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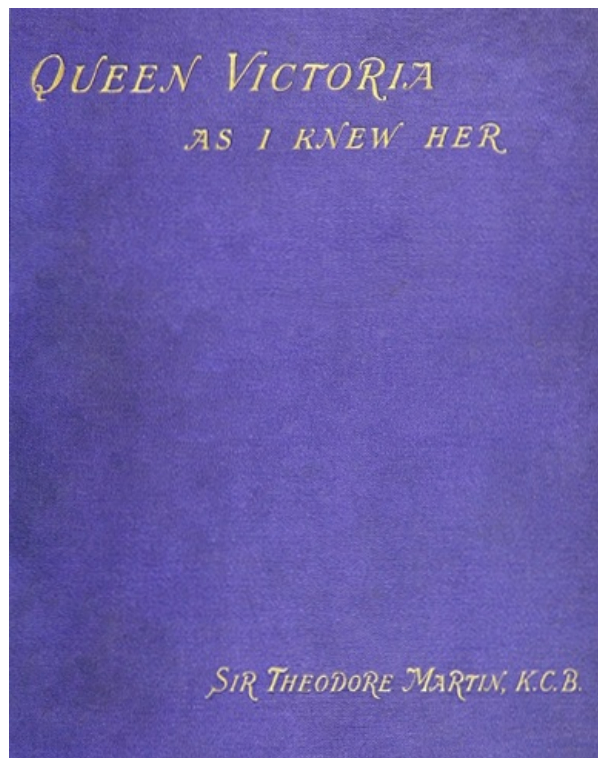
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QUEEN VICTORIA

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QUEEN VICTORIA  
AS I KNEW HER

BY  
SIR THEODORE MARTIN

For Private Circulation

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EDINBURGH AND LONDON  
MCM I

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*S*TIFLE the throbbing of this haunting pain,  
And dash this tearful sorrow from the eyes!  
She is not dead! Though summoned to the skies,  
Still in our hearts she lives, and there will reign;  
Still the dear memory will the power retain  
To teach us where our foremost duty lies,  
Truth, justice, honour, simple worth to prize,  
And what our best have been to be again.

*She hath gone hence, to meet the great, the good,  
The loved ones, yearn'd for through long toilsome years,  
To share with them the blest beatitude,  
Where care is not, nor strife, nor wasting fears,  
Nor cureless ills, nor wrongs to be withstood;  
Shall thought of this not dry our blinding tears?*

Published in the 'Nineteenth Century,' February 1901.

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QUEEN VICTORIA  
AS I KNEW HER.

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CHAPTER I.

My personal introduction to Queen Victoria was due to the circumstance of my being chosen by Her Majesty to be the biographer of the Prince Consort. The obvious difficulties of that task, to which I looked forward with grave apprehension, could not have been successfully overcome but for the personal confidence early reposed in me by the Queen, which led not only to her placing unreservedly at my disposal the very complete collections made by the Prince Consort of confidential State and other papers connected with Her Majesty's reign, but also to the frank communication of such personal details as, while they illustrated the character of the Prince, threw the strongest light upon that of the Queen herself.

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After my book was completed, the same confidential relations continued. This gave me such unusual opportunity of observing Her Majesty's qualities of mind and heart, that I am tempted to place on record so much of what I saw as may without impropriety be told. What she was as a Sovereign will be for historians to tell; it is only of the woman as she became revealed to me that I would speak, using, where I may, her own words, as I find them in looking back upon the very voluminous correspondence with which I was honoured through many years. The endearing qualities of the Queen have been acknowledged by all who knew her. They secured for her what might be truly called the affectionate devotion of the men and women of her Court. I belonged to the outer world, but by no one were these qualities more warmly felt than by myself; for to the end, when the work which first brought me into contact with Her Majesty had long been completed, her gracious kindness and trust were vouchsafed to me with a constancy that knew no shade of change.

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been asked. It is a question which, in the early days, I often asked myself, for the selection came upon me as a great surprise. I did not know the Prince Consort, but I had heard much of him through my friend Mr (afterwards Sir Arthur) Helps, Clerk of Her Majesty's Council, and had been consulted by him in his preparation of the Collection of the Prince's Speeches and Addresses, and of the admirable monograph with which he introduced them, in the volume published by Murray in 1862. He must have laid more stress on my assistance than it merited. The Queen, to whom I was an entire stranger, presented me with an inscribed copy of the book dated 20th December 1862. It came with a letter from Lady Augusta Bruce (afterwards Stanley), one of the Queen's ladies, in which she says she had been commanded to forward it to me, "in remembrance of my co-operation in the work of giving these precious memorials to our country and to the world, and as a token of Her Majesty's true appreciation of the spirit in which that co-operation was afforded." Lady Augusta was an old and valued friend of my wife, and she, as well as Sir Arthur Helps, may have spoken of me to the Queen; but I was quite unprepared for such a recognition of suggestions which in no way merited, to my thinking, the name of co-operation. From this time onwards I heard much both of the Queen and Prince from my friend Helps, and my opinion was often asked in connection with Her Majesty's *Leaves from a Journal*, which he was engaged in carrying through the press.

