible." But those fears were groundless. He who in His wisdom had seen fit to remove from her side the sustaining hand was well able to support her in the day of affliction. As Sir Theodore Martin wrote, and as we have already seen, "the blow had fallen in an hour of peril to her land."[1] We ourselves have just noticed the peaceful termination of the American quarrel, but we must not forget that when, in the blackness of the winter's night, the great bell of St. Paul's tolled forth to the listening world the announcement that the beloved Prince was no more, the breath of war was in the very air itself. What his heart had striven for—what his dying hand had sought—had been attained, but that fact was not known by the bereaved Queen in those first moments of agony. None can doubt who have made any study whatever of her character that she was

[1] The *Life*, vol. v. p. 77.

a religious woman—that when in the early hours of the morning of her accession day she requested to be left alone, she had recourse to Him who has promised to be not only the helper of all, but, in a special manner, the defender of the cause of the widow! So now, when thus sorely needed, strength was given. It was, we believe, none other than Mr. Bright who told us that the Prince Consort having died at eleven o'clock on the evening of the fourteenth of December, the Queen was yet at work on the *Trent* despatches at seven o'clock on the following morning. No doubt there was something more required than duty to rouse her to such an effort. The Queen was but an ordinary mortal after all, differing in no way in her feelings from the humblest of her subjects, in the weaknesses of humanity at such a time. Doubtless it was as much the thought as to how dear to the dead Prince had been the cause of peace as duty to her people that drove her to work when the sleepless hours of the first night of bereavement

were passed, and the dawn of the first Sabbath without him, for two and twenty years, was breaking in the eastern sky. One can conjure up the tragic scene—the great corridor at Windsor Castle—the grey light creeping in through the casements—the beautiful room, with the evidences of his love and taste scattered around; the sketches made during many a happy excursion near that far-off and once joyous Highland home; and in the midst of it all, the short figure, robed in black, for the parent who had left her but a few months before. The passionate grief for the mother must have been lost sight of under the new and greater bereavement. How difficult the task of grasping the details of the despatches before her! No doubt more than once she must have been tempted to cast them aside, when the thought of her beloved, and the endeavours he had made to preserve the peace between the two great Saxon nations, recalled her to the stern duty. And beside her—close beside her—doing all that a loving,

sympathetic daughter could do, was the Princess Alice. Her name is interwoven in the tale of those sad days, and is consequently enshrined in the hearts of all who loved the Queen.

It is wonderful how erroneous impressions grow up respecting the lives of great personages. To a large number of her subjects at least, the fact that Her Majesty, after the death of her husband, withdrew from the gaiety of the world, was taken to mean that she no longer carried out the rôle of Sovereign. To these, the holding of Drawing-Rooms, the presence at State Balls, and so forth, were the true functions of monarchy; to the Queen they were nothing, or next to nothing. Such duties could be delegated to other and younger representatives of the royal house, but she would devote herself exclusively to the *real* duties of her high office. How real, how important they were may best be seen from an extract in Lord Malmesbury's diary, dated exactly one fortnight after

the Prince's death.[1] "I hear," he writes, "that Ministers have signed a memorial to the Queen, refusing to transact business with her through Sir Charles Phipps." Had the Sovereign's duties been merely formal, as some outside the political world have supposed, such a document could not have received the signatures of men like Lord Palmerston, Mr. Gladstone, and others. A paragraph in the diary of the same distinguished statesman just quoted from shows that this view is correct, since he adds, speaking of the ministerial decision, that, though cruel, it was right. But even before the memorial reached her hands, Her Majesty, when she thought it necessary, had held personal communications with one of the Government at least. "The Queen," Lord Malmesbury records on the 20th of December, but six short days after the Prince's death, and three before he had been temporarily laid to rest in the royal vault at St. George's Chapel, "has signed some papers, and seen Lord

[1] *Memoirs of an Ex-Minister*, vol. ii. p. 265.

Granville." What better proof could be given than this of the absurdity of the contention of many people that the Queen practically gave up her duties after the calamity of 1861. No doubt the contention was made in error, since they were wholly ignorant of the true functions of the Crown, in which last we do not hesitate to aver there was never any break whatever.

Her Majesty was not present at the mournful ceremony which took place at Windsor on the 23rd of December. It was thought better that she should retire to Osborne, where greater quiet and privacy could be obtained than at the Castle, but before leaving, on the 18th December, she drove to the gardens at Frogmore, accompanied only by the Princess Alice; and, supported on her arm, she selected the spot where the mausoleum should be erected. And in these days of weakness and prostration it was something more than mere physical support, as we have already seen, that the eldest unmarried daughter gave to her bereaved mother. "Since

the death of the Prince Consort," writes Sir Theodore Martin,[1] "the Princess Alice had developed a force of character, combined with tact and judgment, truly admirable, settling and arranging everything for the Queen with Ministers and officials, and sustaining Her Majesty by her own firmness and skilfully ministered sympathy." Only those in close communion with members of the royal family can know how those early days of grief were actually passed. The Court Circular of the times is monotonous in its record "that the Queen remains in strict seclusion; the Princes and Princesses walk daily in the grounds." Even Whippingham Church, which the Prince had built, was no longer frequented, and divine service was performed in the presence of the Queen and a few members of the household in the dining-room of Osborne House instead; yet all the time the work went on. "Wonderfully calm," was the report of the Duke of Newcastle, after an audience with Her Majesty on business

[1] The *Life*, vol. v. p. 80.

of State, and recorded by Mr. Childers under date of 7th January 1862.[1] Across the Solent, as in the days when life was sweet and pleasant, the fairy yacht glided, carrying the red despatch boxes, the contents of which were read, considered, altered, just as of old,—only now the task was done *alone*! In the touching words of Her Majesty, "It was to be as it were the beginning of a new reign!"

It is difficult, when one thinks of the heavy task, performed so devotedly and under circumstances so painful, to realise that the cruel calumny that the Queen remained bowed down in mere selfish grief, doing nothing, was believed by many of the less well informed classes. Had such been the case, Her Majesty would have brought the affairs of the nation to a complete standstill. We know this from the speech of Mr. Arthur Balfour already referred to in these pages, when, at the first sitting of the House of Commons after the Queen's death, he spoke of the mass

[1] *Life of Right Hon. Hugh Childers*, vol. i. p. 109.

of documents which even those few days of illness had piled up. The work, we repeat, went on always, even at a moment when Her Majesty might well have been excused if she had laid public business altogether on one side.

When some great calamity has actually fallen, it is in reality easier to carry on the daily task, even though the heart be well-nigh broken, than in a period of suspense too terrible for words. And yet that is what the Queen actually did during the dying hours of Prince Albert. "Every detail," writes Sir Theodore Martin,[1] when speaking of the *Trent* Question, "both of the outrage and the steps taken in consequence, being communicated to Her Majesty, and considered by her, day by day, as usual." And so, both before the end came and when the blow had actually fallen, we see that beyond all doubt the Queen carried on the work of the country. Nay, she even did more. The time for taking part in the mere social gaieties of the great world were indeed practically

[1] The *Life*, vol. v. p. 74.

over, but everything that concerned her people seemed now to more nearly concern herself. To some, great sorrow has a narrowing effect. Not so, as we have said, to the Queen. To her it did but widen the sympathy for all who suffered. "The Queen's own misery only makes her feel more for them," were the words, or something like the words, of her message to the widows of the miners who fell in the terrible colliery explosion at Hartley just at this time. Through all the years of her life she exhibited this tender compassion for all in sorrow. Even when old age came, it did not bring to her that deadening of the feelings too often seen, but as was well said in a touching little poem by, we believe, a son of a former Archbishop of Canterbury, and issued only a few weeks before her last illness, it only made her heart more tender—her smile more kind. Sympathy had helped her in her own sorrow, and she never failed afterwards to exhibit it to others in like need.

"Lady Ely arrived" is the entry under date of 6th February 1862 in the *Memoirs*

of an Ex-Minister, and written from Heron Court. "She seemed very low, and the account of her life at Osborne for the last five weeks quite accounts for the depression of spirits. She gives a sad report of the poor Queen, who talks continually about the Prince, and seems to feel comfort in doing so. She takes great pleasure in the universal feeling of sympathy for her and sorrow for him shown by all classes."

The new reign! Those were her own words. And how true she must have felt them when each problem that came up for consideration had to be decided for the future *alone*. But the guiding hand had not been withdrawn till the Queen was fully able to stand by herself. It has been suggested by the late Mrs. Oliphant, in her charming *Personal Sketch*, that without in any way taking from the merits and work of "Albert the Good," the Queen was probably unjust to herself in a certain measure. In the *Life of the Prince*, Her Majesty's object, she points out, seems to have been to obliterate herself as far as

possible. It is a charming trait in her character, it is a proof—if, indeed any proof were needed—of how deep her love for him was; but there can be no manner of doubt that such was her desire. Mrs. Oliphant's words on the subject are so true that we venture to extract them.

