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The Victorian Half Century

A Jubilee Book

BY

CHARLOTTE M. YONGE

AUTHOR OF 'THE HEIR OF REDCLYFFE,' 'UNKNOWN TO HISTORY,'
ETC.

WITH A PORTRAIT OF HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

London

MACMILLAN AND CO.

AND NEW YORK

1887



THE VICTORIAN HALF CENTURY







From a Photograph by Bassano.

Ann Foster



Portrait of a woman, likely a historical figure.

Ann Forrester
30th November

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Printed by R. & R. CLARK, December 1886.

Reprinted February and July 1887.

TO
THEIR ROYAL HIGHNESSES
THE FOUR SURVIVING DAUGHTERS
OF HER MAJESTY
As Dedicated (by Permission)
THIS ENDEAVOUR TO SKETCH THE CAREER OF
THEIR ROYAL MOTHER
AND
THE BELOVED MOTHER OF HER COUNTRY
ON
The Year of Jubilee

P R E F A C E

THE following brief outline of the events, domestic and public, of the last Fifty Years, may at least claim the credit of perfect accuracy, having been revised by the best authority.

C. M. YONGE.

Dec. 11, 1886.

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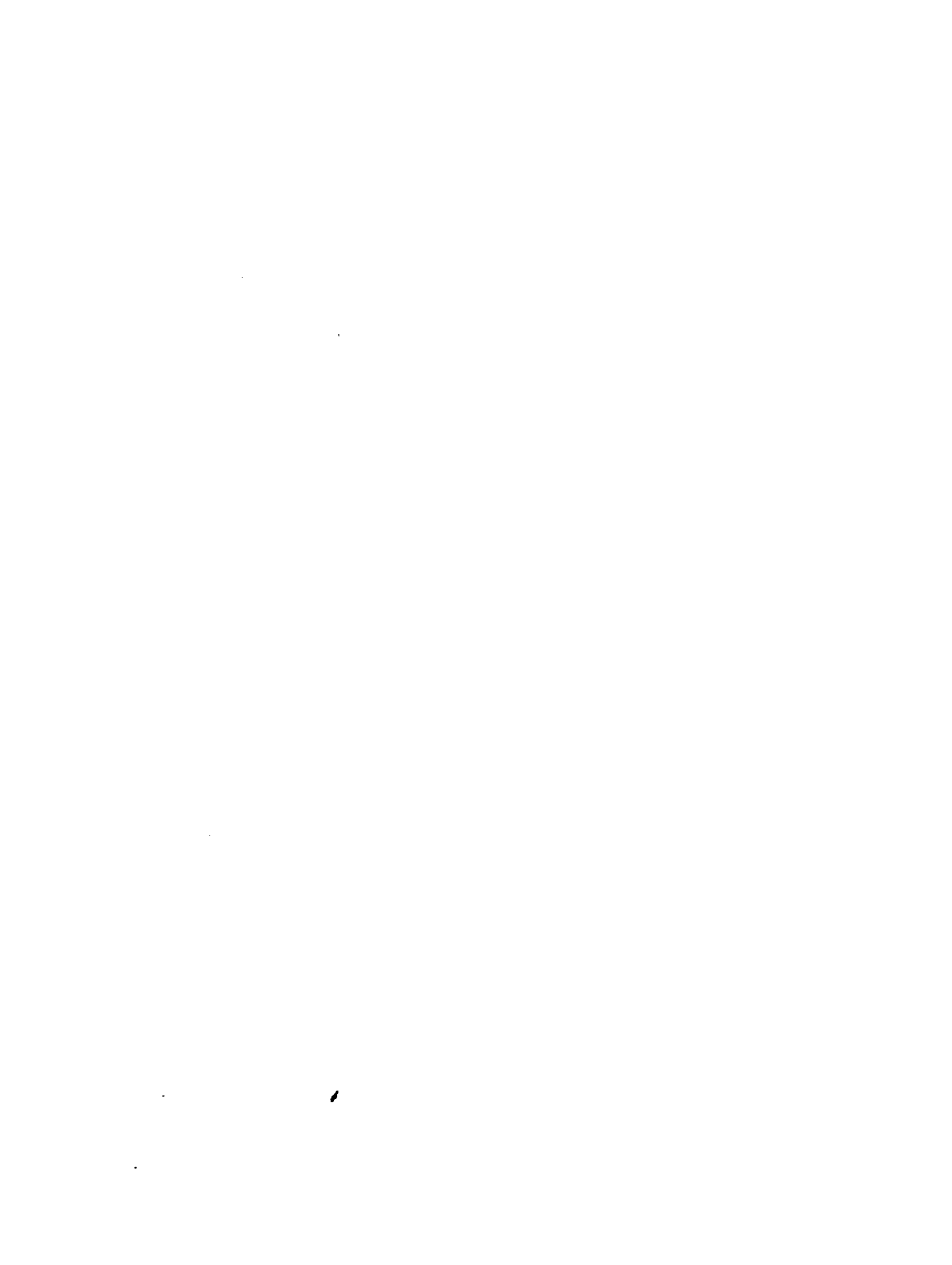
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CHAPTER I

ACCESSION

A FEW years ago there was a picture in the Royal Academy which was looked at with much attention and delight. It represented a young girl, small, slight, and slender, but full of dignity, blue-eyed, and with clear-cut features, standing with loose hair and slippered feet, to receive the homage of three elderly men, regarding her with a mixture of reverence and tenderness. It was well known to represent Queen Victoria when called up at five o'clock on the morning of the 20th of June 1837 to hear that she was Sovereign of the British dominions, when only five weeks past her eighteenth birthday.

The little May-flower, as her German relations were fond of calling her, had been born on the 24th of May 1819. Her father was Edward, Duke of Kent, fourth son of George III.

With the very best intentions, good King George had been far from successful in the education of his sons. There had been over-severity at first, and afterwards a lack of occupation. The state of the Continent likewise prevented foreign princesses from being available matches for them till they were advancing in life ; and the want of home and family had been very injurious to these young men. The second pair of brothers, William and Edward, as sailor and soldier, had more wholesome occupation than their elders, and never threw themselves into oppo-

sition to their father. The miserable marriage of their eldest brother had produced only one daughter, Princess Charlotte; the second brother had no children, and on the untimely death of Princess Charlotte, marriage was urged on the two younger princes, and their weddings took place on the same day. The Duke of Kent married Victoria, the sister of the Duke of Saxe-Coburg, and widow of the Prince of Leiningen. One little girl, the Princess Feodora of Leiningen, was hers already, and was a beloved half-sister to the "little May-flower."

The names borne by the young Princess of Kent were Alexandrina Victoria, the first being given in gratitude for some act of kindness to the Duke of Kent from the Czar Alexander of Russia. The child was only eight months old when she was left fatherless, but she was bred up with the utmost care by her mother, under the advice of Prince Leopold, brother to the Duchess, and the widowed husband of Princess Charlotte.

An establishment was formed for the Duchess at Kensington Palace, with Claremont for a country house. Here we occasionally hear notices of the little Princess. At two years old she was seen on the floor by her mother's side by the great and good William Wilberforce, who played with her, and mentioned her as "a fine animated child;" and a little later she was running about in the gardens, with her little watering-pot, administering the water as much to her own feet as to the flowers.

Her mother devoted herself to the training of the child destined to so important a station. Hers was a very different education from that of the former heiress, who had been a ball of contention between her father, mother, and grandfather, and had in the meantime been allowed to run wild by her good-natured governess, till her own noble nature asserted itself in the hands of her husband. The young Victoria, on the contrary, was anxiously guarded. Her State-governess was the Duchess of Northumberland, but she was constantly with either her mother or her actual

governess, Baroness Lehzen, and in her fifth year the Reverend George Davys (afterwards Dean of Chester and Bishop of Peterborough) became her instructor, actually teaching her letters. For an hour in the morning and an hour in the afternoon from that time forward he was with her. He gave her instruction in her religious faith, in history, Latin, and, as time went on, in whatever he thought might be needful to her; and he was often astonished at her great intelligence, and the strong memory which enabled her to imbibe so much, as well as to reflect upon what she learnt.

Her great characteristics in her childhood, as through life, were her conscientious truthfulness, warmth of heart, and sense of duty. And these were cherished by her mother, who watched over her unweariedly, and was especially desirous that no gossip should prematurely reveal to her the position in which she stood.

It was when she was about twelve years old, after George IV. was dead and William IV. was on the throne, that arrangements were being publicly made for a Regency in the event of the King's dying while she was in her minority. It was then agreed between mother, tutor, and governess that it was time that she should be aware of what awaited her; and Dr Davys therefore set her to draw out the genealogical tree of English royalty. Presently she said earnestly, "Mamma, I cannot see who is to come after uncle William, unless it is myself."

She was told that so it was. "It is a very solemn thing," she said. "Many a child would boast, but they don't know the difficulty. There is splendour, but there is responsibility." Then lifting up her forefinger, and giving her hand to her governess, she earnestly said, "I will be good."

"And she has kept her promise
Through all her length of life;
And all her subjects bless her—
Good mother, Queen, and wife."

She added that she now saw why she had been made to learn Latin, when it had not been required of her cousin Augusta.

It is plain that from that time she must have thought much and independently of the future, and there was a great deal to bring it before her. Her mother used yearly to take her on journeys, so as to visit remarkable places in England, and the people thronged to behold the maiden who was to be their future Sovereign. On the other hand, this attention excited the jealousy of the King. William IV. had entered the Navy at a time when coarseness of manners prevailed, and he was rude both in speech and behaviour. Both he and his wife were very fond of their young niece, but while good Queen Adelaide was on affectionate terms with the Duchess of Kent, King William made no secret of his dislike to his heiress's mother, and his desire that she should never become Regent.

When all the royal party were dining together, he expressed this hope in such unmeasured and insulting language as reduced the two elder ladies to dismayed silence, and the younger one to tears. Eighteen is the age fixed for the majority of sovereigns. The Princess's birthday had come, and she had been presented, but she still wished to continue her studies with the Dean of Chester, and her mark still stands in the memoirs of Mrs Hutchinson, which she was reading with him.

William IV. died in the night, and at five in the morning the Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr Howley), the Marquess of Conyngham (Lord Chamberlain), and Sir Henry Hallford, the royal physician, drove up to Kensington Palace, and had some difficulty in making themselves heard by the sleeping household. In a few minutes the young Queen came in her dressing-gown, with a white shawl thrown round her, her hair hanging down, and slippers on her bare feet. At the words "Your Majesty" she held out her hand to be kissed. Tears stood in her eyes, but she was perfectly dignified and composed. By nine o'clock

she was ready for her first Privy Council, where she sat at the head of the table to receive the homage of the Ministers, of whom Viscount Melbourne was Premier, of the Duke of Wellington, then Commander-in-Chief, and of the royal Dukes of Cambridge and Sussex. She was collected throughout, only when these two old uncles bent the knee before her a deep blush tinged her face and neck.

Afterwards she went to St. James's Palace to show herself at the window while proclamation of her accession was made by the heralds; but there were no great acclamations, and she was observed to look pale. Loyalty had been a good deal trifled away by the two latter kings, and she had to win it back again.

Her good sense and judgment were very striking. In all the questions that arose respecting her attendants and expenses, she took a line of her own, which had evidently been thought out carefully. Hitherto a most submissive daughter, she saw that, as Queen, she must permit no influence to lead her. This was at first a great disappointment to the Duchess of Kent, but the daughter's tenderness, affection, and filial deference never failed, and gradually the terms on which they stood were perfectly satisfactory, the Duchess living in her own apartments, except in the evening, at meals, and when they drove out together, and never meddling in matters of State.

The great object of the young Queen was that the debts that her father had left should be paid, and for this she avoided all unnecessary expense or display. She also did all in her power for the friends of her childhood, making her tutor, as soon as was possible, a Bishop, taking his eldest daughter into her household, and giving the Baroness Lehzen an appointment about her person.

The next great ceremony at which she appeared was the opening of her first Parliament, going in the old-fashioned State-coach, drawn by the equally old-fashioned cream-coloured horses, bred in Hanover.

Many years after, Napoleon III., who was then passing through London as an unknown personage, said that no sight had ever more impressed him than that of the youthful maiden on the throne, reading her speech in the sweet, silvery, clear voice, so simple, yet so majestic.

CHAPTER II

THE CORONATION

THE young Queen found in power a Whig Ministry headed by Viscount Melbourne, a man of great courtesy and gentleness, whom she always regarded with gratitude for the kind and clear manner in which he initiated her into the routine of business.

She took up her abode for the chief part of the year in Buckingham Palace, using beautiful Windsor Castle for her country home, and with her mother always by her side. Every one was eager to see their young Sovereign, and very kindly did she gratify them, always bearing in mind the saying of old Louis XVIII., that the politeness of royalty is punctuality. The custom was that the royal family should parade on Sunday afternoons on the broad terrace at Windsor, and the public be admitted to see them, and eagerly did they avail themselves of the opportunity; but this is one of the many things that have been put an end to by the greater facility and cheapness of travelling, since such crowds would have thronged by train to enjoy the spectacle as to destroy all comfort even for themselves, and cause confusion.

The same cause has prevented the great triennial festival of Eton—Montem, when all the boys paraded at Salt Hill, some in costume, some in red coats, some in blue, to collect contributions for the University expenses of the captain of the college boys. Hither came Queen Victoria,

It was decided that instead of the banquet in Westminster Hall, which would gratify only a few, there should be a grand procession in state equipage including all the foreign ambassadors, from four to six miles long, from Buckingham Palace to Westminster Abbey, so that as many persons as possible might behold part of the pageant. Of the procession the great music composer Felix Mendelssohn writes, "At a quarter past twelve the procession began to arrive at Westminster Abbey and in an hour later the whole had been absorbed in the Cathedral. I need not describe the procession in full, but will mention a few details. So, for instance, I was hit by the good feeling of a whole nation, that of a queen when Marsina's boat appeared. Nothing more brilliant could be seen than all the beaming notes with their rich harness, the carriages and groom covered with gold embroideries, and the splendour of the people. All this too was embraced by the vegetable and animal and the crowds of common people under the full sky, which was only now and then pierced by sunshine: a first indeed it rained. But when the golden lion-like carriage supported by lions with their heads and surmounted by the great crown of England drove up and the graceful girl was seen bowing right and left — when at that instant the mass of people was completely moved by their waving handkerchiefs and raised hand while one roar of cheering almost drowned the pealing of the bells, the blare of the trumpets, and thundering of the guns, one had to pinch oneself to make sure it was not all a dream out of the Arabian Nights. Then fell a sudden silence, the silence of a church, after the Queen had entered the Cathedral. I mixed among the crowd, walked up to the door of the Abbey, and peered into the solemn obscurity; but any involuntary emotion was dispelled by a sense of the ludicrous, as I looked closely at their dressed-up modern

had been the
"Lips"

er of the French in Spain against the

and it was then that in the confusion of boys and carriages one little fellow was being pushed down in the throng, and would have been under the wheel if she had not stretched out a hand, which he grasped so as to be able to recover his feet. She said something about being glad, but he was too much bewildered to utter anything before she had passed on. He was Coleridge Patteson, the future Missionary-bishop of the Melanesian Isles.

Here is a description of a ball at Buckingham Palace in the May of the same year, from Mr. Charles Greville's memoirs:—

"The Queen's manner and bearing perfect. She danced first with Prince George¹, then young Esterhazy, then Lord Fitzalan. Before supper, and after dancing, she sat on a sofa, somewhat elevated, in the drawing-room, looking at the waltzing; she did not waltz herself. Her mother sat on one side of her, and the Princess Augusta on the other, then the Duchesses of Gloucester and Cambridge and the Princess of Cambridge, her household with their wands standing all round, her manners exceedingly graceful, and blended with dignity and cordiality, a simplicity and good humour when she talks to people which are mightily captivating. When supper was announced she moved from her seat, all her officers going before her, she first alone, and the royal family following, her exceeding youth strikingly contrasting with their mature age, but she did it well."

Later he says, "It is the remarkable union of naïvete, kindness, nature—good nature, with propriety and dignity, which make her so admirable and so endearing to those about her, as she certainly is. I have been repeatedly told that they are all warmly attached to her, but albeit all feel the impossibility of for a moment losing sight of the respect which they owe her. She never ceases to be a queen, and is always the most charming, cheerful, and obliging, unaffected queen in the world."

The Coronation was fixed for the 28th of June 1838.

¹ The Duke of Cambridge.

It was decided that instead of the banquet in Westminster Hall, which would gratify only a few, there should be a grand procession in State equipages, including all the foreign ambassadors, by a route two or three miles long, from Buckingham Palace to Westminster Abbey, so that as many persons as possible might behold part of the pageant. Of the procession the great musical composer Felix Mendelssohn writes, "At a quarter-past twelve the procession began to arrive at Westminster Abbey, and by an hour later the whole had been absorbed in the Cathedral. I need not describe the procession in full, but will mention a few details. So, for instance, it was fine to see the good feeling of a whole nation break out in cheers when Marshal Soult appeared.¹ Nothing more brilliant could be seen than all the beautiful horses with their rich harness, the carriages and grooms covered with gold embroideries, and the splendidly dressed people inside. All this too was encircled by the venerable gray buildings and the crowds of common people under the dull sky, which was only now and then pierced by sunbeams; at first indeed it rained. But when the golden fairy-like carriage, supported by Tritons with their tridents, and surmounted by the great crown of England, drove up, and the graceful girl was seen bowing right and left — when at that instant the mass of people was completely hidden by their waving handkerchiefs and raised hats, while one roar of cheering almost drowned the pealing of the bells, the blare of the trumpets, and thundering of the guns, one had to pinch oneself to make sure it was not all a dream out of the Arabian Nights. Then fell a sudden silence, the silence of a church, after the Queen had entered the Cathedral. I mixed among the crowd, walked up to the door of the Abbey, and peered into the solemn obscurity; but my involuntary emotion was dispelled by a sense of the ludicrous, as I looked closely at their dressed-up modern

¹ He had been the Commander of the French in Spain against the Duke of Wellington.

cinq-centi halberdiers (the beef-eaters), whose cheeks suggest beef, and whose noses tell tales of whisky and claret."

It is said that half a million of persons came up from the country for a chance of the sight of the procession, though, of course, only a limited number could be accommodated in Westminster Abbey. Even those whose office or rank gave them a place had to be admitted at 7 A.M., after waiting an hour in the cloisters in wet and wind; but the sun came out, making it "Queen's weather," and flashing on the diamonds of the tiers of peeresses, so that their rainbow-sparkling reflections played wonderfully on the arches of that most beautiful of all clerestories.

At ten o'clock the sound of cannon announced that the Queen had entered her carriage, and by and by she appeared in a royal robe of crimson velvet, furred with ermine and bordered with gold, the collar of the Order of the Garter round her neck, and a small circlet of gold round her head. Three swords were borne before her, the emblems of justice, of defence, and the blunted Curtana—the sword of mercy, betokening that the Sovereign alone can pardon a convicted criminal. Her train was borne by the eight fairest girls to be found among the daughters of the dukes and marquesses, all in cloth of silver, with roses in their hair. An eye-witness says, "The Queen came in as gay as a lark, and looking like a girl on her birthday. However, this only lasted till she reached the middle of the cross of the Abbey, at the foot of the throne. On her rising from her knees before the faldstool after her private devotions, the Archbishop of Canterbury turned her round to each of the four corners of the Abbey, saying, in a voice so clear that it was heard in the inmost recesses, 'Sirs, I here present unto you the undoubted Queen of this realm. Will ye all swear to do her homage?' Each time he said it there were shouts of 'Long live Queen Victoria!' and the sounding of trumpets and the waving of banners, which made the poor little Queen turn first very red and then

very pale. Most of the ladies cried, and I felt I should not forget it as long as I lived. The Queen recovered herself after this, and went through all the rest as if she had often been crowned before, but seemed much impressed by the service, and a most beautiful one it is."

The service was drawn up by St. Dunstan about the year 979, and, with a very few modifications, has been used ever since. The Communion Service is its foundation. An ingot of gold was offered by Her Majesty, and, after a brief sermon by the Bishop of London, the Archbishop administered the solemn oath to guard and do justice to her people, to observe the laws, and defend the Church.

