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MEMOIR OF QUEEN ADELAIDE,

CONSORT OF KING WILLIAM IV.

BY DR. DORAN,

AUTHOR OF "LIVES OF THE QUEENS OF ENGLAND OF THE HOUSE OF HANOVER," ETC.

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ADELAIDE OF SAXE-MEINENGEN.

Und ich an meinem Abend, wollte,
Ich hätte, diesem Weibe gleich,
Erfüllt was ich erfüllen sollte
In meinen Gränzen und Bereich.

A. VON CHAMISSO.

The pocket Duchy—Old customs—Early training—The Father of the Princess Adelaide—Social life at the ducal court—Training of the Princess Adelaide—Marriage preliminaries—English parliament—The Duke of Clarence—Arrival in London of the Princess—Quaint royal weddings—At home and abroad—Duke and Duchess of Clarence at Bushey—"State and Dirt" at St. James's—William IV. and Queen Adelaide—Course of life of the new Queen Consort—King's gallantry to an old love—Royal simplicity—The Sovereigns and the Sovereign people—Court anecdotes—Drawing rooms—Princess Victoria—The coronation—Incidents of the day—Coronation finery of George IV.—Princess Victoria not present—Revolutionary period—Reform question—Unpopularity of the Queen—Attacks against her on the part of the press—Violence of party-spirit—Friends and foes—Bearing of the King and Queen—Duchess of Augoulême—King a republican—His indiscretion—Want of temper—Continental press adverse to the Queen—King's declining health—Conduct of Queen Adelaide—King William's death—Declining health of the Queen—Her travels in search of health—Her last illness—Her will—Death—And funeral.

THE little Duchy of Saxe-Meinengen was once a portion of the inheritance of the princely Franconian house of Henneberg. The failure of the male line transferred it, in 1583, to the family of reigning Saxon princes. In 1680, it fell to the third son of the Saxon Duke, Ernest the Pious. The name of this son was Bernard. This Duke is looked upon as the founder of the House of Meinengen. He was much devoted to the study of Alchemy, and was of a pious turn, like his father, as far, as may be judged by the volumes of manuscript notes he left behind him—which he had made on the sermons of his various court-preachers.

The law of primogeniture was not yet in force when Duke Bernard died, in 1706. One consequence was, that Bernard's three sons, with Bernard's brother, ruled the little domain in common. In 1746, the sole surviving brother, Antony Ulrich, the luckiest of this ducal Tontine, was monarch of all he surveyed, within a limited space. The conglomerate ducal sovereigns were plain men, formal, much given to ceremony, and not much embarrassed by intellect. There was one man, however, who had enough for them all: namely, George Spanginburg, brother of the Moravian bishop of the latter name, and who was, for some time, the Secretary of State at the court of Saxe-Meinengen.

Antony Ulrich reigned alone from 1746 to 1763. He was of a more enlightened character than any of the preceding princes, had a taste for the arts, when he could procure pictures cheaply, and strong inclination towards pretty living pictures, which led to lively rather than pleasant controversies at court. His own marriage with Madame Scharmann disgusted the young ladies of princely houses in Germany, and especially exasperated the aristocracy of Meinengen. They were scarcely pacified by the fact, that the issue of the marriage was declared incapable of succeeding to the inheritance.

The latter fell in 1763 to two young brothers, kinsfolk of Antony, and sons of the late Duke of Gotha, who reigned for some years together. The elder, Charles, died in 1782. From that period till 1803, the other brother, George, reigned alone. He had no sooner become sole sovereign, than he married the Princess Louisa of Hohenlohe Langenburg. At the end of ten years, the first child of this marriage was born, namely Adelaide, the future Queen of England.

Eight years later, in the last year of the last century A.D. 1800, a male heir to the pocket-duchy was born, and then was introduced into Meinengen the law which fixed the succession in the eldest male heir only. Saxe-Meinengen was the last country in Europe in which this law was established.

The father of the Princess Adelaide, like his brother Charles, was a man of no mean powers. Both were condescending enough to visit even the burgher families of Saxe-Meinengen; and Charles had so little respect for vice in high places, that when a German prince acted contrary to the rights of his people, the offender found himself soundly lashed in paper and pamphlet, the pseudonymous signature to which could not conceal the person of the writer—the hasty Duke Charles. If this sometimes made him unpopular over the frontier, he was beloved within it. How could the people but love a sovereign

Duke who, when a child was born to him, asked citizens of good repute rather than of high rank to come and be gossips?

In the revolutionary war, Duke George fought like a hero. At home, he afforded refuge to bold but honest writers, driven from more mighty states. He beautified his city, improved the country; and, without being of great mental cultivation himself, he loved to collect around him, scholars, philosophers, artists, authors, gentlemen. With these he lived on the most familiar terms, and when I say that Schiller and John Paul Richter were of the number, I afford some idea of the society which Duke George cared chiefly to cultivate. He buried his own mother in the common church-yard, because she was worthy, he said, of lying among her own subjects. The majority of these were country folk, but George esteemed the country folk, and at rustic festivals he was not unwilling to share a jug of beer with any of them. Perhaps the rustics loved him more truly than the sages, to whom he proved, occasionally, something wearisome. But these were often hard to please. All, however, felt an honest grief, when, on the Christmas night, of 1803, Duke George died, after a brief illness, caused, it is said, by a neglected cold, and the rage at an urgent demand from the Kaiser, of 60,000 florins, fine-money for knightly orders, ducally declined.

The Duke left a young family, Adelaide, Ida, and his son and successor, Bernard, then only three years of age. The mother of these fatherless children took upon herself the office of guardian, with that of Regent of the duchy. The duties of both were performed with rare judgment and firmness, during a time of much trouble and peril, especially when the French armies were overrunning and devastating Germany.

On the young ladies, gently and wisely reared in this little court, Queen Charlotte had begun to look with the foresight of a mother who had elderly and wayward sons to marry. When the death of the Princess Charlotte of Wales threatened to interrupt the direct succession of the crown, the unmatched brothers of the Regent thought of taking unto themselves wives. Cumberland had married according to his, but to no other person's, liking, hardly even that of his wife. The Dukes of Kent and Cambridge made better choice; and there then remained but the sailor-prince to be converted into a Benedict. The Queen selected his bride for him, and he approved, or acquiesced in the selection. He might, as far as age goes, have been her father, but that was of small account; and when Adelaide of Saxe-Meinengen was spoken of, men conversant with contemporary history, knew her to be the good daughter of an accomplished and an exemplary mother.

The preliminaries of the marriage were carried out amid so much opposition, that at one moment the accomplishment of the marriage itself wore a very doubtful aspect. The difficulty was of a pecuniary nature. The Dukes of Kent and Cambridge were content, on the occasion of their respective marriages, to accept an addition to their income of £6,000. The Duke of Cumberland was compelled to rest content, or otherwise, without any addition at all,—save the expenses of a wife. With the Duke of Clarence it was different. He already possessed £18,000 per annum, and ministers resolved, after a private meeting with their supporters, to request the Parliament to allow him an increase of £10,000. On the 13th of April, 1818, a message from the Prince Regent to that effect, was submitted to either House, by Lord Castlereagh and the Earl of Liverpool. In the Commons, the first-named Lord hinted at the dependence of our Princes on the liberality of Parliament, since the time when the crown had surrendered its long uncontrolled disposal of revenues. But the House was not to be "suggested" into a generosity which might be beyond justice. Tierney, the gad-fly of his period, complained of the previous meeting of the friends of ministers, and the communication to them, before it was made to the House, of the amount to be applied for. Methuen insisted, that before the Commons would grant a farthing, they must be made acquainted with all the sources from which the King's sons derived their present revenue, as well as the amount of the revenue itself. Finally, Holme Sumner met the proposal of an additional £10,000, by a counter-proposal of £6,000. This was carried by a narrow majority of one hundred and ninety-three to one hundred and eighty-four; and when this sum was offered to the Duke, he peremptorily declined to accept it.

Things did not progress more in tune with marriage-bells in the House of Lords. There, when Lord Liverpool stated what his royal client would be contented to receive, Lord King started to his legs and exclaimed, "That the question was not what it might please the Duke of Clarence to take, but what it might please the people to give him!" They were not willing to give what he expected, and for a time it seemed as if there would consequently be no marriage with the Princess of Saxe-Meinengen. But only for a time.

"The Duke of Clarence is going to be married, after all," was a common phrase launched by the newspapers, and taken up by the people, in 1818. If the phrase had but one meaning, it had a double application. In the former sense, it had reference to the disinclination of Parliament to increase his income, without which he had expressed his determination not to marry. It was further applied, however, to the old course of his old loves. There were the years spent with Dora Bland, then "Mrs.