"To him,"[1] she writes, speaking of the Prince, "was to be attributed, by the Queen's wish, all that was worthy in the first twenty years of her reign—all that was wise—all that was noble. Had we taken Her Majesty at her word—most sincerely given, and in perfect good faith, as it was—we should have looked for nothing but complete breakdown, and a season of helpless misery and distraction, ending either in the reduction of the Queen to a puppet Monarch, giving signatures and murmuring assents without either power or influence; or a puppet of a still more usual kind—falling into the hands of favourites, and ruling, or pretending to rule, as they

[1] *Queen Victoria: Personal Sketch* (Cassell & Co.), p. 118.

guided. Both Great Britain and the world are fully aware that nothing of the kind happened. Her Majesty resumed her place, and the wheels of State rolled on as before. If she were by herself unable to grasp the problems of State, if her judgment failed, if she ceased to have an independent opinion, none has ever breathed a word to that effect. Statesmen have died, and their lives have been written, and many a troublous and painful secret, and many a secret whisper, has been made known to the world; but amid all these babblings, no one has ever ventured to say, Alas! things were different now; that when the Prince was gone, who kept her right, the Queen's influence was diminished. One can imagine that, in her generous enthusiasm for him, it would almost have pleased Her Majesty had something of this kind been said; but, so far as we are aware, it never was said—nay, nor hinted—amid the manifold gossipings of a Court. If she owed all to her husband, as Her Majesty has

over and over again told us, to what has she owed it that her great career has gone on undiminished? Her complete self-abnegation was beautiful, and there is no doubt that it was expressed with entire sincerity; but there can be still less doubt either that Prince Albert's royal pupil had attained, by the time he left her, to the power of standing alone, or that her attribution of every wise instinct to him never prevented a large admixture of her own."

These words were written during the Queen's lifetime. That they were completely true none acquainted with the admirable manner in which, through all the long years of her widowhood, Her Majesty discharged the duties of her office, can doubt for a single moment. The soundness of judgment which she displayed on so many occasions had indeed developed long before the Prince's death. We had many proofs of that sagacity given by Ministers on both sides of the Houses of Parliament on the evening following the day of her death; and in Lord Kimberley's touch-

ing oration there seems to us a striking evidence of the contention just made. "Let us have the Queen's opinion first. That is always worth hearing, even if one does not agree with it," he told us, was a customary observation of the late Lord Clarendon, who was no less than four times Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and twice over held the seals during the Prince's lifetime. Nothing is farther than any desire to take from the last named, nevertheless the words of Lord Clarendon are substantial proof of the truth of what is here contended. It may be well to finish at once the question of the Queen's retirement. After a time, murmurs were heard, more particularly from those classes which have little knowledge of the real duties of the Sovereign. To them it would indeed have been a revelation if they had learned that all the time, even, as we have seen, from the morrow of the Prince's death, she was working, ever working, for the good of her people —ay, struggling for them, to come always to a decision which she believed would

be best for their welfare. "Groping by myself, with a constant sense of desolation," were the pathetic words she herself used to describe her position to Dean Stanley.[1] And, as time went on, the murmurs increased, till they were distinctly heard at a meeting of the Trades Union, some five years after the Prince's death. But the Queen was not, on that occasion, left without a defender. He who rose to speak in her cause was no courtier, but, on the contrary, was indeed styled the "People's Tribune." Death has long silenced the harsh political strife which for long raged about him; and to-day men of all parties agree to honour the memory of John Bright.

"I rise,"[2] he said, "for the purpose of making, in one sentence, a reference to a portion of the speech of Mr. ———, which I hope I did not fully comprehend.

[1] *Life of Dean Stanley* (John Murray).

[2] The writer is entirely indebted for a knowledge of this speech to Mr. C. Jeaffreson's *Victoria: Queen and Empress* (Heinemann), which, on searching the file of the *Times*, he finds to be reported on the 5th December 1866.

An Appreciation

. . . He made observations which, in my opinion, no meeting of people in this country, and certainly no meeting of reformers, ought to have listened to with approbation. Let it be remembered that there has been no occasion on which any Ministry has proposed an improved representation of the people when the Queen has not given her cordial, unhesitating, and, I believe, hearty assent. But Mr. ——— referred further to a supposed absorption of the sympathies of the Queen with her late husband, to the exclusion of sympathy for and with the people. I am not accustomed to stand up in defence of those who are possessors of crowns. But I could not sit here and hear that observation without a sense of wonder and of pain. I think there has been by many persons a great injustice done to the Queen with reference to her desolate and widowed position. And I venture to say this, that a woman, be she the Queen of a great realm or be she the wife of one of your labouring men, who can keep alive in her heart a great sorrow for the

lost object of her life and affection, is not at all likely to be wanting in a great and generous sympathy." True, noble, manly words; and all not blinded by party passions must agree they were worthy of John Bright.

The murmurs did not pass at Court unnoticed. From time to time it was said that Her Majesty was about to return to the gay world, till at last she did what she so often did throughout her reign—took her people into her confidence. In a few simple, womanly words she told them that mere gaiety was beyond her powers, but that on occasions, when her presence was really required, she would come among them, but that, as a rule, she should delegate her social duties to those who could so well perform them, contenting herself with labouring for the good of her people.

And there are many who think that this comparative retirement did no harm; that, on the contrary, the very rarity of the Queen's appearances in public did but increase their value in

popular estimation. We confess that we agree with this idea; and that we are not alone in this view of the subject may be seen from an article which appeared, we believe, in the *Spectator* about a year previous to the Queen's death, and which on that occasion expressed practically the same opinion.

It was but fifteen months after the death of the Prince Consort that, if such an expression may be allowed, a suitable substitute for Her Majesty in social life was found in the then Princess Alexandra, who entered London on the 8th of March 1863 two days prior to her marriage to the present King, amid a storm of enthusiasm not likely to be forgotten by any who witnessed it. The gorgeous ceremony is outside our limits—"so grand as to be quite overpowering" was the description given by a Cabinet Minister of the scene in St. George's Chapel, where Her Majesty was present in the royal closet. That she was no longer prostrated with grief we know from Lord Malmesbury, who had an audience

with her a few days later, and records that she was "quite calm, and even cheerful," though complaining of "not feeling strong, and unable to stand much."[1] Gaiety, we know, was beyond her, but work came naturally to her, and of that, as we have already seen, there was never any cessation. That the Queen was ever on the side of peace, if it were compatible with the honour of the country, we know beyond all doubt. We have seen, in conjunction with the good Prince, how in 1861 the Court lent all its efforts for a happy solution of the American difficulty. In 1864 Her Majesty was alone, and it may be said to be due to her influence that this country was not involved in a war with the hosts of Germany. It is not our intention to deal here except most briefly with the Schleswig-Holstein complication, concerning the succession to which duchies an agreement had been come to between the Great Powers in 1852. The details relating to the dispute

[1] *Memoirs of an Ex-Minister*, vol. ii. p. 295.

which arose after the accession of Christian IX. to the throne of Denmark are exceedingly intricate, and ended in war being declared against the latter Power by Austria and Prussia on the 31st January 1864. In this country a large party were in favour of assisting the Danes, and that the Government of the day were in sympathy with it may be seen from the entries in Lord Malmesbury's memoirs. Writing under date of the 27th January, he tells us that, at a meeting of the Cabinet a few days before, a very grave decision had been come to—that that decision had been submitted to the Queen, and the Courts of Prussia and Austria notified that this country would assume a hostile attitude in the event of the forces of the last-named Powers invading Schleswig. But an unexpected factor stood in the way. Two days later the same statesman records: "The Queen will not hear of going to war with Germany."[1] Ministers, we know,

[1] *Memoirs of an Ex-Minister*, vol. ii. p. 315.

were strongly in favour of intervention, but Her Majesty stood firm. How fortunate it was she did so anyone with any knowledge of military matters will easily comprehend when it is recalled that the Prussians were at that time armed with the breech-loader, whereas we ourselves were only provided with the old-fashioned weapon. "We should probably have suffered in consequence the same disaster as the Austrians did two years later," is the comment of the writer we have quoted above, and which he added in later years in a footnote in his diary. Concerning this, it is only necessary to say that had Lord Malmesbury, instead of the word "probably," used that of "certainly," he would not have gone beyond the mark. To the Queen's affection for the land of the Prince Consort's birth and her love of peace we owe on this occasion a debt of gratitude, since the two combined saved us from a misfortune too terrible to even contemplate.

It was not only in foreign politics

that Her Majesty was a power in favour of peace. In home matters she ever lent herself to smoothing down difficulties. Where opposition was keen she adjusted things by tactful interposition at the right moment, with suggestions of wise compromise, doing all she could, by judicious advice, to lessen evils which had arisen through sharp asperities. And this she ever did without regard to personal feelings. In no case is this more conspicuous than in her dealings with the thorny questions which presented themselves in the matter of the disestablishment of the Irish Church.