The anointing followed, no empty ceremony, but the outward sign of the Holy Spirit of rule and authority. Four Knights of the Garter, in their blue velvet mantles, held a canopy of cloth of gold over the Sovereign's head, while the Dean of Westminster, taking the golden ampulla from the altar, poured into the spoon some of the oil, with which the Archbishop traced the cross on her head and hands, pronouncing the words, "Be thou anointed with holy oil, as kings, priests, and prophets were anointed," while the choir chanted the anthem of the anointing of Solomon. Then he gave her his solemn benediction. She looked like a child receiving a father's blessing as she knelt, and all the bishops around joined their voices in one solemn Amen. The Primate then placed her on the throne, or rather St. Edward's chair, so named from Edward the Confessor. Beneath the seat lies a rough stone, called in Erse the *Lia Fail*, or Stone of Destiny. Tradition declares that it once was Jacob's pillow at Bethel, whence it was brought to Cashel, where the kings of Munster sat on it to be crowned. In 513 King Fergus, having conquered part of Scotland, carried it thither, and Scottish kings took their seat on it till 1296, when Edward I., thinking he had annexed Scotland, brought it to Westminster, and placed it where it has ever since remained. Here the Queen received the ring betrothing her to her people, the orb of

empire,—a small globe surmounted by a cross, and the sceptre of rule. There, as the Queen sat, the Archbishop placed the crown of England on her head, and at the same moment the peers and peeresses simultaneously put on their coronets, the bishops their mitres, the heralds their caps, the trumpets sounded, the drums beat, the cannon outside fired, the Tower guns answered, and mighty cheers within and without rent the air. The Archbishop then presented the Bible to Her Majesty, and again led her to the throne, after which he was the first to do homage, followed by all the lords spiritual (the other bishops) and the lords temporal, in regular order, according to their rank. Each removed his coronet, touched the crown on the Queen's head, and spoke thus: "I do become your liegeman of life and limb, and of earthly worship; and faith and love I will bear unto you, to live and die against all manner of folks. So help me God."

Among the barons came Lord Rolle, who many years before had received the Queen's grandfather, George III., in his house in Devonshire, and whose pride and display on the occasion had been ridiculed in a witty poem called "The Rolliad." He was now past eighty, though still full of energy; and as he tried to climb the steps of the throne his foot caught in his robes and he fell, the young Queen above moving forward to try to help him. This natural warm impulse drew forth ecstatic shouts; and when the brave old man was raised and insisted on still paying his homage, he was led forward, and she rose so as to save him effort, while there were renewed cheers. Foreigners were said to fancy his prostration was the tenure by which he held his barony.

The last created baron having sworn allegiance, the Queen showed where her own homage was due by removing her crown while she received the Holy Communion. Then, the last blessing having been uttered, with the crown on her head, the sceptre in one hand and the orb in the other, the crowned Majesty of England left the Abbey,

bowing once to the old Lord Rolle in congratulation, as she saw him safe in his place. The whole gorgeous array swept after her.

A little bit behind the scenes must also be given from Mr. Greville. "Lord John Thynne, who officiated for the Dean of Westminster, told me that nobody knew what was to be done except the Archbishop and himself (who had rehearsed), Lord Willoughby (who is experienced in these matters), and the Duke of Wellington, and consequently there was a continual difficulty and embarrassment, and the Queen never knew what she was to do next. They made her leave her chair and enter into St. Edward's Chapel before the prayers were concluded, much to the discomfiture of the Archbishop. She said to John Thynne, 'Pray tell me what I am to do, for they don't know.' And at the end, when the orb was put into her hand, she said, 'What am I to do with it?' 'Your Majesty is to carry it, if you please, in your hand.' 'Am I?' she said; 'it is very heavy.' The ruby ring was made for her little finger instead of the fourth, on which the Rubric prescribes that it should be put. When the Archbishop was to put it on she extended the former, but he said it must be put on the latter. She said it was too small, and she could not get it on. He said it was right to put it there, and as he insisted she yielded, but had first to take off her other rings, and then this was forced on; but it hurt her very much, and as soon as the ceremony was over she was obliged to bathe her finger in iced water in order to get it off."

CHAPTER III

MARRIAGE

THE painful pressure of the coronation ring was perhaps a token that cares and troubles were ready for the young head that wore the crown. At home there were the men who called themselves Chartists, because they called for a charter of equality; and as usual there were difficulties about Ireland, its champion being Daniel O'Connell. In all this hitherto Lord Melbourne had been the Queen's great counsellor. Her life at Windsor was thus:—She rose at a little after eight, breakfasted in her private rooms, then admitted her ministers, and spent every morning on business, reading all the despatches, and entering into every matter laid before her, ending with an hour or two with Lord Melbourne. After luncheon she rode out with her suite, Lord Melbourne on one side, an equerry on the other, generally very fast. On coming in she amused herself with music and singing or other pursuits until dinner, which was called at half-past seven, but she seldom appeared till after eight, when she came down with the Duchess of Kent. When the ladies came to the drawing-room she stood, moving about from one to the other, talking a little to each, and also speaking to the gentlemen when they came in from the dining-room, and a whist table was made up for the Duchess of Kent; and Her Majesty and all the rest sat about a great round table and made what conversation was possible, and, as Mr. Greville

said, it was uphill work. However, the first great change that impended was by no means welcomed. The ministry were so nearly outvoted that they resigned, and a new question arose. Sir Robert Peel, the Conservative leader, could not but recollect the last female reign, when the influence of the Duchess of Marlborough, and afterwards of Lady Masham, had been paramount, and it was yet to be proved of what different mould Queen Victoria was from Queen Anne. He insisted that, on the change of ministry, the ladies of the household should also be changed, and to this the Queen would not submit. She was much attached to her ladies. She wrote, "They wanted to deprive me of my ladies, and, I suppose, they would deprive me next of my dressers and my housemaids, but I will show them that I am Queen of England."

It was altogether a misunderstanding, for Sir Robert Peel really wished for only a very few changes, and chiefly desired to establish the principle, while the Queen resisted with the vehemence of her warm heart and her twenty years. The matter ended by Lord Melbourne's return to office, and for a time in a dislike on the Queen's part to Peel, and a resentment against her among the Conservative party—both of which sentiments happily soon gave way.

If the discontent and displeasure thus excited made the youthful Queen doubt the wisdom of her resistance, she must have looked forward all the more to having a manly judgment to assist her in her perplexities.

The youth whom the family had already selected for her husband was just reaching man's estate. He was the second son of her mother's eldest brother, the Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld. The next brother to the Duke, and, in right of ability and force of character, the head of the family, was Leopold, the widowed husband of our lamented Princess Charlotte, and by election the King of the Belgians, for whom his prudence secured much peace and prosperity.

The young Albert had been born at Rosenau on the 26th

of August 1819, so that he was three months junior to the Queen. He had been wisely and carefully educated, with a strong sense of religious duty and of responsibility. In 1836 his father had brought him and his elder brother to England in order that the Duchess of Kent might judge of him, and that, if possible, the two young people might form an attachment to one another.

The experiment was successful, but no more then passed, and the Prince was sent to study at the University of Bonn, and to travel in Italy. He became both well informed and accomplished to no ordinary degree, with considerable knowledge both of art and music; and his character was perfectly blameless, through all the surroundings of German student life, and in spite of high spirits which found vent in some of the practical jokes to which Germans are addicted. He was somewhat shy and retiring, and there were always few with whom he could unbend, but those who were admitted to know him familiarly loved and admired him extremely. His personal beauty, too, was great. His figure was tall and manly, and the classic regularity of his features was like an ancient gem, his complexion clear and pale, lighted up by bright blue eyes, and a very sweet though rare smile. As Disraeli long after said, "he had been most carefully trained, and *not over-educated for his intellect.*"

Such was the young man who, at twenty, was invited with his brother in the October of 1839 to make a visit at Windsor, every one but himself thoroughly knowing why. However, in the case of a sovereign, the gentleman cannot take the initiative, and it may well be believed that the Queen said the most nervous thing she had ever had to do was the making her proposal. It was done! and King Leopold wrote that he could say, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace," while the Queen made her formal announcement to the Privy Council.

The country watched a little anxiously. The antecedents of consorts to British Queens regnant had not

been encouraging. Philip of Spain had been a hateful tyrant, Henry of Darnley mischievous and wretched in life and death, George of Denmark a mere nonentity, only remembered for his habit of saying *Est il possible*; and this German prince was young and untried, so that his possible influence was regarded with a certain jealousy. In fact justice was never completely done to him by the country in his lifetime. It was only after his death that England acknowledged what manner of man he had been.

Still an enthusiastic welcome was not lacking when he arrived as a bridegroom on the 6th of February 1840. The marriage took place on the 10th in the Chapel Royal at St. James's, and sounds of cannon announced to London when the ring was placed on the Queen's finger.

The pair proceeded to Windsor, where they were received by an ecstatic throng of Eton boys in white gloves and white favours. They only remained there three days, and then returned to Buckingham Palace. Lady Lyttelton thus describes the royal bride: "Her look of confidence and comfort at the Prince as they walked away as man and wife was very pleasing to see. I understand she is in extremely high spirits since. Such a new thing for her to *dare* to be *unguarded* in conversing with anybody, and with her frank and fearless nature the restraints she has hitherto been under, from one reason or another, must have been most painful."

CHAPTER IV

MARRIED LIFE

AMONG the special trials of royalty may be reckoned that of being the observed of all observers, and therefore a mark for gossip and misrepresentation not always intentionally malevolent, but arising from the peculiar satisfaction people feel in spreading unpleasant reports about those in high station.

All through the girlhood of the Princess Victoria it was said that her ankles were weak, and it was only when she was seen freely standing and walking that this foolish idea was dissipated. Her husband could not escape the murmurs of evil tongues, and for a long time all that was thought to proceed from him—even an alteration in soldiers' caps—was looked on with suspicion and dislike. The course of conduct he proposed to himself, and consistently maintained, was liable to be misunderstood. With talents, abilities, and force of character, such as might have made him visibly a leader of men, he deliberately effaced himself and abstained from courting popularity. He did the work, made the suggestions, moved the wheels, but in the background, leaving the Queen always the prominent part, and the full honour of whatever was done. And at the same time, in the full prime of youth and flush of spirits, scarcely yet twenty-one years old, he gave up time and amusement to devote himself to his wife, and to toil in services for the State for which he expected to reap no credit. That in

personal intercourse he was regarded as stiff, cold, and proud arose (as was found in after years) from his determination to form no associations which might by any possibility be turned to purposes of intrigue or party spirit, or unfairly bias his own judgment. Such a life of resolute, high-principled unselfishness in the full glare of a court is almost unexampled ; and it had the reward of the Queen's perfect affection and confidence, the true relations of husband and wife being preserved in full perfection—without ever disturbing those of sovereign and consort.

Another trial of royalty is that conspicuous personages attract the notice of the insane or semi-insane, and, in the June following the marriage, the first of these crazed attacks on the Queen's life was made. As she was driving with the Prince in a pony carriage up Constitution Hill some one in the crowd fired a pistol at her. The Queen started up, but was pulled back by Prince Albert, and a second pistol was fired, happily without effect, before the wretch was secured. As a newspaper poet wrote at the time—

“ She turned not with a woman's fear
To sheltering palace wall ;
Her guards were in her subjects' hearts—
The hope, the star of all.

Was this a soul unfit to reign ?
Was this, the bright young bride,
A girl, irresolute and weak—
A mock to England's pride ?

No, if to that high soul be joined
Fair face and feeble arm,
It doth but add, to thinking minds,
A glory and a charm.”

The unhappy man proved to be a youth named Edward Oxford, who had been a pot-boy. The only reason he had to give was, “ I thought I might as well shoot at her as at any one else.” There was sufficient ground for deciding that he was insane, and he was placed in a lunatic asylum for life. When he heard of later attempts on the Queen,

he observed that if he himself had been hanged others would have abstained.

Till her marriage the Queen had never been happy except in London, and had found the country dull. Prince Albert's varied tastes for landscape-gardening, farming, improvements of the breeds of horses and cattle, made the sojourn at Windsor delightful to her, and drawing and music were further pursued together. The Prince gave several hours each day to studying with Mr. Selwyn, a distinguished barrister, on the constitution and laws of England, and read Hallam's *Constitutional History of England* with the Queen.

On the 21st of November was born at Buckingham Palace the Queen's first child, Victoria, Princess-Royal. It was only a few days later that a boy named Jones was found hidden under a sofa in the outer room. He was discovered by the nurse, who called Prince Albert without alarming the Queen. He proved to be an underwitted lad named Jones who had wandered aimlessly into the Palace, and the wits of the time called him In-i-go Jones. The day before the christening, on the 10th of February, the Queen's hand, ever so ready to help, had been the one to help Prince Albert to climb the bank of the sheet of water in the grounds of Buckingham Palace when the ice had given way with him.

The Prince of Wales was born on the 9th of November of the ensuing year, 1841, and was christened, with the King of Prussia for his godfather, on the 25th of January in St. George's Chapel. As a specimen of the flying reports, it was said that the Queen looked cross, and she was indeed very anxious about their little daughter, who was suffering from teething, though, except for this, it appears from private letters and journals that nobody could have been more joyous or better contented than the happy young mother. The service ended with the "Hallelujah Chorus," by Prince Albert's special desire. He said an anthem would send everybody away criticising the music,

whereas, with the "Hallelujah Chorus" they would go with hearts full of praise.

Afterwards there was a grand installation of the King of Prussia as Knight of the Garter, and a splendid banquet in St. George's Hall.

The court had become much brighter and more lively, and the Prince had persuaded his royal wife to give up her late hours, and indeed she soon found that only by early rising could she make time to see much of her children.

Shortly after Samuel Wilberforce, Archdeacon of Surrey, son of the great anti-slavery champion, speaks of having been taken by the Prince to see "the young Duke of Cornwall, and a very fine boy he is" (the eldest sons of our monarchs are born Dukes of Cornwall and created Princes of Wales).

Archdeacon Wilberforce was at that time one of the Prince's chaplains. The great beauty of his sermons and the remarkable fascination of his manners rendered him at that time always welcome at Windsor. He was wont in after life to say that the Prince was the ablest man with whom he ever conversed.

Two years later, in 1845, he was made Bishop of Oxford, which involves being Chaplain to the Order of the Garter, and later he became Almoner, so as to have the distribution on Maundy-Thursdays of royal gifts and silver pennies to persons equalling in number the Sovereign's age.

CHAPTER V

CHANGES

THE Victorian reign has been an era of great change, often brought about by inventions, whose importance was scarcely understood at the moment of their discovery. It is impossible here to dwell on them in detail, but they had, for the most part, dated from an earlier period. The power of steam in working machinery had been discovered in the last century, and its application to the loom and the forge had already enabled the coal districts of England to become the great workshop of the world.

The work of women and children was needed in the factories, and multitudes flocked to Manchester, Bradford, and the cotton-weaving districts. Factory labour unrestricted was fast becoming a cruel system of oppression, and it was the life-long toil of the generous-hearted Earl of Shaftesbury to obtain protection by the laws for those who could not protect themselves from the exactions of trade. Steam had also been applied to locomotion, first by water, then by land, and during the earlier years of Queen Victoria a mighty system of railways was fast branching forth over Great Britain and the Continent, making an infinite difference in the facility of communication and transport.

This rendered possible the great invention of Rowland Hill, a commercial schoolmaster, who was the first to devise the pre-payment of every letter by a penny stamp, bringing down the cost of correspondence so that the number of

letters might more than supply the difference of payment upon each. The amount was first reduced to fourpence, then emblematic envelopes were supplied which turned out more grotesque than useful ; but in 1840 the "Queen's head" stamp was introduced, and the postal system began which has gradually extended throughout the whole civilised world.

Sir Robert Peel, the Prime Minister who succeeded Lord Melbourne when in 1841 the Whigs went out of office and the Conservatives came in, belonged to a family whose wealth and eminence had been gained in the early days of manufactories. His grandfather had been known as Parsley Peel, from a favourite pattern for calico prints suggested to his daughter Nancy by a parsley leaf.

On the change of ministry the question of the ladies of the bedchamber was solved by the voluntary resignation of those more closely connected with politics. Mr. C. Greville (clerk of the council) speaks in the highest terms of the grace and dignity with which the Queen went through a change so painful to her as parting with Lord Melbourne, to whom she had trusted entirely for four years, together with his colleagues. Her whole conduct showed her morally, as well as by station, the greatest lady in the land, and Sir Robert Peel only wished to show her all consideration. The parting advice that Lord Melbourne left for him was no small testimony to her good sense. "Whenever he does anything," said the retiring minister, "or has anything to propose, let him explain to her clearly his reasons. The Queen is not conceited; she is aware there are many things she cannot understand, and she likes to have them explained to her elementarily, not at length and in detail, but shortly and clearly."

And now another calico printer, Richard Cobden, was working in the direction of fresh changes. The most urgent question of the day was on the Corn Law. Was a duty on imported corn to be maintained for the sake of giving what was termed "protection" to the agriculturists?

Was it to the true advantage of the country that bread should be as cheap as possible, or that the price should be kept up by the duty on foreign importations, so that the home farmer should be able to grow corn and pay his taxes without too much loss? There were the further questions whether Great Britain were able to feed her whole population; and again, if her farmers could not hold out against foreign competition, and the nation became dependent on supplies from without, what might be the result in case of a war or other disaster cutting these off?

Meantime the price of bread depended on the harvest, and sometimes rose so high that there was considerable distress, which was most felt by the manufacturing population. Each party viewed the other as short-sighted and likely to ruin the country, and long ago the poet Moore had written a humorous dialogue between Corn and Cotton ending with

"Squire Corn would be down before long."

Several attempts had been made to adjust the difference by a sliding scale of duty, by which the impost on foreign corn was lowered in proportion as a failure in the crops might enhance the price of wheat at home; but there was a strong desire to do away with all such duties among persons unconnected with land, and this was brought to a head by Cobden's organisation of an anti-corn law league.

No one had benefited more by the works of the giant steam than royalty itself. Formerly most sovereigns revolved in as narrow a circle as chess kings, since the expense of moving with a large suite was excessive, accommodation was hard to find, and hospitality was a heavy tax even on grandees. Queen Elizabeth had indeed made progresses—but, as it was said, partly for the sake of destroying superfluous wealth in her nobles; and in France a visit of Louis XIV. had caused the suicide of the chief cook of the Prince of Condé in despair at the delay of the sea fish for the banquet. George III. had never gone farther than

Devonshire, and a visit from one monarch to another was regarded as an extraordinary event. Queen Victoria, however, was able to favour her principal subjects with visits, without inconveniencing them more than was amply compensated by the honour and gratification, and great was the enjoyment of both Queen and Prince of the historical interest of Woburn Abbey and Hatfield House, and of Sir Robert Peel's noted collection of pictures at Drayton Manor. The country people thronged to see the Sovereign, and throngs of farmers on horseback escorted them, sometimes almost smothering them with dust. In 1842 the first visit was made to Scotland, and intensely enjoyed. King Leopold had always been a frequent visitor. His second wife was very much beloved by the Queen for her noble truthful nature. "Louise is perfect," she wrote, "so excellent, so full of every kind and high feeling. Albert is the only equal to her in unselfishness."

This charming lady was the daughter of the King of the French, Louis Philippe, who, during his exile in the days of the great French Revolution, had been an intimate friend of the Duke of Kent. Moreover his daughter-in-law, the recently-widowed Duchess of Orleans, was a cousin on the mother's side of Prince Albert. In the August of 1843, the first trip of the royal steam yacht, *Victoria and Albert*, carried the personages whose name she bore to visit Louis Philippe and his family at the Château d'Eu, near Tréport. In spite of the recent sorrow that had fallen on them by the fatal accident to the Duke of Orleans, it was a very happy time. The other sons and daughters of the French King were young and bright, and Queen Amélie was a tender motherly person, and there was all the ease and enjoyment of a large and lively family, a great novelty to one who had grown up in comparative solitude. The French soldiery and peasants at hand showed an enthusiasm for their young guest, and both sovereigns augured the extinction of the long instinctive hatred of English and French. Here is a pretty and touching scene recorded in the royal journal,

when the young mother showed the elder, so recently bereaved of her eldest born, the portrait of her little ones, "Puss and the boy." She said to us so dearly, so kindly, "God bless them, and may they never grieve you." I then expressed a wish that they might become like her children, and she said in one thing she hoped they might, viz. "in their attachment to their parents! But they bring grief too!" In saying this she looked down, her eyes filled with tears, and she added, "After all, as God wills."