Jordan," the actress,—years of an intercourse which had much of the quiet, happy character of a modest English home,—the breaking-up of which brought such great grief to the mother in that home, that even every service subsequently rendered to her, seemed to partake of the quality of offence. It has been registered as such, by those who heard more of the wailing of the Ariadne, than they knew of the groundlessness of it, when vented in reproaches for leaving her unprovided for as well as deserted.

Then the public remembered how this light-of-heart Duke had been a suitor to other ladies. He was the rival of Wellesley Pole, for the favour and the fortune of the great heiress, Miss Tilney Long. That ill-fated lady conferred on this wooer of humbler degree, the office of slaying her happiness, sapping her life, and mining her estate. The other lady, who declined the Duke's offer of his hand, or petition for her own, was Miss Sophia Wykeham, of Thame Park, daughter and sole heiress of an Oxfordshire 'squire. Each lady had merits of her own, and other attractions besides those which lay in the *beaux yeux de sa cassette*; but, perhaps, each remembered the clauses of the royal marriage act; however this may have been, Miss Tilney chose between her suitors, while Miss Wykeham, after turning from the prayer of the Duke, never stooped to listen to a lowlier wooer.

These were the "antecedents" of the lover who, in maturer age, took, rather than asked for, the hand of Adelaide of Saxe-Meinengen. Of all the actions of his life, it was the one which brought him the most happiness; and with that true woman he had better fortune than is altogether merited by a man, who, after a long bachelorship of no great repute, settles down in middle-life to respectability and content, under the influences of a virtuous woman, gifted with an excellent degree of common-sense.

In the dusk of a July evening, in the year 1818, this unwooed bride quietly arrived, with her mother, at Grillon's Hotel, Albemarle Street. She had but cool reception for a lady on such mission as her own. There was no one to bid her welcome; the Regent was at Carlton House at dinner, and the Duke of Clarence was out of town on a visit. Except the worthy Mr. Grillon himself, no person seemed the gladder for her coming. In the course of the evening, however, the Regent drove down to Albemarle Street; and, at a later hour, the more tardy future-husband was carried up to the door in a carriage drawn by four horses, with as much rapidity as became a presumed lover of his age, in whom a certain show of zeal was becoming.

The strangers became at once acquainted; and acquaintance is said to have developed itself speedily into friendship. The family-party remained together till near upon the "wee sma'" hours; there was much indulgence there, we are told, of good, honest, informal hilarity; and when the illustrious and joyous circle broke up, the easy grace, frankness, and courtesy of the Regent, and the freedom and light-heartedness of the Duke, are said to have left favourable impressions on both the mother and the daughter.

Quaintest of royal weddings was that which now took place in old Kew Palace. Indeed, there were two, for the Duke of Kent who had gallantly fetched his wife from abroad, and had married her there, according to Lutheran rites, was now re-married to his bride, according to the forms of the Church of England. Early in the day, there was a dinner, at which the most important personages in that day's proceedings were present. The old house at Kew seemed blushing in its reddest of bricks, out of pure enjoyment. The Regent gave the bride away; and, the ceremony concluded, the wedded couples paid a visit to the old Queen in her private apartment. She was too ill, then, to do more than congratulate her sons, and wish happiness to the married. The Duke and Duchess of Kent thereupon departed, but the Duke and Duchess of Clarence remained,—guests at a joyous tea party, at which the Regent presided, and which was prepared alfresco, in the vicinity of the Pagoda. It must have been a thousand times a merrier matter than wedding state-dinners of the olden times, at which brides were wearied into suffering and sulkiness. If the figure about "cups which cheer but not inebriate" had not been worn to the finest tenuity, I might at once give it, here, application and illustration. Suffice it to say, that a more joyous party of noble men and women never met in mirthful greenwood; and when the princely pair took their leave, for St. James's, the Regent led the hilarious cheer, and sped them on their way, with a "hurrah!" worthy of his bright and younger days.

The Regent, undoubtedly, manifested a clearer sense of the fitness of things, on this occasion, than either of the managers of the theatres, honoured by the presence of the newly-married couple soon after the union.

At Drury Lane, was given the "Marriage of Figaro," and Covent Garden complimented the Duke and Duchess with the "Provoked Husband."

It cannot be said that the public looked with much enthusiasm on any of the royal marriages. Such unions with rare exceptions, are unpleasantly free from sentiment or romance; and, in the present instances, there was such a matter-of-fact air of mere "business" about these contracts and ceremonies, such an absence of youth, and the impulses and the dignity of youth, that the indifferent public, even remembering the importance of securing a lineal succession to the throne, was slow to offer either

congratulation or sympathy. The caricaturists, on the other hand, were busy with a heavy and not very delicate wit; and fashionable papers, uniting implied censure with faint praise, observed that "the Duchesses of Kent, Clarence, and Cambridge are very deficient in the English language. They can scarcely speak a sentence. They possess most amiable dispositions." It may be added, that they also possessed true womanly qualities which won for them the esteem of husbands, of whom two of the three, at least, had never been remarkable for a chivalrous, a gentlemanlike, a manly respect for women. That was a sort of homage rarely paid by most of the sons of George III., and I am afraid, that our fathers generally are obnoxious to the same remark.

After a brief residence at St. James's, and as brief a sojourn at the Duke's residence in Bushey Park, the Duke and Duchess of Clarence repaired to Hanover, and remained there about a year,—no incident marking the time that is worthy of observation. The issue of this marriage scarcely survived the birth. In March 1819, a daughter was born, but to survive only a few hours. In December 1820, another princess gladdened the hearts of her parents, only to quench the newly-raised joy by her death in March of the following year. The loss was the keener felt because of the hopes that had been raised; and the grief experienced by the Duke and Duchess was tenderly nourished, rather than relieved, by the exquisite art of Chantrey, which, at the command of the parents, reproduced the lost child, in marble,—sleeping for ever where it lay.

The household at Bushey was admirably regulated by the Duchess, who had been taught the duties as well as the privileges of greatness. The fixed rule was, never to allow expenditure to exceed income. It is a golden rule which, when observed, renders men, in good truth, as rich as Croesus. It is a rule which, if universally observed, would render the world prosperous, and pauperism a legend. It was a rule the more required to be honoured in this case, as the Duke had large calls upon his income. When those were provided for, old liabilities effaced, and current expenses defrayed, the surplus was surrendered to charity. There was no saving for the sake of increase of income,—economy was practised for justice-sake, and the Duke and Duchess were so just, that they found themselves able to be largely generous. With the increased means placed at their disposal by the death of the Duke of York, there was but trifling increase of expenditure. If something was added to their comforts, they benefitted who were employed to procure them; and, if there was some little additional luxury in the rural palace of Bushey, the neighbouring poor were never forgotten in the selfish enjoyment of it.

In 1824, the Duke and Duchess of Clarence had apartments in St. James's Palace, where, however, they seem to have been as roughly accommodated, considering their condition, as any mediaeval prince and princess in the days of stone walls thinly tapestried and stone floors scantily strewn with rushes. The Duke cared little about the matter himself, but he gallantly supported the claims of his wife. In a letter addressed to Sir William Knighton, the King's privy purse, in 1824, he thus expresses himself—from St. James's Palace:—

"His Majesty having so graciously pleased to listen to my suggestion respecting the alteration for the Hanoverian office, at the palace, I venture once more to trouble you on the point of the building intended for that purpose. To the accommodation of the Duchess, this additional slip at the back of the present apartments, would be most to be wished and desired, and never can make a complete Hanoverian office without our kitchen, which the King has so kindly allowed us to keep. Under this perfect conviction, I venture to apply for this slip of building which was intended for the Hanoverian office. I am confident His Majesty is fully aware of the inconvenience and unfitness of our present apartments here. They were arranged for me in 1809, when I was a bachelor, and without an idea at that time of my ever being married, since which, now fifteen years, nothing has been done to them, and you well know the dirt and unfitness for the Duchess of our present abode. Under these circumstances, I earnestly request, for the sake of the amiable and excellent Duchess, you will, when the King is quite recovered, represent the wretched state and dirt of our apartments, and the infinite advantage this slip would produce to the convenience and comfort of the Duchess .... God bless the King and yourself, and ever believe me, &c.—WILLIAM."

Though often as ungrammatical and inelegant, it was seldom the Duke was so explicit in his correspondence as he is in the above letter. Generally, he wrote in ambiguous phrases, very puzzling to the uninitiated; but when his Duchess Adelaide was in question, and her comfort was concerned, he became quite graphic on the "state and dirt" in which they passed their London days, in the old, dingy, leper-house palace of St. James's.

With the exception of the period during which the Duke held the office of Lord High Admiral, 1827-28,—an office which may be said to have been conferred on him by Canning, and of which he was deprived by the Duke of Wellington,—with the exception above noted, this royal couple lived in comparative retirement till the 26th of June, 1830, on which day, the demise of George IV. summoned them to ascend the throne.