Whatever were the views of Her Majesty in the later years of her life on this subject, it is no secret that at the time she greatly disliked the measure. Presumably she changed her ideas on the matter. Be that as it may, we have in her attitude a striking piece of evidence of the impartial manner in which she ever acted, the candid and frank way in which she displayed her own views to the Minister from whom

she differed, and the loyal support she gave him when once she realised that her opinions were to be disregarded and that she was to be called upon to act under advice which was unpalatable to her. And at such a time she did not, as it were, retreat in dudgeon, giving ungracious consent and no more, but from the instant she comprehended a matter was inevitable, she did all in her power to bring it to a wise and pacific ending. In a letter dated from Balmoral in 1869, General Grey[1] wrote by her command to Archbishop Tait, saying, "Mr. Gladstone is not ignorant (indeed Her Majesty has never concealed her feelings on the subject) how deeply Her Majesty deplores the necessity under which he conceives himself to lie, of raising the question as he has done, or of the apprehensions, of which she cannot divest herself, as to the possible consequences of the measure which he has introduced." In this

[1] *Life of Archbishop Tait* (Macmillan & Co.), vol. ii. p. 24. The particulars regarding the passage of the Bill are all taken from the same work and chapter.

letter we have evidence of the Queen's frank nature, and, during the negotiations which followed, of that which has just been stated, how she never retreated in sullen silence, but did all she could to make the wheels of State roll smoothly on their course. Mr. Gladstone, as he himself has told us on this occasion, felt a difficulty in approaching the Archbishop of Canterbury on some of the points connected with a measure which could not fail to be disagreeable to the occupants of the Episcopal bench, and it was Her Majesty who paved the way for the meeting between the cleric and the statesman.

"I explained to the Queen," the Prime Minister wrote to the Archbishop from Carlton House Terrace, under date of the 18th February 1869, "that I had not felt myself warranted in so approaching your Grace. This lack on my part the Queen kindly undertook to remove."

This letter of Mr. Gladstone's had been called forth by a friendly note from the Archbishop, which had been

the result of a letter from the Queen, in which she had told the last named that the subject of the Irish Church made her very anxious, and urged him to see the Prime Minister. The interview took place the following day, and it was a relief to the Archbishop to find himself in agreement with Mr. Gladstone over certain stipulations which he deemed necessary in connection with the Bill. The ten days that followed the meeting, the Archbishop has told us, were the most difficult of his life. In a work of this kind it is impossible to go into the details connected with the measure in any way, and we can only give a bare outline of the affair.

The Bill was introduced into the House of Commons by Mr. Gladstone in a speech of three hours and a half, and the second reading was carried by 368 against 250. Mr. Disraeli still hoped to save at least a reduced establishment, and he wrote to the Archbishop urging that when the Bill reached the Lords the action of the House should be divested as far as

possible of party character. He suggested a meeting of leading Peers, which was accordingly held at Lambeth Palace, when the Archbishop urged that the Bill should be read a second time as soon as it came before the Upper House. The only supporters of this proposal, however, were Lords Grey, Salisbury, and Stanhope,[1] though the measure was even then passing through the committee stage of the Commons with immense majorities. It was read a third time on the 31st May, and sent to the Lords. The Queen's dislike of the measure had in no way abated, but she at once wrote to the Archbishop urging him to put himself in communication with Mr. Gladstone. She saw the danger of a violent collision between the two Houses, which Dr. Tait had already declared to the Prime Minister to be "imminent." The Archbishop was, as we have seen, in favour of the second reading of the Bill, but, in spite of that, Mr. Gladstone's reply was hardly

[1] *Life of Archbishop Tait*, vol. ii. p. 19.

conciliatory as to the other points which the Archbishop had raised, and the latter replied, making allowance for the Governmental position, and stating that he was ready at any moment in the future to act as Her Majesty urged. The negotiations which followed are full of interest, and show the immense and tactful part played by the Queen; but we can only deal briefly with the matter.

Writing to Her Majesty on the 7th June, the Archbishop gave her twenty as the probable number against the second reading, and saying that everything would depend on the manner in which Lord Granville introduced the Bill. How well he knew the Queen's wise judgment and tact may be seen from the words he then added: "Any representation from your Majesty would make it almost impossible for him to avoid adopting a conciliatory tone."[1] The day after this letter was written the Archbishop

[1] Lord Granville's tone was, it is almost needless to add, everything that was charming.—*Life of Archbishop Tait*, vol. ii. p. 27.

wrote to Mr. Disraeli to inform him that the Queen was desirous that the second reading should be carried, which accordingly came to pass on the 18th of June at three o'clock in the morning, with a majority of thirty-three. The Bill was amended in committee, and once more difficulties rose between the two Houses, but compromise was the wise order of the day. The Archbishop was, as the Bishop of Rochester wrote[1] "in almost hourly communication with the Queen," and in the end a satisfactory solution of all the difficulties was come to. If the matter has been dealt with at some little length, the reader must pardon it, since no more admirable instance of the good sense and rectitude of conduct can be given of her whose loss we deplore. As the biographer of the Archbishop truly declared—"Beyond question it was to the Queen and the Archbishop that the successful compromise was mainly due." A leading article in the *Times* a few years ago, reviewing the *Memoirs* of the great cleric, from which the story

[1] *Life of Archbishop Tait*, vol. ii. p. 39.

has been culled, seems to justify the importance we have attached to the incidents, since it said in effect, that if people would only peruse the volumes in question they would see what the position of the Crown in the country was, and its undoubted influence for good.

With the great War of 1870 this country was happily not concerned. It is mentioned here, however, since there is a special point of interest connected with it in relation to the Queen. It is natural to suppose—indeed it is no secret—that the heart of Her Majesty was on the side of Germany, bound to it as she was by the closest ties, but nevertheless she was sad for the sorrows of France, and filled with sympathy for the Emperor Napoleon and his wife, who were her personal friends. Great Britain rightly never departed from a line of strict impartiality, but all that the people of this country could do to assist the wounded and the starving was done, and our attitude on that occasion, it was said, would never be forgotten

by the French people. In one of the state rooms at Windsor Castle Her Majesty received the deputation from that country after the war was over, the signatures amounting to nearly twelve million! When one recalls some of the things that have been said and done in France during the last eighteen months, above all, in relation to the Queen, it is impossible not to feel that the gratitude so warmly and gracefully expressed on the before-mentioned occasion was not of such a lasting nature as was then stated would be the case. There was indeed another and greater reason why the people of that country should have held the name of Queen Victoria in veneration. Whatever was said of England, however deep the feeling in favour of the Boers, *her* name should have been kept clear of the controversy, when the fact is recalled that it was Her Majesty's *personal influence* which some few years after the war of 1870 prevented a second onslaught by Germany on France. The spiteful remarks—the bitter *chagrin*, indeed, of

Prince Bismarck, which has since come to light—show clearly how completely his game was spoilt by the interposition of the Queen of England in the cause of peace.

In 1872 Her Majesty made the first of those three royal progresses of her widowhood through the streets of her capital. It lies outside the scope of this work, which has not attempted to deal with the ceremonial part of the reign. It was made in consequence of the recovery of the Prince of Wales from an illness which had well-nigh proved fatal, and it called forth a scene of enthusiastic loyalty. That it is a temptation to speak of the event we own, but we shall reserve ourselves for mere ceremonies to the last progress of all, that of the Diamond Jubilee, which may be said to have been of a unique character. There is, indeed, too, one other progress—the last progress of all, —the one that lies closest to our hearts, and on that too we shall touch within a few pages now.

But though 1872 was the first great

public appearance of Her Majesty in the heart of the city, she had already emerged from that "strict seclusion" which she had sought in the early days of her widowhood. Parliament had been opened in state—Netley Hospital visited — the fleet reviewed in honour of the Sultan of Turkey, who was invested by the Queen with the Order of the Garter, during the passage of the *Victoria and Albert* through the lines of the great battle-ships. True to her promise, Her Majesty had shown herself in public whenever it was really necessary for her to do so, and, if we may again say it, the rarity of her appearances had increased the value attached to them. But in spite of it all—spite of the work, which, as we have seen, was being daily carried on, and, with the expansion of the empire and the increased facilities for communication, daily, too, becoming more heavy,—she was still in sorrow for, as Mr. Bright said, "the lost object of her life and of her love." But yet there was a

change, and a great change, in the tone of it. Things were no longer with the Queen as they had been when she wrote in her diary,[1] in the early days of her widowhood, that in the life that was left there was "no pleasure — no joy — all dead." The situation was, as Sir Theodore Martin[2] has so well put it: "Years not many had gone—the grief of those that loved him had been purged of well-nigh all its pain," and then the apt quotation—"Harsh grief doth pass in time into far music." The Queen sorrowed, but not as those without hope. The birthdays of the Prince—even the fatal 14th of December itself—were no longer looked upon as days of gloom. "That's not the light to look at it in,"[3] one of her humble but faithful Highland attendants had said to her, years before the period now treated of, and she had grown able to agree with him. Still, to the very last, the shadow of his passing

[1] *More Leaves.*
[2] *Life of Prince Consort*, vol. v. p. 77.
[3] *More Leaves.*

was upon her. We do not mean anything morbid. On the contrary, she had grown, like the saintly Alexandrine de la Ferronnays in the *Récit d'une Sœur*, to find "life beautiful and interesting" once more—and like her, too, to mourn almost "gaily"! Everything was worth studying. "Her sagacity in reading people and their ruling motives and weaknesses, and a little disposition —though very little, and scarce more than to show her complete grasp of them—to be quietly amused at them, struck me very much,"[1] wrote Archbishop Benson from Osborne on one occasion; while on another he notes that Her Majesty was "shrewder and fuller of knowledge than most men."[2] Life to her was a very serious thing. She looked on it always, as she herself has told us the Prince Consort did, as a *preparation* for a higher and nobler one beyond the grave. That others should not do the same, but make this life everything, was a matter of grief to her.