Immediately after there was a voyage to Belgium, where the great old historical towns were visited. One sentence of Prince Albert's letter about his uncle's children has a melancholy interest, "Little Charlotte is the prettiest child you ever saw."

This summer of 1842 had seen another strange attempt on the Queen's life, one by a youth named Francis. Miss Liddell, one of her maids of honour, writes: "On the 29th May I was in-waiting at Buckingham Palace, and had attended divine service on Sunday at the Chapel Royal with the Queen and Prince Albert. As we were driving back from church there was a momentary delay in the Birdcage Walk, but the ladies-in-waiting who were in the second carriage knew not the cause of the stoppage. However we noticed that the Prince looked annoyed, and went away with the equerries. The Queen, who was quite calm and collected, walked up the grand staircase to her apartments, talking to her ladies, and spoke of the sermon." The following day Miss Liddell and Miss Paget waited in vain for a summons to drive with the Queen, and they saw her drive off in an open carriage with Prince Albert. By and by they heard of the attempt of Francis, and in the evening, while the Queen was talking over the matter with Sir Robert Peel, she turned to Miss Liddell and said, "I dare say, Georgy, you were surprised at not driving with me this afternoon, but the fact was that as we returned from church yesterday, a man presented a pistol at the carriage window, which flashed in the pan. We were so

taken by surprise that he had time to escape, so I knew what was hanging over me, and was determined to expose no life but my own."

Well may she be called "our lion heart."

Sir Robert Peel, a man of highly sensitive feeling, was much overcome by the danger she incurred.

Before Francis had been tried, another attempt was made by a hunchback named Bean. The terrible sentence of death seemed rather to fascinate than deter these maniacs, so a bill was passed making flogging and imprisonment the penalty, and this had the desired effect.

One great undertaking which the Prince was carrying out was the arrangement of the domestic affairs of the palace. Each change of ministry changed the great officers of the crown, and as they were charged with the ordinary household duties, and did not live in the palace, there was nobody to take care that anything was done. The lord steward found the fuel, the lord chamberlain had the fires lighted; the lord chamberlain provided lamps, the lord steward the oil; and as the outside of the palace was the charge of the Woods and Forest, and the inside that of the lord chamberlain, the cleaning or mending of a window was a delicate matter, taking months to accomplish, and most of the servants were practically under no control at all. The waste of course was excessive, and Prince Albert did his best for reforms, but could not succeed till 1843, when the whole economy of the palaces was made over to a single head, the master of the household; and from that time it became possible to exercise that noble form of frugality which, cutting off foolish waste and needless personal indulgence, leaves full room for needful splendour and royal munificence and charity.

It may be worth noticing here that all the special fashions connected with Her Majesty are of the quiet, simple, and sensible order, and that while she was still a young woman, whose dress gave the general style, there were far fewer absurdities of taste than at almost any other

and expression. I thought to myself, one must not pay too many compliments on such an occasion, so I merely thanked her a great many times, on which she said, "Oh! if only I had not been so frightened, generally I have such a long breath." Then I praised her heartily and with the best conscience in the world, for just that part, with the long C at the close, she had done so well, and taking the three notes next to it all in the same breath, as one seldom hears it done, and therefore it amused me doubly that she herself should have begun about it. Afterwards the Prince sang "Es ist ein Schnitter," and Mendelssohn improvised till it was time for Her Majesty to start for Claremont.

Lady Lyttelton speaks of the remarkable beauty of the Prince's performance on the organ, and the manner in which he poured out with it his inmost soul. "Nobody but the organ knows what is in him, except indeed by the look of his eyes sometimes."

A third child was added to the royal nursery on the 25th of April 1843, Alice Maud Mary, destined to be the great darling of the family, and the first to be taken from them.

CHAPTER VI

THE FIRST AFGHAN WAR

THE leader of the House of Lords and the chief military authority in England was the great Duke of Wellington, *the* Duke, as he was universally called. He had lived down the unpopularity he had incurred during the Reform agitation, and was regarded by the Queen with almost a daughter's affection and respect, and by the nation with pride and reverence, as not only the greatest living general but as the very soul of honour and uprightness. As Scott had written :—

“ Not a peoples' just acclaim,
Not the full hail of Europe's fame,
Thy prince's smiles, thy state's decree,
The ducal rank, the gartered knee ;
Not these such pure delight afford
As that, when hanging up thy sword,
Well may'st thou think, “ This honest steel
Was ever drawn for public weal,
And, such was rightful heaven's decree,
Ne'er sheathed unless with victory.”

Since the American war had ended in 1782 no disaster had befallen the British arms ; and thus it was all the greater shock when, early in 1842, the overland mail from India brought the tidings of the utter destruction of an English force in the Khyber Pass, in the mountains of Afghanistan, only one man, Dr. Brydon, an army surgeon, having

escaped, half dead, drooping over the neck of a worn-out pony, to tell the tale in the frontier town of Jellalabad.

Afghanistan, a country of mountains and fierce hill tribes, lying between the Russian and the British dominions, had been taken into alliance by England. The cause of one of the pretenders to the chieftainship had been espoused, and an English and Sepoy force of about 5000 had been placed in the city of Cabul, ostensibly for his protection, but also as a check upon possible advances on the part of Russia.

Discontents arose, and in the November of 1841 Sir Alexander Burnes, with his brother and another officer, was murdered in his own house at Cabul, and a fortnight later the envoy, Sir William Macnaghten, was also treacherously slain during a conference with Akbar Khan, the chief of the insurgents. The country was rising, the season prevented any aid being sent from India, and the general in command was feeble and aged. Retreat was decided upon, and it was hoped was secured by treaty; but Akbar neither could nor would restrain the ferocious hill tribes. The mere journey in the month of January through the passes of rugged mountains covered with snow would have been bad enough for an army encumbered with numerous women, children, and camp followers. Snow and frost had caused the death of many even before, ten miles from Cabul, the troops reached the terrible Khybar Pass, between walls of rock and precipice, five miles long, and all the heights above alive with merciless enemies. An officer returned to remonstrate with Akbar, who undertook to put an end to these attacks if some of the principal officers were surrendered to him as hostages. This was done, but without any effect except depriving the mass of unfortunate beings of their leaders. They struggled on, utterly disorganised, shot down at every step. Lady Sale, whose husband was commandant at Jellalabad, and the widowed Lady Macnaghten were surrendered to Akbar; and afterwards General Elphinstone and Colonel Shelton, whose regiment, the 44th, was utterly

destroyed. The savages placed barriers across the narrower parts of the pass, and cut down or made prisoners all who were thus penned in, till only about forty succeeded in escaping from this valley of the shadow of death; and cold, privation, and exhaustion, as well as the pursuers, made an end of all these, so that Dr. Brydon alone reached Jellalabad on the 13th of January.

The enemy surrounded that city, and it was in the utmost danger till, on the 7th of April, Sir Robert Sale made a gallant sally, set the besiegers' camp on fire, and forced them to retreat. In the summer Generals Nott and Pollock brought a force of English and Sepoys, and after a course of successes liberated the captives, all but General Elphinstone, who had died. Lady Macnaghten had actually been forced to grind corn between two stones, and the English troops were only just in time to save her from being carried off to the Usbeck Tartars. The victory was complete, but it was decided to give up the country, being a very difficult one to guard, and the fortresses, including Jellalabad, were dismantled, and the troops returned to India, saddened by the sight of the bones which strewed the fatal pass. It was supposed to be gratifying to the national feelings of the Sepoys that the sandal wood gates of the Temple of Somnauth, carried off 800 years before, were brought back in order to be restored.

The Queen had deeply grieved over these disasters, but only two years had passed before a fresh war broke out with the Sikhs, a gallant warrior tribe, with whom Sir Harry Smith and Sir Hugh Gough fought three battles at Moodkee, Ferozeshah, and Aliwal, very hardly contested, and therefore the more glorious; but in the first the brave Sir Robert Sale ended his noble career. By the treaty that followed the Sikh country south of the Indus, called the Punjaub, or land of five rivers, was placed under British protection, though governed by native princes.

In the meantime the Duke was induced by Prince Albert to use his influence in putting down the barbarous and un-

christian code of honour which made it even in a civilian an exertion of great moral courage to decline a challenge to a duel, and such a refusal by a soldier caused such a stigma as was equivalent to the loss of his commission. It used to be a wonder in popular literature to find a tale without a duel, and Christian heroes were made to decline them at a terrible cost. In point of fact, sensible men could almost always avoid the necessity, but the heat of politics, the rivalries of love, and the quarrels of dissipation still led to them, and even the Duke himself had fought. The law was powerless, but an amendment in the Articles of War declared it suitable to the character of honourable men to apologise or to accept an apology in case of offence given or received, and thus England set an example, unfortunately not yet followed elsewhere, of preventing this savage practice. Both Queen and Prince were deeply religious, with a dread of exclusiveness, and with an earnest desire to promote religion and morality in the nation.

The Queen had grieved over the death of her first Premier, Lord Melbourne. "A most kind and disinterested friend, and most deeply attached to me," were her own words. He had died in 1842, after a long decay, often cheered by kind letters and messages from his royal mistress.

CHAPTER VII

THE IRISH FAMINE

BRIEFLY must be recorded the birth of a second prince, Alfred, now Duke of Edinburgh, at Windsor, on the 6th of August 1844, and likewise a visit from that splendid potentate, the Czar Nicolas I., one of those men whose stern resolution and activity make them great forces in the world. He so lived in his uniform that he said that out of it he felt as if he had lost his skin, and he always slept on a leathern sack stuffed with hay! A return visit was also paid by Louis Philippe, and the Queen much enjoyed a tour in the Prince's native country, visiting all his haunts. She was enthusiastically welcomed everywhere, and at Cologne, outside Farina's factory, the ground was sprinkled with the famous scent named from that city.

Alas! that same summer of 1845 a different scent began to be known, which has since become only too familiar—namely, the peculiar smell which announces the potato blight, beginning in the haulm. Potatoes had within the last half century become to a great degree the sheet-anchor of the English peasantry. In every cottage that had a garden the daily dinner was on potatoes, the bit of bacon being the Sunday treat; and in Ireland these were almost the exclusive food. The light peaty soil suited them, and the slight intermittent labour they required agreed with the habits of the people. The Englishman ate a good deal of bread, the Irishman scarcely anything but “praties” and oatmeal.

The summer of 1845 was wet, close, and thundery, causing the wheat harvest to be unusually bad ; while the blight spread among the potatoes with the virulence of a new disease, and made such devastation that it even seemed as if the species might be extinct.

A famine was imminent in both countries. The only thing to be done was to admit corn free of the duty, but the question was whether this should be only during the actual scarcity, or whether the corn laws should be entirely repealed. Sir Robert Peel, feeling that he was held to be bound to support protection, resigned office ; but the Whigs failing to form a Cabinet, he resumed his post as Premier, and carried through the total repeal of the corn laws, though at the expense of being regarded by the Protectionists as a traitor to their cause. They combined with the Whigs to defeat him at the next session of Parliament, and in June 1846 Lord John Russell came into office.

It had been impossible to avert severe distress even in England. Every potato not infected was saved for seed, and the poor suffered severely, but were spared from actual starvation, and gradually learnt to depend on a greater variety of food. Their condition, however, was wealth compared to that of the Irish, who lost *all* they had to depend upon.

Vigorous efforts were made for their relief. The hearts of the English bled for them, and, unprosperous as the harvest had been, all classes vied with one another in subscribing to a fund for their relief. The Queen headed the list with thousands ; all according to their degree gave, often with self-denials, trifling but real. Young men at the University stinted themselves of desserts, little children gave up their pudding. A Government grant of a million was made for reclaiming waste lands, so as to give employment and payment, and half that sum for buying seed. The Queen herself had only secondary flour used in her kitchen. Every day nearly two millions of rations were distributed to the starving people, chiefly of rice and Indian-corn meal,

by the Government, besides great exertions made by private charity. As many as possible were persuaded to emigrate and supplied with all necessities for the voyage; but in spite of all that could be done the misery was appalling.

The country is such as to be thinly inhabited, and the people at all times were content to live in the merest hovels, with no comforts, no resources, on wild moorland tracts, where, when their crop failed and their pig and cow were gone, there was nothing to fall back on. The fever that goes with hunger set in, and hundreds died either from that or sheer starvation. Lonely cabins on the mountain side were found with the last survivor lying dead, and whole families were utterly swept away. The relief was difficult to organise. Some resented having to work, many were discontented with the meal and rice, and though there were many most noble and touching cases of patience and self-devotion among the sufferers, it was no wonder that more than one good clergyman, landlord, and lady absolutely died of the sorrow, exertion, and self-denial they underwent in the endeavour to relieve the misery around. To individuals there was warm gratitude, to England as a nation none, but rather a strange idea that all was her fault. The distress of the two years from '45 to '47 was no doubt frightful. Whole districts in the south were depopulated by hunger, disease, or emigration, and it is said that the Irish character has never entirely recovered the old rollicking fun and gaiety that used to mark it.

Princess Helena had been born in 1846, and the quiet days of autumn set in. The careful economy exercised by Prince Albert had enabled the Queen to purchase the estate of Osborne in the Isle of Wight, the great and especial delight of both. "The fine air," the Prince writes, "will be of service to Victoria and the children, and I, partly builder, partly farmer, partly gardener, expect to be a good deal upon my legs and in the open air." "It is a relief," wrote the Queen, "to be away from all the bitter-

ness people create for themselves in London." The new buildings were first occupied on the 15th of September 1846. After dinner the Queen's health was drunk as a house-warming, and in the course of the day Prince Albert repeated in German some lines from a hymn of Luther's,—

“ God bless our going out,
Our coming in, bless too ;
Our daily bread, and all
We do or do not do.
Bless when we peaceful die,
As heirs beyond the sky.”

CHAPTER VIII

THE YEARS OF REVOLUTION

THE Queen was greatly pained by an action on the part of France which she could not approve, and which threatened to overthrow the friendship between her and Louis Philippe, namely, the marriage of his son, the Duke of Montpensier, to the Infanta Louisa, sister to the Queen regnant of Spain, at the same time as Queen Isabella herself wedded her cousin, a Spanish prince.

It had been distinctly understood that the Infanta should not marry a French prince while she remained heiress-presumptive to the crown, since any close union between the thrones of France and Spain had always been viewed with dread and jealousy by the European powers. Queen Victoria felt the matter so strongly that she wrote with great force to the Queen of the Belgians, explaining her feelings not only as a sovereign but as a woman who felt for the young Queen of Spain in having a dull, inferior, and uncongenial husband forced upon her. The Belgian Queen was addressed because her father had already made her the medium of his very lame defence. It had been a case of vaulting ambition overreaching itself. The manifestation of desire for family aggrandisement rendered the French nation distrustful of "the citizen king," at a time when agitation seemed in the air. "Europe," as Prince Albert had written, "seemed in a ticklish condition." The election of Pío IX., a Pope who began with liberal

tendencies, had excited the patriots of Italy into a wild ferment. France was in a state of suppressed agitation, and on the 20th of February 1848 the attempt of Government to prevent a dangerous political banquet led to an insurrection in Paris. Louis Philippe quailed in the moment of peril, resigned his crown to his young grandson, the Count of Paris, and fled. The Duchess of Orleans bravely tried to present her son to the people in the Chamber of Deputies, but she was howled down and safely conveyed away and out of Paris. Queen Victoria forgot all the offences of Louis Philippe, and felt only anxiety and sorrow. "We have had," she wrote, "since the 25th enough for a whole lifetime—anxiety, sorrow, excitement—in short, I feel as if we had jumped over thirty years' experience at once. The whole face of Europe is changed, and I feel as if in a dream!"

In small detachments, travelling in disguise, the members of the Orleans family arrived in England, and were welcomed with the warmest kindness and pity. Many were quite young children. The king and queen came as Mr. and Mrs. William Smith in a steamer from Havre to New-haven on the 2d of March, and were offered a home in the old palace of Claremont, belonging to King Leopold, for life, and there the scattered party began to reunite. "You know," wrote our Queen to Baron Stockmar, "my love for the family. You know how I longed to get on better terms with them again. . . . Little did I dream that this would be the way we should meet again, and see each other in the most friendly way. That the Duchess of Montpensier, about whom we have been quarrelling for the last year and a half, should be here as a fugitive, and dressed in the clothes I sent her, and should come to thank me for my kindness, is a reverse of fortune which no novelist could devise."

Germany was likewise in an uproar, and the Queen felt much anxiety for her friends there. In London there was a feeble attempt at a riot, only serving to show the

loyalty of the great mass of the citizens. Scotland had some more serious risings, but these were put down. However, the Chartists were stimulated to draw up a monster petition, with which they announced their intention of marching from Kennington Common to the House of Parliament, evidently designing to begin a revolution such as had overthrown Government and brought in anarchy and bloodshed in many a city of the Continent. The day was to be the 10th of April. The Queen's courage and confidence in her people never failed; but it was thought wiser that she should leave London, and she went down to Osborne, when the Princess Louise was three weeks old, whilst the Duke of Wellington undertook to protect the country, keeping troops in reserve, ready to be brought forward on any need arising, but not showing a man of them except the ordinary sentries on guard in public places. The preservation of order was entrusted to the voluntary services of 170,000 men of all ranks, from duke to artizan, who presented themselves to be sworn in as special constables, among them Prince Louis Napoleon, afterwards Napoleon III. They cheered the great captain heartily as he quietly went to his accustomed place at the Horse Guards. The huge procession, which was announced as likely to be half a million, proved to be of scarcely 8000. Not a blow was struck, not a shot was fired, not a window broken, the procession broke up when the police refused to let them pass the bridges, and the petition was conveyed in three cabs to the Houses of Parliament. The signatures were only a fifth part of the number expected, and of these many names were merely copied out of directories, with the addition of those of the Queen and Duke of Wellington, and such fabrications as No Cheese, Pugnose, Flatnose, etc.

Never was there a greater failure or a fuller demonstration of loyalty, and the royal pair at Osborne had thankful, grateful hearts.

Irish troubles were, however, mending. The strange contradictory character of the Celtic natives, tender yet

cruel, faithful yet treacherous, pious yet false, eager yet indolent, patient yet passionate, utterly disregarding all life except their own, has rendered them almost impossible to be governed either by themselves or any one else, ever since the first English settlement and the grant by the Pope to Henry II. in 1170. The difficulty had only been increased by the importation of Norman, English, and Scottish settlers at different periods, for the lapse of centuries has not prevented them from being viewed by the populace as usurpers and aliens; and savage ferocity on the Irish side awoke fierce hatred and retribution on theirs, all being complicated by the neglect of the Church at the Reformation to provide instruction for the natives, which gave the Roman Catholic Church the opportunity of winning them to a vehement devotion to her cause, so that religious opposition embittered all the rest.

Ever since the beginning of the century, when the Union took place, there had been a course of concession and an endeavour to conciliate, but whatever was granted only emboldened the Irish to demand more, especially the repeal of the Union. Fanatic gentlemen, among whom was specially notable Mr Smith O'Brien, took up the cause, and furious denunciations were made in Irish papers, together with suggestions how to overpower the soldiery in a popular rising. At Limerick a meeting was to be held at the Garrfield Club, but the party of the late Daniel O'Connell were at enmity with that of Smith O'Brien, and set upon them. Smith O'Brien was too severely handled to attend the meeting, and the others were attacked at the banquet. As Thackeray's ballad declared—

" They smashed the lovely windies,
Hung with muslin from the Indies,
Pursuing of their shindys
Upon Shannon shore."

The police—objects of hatred and contumely to those would-be patriots—were called upon for their defence and dispersed the mob, and the meeting took place with

windows boarded up ; but a fortnight later Smith O'Brien and his chief confederates were arrested for seditious language, but only one, Mitchel, was convicted, as the Irish Juries would not agree on their verdict in the other cases. He was transported to the Bermuda Islands.