It is said that when the news of the death of George IV. was announced to the Duchess of Clarence, the new Queen burst into tears. The prayer-book she held in her hand, at the moment, she conferred on the noble messenger, as a memorial of the incident, and of her regret. The messenger looked, perhaps, for a more costly guerdon; but she was thinking only of her higher and stranger duties. If Queen Adelaide really regretted that these now had claims upon her, not less was their advent regretted by certain of the labouring poor of Bushey, whose harvest-homes had never been so joyous as since the Duke and Duchess of Clarence had been living among them.

The course of life of the new Queen was only changed in degree. Her income was larger, so also were her charities. Her time had more calls upon it, but her cheerfulness was not diminished. Her evenings were generally given up to tapestry work, and as she bent over the frame, many of the circle around her already sorrowingly remarked, that the new Queen, though not old in years, seemed descending into the vale of life.

The esteem of her husband for her was equal to her merits. His affection and respect were boundless; and when the senate granted her, on the motion of Lord Althorpe, £100,000 per annum, with Marlborough House and Bushey Park, in case she survived the King, the good old monarch was the first to congratulate her, and was pleased to put her in office, himself, by appointing her Perpetual Ranger of the Park, which was to become her own at his decease.

I shall not anticipate matters very violently, or unjustifiably, perhaps, if I notice here, that William IV. was not forgetful of his old loves, and that Queen Adelaide was not jealous of such memories. She looked more indulgently than the general public did, on the ennobling of his children of the Jordan family. If that step could have been met by objections, in these later days, it was at least supported by that amazingly powerful, but sometimes perilous engine, precedent. Though indeed, there was precedent for the contrary; and perhaps the husband of Queen Adelaide would have manifested a greater sense of propriety on this occasion, had he rather followed the decent example, in a like matter, of the scrupulous Richard the Third than that of Henry the Eighth or the Second Charles.

There was another ennobling, however, which the public as warmly approved as the Queen heartily sanctioned. In 1834, her husband raised to the dignity of a Baroness, the lady who had declined to share with him whatever of higher or more equivocal honour he could have conferred, by marrying her. In that year, Miss Wykeham became, by the grateful memory and good taste of her old royal lover, Baroness Wenman of Thame Park, Oxon. This testimony of the memory of an old affection was an act to be honoured by a Queen, and to it that royal homage was freely tendered. Enquirers, on turning over the peerage books, may discover many honours conferred on women too ready to listen to the suit of a monarch; but, here, for the first time, was a title of nobility presented to a lady who had declined to give ear to royal suit, paid in honesty and honour.

The fact is that there was something chivalrous in the bearing of the King towards ladies; hearty, but a courteous heartiness. This sort of tribute he loved to render to his wife; and there was nothing so pleasant to hear, in his replies to addresses, after his accession, as the gallant allusions to the qualities of the Queen, who stood at his side, serenely satisfied. This heartiness was not an affectation in him. "It was of his nature; and another phase of his character was manifested by King William at the first dinner after he ascended the throne, at which his relations only were present. On that pleasant occasion, although it was a family dinner, he gave as a toast:—"Family peace and affection;" it was the hearty sentiment of a citizen King who loved quiet and simple ways, who walked the streets with his intimate friends, and often occupied the box-seat of his carriage, turning round to converse with the Queen, inside.

When Adelaide became Queen Consort, some persons who would not have been ill-pleased to see her fail, affected to fear that the homely Duchess should prove to be unequal to the exigencies of the queenly character. One person, I remember, hinted that, in this matter, she would not do ill, were she to take counsel of the Princess Elizabeth of Hesse Homburg, "than whom none could better record to Her Majesty the forms, and usages, and *prescriptions* of the court of Queen Charlotte." But Queen Adelaide needed no such instruction as the good daughter of George III. could give her. She observed the forms and usages that were worthy of observance; and as for *proscriptions*, she could proscribe readily enough when duty demanded the service,—as the Church felt, with mingled feelings, when she declined to invite clergymen to her state balls or to her dancing *soirées*. The dancing clergy had their opportunity for censure, when the King and Queen gave dinner-parties on the Sunday.

The court was essentially a homely court. The two sovereigns fed thousands of the poor in Windsor Park, and looked on at the feasting. The Queen went shopping to Brighton Fancy Fairs, and when on one occasion she bent to pick up the "reticule" which an infirm old lady had dropped, as much was made of it as of the incident of King Francis, who picked up (or did not pick up) Titian's pencil, and handed it to that sovereign gentleman among artists.

Then the new sovereigns paid more private visits than any pair who had hitherto occupied the British throne. While the Queen called on Sir David and Lady Scott, at Brighton, her royal husband, with whom she had just previously been walking, on the Esplanade, would suddenly appear at the door of some happy but disconcerted old Admiral, and invite the veteran and his wife to dinner. To the hearty, "Come along, directly," if there was a glance from the lady at her toilet, the Citizen-King would encourage her by an intimation, never to mind it, for he and his wife were quiet people; "and, indeed," as he once remarked, "the Queen does nothing after dinner but embroider flowers." Which, indeed, was true enough, and—to tell the truth—very dull, as I am assured, did the finer people find it.

The consequence of this familiarity of the sovereigns with their humbler friends, was a rather audacious familiarity ventured upon by people who left their queer names in the book at the King's door, and more than once successfully passed it, and penetrated to the Queen's drawing-room. This evil, however, was soon remedied. There were other matters Queen Adelaide was bold enough to, at least, attempt to remedy. Indecorousness of dress, in a lady, she would censure as sharply as Queen Charlotte; and if, when Mrs. Blomfield appeared at her first drawing-room, in a "train of rich immortal velvet," as the fashionable chroniclers of the day call it, she did not even hint surprise, it was perhaps out of respect for the successor of the Apostles, of whom that good, but richly velvetted, lady was the honoured wife.

The letter-writers who dealt with court incidents at the period of the accession of this domestic couple tell of various illustrations of the simplicity of the new sovereigns, When the Duke of Norfolk had an interview with William IV. at Bushey,—on the affair which had brought him thither being concluded, the King declared he must not leave the house without seeing the Queen; and thereupon ringing the bell, he bade the official who answered the summons to "tell the Queen I want her."

This lady, at the time when her husband was Duke of Clarence and Lord High Admiral, had been accustomed, on her visits to Chatham, to be received and entertained by the daughters of the then Commissioner, Cunningham. As soon as the Duchess became Queen, among her first invited visitors to Bushey were these ladies. At the meeting, they offered to kiss Her Majesty's hand, but "No, no," said Queen Adelaide, "that is not the way I receive my friends. I am not changed;" and therewith ensued a greeting less dignified, but not less sincere.

There are other stories told of incidents at Windsor, which indicate the difference of the court going out from that of the court coming in. This change required the removal from the palace of a little household, the head lady of which reluctantly gave way to the new Queen. These incidents, however, belong rather to the *Chronique Scandaleuse* than to mine. I will only add, therefore, that people generally rejoiced in seeing a "wife" installed where "queans" used to rule it; and that, when William IV. was seen walking arm-in-arm with Watson Taylor, or some other happy courtier, they added one incident to the other, and comparing the new court with the old, exclaimed, "Here is a change, indeed!" No one ever dreamed at that moment that the time would come when party-spirit would stir up the "*mobile*" against the sovereigns; that the Queen would be accused of plotting with the Duke of Wellington against Reform; that stones would be cast at the royal carriage as it bore the King and his Consort from the theatre; and "that, when matters went adversely to the humour of the ultra-chiefs of the popular movement, the first lady in the land should be marked out for vengeance by the famous cry, "The Queen has done it all!"

The drawing-room of which I have before spoken, at which good Mrs. Blomfield appeared in "immortal velvet," was remarkable, however, for another incident, which I will relate in the words of a writer in "Frazer's Magazine," John Wilkes, ex-M.P. for Sudbury, who thus relates it in his "Regina's Regina"—"The drawing-room of Her Majesty Queen Adelaide, held in February 1831, was the most magnificent which had been seen since that which had taken place on the presentation of the Princess Charlotte of Wales, upon the occasion of her marriage. No drawing-room excited such an interest, when compared with that, as the one held by Queen Adelaide, at which the Princess Victoria was presented on attaining her twelfth year. It was on this occasion that the Duchess of Kent and her illustrious daughter arrived in state, attended by the Duchess of Northumberland, Lady Charlotte St. Maur, Lady Catherine Parkinson, the Hon. Mrs. Cust, Lady Conroy, La Baronne Letzen, Sir John Conroy, and General Wetheral. This was the first public appearance of the Princess Victoria at court. Her dress was made entirely of articles manufactured in the United Kingdom. Victoria wore a frock of English blonde, simple, modest, and becoming. She was the object of interest and admiration on the part of all assembled, as she stood on the left of Her Majesty on the throne. The scene was one of the most splendid ever remembered, and the future Queen of England contemplated all that passed with much dignity, but with evident interest."