[1] *Life of Archbishop Benson*, vol. ii. p. 2.
[2] Vol. ii. p. 561.

"I cannot understand the world," she said at another time to Dr. Benson,—"cannot comprehend the frivolities and littlenesses. It seems to me as if they were *all a little mad*!"[1] To one with so lofty an aim as the Queen, how natural this view! Her religion, however, was of the closet, and not for outward show. She detested *cant* of any kind, and if we are to believe some of the stories told, was not slow to show her dislike of anything approaching to it. She never, so far as we know, preached to anyone—never in those visits of which we have any record, to the houses of the afflicted, told people "that it was for their good," or that they must submit at once, and so forth, as is the way with some pious people. She understood to the full how difficult it was for imperfect mortals to bow the head when that which made life fair and pleasant was taken away. Surely, if submission was so easy, there would be little merit in it! No, there was nothing of that kind in the sympathy which

[1] *Life of Archbishop Benson*, vol. ii.

must ever be associated with the name of Queen Victoria. Now and then there was a whisper to the stricken one of the life beyond, and the duty left to fulfil, but, in the records possessed, hardly more than a whisper. "I came in and took her hand, and pressed it," is the sort of entry one meets with in her accounts of visits to those in sorrow. Nothing more pathetic can be fancied than the picture which appeared in *Black and White*, some years ago, of Her Majesty sitting with her hand on the shoulder of the bereaved Highland woman in her lonely and homely cottage.

And all the time, when thus able to throw herself into the griefs of others,—weighed down "with the cares and overwhelming anxieties" of her own position, as she herself put it to Dr. Norman Macleod,[1]—the cares of the mightiest empire in the world! This is surely in looking back now, one of the chief, charms—one of the chief characteristics of the Queen. It is not our intention

[1] *More Leaves.*

to attempt to draw her character, which was a marvellous combination of sweetness and strength. That must be left to the historian, and to those who were in personal relationship with her. We merely wish, as we stated at the commencement of this little work, to deal now and again with some small characteristic.

If this were intended to be a biography of the Queen, it would be easy enough, in a way, to write it up to date—to the last date of all, the 22nd January 1901! so far at least, that is, as ordinary public events are concerned. But in setting himself to this task, the writer had no such idea. Lives of the Queen there have been, and will be many. Some of authentic kind will be among the number, but those will be at such length as to be beyond the power of the ordinary work-a-day reader. It is for the benefit of the latter, and to bring to his notice the opinions of competent judges on the subject, that these imperfect pages are hastily put together. It is hoped, too, as we have before said, that they may

supply a want, since the ordinary small volumes dealing with the late Queen treat more of the ceremonial events of the reign than the work of her beloved Majesty. At this point, then, we are met with a supreme difficulty. In the above pages we have dealt only with facts, not at all with surmises. The political events of the later years of the reign are associated with the great names of Gladstone, Disraeli, and Salisbury, and the last named of these is still happily with us. It is therefore too soon for the publication of the letters and despatches, from which alone we should care to quote, consequently it is as yet impossible to know the particular line which Her Majesty took over the various momentous questions which have arisen during the terms of office of these three statesmen. Gossip and club rumours there have been indeed in plenty; but that is useless for the purpose of this volume, since the writer determined to have nothing to do with any question which was unsupported by documentary evidence. The position of

a constitutional Sovereign is in some respects an unfortunate one. The Ministry of the hour may blunder, may even involve the country in a disaster, but the occupant of the throne cannot show if he or she has done anything to avert the evil which has fallen upon the land, but must wait for years before the true part played can be revealed with prudence to the public. In the case about to be treated of, this was not the case with the Queen. The story of the first expedition to Khartoum is too recent for it to be necessary to be dealt with at any length. Indeed, we might go farther, and say that the disgrace attaching to the period has sunk too deep into the hearts of the nation for anything connected with it to have been entirely forgotten. We do not imply that the policy of the then Government was not dictated by supposed humane motives, but the fact that it was a weak one—a policy, if the expression may be used, of shilly-shally, causes the word disgrace to be employed.

Gordon, as all the world knows, had

been Governor of the Soudan, therefore anything he said in relation to the place was worthy of the deepest consideration, and it is difficult to understand how the Ministry came to the decision to abandon the country, when we reflect upon the advantages that had accrued to the unhappy natives under his rule. "I had taught them," he said, "that they had a right to exist — taught them something of the meaning of the words liberty and justice." He had warned the Khedive of the care necessary in dealing with the Soudan, but his warnings had been disregarded, and the Mahdi had arisen. Into what followed we shall not attempt to go. There is no necessity for it. Briefly, a crisis had arisen, the British Government decided to abandon the Soudan, and General Gordon was requested to go out to Khartoum and superintend the evacuation of the province. There was a hush upon the nation as he went, in that supreme moment of difficulty, and the country watched his going forth into the blackness of the Soudan night with breathless awe. Without show, without

state, he went—the very footsteps of his going hushed by the desert sands. We know what followed. Procrastination and refusal—refusal and procrastination on the part of the Government, who were so anxious to avoid firing a shot that in the end their hands reeked with blood, the most noble and heroic ever shed in the history of this country. And during all these delays—during the time of paralysis of manly feeling which had smitten the Ministry of Mr. Gladstone, she who in the darker hours of the Indian Mutiny had seen the seriousness of the situation and the need of reinforcements long before her then Government, had on this occasion taken also the right view—the view which in the end had also to be adopted! We claim no great genius for the Queen, but merely sound wisdom and a most well-balanced judgment. Warning after warning had been addressed by Her Majesty to her Ministers as to the line to be adopted if the garrison of Khartoum was to be saved and General Gordon rescued. It was not, however, till too late that the

Government rose from its torpor and despatched the expedition, which, as we all know, arrived only when all was over. The general world knew nothing then of the part played by the Queen—did not know that, if the Ministry had listened to her wise words, the terrible disaster would *never* have happened. She was ill from the shock. That much was known, and there were whispers and surmises, but outside the circle of leading politicians none knew the truth *for certain.* There was a general wish among the more thoughtful to know what the Sovereign's view of the terrible situation was, but it was realised that years must elapse before that wish was likely to be gratified. And then —suddenly the veil was lifted! The communications to Ministers could not be published, but one letter appeared, and in that letter the *whole* scene was made clear. To the sister of the dead hero nothing could be refused. Miss Augusta Gordon applied for leave to incorporate into the volume of her brother's correspondence, which she was

bringing out, a letter dated from Osborne on the 17th February 1885—a letter which may be described, as was a very similar one to the widow of the murdered President of the United States, as a letter from a woman to a woman in her hour of need! It was as follows:[1]—

"DEAR MISS GORDON,—How shall I write, or *how* shall I attempt to express *what I feel*? To *think* of your dear and noble and heroic brother, who served his country and his Queen so truly, so heroically, with a self-sacrifice so edifying to the world, not having been rescued! That the promises of support were not fulfilled—which I so frequently and constantly pressed on those who asked him to go—is to me *grief inexpressible*; indeed it has made me ill. My heart bleeds for you, his sister. . . . Will you express to your other sisters and your elder brother my true sympathy, and, what I do so keenly feel, the *stain*

[1] *Letters of General Gordon to his Sister* (Macmillan & Co.).

left on England for your dear brother's cruel, though heroic, fate?—Ever, dear Miss Gordon, yours sincerely and sympathisingly,

"VICTORIA, R. AND I."

In this beautiful and touching letter the veil was, as we have said, lifted. It was the Queen who saw the situation—the Queen who urged, and Ministers who rejected. It was the woman who pleaded—the men who had refused! Surely, after perusing it, no great gift of prophecy is needed to say that when, in the lapse of time, the whole correspondence that passed between Her Majesty and her Ministers during those frightful days of anxiety is given to the public, there will be in her letters such *burning* sentences as must—however convinced they may have been of the rectitude of their attitude—have been sufficient to have brought a flush of shame to the cheeks of any man.