The Irish raged, and the Chartists uttered threats ; the Government was said to be murdering the Irish, whereupon *Punch* put forth a cartoon showing the manner of it, *i.e.* the viceroy, Lord Clarendon, being aimed at by a horde of ruffians. In July Smith O'Brien actually tried to organise an insurrection, and got together about a thousand men. These were encountered by about a hundred and fifty armed police at Widow M'Cormick's house, at the Bog of Boulagh, Ballingarry. There was a little firing, and the rebels broke up and dispersed, Mr O'Brien creeping away on all fours through the cabbage garden. After wandering about the country for some days he was arrested, and brought to trial for high treason with his chief confederates. Sentence of death was pronounced on them, but was commuted to transportation for life, and the absurdity of the cabbage-garden adventure had a very wholesome effect upon the country.

While other governments were falling, and war and terror raged all over Europe, the machinations of the disaffected in Britain were overthrown with scarce the shedding of a drop of blood.

CHAPTER IX

THE HIGHLAND HOME

THROUGH these troubles and perplexities the Queen had two great refreshments, intercourse with her children at all times, and her holidays spent in the Isle of Wight, in yachting, or in Scotland. Madame de Bunsen, the English wife of the Prussian Ambassador, thus describes her: "She is the only piece of female royalty I ever saw who was also a creature such as God Almighty has created. Her smile is a real smile, her grace is natural; although it has received a high polish from cultivation, there is nothing artificial about her."

In spite of all her many occupations she was the most careful of mothers. Not only were the little sayings and doings of "Vicky and Bertie" chronicled with the delight all parents feel, but her watchfulness continued as nursery days passed away and schoolroom days began. The governesses were carefully chosen, but in addition to this the Queen watched over the religious instruction of the children; and either she or Prince Albert knew what each child was learning, what books they read, and what was the progress. There was no indolence nor helplessness allowed. And above all, they were bred up to be kind and helpful.

As they grew old enough one after another became companions in the holiday expeditions, when Scotland became more and more the attraction both on account of

the Highland scenery and of the shooting, which was one of the indulgences that Prince Albert allowed himself. The fine mountain air was so beneficial to all the family that their physician, Sir James Clark, strongly advised them to purchase a house in Aberdeenshire, and Prince Albert was able to accomplish the acquisition of Balmoral Castle at his own expense, without asking anything from the nation. It was in the midst of beautiful wooded hills, quite solitary, and affording opportunities for deer-stalking and for shooting; while the Queen was delighted with the Highland cotters in the neighbourhood, and made friends with them like any homely "leddy" of the country.

Her year was generally arranged so as to keep Christmas in her stately ancestral home at Windsor, while the Prince lived, spend the time chiefly devoted to public business and receptions at Buckingham Palace, with snatches of refreshment at Osborne House, where the earlier summer with interludes of yachting was passed, and the later months of warmth and beauty were given to the Highland home.

It consisted, when first inhabited, of a little hall, with a billiard-room; next to it the dining-room; upstairs a large sitting-room, bedroom, and dressing-room, and opposite rooms for the children and their governess, Miss Hildyard, rooms for the ladies below, and the gentlemen above. The Queen says, "It was so calm and so solitary, it did one good as one gazed around, and the pure mountain air was most refreshing. All seemed to breathe freedom and peace, and to make one forget the world and its sad turmoils." "The Queen, running in and out of the house all day," says Mr. Greville, "goes into the cottages and chats with the old women."

When the Prince went out shooting the Queen occasionally rode with him on a pony, little heeding wind or weather, and they even spent a day or two at a couple of huts on the mountain side. Their delight in scenery was great, and both

were fond of sketching. The children enjoyed themselves greatly, and the rest was great after the constraints and anxieties of the court. Among these must not be entirely passed over a misunderstanding with Lord Palmerston, then Foreign Secretary. A veteran in office, he was accustomed to manage its affairs in his own way with scarcely any reference to the Queen's wishes or views. She had now reigned twelve years, and had considerable experience and strong opinions, and she saw several acts carried out contrary to her own desires. Remonstrances were made, but Lord Palmerston was a man of imperturbable good humour and courtesy, and the strongest language had often been found to make no impression on him. When argued with by the Prince, and told that the Queen thought herself treated with disrespect, he had tears in his eyes and showed unusual tokens of depression, but no promises for the future could be extracted from him. The Queen was seriously mortified at being practically treated as if her Minister were accountable only to the nation and not to her, but the spirited manner in which she had behaved caused more deference to be shown to her.

Another Indian war had broken out. The Punjaub was under British protection, but the native governor of Mooltan was murdered by his son, Moulraj Singh, whose misrule was such that the chief of the country gave authority to Lieutenant Anderson and Mr. Vans Agnew to depose him. But Mooltan was bent on revolt against the stranger, and those two gentlemen were murdered on the 18th of April 1848, and the Punjaub was in a state of rebellion. Lieutenant Herbert Edwardes, however, was equal to the occasion. He had with him one Sepoy regiment, 850 horse, and a few swivel guns. He hurried to Mooltan, raising levies among the loyal Sikhs on the way, and succeeding by his friendly manners with them in making them as faithful as they were brave. With their help he kept Moulraj Singh penned fast in Mooltan, an achievement the more remarkable that, on almost the first day of the

siege, his hand was shattered by an accident with his own pistol, and all his orders were given as he lay on his bed in his tent with his hand on a pillow. Mooitan was the town where Alexander the Great had once climbed over the earthen rampart, and barely escaped with his life. The place, with earthen rampart and trees growing within, was little changed since his time, and the bravery of the besiegers was equal to that of the great conqueror of old. Major Whish finally arrived and reduced the place.

Meantime the insurgents fought a desperate battle with Sir Hugh Gough at Chillianwallah—so indecisive that Sir Charles Napier was sent out in all haste to take the command. He was an old Peninsular hero, wont to declaim against the quantity of baggage which encumbered English armies, and to declare that a clean shirt and piece of soap were enough luggage for any soldier. He made all speed, but before he reached the scene of action, Sir Hugh Gough had retrieved his fame by a grand victory at Goojerat, and thenceforth the Punjaub was added to the British dominions in India, and the Sikhs became faithful adherents to our cause, as they learnt to understand the difference between English justice and the uncertain rule of these native chiefs.

Sir Charles Napier returned home in the following year, 1850, after having spoken very highly of the gallantry and obedience of the Sepoys—our native soldiery of India—and censured the extravagance of the English officers. Thus the second Victorian war had ended in success.

But a great disaster was the death of Sir Robert Peel, who was actually riding to the palace when his horse threw him on Constitution Hill. His collar bone and one of his ribs were broken. He had the nervous and sensitive constitution that often belongs to orators, and with him pain was specially acute. The broken rib pressed on the lung, and after four days of terrible suffering he died on the 2d of July 1850. "Death has snatched from us," wrote the

Prince, "the best of men, our truest friend, the strongest bulwark of the throne, the greatest statesman of our time." The Queen mourned as for one of her own family. She would fain have conferred a peerage on his widow in recognition of his services, but Lady Peel replied that her wish was to bear no other title than that by which her husband had been known—and that, indeed, it had been his special desire that none of his family should accept such distinctions, as if his public services had been done with a view to any reward.

Two other losses had in these years touched the Queen nearly—that, on the 2d of December 1849, of good Queen Adelaide, who had been always most kind to her in her girlhood; and of her uncle, the Duke of Cambridge, a good-natured old gentleman, of whom she was very fond, who died on the 8th of July 1850.

The few survivors among the advisers of her earlier days were the more valued,—above all the great Duke of Wellington, who was in his eightieth year, and, though full of vigour, had greatly desired to resign to Prince Albert his post as Commander-in-Chief. It is no small testimony to the merits of the Prince that one so wholly free from any shade of adulation, and so well able to judge, should have deliberately thought the army and country safest in his hands. The Prince, however, thought it wiser not to accept such an office, partly from want of military experience, also because his work as the Queen's chief private secretary occupied him fully, and above all, because he thought his intimate union with the Crown would be a disadvantage to the office.

This transaction had taken place before the loss of Peel in the spring of 1850, and when, on the Duke's 81st birthday, the 1st of May, another Prince was born, he was made godson to the old hero, and received his name of Arthur. Such a compliment to a subject was almost unexampled except in the case of Duguesclin, the defender of France, and then, though he was sponsor, his name was not given.

The little brother, Prince Albert wrote, was "received by his sisters with *jubilates*." "Now we are just as many as the days of the week!" was the cry, and then a bit of a struggle arose as to who was to be the Sunday. Out of well-bred courtesy the honour was assigned to the new-comer.

CHAPTER X

THE GREAT EXHIBITION

DURING the last two years the mind of the Prince had been full of a grand scheme for a universal exhibition of the produce of the art and industry of the whole world. So familiar has the idea become of an International Exhibition that it is difficult to realise how much opposition, difficulty, and even derision, Prince Albert had to undergo before the scheme could be carried out. Single countries had held exhibitions of their own productions, but no one had ever devised uniting those of every land. Indeed, till the nineteenth century, it was held to be one of the first principles of political economy to encourage home manufacture by keeping out as much as possible every foreign importation, and to do everything to hinder money from being carried out of the country. Nor, indeed, till the days of steam locomotion by sea and land would the mere transport have been manageable.

The idea was first started by the Prince in July 1849, but it could not be rapidly matured, and much preparation was required. Indeed, the revolutions of the Continent had scarcely subsided, and it remained to be proved whether the English would willingly put themselves in competition with all the world. Large minded men embraced the scheme. Sir Robert Peel, at the time of his death, was warmly interested in it, but the necessary business was such an addition to the Prince's other toils that his

health threatened to break down under the strain. "No one believes he is ever nervous, which he is," said the Queen.

However difficulties gradually smoothed down. The world was for a short time at peace. France was subsiding under the strong grasp of Louis Napoleon. The peaceful challenge had been universally accepted, and the difficulty of finding an erection fit to contain all that was promised was met by Mr. Paxton, the head of the grand garden establishment of the Duke of Devonshire at Chatsworth, where the conservatories had made him aware of the capacities of glass and iron work.

A Crystal Palace was devised high enough to contain, without injury, more than one of the elm trees growing in Hyde Park, under the domed roof of its central nave. Other and much larger edifices of the same kind have succeeded it, but none fit to be compared with it in beauty and grace, their very size rendering the unity then accomplished a problem hitherto unsolved. It was to them as Mount Blanc to Chimborazo or Everest. No one who can remember that first building can forget the strange thrill of wonder and delight at the entrance; the combination of space, light, and colour, the fountains, statues, and details, and the wonders of each court, with the works hitherto unseen and in minute perfection, ranging from Saxony linen like spun-silver to bouquets of diamonds and emeralds, while the exquisite Greek slave might contrast with the relentless-looking machinery grinding on its course. There was much less of the sense of a huge advertisement or shop than in its successors, far more of the feeling expressed by the inscription round the arch of the principal aisle, "The Earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof,"—words which, by the bye, a French visitor thought showed the adulation of the English towards the nobility.

The Queen's description of the opening day, the 1st of May 1851, is written in the fulness of her heart: "The glimpse of the transept through the iron gates, the waving

palms, flowers, statues, myriads of people filling the galleries and seats around, with the flourish of trumpets as we entered, gave us a sensation I can never forget, and I felt much moved. We went for a moment to a little side room, where we left our shawls, and where we found mamma and Mary,¹ and outside which were standing the other princes. In a few seconds we proceeded, Albert leading me, having Vicky at his hand and Bertie holding mine. The sight, as we came to the middle, where the steps and chair (which I did *not* sit on) were placed, with the beautiful crystal fountain just in front of it—was magical—so vast, so glorious, so touching. One felt, as so many did whom I have since spoken to, filled with devotion, more so than by any service I have ever heard. The tremendous cheers, the joy expressed in every face, the immensity of the building, the mixture of palms, flowers, trees, statues, fountains, the organ (with 200 instruments and 600 voices, which sounded like nothing), and my beloved husband, the author of this Peace Festival, which united the industry of all nations of the earth. All this was moving indeed, and it was and is a day to live for ever. God bless my dearest Albert! God bless my dearest country, which has shown itself so great to-day. One felt so grateful to the great God, who seemed to pervade all and to bless all! The only event it in the slightest degree reminded me of was the coronation, but this day's festival was a thousand times superior. In fact it is unique, and can bear no comparison from its peculiar beauty and combination of such striking and different objects. I mean the slight resemblance only as to its solemnity, the enthusiasm and cheering too were much more touching, for in a church naturally all is silent. . . . That we felt happy, thankful, I need not say; proud of all that had passed, of my darling husband's success, and of the behaviour of my good people."

Well she might be, for though 25,000 people were

¹ Princess Mary of Cambridge, now Duchess of Teck.

within the building, and 700,000 outside to watch the procession, there was not one accident, not one police case!

It was the 82d birthday of the old Duke, the first of his little godson. The elder Arthur came to visit the younger later in the afternoon, bringing a gold cup and some toys, chosen by himself, and the little fellow gave him a bunch of lilies of the valley, an incident very prettily represented in a picture by Winterhalter, where the Queen appears to have snatched the child from his bed.

The Exhibition was closed on the 11th of October, when the list of prize-holders was read, to the number of 2918 for skill and beauty of workmanship, and 279 for inventions. The whole was wound up by a prayer of thanksgiving, read by the Bishop of London, followed by the Hallelujah Chorus.

This had been an unusually happy and peaceful year. The next began with a change of Ministry, bringing in the Conservatives, with the Earl of Derby as Premier, a chivalrous high-spirited gentleman, a type of the finest race of nobles, religious and scholarly, as well as statesman-like, and a leader in manly sports.

September 14th, however, took away the great Duke of Wellington. He died in his 84th year, after only one day's illness, apparently painless, fading into unconsciousness from mere old age, his last word "Thank you" to a servant who offered him nourishment. The Queen was at Balmoral, and heard the news at the Dhuloch, where she was spending the night at the little shieling of Alt-na-Guithasach. Her feeling was deep. She writes, "What a loss! One cannot think of this country without the Duke, our immortal hero. In him centered almost every earthly honour a subject could possess. His position was the highest a subject ever had. Above party, looked up to by all, revered by the whole nation, the friend of the Sovereign. And how simply he carried these honours! With what singleness of purpose, what straightforwardness, what courage were all his actions guided. The Crown

never possessed, and I fear never will, so devoted, loyal, and faithful a subject, so staunch a supporter."

The Duke had died at Walmer Castle, which he held as Warden of the Cinque Ports. He lay in state at Chelsea Hospital, in a hall lighted with candles, and his banners around; guarded by a party of his own regiment, the Grenadier Guards, afterwards at the Horse Guards. The Queen herself brought her elder children to do honour to her hero, and on some of the days a hundred thousand persons passed solemnly and silently through the hall where the coffin stood. The funeral took place on the 18th of November in St. Paul's. The beautiful words of Sir Francis Doyle must here be borrowed:

"See how the people gather together,
All thoughts of self disdaining;
How feeble women, in the stormy weather,
Stand worn but uncomplaining.

It is because they here await
The coming of the good and great;
The man who down to death from youth
Steered by the living Star of Truth,
Made his lov'd country's cause his own,
And served her for herself alone;
Therefore the Queen upon her throne
Weeps bitter tears to-day.
Therefore the humblest workman here
Bares a rough head before the bier,
When that which was the Duke draws near.
Therefore the soldiers, sadly, proudly,
Move on their mournful way.
Therefore the cannon boometh loudly
Athwart the fog-smoke gray.
Therefore the leaders of the State
Around the gorgeous pageant wait;
And chiefs from many a land afar,
From proud and distant kings,
Each wise in peace, or brave in war,
His sigh of reverence brings.

This is why the land wept o'er him;
And as one man the people bore him,
To sleep where Nelson slept before him."

Foreign officers of distinction carried the Duke's bâtons. That of English Field-Marshal was borne by the Marquess of Anglesey; Prince Albert was there, and the pall was held by the old generals who had fought under him, and some of whom could not restrain their grief. Some were there who, forty-three years before, had buried his predecessor, Sir John Moore, "by the struggling moonbeam's misty light, and the lantern dimly burning." How strange the contrast! And it is hard to say which scene was the most impressive and touching. For to each alike, duty was the watchword.

CHAPTER XI

THE CRIMEAN WAR

ENGLAND had scarcely lost her hero before there were threatenings of a European war. First, however, there had been a change of Ministry, a coalition under the Earl of Aberdeen coming into office in December 1852. In April ensuing Prince Leopold was born, and in June the whole royal family, except the baby and Prince Arthur, suffered from a severe attack of measles.

The time was inopportune, for the experiment was being tried of putting the army under canvas—setting up a camp at Chobham under the command of the old Waterloo General, Lord Seaton. So new was it to the cavalry to be in the open field, that some of the troopers of the Scots Greys were actually weeping over their horses the first night they had to sleep out of their stables. No one enjoyed the scene the camp presented more than did the Queen when she was able to visit it, riding by her husband's side in a military habit, the four eldest children near—"Our dear camp" she calls it. The fleet also was in splendid condition, and well it was, for Russia was fast assuming a threatening attitude towards Turkey.

For generations past the Russian Empire had viewed the Ottoman power half with a crusading spirit, half with an ambitious desire to obtain Constantinople and open the way to the Mediterranean. Nicolas I. felt both these longings, and he had already declared to the English Ambassador,

Sir Hamilton Seymour, that Turkey was a very sick man, near death, and intimated a willingness to come to terms with England in dividing the spoil. England, however, was not only closely bound by treaty to Turkey, but was determined to prevent the already formidable Russian power from gaining Constantinople. The Czar claimed to be considered the protector of all the Greek Christians scattered throughout the Ottoman Empire, and a quarrel had been on the point of breaking out with France respecting the guardianship of the holy places in Palestine. The Sultan, Abdul Medjid, under the advice of the English Ambassador, Sir Stratford Canning, firmly refused to accept this protectorate, and on this, Nicolas declared war in a remarkable manifesto, appealing to the religious sentiment of his subjects. In less than a month the Russian and Turkish fleets in the Black Sea met off Sinope, and the Turkish was utterly destroyed, only one vessel escaping to bring the tidings to Constantinople. Four thousand Turks were killed and the town set on fire. This was on the last day of November 1853, and it made war inevitable.

Louis Napoleon, who had in December 1852 obtained his election as Emperor of the French, allied himself with England for the protection of Turkey, and the winter was spent in warlike preparations.

But we must not pass one pretty home episode at Windsor, when Madame Bunsen saw some tableaux acted by the royal children. First came the Seasons, Princess Alice as Spring, reciting appropriate verses from Thomson's *Seasons*; the Princess-Royal as Summer, while Prince Arthur lay resting on some sheaves, as if in harvest. Next Prince Alfred came by himself as Autumn, crowned with vine leaves and in a leopard's skin; and lastly Winter, represented by the Prince of Wales, with snow and icicles on his clothes and little Princess Louise wrapped in warm garments. This over, Princess Helena stood as a tableau of her namesake saint, in a long veil, tall cross in hand, and recited verses blessing the rulers of her country. Then

the little actors were helped to jump down from their platform, and the baby brother was brought in "and looked at us all with big eyes."

Meantime preparations for war were actively carried on; and on the 22d of February a body of British troops started for Turkey under the command of Lord Raglan, who, as Lord Fitzroy Somerset, had lost an arm while acting as the Duke's aide-de-camp at Waterloo. The Queen and her family, with swelling hearts, cheered the Scots Fusilier Guards as they marched beneath the balcony at Buckingham Palace on their way; and not many days later she inspected the magnificent fleet at Spithead, each ship passing her yacht in turn with a salute, the Admiral last of all in the *Duke of Wellington*. She waved her handkerchief with strong feelings, and wrote next day: "I am very enthusiastic about my dear army and navy, and wish I had two sons in *both now*. I know I shall suffer much when I hear of losses among them."

A day of prayer was set apart for the success of our arms. The Queen made it a point that there should be no "imprecations against our enemies, but an earnest expression of thankfulness for the blessings we have enjoyed, as well as of entreaty for protection of our forces by sea and land, and to ourselves in the coming struggle;" and she suggested the prayer "to be used before a fight at sea," as highly applicable.