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It had been intended that General Charles Grey, the Queen's Private Secretary, should write the Prince's Life, and a first volume was in course of being prepared, which dealt with the early years and marriage of the Prince. The General soon found that he had neither the leisure nor the strength to carry out the work, and I was aware that the question how this was to be done had closely occupied Her Majesty's thoughts. I was, however, taken greatly by surprise when a letter from Helps reached me in my holiday retreat in North Wales, in which he told me that the Queen had approved of a suggestion he had made, that I should be asked to undertake the task. With his letter he sent for my perusal, through Miss Alice Helps, who was then staying with us, a memorandum giving an outline of his ideas how the work should be carried out.

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"It will be a very great thing to do," the memorandum said, "covering many of the most secret transactions of the reign. General Grey's book is merely the life of the Prince as a child, and up to his marriage. It now becomes part of the history of England, and also of foreign States. A special duty will be to judge what documents shall be published, taking it for granted that such a work cannot long be kept secret.... The more I see of the Prince's doings and sayings, the more I am struck with their largeness and extent." The memorandum goes on to offer assistance (which, as it turned out, I never used) in looking up and selecting materials and in furnishing political information, ending with the assurance, that "after seeing me, Her Majesty would be most confidential, and would trust everything to me. H. M. would much like Mr Martin to undertake the work, and he would find no difficulty in getting her to assent to any of his wishes in regard to it."

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Reflection satisfied me that, as the event proved, Mr Helps had not fully appreciated either the greatness of the scale on which a biography, that would in fact be a history, must be constructed, or the amount of time and labour which it would demand. Much honoured as I felt by the proposal, I shrank from the task; and in the full sense of my own unfitness for it, and in the hope that it would not be further pressed upon me, I replied to Mr Helps as follows:—

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"27th August 1866.

"MY DEAR HELPS,—Alice has read to me your memorandum as to the proposed Life of the Prince Consort, and I have given the subject very anxious consideration. The work I conceive to be one which, while full of the greatest interest, is surrounded with the gravest responsibility. You do not very clearly indicate what precise shape the Life is intended to take. It is natural and proper that a Life of the Prince should be prepared, and given to the world, probably at no distant date, in which the real greatness of his character, public and private, and the breadth of his views should be developed, and developed by letting himself speak through the memoranda and other documents under his own hand, which, I presume, exist in abundance, wherever these can with propriety be used. But it is, of course, obvious that the matters to be dealt with involve so much that is delicate in their bearing both upon individual and public affairs, that to decide what should and what should not be given will involve most anxious consideration at every step; while it is scarcely less certain that much must either be altogether withheld, or set apart for a volume of *pièces justificatives*, to be compiled for possible publication at some more remote period.

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"The selection and classification of these materials will occupy much time and thought before a line of the Biography can be written. At least such is my present opinion, for I do not think that the life of any man of mark, much more a man so pre-eminent as the Prince, can be written until the whole scope and purpose of his life, as seen in his actions and habits of thought down to its close, have been, as far as may be, ascertained—until, in Shakespeare's words, the 'idea of his mind and life' has crept into the biographer's 'study of imagination.' Then, and then only, can he hope to paint his portrait with the freedom and warmth of pencil which can alone be derived from a full mastery of his materials and thorough sympathy with his theme. Add to this, that much will have to be read and considered of what has already been said and done in public matters during the Prince's life.

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"Holding these views of the task, I naturally pause very gravely before making up my mind whether or not to accept a duty so honourable, but, at the same time, so onerous. You know how fully my time is engaged in my profession. This will in itself make anything like frequent absence

from London impossible, and indeed I would undertake nothing which took me frequently from home, where, as you know, all my happiness is centred. While, therefore, I might upon occasion be able to attend Her Majesty for instructions or the discussion of such points as required explanation, I could only do so upon occasion, and I could, for the meantime at least, only pledge myself to give such time to the work as my profession and my health (which, you know, is far from strong) would admit. Now, it may not be compatible with the views of Her Majesty to accept my service under such conditions. But, in any case, it is indispensable that she should be fully aware of them. If, with the full knowledge of them, Her Majesty should still be pleased to consider that I can be useful in carrying out Her Majesty's views, I should then feel less difficulty in undertaking the task, always understanding that I am to be assisted, as you propose, in the selection and arrangement of documents, &c."

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Mr Helps received my letter at Balmoral, where, as Clerk of the Council, he was in attendance upon the Queen. "Nothing," he wrote, "can be better than your letter, which I received yesterday evening, and have just sent in to the Queen. She has named a time for seeing me to-day, and, if I have time afterwards, I will tell you what she says." His letter concludes with an account, that is not unamusing, of one of the household balls by which the routine of the life at Balmoral was occasionally broken:—

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"The ball went off admirably last night; even Her Majesty remained many hours watching it. In how many points one's education has been neglected! I could not dance any of these Scotch dances. However, I enjoyed the fun as a spectator. All ranks danced together, and one of the best hits I saw made was when the Prince's coachman, a dapper little fellow, cut out H.R.H. very neatly in what they call a 'perpetual jig.'