The admiration which Her Majesty displayed for the character and life of him who has been well styled "the

ideal Christian soldier," and the tender sympathy which she exhibited towards his sorrowing sister was consolation deep and true to the latter. The writer knows that beyond any manner of doubt. Deigning to be pleased with a little tribute which he had paid to the memory of the hero of Khartoum, Miss Augusta Gordon was good enough to express a wish for an interview, and in the twilight of a winter's day he arrived at Southampton, and waited on her in the house—the famous house at Rockstone Place. In the hour that followed much was said which the writer can never forget, and which justifies fully the above remark. Later, when standing in Charles Gordon's own room, where his favourite texts hung on the wall, she placed in the author's hands the well-worn Bible of the dead soldier. "Not his favourite," she said; "that I gave his Queen. I couldn't keep that, you know," she sweetly added. That the Queen appreciated the offering to the full may be seen from its subsequent fate. It

lies open on a white satin cushion, under a crystal cover, called the "St. George's Casket" in the corridor of Windsor Castle, among the busts and portraits of the great men of the reign whose memories the Queen delighted to honour. It is of interest to know, as Mrs. Oliphant has told us, that in the later years of her life Her Majesty, in passing, would often pause and read a verse or two from that sacred volume.

Egypt is the last political subject to which we shall refer. It is one more instance of the Queen's clearness of vision and soundness of judgment. Had the Ministry of Mr. Gladstone followed the lines of the opinion Her Majesty "so frequently and constantly pressed," to use her own words, the garrison of Khartoum would not have been massacred, the life of the great hero would not have been sacrificed, and there would not have rested, as there must ever do in relation to the whole matter, an everlasting stain on England's honour.

There is one point which we should

like to mention, namely, the repeated blows which fell upon the Sovereign in the later years of her life. Till the death of the Queen's mother, to whom she was, as we have seen, most deeply attached, things seemed to go well with her, but after that period loss followed upon loss. True, this is the penalty that has to be paid for a lengthened period of life, but, even with that allowance, it still seems that she was unfortunate in this respect. Those whom she had a right to expect, if we may make use of such an expression, should remain with her were snatched away, and she was called upon to mourn for friends who, in the ordinary course of nature, should have wept beside her own bier. True, after the great sorrow of her life, griefs which otherwise would have been overwhelming were to a certain extent minimised. As the old Highland widow put it in her homely language, "When *he* was ta'en, it made sic a hole in my heart that a' other sorrows gang lichtly through," and as Her Majesty pathetically wrote, "So it

was, and ever will be, with me."[1] Of the four sons given her, two were torn away, while from among the daughters, the one who had been her stay in the hour of desolation was carried off, after a few days' illness, on the very anniversary of the father's death, and whose dying couch she had so lovingly tended. The writer till recalls the words of the touching letter written on that occasion by the then Prince of Wales to Lord Granville, and read aloud by the latter in the House of Lords.

"So good, so kind, so clever! We had gone through so much together—my father's illness, then my own; and she has succumbed to the pernicious malady which laid low her husband and children, whom she nursed and watched with unceasing care and attention. The Queen bears up bravely, but her grief is deep beyond words."

And that it was ever so with all her sorrows is certain. She had been once overwhelmed almost to despair, but that could never happen to her again;

[1] *More Leaves.*

but her heart never grew cold—never grew *accustomed*, if one may say so, to the deaths of those she loved. To the very last "her grief" for their loss "was deep beyond words." How pathetic is that cry of hers, given, we think, in a letter to Dr. Macleod's son after the loss of his father: "Never again —never any more! Those dreadful, *dreadful* words that I have had to say so often!" Truly, as was said in the little poem already mentioned, as the years rolled by, her heart only became more tender, her smile more kind. Death indeed seemed always casting his shadow on the beloved Queen. Children, as we have seen, were taken from her—three at least of her grandsons, and one of these the heir presumptive to her throne, while the last one she had to mourn fell in the cause of her land! Sons-in-law, too, were snatched away—the figure that had been most conspicuous in the first Jubilee Procession, in the white uniform, among the number—"that splendid, knightly Prince, as good as he was noble,"

as she herself described the dead Emperor Frederick in a letter dated from Windsor Castle on the 22nd June 1888.[1] And that other son-in-law, too, from her own immediate circle, the one who had done more, perhaps, than anyone to rouse her from sorrow, and who had gone forth into the field, "not with any idea of glory,"[2] but just simply with the wish to do something for the land of his adoption. The writer well recalls the beautiful winter's day when Prince Henry's body was landed at Osborne —the Queen's face of sorrow, with the large tears pouring down her cheeks as she sat waiting in her carriage, watching the *Alberta* moving slowly through the ships of the flying squadron; the group of outriders and other horsemen, bareheaded, motionless; and the intense silence which reigned, broken only by the tolling of church bells and the steady boom of the minute guns. It was one of the most pathetic scenes ever witnessed — above all when the

[1] *Life of Archbishop Benson*, vol. ii. p. 211.
[2] Vol. ii. p. 713.

Alberta was at last alongside, and Her Majesty, supported by her Indian attendant, tottered across the gangway, while her soldier son, with an arm held ready, if she needed it, bowed backwards before her. And it was not only in her own family that death was busy. Friends innumerable were taken away; all the three ladies whose names were so familiar as being about her—Lady Ely, the Duchess-Dowager of Roxburghe, and Lady Churchill—predeceased her,—the last indeed, the familiar "Jane Churchill" of *More Leaves from the Journal*, on the very morning of the Queen's last Christmas Day on earth. Faithful attendants, too, it was the same with, and the Queen mourned them as she mourned the friends who were among the mightiest in the land. And yet, as we have said, she never grew *accustomed* to death, never grew cold and stolid, as is too often the way with those who have exceeded the allotted span of human life. To the last her heart was *young*!

To support troubles so great as these

—to return to the daily task, as we have seen she did, when her heart was well-nigh broken—could only have been possible to a woman of real religious feeling. We have already touched on this subject, and we have no intention of going into it here at any length—indeed, it is only mentioned because of what seems to have been a popular error, and with which we should like to deal for a moment. It would be impertinence for anyone outside the Queen's own immediate circle to attempt to examine into exactly what were her own particular ideas on so sacred a subject. It is impossible to read her journals—to study the letters which have passed between her and those she was pleased to honour with her friendship, and which have appeared since in various memoirs, etc., without knowing that she passed this life but as a preparation for a higher and greater one. That, it seems to us, is sufficient to say here, but the matter is brought forward because of the before-mentioned popular error. It was the common belief of many that,

whenever there was a question of ecclesiastical preferment, the Queen was in favour of giving the post to a Low Churchman. This is *absolutely* opposed to all we have been able to gather from a study of the subject.

The idea appears to have arisen from what was wont to take place at the time when the Queen was first left to stand alone. At that period Lord Palmerston was the great man of the day. Of Church matters he knew nothing, and cared less. Such being the case, he looked round for one he was sure was in earnest on the subject, and such he found in his relative—the noble and self-sacrificing Lord Shaftesbury. Whether the latter was or was not discreet in his selections we do not know. The matter is one in which the writer is not in any way concerned or competent to judge. That Lord Shaftesbury never mentioned a name to Lord Palmerston without believing it was the best one under the circumstances we do not doubt. The names so submitted were not likely to be displeasing to Her

Majesty. They were the names of men whose religious convictions tallied with those in which she had been reared, added to which, we must remember that in the Palmerston period views which have since become popular were little known outside University circles. Those holding them were all classed together under one heading—Puseyism. And the British public, as a whole, disliked Puseyism at that time, and mistrusted the High Church party. It is probable that the Queen shared this mistrust. If it is not disrespectful to say so, her knowledge of the party at that time was possibly not great. Once, however, the hand of Lord Shaftesbury was withdrawn, things changed. As High Church views spread, the Queen came to know more on the subject. To the last we believe she liked the simplest form of worship, and from what she has herself recorded in her journals, particularly where she spoke of her friendship with the late Dr. Macleod, it is evident she maintained in a great measure the views on ecclesiastical subjects in which

she had been brought up, but much broadened by modern readings. But it was characteristic of the Queen that she did not allow herself to be biassed. She understood to the full the growth of the before-mentioned party in later years, and, devoted as she undoubtedly was to the Church of England as by law established, she saw that it could not be maintained except by wise and judicious selections to the Episcopal bench. The following letter, written to Archbishop Benson, himself a High Churchman, seems to prove the truth of what we have stated above, and to quote it, the best way to bring the matter to an end.

"OSBORNE, *January 3rd*, 1890.[1]

"MY DEAR ARCHBISHOP,

"The great amount of letters and telegrams which I have received and had to write during the last few days will, I hope, be understood as the cause of my not sooner answering your kind letter and thanking you for it, and for the volume of your charges.

[1] *Life of Archbishop Benson*, vol. ii. p. 293.