The Emperor of the French had a magnificent camp at St. Omer, which he invited Prince Albert to inspect. The Queen was left at Osborne for what to her was a long absence, from Monday the 4th of September to Saturday the 9th. When the Prince returned in early morning the Queen came out to meet him, and as she saw him again the quiet thankful uplifting of her eyes and hands in thankfulness greatly struck one of those present.

At this very time hostilities were beginning. The English troops had hitherto been encamped at Varna, a beautiful but unhealthy place; the French, under Marshal St.

Arnaud, not far off. It was decided to make a sudden descent on the Crimean Peninsula and endeavour to seize the great fortified city of Sebastopol, from which the Russians hoped to command the Black Sea. Six days after the landing was won the great battle of the Alma, on the 20th of September. Lord Raglan would at once have marched on and assaulted Sebastopol, and indeed a report prevailed in England that it was taken, and the bells were rung in consequence, but the French commander was not willing to make the attack; and the army was obliged to encamp at Balaclava and begin a regular siege, interspersed with much fighting over the redoubts, as the armies pushed forward their advances.

Then on the 26th of October an order misunderstood caused the brigade of light cavalry to charge a Russian battery, though it was almost certain death.

“Some one had blunder’d :

Into the valley of Death
Rode the Six Hundred.”

Out of 673 only 195 remained ; but

“We will not call their lives ill spent,
If in all time they show
That where the Light Brigade is sent
The Light Brigade will go !”

Captain Nolan, the actual bearer of the order, was among the slain ; and what caused the error is therefore uncertain, but it is believed that Lord Cardigan mistook the point he was intended to attack, and thus bravely hurled his men to destruction. “Magnificent, but not war !” said the French. However, the heavy cavalry had already gained a grand success, and they protected the return of the few survivors with “Swords red to the wrist-band, hearts steel to the core.”

“Fatal mistake !” wrote Lord Raglan ; “my only consolation is the admirable conduct of the troops, which is beyond all praise.”

On the ensuing 5th of November the Russians, who had just received great reinforcements, made a night attack, hoping to surprise the English in their camp at Inkerman. From five o'clock on the winter morning till after dark in the evening the battle raged, until, after severe loss, the English had won what was perhaps the most brilliant and hardly-contested victory that has ever been gained. The spirit of the army may be shown by one instance: Sir Thomas Troubridge, with both feet shot off, still sat on a gun giving his orders, because there was no other artillery officer near to take his place, and the private soldiers emulated the daring of the officer.

The Queen was deeply moved—above all being indignant that the Russians actually butchered wounded men lying on the ground; and remonstrances on this head were sent to the Russian commander, Prince Menschikoff.

Into woman's work in time of war the Queen threw herself heart and soul, fully sympathising, when Florence Nightingale obtained permission to take out a band of nurses for the wounded; subscribing largely to the Patriotic Fund for the widows and orphans of the slain; and working with her daughters and ladies at warm coverings for the men, for whose sufferings in the bitter cold of the winter she grieved most deeply.

The country grew impatient: there were murmurs that the war was not properly conducted, and very just ones that the army was not sufficiently supplied. In consequence of a cumbrous system, ill-managed, the destitution was great, and the newspapers made this known. The next meeting of Parliament resulted in a vote for an inquiry into the conduct of the war. Lord Aberdeen resigned; Lord Derby could not secure support enough to undertake the Premiership; and the Queen finally placed the Government in the hands of Lord Palmerston.

In March came the unexpected tidings of the death of Nicolas I., after a very short illness, aggravated probably by the discovery that his troops, so carefully trained, were

unable to stand before English, French, or even Turks. His son, Alexander II., inherited his policy, and the weary siege dragged on. The wounded, who had been sent home to recover at Chatham hospital, were visited by the Queen, and her dismay at the insufficient accommodation there led to arrangements which resulted finally in the beautiful military hospital at Netley. Her kind words and deep enthusiasm filled the sufferers with delight.

In April the Emperor and Empress of the French visited their royal ally. "How strange," says the Queen's journal, "that I, the granddaughter of George III., should dance with Emperor Napoleon, nephew of England's greatest enemy, now my most intimate and nearest ally, in the Waterloo room, and this ally, only six years ago, living in this country an exile, poor and unthought of!"

There was a certain anxiety all the time lest some of the many bitter enemies of Napoleon III. might take this opportunity of assassinating him. "I felt," says the Queen, "as I walked on the Emperor's arm that I was possibly a protection to him. All thoughts of nervousness for myself were past. I thought only of him." The visit altogether gave great pleasure to both parties, though the former Sovereigns of France were by no means forgotten; and the Queen had grieved at the contrast of Marie Amélie driving away to Claremont with a shabby carriage and hired horses just before the State reception of the Emperor.

Many of the invalids had been sent home, and the Queen proposed that she should give the medals for the battles of the Alma, Balaclava, and Inkerman with her own hands. This was done on the 18th of May in the Parade Ground of the Horse Guards. The men were drawn up so as to form three sides of a square, the fourth being formed by a dais for the royal party, their attendants, and officials. They then marched past in ranks four deep, each handing to an officer a card bearing his name, his corps, his services, and wounds. The card was handed to Her Majesty, who immediately presented the medal with heart-

felt kindness. When a one-armed man was embarrassed with the clasp, she fastened it herself, and watched with deep feeling those who could scarcely limp along. When the gallant Sir Thomas Troubridge came in a Bath chair, she told him she should make him one of her *aides-de-camp*. "I am amply repaid for everything," he answered.

Her own feelings are shown in a letter to her uncle:—"Noble Fellows! I own I feel as if they were my own children. My heart beats for them as for my nearest and dearest! They were so touched, so pleased—many, I hear, cried; and they won't hear of giving up their medals to have their names engraved on them for fear that they should not receive the identical ones that were put into their hands by me."

All was not yet over. Summer had come in, and Lord Raglan succeeded in stirring up the French army to action. It had suffered as much or more than the English; but the country had not been allowed to know of its condition. St. Arnaud had died of cholera; Canrobert, who had succeeded him, was hard to move; but Pellissier was now in command. Under him the Mamelon tower was taken, and two assaults were made simultaneously on the 18th of June by the English on the Redan, by the French on the Malakoff. There was desperate courage and fearful loss in each case, but neither was successful; and Lord Raglan, bitterly grieved at failing on Waterloo day, and already terribly harassed by newspaper criticisms—and, what was worse, publication of all his designs, so that the enemy could profit by them—sank under a short and sudden illness, and died on the 28th.

Napoleon III. began to get dispirited, and to manifest signs of that want of perseverance which was one of his characteristics, though it began to be known that the Russian force had suffered the most of all; and, large as was the empire, it was becoming exhausted. However, on the 16th of August, another attack was made by the Russians, which led to the battle of the river Tchernaja. The French

bore the brunt of this attack, and the enemy retreated with terrible loss. The aspect of the dead—men who had been freshly marched up from the interior—showed that the Czar's best troops must have been already spent. The Italians had also sent a fine contingent to join the English and French.

All were in good spirits when the Queen, with her husband and two elder children, paid a return visit to the Emperor. They were lodged at St. Cloud, where, to the surprise of the French, they insisted on a quiet Sunday with the English Church service. In Paris the welcome was enthusiastic, and the sights at the Tuileries, the Louvre with all its treasures of art, delighted them, and, above all, the historical places. They did honour to the *Grande Exposition*, the first to follow in the track of the English Exhibition, and returned home after a brilliant ten days. The younger children, who had been secluded for some time previously by an attack of scarlatina, met them at Osborne, Princess Alice quite overcome at the meeting after the long separation; and the whole family then proceeded to the new buildings in progress at Balmoral.

There, on the 18th of September, was received a telegram from General Simpson, who had succeeded Lord Raglan in the command, announcing that on the 8th the Malakoff and Redan had again been assaulted. The French had made good their hold on the former; the English took the latter, but could not maintain their footing there, and were preparing to renew the assault in the morning when they found the Redan deserted. Sounds of explosions in the arsenals, outbursts of flame in the streets, an immense conflagration in the harbour, announced that the enemy were abandoning the town, and there was no more to be done but to enter and take possession after the twelve months' siege.

As soon as the good news had been confirmed, Prince Albert and his boys, with all the gentlemen, started forth, followed by the whole of the villagers and servants in the house, to light the big pile on the top of Craig Gowan

which had been prepared on the false intelligence the year before. Round it there was ecstatic playing of pipes, firing of guns, drinking of healths, and dancing of reels, ending by all coming down and cheering under the windows of the happy Queen.

Rejoicings took place all over the country, and some slight successes were gained by the allied armies, but there was no further advance made, and neither of the belligerent powers was unwilling to accept the offer of Austria to mediate between them. This resulted in the Treaty of Paris, by which Sebastopol was to remain unfortified, and no ships of war allowed in the Black Sea except by mutual consent of Russia and Turkey. The other details need not be mentioned here; but the gladness and relief were great when it was signed on the 30th of March 1856.

The armies were welcomed home ecstatically, but none had a kinder welcome than the sick and wounded whom the Queen visited at Chatham. Her thanks to Miss Nightingale for what had been done for the wounded were most earnest. A jewel designed by Prince Albert as a testimonial was presented to that noble-hearted lady, whose example has since led to the establishment of the ambulance corps that have done so much to mitigate the horrors of war, while her counsel and influence have established an entire revolution in the nursing system of hospitals.

“ On England’s annals, through the long
Hereafter of her speech and song,
That light its rays shall cast
On portals of the past.
A lady with a lamp shall stand
In the great history of the land,
A noble type of good
Heroic womanhood.”

The Queen welcomed her Crimean heroes in person, and also had a grand inspection of her fleet at Spithead, which presented one of the most magnificent spectacles to be seen in the world.

And out of all the miseries of the war came first, perhaps, the work of Florence Nightingale and its results ; next the establishment of the camp at Aldershot for the training of our armies ; and, lastly, the great hospital at Netley, where not only are sick soldiers nursed, but those returning with their discharge are saved from the direful snares that lie in wait at seaport towns, and safely sent home with their pay untouched, and where army surgeons have their final training.

CHAPTER XII

THE INDIAN MUTINY

It was during the triumphant autumn of 1855 at Balmoral, only three days after the beacon blaze of Craig Gowan, that Frederick William, eldest nephew to the childless King of Prussia, came, with the full consent of his whole family, to sue for the hand of the Princess-Royal, who was not yet fifteen years old.

Knowing and loving him well, her parents were delighted, but they left all dependent on her own heart, and further stipulated that nothing should be said to her till after her Confirmation; but love was too strong, and during a mountain ride on Craig-na-ban the youth found a piece of white heather, an emblem of good luck, and, as he presented it, found words to speak his hopes. There was no doubt of the affection on each side, but no more was permitted to pass at that time. In the ensuing March came the Confirmation, Dr. Wellesley, Dean of Windsor, having first examined the Princess, whose replies showed her thoroughly instructed and earnest.

The two elder Princes had the Rev. H. M. Birch as their tutor till 1854, when Mr. Gibbs succeeded him, specially for the heir to the crown, and in 1856 Lieutenant Cowell of the Royal Engineers, who had served in the late war, became Prince Alfred's tutor. Still the home circle was complete; and at Osborne the great delight of the children was a Swiss cottage entirely their own, where they grew vegetables and

flowers, and sometimes had tea with their parents. In the Highlands they ran freely on the mountain-side, and wandered through the glens with the keepers and gillies and dogs, and frequently visited the cotters and tenants in the neighbourhood. Nor among the pleasures of the country life must the animals be omitted, the dogs,—beautiful hounds and collies, which became companions and friends, and the horses of all degree. Animals have always been loved by the Queen, and her feeling of pity and indignation is always strong at any ill treatment of them. That blessing of life, a bright yet orderly childhood, was theirs to the full. The two eldest Princesses were both remarkable for ability, the Princess-Royal being considered by Baron Stockmar to be “exceptionally gifted in many things, even to the point of genius;” while Princess Alice was full of grace, very attractive, but with a certain sharpness of criticism which “led to many a little conflict in the schoolroom.” She threw herself into all she did, and drew sketches to illustrate any history she was reading. One of these (of Marie Antoinette and the Dauphin endeavouring to escape from the Tuileries) was preserved by Mr. Leitch, who gave lessons in drawing to the royal schoolroom in such a satisfactory manner that the Queen herself became his pupil, and found that after his instruction she could far better produce the effects that she desired in sketching, where she was as thorough as in everything else. In June there was an accident in the schoolroom which shall be told in Prince Albert’s words: “Vicky was sealing a letter at her table, and was all at once in flames, her sleeve having caught fire at the candle. Miss Hildyard was luckily seated at the same table, and Mrs. Anderson was in the room giving Alice her music lesson. They sprang at once to her assistance, and extinguished the flames with the hearthrug. Nevertheless her right arm is severely burnt from below the elbow to the shoulder. . . . The poor child showed great self-possession and presence of mind at the time, and much courage under the pain.”

On the 14th of April 1857 the number of royal children was completed by the birth of Princess Beatrice, the baby of the family, and the godchild of her eldest sister. Two days later died the Duchess of Gloucester, the last survivor of the numerous family of George III. "We all looked on her as a sort of grandmother."

It was just after this that a visit was paid, which has a melancholy interest, from the Queen's newly-married cousin, Charlotte of Belgium, and her husband, the Archduke Maximilian of Austria. In a few short years that unfortunate attempt on Mexico was made which resulted in death for the husband and insanity for the loving wife.

This spring it was decided that the Queen's husband should always be mentioned as Prince Consort, chiefly to avoid clashing with the names of his sons, as well as to give him a fixed status as an English prince.

Prince Albert devised, and the Queen gladly adopted, the idea of the Victoria Cross as a badge of honour for deeds of valour and self-sacrifice in face of the enemy. The first distribution was made by the Queen's own hands in Hyde Park on the 26th of June 1857. She rode on her roan charger, wearing a scarlet jacket and dark blue skirt, to the space where the sixty-two heroes designated were drawn up, and, still sitting on horseback, she fastened on the much prized decoration with her own hands.

Alas! fresh occasions for winning that Cross were springing up. Only the very next day came frightful tidings from India, telling of treachery, mutiny, and slaughter. A few words must be spent in explanation. The great power which had grown up in India had all arisen in less than two hundred years from the establishment of a company of merchants for the purposes of trade. They had enlisted native soldiers, called Sipahis or Sepoys, to protect their factories; and, to guard themselves from the encroachments of the French, had borrowed regular troops from the Crown. Through the latter half of the eighteenth century French and English had, by alliances with native princes, tried to oust one

another, till English victories, followed by the home disasters of the Revolution, had put an end to the French attempt. Many of the small Hindoo provinces had in the course of the struggle been conquered or ceded to the English, and others, while nominally under native rulers, were under British protection, and English residents prevented any very flagrant misrule. The Crown appointed a Governor-General and a Governor for each of the Presidencies of Bengal, Madras, and Bombay, and kept English troops there ; but the territory was the private property of the East India Company, the administration and finance were in their hands, the magistracy were their servants, the Sepoys their soldiers, and they supplemented the pay of the English troops.

The great peninsulas south of the Indus and Himalayas are inhabited by many different races, of many different faiths ; but in the western one the staple had been Hindoos, with their complicated system of myths, and their immutable laws of caste, which can be broken by a profane touch or by partaking of forbidden food. Buddhism had built a fresh system on this, but it principally prevailed in the Island of Ceylon and the eastern peninsula. All had once been conquered by a mighty Mahometan power, and a great Mongol or Mogul Tartar Empire had been established, which had in the course of four hundred years entirely melted away, though leaving a considerable number of Moslem inhabitants scattered about. The last remnant of the old Imperial "Great Mogul" was the King of Delhi, who had a palace at that city and a large pension, but was deprived of all power. At Lucknow still reigned the King of Oude, under British toleration, till 1856, when his unbearable injustice and cruelty at length decided the Governor-General, Lord Dalhousie, on deposing him, and pensioning off himself and his grandsons, with a palace and grounds for the usual amusements esteemed by the effeminate though often ferocious Eastern princes.

The Company had always bound itself to leave un-

touched the religion of its subjects ; indeed, it had maintained heathen temples and systematically discouraged the endeavours of missionaries. The Sepoys were all either Hindoo or Mahometan, though all their superior officers were English, and every care was taken to avoid interfering with their superstitious practices. At the same time, young men were only too apt to treat native servants with a rudeness that roused a vindictive spirit, and the mere fact of obedience to a lady was wormwood to a Hindoo, who utterly despised women. The commencement of railroads and other improvements began to alarm the natives. Moreover, a new kind of cartridge was introduced, which report declared to be greased with beef fat. Not only is the cow sacred, but many castes of the Hindoos never touch animal food, and as the end of the cartridge had to be bitten off before it could be used, it was imagined that the change was made in order to make the Sepoys sin against the laws of caste, and thus become easy converts to Christianity. The Mahometans, moreover, were alienated by the annexation of Oude. The whole native army was in an unsatisfactory state, but no representations had availed to bring about a reform, and it seems that a belief prevailed among the populace, especially the soldiery, that the time for the overthrow of English rule had come. Mysterious tokens were handed about, and on the 10th of May 1857 the mutiny began at Meerut, the Sepoys rising against their English officers, and murdering them and their wives and children with horrible cruelties.

Through the dreadful details there is no need to go. It is enough to state that at each station the English officers were confident of the fidelity and attachment of their own native regiments till they found the weapons at their throats, and themselves only saved by death from witnessing the frightful atrocities suffered by their wives and little ones. The English troops were too few to do more than protect themselves. They had to abandon Delhi, Lieutenant Willoughby gallantly blowing up the magazine to prevent

its stores from being used against the English. The horrors endured by those who could not escape were only known from the condition of their corpses. Happily the mutiny was confined to Bengal, and the city of Calcutta, the seat of Government, remained secure.

The first tidings reached England on the 27th of June, just as the royal party were starting to open a Loan Exhibition of works of art at Manchester, but it was not at first understood how serious the matter was. On the 11th of July Sir Colin Campbell was sent out to take the command in India. He was asked how soon he could be ready to start. "To-morrow," he said, but the troops could not follow him with equal rapidity, and before they could arrive the horrors had reached their height.

Close to Cawnpore, a considerable military station where many English families resided, was Bitthoor, the abode of a Mahratta chief, commonly called Nana Sahib. He had a tinge of English education, and had been on friendly terms with the officers and their families, but he had a grievance. The policy of the Company had been that when a native princely family under subjection to them died out, its domains should lapse to them, and the Hindoo custom of adopting an heir should not be permitted. Nana Sahib had been thus adopted, but his adoption had not been recognised, and though possessed of considerable wealth he was denied any power. To the very last, however, he was thought friendly, and when the mutineers threatened an advance, it was proposed to put the women and children under his care in his palace at Bitthoor.

There was general astonishment when he was found to be heartily on the side of the mutineers. The cantonments were besieged by the Sepoy force, the Nana at their head. The walls were incomplete, and for the most part only a few yards high. The number of helpless beings within was very numerous, many of the wives and children of the 32d English regiment having been left there. The miseries and agonies they suffered were unspeakable, and their patience

and courage can only be remembered with shuddering reverence. Meantime an English force under the gallant General Havelock was struggling forward, as best it might, through the heat of a Bengalese summer to their rescue. The Nana, resolved not to be balked of his prey, sent to offer to escort the survivors in boats on the river to Allahabad. As soon as they were beyond the poor shelter of their cantonments they were fired upon with grapeshot and rifles. Almost every man and many women there were slain. Two officers, Thomson and Delafosse, and two privates, gained the bank, and were received at last by a friendly Rajah.

The other boatloads, almost entirely women, were driven back to a small house in the town. There were only five men, the other two hundred were women and children. Here they were penned in for six dreadful days. Then learning that Havelock was upon him, Nana attempted a combat, but was routed. He retreated; the way into Cawnpore was open, but when Havelock entered, the house was swimming with blood, and a well near at hand was choked with corpses!

The English soldiers, sickened with horror, sobbed aloud over the fearful sight. For a time their hearts were steeled against mercy. The troops were ready to hunt down the Sepoys like mere wild beasts, but there was nobler work for them. Lucknow was holding out bravely but desperately, and had lost the noble governor, Sir Henry Lawrence, but Havelock could not advance to its relief till fresh troops came up, and cholera was a more fearful foe than even the Sepoys. On the 20th of September Delhi was retaken, and Colonel Hodgson, commanding a troop of native cavalry, shot the two princes on his own responsibility.