Nearly three-quarters of a century had elapsed since a Queen-Consort had been crowned in Great Britain. On the present occasion, such small pomp as there was, was confined to the religious part of the ceremony. The procession, to and from Westminster Hall, the banquet there, and the dramatic

episode of the entry of the champion, were all dispensed with. There was an idea prevalent, that the cost would be too great, and that the popular voice would be given to grumble;—as if money spent in the country, and made to circulate rapidly through many hands, would not have been a public benefit rather than a public injury. The ministry, however, would only sanction the maimed rites which were actually observed;—the privileged people were deprived of many a coveted perquisite, which might have dipped deeply into the public purse, and the heir of Marmion and the owner of Scrivelsby, kept his horse and his defiance at home in the domain of the Dymokes. The public, cheated of their show, called it a "half-crownation."

There was only one incident at this ceremony which is worth narrating. The Queen-Consort's crown was a rich little toy, sparkling but small. It would hardly fit a baby's head, and, accordingly, Queen Adelaide's hair was turned up in a knot, in order that on this knot the little crown might safely rest. The Archbishop of Canterbury, in place of fitting the crown down upon this knot of hair, only lightly placed the glittering toy on the top of it. Had the Queen moved, she would have been discrowned in an instant, and all the foolish people whose footsteps go wandering on the borders of another world, instead of going honestly straightforward in this, would have had a fine opportunity of discussing the value of omens. But, in a case of adornment, the ladies had their wits about them, and were worth the whole episcopal bench when the matter at issue was surmounting a head of hair with its supreme adornment of a crown. Some of those in attendance stepped forward, saved their embarrassed mistress from an annoyance; and Queen Adelaide was crowned in Westminster Abbey, by a couple of ladies-in-waiting!

It may be that the Archbishop was not so much to blame on this occasion. The little crown was made up at her own expense for the occasion, by Rundell, out of her own jewels, and it may not have fitted easily. She had a dread of unnecessary outlay, and, perhaps, remembered that at George the Fourth's coronation, the sum charged by Rundell merely for the hire of jewels by the King, amounted to £16,000, as interest on their value. The whole expense of the double coronation of William and Adelaide, did not amount to much more than twice that sum.

The Queen herself was not ill-dressed on this occasion, as will be seen by the record made by those who have registered the millinery portion of the ceremony:—"Her Majesty wore a gold gauze over a white satin petticoat, with a diamond stomacher, and a purple velvet train, lined with white satin, and a rich border of gold and ermine. The coronet worn by Her Majesty, both to and from the Abbey, was most beautiful. It was composed entirely of diamonds and pearls, and in shape very similar to a mural crown."

It may not be irrelevant to state, that when the modest coronation of William and Adelaide was yet a subject of general conversation, the expensive finery of that which preceded it was actually in the market, and was subsequently sold by public auction. Out of the hundred and twenty lots "submitted" by Mr. Phillips, the new King and Queen might have been tempted to secure a souvenir of their predecessor; but they had no taste for "bargains;" perhaps, small regard for their defunct kinsman. Nevertheless, so thrifty a lady as the Queen may have sighed at the thought of the coronation ruff of Mecklin lace going "dirt cheap" at two pounds; and she may have regretted the crimson velvet coronation mantle, with its star and gold embroidery, which originally costing five hundred pounds, fetched, when yet as good as new, only a poor seven-and-forty guineas. There was the same depreciation in other articles of originally costly value. The second coronation mantle of purple velvet, fell from three hundred to fifty-five pounds; and the green velvet mantle, lined with ermine, which had cost the Czar, who presented it to the late King, a thousand guineas, was "knocked down" at a trifle over a hundred pounds. Sashes, highland-dresses, aigrette-plumes,—rich gifts received, or purchases dearly acquired, went for nothing; and, after all, seeing into what base hands coronation bravery is apt to fall, the economical King and Queen were not without justification in setting an example of prudence, which was followed at the next great crowning.

Perhaps not the least remarkable incident in connection with this coronation, was the absence of the heiress-presumptive to the crown, the Princess Victoria. No place had been assigned to her, nor any preparation made in expectation of her gracing or witnessing the ceremony. It has been said by some persons that Earl Grey, the prime minister, obstinately opposed all idea of inviting the Princess to be present. But the grounds for such opposition are so unapparent, that it is difficult to give credit to them at all. By others, it has been asserted that the Duchess of Northumberland, the governess of the Princess, in the exercise of a superior and enlightened judgment, and in consideration of the then alleged delicate health of her young charge, advised that her pupil should not be present at the coronation of King William and Queen Adelaide. This reason seems hardly to account for the fact. In the absence of a better, it was accepted by those at least who did not throw the blame of that "conspicuous absence" on Queen Adelaide herself and her royal consort; but, as an anonymous writer remarked, —"Who that knew the good King William and his incomparable Queen, would believe that any slight was put by them on their well-beloved niece and the heiress-presumptive to the throne?" The same enemies also stated that "the Duchess of Northumberland was seeking to give a political bias to the

education of the Princess; and some uneasiness was therefore created at the palace." The "Times" asserted, with iteration, that the Duchess of Kent had "refused to attend, yes, refused to attend," and reproved Her Royal Highness, in the harsh terms which illustrated many of the controversies of the day, for the impertinence of the widow of a mediatized German Prince, in withholding her daughter from a ceremony at which she could never, at one time, have expected to see daughter of hers, as heiress-presumptive to the crown of England! Other papers made this alleged refusal rest on the course taken by Lord A. Fitzclarence, who, in marshalling the coronation procession, on paper, had assigned a place to the Princess Victoria, after the other members of the royal family, instead of next to the King and Queen. Finally, the "Globe," on authority, declared that the Duchess having pleaded the delicate state of her daughter's health, had obtained the king's sanction to her absence,—a version of the end of a story which began, nevertheless, more like the current report of it than would seem here to be indicated. As marked an instance of absence as that of the Princess, was that of the whole of such members of the preceding administration, as happened to be members of the House of Commons. This, however, little affected the King, who, at the subsequent dinner at St. James's Palace, gave, as a toast, the "Land we live in," and declared that, except as a formality and memorial, the coronation was an useless affair, as far as he was concerned, for no oath he had there taken could bind him more stringently to fulfil his duty towards the people than he felt himself to be bound as soon as the responsibility of his position had fallen upon him.

The land he lived in now speedily became agitated by that wave of revolution which was shaking many of the monarchies of Europe. England endured as great revolution as any of them, but with this difference, that here it was effected according to law, and albeit not exempt from very vast perils, was carried through to its natural consequences, to the mutual advantage of the government and the governed.

When the first rumours began to spread of an opposition establishing itself at court against the progress of reform, the press manifested particular desire to exonerate the Queen from the charge of participating in, or heading such a course. The "Times" especially interfered to protect that lady from similar aspersions. Papers of less influence, but of like principles, had openly named Queen Adelaide, the two daughters of George III., Elizabeth, (Princess of Hesse Homburg,) and Mary, (Duchess of Gloucester,) as mischievously active in impeding the popular will. In answer to such accusations, the "Times" (April 9, 1831) in a brief, but spirited and courteous leader, denounced the falsehood, and showed the improbability and the unfairness of such allegations. On a like occasion, that paper fairly urged that whatever opinions might be expressed by members of the household, they were not to be attributed to the mistress of that household. At the same time, on these members and on the fair frequenters of drawing-rooms who there gave utterance to sentiments which they carried into action elsewhere, against the great consummation sought by the people, the pro-reform paper thundered its bolts and showered its sarcasm with unsparing hands. On most occasions, however, so much was made of the apparent heartiness of the King, that excess of praise in that direction, took the form of censure on the lukewarmness if not the hostility of the Queen. Contrasts rather than parallels were the favourite medium for turning the public attention to the two sovereigns. The Ex-Chancellor Eldon was said to have assured Queen Adelaide, that if reform was carried, the days of her drawing-rooms were numbered, and that royalty would do well to follow a counsel which was given by Earl Grey to the bishops,—namely, set its house in order. On the other hand, we hear of the new Chancellor Brougham attending the court with his huge official purse so full of petitions in favour of parliamentary reform, that as he continued to extract and present them, he apologized to King William for troubling him with such piles of the public prayers or demands. Whereupon the King is said to have remarked, in the hearing of the Queen, "My Lord Chancellor, I am willing to receive anything from that purse, except the seals!" The wit was small, but the suggestiveness was considered important, and gossips, on both sides, jumped to conclusions which had questionable affinity with the premises.