An Appreciation

"I deeply regret the death of the Bishop of Durham, whom I knew well in former days—and who was a man of such knowledge and power, and of such use in his position; and I entirely agree with you in the immense importance of the selection of bishoprics. It is a great anxiety, and the men to be chosen *must* not be taken with reference to satisfying one or the other *party* in the *Church*, or with reference to any political party —but for their *real worth*. We want people who can be firm and conciliating, else the Church cannot be maintained.

"We want large, broad views, or the difficulties will become insurmountable.

"I have understood that you consider Canon Westcott as the fittest successor to Bishop Lightfoot. A few days must elapse before much can be done. . . .
—Yours truly, V.R.I."

The time has now come to touch for a few minutes on the closing events of the reign. Hitherto we have dealt almost entirely with the working part of the Queen's life; but as the Jubilees

of 1887 and 1897 were in a great measure the earthly rewards of the faithful devotion she had displayed towards her duties, it seems not altogether inappropriate to refer to them, particularly the last named. That other and silent procession which but a short time back passed before the gaze of millions of mourners we shall also say a few words concerning.

"Most noble was the aspect of everything," recorded Archbishop Benson in his diary, speaking of the service in Westminster Abbey in 1887. Thirty-two sons, sons-in-law, and grandsons rode before her carriage; and this, the same authority tells us, was the Queen's own idea. Though everything concerning the event was utterly surpassed by the Diamond Jubilee, there is no doubt that the celebration of 1887 was a very wonderful one. Lord Granville, speaking of it, told his audience that in many lands he had witnessed many pageants —that he had watched the funeral of the Iron Duke go by; that he had seen the triumphal entry of the then Princess

Alexandra into London, before her marriage; as the representative of his Sovereign he had taken part in the coronation of a Czar at Moscow,—but that at no time or place had he seen anything which, to quote his words, "in any way resembled the passage of the Queen's Majesty through the streets of London on that Tuesday morning."

And if this could be said by an authority on such subjects, as the late Lord Granville undoubtedly was, how much more might be said of the Diamond Jubilee! It was an altogether unique event. Everywhere one went one heard the tale of the strange emotion with which everyone seemed to have been seized. In the *World* newspaper there was an amusing, yet not altogether unpathetic, account of the number of men who, on that wondrous summer day, complained of being troubled with hoarseness and heavy colds! This was the striking part of it all. In every account it was the *men* who figured. The writer well records the words of a girl friend, who, standing

in the drawing-room window at Apsley House, during the passage of the Queen's carriage, said that what had impressed her was the white *faces* of the men!

"It was not," she said, "that we women were overcome. That was *natural*. We should have been wanting in our womanhood if it had been otherwise; but it was the men—their faces!" "Had it lasted a minute longer, I should have put my head down and cried like a child," the man who stood next her told her. And everywhere that day there came the same story—from the very clubs even, where men with medal on their breasts had all but broken down.

The accounts given in the daily press were remarkably good, but perhaps the best was that which appeared in the columns of the *Daily Mail*.[1] It was so exactly true that we cannot forbear to quote here the description of the arrival at St. Paul's—

"Down there, through an avenue of

[1] Golden Number *Daily Mail*, June 23, 1897.

eager faces, through a storm of white waving handkerchiefs, through roaring volleys of cheers, there was approaching a carriage drawn by eight cream-coloured horses. The roar surged up the street, keeping pace with the eight horses. The carriage passed the barrier; it entered the churchyard; it wheeled left and then right; it drew up at the very steps of the cathedral; we all leaped up; cheers broke into screams, and enthusiasm swelled into delirium; the sun, watery till now, shone out suddenly clear and dry, and there—. And there was a little, quiet, flushed old lady, all in black, a silver streak under the bonnet, a simple white sunshade, sitting quite still, with the corners of her mouth drawn tight, as if she was trying not to cry. But that old lady was the Queen, and you knew it. You didn't want to look at the glittering uniforms now; nor yet at the bright gowns and the young faces in the carriages; nor yet at the stately princes —though by now all these were ranged in a half circle round her. You couldn't

look at anybody but the Queen. So very quiet, so very grave, so very punctual, so unmistakably and every inch a lady and a Queen. Almost pathetic, if you will, that small black figure in the middle of these shining cavaliers, this great army, this roaring multitude; but also very glorious! When the other Kings of the world drive abroad, the escort rides close in at the wheels of the carriage; the Queen drove through her people quite plain and open, with just one soldier at the kerbstone between her and them."

We have read many accounts, but none that more actually described the scene than this. It was said, we remember, that during the time she drove through those seven miles of the streets of her capital she spoke but little to those with her, and that, as she bowed from side to side, all she kept exclaiming was, "God bless my people! God bless my people!"

It is not our intention to deal further with this ceremony, or attempt in any way to describe the procession or the

illuminations and bonfires which took place all over the country. Mr. Punch summed up the last in brief verse,—

"It was about the close of a warm day in June,
Sweet bells, loud trumpets, all that day had played most joyous tune;
Night sank upon the dusky beach and o'er the purple sea,
Such night as England ne'er had seen, nor e'er again shall see.
And now to greet the Jubilee night of our glad sea-girt isle,
At earliest twilight, beacon piles lay waiting many a mile;
Far on the deep the sailor sees, along each shore and shire,
Cape beyond cape, in endless range, those twinkling points of fire."

It has been well said that on those rare occasions, when the first of all comic papers—the one whose proud boast it is, through all the years of laughter and fun, never to have perpetrated a joke to bring a blush to a maiden's cheek—sees fit to sound the note of pathos, it is all the deeper—all the sadder, because of its very rarity. Above the pealing of the joy-bells—

above the blare of trumpets—above the salvo of the guns, on that beauteous day, it sounded loud and clear in the closing verses of Punch's stirring "Song Imperial":—

"Stand up, all! yea, princes, nobles, peoples,
All the mighty empire—mightier ne'er hath been;
Boom from all your decks and towers, clang from all your steeples,
God save Victoria! God save the Queen!"

Then comes the solemn funeral note!—

"But now our sun descends, from the zenith westward,
Westward and downward, of all mortals seen;
Yet may the long day lengthen, though the fall be restward,
May we long together cry, God save the Queen!
"When in the coming time, 'neath the dim ocean line,
Our dear sun shall sink in the wave serene,
Tears shall fill these eyes of mine, tears shall fill these eyes of thine,
Lowly kneeling,—all shall pray, God save the Queen!"

On the day following the great demonstration of loyalty, Her Majesty

telegraphed her thanks to all parts of her vast empire. We cannot, we think, do better than bring this reference to that memorable time to an end by quoting the words—the characteristic words,—

"From my heart I thank my beloved people. May God bless them."

With the exception of Her Majesty's visit to London when a gleam of light had shone forth in the South African war clouds, this was the last great visit to her capital: that war which cast its shadow so heavily on the closing days of her reign. At all times everything concerning the army and navy interested her down to the most minute details, and in war time it doubled. All that she could do to promote the comfort of her troops she did. So great was her solicitude for them that, it is recorded in the life of Mr. Childers, at the period of the expedition to Egypt, in one day alone he received no less than seventeen letters from Her Majesty and her Private Secretary. And in this greater war, which is still

raging, her thought for the army was shown to the very last. Though there was no visible sign of rapidly advancing age, everything that could be done to spare her extra fatigue was arranged for. But as to the work, little could be done to lighten the task. How heavy the daily round is few really realise. It was said, and we believe truly, that during his fatal illness the late Sir Henry Ponsonby, who acted as Private Secretary to Her Majesty for so many years, used to exclaim, "It is rest I need—*rest*!" The little crowd which were wont to see the gentlemen of the household driving down Constitution Hill in the heavy carriages, with the scarlet footmen, and other gorgeous accessories, on the occasions of the Court coming to town, no doubt fancied that their lives were very easy—very splendid. Probably "the man in the street" pictured these courtiers of Queen Victoria as having nothing else to do but enjoy themselves, and never dreamed of the piles of documents, letters, and telegrams which were awaiting those employed in the task of

assisting the Queen in the government of her vast empire. And not only the "man in the street," but a number of others who might, if they had chosen to read, have known better, would have been equally surprised at that weary sigh, "It is rest I need—*rest*!" A never-ending round of work—of work that did not even cease on a journey, when sheaves of telegrams would be handed up into the royal saloon when the train stopped at Perth or wherever else it was that the special halted. It went on, as we have said, always for the Queen.