After eighty-seven days' siege Havelock, on the 25th of September, succeeded in reaching Lucknow, but not in time to save the life of the noble Lawrence, and he could not carry away the besieged nor drive off the enemy till Sir Colin Campbell came up on the 17th of November and

totally defeated the enemy. Henceforth all was victory, and, alas ! vengeance, for the English had been maddened by the cruelties of the Sepoys, and ferocity grew by its exercise. Havelock, a good and pious man, whose one ambition had been to win a battle, died from the effects of his exertions only twelve days after the arrival of Campbell at Lucknow, without knowing of the honours that rewarded him.

It was not, however, till the next summer that peace was entirely restored in India. One consequence of this fearful rebellion was the resignation of the East India Company. There are no longer two separate jurisdictions, or two separate armies in India, but all alike is under the Crown, and the Sepoy system is entirely abolished. The natives imagined that the Company was an individual, and that the Queen had hanged him for his offences, and assumed the government in person.

CHAPTER XIII

THE FIRST WEDDING

THE Queen had been deeply moved by the sufferings and heroism of her subjects in India, and took the opportunity of enforcing her recommendation that the army should be kept in a strong state of efficiency.

At home there had been a short visit to Osborne from the French Emperor and Empress, and then followed the autumn at Balmoral, the last for the Princess-Royal, over whose departure the warm-hearted Highlanders mourned.

And the preparations for her marriage were further saddened by the sudden death of the Duchess of Nemours at Claremont, a cousin and namesake. "We were like sisters," writes the Queen, "bore the same name, married the same year, our children are the same age. There was, in short, a similarity between us which, since 1839, united us closely and tenderly. Now one of us is gone—passed as a rose full-blown and faded—from this earth to eternity, there to rest in peace and joy!"

Early in January the wedding was to take place. The Queen's diary has this motherly entry at Windsor. "Went to look at the rooms prepared for Vicky's honeymoon. Very pretty! It quite agitated me to look at them. Poor, poor child. We took a short walk with Vicky, who was dreadfully upset at this real break in her life, the real separation from her childhood. She slept for the last time in the room with Alice."

The relations flocked to this first wedding—the King of the Belgians and his sons, the Prince and Princess of Prussia, the Duke and Duchess of Coburg, the Princes Albert of Prussia, father and son, Duke Frederick Charles of Prussia—all with their suites, so that the daily dinner party at Buckingham Palace numbered eighty or ninety. On the Sunday the young bride gave her mother a brooch with her own hair, and throwing her arms round her said, "I hope to be worthy to be your daughter."

The bride and bridegroom and their parents were photographed together on the morning of the wedding day, but the Queen trembled so much as to render her likeness indistinct.

The first wedding in a family has always a certain charm and a certain pain of its own, especially when there has before been neither death nor separation to break the happy circle. This wedding took place in the Chapel-Royal at St. James's on the 25th of January. The Queen entered it in procession, her two elder sons in front, the two little ones on either side of her, the three Princesses behind, in pink satin, covered with Isle of Wight lace, and their hair adorned with daisies and cornflowers. These last were dear to the Prussian royal family for the sake of Queen Louise, the King's mother, who was memorable for having been the mark for the first Napoleon's insolence, and having died with her heart broken by the miseries of her country.

Afterwards the bridegroom arrived, and then the bride, between her father and great uncle, King Leopold, as the Queen writes, "My uncle, mamma's brother, and one of the wisest kings in Europe. My last fear of being overcome vanished on seeing Vicky's quiet, calm, and composed manner. It was beautiful to see her kneeling with Fritz, their hands joined, and the train borne by the eight young ladies, who looked like a cloud of maidens hovering round her."

The young couple drove to Windsor, and their carriage was dragged to the Castle by the Eton boys. The parting came on the 2d of February, and the inevitable grief was

soon cheered by the news of the enthusiastic welcome of the bride in Germany, and of her happy and useful life there.

Events are strangely linked together. On the 14th of the previous January an attempt had been made to assassinate the Emperor and Empress of the French by throwing at their carriage shells filled with detonating powder. They both escaped unhurt, but about twenty persons were injured. The murderers were seized at once, most of them being Italian revolutionists—the principal one Felice Orsini. For many years past, political outlaws had taken refuge in England, though not regarded there with much favour; but in the alarm excited by this savage outrage, the French Government peremptorily demanded the expulsion of “assassin refugees,” and the newspapers and army uttered threats that could only be interpreted as intended to provoke a quarrel. On this Lord Palmerston brought in a bill making conspiracy to murder a felony for which a foreigner could be punished in England, though the crime was to be committed abroad. There was, however, a feeling that the mode of proposing this reasonable measure showed a submission to French dictation and fear of French blustering, and Mr. Milner Gibson moved that an answer should have been sent to the French *before* the bill was brought into Parliament. The majority were on his side; and as this amounted to a vote of censure, the Palmerston Ministry resigned, and Lord Derby came into office.

There was so much anger, and such hot language was used by the French, that there was strong expectation of war and of an invasion; and this led to the great volunteer movement, by which a large proportion of men of all ranks and professions have given up a part of their time to military training and rifle practice. This, however, did not fully take shape till the ensuing year, 1859, when instructions were issued to the Lords Lieutenant of each county, and the enrolment was enthusiastic. It was said that the first grand review in Hyde Park, which was witnessed by many foreigners, had an immense moral effect, and entirely took

away the inclination for an invasion. The Governments had long ago come to an agreement, since the Emperor was far from desiring a war with England, though he might have been driven to it in order to preserve his popularity. Though the invasion alarm has long been over, the volunteer system has never fallen to the ground, and still keeps our young men healthfully exercised, and "ready, aye ready, for the field."

Meantime the Queen and Prince had been at Cherbourg, and afterwards at Potsdam, where they paid a pleasant visit to their daughter. They were received on their return by Prince Alfred in his midshipman's uniform, "half blushing, but looking very happy." He had just passed an examination so severe that Lord Derby, on looking at the papers, said he was thankful that nothing of the kind was required of Her Majesty's ministers on coming into office. The first grandchild was born on the 27th of January 1859, and the Queen was much disappointed that she could not be present at his christening, and unable to satisfy herself that her daughter did not look, as the Prince Consort said, "weak and watery, by being baked, like a bit of pastry, in hot rooms." However, there was the great delight of a birthday visit from her at Osborne in the spring, joy only damped by a sharp attack of illness of the Duchess of Kent. There was also the harass of a fresh change of Ministry when the Derby Ministry were defeated on the Address and Lord Palmerston returned to office; and there were anxieties during the French war with Austria in Italy, suddenly ended by the treaty of Villa Franca, without doing more than placing Northern Italy under the constitutional monarchy of Victor Emmanuel of Sardinia.

There were the usual relaxations of sojourns in the Isle of Wight and the Highlands, especially one delightful expedition in a semi-incognito, as Lord and Lady Churchill, when they slept at a little inn, and their maid was told by the hostess, "Your lady gives no trouble."

Princess Alice had left the schoolroom, and become, in

the Queen's own words, "a real comfort." The royal mother hoped not to "let her marry as long as the parting could reasonably be delayed ;" but even Sovereigns cannot dispose of the affections, and a visit from the two young princes, nephews of the Grand-Duke of Hesse, made it evident what was to be "the maiden's fate," though she was still so young that her betrothal did not take place at once.

There was another pressing anxiety, caused by the War of Secession in America. The Northern States were adverse to negro slavery ; the Southern States had hitherto considered slave labour absolutely necessary to the cultivation of cotton, rice, and sugar,—their main dependence. The presidents had almost uniformly been men from the South ; and when a Northerner, Abraham Lincoln, was elected, the Southern States considered that a blow was struck at the institution, and, without waiting to see their expectations verified, began a war which lasted five years before the seceding states were reduced to submission, and therewith slavery abolished. There was a time of fear that England might have been drawn into it, because steamers used by the South had been built privately in her harbours, and had taken refuge there. Also two envoys from the Southern States were seized by a Northern armed vessel on board a British steamer, and the insult seemed about to lead to war. But this was averted, and the chief influence of the struggle upon England was that the cotton cultivation being wholly prevented, the manufactories were unsupplied, and thousands of workpeople were left unemployed and starving.

Their conduct was exemplary in their sufferings. No riots, no disturbances took place, and all the rest of the nation rose to the relief of their sufferings. Contributions of all kinds, from persons of every degree, were poured in ; and many noble-hearted men and women devoted themselves to contriving occupations which might be a means for the sufferers to *earn* what, if bestowed as a gift, might have destroyed their self-respect. Never was the brotherhood of the country more strongly shown.

CHAPTER XIV

SORROWS

THE Queen and Prince Consort had reached early middle age, that period at which the younger generation begins to come into full grown life; and the elder, whose presence has been felt like that of sheltering trees, is passing away.

The first to go was the Prince's stepmother, the Dowager Duchess of Coburg. The Queen, with the Prince and Princess Alice, had just arrived in Germany at the time of her death, the Crown Prince and Princess of Prussia met them, and they all went to Coburg together for the funeral. The little grandson was with them, much to their delight.

It was a peaceful and pleasant time, part of it spent at the Prince's old home at Coburg; but the journey ended in a severe cold and sore throat of the Queen, which obliged her to keep to her own room while she was at Brussels.

The next to pass away was the Queen's beloved mother, the Duchess of Kent, whose health had been gradually failing for some years. On the 15th of March 1861 a summons came from Frogmore at six in the evening, and when the Queen arrived she found the patient unconscious. All night this continued, nothing to be heard but the heavy breathing, and the striking of the quarters by a large old repeater in a tortoise-shell case, which had belonged to the Duke of Kent. Morning came without a change, except that the breathing grew fainter and fainter, and at half-past nine it ceased. Then the Queen was

gently lifted up by her husband and led into another room, where she had the relief of being able to weep freely for one whose whole thought she had been, and from whom she had never been separated for more than a few months at a time for the forty-one years of her life. Her eldest daughter instantly hurried to her side, and all her children were round her, except Prince Alfred, who was at sea. Her grief was intense, and she could hardly bear to have any one with her during several weeks.

Sunshine was passing away, and though the loss of those who are taken when full of years does not usually cast a permanent shade over the life of the survivors, a greater and heavier cloud was on the way.

The Prince Consort had begun to show tokens of being overworked, though he was as active in the service of the country as ever. There was a visit to Dublin, as much enjoyed as the two previous ones in 1849 and 1853, and this was followed by an expedition to Killarney with the four eldest children, when the wonderful beauty of the lake was seen from an eight-oared barge. Then came a stay at Balmoral, but the Queen was still depressed; there were anxieties as to the little Leopold, who had had the measles very severely in the spring, and had to be sent abroad for the winter.

The first return to Windsor Castle without the Duchess at Frogmore was very trying, and there were further sorrows in the illness of Sir Edward Bowater, the gentleman who had gone to Cannes with Prince Leopold, and who eventually died at Cannes on the 14th of December. In November, too, the Prince had a great shock in the death of his much-loved kinsman, the young King of Portugal, from fever. Moreover, it was the crisis of the difficulties before referred to with the United States, and almost the last paper written by the Prince was with a view to accommodating the difference without compromising English honour. He had sleepless nights, with rheumatic pains, and felt each chance exposure to the

rain and cold of late November. The last time he appeared in public was on the 28th of November, when he came out on the terrace to see the Eton College volunteers exercised, and then have luncheon in the conservatory. It was a great effort, and he was chilly and weary all the time. On the Sunday he went to church and knelt as usual, though looking very ill, and afterwards able to eat nothing.

He did not join the family after that evening, though he still rose at his usual hour, day after day, and lay on the sofa in his sitting-room, with the Queen or Princess Alice reading Scott's *Peveril of the Peak* to amuse him, when he could bear to listen. By the 7th of December it was evident that the illness was gastric fever. He was daily moved from the bed to the sofa, and wheeled into another room, and though occasionally wandering a little, he still took interest in events around and listened to reading or to music; and his tender sayings to the Queen are of that sweetness that makes all the world kin, "*Liebes Fräüchen*" (dear little wife), as he stroked her cheek; "*Gutes Weibchen*" (good little wife), and, with his weary head on her shoulder, "it is very comfortable so, dear child."

It was impossible for those about him not to remember that he had said, "If I had an illness I am sure I should not struggle for life. I have no tenacity of life."

By the 12th the physicians felt actual alarm, and though on the night before the 13th there was a slight rally, it was thought expedient to telegraph to Cambridge for the Prince of Wales. That day, at noon, the Queen perceived a dusky hue about the face and hands, and the breathing was very rapid and labouring—with much wandering and dozing, scarcely perceiving when one after another his children came and took his hand. This was at about half-past five, and when the Queen bent over him with the words, "*Es ist kleines Fräüchen*," he kissed her.

As evening advanced a rapid change set in, the hands

became cold, and just before eleven o'clock the spirit had returned to God who gave it, and the loving wife was a broken-hearted widow.

It was her daughter Alice on whom above all she leant in those terrible days, when, if anything could have given her comfort, it would have been the universal sympathy of the nation, grieving not only for and with her, but gradually coming more and more to an appreciation of what the loss was to themselves—in that wise head and clear judgment, scarcely appreciated while they were still available, because of the resolute reticence and sense of duty that kept the Prince in the background.

He was buried as quietly as his rank permitted at Windsor, and the Queen, on the 17th of March 1862, laid the first stone of a mausoleum, where, by the end of the year, the remains were transferred, in which she and her family always keep the anniversary of his death.

King Leopold persuaded her to leave the scene of her bereavement for Osborne, where she remained in the deepest seclusion, all the more needful from the heavy pressure of the necessary business of a Sovereign. For twenty years the Prince had prepared and explained all this as no one else could do for her, bringing his great powers of intellect and judgment to bear upon these subjects; and the loss of such assistance could not but make the work to be done with a saddened heart and crushed spirits exceedingly laborious. Such help as Princess Alice could give was earnestly afforded, but of course this was very slight in comparison with what she was accustomed to, though very precious to her feelings, and the effect on the Princess was that she "suddenly developed into a wise and far-seeing woman, living only for others, and beloved and respected by the highest as well as the lowest." Among the many undertakings left in hand was the second International Exhibition, the opening of which was likely to be a sad contrast to that brilliant day of perfect enjoyment which the Queen had recorded as her husband's greatest triumph.

The Prince of Wales went on the 6th of February 1862 to make a tour in the East, all the details of which had been arranged by his father, and the rest of the family were of course still in the deepest mourning, so that it was the Duke of Cambridge who had to open the Exhibition as usual on the 1st of May. It was much larger than the first, and was therefore placed at South Kensington instead of Hyde Park, and, perhaps on account of its great size, was far less beautiful in proportion and grouping than its predecessor. In spite of the condition of the United States, which excluded almost all American contributions, the number of exhibitors from foreign countries was 16,456, whereas in the first there were only 6566.

After a short stay at Balmoral, the Princess Alice's wedding took place at Osborne as quietly as possible on the 1st of July. After seeing this beloved child depart to visit her husband's home, the Queen returned to Balmoral, where, as her journal shows, the sight of the beauty made her only feel that there was "no pleasure, no joy—all dead." She caused a cairn, 40 feet wide at the base and 35 feet high, to be erected on Craig Lorigan. She herself and the six children with her each placed a stone. The inscription is—

To the Beloved Memory
OF
ALBERT, THE GREAT AND GOOD
PRINCE CONSORT
RAISED BY HIS BROKEN-HEARTED WIDOW
VICTORIA R.
AUGUST 21, 1862

"He being made perfect in a short time fulfilled a long time. For his soul pleased the Lord. Therefore hastened He to take him away from among the wicked."—Wisdom iv. 13, 14.

CHAPTER XV

UNEVENTFUL YEARS

BEFORE the end of that year of sorrow Queen Victoria knew that fresh ties were forming around her. She had always set her face against the cruel old system which made royal marriages links between different countries, irrespective of any feelings of the parties concerned. She was gladdened by finding that the Prince of Wales had become attached to one of the most lovely and gentle ladies in Europe, the Princess Alexandra of Denmark.

The wedding took place in England, the bride having previously been met at Gravesend by her future husband, when they proceeded slowly through the principal streets of London, amid the ecstatic welcomes of the people, waving flags from every window and balcony, and cheering with the utmost enthusiasm. Two days later, on the 10th of March 1863, the marriage ceremony was performed at St. George's Chapel, Windsor, the Queen, in her widow's mourning, watching from the royal closet, while all the brothers and sisters stood round, the Princess-Royal with her little son by her side, in Highland dress, like his young uncles. That evening might have made Lord Macaulay retract his line—

“Such night in England ne'er hath been and ne'er again shall be,”
for not a hill or cape throughout the island was without its bonfire, and “the twinkling points of fire” could

be counted in numbers from every elevation, though, happily, not for a nation's alarm, but a nation's rejoicing.

On the ensuing Easter Sunday Princess Alice's first daughter was born at Windsor, and christened Victoria. During the visit to Osborne that followed, the Queen and Princess inspected Netley Hospital. The galleries are altogether a quarter of a mile in length, and when the Queen had seen one, and kindly greeted the men in their beds, it was suggested to her that she would spare herself fatigue by not going through the second, which was exactly like the first. "The poor men would be disappointed if I did not go to them," she said.

Later in the year there was a family gathering in Scotland—the Prince and Princess of Wales at Abergeldie, and the Crown Prince and Princess of Prussia, with their children as their guests; while Princess Alice, with her husband and baby, were with the Queen at Balmoral.

Here, coming home in the dark on the 7th of October, from an expedition to Clova, the Queen and the Princesses Alice and Helena met with an accident. They had become conscious that the carriage was off the track, and John Brown, the Queen's faithful attendant, was sitting on the box holding the lantern. The Queen's journal continues: "About twenty minutes after we had started the carriage began to turn up on one side. We called out, 'What's the matter?' There was an awful pause, during which Alice said, 'We are upsetting.' In another moment, during which I had time to reflect whether we should be killed or not, and thought there were still things which I had not settled and wanted to do, the carriage turned over on its side, and we were all precipitated to the ground! I came down very hard with my face on the ground, near the carriage, the horses both on the ground, and Brown calling out in despair, 'The Lord Almighty have mercy on us! Who did ever see the like of this before? I thought you were all killed!' Alice was helped up by means of

tearing all her clothes to disentangle her; but Lenchen (Princess Helena), who had also got caught in her dress, called out very piteously, which frightened me a good deal, but she was also got out with Brown's assistance, and neither she nor Alice was at all hurt. I wondered then that I was not hurt, and urged that we should make the best of it, as it was an inevitable misfortune. Smith (the coachman), utterly confused and bewildered, at length came up to ask if I was hurt. Meantime the horses were lying on the ground as if dead, and it was absolutely necessary to get them up again. Alice, whose calmness and coolness were admirable, held one of the lamps, while Brown cut the traces, to the horror of Smith, and the horses were speedily released and got up unhurt. There was no means of getting home except by sending back Smith with the two horses to get another carriage. All this took some time, about half an hour, before we got off. By this time I felt that my face was a good deal bruised and swollen, and, above all, my right thumb was exceedingly painful and swollen—indeed, I thought at first it was broken till we began to move it. Alice advised then that we should sit down in the carriage, that is, with the bottom of the carriage as a back, which we did, covered with plaids, little Willem (a black servant of Princess Alice's) sitting in front with the hood of his bournouse over his head holding a lantern, Brown holding another, and being indefatigable in his attention and care. He had hurt his knee a good deal in jumping off the carriage. A little claret was all we could get to drink, or to wash my face and hands. Almost directly after the accident happened, I said to Alice it was terrible not to be able to tell it to my dearest Albert, to which she answered, 'But he knows it all, and I am sure he watched over us.'

After about half an hour the groom in charge of the ponies on which they had ridden up the mountain came back with them, having taken alarm at the long delay, and fearing an accident. The royal ladies gladly mounted and

rode home, meeting the carriage by the way, and reaching Balmoral at twenty minutes to ten.