"There was a little 'tiger' who greatly distinguished himself, and contrived, which is a matter of skill, to get the Princess [of Wales] for a partner for a short time. Then, perhaps, the little imp was himself cut out by a duke. The people behaved, as they generally do in such cases, admirably—free, graceful, and comparatively at their ease—and yet never forward."

As I heard no more on the subject of the Life for several days, I had begun to hope that the subject would drop, so far as I was concerned, when, on the 11th of September, Mr Helps sent me a letter to himself from the Queen, in which Her Majesty wrote: "She thinks it most important that the services of Mr Martin should be engaged in this all-important work, which she feels should be as *faithful* a representation of the greatest and best of men, her dearly loved and honoured husband, as it possibly can be. The copying and *sifting* of papers, and the responsibility for what should be put in or omitted, would rest with the Queen, General Grey, and Mr Helps, and this, she hopes, will remove Mr Martin's objection to the task. It will give the Queen much satisfaction to make Mr Martin's acquaintance."

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On reading this letter, I waited on Mr Helps, when he gave me full details of what had passed in his interview with Her Majesty after she had read my letter. Among other things, I remember, he informed me that she laid great stress upon the fact that through life I had never taken a side in party politics; that I was thoroughly versed in the German language, in which a large proportion of the documents which I should have to consider was written; that I had gone through a full legal training, and had in my profession come in contact with many men engaged in undertakings of great importance. After so gracious an expression of Her Majesty's confidence, I felt that only one course was open to me, and accordingly I wrote to Mr Helps: "Her Majesty having been graciously pleased to accept such aid as I can give towards the great object which Her Majesty has so deeply at heart, I feel that I can no longer hesitate to place my best services at her disposal. You will understand best how to make this known to Her Majesty, whose commands I shall hold myself in readiness to fulfil."

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The Queen soon afterwards returned from Balmoral to Windsor Castle, and it was arranged that I was to be introduced there by Mr Helps on the 14th of November 1866. The night before was memorable for the marvellous transit of shooting-stars (the Leonids) across the heavens, the recurrence of which in subsequent years has been looked for eagerly but in vain. I remember well wondering to myself, as after midnight I gazed upon that magnificent spectacle, how I, utter stranger as I was to the ways and etiquette of courts, should pass through the ordeal that awaited me. I had been rather disconcerted that evening by hearing that Mr Helps, whose presence would have somewhat lightened the embarrassment of a first interview with the Queen, was so unwell that he could not accompany me to Windsor. Thither, therefore, I had to go alone, and at the appointed hour was ushered into a room the walls of which were enriched by part of Her Majesty's great collection of miniatures. Here I found the Princess Helena awaiting me. I had met her more than once before, and her presence served to place me more at ease than I should otherwise have been before Her Majesty appeared. Still, my heart beat quicker when, very soon, I found myself in the presence of the Queen. In her face I read at a glance marked traces of the great sorrow she had undergone. Serene and full of quiet dignity as it was, I seemed to perceive in the Queen's bearing something of that nervousness, almost amounting to shyness, which, as I came to know afterwards, Her Majesty always seemed to feel in first meeting a stranger—a shyness so little to be expected in a Sovereign who had gone through so many exciting scenes, and had known nearly all the most distinguished men in Europe. To show no signs of embarrassment, but to be simple and self-possessed, I saw at once was my true policy. The consequence was that Her Majesty herself quickly became at ease, and by her frank, gracious manner made me feel as it were at home in the long conversation that ensued, and in which, for

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the first time, I felt the charm that never failed of her exquisite smile and of her silver-toned voice.

The details of that conversation I cannot, after so long an interval of years, recall. An opportunity was given to me of explaining my views as to the lines upon which the Life of the Prince should be written, and the information with which I desired more immediately to be furnished. The Queen promised to send me such extracts from her own and the Prince's diaries, and copies of such documents in her possession, as she considered might be useful. Before she withdrew, Her Majesty turned the conversation to general topics, and, to my surprise, I found that she somehow knew much of my home ties, and of my tastes and pursuits in literature and the arts, in regard to which she encouraged me to give the frank expression of my opinions. I left her presence deeply impressed by the simplicity of bearing under which the dignity of the Queen was unostentatiously present but subtly felt, and by a singular charm of manner, which grew and grew upon me the more I came under its influence in the years of frequent intercourse that followed.

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The absence of Mr Helps upon this occasion was, in a sense, fortunate, as it gave me the opportunity of learning, in the Queen's own words, the impression Her Majesty had formed of me in this first interview. On the same day she wrote to Mr Helps. He was a great purist in regard to style, which will explain the first paragraph of her letter:—

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"WINDSOR CASTLE, Nov. 14, 1866.

"The Queen is *so* grieved (perhaps Mr Helps will scold her for that *so!*) to hear of Mr Helps feeling so ill to-day, but she thinks he will be relieved to hear that the first interview with Mr Martin passed off extremely well, and that the Queen is very much pleased with him, and *feels sure* that she can be at her ease with him. He is clever, kind, and sympathetic, and it will be a great interest to her to work *with him* and Mr Helps."