While the Queen was thus treated with a certain degree of moderation by the press, she is said to have been seriously coerced by the liberal ministry of the day. The charge was distinctly made, after the Queen's death, in a funeral sermon, preached by the Rev. Mr. Browne, Vicar of Atwick. The occasion was so solemn, that an honest man was not likely to be led even into exaggeration, much less into deliberate misrepresentation. I will therefore quote the preacher's own words:—

"The Queen-Consort had witnessed in her father-land, some of the dreadful effects of the French revolutionary movements; and she was known to disapprove, out of womanly feeling and fear for her husband's safety, of popular tumults and agitations. With the narrow-minded and impure, suspicion is proof, and is followed by resentment. This pure being was a sufferer by the machinations and exactions of the ephemeral favourites of the misguided populace. Her influence over her royal husband was too great to be trusted, and she was forbidden,—I speak advisedly, and mean nothing less than '*forbidden*'—to have a kindred spirit near her during the agitation and intimidation, by which the measure called the Reform Bill, was supported and carried."

It was when that bill was in jeopardy, when the King,—who had made so many knights that the very pages called them the "Arabians," the "Thousand and One,"—hesitated to create a sufficient number of new lords to secure the passing of the bill in the Upper House; it was then that the press began to admonish the King and to menace the Queen. On one occasion, when they attended at the opening of the new Staines Bridge, where, by the way, they were so closely pressed upon by the mob, that maids of honour and gentlemen in waiting had their pockets picked, the Conservative wits remarked, that the King might make new bridges, but that he must leave the peers alone. The Whig party at once assumed that Queen Adelaide was at the head of a faction, whose object was to give reality to such jokes, and thenceforward the Queen was little spared. The "Times" asserted that it was by "domestic importunity" alone that the free action of the King's mind was impeded. The Queen was compared to Queen Amata, in the "Æneid," cajoling or raging at her older consort, Latinus, because the latter preferred Æneas to Turnus, as a husband for their daughter, Lavinia. There was not much alike in the two cases, for Amata was a staunch Conservative, who detested the idea of a foreign prince obtaining the hand of her daughter, and exercising influence within the limits of Latium. But there were strong terms in the original which suited the purpose of the hour, and the Queen was pelted with them most unmercifully.

Occasionally, there was a truth mixed up with the harder words, which even ultra-Tories could not gainsay, as when the "Times" remarked, that "a foreigner was no very competent judge of English liberties, and politics are not the proper field for female enterprize or exertion." When this strong hint was taken to have failed, and Queen Adelaide was still supposed to be conspiring with the daughters of George III. to turn King William from his liberal views, this was the tone with which the royal lady was lectured by the press:—"There is a lady of high rank, who must be taught a salutary, though a very painful, lesson. She may be bold as an amazon, be troublesome, importunate, or overbearing, but her present course is one from which can follow nought but final wretchedness. Why has she so eagerly, within these few hours, bidden her gossips not to despair? Why such haste to tell them, all will be well! The King will do without the Whigs! Yes, madam, but England will not. Still less will England do without the unmutilated Bill."

At another time, Queen Adelaide was reminded that if a female influence drove Necker from the court of Louis XVI., one of the consequences was the destruction of the most influential lady; another, the ruin of the country. The influence being assumed to be still active, allusion was made to the "foreign woman whom the nation may have too easily adopted." Reports were rife that intrigues were on foot, the object of which was to induce liberal peers to betray their party, and then the public censor showered imprecations on "blandishments and intreaties, urged with a force and pertinacity which, coming from a monarch, are difficult to be refused."

On the other hand, the Conservative press drew its own inferences, and made its own accusations. When the cholera was raging, during the reform fever, Queen Adelaide's drawing-room happened to be very thinly attended. The real cause was lost sight of, and Her Majesty was respectfully assured that the scanty attendance was entirely owing to Lord Grey's revolutionary government, beneath which all old English energy, vitality, and spirit, had become so extinct, that it was unequal to the exertion of even manifesting respect for an English Queen.

These old English qualities did, however, manifest themselves at a Conservative festival in Gloucestershire, where the health of "the Queen" was "received with great applause." Upon which announcement the "Times" significantly asked, "Is that meant as a compliment to Her Majesty, or will it sound as such in the ears of the unanimous people?" Then, when reiteration was made of the alleged co-operation of the sisters of William IV. with Queen Adelaide, in efforts to overthrow the Reform Bill, the "Times" stepped forward with the following testimony in favour of those ladies and their mother, with the accompanying admonition to the Queen:—"No one will be persuaded that any daughter of George III. could so mistake their position in this country, or so disregard their duty. Queen Charlotte was advised by her mother, before she ever touched the shores of England, to make entire and religious abstinence from politics the rule of her life, as a British Princess; and for twenty-eight years, till the question of the first Regency forced Queen Charlotte upon the stage, as a reluctant actress, she had satisfied herself with being a modest spectatress, living in strict observance of maternal counsel: and what was the consequence? Down to the abovementioned period of her wedded life, Her Majesty enjoyed, in a degree not experienced by any Queen-Consort for centuries past, the respect and good-will of the whole community. Is it then to be supposed that the leading maxim of her own mother, was not impressed by that judicious and estimable woman, upon the minds of her daughters, the six Princesses, two of whom still adorn the court of England with their constant presence? The Princess Augusta and the Duchess of Gloucester owe little to the gossips who thus abuse the delicacy of their illustrious names."

Party-spirit was, doubtless, aggravated on either side by the tone of the press. Influential cities announced their refusal to pay taxes, and tavern-clubs possessing pictures of King and Queen, turned them heels uppermost, with an intimation that they should be righted as soon as the originals had made

themselves right with the people. If Tories of eminence talked of coercing the King, Whigs equally exalted hinted at the possibility of sending his Consort to Germany, and of rousing the men of the provinces in order to make an impression upon people in high places. One well-known "man about town" presiding at a public dinner, refused to propose the Queen's health, and, among the lower caricature-shops, she might be seen pictured, wending her way, the ejected of England, to a dull, dreary, and unwelcoming Germany.

Publicly, however, she had her champions too. Mr. Baring, from his place in parliament, protested against the language of the Whig papers, generally. His own description of it, as applicable to the Queen, was, that it comprised foul slander against the highest personage of a sex, from insulting which every manly mind would recoil. The gallant champion added, with less discretion, perhaps, that the full measure of scornful indifference and silent contempt with which the Queen repaid all the insults heaped upon her, had elevated her in the hearts of those whose homage was a worthy tribute. Mr. Hume, ultra-reformer as he was, exhibited very excellent taste on this occasion, and pointed out in a few words marked by good common sense, that the name of the exalted lady, in question, should never be dragged into the debates, the discussions, and the dissensions of that house.

Less, perhaps, by way of championship, than in the character of consolers, did the bishops, or a certain number of them, with the Archbishop of Canterbury at their head, address Queen Adelaide. They had, previously, "been up" to the King, who was just then being counselled in various ways, by everybody, from wary old politicians to the 'prentice-boys of Derry. They brought to his Consort the usual complimentary phrases,—but, in the present instance, they carried weight with the Queen, for amid the din of abuse with which she was assailed, a few words of assurance and encouragement, of trust, counsel, and consolation, must have fallen pleasantly upon her ear. She said as much, at least, in a brief phrase or two, indicative of the satisfaction she experienced at hearing such words from such men, at a period when she was the object of so much undeserved calumny and insult.

The scene was, undoubtedly, made the most of by those who rejoiced most in its occurrence; perhaps, too much was made of it; and this induced the ridicule of the opposite side. The "Times" courageously denied its existence. The presentation of the prelates was admitted, but the Queen's speech was defined as a hoax. There was nobody by, it was said, but the knot of diocesans and a body of maids of honour,—and, of course, any report emanating from such a source was to be received with more than ordinary suspicion.

Long before the press had commenced directing an undesired notice upon the Queen, private circles were canvassing her conduct with regard, especially, to this matter of reform. "By-the-bye," says Moore in his Diary, "the Queen being, as is well known, adverse to the measure which is giving such popularity to her royal husband, reminds me a little of the story of the King of Sparta, who first gave his assent to the establishment of the Ephori. His wife, it is said, reproached him with this step, and told him that he was delivering down the royal power to his children, less than he had received it. 'Greater,' he answered, 'because more durable.' This is just such an answer as William the Fourth would be likely to give to *his* wife. But the event proved the Spartan Queen to have been right, for the Ephori extinguished the royal power; and if Queen Adelaide's bodings are of the same description, they are but too likely to be, *in the same manner, realized*,"—a curious avowal from Lord Lansdowne's Whig friend.

There are few things which more forcibly strike a student of the political literature of this period, than its wide difference from that which now generally prevails. It seemed, in those days, as if no public writer could command or control his temper. The worst things were expressed in the worst forms, and writers had not reached, or did not care to practise, the better style by which a man may censure sharply without doing undue wrong to the object of his censure, without losing his own self-respect or forfeiting that of his readers.