These were not very eventful years in England, except for the birth of the first son of the Prince of Wales on the 8th of January 1864, and the rejoicings in consequence. The Queen continued to lead a very quiet and secluded life, feeling every public appearance an effort, soothed and refreshed by her sojourns in Scotland, but ever retracing the scenes of past happiness.

Again, in October 1865, on the way to visit the Duchess of Athole at Dunkeld, the Queen and Princess Helena had another adventure. The Duchess had met them at a farmhouse, whence they rode over the hills on ponies, a thick mist coming on and turning to rain before they reached a lodge, where two carriages met them. The Queen's journal continues: "It was pitch dark, and we had to go through a wood, and I must own that I was somewhat nervous. We had not gone very far when we perceived that we were on a very rough road, and I became much alarmed, though I would say nothing. A branch took off Grant's cap, and we had to stop for Brown to go back and look for it with one of the carriage lamps. This stoppage was most fortunate, for he then discovered we were on a completely wrong road. Grant and Brown had both been saying, 'This is no carriage road, it is full of holes and stones.' Miss MacGregor (from the front carriage) came to us in great distress, saying she did not know what to do, for the coachman, blinded by the driving rain, had mistaken the road, and that we were in a track for carting wood. What was to be done? No one at this moment seemed to know whether to try and turn the carriage, or to take a horse out and send the postilion back to Loch Ordie to get assistance. At length we heard from General Grey that we could go on, though where we should get out no one could exactly tell. Grant took a lamp out of the carriage, and walked before the horses, while Brown led them, and this

reassured me. But the road was very rough, and we had to go through some deep holes full of water. At length, in about twenty minutes, we saw a light and passed a lodge, where we stopped and inquired where we were, for we had already come on a good road. Our relief was great when we were told we were all right.

This year brought the Queen another great sorrow in the death of Leopold, King of the Belgians; the uncle who had above all taken the place of a father to her, and whom she had always loved so deeply.

CHAPTER XVI

THE ABYSSINIAN WAR

ON the 18th of October 1865 Viscount Palmerston died, after a very brief illness. He was within two days of his 81st birthday, had been in office almost all his life, and was Premier to the day of his death. His career was well summed up by Harriet Martineau : " By his levity he made many things easy, by his industry he accomplished a vast amount of business, by his gay spirits he made a sort of holiday of the grave course of the nation. But he has done nothing to fit his country, or his party, or even his nearest associates, for a wise conduct of national affairs in the time to come. One reason of the general sorrow for his death is the general misgiving as to what is to come next."

Lord John Russell (advanced to an earldom) became Premier, but on bringing in a bill for the extension of the franchise the Ministry were defeated, and went out of office in June 1867. The Conservatives came in with the Earl of Derby and Mr. Benjamin Disraeli, a remarkable person, son of a noted literary man of Jewish extraction, and himself hitherto known as a writer of brilliant political novels, and a maker of powerful speeches in Parliament. Under their auspices, a bill was passed giving household suffrage in borough towns, and soon after, on the resignation of Lord Derby, Disraeli became Prime Minister.

A war was in hand with Abyssinia, a strange country,

which, though Christian by profession, had, from isolation, relapsed into barbarism and savagery. The king, Theodore, had for a time shown himself willing to receive European emissaries and to have endeavours made for the advancement of his people, but he suddenly took offence and threw the English Consul, Mr. Cameron, with his suite, some missionaries, and various other Europeans, into prison, about thirty-five in all. An expedition was fitted out for their deliverance, and placed under General Sir Robert Napier. Gaining access by the Red Sea, he advanced on Magdala, the capital, and defeated the Abyssinians on the adjacent heights. On this Theodore released the captives, but refused submission, on which the city was attacked, and in the midst of the assault the king was slain, perishing, it is believed, by his own hands. As on inquiry he was found to be a usurper, the right heir was set up in his place, and his young son was brought to England and presented to the Queen in the Isle of Wight. He was sent to India for education, the climate of England being too cold for him, but he died after a few years.

Prince Alfred, who had been created Duke of Edinburgh, had from the first done his full duty as a naval officer. In the early part of the year 1868 his ship, the *Galatea*, was in the harbour at Sydney. He had gone ashore for a picnic, when he was suddenly shot in the back by a miscreant named O'Ferral. The present writer was at a large public assembly at Oxford when the intelligence was telegraphed to the Earl of Carnarvon (Colonial Secretary), and the thrill of horror and indignation that passed at once through all that great body was a sensation never to be forgotten. Mercifully the bullet proved to have missed any vital part, and the prince's recovery was rapid. He interceded for the assassin, but in vain; the man was at once tried and executed. He declared that he had acted on a sudden impulse and had no accomplices, but there was every reason to believe that he was connected with the Fenians. This was the title assumed

by the disaffected in Ireland in commemoration of the legendary heroes of whom Fingal was supposed to have been the chief, and who were the subject of Ossian's poems.

To repress Irish demands and turbulence was the policy of one party, to endeavour to content them that of the other, and in the end of 1868 the Conservative Ministry was overthrown, and the Liberals brought in, when their first measure was to disestablish the Irish Church, on the plea that a large proportion of the nation were Romanists, and that a source of irritation and jealousy would be removed; but the expectation of peace, content, and tranquillity was not fulfilled.

Princess Alice was going through a time of much trial, war having broken out between Austria and Prussia. It was as painful as a civil war, and Prince Louis himself was forced to take the field, and when she could ill spare him; but she was vigorously making every preparation for the wounded, begging for old linen. She writes to her mother: "I come to ask if you could send me some old linen for rags. In your numerous households it is collected twice a year and sent to hospitals. Could I beg for some this time? It would be such a blessing for the poor Germans, and here they are not so rich."

The two little girls, Princesses Victoria and Elizabeth, or Ella as she was called, were with the Queen in England, and a third was added to their number on the 11th of July 1866, happily during an interval while the father was able to be at Darmstadt, though he had to leave it three days later to take part in the battle of Königgrätz. "You can't think what war in one's own country—in a little one like this—is," the princess writes; "the want is fearful!" Before the little one was a month old, on August 4th, the brave and tender-hearted princess was driving to the hospitals to inquire after the wounded who were brought from the fields of battle. "As soon as I am better I will go to them myself, but the close and crowded wards turn one easily faint." On the 17th she actually went, and let

a poor man who had undergone an operation hold her hand, while he cried like a child, saying "It burns so!"

By this time her husband had rejoined her, and peace being soon after concluded the babe received the Greek word for peace, Irene, as her baptismal name.

What the Princess Alice had seen during this war led her to form a "Ladies' Union" for training women of all ranks in nursing, and especially in giving assistance to the comforts of the troops in time of war. Nursing was an especial talent of the princess herself. She had that great perfection of joining to the stateliness of her rank the sweet, tender homeliness of a cottage mother. She nursed her own children, made their dresses, and when her favourite English nurse was ill she washed and dressed the baby herself; nor did she fail to carry the like tender ministrations into the houses of the poor at Darmstadt. What she did was at the expense of her own time and exertion, for her means were not large, considering her rank. She had to practice careful economy, not being able to afford a country house for her children in the summer, and not being able often to enjoy her greatest pleasure, a visit to England, on account of the heavy expense.

In March 1867 there was much anxiety for the Princess of Wales, who suffered from a severe rheumatic fever, and was long in shaking off the effects, finally going to the baths at Weimar.

The Princess Helena had been married on the 5th of July 1866 to Prince Christian of Schleswig-Holstein, the Queen being this time able to retain her daughter in her own country. The Princesses Louise and Beatrice were now the companions in the Highland expeditions. In one the Queen notes: "A little boy tried to give me a nosegay which was fixed on a pole, and in trying to catch it Colonel Ponsonby let it fall. The little boy screamed 'Stop! Stop!' and ran in such an agony of disappointment that I stopped the carriage and took it from him, to his mother's great delight."

CHAPTER XVII

THE FRANCO-GERMAN WAR

THE year 1870 brought another shock to Europe in the Franco-German War. The unfortunate Spanish queen, Isabella, whose marriage twenty-five years previously had led to the ruin of Louis Philippe, abdicated her throne. The Spaniards looked about for a sovereign, but theirs was a kingdom by no means tempting to any person with a cool temper.

One candidate for it, however, was found in the person of Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern, a relation of the Prussian royal family. Upon this the Emperor of the French protested that if a German ruling house placed one of its princes on the throne of Spain, balance of power would be overthrown. Leopold at once retired, but Napoleon insisted that the King of Prussia, as head of the family, should give a pledge that he should not come forward again. This was so unreasonable that it was plain that the French were only seeking a pretext for war, and, in fact, the Emperor felt his position so insecure, at the head of that fickle nation, that he allowed himself to be pushed on into taking up arms for the invasion of Germany on the Rhine frontier, carrying his young son with him, and publishing despatches whose magniloquence was intended to conceal the strange deterioration of the army since the days of the Crimea.

The Germans, on the other hand, rose as one man for

the defence of their frontier, and their national hymn, "Die Wacht am Rhein," was heard from end to end of the country. Both the English-born Princesses had to see their husbands depart for the seat of war, and to throw themselves into the preparations for alleviating the sufferings of the wounded. Victory at once declared itself on the German side. The first shot was fired on the 2d of August at Saarbrück. Frightful battles followed in quick succession. The Emperor soon felt obliged to send his high-spirited son to England for safety, and on the 1st of September, after a great defeat at Sedan, he surrendered himself to King William of Prussia as a prisoner.

No sooner did the tidings reach Paris than the people were filled with fury against the Bonaparte family. The Empress Eugénie fled in disguise from the Tuileries, and made her way to England, where, on his release by the Germans, she was joined by the Emperor, so that for the second time the Queen had to welcome and cheer fallen monarchs of France whom she had received in prosperity.

France meantime proclaimed a republic, and with resounding boasts of patriotism closed the gates of Paris, while the German armies besieged Metz and Strasburg, and marched on the capital. Through all the early winter the siege lasted, while bodies of troops coming to its relief were successively defeated by the Prussian princes; and on the 18th of January 1871 King William of Prussia was declared German Emperor by the whole Germanic confederation. Ten days later he received the surrender of Paris, where hunger had reduced the inhabitants to a fearful state of misery. They had eaten their horses, dogs, and cats, and their bread was chiefly sawdust.

The victorious Germans had suffered likewise, for the earlier battles had been hotly contested, and the value of the "*Hulfsverein*," or help mission, which Princess Alice had established, was indeed tested. The best nurses were sent to the neighbourhood of the camp, and such of the

wounded as could bear it were carried to hospitals in the interior. There were four of these at Mayence under Princess Alice. "I hope," she writes, "that I shall not live to see another war. It is too dreadful. We have over 500 wounded; as soon as they are better they are sent north, and worse ones fill the beds, French and Germans intermixed. I neither see nor smell anything but wounds, and the first sight, which sometimes one does not escape meeting, is very shocking. . . . Now, to-day, all the poor wives, mothers, sisters come to me for news of their relations; it is heartrending. . . . Yesterday a poor woman came to me to ask me to help her to get to the battlefield to have the body of her only son looked for and brought home, and she was so resigned and patient. . . . Daily I hear the muffled drums of the funeral of some soldier or officer being taken past my windows to its last resting-place. How deeply do I feel for the poor widows and orphans. My children are very well, but have absolutely no place where they can walk with safety from infection. The barrack at the foot of our garden contains 1500 French prisoners, and many of them ill. I send the children out driving of an afternoon when I can, but having only one coachman, as ours are with Louis, at present I cannot manage it often."

No wonder the brave princess suffered from violent inflammation of eyes and throat, with fever and neuralgia! The Queen sent her Dr. Hofmeister to attend her, as her regular physician was occupied with the wounded, and in October was born her second son and fifth child, Frederick William. On her recovery she was sent from these sad scenes to her elder sister at Berlin. They spent the evenings alone together, and were much comforted and refreshed; but in December the Princess Alice was back among her wounded, and was carrying Christmas gifts from herself, her sisters, and her mother to delight them.

A cape worked by the Queen was given to a lad who became worse soon after, and was dying. "The poor boy

won't part from it for an instant, but holds it fast round himself."

It was not till the 21st of March that the Princess met her husband at the Darmstadt station, and on the 26th of June the two sisters were rejoicing together in the triumphal return of the army to Berlin.

In peaceful England all had been quiet during these fearful tempests abroad. In October the Princess Louise became engaged to the Marquis of Lorne, eldest son to the Duke of Argyll, and grandson to the Queen's first Mistress of the robes, the Duchess of Sutherland. It was the first publicly sanctioned alliance of the English blood-royal with a subject since the prohibitory Act of George III.; but this had left the sovereign at liberty to dispense with the barrier, and no difficulties were made, so that the marriage took place in the ensuing spring, on the very day on which Princess Alice was made happy by her husband's return to Darmstadt. The wedding tour was so contrived as to give the sisters a few days together in June.

As a rest after their most trying and distressing year, the Prince and Princess Louis of Hesse came with all their children to Balmoral in September, but they found the Queen very unwell with rheumatic gout. However, she happily gradually recovered her usual excellent health, and was able to enjoy her grandchildren's company till they caught the whooping-cough and were sent to London, while their parents proceeded to Sandringham to visit the Prince of Wales, "the first time for eleven years that I have spent Bertie's birthday with him," Princess Alice wrote.

A terrible anxiety was, however, imminent. The Prince of Wales had just returned from a visit to the Earl of Londesborough at Scarborough, and before long symptoms of typhoid fever showed themselves simultaneously in himself, in one of his grooms, and in the Earl of Chesterfield. Anxiety became intense as time went on, and on the 1st of December Lord Chesterfield died. The two Princesses, wife and sister, were indefatigable nurses, and the Queen

came to her son's bedside. Fervent prayers throughout the entire nation were offered up. On Sunday the 10th the Princess of Wales wrote a touching little note to the Vicar of Sandringham: "My husband being, thank God, somewhat better, I am coming to church. I must leave, I fear, before the service is concluded, that I may watch by his bedside. Can you not say a few words in the early part of the service, that I may join with you in prayer for my husband before I return to him."

At night the patient was worse, hardly recognising any one, and as the anniversary of his father's death, the 14th of December, approached, the anxious watchers became almost hopeless; but even on that day the first turn for the better began, and the Prince was out of danger, almost on the day the young groom died, in spite of all the skill and care lavished on him.

There was intense feeling throughout the country, and it found full expression when, on the 27th of February 1872, the Prince went in state to St. Paul's to return thanks for his recovery, accompanied by his royal mother, his wife, brothers and sisters, and his two elder children. The streets were lined with rejoicing crowds, and the Cathedral contained 1500 persons.

The Queen, in black velvet trimmed with ermine, came in with the Prince on one side and the little Prince Albert Victor on the other. The Princess of Wales, in blue, led the younger Prince George. There was a grand Te Deum at the opening of the service, and the Archbishop of Canterbury's sermon was on the text, "Ye are members one of another." There was a grand illumination in the evening, and it was one of the occasions when the whole country seemed truly of one heart!

Yet only a week later another pistol was pointed at the Queen by a half-witted Irish lad, with a Fenian petition in his pocket. It proved that the pistol was not loaded, and was of so peculiar a construction that if it had been, it

would not have gone off, so that the only effect was to consign the youth to a lunatic asylum.

After the midway of life a biography often becomes a record of sorrows, and the loss of the admirable Scotch minister, Dr. Norman Macleod, deeply affected the Queen, who had always specially delighted in seeing him at Balmoral. The last time he was there, she observed the first sign of illness when, contrary to his habit, he accepted her invitation to him to sit down in her presence, and when she wished him good-bye and shook hands with him, he said, "God bless your Majesty" with tears in his eyes. Then the thought came to her that she might never see him again. This was on the 27th of May, and on the 16th of June she heard of his death.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE EMPRESS

"MEMBERS one of another." If this truth was evinced on the one hand by the public feeling for the illness of the heir to the throne, it was proved on the other hand by the Queen's strong feeling at a sad accident to the children of a poor man named Rattray. The mother had gone to see her own dying mother, and had kept her boy of ten years old from school to take care of his brother of three. While the elder one was fishing in a burn running into the Dee, then much swelled by rains, the little one fell in. His brother jumped in to try to save him, and both were swept away by the current. The younger one's body was found at once, and the Queen watched long and with earnest sympathy the search for the elder. She went afterwards to see the poor mother: "We went in, and on a table in the kitchen, covered with a sheet which they lifted up, lay the poor sweet innocent bairnie, only three years old, a fine plump child, and looking just as though it slept, with quite a pink colour, and very little scratched, in its last clothes, with its little hands joined, a most touching sight. I let Beatrice see it, and was glad she should see death for the first time in so touching and pleasing a form. Then the poor mother came in, calm and quiet, though she cried a little at first when I took her hand and said how much I felt for her, and how dreadful it was."

All day long there was search for the other body, and it

was found at last on a small island, in time for the two brothers to be buried together—the Queen and her two youngest children watching the sad procession. Both in Scotland and the Isle of Wight the Queen is always the friend of the tenants and cottagers, visiting them when sick, providing comforts and pleasures, and doing all to promote their good and friendly feeling.

This spring was carried the Act for vote by ballot, in the hope that the secrecy of the name of the voter might secure greater purity of election.

1873 began with the death of the Emperor Napoleon, ending one of the strangest careers that ever fell to the lot of man. The Empress Eugénie continued to live at Chislehurst, receiving much friendly kindness from the royal family, and the young Prince Imperial was a promising student at the military college at Woolwich.

A death took place this year that touched the royal family more nearly. Each of the Queen's elder children knew the sorrow of the loss of an infant. The Prince of Wales had mourned his third son, the Princess of Prussia's little Sigismund had been taken from her, and now Princess Alice's "Frittie," as she was wont to call the babe born in the midst of the war, was snatched away suddenly. Her little ones were playing about her, while she was dressing,—the baby on the bed, the two boys running about, when the elder one went out through the open door of the next room, and his brother followed. The next moment there was a fall. The younger child had fallen headlong through the window into the street, and died in his mother's arms a few hours later,—May the 29th, 1873.

He was a delicate child, but a very bright one, and the heartache for him never ceased, especially as the remaining brother pined for him. Nearly a year later this little fellow said, "When I die, you must die too, and all the others. Why can't we all die together. I don't like to die alone, like Frittie."

Another change of Ministry took place in 1874, bringing

in the Conservatives with Mr. Disraeli, who, a couple of years later, accepted the title of Beaconsfield.

His Ministry began with much prosperity. In January, the Duke of Edinburgh was married at St. Petersburg to the daughter of the Czar Alexander II. of Russia, first according to the Greek ritual, then according to the English. The Queen welcomed them home at Windsor with great splendour.

British power was extending on all sides. The natives of the cluster of islands called Fiji, once a proverb for cannibalism, had been greatly tamed by missionary teaching, and there were also many European settlers. By their own request they were placed under the protection of English law, and received a governor.

On the West Coast of Africa, the outrages of the savage king of Ashantee made a war necessary, but it was conducted with so much ability by Sir Garnet Wolseley that complete success was gained with hardly any loss of life.

The Prince of Wales had been making a tour in India, and by his gracious manners and ready courtesy much gratifying the native princes, and it was held advisable that the Queen should assume the title of Empress of India, she being really the successor of the old Mogul Emperors whose power the whole peninsula acknowledged; and on the 1st of January 1876 she was proclaimed Empress at Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, and Delhi, and at the last mentioned place, the capital of the old empire, the Viceroy, Lord Lytton, held a magnificent court, attended by sixty-three native princes glittering with jewels.

Almost at the same time the Transvaal, a large territory adjoining our South African possessions, was annexed. It was partly inhabited by Dutch Boers (farmers) who had overflowed from the Cape, partly by British settlers, and partly by Zulus, and all at first seemed willingly to acquiesce in submitting to English rule, so as to receive British protection.

British intervention was likewise needed in the East.

Russia had never ceased to covet Constantinople, and to claim the right to protect the Christian inhabitants of the Turkish empire. In the Herzegovina and other provinces, where the population was in great part Christian, there were revolts, occasioned, as some said, by the rapacity and insolence of Turkish officials; as others declared, stirred up by secret emissaries of Russia. At any rate, there was much horrid ferocity shown on each side, and the Turkish soldiery committed barbarities which shocked all Europe. This gave an excuse to the Russian Czar for invading Turkey, and there was much severe fighting, in which, to the general surprise, the Turks showed themselves able to hold the Balkan against the enemy.