Words so kind naturally dispelled some of the misgivings with which I was haunted in looking forward to what would be expected from the biographer of the Prince Consort,—expected both by her, who knew what she herself and her kingdom had lost in him, and by the public, who only too late had surmised the extent of that loss. No time was lost in getting together materials for the story of the early part of the Prince's life. These were supplied to me by the Queen from her journals, from family correspondence, and, in short, from everything which could throw light upon the youth and character of the Prince. Much information was also furnished in interviews with Her Majesty at Windsor Castle, to which I was frequently summoned. I gathered much, also, from some of the gentlemen of the household who had known the Prince, and with whom I became acquainted during my visits to the Castle, where they were at pains to show me that I was not an unwelcome guest. Most of all I learned from General Charles Grey, the Queen's Private Secretary, a man of strong character and conspicuous ability, whose personal friendship and confidence in me I must ever remember with the warmest gratitude.

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On one of my early visits to the Castle he put to me a question which I was glad to have an opportunity of answering, and to which, in the interests of the Queen, he was entitled to a reply. "To what," he said, "do you look forward in return for executing the onerous task you are undertaking?" "My compensation," I replied, "will be ample, if I can make people understand the Prince, how great he was, how devoted to the welfare of our country, how great the debt which the country owed him. It must," I added, "be understood that my work is to be without fee or reward of any kind. My private means are ample for all my wants, and I can therefore afford full time for doing the work thoroughly. All I stipulate is that I am to have a free hand both as to the time and manner in which it is to be done. I foresee that it will be the work of years, and that it can only be well done if I am allowed entire independence in forming and expressing my estimate of the Prince, and of his influence in matters of public or political importance."

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General Grey expressed his satisfaction with what I said, and, no doubt, lost no time in informing the Queen of its import. However this might be, from that moment I was treated with unreserved confidence, and the conditions for which I had stipulated were fully and frankly kept throughout all my labours. In General Grey I found a cordial friend. He paid me the compliment of asking my assistance in finally seeing through the press the work, *The Early Years of the Prince Consort*, on which he was then engaged, and which was soon afterwards published. It had been originally intended that my work should begin where his left off. But as I went on with my studies I found that, to make my biography coherent and complete, I must go over the ground General Grey had already gone over, and treat its incidents in my own way, and with a view to my plan for the further narrative of the Prince's life.

As I look back on my correspondence with the Queen, it gratifies me to see how early Her Majesty's letters had passed from formal reserve into a strain of confidential friendliness. Thus in a letter of December 18, 1867, she writes, "The Queen thanks Mr Martin for his two kind letters," and invites him to Osborne for two or three days, where he will meet M. Silvain van de Weyer, "a great and intimate friend of the dear Prince, a man of great cultivation of mind and of the kindest heart, and who will give Mr Martin many useful hints about the Prince's character." This meeting led to an unbroken friendship with the singularly gifted man so well described by Her Majesty. From him I learned much that was of service to my immediate purpose in depicting the early part of the Prince's life. He had been so completely behind the scenes also in all the political

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movements of the time, that I hoped to have the benefit of his knowledge in dealing with the subsequent years as well. But this was not to be. To my infinite regret, he died before the first volume of the *Life* was published,<sup>[1]</sup> but he read the proof-sheets of the greater part of it, and I was greatly encouraged by the warmth of his approval. In the same letter the Queen goes on to say: "The Queen is reading Mr Martin's *Correggio*,<sup>[2]</sup> of which she used to hear her governess, the Baroness Lehzen, so often speak. Would he let her have a copy to send to the Baroness?"

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"This day," the letter adds, "has been splendid—a cloudless blue sky, and equally blue sea, with the purest air. But when the Queen awoke this morning her heart felt *sick*, as she knew how her darling husband would have enjoyed such a day in his beloved Osborne, and she yearned for one hour of former happiness."

I was again summoned to Osborne in the first week of January 1868. A day or two after my arrival (10th of January) I had a bad accident on the skating-pond,—so bad that I had to be carried to the Palace, where the limb was promptly placed in splints by Dr Hofmeister, the Queen's resident surgeon. The injury was serious, and the pain extreme. On the Queen's return from her afternoon drive she heard of the accident, and immediately sent the late Duchess of Roxburghe, her Lady-in-Waiting, to me. She had been commanded to express Her Majesty's regret that she could not come at once to see me, as she had so many despatches awaiting her which required immediate attention. She also added that I was to write to my wife to come to Osborne: the Royal yacht would be ordered to Portsmouth to wait her arrival and to bring her over. Before nine o'clock next morning I was surprised by the appearance of Her Majesty in my room, where she expressed her warm sympathy with my suffering, and gave orders for my having the constant attendance of one of her principal servants. The Queen had scarcely left my room when two unusually large pillows were brought to me. The Queen, I was told, thought the pillows I had were too small, and had ordered these larger ones to replace them. This thoughtful kindness was but the beginning of a care for my recovery on the part of Her Majesty which left nothing undone that could minister to my comfort. On the 12th my wife arrived, and was met by the Duchess of Roxburghe. Soon after, the Queen came to her room, and her Diary records: "H. M. gave me her hand, and welcomed me most kindly. I am desired to ask for everything as if I were at home;" and everything *was* done to make her feel at home, by Her Majesty, by the Royal children,—the Princesses Helena, Louise, and Beatrice, and the Duke of Connaught and Prince Leopold,—and by all the ladies and gentlemen of the household. What the impression was which she produced upon the Queen we subsequently learned by a letter from Mr Helps, in which he quoted Her Majesty's words from a letter he had received:—

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"17th January 1868. [Pg 25]

"We are selfishly glad that Mr Martin is kept here, and think Mrs Martin *most* pleasing, clever, and distinguished—really very charming."