There was nothing that concerned her people that did not concern herself. It was not only, as we have seen, that she went deeply into political matters, while ever keeping, as Mr. Chamberlain[1] explained in his touching testimony to her worth at the memorial meeting at the Mansion House, "within the strictest limits of our constitution," and attaining thereby "to a height of power and

[1] *Vide* Mr. Chamberlain's speech as given in the *Morning Post*, 27th March 1901.

personal authority which even the most despotic Monarch might well have envied," but she concerned herself about even small details in far less important matters. Work must indeed have become a normal part of her existence latterly, in which in reality there was very little relaxation. If we except the morning's airing in the donkey chair, there was just the break of the afternoon drive, and nothing more, and which, when she was not in London, was taken in the very quietest manner. Indeed, those accustomed to see Her Majesty as she drove about the metropolis with some little state, particularly in going to or from the station, when she was always attended by an escort of household cavalry, would have been surprised to have met her in the quiet roads around Cowes, or even in the neighbourhood of her stately castle at Windsor. There was just the carriage and pair, with a Highland attendant on the box, and, far on ahead, one outrider—nothing more. And when the drive, which even in winter was taken rather late,

and far more so in summer, was over, the work was not finished, or, indeed, anything like finished. Dinner was generally about nine, and when Her Majesty had once more regained the privacy of her own apartments, the preparations for the next day's task had to be begun. It is hardly more than a year since the writer heard an absolutely true story of how, not very long ago at Balmoral, at one o'clock in the morning, everyone had retired to bed except an attendant or two, and the telegraph clerks, who were engaged in deciphering an immense despatch of importance from Constantinople which had begun to come in while the Court was at dinner. There was one other person up too, and that was the greatest lady in all the land! White-haired, feeble, needing rest, and yet waiting up because it was her duty to master the contents of the document at once! It was characteristic of her devotion to the great work intrusted to her, and as such the tale was told before the writer. How the picture of it rises

before one as one writes! The lonely castle, in the midst of the Highland scenery, which she knew and understood so well—nearly all the windows dark save the Queen's own! Eighty years of age, and working at that hour for the good of her people! Truly might Mr. Chamberlain say in the speech already referred to, "that all admit what a debt of gratitude this country owes to the example of her life,—a life so pure, so dignified, and yet so simple; to the spectacle of her constant devotion to duty; to her unceasing care and labour in the interests of the State, which hardly ever rested, even for a day, during the whole sixty-three years over which her reign extended." "Hardly ever rested for a single day!" We repeat the words, which seem to echo what we have already contended concerning the statements made and believed by many people, that after the Prince Consort died Her Majesty did nothing further! Yet this very work was possibly one of the reasons of her long life. It was,

we believe, Mr. Gladstone who said that he was always well because he had no time to be ill, and doubtless it was the same with the beloved Queen till almost the last. Her devotion to fresh air, too, and her generally healthy habits, no doubt contributed greatly to her length of days. For many years she appeared far more feeble than was actually the case, but this was caused by the rheumatic affection in one of her knees, which occasioned her to require assistance when she moved, particularly in the latter days. But even in making this allowance, there were no doubt times when, as age increased, she was much exhausted. The annual spring visit to the Continent did much to revive her, but that the actual journey fatigued her latterly is beyond doubt.

Not more than a few years ago it called forth a striking and pathetic account from a correspondent of republican sentiments, and which consequently makes it all the more interesting. It was called "A painful impressionist Picture," and appeared,

we believe, originally in the columns of *Truth*, though the account here set out was taken from the *Westminster Gazette*.

"I was at once glad," Mrs. Crawford records of Her Majesty's arrival at Cimiez, "and sorry to see the Queen as she alighted. The gladness was due to feeling for her the deepest respect, and to regarding her as a quite exceptional member of her caste —indeed, so exceptional that I always cry 'Amen' when I hear 'God Save the Queen.' The sorrow arose from seeing how years tell on her. She was greatly stooped. How weary she looked, and yet how kind and obliging, and well disposed to play her part in the rapidly acted pageant! She seemed unable to raise her head. The upward glances that she cast on all went to one's heart. She looked up and round under her eyelids, as if wanting strength to look otherwise. One might have thought that she did not feel her feet under her as she tried to descend the sloping gangway from her train into

the station-house. Two servants usually help her; but no doubt to lend herself to the function, she leant only on one of the Indian servants, who supported her well. The blood left her face as she tottered down. A painter worthy of the name could have done an immortal portrait if he had caught her at that moment. He should not be a frivolous Angeli from Vienna, or a fashion-plate artist from Copenhagen; but a modern Velasquez or a Bastien-Lepage, with the courage to be absolutely truthful and the ability to transfer to canvas all the history the Queen's face suggests—all the exceptional experience of her exceptionally long regal career. It more than hints all her constantly repeated and firmly fulfilled desire, to keep in the right path, and all her woman's joys and sorrows, which are written in plain characters. That painter would have said with his pencil: She was unswervingly good; at seventy-six she was invested with a majesty that altogether ceased to depend on her lofty station—that was entirely personal, and

a moral fact strange and interesting. The smile—that test of disposition—was most sweet. There was no trace of the gloom which is characteristic of so many of the Queen's photographs, not one of which conveys a moral portrait of her. How was the Queen dressed? It would be hard to describe. The clothes were all loose. Were they bundly? Perhaps; but they suited her. They conveyed the idea that she was her own law, and that she had other things to think of, more important by far than her clothes. Convenience alone was consulted. The bonnet was of white satin, veiled with black lace, and trimmed with ribbons falling down on the nape of the neck. A modern Velasquez would have been faithful in noting these details, as giving an index to the royal mind. He would have seen in them evidence of a nature superior to stupid conventionalities. For the want of such a painter, I fear one of the great lessons of the Queen's life will be lost to posterity."

No more characteristic sketch of Her

Majesty as she was at such a moment has ever appeared in print. Anyone in the habit of seeing her arrive after a long journey will recognise the truth of it at once.

And now we come to the last stage of all, and we trust we may be forgiven if for a moment we touch on a purely personal matter. Being in London during the month of December 1900, it was impossible for the writer to witness the Queen's arrival in the Isle of Wight for Christmas, as had been his custom for many years; but a *strange* feeling possessed him, and rising in the dark winter's morning, he went down from Paddington by the early train to Windsor, in order to see the Queen leave the Castle for Osborne. The royal special, which was ordered for a little after ten o'clock, was drawn up at the departure platform in readiness when the writer arrived; but it was only to learn that the hour had been postponed, and to hear a whisper that "the Queen was not well!"

A day or two before, she had visited

the Bazaar for Irish Industries. It was the last thing of the kind she was ever to attend, and, contrary to her usual habit, she had made no selections herself, but had delegated the task to the daughter who had been her constant companion, and whose marriage even had made no difference in Her Majesty's daily life.

Very grand the Castle looked that morning, in the pink mist which half-veiled its splendours, but after a while it lifted, and the grey towers and battlements showed clearly.

The Queen did not leave the quadrangle till nearly a quarter to twelve, and it was with a shock of painful surprise that the author, looking up the hill, expecting to see the outrider, saw *instead* a hearse with the customary attendants descending the steep incline! It contained the body of an old servant who had died suddenly the day before. A moment afterwards the customary procession came in sight on its way to the station. One had a vague knowledge of an outrider, equerries, and a

groom, but it was the Queen only that one saw in reality. There was the beautiful silver hair, the deep mourning one knew so well, but she seemed stiller than usual—not bowing, or scarcely bowing—grave beyond her wont! Then the carriage turned the corner by the station and passed from view; and the writer, who had contrived to see her at all the great moments of her later years, was to look upon her face on earth no more! Was it fancy that Windsor seemed greyer, stiller than usual that day!

Christmas came, and with it the death of Lady Churchill, who had gone to Osborne for her customary wait. The shock must have been terrible. Doubtless it hastened what was coming. Those in the habit of noticing the Queen's movements now saw a change. True, there were the daily drives, but even they seemed different. There was no visit to West Cowes, with the familiar entry: "The equerries were in attendance on horseback." No one dined at Osborne. The programme for

Lord Roberts' reception was altered. Instead of staying the night, he left immediately after the audience. The Secretary for the Colonies arrived, and he, too, was received, but there was no entry to the effect that he had afterwards dined with Her Majesty. There was a vague disquiet. Trouble was in the air. Then came the fatal Friday morning with the official announcement —"The Queen has not been in her customary health of late." A period of rest was spoken of as being required. One read the words over and over again, turning them now this way, now that, seeking to find some gleam in the darkness which seemed to have fallen. It was evidence of the way she was regarded by her people that everyone behaved as if a break was threatened in the family circle. "You see she was out on Tuesday"—"And she saw Lord Roberts that second time—she could not have done that if she had been so very ill," were the kind of remarks that went on all that day. True, there were people who pursued their usual round,

and did not seem in any way concerned, but they were people not likely to be distressed by anything unless it had affected their own personal comforts and so forth. In the homes where her name was a household word—and they were to be found among "the castles of the noble, the mansions of the wealthy, the cottages of the poor"[1]—the news produced the effect Monsignor Vaughan so well described in his fourth sermon on the subject: A sense of bereavement, that nothing else but the loss of one bound by the closest family ties could have done. Nothing else was thought of—nothing else was spoken of. And the next day came the news which dashed aside every ray of hope that had been gathered together, by the reminder that it was but natural that at her age she should be indisposed, and that one must expect it occasionally, and so forth.