Taken altogether, the year 1832 may be said to have been the most eventful, and the least felicitous, in the life of Queen Adelaide. It was a year which opened gloomily for the court, both politically and personally. At one of the small festivities held at the Pavilion, the King's old friend, Mr. Greenwood, of the firm of Cox and Greenwood, Army Agents, was playing whist, after dinner, with the Queen for a partner, and the King and Sir Herbert Taylor for adversaries. During the progress of the game he was taken ill, became insensible, and, on being removed from the room by Sir Herbert and Lord Erroll, died in an adjoining apartment, within a quarter of an hour. The Queen was very much shocked at this incident, and the elder ladies about court who thought it ominous of a fatal year,—for already were movements hostile to monarchy becoming active,—considered the next month's omen of unpleasant significance too, when the fog in London, on the night of the anniversary of the Queen's birth-day, was so dense, that not a lump of the illuminations was visible through the mist. Then ensued, in the subsequent spring, the unpleasant feud with the Sefton family, in which Queen Adelaide's name was so prominent.

Soon after the temporary resignation of the Grey ministry, King William invited the Jockey Club to dinner at St. James's Palace. Among the invited was old Lord Sefton, who was a Whig *and something more*, and who was resolved to avenge on the King the wrongs inflicted, as he assumed, by that dissembling monarch on his friends of the late administration. Lord Sefton, accordingly withdrew from the club, in order that he might be able to decline the royal invitation, as a member. The unsuspicious King at once invited him as a friend, but Lord Sefton was ungracious enough to absent himself, and did not condescend to restore the sovereign to favour, till Lord Grey was once more at the helm of the national ship,—steersman and captain too. His lordship and family appeared at the ball given by the Queen, in May to which, of course, they had been all invited. Meanwhile, however, the King had learned how he stood in the estimation of the Earl, meeting whom in the Queen's ball-room, he turned his royal back upon him, publicly. Thence arose embittered feelings on the part of the offended peer. *Vivere sat, vincere*, "to conquer, is to live enough," is the Sefton motto, and the bearers of it seem to have been determined to have this taste of life, by putting down the royal offenders, and appearing before them to enjoy their humiliation. "Lord Molyneux" (Lord Sefton's son, says Mr. Raikes, in his *Diary*,) "has attended a public meeting at Liverpool, where he made a speech, and actuated by his father's feelings, alluded very bitterly to the conduct of both the King and Queen. He afterwards came to town, and appeared, with his family, at the ball. On the following day, the King commanded Mr. W. Ashley, as vice-chamberlain to the Queen, to write to Lord Molyneux, and request he would not appear at court again. Nothing could be more just. This is only a slight instance," adds the Tory Diarist, "of Whig insolence and ingratitude. Sefton has been made a peer, and treated with the most marked courtesy and attention by the present King."

In the following June, Lord Lichfield, master of the buck hounds, prepared a list of guests invited by him to meet the King, at the conclusion of Ascot races; at dinner, at Lord Lichfield's house, Fern Hill. The King expressly ordered that Lord Sefton should not be invited. Considering the offence, it was singular that any one should have thought of winning the Queen over to use her interest in influencing her husband to withdraw the command. Lady Lichfield, however, did so, intimating to Her Majesty, that if the King had been moved by what was reported to have passed at the Jockey Club, she was enabled to say how that matter had been much misrepresented. The Queen confined all reply and comment to the words, coldly uttered, that, she hoped it was so.

It certainly was not a period when Queens could expect to be cordial with people who insulted them, and whose speeches in public were exercising a very unwholesome influence on the more ignorant of the lower orders. At the above very Ascot races, the King was grievously assaulted, in the Queen's presence, by a ruffian in the crowd. Their Majesties had just taken their seats in the grand stand, and the King had then risen to salute the people in view, when the ruffian in question flung a stone at him, which struck the King on the forehead, but did not inflict any serious mischief. The assailant was let cheaply off; but Queen Adelaide was much distressed by his act; and the impression it made upon her was only increased, a week later, when she appeared with the King at the review in Hyde Park. There she was treated with such incivility and rudeness, that at the fête, at the Duke of Wellington's, in the evening, where they held a little court, the Queen wore a spiritless and sorrowing aspect, while King William, his buoyant spirits all quenched, looked aged and infirm, weary of his vocation and vexations.

The season, certainly, was not one for monarchs to be abroad in, with joyous exterior. In the summer of this year, there passed through London a princess whose story bore with it a great moral to the wearers of crowns. I allude to the Duchess of Angoulême, the daughter of Louis XVI. She had experienced the widest extremes of fortune, but had been longest and most intimately acquainted with misfortune. She was again a fugitive and an exile,—one never destined to behold her country again. The Queen visited her at her modest apartments in Charles Street, Grosvenor Square; and she took leave of that illustrious victim of many revolutions, with evil forebodings of the issue of the spirit of the then present time. Her Majesty did not, indeed, lack a certain spirit of her own, wherewith to meet the other and revolutionary spirit. Thus, when her friend and faithful servant, Lord Howe, was compelled to give up his office of chamberlain to the Queen, his mistress would never accept the nomination of any other person to the same post. Lord Howe remained in attendance upon his mistress unofficially; but he positively refused to be reinstated by Lord Grey, to whom his reply was, "That he had been wantonly dismissed by him, and would receive no favour at his hands." The act of Lord Grey was, probably, far more keenly felt at court, than that of the two new radical members (Messrs. Wigney and Faithful) returned for the royal borough of Brighton; and who, "under the very nose of the court," as it was said, "talked openly of reducing the allowance made to the King and Queen." This was a foolish speech; but there was an even more indiscrete tongue within the Pavilion, than those of the new radical senators without. In 1833, the King himself declared in favour of a republican form of government! What must the feelings of Queen Adelaide have been,—she who had a horror of revolutions, and a hatred for republicanism,—on that never-to-be-forgotten Sunday evening, the 6th of January, 1833? The American Minister was a guest at the dinner table that evening. At the dessert, the King, instead of wisely going to sleep, as he was accustomed to do after his second glass of wine, *would* be lively and talkative. When

he was in this vein, he was addicted to make speeches, and on this occasion, before the ladies had retired, he delivered himself of a very notable one, considering the times and the speaker, in which he expressed his great regret that he had not been born a free, independent, American: seeing that he entertained deep respect for the United States, and considered Washington to be the greatest man that ever lived. Queen Adelaide must have been astounded when listening to this profession of political faith, and to this eulogy of a man who had struck the brightest jewel out of the crown of his panegyrist's royal father!

To old royalists, such a speech as the above savoured of that period which is called "the end of the world." Speculative individuals who heard of it, were amazed. "The aristocracy are hourly going down in the scale; royalty is become a mere cypher." Well might Mr. Raikes make this entry in his journal, when a King of England manifested a liking for "rowdyism." The influences of these passing events, even on men of intellect, are well marked by a contemporary passage in the diary of the merchant, whose commercial affairs were going the way he fancied the monarchy was tending. "I was walking the other day," he writes, in February 1833, "round the Royal Exchange, the *enceinte* of which is adorned with the statues of Kings. Only two niches now remain vacant; one is destined to our present ruler, and that reserved for his successor is the last. Some people might say it was ominous." So, indeed, it proved to be; half-a-year after the accession of Queen Victoria, when there were as many niches as there had then been sovereigns, and room for no more, destruction ensued, but it was the Royal Exchange that fell (by fire), and not the monarchy. That has grown stronger. May it ever so flourish!

Meanwhile, it is to be observed, that Queen Adelaide after this time began to re-conquer the popular esteem. When, in July 1834, she embarked at Woolwich as Countess of Lancaster, on board the royal yacht, for Rotterdam, in order to visit her relations in Germany, the spectators of the scene received her with demonstrations of great respect, and, on her return, in the following month, she landed at the same place amid acclamations of loyalty and welcome.

It was after her return that the King began to bear symptoms of restlessness and fatigue, which betokened that decay which gradually made progress, and was ultimately accelerated in 1837, when his daughter, Lady de Lisle, died to the grief of many, but especially to the heart of her father.