Almost daily during the three following weeks we had the honour of lengthened visits in our rooms from Her Majesty, in which there was a frank interchange of views, not only in regard to the subject on which I was specially engaged, but also upon the events of the day and other topics of general interest. It so happened that just at this time the *Leaves from a Journal* were published. Her Majesty's estimate of that little volume was most humble; and as, possibly from a feeling of shyness, she shrank from writing with this first literary effort to the Poet Laureate, she honoured me by requesting me to do so on her behalf. The Queen revered genius; greatness in birth and station she regarded as but an accident. To the genius which makes its own position by commanding the love and admiration of the world she bowed with genuine humility. How well this was shown in her visit to Abbotsford! "In the study," she writes, "we saw Sir Walter's Journal, in which Mr Hope Scott asked me to write my name, *which I felt it would be presumption to do.*" Surely a beautiful appreciation of genius, as distinguished from the accident of position.

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The *Leaves* book was inscribed by the Queen's own hand, and this was the acknowledgment which reached me from Mr Tennyson:—

"FARRINGFORD, FRESHWATER, 21st January 1868.

"DEAR MR MARTIN,—We are very sorry to hear of your accident, and fear, from what you say, that it may have caused you much pain. We are sure that with the Queen, if anywhere, you will have been made to forget it.

"I need not say that I am very much honoured by Her Majesty's gift—you know that; and I know that I may trust to you to make my thanks acceptable for a book not only of so much interest in its own day, but trebly valuable to the historian of that future when we shall all of us have gone to join Tullus and Ancus.

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"Will you remember us most kindly to Mrs Martin? and with a hope that you will soon be well, I am, yours very sincerely,

"A. TENNYSON."

I must have written to the Queen in warm terms of satisfaction at the burst of enthusiastic and affectionate loyalty with which her little volume was hailed, knowing, as I did, how this feeling contrasted with much of a very different tenor to which Her Majesty's close retirement after the Prince's death had given rise, and which had caused her extreme pain, for on the 16th of January the following note was sent to my room:—

"The Queen was moved to tears on reading Mr Martin's beautiful and too kind letter. Indeed it is not possible for her to say *how* touched she is by the kindness of *every one*. People are far too kind. What has she done to be so loved and liked? She did suffer acutely last year, she will not deny, and it made her ill; but the sore feeling has vanished entirely, and the very thought of it has lost its sting.... Mr Martin must keep very quiet to-night, and be very good, and *do* what Mrs Martin and the doctor tell him."

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Three days later the Queen wrote to me again on the same subject. Her Majesty had the special virtue of dating all her letters and notes, however slight—a grace her subjects too little cultivate.

"OSBORNE, Jan. 19, 1868.

"The Queen would have liked to go to Mr Martin, but ever since she came in, at a quarter past five, she has done nothing but read the reviews in the newspapers. She is very much moved—deeply so—but not uplifted or 'puffed up' by so much kindness, so much praise. She sends one [review] that is very gratifying, which Mr Martin has *probably* not seen. Pray, let the Queen have it back after dinner.

"Two things there are in some of the reviews which the Queen wishes Mr Martin could find means to get rectified and explained: 1. That the Queen wrote *The Early Years*.<sup>[3]</sup> Pray, have that contradicted. 2. That it is the Queen's *sorrow* that keeps her secluded to a certain extent. Now, it is her *overwhelming work* and her health, which is greatly shaken by her sorrow, and the totally overwhelming amount of work and responsibility—work which she feels really wears her out. Alice Helps was wonder-struck at the Queen's room; and if Mrs Martin will look at it, she can tell Mr Martin what surrounds her. From the hour she gets out of bed till she gets into it again there is work, work, work—letter-boxes, questions, &c., which are dreadfully exhausting—and if she had not comparative rest and quiet in the evening, she would most likely *not be alive*. Her brain is constantly overtaxed. Could this truth not be openly put before people? So much has been told them, they should know this very important fact, for *some day* she may *quite* break down."

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It was not till a subsequent visit that I had an opportunity of seeing, in Her Majesty's working-room, the huge piles of despatch-boxes arriving daily from every department of the Government, by which she was surrounded. But Mrs Martin saw them during this visit, and this is what she wrote of them to a friend: "Her Majesty took me into her own room one morning to show me the piles of despatch-boxes, all of them full of work for her, and all requiring immediate attention; and this goes on from day to day. It is the Queen's great aim to follow the Prince's plan, which was to *sign nothing* until he had read and made notes upon what he signed. You may imagine how such conscientiousness swallows up the Royal leisure."