Before, however, the mighty forces of Russia could overwhelm them, Lord Beaconsfield, in conjunction with other European powers, insisted on the observance of the Treaty of Paris made at the end of the Crimean war. And on the pledge of the Sultan to carry out reforms that would greatly ameliorate the condition of the Christians and secure them full protection, it was made known that England would assist Turkey. The fleet was sent into Besika Bay, and troops brought from India to Malta, and on these tokens of such support being in earnest, the Czar consented to make peace at the Treaty of Berlin, May the 30th, 1878. The island of Cyprus was placed by the Turks in the hands of the English.

CHAPTER XIX

DEATH OF PRINCESS ALICE

FEW mothers had been happier than Queen Victoria in seeing all her fine family grow up around her affectionate and dutiful, and, with the exception of the delicacy of Prince Leopold, causing unusually little anxiety on the score of health.

But to Princess Alice the year 1877 had been one of great trial. First her father-in-law, Prince Charles of Hesse, died, and scarcely a month after his elder brother, the Grand Duke, to whom her husband was heir.

The family were very affectionate, and the grief was much felt, and with it came all the business and anxiety connected with the succession. The Princess was far less strong than formerly, but she spared herself nothing, though the strain was severe, and she lost sleep and appetite, but she still attended to her charitable institutions, and exerted herself to the utmost. She was thus in a low condition of health when her eldest daughter, Princess Victoria, sickened with diphtheria on the 8th of November 1878. She was separated from the others and nursed by her mother and the Lady Superintendent of the hospital. She had the disease slightly, but was hardly on the mend before all the rest of the family were attacked, except the mother, and the second princess, Ella, who was sent out of the house. The little Mary,—May, as the household loved to call her,—a bright little creature of four years old, sank

under it during the very height of anxiety for the only boy. He, however, recovered, and by the 6th of December was able to drive out with his father in a close carriage. On the 7th Princess Alice went up to the station to spend a few minutes with her sister-in-law, the Duchess of Edinburgh, who was on her way to England, after all the anxiety lest a war should break out between their two native homes. On that evening the princess felt unwell, and the symptoms of the terrible illness declared itself, caught, it was supposed, when in the agony of their sorrow for their little daughter she had laid her head upon her sick husband's pillow. The illness lasted a week. All efforts to save her life were vain, and on the 14th of December, the seventeenth anniversary of her father's death, the day four weeks of that of her child, she fell asleep to wake no more here, with the words on her lips, "From Friday to Saturday—four weeks—May—dear papa."

It was a fearful blow to the whole family. Her eldest and youngest brothers hastened to the funeral, and, as soon as possible, the Queen had the poor bereaved children with her.

It was an anxious and sorrowful year on many accounts. The winter was unusually severe, and there was much depression and distress. In Afghanistan the British resident at Cabul was set upon and murdered with all his guard and attendants, and Sir Frederick Roberts had to reduce the country to some degree of submission.

At the same time in Natal a great quarrel arose with Cetewayo, the Zulu chief, who was required to lay aside his ferocious habits of killing people untried, and keeping up a great army of fighting men, as well as to receive a British resident. As he made no reply, the British forces crossed the boundary river, Tugela. At Isandlana a detached force under Colonel Durnford were surrounded by overwhelming hordes of Zulus, and almost entirely perished. The two officers, Melville and Coghill, who had charge of the colours, were resolved that these should not fall into

the enemy's hands. They struggled to the river, crossed it, and were found dead on the other side, having saved their country's colours!

Eighty men of the 24th, under Lieutenant Bromhead and the second officer, Lieutenant Chard, R.E., were at a little missionary station called Rorke's Drift, consisting of very little more than a hut and a hospital building. The place was immediately surrounded by a furious band of Zulus, flushed with conquest. An outer line was constructed of nothing but biscuit tins, which the missionary, Mr. Smith, helped to place. The few Englishmen most gallantly held out the whole night, though under the repeated charges and continual fire of the Zulus, who were many times their number. Nothing could the desperate enemy gain, and they at length retreated, as a British force was found advancing. Another officer, Colonel Pearson, was besieged at Ekowe, and waited anxiously for relief.

With the English army had gone the young Prince Imperial, son of Napoleon III. He had distinguished himself at Woolwich, but it was not thought advisable for him to hold a commission in the English army. However, his high spirit and great desire to gain experience in the art of war caused him to be permitted to go out with Lord Chelmsford's army, with orders that he was not to be exposed to danger. His fiery spirit, however, made it very difficult to keep him back, though no one apprehended any special peril when, on the first of June, he went out with a small party of troopers to make reconnaissances. They had been sketching, when a party of Zulus suddenly started out of the reeds and fell upon them. A panic unhappily caused a general flight among the British, even their officer never pausing to see that all were together. Thus the Prince Imperial, finding some difficulty in mounting his horse, was left behind, and, setting his back against a rock, died bravely under fifteen assegai wounds, with his face to the foe. It afterwards proved that the number of Zulus was so scanty that a little steadiness and resolution

such as in most cases Englishmen show would have dispersed them, so that this blot on the scutcheon might have been saved.

The Queen felt it most deeply. Her journal says : "Poor, poor dear Empress, her only, only child, her all gone, and such a real misfortune ! I was quite beside myself, and both of us (herself and Princess Beatrice) have hardly had another thought since. And he was so good ! Oh ! it is too, too awful ! The more one thinks of it, the worse it is !

"June 20th. Had a bad restless night, haunted by this awful event, seeing those horrid Zulus constantly before me, and thinking of the poor Empress, who did not yet know it. . . . My accession day, forty-two years ago, but no thought of it in presence of this frightful news. . . . Monstrous ! To think of that dear young man, the apple of his mother's eye, born and nurtured in the purple, dying thus, is too fearful, too awful ; and inexplicable and dreadful that the others should not have turned round and fought for him."

All that sympathy could do for the bereaved mother, all the honour that could be shown when the corpse of the brave youth was brought home, was freely lavished, but with the sense that it could do but little towards healing such a wound ! There was an enquiry into the conduct of the officer in command, Lieutenant Carey ; but the offence was hardly a technical one, and the Empress Eugénie generously interceded for him.

The victory at Ulundi, gained by Lord Chelmsford, broke up the power of Cetewayo, who was pursued, made prisoner, and carried to Cape Town, but these repeated disasters, together with a succession of unfavourable seasons, had raised much discontent in England, which, somewhat unreasonably, was visited on the Ministry. There also had been loud outcries that the Bulgarian atrocities should have been sooner prevented, forgetting that a Government cannot take steps upon mere newspaper reports, and that authentication requires time.

Thus when Parliament, which had sat almost to the last year of its existence, was dissolved early in 1880, the result of the elections was so adverse to Lord Beaconsfield's government that they retired, and a Liberal Ministry came in with Mr. Gladstone, professing that they preferred peace and economy to the maintenance of British supremacy.

It fell to them to arrange for the pacification of Zululand. The territory once held by Cetewayo was divided among thirteen petty chiefs, but no sooner was this done than the Boers of the Transvaal, finding that their annexation meant paying taxes, broke out in revolt. Dutchmen are formidable antagonists even to Englishmen, and they were victorious at Lang's Neck, and succeeded in surrounding and destroying General Sir George Colley and his force upon Majuba Hill, chiefly in consequence of unfortunate blunders. On this self-government was granted to them on an acknowledgment of British suzerainty.

The Afghan war likewise broke out again, and there was a treacherous surprise of an English officer, Lieutenant Maclaine, with some of his men, and a British force was defeated at Maiwand. Sir Frederick Roberts made an extraordinary march, and gained a complete victory, but too late to save the lives of the prisoners. It was decided to leave Afghanistan independent, so long as it remains neutral between England and the Russian Empire.

Egypt properly belongs to the Turkish Empire, but since the beginning of the century the rulers had become in fact independent. The Suez Canal, opening a way for vessels between the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, had been the invention of M. Lesseps, a French engineer, and had been carried out by a company of shareholders. Considering the great importance to England, as shortening the route to India, Lord Beaconsfield had bought a large number of shares for Government, with the consent of France. The Khedive, as the Egyptian Viceroy is termed, admitted French and English residents at his court, and under their guidance many of the abuses to which Eastern rule is liable

were removed, and the condition of the people much improved. The officials, who had been used to prey upon the peasantry, naturally resented the change, and one of them, Arabi Pasha, aroused a rebellion, assisted by some of the robber tribes of Arabs. Alexandria, which had become almost a European town, was set on fire, and there was an attempt at massacring the European inhabitants, but these had for the most part escaped to the ships in the harbour, where the Khedive and his family likewise took refuge.

Troops were at once sent out under Sir Garnet Wolseley, and the fleet under Sir Beauchamp Seymour. Prince Arthur, who had been created Duke of Connaught, and married to the Princess Marguerite of Prussia, daughter of the distinguished general, Prince Frederick Charles of Prussia, called the Red Prince, went out with his regiment and took his full share of the hardships of the campaign in such a climate. Alexandria was bombarded and captured, there was a grand victory at Tel-el-Kebir, and the troops entered Cairo in triumph, soon after making Arabi prisoner. The Queen, who had learnt by telegram that the battle was about to take place, had been in the greatest anxiety. She had the young wife with her, and together they read the telegram which told of the victory, adding "Duke of Connaught is well, and behaved admirably, leading his brigade to the attack." Mother and wife embraced one another warmly, full of joy, pride, and thankfulness.

The tidings came just as the Queen was welcoming her youngest son, Leopold, Duke of Albany, with his bride, Princess Helen of Waldeck, at Balmoral. There was great rejoicing, all the Highland attendants and tenants assembling beside the arch of welcome, and after the health of the bride and bridegroom had been drunk, followed that of the victorious army with the Duke of Connaught, then that of the Duchess, and of her baby daughter, who was present in the nurse's arms. In the evening a bonfire was lit on Craig Gowan, just where there had been one in 1856 on the fall of Sebastopol, and again the Queen had a bright

and exulting day. Yet it was only too plainly marked what change and sorrow had done, for of all her children, Princess Beatrice alone ascended to where the Prince Consort and his two elder sons had so merrily climbed before. The nine were scattered, one of the flowers of the flock was in her grave, and the Duke of Albany was not strong enough for such a night expedition.

CHAPTER XX

CONCLUSION

DELIBERATIONS on the future of Egypt were still in hand, and there was great unwillingness to assume responsibilities, or to give offence to other nations, when new troubles arose.

There had already been rumours that one of those fanatical outbursts which from time to time take place among the fanatics of the East was working up. The Soudan, or land of the blacks, south of Egypt, a vast country stretching to Lake Nyanza, had been nominally annexed by Egypt in 1819. It was full of wild Arab tribes and of slave dealers, and here a man named Mohammed Achmet, a boatbuilder originally, assumed the title of Mahdi, or Prophet, and claimed to be a prophet who was to succeed the original Mahommed 1200 years after his coming. Many of the Soudanese followed him, and his Arabs and negroes were more than a match for the Egyptian troops sent against him, even when officered by Englishmen. In 1883 an army under Colonel Hicks, a retired English officer, was utterly annihilated, scarcely a man escaping, and it was felt that the Mahdi's rising was no trifle.

The Liberal Government, anxious to avoid expensive wars, and to get rid of Egyptian complications as soon as possible, recommended the Khedive to surrender the Soudan to the Mahdi and his wild Arabs; but the difficulty was that Khartoum, a city at the confluence of the two

branches of the Nile, was filled with Europeans of all nations and Egyptian troops, and there were Egyptian garrisons and officials with their families in several other towns in the Soudan, who must be brought safely off before the country could be given up. The Egyptians could not fight the Arabs. Another of their armies, also under an Englishman, Baker Pasha, had been cut to pieces, and though on the tardy consent of the British Government General Graham was allowed to act, and his English troops gained a victory at Teb, he was not allowed to follow it up nor to receive fresh troops.

A different expedient had been found. There was in England a man of the most chivalrous nature, deeply religious, brave, as one who loved rather than feared death, tenderly beneficent, marvellously humble-minded, and with a wonderful capacity for dealing with barbarians. He had already so distinguished himself by putting down a great rebellion in China that he was commonly called Chinese Gordon; and he had since acted for the Khedive in the Soudan, successfully putting down the slave trade, and had received the rank of Pasha.

There was a certain idea that he could do everything, as indeed he had never failed, and public opinion seems to have led the Cabinet to propose his going out to Khartoum to negotiate with the Mahdi, and bring off the garrisons. Almost alone he crossed the deserts and reached Khartoum shortly before General Graham's victories. This was known in England, and also that the Mahdi's forces were advancing and hemming him in, that garrison after garrison had to surrender, and were ruthlessly massacred, yet the Government declared that Gordon was in no danger! At last public feeling grew so strong that the Cabinet fitted out an expedition under Lord Wolseley, who sent a force in advance across the desert. Two fierce battles were fought at Abu Klea and Gubat, on the banks of the Nile, both successful; but the gallant general, Sir Herbert Stewart, was mortally wounded, and some delay was thus occasioned.

Alas! when, a few days later, Khartoum was reached it proved to have been betrayed to the Mahdi, and that Gordon had been slain. We had lost one of our noblest countrymen! Well might he ask in the journal he kept almost to the last, "There is one thing which is quite incomprehensible. If it is right to send up an expedition now, why was it not right to send it before?" He might have escaped, but he stood to his post, resolved not to desert those whom he had undertaken to protect, and so he endured 317 days of siege in "one continuous misery and anxiety." "I have done my best for the honour of our country. Good-bye."

There was an agony of indignation and grief throughout the country among those—from the highest to the lowest—who had had their hands tied by the necessity of acting through a Ministry who were carrying the peace policy thus far. All that the Queen could do in messages to the brother and sisters, full of sympathy, was done, and the general feeling expressed itself in a foundation, known by Gordon's name, for training orphan boys for the army.

As the Soudan was to be yielded, and the unfortunate garrisons had all been massacred, the English troops were withdrawn from that terrible climate. Auguries that this would only lead to further encroachments of the Arabs were disconcerted by the death of the Mahdi, when his army seems to have resolved itself once more into the usual state of wandering tribes.

This year brought another trial to the Queen's heart in the unexpected death of her youngest son, the Duke of Albany. He was a highly accomplished person, with much of the talent, taste, and ability of his father, and had quiet, scholarly habits. His health had always been delicate, but there was no special cause for anxiety when he went to pass the spring abroad, and there was a general shock when the tidings of his death at Cannes arrived. He left an infant daughter, and a few months later his little son was born.

The later events of the royal family have been the

marriage of Princess Beatrice with Prince Henry of Battenberg, happily not separating her from her royal mother; also of the eldest daughter of Princess Alice to Prince Louis of Battenberg, who also resides in England. They are brothers to the brave Prince Alexander, whose career in Bulgaria has been watched with so much sympathy.

The extension of the household suffrage to the counties was carried in the summer of 1885, but the changes of Ministry and the Irish difficulties connected therewith are in so undeveloped a state that they can hardly be entered on in this brief summary of the leading events of fifty years.

The Victorian era will be remembered as a period of great progress in all respects. Perhaps no fifty years in the whole history of the world has produced such changes, affecting all classes in their domestic life and prosperity, as have been produced by railways, by telegrams, by postal arrangements, and the rapid communication of intelligence of every sort of event throughout the civilised world, although to every success there is a dark shade, and the view is chequered. Religion has awakened to great exertions. The Church has worked wonders in her missions, both at home and abroad. From a state of lethargy and unpopularity she has awakened to great vigour and energy. The bishoprics in England have been increased in number in a manner unexampled since primitive times. Her services, her buildings, her clergy, her ministrations have multiplied more than sevenfold, and the attachment of her members is intensified, yet the irreligion and scepticism of large masses of people still resist and defy her. Education has done much, and is doing much, but there are great endeavours to render it a godless education. Victory has attended our standards, but there have been terrible reverses. And with much to be thankful for, there is also much to humble us; while for the future there is much to hope, but also much to fear, though still we may trust that as long as we cling to Him, God will be on our side, and well

may we be thankful that through this critical period, where every throne around us has been shaken, and many overthrown, that we should have been blessed with a Sovereign whose personal character commands not only loyalty, but love and reverence, whose heart beats for all that is high and noble, who sympathises with all suffering, guides all wholesome effort, and discourages all that is foul or cruel. Well may we pray

“ And sing with heart and voice,
God save the Queen !”

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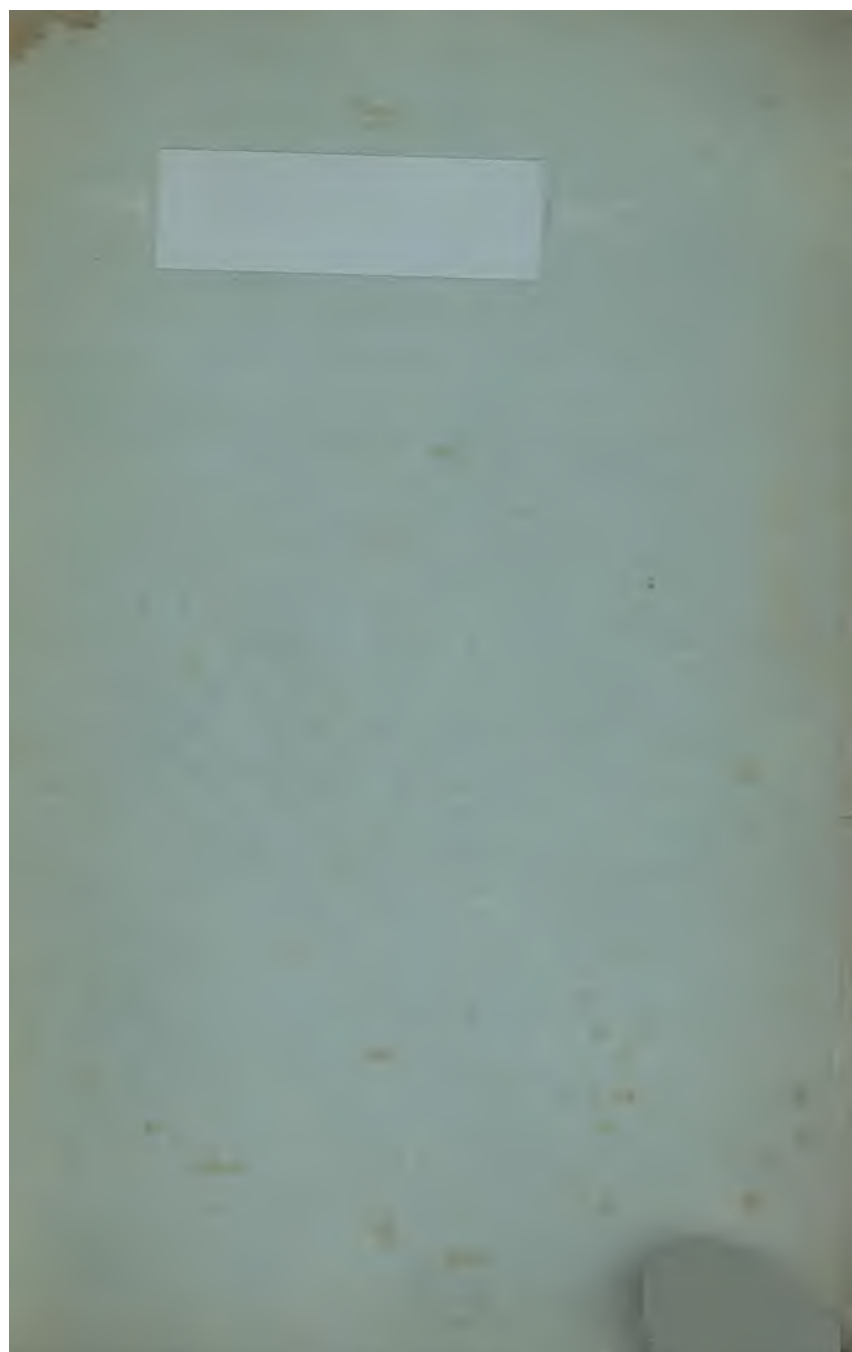
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