As the King's health began to give way, so also did his temper more easily yield before small provocations, and more freely did he indulge in that early acquired habit of using strong expletives which has been noted, in her diary, by Fanny Burney. William the Conqueror, it is said, used to ungallantly beat his wife, Matilda, of whom he was otherwise so fond. William the Fourth was guilty of an offence only next to it in criminality,—by swearing in presence of his Consort, Adelaide. There is a well-known instance of this told in connection with a visit to the Royal Academy, in 1834. The occasion was that of a private view, with a very large public attendance, at Somerset House. The President of the Royal Academy received the illustrious visitors, and accompanied them through the rooms. In the course of their progress, he pointed out to the King the portrait of Admiral Napier, who had recently been in command of the Portuguese fleet, for Don Pedro. The King's political wrath was too strong for his infirmity, and, without forgetting the presence of his wife, nay, making such presence an excuse for not breaking forth into greater unseemliness, he exclaimed:—"Captain Napier may be d——d, sir! and you may be d——d, sir! and if the Queen was not here, sir, I would kick you down stairs, sir." Such a scene indicated as much infirmity as bad taste on the part of the chief actor, and must have sorely tried the patience and shaken the dignity of the Queen. She now, perhaps, as much or more than ever, required the support of those nearest to her. The old prejudices of the reform time against her had not yet died out, and to these was to be added certain malignity in foreign papers; a malignity which culminated in 1835 in the "Gazette de France," which paper seriously asserted that England was endeavouring to revolutionize Spain and Portugal, with ulterior purposes of pursuing the same course in Germany and Italy, as she had done in Belgium and in Greece;—and that at the head of this conspiracy for reconstructing Europe, were William the Fourth, the Duke of Wellington, and *Queen Adelaide*! Thus, the lady who had seldom during her life desired more than to be permitted to enjoy it tranquilly, and who had but little perplexed herself touching the ways of others, was held up, after being accused of being a political meddler at home, as being a political conspirator abroad.

When her royal Consort's indisposition assumed an appearance of increased gravity, Queen Adelaide at once took her place by his couch, and never left it but when compelled by gentle restraint put upon her by those who loved her, and who feared for her own health. "Les reines" (says a French writer) "ont été vues pleurantes comme de simples femmes," and she was one of them. Her constancy only gave way, and she broke into profuse but silent tears, on the eve of the old King's death, as the Archbishop of Canterbury concluded the service of the sick, by pronouncing the solemn words of the benediction as contained in the Liturgy of the Church. The good old monarch looked with affection upon his sorrowing Queen, and with as cheerful a voice as he could put on, and almost in nautical phrase, begged her to be of good heart and to "bear up! bear up!"

The Rev. Mr. Browne, Vicar of Atwick, rendering testimony to her conduct on this occasion, said in a funeral sermon: "She was by the King's bedside, a being so full of devoted love and pious resignation: of such meekness, gentleness, and goodness, and sweetness; that an angel might have beheld her with satisfaction and delight, and, *almost with advantage*." She did her duty like a true wife and tender woman; and Mr. Browne thought that, altogether, Queen Adelaide might have afforded an useful hint or two even to angels! It is more than the good Queen ever dreamed of.

I do not know that I can cite a worthier witness to the Queen's conduct on this occasion, than the Archbishop of Canterbury. That reverend prelate was in close attendance upon the King during the last days of his life, in 1837, and in the course of his ministrations, saw more of Queen Adelaide than any other individual there present had the opportunity of doing. At a meeting of the Metropolitan Churches' Fund Society, the primate went fully, but tenderly and sensibly, into this solemn matter; and after rendering due, but not over-piled, measure of justice to the King, spoke in these words of his Consort:—"For three weeks prior to his dissolution, the Queen sat by his bedside, performing for him every office which a sick man could require, and depriving herself of all manner of rest and refection. She underwent labours which I thought no ordinary woman could endure. No language can do justice to the meekness and to the calmness of mind which she sought to keep up before the King, while sorrow was preying on her heart. Such constancy of affection, I think, was one of the most interesting spectacles that could be presented to a mind desirous of being gratified with the sight of human excellence."

The spectacle at the close was one most touching of all, for old King William, threescore and twelve, died at last in a gentle sleep, as he sat up on his couch, his head resting, where it had lain undisturbed for hours, on the shoulder of the Queen. Such had been her office at various times, daily, for the preceding fortnight; and when it shall have been a little more hallowed by time, it will be a fitting subject to be limned by some future artist, competent to treat it.

Since the death of Charles II., no King of England had died under the same roof with his wife; and then there was no such touching scene as the above, but only a few words of decent reconciliation before the royal pair parted for ever; and the wife, (leaving the husband to die at leisure and commend worthless women to his brother's protection) went to her chamber to receive the formal news of his death, and finally to receive the condolence of visitors, laying the while on a state bed of mourning, in a chamber lighted with tapers, the walls, floor, and ceiling covered with black cloth. Queen Adelaide stayed by her husband to the last, then laid his unconscious head upon the pillow, and quietly withdrawing to her chamber, looked for consolation to other sources than the visits of courtiers shaping their faces to the humour of the hour.

The respect of the royal widow for the deceased King did not cease here. On Saturday night, the 8th of July, she attended the funeral ceremony, at Windsor, being present in the royal closet during the whole ceremony. She is the only Queen of England who saw a King, her Consort, deposited in the tomb.

In the following month, the Dowager Queen left Windsor Castle, to which the shouts of a joyous people welcomed her successor. From that time, she may be said to have commenced her own course of dying. Her story is really, henceforward, but the diary of an invalid. The nation, through the legislature, condoled with her upon her bereavement, and as she descended the steps of the throne to resume her old unostentatious privacy, there was not a man in the realm who failed, in some wise, to greet her, or who did not acknowledge that she had borne greatness with honour, and had won the hearts of a people who had been once forward to censure her.

From this period, her life was one of suffering, but it was a suffering that never rendered her selfish. In her worst hours of anguish, her ear was open, her heart touched, her hand ready to relieve her sisters in affliction, and to remedy the distresses of all who really stood in need of the royal succour. For nearly twelve years she may be said to have been dying. The sunniest and most sheltered spots in this country were visited by her, but without resulting in permanent relief. The winter of 1837-8 was spent at St. Leonard's. An attack of bronchitis, in the autumn of the latter year, drove her for refuge and remedy to Malta, where the church raised by her at Valetta,—the cathedral church of Gibraltar,—at an expense of £10,000, will long serve to perpetuate her memory. On her return in May 1839, she became, for a time, the guest of various noble hosts in England. In 1840, she visited the lakes, and established her home, subsequently and for a brief period, at Sudbury. Her next homes,—the frequent changes indicating increased virulence of disease,—were at Canford Hall, Dorset; Witley Court, Worcester; and Cashiobury, near Watford: thence she departed on one short and last visit to her native home, from which she returned so ill that, in 1847, she repaired, as a last resource, to Madeira, whither she was conveyed in a royal frigate.

The progress of the sick Queen over the water, was not without its stateliness and solemnity, mixed with a certain joyousness, acceptable to, though not to be shared in by the royal invalid. Before the squadron departed from Spithead, on Sunday, the 10th of October, full divine service was celebrated on

board the *Howe*, the ship's chaplain reading the prayers, the Queen Dowager's preaching the sermon, on a text altogether foreign to so rare and interesting an occasion:—"But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets," (Rom. iii. 21.) After service, the squadron stood forth to sea, no incident marking its way till the following Tuesday. On that day, a bird winging from the Bay of Biscay, fluttered on to the *Howe*, perched on the yards, and then flew from one point to another, and back again, as if he had made of the gallant steamer a home. A sailor, named Ward, attempted to capture the little guest, in pursuing which into the chains, being more eager than considerate, he fell headlong over into the waves, while the *Howe* pursued her forward way. In an instant after alarm was given, however, the life-buoy was floating on the waters, a boat was pulling lustily towards the seaman, and the *Howe* slipped her tow ropes, and made a circuit astern to pick up rescued and rescuers. Ward, meanwhile, had by skilful swimming, gained fast hold of the buoy, and was brought on board little the worse for his plunge and his temporary peril. Queen Adelaide was more moved by this accident than the man was himself. On the following Sunday, the Queen was better able than she had previously been, to turn the accident to some account, for Ward's own benefit. Her Majesty had attended the usual service on board, and had listened to another sermon from the ship's chaplain, this time on a subject as unappropriate as that of the preceding Sunday:—"And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission," (Heb. ix. 22),—the ship's company were repairing to their respective quarters, when Ward was told that the Queen Dowager requested to see him. If this message disconcerted him more than his fall into the Bay of Biscay, he soon recovered that self-possession which no man loses long, who has a proper feeling of self-respect. Besides, the widowed Queen, in her intercourse with persons of humble station, wore habitually that air—

"—which sets you at your ease, Without implying your perplexities."

She spoke to the listening sailor kindly, on his late peril, and the position in which it suddenly placed him near to impending death. A few words like these, wisely and tenderly offered, were likely to be more beneficial to a man like Ward, than a whole course of the chaplain's sermons on doctrinal points in the Epistle to the Hebrews; and I cannot but hope that the artists of the next generation, when Time shall have poetized the costume of the incident, will not forget this picturesque passage in the life of the Queen and the man-of-war's-man.

And now, as they glided by the coast of Portugal, on the evening of Monday, the 18th of October, there was dancing on board, and again on the Wednesday evening. Princesses waltzed with commanders, the Grand-Duchess tripped it on the poop with a knight, and the midshipmen went dashingly at it with the maids of honour, while the gun-room officers stood by awaiting their turn. On the fore part of the quarterdeck, as many of the ship's company as were so minded, got up a dance among themselves; and the suffering Queen below heard the echoes of the general gladness, and was content.