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We were still at Osborne when a gloom was cast over the Palace by the sudden and very alarming illness of Prince Leopold. Only the day before he had been in our room full of life and spirit, and when we were told of his illness we were also told that the very worst was feared. The prevailing grief showed in a very touching way how much he was beloved. The Queen was deeply moved; but she bore up with the courage and hopefulness which was a part of her character, and which, it is well known, upon occasion put courage and hope into the hearts of her Ministers, when these were wanted, at times of crisis in either home or foreign affairs. She had seen crises as bad, or worse, and remembered their details, and she could remind them how these had been successfully grappled with and got over. Just so, she had previously seen Prince Leopold in danger quite as great, and he had recovered. While, then, those around him were almost in despair, she never lost heart and hope. The first tidings of a decided change for the better came to us in a little note from the Queen sent to my room on the evening of the 31st of January, saying, "Our dear child is going on very satisfactorily, thank God!"

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When we left Osborne three days afterwards, the Prince was out of danger, and we started for London with a lighter heart than we should otherwise have done. We had been permitted to share in the anxiety of the Royal family, and their joy at its removal was a joy to us also.

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The Queen pressed us hard to delay our journey, but the quiet of home was absolutely necessary for my complete recovery. We had made our formal adieus to Her Majesty the previous evening. She had not returned from her morning drive when we left Osborne. But the following letter overtook us by special messenger at Southampton:—

"Feb. 3, 1868.

"The Queen was much vexed to find, on coming home, that Mr and Mrs Martin had already left, as she was anxious to wish them good-bye, and give Mrs Martin the accompanying souvenir of her stay here.<sup>[4]</sup> The Queen thought they would hardly venture across to-day with this high wind

and in the public boat. She trusts, however, the journey will be performed with comparatively little suffering, and that Mr Martin will not be the worse. Prince Leopold is going on as well as possible."

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On reaching London we wrote to the Queen, and our letters brought the following reply:—

"The Queen thanks Mr and Mrs Martin both very much for their kind letters. She rejoices so much to hear of Mr Martin not having suffered, and hopes he and Mrs Martin may frequently revisit Osborne under more pleasant circumstances."

The circumstances of our long visit to Osborne on this occasion might have been in a sense more "pleasant," had they not been dashed, as they were, by the brief but alarming illness of Prince Leopold, and by the very painful accident to myself. But more auspicious they could not have been for my purpose as biographer of the Prince Consort, or my relations to Her Majesty and the Royal Family. Their kind natures were drawn to me by sympathy, as, but for my accident, they might not have been, and one and all vied in making both my wife and myself feel thoroughly at home. With regard to the Queen herself, frequent personal interviews did what no amount of correspondence could have done. They served to confirm the confidence with which I had been previously regarded, a confidence essential to the successful execution of my task. Insincerity, selfishness, obsequiousness could not live before her, and when her trust was given, her own sincere, sensitive, womanly nature was stirred, and it revealed itself with a frankness, a considerateness, and a courtesy that were irresistibly fascinating, and raised loyalty to chivalrous devotion.

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## CHAPTER II.

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THE letters above quoted show how deeply the Queen felt hurt by the severe remarks of many of the journals as to her seclusion and disappearance from the ceremonials of public life for some years after the death of the Prince Consort. Her Majesty must also have been aware that comments to the same effect were current in general society, where the accustomed gaieties of the Court remained at a standstill. Indeed one sometimes hears them still urged in reproach to her otherwise faultless life as a Sovereign, as though her duty to the State had been sacrificed to a morbid indulgence in the sorrows of her personal bereavement. At one time there might have been some excuse for such an impression, but there is none now. People did not then know, as they know now, how heavy a weight of labour and anxiety had been thrown upon the Queen by the death of the Prince. During his life her labours as Sovereign had been lightened by the constant presence at her side of a counsellor to whom the welfare of the Empire was as dear as to herself, whose life was merged in hers, on whose strong brain and constant devotion she had, for over twenty years, been accustomed to lean for support and guidance. While he lived, the cares of Royalty pressed comparatively lightly upon the Queen. But when he died the full burden of them fell upon her; and from that moment she became the most lonely of women—for who is so lonely as the survivor of two beings whose mutual devotion has been so all-sufficing that they have never looked elsewhere for mental companionship or support? How much more so if the survivor be a woman!

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With no one to whom she could turn for the same sympathy and guidance, the Queen had henceforth to look solely to her own resources for fulfilling the duties and responsibilities of the great position which, with the Prince's assistance, she had built up for herself before the world. Together it had been their rule to keep themselves advised from day to day of every detail of public affairs by the officials of every department, and to make themselves a living chronicle of everything that passed in the administration of the Empire. This tradition the Queen had now to carry on by herself. But for her great powers of work, her quick perception, and a memory of singular tenacity, this would have been impossible; and it requires no effort of imagination to understand how great to her must have been the resulting exhaustion of both body and mind, and how natural the occasional fear, to use her own words, that some day "she might quite break down." She was not singular in this fear, for it was shared by those who knew her best, and especially by her uncle, the King of the Belgians—and no one knew her better than he, both in her strength and in her weakness. When spoken to about her seclusion and the prevailing desire that she could come more into public life, his advice was to leave her alone. "Pauvre Victoire," M. Van de Weyer told me were his words, "ne la tourmentez pas!"