"The Queen is in a state of great prostration, accompanied by symptoms that give rise to anxiety."

[1] Quoted from Mr. Bright's speech on the Austrian negotiations during the Crimean War.

Such an announcement might have been made about an ordinary person with a hope of recovery, but it was felt at once that it was altogether different when made respecting the Queen of Great Britain—the Empress of India—the mightiest ruler, the best loved Sovereign upon earth. And on the Sunday a great stream of prayer went forth. In the country it was a day of agonising suspense, but to those who telegraphed to London for information a little reward came in a gleam of hope in the evening. It was but a passing one after all. Who will ever forget the two days that followed,—above all, the Tuesday? The grey sky—the extraordinary silence that reigned, reminding one always of a Sunday—the hurried sound of footsteps without, as though each passenger bore tidings, or went in search of such. Towards evening this greyness passed; the western sky turned red and beautiful—great shafts of light shot upwards to the highest heavens, and in this golden brightness the Queen passed! Sons and daughters,

grandchildren, faithful friends, loving attendants,—they were all there, close to her to the very end. Into that still chamber it is not our intention to pry. In time, when it shall please those closest to her to give the details of those hours, her people who loved her, and watched by her dying couch in spirit, will welcome them with reverence; but that time is not yet. And in connection with that closing scene will ever be bound in English hearts the memory of a great Emperor's name. He was the commander of the mightiest hosts of war the world has ever seen, but it was said that within that still chamber he was tender as a woman, and we believe it. Not lightly will the people of this country let pass from their memories this hasty coming of William of Germany to a sorrow-stricken nation.

There was mourning far and wide that night when the news spread. As the *Morning Post* truly said on the morrow of that fatal 22nd January 1901: "Wept for at Osborne and Windsor, and on Deeside, and throughout her kingdoms

and empire, mourned by all the world, never did the departure of one soul cause such deep feelings of pain to so many hearts." Well might Harold Begbie write in the columns of the same paper—

"Now doth a darkness wrap the earth; a sob
Breaks from humanity and cleaves the night,
A chord in England's heart has ceased to throb:
Death's hand has passed between us and the light."

And as it was at home in our sea-girt isle, so it was in Australia—in Canada—in India—at the Cape. Nothing more dramatic, more touching, has ever been told than the story of the correspondent of the *Daily Mail*, who through the anxious days that followed the coming of the first ill-omened telegram, haunted the rude office near the African veldt, and listened to the clicking of the instrument that brought now hope, and now despair, until at last he heard—click-click-click, and a man's hoarse, broken voice gave forth the whisperings of the mystic wire—

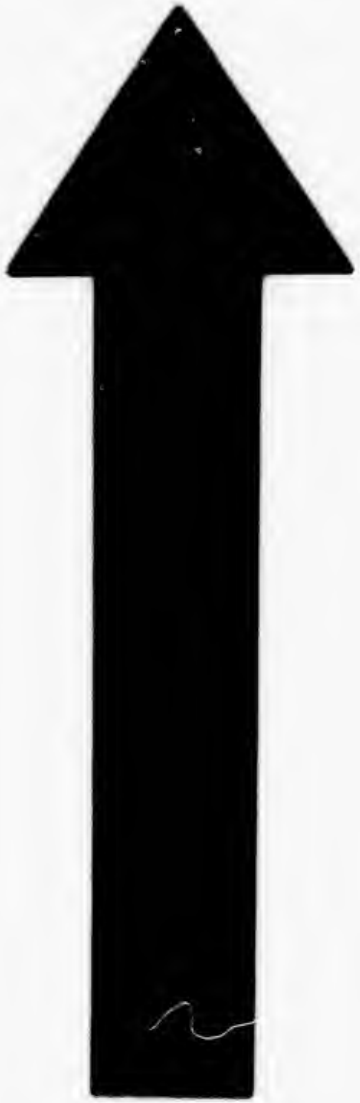
"Her Majesty died last night."

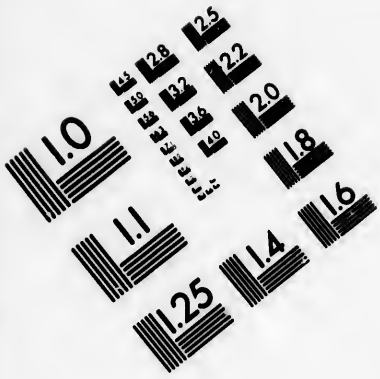
. . . . .

An Appreciation

The grey days went by. On Osborne tower the royal standard drooped sadly in the wintry air, while within she lay quiet and still with folded hands—at rest at last! A Queen in marble, they said, who saw her thus. There was a whisper — ay, perhaps more than a whisper—of a robe of pure white satin, of strewn orange blossoms, and of the face, with the sweet silver hair, hid at the last from sight by the veil she wore on that long-gone wedding morn, sixty years and more ago now. It may have been so. We repeat—to the last her heart was young.

Into the mighty pageant that followed we shall not attempt to go. The event is too recent; the purple hangings on the walls seem scarcely to have disappeared. She was happy in her life, and, as Mr. Arthur Balfour truly said, happy also in her death. It was fitting that the end should come at Osborne—"sweet Osborne," as she had ever styled it in her journals—since it enabled her sailors to pay a last tribute of love. Who that saw the passage of the tiny *Alberta*





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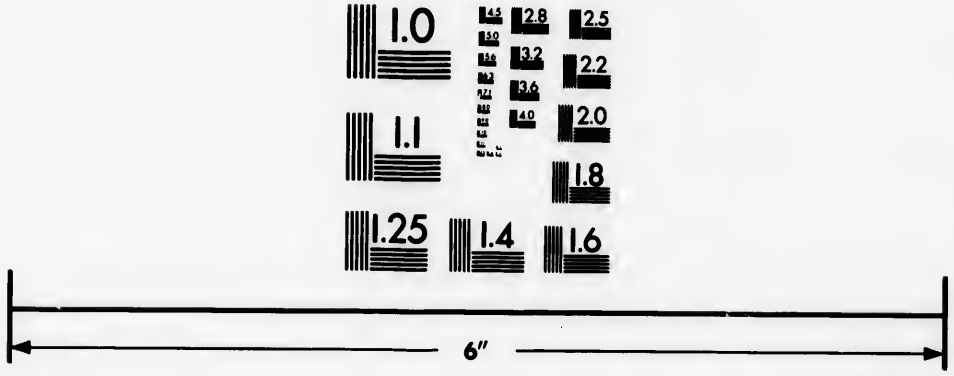

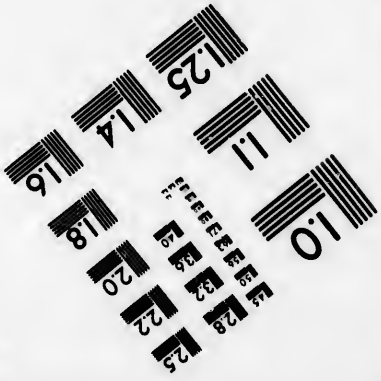

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through the lines of the mighty ships of war will ever forget it, while the minute-guns rolled like thunder along the eight miles of vessels. Overhead the sky was one great sheet of blue. "Queen's weather to the last," we whispered somehow, as we watched the splendour of the day. There were other vessels following —the *Victoria and Albert*, with the King on board, and the mighty *Hohenzollern*; but one never thought of the King, or, if one did, it was but as *her* son. Nor, we venture to think, would the King have wished it to be otherwise. There was only one thing that day, it seemed, and that was the fairy yacht, with the royal standard flying low upon the slender mast, and on the deck the snowy burden, half veiled with the ermine and crimson robe that she had worn in the hey-day of her youth, and in the sunlight of a June morn, when they crowned her Queen in the grey abbey, long, long ago. No—one only saw the *Alberta*, with its casket, around which her sailors watched. "Such a little casket to contain the heart of an empire!" as someone truly

said. Once more the shafts of light shot upward in the western sky, turning distant Osborne and its towers into a palace of gold, while the yacht sped silently through a flood of glory into the chief harbour of what, but a few short days before, had been "Her Majesty's Navy." On the morrow she was borne across London amid a manifestation of grief such has never before been witnessed for any earthly Sovereign. Not in the stately chapel of St. George at Windsor do her remains lie, but in that mausoleum which she had erected for herself and her much loved husband.

"Here will I rest with thee, and rise again with thee, beloved," were the words she had caused to be inscribed upon the walls of that beautiful memorial, and beneath the stately dome of which Victoria and Albert are now reunited.

It is too soon, and beyond the scope of this little work, to attempt to realise the effect of her life and work upon those she ever proudly called her people. That will be the task of wiser and more competent hands than ours.

The aim we have had in writing this, was to endeavour to bring home to those whose leisure hours, as we have said, do not admit of the study of lengthy volumes, the nature of her duties, and to realise something of the beauty of her character, the effect of which we believe will, in after years, fulfil the prophecy—

"She wrought her people lasting good."

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