On the following Friday, the *Howe* was close to Belem Castle, and was towed into the Tagus by the steam-frigate *Terrible*. The King-Consort of Portugal came down in a state barge to receive the Queen, whom he escorted to the palace of the Necessidades, landing amid a roar of artillery and welcomed by loyal demonstrations as the illustrious traveller passed on her way to the Queen regnant, Donna Maria.

By such progress did Queen Adelaide make her way towards Madeira, the climate of which could not arrest the progress of her malady, and she returned to England,—for a time to Bushey, finally, to Bentley Priory, near Stanmore, where she occupied herself in preparation for the inevitable end. There, on the 8th of May, 1849, the Queen Dowager may be said to have "done a foolish thing," in altering her will without legal assistance in the method of alteration. On that day, alone and unadvised, Her Majesty took out her old and duly attested will, of the 14th August, 1837, and inscribed on the back thereof this remarkable endorsement:—"This will is cancelled, 8th May, 1849. My heirs are my brother and sister, and their heirs after them. My executors, Lord Howe and the Hon. W. A. Cooper, are requested to pay off all what I directed in my codicil, and then to divide my property equally between my brother and sister. This is my last will and request."

It was the will of a Queen, but it stood for nothing in the eye of the law. The endorsement was brought under notice of the Prerogative Court; the Judge, Sir Herbert Jenner Furst, declared it to be of no effect. It was a mere unattested memorandum; and he pronounced, as the legal phrase is, for the original will. Of greater interest is the subjoined document, which pleasantly contrasts with the wills of many of her lady predecessors, whose minds were engaged on the disposal of their state beds, their mantles, and their jewellery, to the exclusion of all other subjects. Thus wrote the dying Queen Adelaide:—

"I die in all humility, knowing well that we are all alike before the throne of God; and I request, therefore, that my mortal remains be conveyed to the grave without any pomp or state. They are to be

removed to St. George's Chapel, Windsor, where I request to have as private and quiet a funeral as possible. I particularly desire not to be laid out in state, and the funeral to take place by daylight; no procession; the coffin to be carried by sailors to the chapel. All those of my friends and relations, to a limited number, who wish to attend, may do so. My nephew, Prince Edward of Saxe-Weimar, Lords Howe and Denbigh, the Hon. William Ashley, Mr. Wood, Sir Andrew Barnard, and Sir D. Davies, with my dressers, and those of my ladies who may wish to attend. I die in peace, and wish to be carried to the tomb in peace, and far from the vanities and pomp of this world. I request not to be dissected nor embalmed; and desire to give as little trouble as possible. "ADELAIDE R."

The end soon come, and it was met with dignity. On the 22nd of November, 1849, Queen Victoria and Prince Albert visited the Dowager Queen, for the last time. On the last day of the month she calmly passed away. The above document was then produced; and it rendered kings-at-arms, heralds, gold sticks, and upholsterers powerless to exercise their absurd dignity in connection with death,—when so intelligible and sensible a protest as the above was in existence. Accordingly, on a fine December morning of 1849, there issued from the gates of Bentley Priory, an ordinary hearse with a pall emblazoned with the Queen's arms, preceded by three mourning coaches. A scanty escort of cavalry accompanied them, more for use than show, their office being to see that no obstruction impeded the funeral march from Stanmore to Windsor. On its way, the attitude of the spectators exhibited more of sympathy than curiosity.

The Harrow boys turned out in testimony of respect, and the country people at large looked like mourners, wearing more or less, but wearing some outward manifestation of sorrow.

The Queen's body reached the Chapel at Windsor at one o'clock. In the south aisle, close to the porch, there had been standing, grouped together, silent and motionless, a group of seamen,—grave, bronzed, athletic sailors. Their demeanour showed them worthy of the office which the now dead Queen had asked at their hands. When all the royal, and great, and noble personages were in their respective places,—while some indispensable officials effected a little more of their foolish calling, in the presence of death, than Queen Adelaide herself would have sanctioned;—while princes, peers, and prelates, ladies-in-waiting, clergy, and choristers, proceeded passively or actively with their parts in the ceremony of the day,—then those ten sailors advanced to accomplish the duty assigned them, and standing by the platform on which the body was placed, gently propelled it to a position over the subterranean passage into which it was lowered, after one of the simplest services that was ever said or sung for departed Queen, had been accomplished.—Most simple, save when Garter stepped forward to announce what all men knew, that it "had pleased Almighty God to take out of this life to His divine mercy" the departed Queen; and to assert what that royal lady would assuredly have gainsaid, that she was a "Most High, Most Mighty, and Most Excellent Princess." With this, and one or two other formalities of that pomp and state from which she had asked to be spared, Queen Adelaide passed to the tomb,—a tomb capacious enough to contain whole generations of kings and queens, princes and princesses yet unborn.

This event was followed by an unusual amount of execrable elegiac verse, which was powerless, however, to throw ridicule on what it affected to solemnize. I have had the pain of reading an inconceivable amount of this trash,—a pain only relieved by the occurrence of lines which, intended to be serious, were irresistibly comic. Out of the reams written in professed honour of a most exemplary Queen, I have not met with an appropriate line that is worth citing. One sample of the solemnly absurd Pegasuses set restive on this occasion will assuredly satisfy curiosity. The writer affects to see at the royal funeral the ghosts of departed great ones, who assemble to do visionary homage to their new sister in death. Among them is the incautious Bishop, who died from the effects of a cold caught at the funeral of the Duke of York:—

"Lo! see the shade of a prelate pass by
Who came to a night-burial to die;
Standing too long expos'd to the chill air,
Death aim'd his dart, and struck the mitre there."

Poor Queen Adelaide! A wish could save her from some of the empty pomps and vanities that linger about the open grave; but nothing could save her from the villainous poetasters. All the rhymers who rung metrical knells at her death, deserved the fate, and for like reasons, invoked in "Julius Caesar" on the so-called poet who made "bad verses."

The preachers, if honest chronicling is to be observed, did not on this occasion very much excel the poets. Very "tolerable" indeed, and not at all to be endured, were most of the funeral sermons which have come under my notice. One clergyman, who had been the Queen's chaplain too, and who had composed a funeral sermon on William the Fourth, reproduced not merely the substance, but in many parts, identical passages from the discourse on the dead King, and made them do duty in illustrating

the demise of that sovereign's royal widow. Others were illogical, or were painfully simple, or amusingly trite. In one, I find an intimation that "after deducting the more needful expenses of her household, she gave away *all* she had, and died *poor*;" which seems an inevitable consequence of such liberality. None of these who took a dead Queen for the subject of a lesson on vanity, or for an example to be followed, wore the mantle of a Bossuet,—grand and instructive when consigning La Vallière to the cloister, or Henrietta of Orleans to a tomb. They might at least have found something suggestive in the sermon on the latter occasion, by the "Eagle of Meaux," where he exclaims, after apt reflection on birth, rank, and their responsibilities:—"No! after what we have just seen, we must feel that health exists only in name, life is a dream, glory a deception, favours and pleasures dangerous amusements, everything about us vanity. She was as gentle towards death as she had been to all the world.... She will sleep with the great ones of the earth, with princes and kings, whose power is at an end, amongst whom there is hardly room to be found, so closely do they lie together, and so prompt is death to fill the vacant places. *Can we build our hopes on ruins such as these*."

From beyond sea there did come echoes something like these; and fitting homage to the virtues of the deceased lady was rendered from many a church pulpit among a foreign people. Although it be not necessary to travel into another hemisphere to find a witness offering voluntary evidence to the good qualities of the Queen Dowager, yet I gladly do so in one instance, and reproduce a testimony rendered at the Cape of Good Hope. In a funeral sermon, preached in St. George's Cathedral, Cape Town, on the 24th of February, 1850, by the Rev. W. A. Newman, at that time Senior Colonial Chaplain and Rural Dean, that learned and eloquent divine rendered a graceful tribute to the memory of the deceased Queen, of which the following paragraph is a portion:—"Of this excellent lady's large charities I can speak from evidence, and can, therefore, speak with a full heart. I have lived near to the neighbourhood where her less public bounty diffused itself. I know that the sick room of the poor has been visited by her in person; I know that from her own table a portion has been sent, to call forth the coy appetite of disease; and I know that where ever she went many a heartfelt *God bless her* would follow."

Such was Queen Adelaide, some seven years Queen Consort of Great Britain; a lady who will be remembered, if not as a great Queen, yet as one of the truly good women who have shared with a King regnant the throne of these islands.—One who lived down calumny, and, who, being dead, is remembered with respect and affection.

THE END.

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