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The outside world, of course, did not then know how great was the additional burden that had been thrown upon Her Majesty. Only the Queen herself could enlighten her subjects upon this point, unless some of Her Majesty's Ministers had taken occasion to do so, which they might well have done, but none of them did. This I had to explain to the Queen when she asked me, by her note, above cited, of the 19th of January 1868, and again personally at Osborne, to take means to let the public know the truth. At the same time, I ventured to offer my opinion, that it was neither necessary nor desirable to make any public declaration on the subject. Whatever might be said by some, her people, I was sure, had entire trust in her doing what was best, and that she would appear in public whenever the necessity for doing so arose. My views prevailed, and the enthusiastic reception given within the next few days to the *Leaves from a Journal*, and the warm

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expressions of loyal devotion stimulated by the insight there given into the Queen's character, came, happily, to confirm my opinion. It was still further confirmed by the reception given to the Queen on her visiting the City to open the new Blackfriars Bridge and the Holborn Bridge and Viaduct on the 6th of November 1869, of which she wrote to me (11th November): "Nothing could be more successful than the progress and ceremony of Saturday. The greatest enthusiasm prevailed, and the reception by countless thousands of all classes, especially in the City, was most loyal and gratifying—not a word, not a cry, that could offend any one." The subject of a public statement was not again mooted. Her Majesty was content to wait until the story I should have to tell in the Prince's Life should fully open the eyes of her people to the truth.

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Complaints ceased for a time, but during the year 1870 they were renewed in some of the leading journals, and again the Queen felt deeply wounded—how deeply will presently appear. In the autumn of 1871 she had a serious illness, which occasioned general alarm, and the journals teemed with expressions of the devotion and the sympathetic interest which lay at the heart of all Her Majesty's subjects. To this change is due the following letter:—

"BALMORAL, *Sept.* 17, 1871.

"Long, long has the Queen wished to write to Mr Martin, but her *very severe* illness has prevented her from doing so. She is now, however, going on so satisfactorily, *though very slowly*, that she is glad to be able to thank him for his kind inquiries and letters.

"The Queen cannot help referring to the articles in Thursday's *Times*, and in Friday's *Daily News*, which are very gratifying, as these go the length of expressing *remorse* at the heartless, cruel way in which they had attacked the Queen. Mr Martin wrote rightly, that the words were not spoken which were needed to make the public understand that the Queen could not do more than human strength could bear.<sup>[5]</sup> Mr Martin will recollect the Queen's distress for some years past, and how little she was *believed*. The unjust attacks this year, the great worry and anxiety and hard work for ten years, alone, unaided, with increasing age and never very strong health, broke the Queen down, and almost drove her to despair. The result has been the very, very serious illness—the severest, except one (a typhoid fever in 1835), she ever had—and more suffering than she has ever endured in her life. Now that people are frightened and kind, the Queen will be kindly treated in future; but it is very hard that it was necessary she should have the severe illness and great suffering, which has left her very weak, to make people feel for and understand her.... The sympathy in dear Scotland has been great, and their press was the first to raise their voice in defence of a cruelly misunderstood woman. She will never forget this."

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After this time Her Majesty had no reason, so far as I know, to complain that she was "cruelly misunderstood" by any section of her people. They learned to understand and to sympathise with her, for they saw day by day how close a watch she kept upon all public affairs, how full her thoughts were of them and their wellbeing, and how tender were her sympathies with all of them who were "in danger, necessity, or tribulation."

No one could be much in communication with the Queen without being struck by her power of saying concisely what she had to say in the plainest and clearest language. The swiftness of her thought was apparent in her beautiful, firm, rapid writing. Its clearness was equally shown in her happy choice of the simplest words. She had so much ground to get over daily that she had no time to waste in elaborate expression. For her the one thing important was, that no room should be left for any misapprehension of her meaning—in short, that she should make what was plain to her own mind as plain to the minds of others as it was to herself. If a simple, everyday word or phrase would serve her purpose, she preferred it to anything more ornate. In the course of editing the *Leaves from a Journal*, Mr Helps had many struggles with Her Majesty about what he thought her too homely style, which she defended, because she could not bear it to be thought that what she wrote was written "for style and effect." "It was," she wrote to me (20th October 1868), "the simplicity of the style, and the absence of all appearance of writing for effect, which had given her book such immense and undeserved success. Besides, how could Mr Helps expect pains to be taken when she wrote late at night, suffering from headache and exhaustion, and in dreadful haste, and not for publication?"

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This artless skill in rendering a fresh, unstudied transcript of her impressions—a power eagerly sought for, but very often unattained by men of letters—undoubtedly gave to these jottings in Her Majesty's Journal their special charm. But its value was apparent in all she wrote. The habit of getting as near in words as possible to what was in her own mind gave great vividness and graphic force upon occasion to her style, especially where matters of importance had to be dealt with. When an authoritative Life of Her Majesty is written, proofs of this will be abundant. But, to speak only of what is already before the world, what could be more happy or to the purpose than the Addresses and Messages which she issued upon occasion to her people, and which in point merely of style, apart from the governing thought and feeling, were always masterly? The same characteristic was conspicuous in her conversation. Her words were few and well chosen. You were never puzzled to know what she meant, and she expected you, in what you said, to be equally concise and clear—exact in the expression of opinion, and rigidly accurate as to fact. Her aim always was to get at the truth. Herself the most truthful of women, she resented any shortcoming in truthfulness in others. "Oh!" she once said to me, "nobody can tell of what value it is to me to hear the truth."

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The Queen's intolerance of affectation, verbosity, or obscurity of language affected her judgment not only of men, but also of much of the contemporary literature which found favour with others. She loved and appreciated, and indeed delighted in poetry, but it must be poetry as the vehicle of genuine feeling or wholesome and instructive thought, clothed in the musical language which ingratiate it to the memory, without the inversions or obscurity of phrase or the exaggerations of metaphor or sentiment, which are so often mistaken for originality and strength. In my experience, Her Majesty was not prone to offer critical opinions upon books, but when she did so, her judgments were to the point. Thus, in speaking to me about George Eliot's *Middlemarch*, she remarked, after saying much about the subtle delineation of the various characters, "After all, fine as it is, it is a disappointing book; all the people are failures"—meaning not in the way they were drawn, but in the issues of their lives, as in truth they are.

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The Queen knew, I should say, quite as much of literature, music, and the arts as most of the people who think themselves entitled to speak with authority upon all these topics; but she knew the limitations of her own knowledge, and was much too sincere and too modest to affect authority to dilate upon them. This she left to those who had made them their special study, and was

"Contented if she might enjoy  
The things which others understand,"

or think they understand. She had no leisure for abstruse studies. She had one great book always before her, which commanded and absorbed her supreme attention—the book of human life, of human good and ill within her kingdom, and of all that was going on in Europe and throughout her vast dominions. The study of that book left little leisure for great attainments in literature, science, or the arts.

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To music she had been devoted from her youth. She had grown up in the love of the chief Italian composers, ancient and modern, of Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Meyerbeer, and Verdi in the modern school—in short, all the great masters of melody who wrote from and to the heart. It was not, then, surprising that she cared comparatively little for the writers of the latest school, Wagner, Brahms, Grieg, and others, who write much less from the heart than from the head, building up elaborately scientific tonic structures, the symmetry of which it is difficult to trace, and weaving complicated harmonies that tax and exhaust the attention, and savour more of the science than of the soul of music. However indifferent the Queen might be to productions of this class, she was keenly alive to every piece of pure melodic and harmonious inspiration.

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Of Her Majesty's executive power as an artist I cannot speak, as what I know of her work is confined to a few slight sketches, and the etchings which she made, when Prince Albert and herself were for a time fascinated by that attractive but difficult process. Of these I owe to the Queen's kindness a complete series.<sup>[6]</sup> Of them it is enough to say that the drawing is not remarkable, and that, as etchings, the difficulties of the art have not been overcome. But I had frequent occasion to observe that Her Majesty's studies had resulted in a power of judging good artistic work beyond that of even the tolerably accomplished amateur. She was in the constant habit of having engravings made of the portraits of her family and friends, for private circulation, and for several years I acted, by her desire, as the medium of communication between her and the brothers Francis and William Holl, the eminent engravers, by whom the work was done. The engravers' proofs of these, always carefully scrutinised by the Queen, were never returned to me without some pertinent comment, sometimes illustrated by a drawing by the Queen upon the margin. "None but an artist could have made that suggestion" was a not uncommon remark of the engraver. It showed him how to correct something which he himself had not seen the way to amend.

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With so much to do and think of, Her Majesty was entitled to expect from her Ministers that all important matters submitted for her consideration should be explained in language at once lucid and concise. This, no doubt, was generally done. But a very remarkable instance to the contrary came under my notice while I was lying ill at Osborne. The Irish Church Disestablishment question, which in 1867 had been much agitated, took the shape, in January 1868, of a bill, the printed draft of which, together with a letter explanatory of the measure, was sent by Mr Gladstone to the Queen. Her Private Secretary, General Grey, must have been absent from Osborne at the time, otherwise the Queen would have turned to him for aid in clearing up any difficulty she found in mastering these documents. I was therefore surprised to receive a note from Her Majesty, sending them to me, requesting me to read and return them with a *précis* of their contents, as she had read and re-read Mr Gladstone's very long letter, and found herself more and more lost in the clouds of his explanations the more she toiled through them. My opinion of the measure, of course, was not asked for—it never was upon any subject where her Ministers were properly her advisers—and Her Majesty knew she could rely on my secrecy in regard to its terms as implicitly as if I had been sworn of her Privy Council. My task was simply to analyse and state as clearly as I could the scope of the measure as I might gather it from the documents sent. That the Queen should have been lost in the fog of the long and far from lucid sentences of her Minister, running, as they did, through upwards of a dozen closely written quarto pages, seemed only natural. I therefore turned from them to the draft bill, and long professional experience in the study of similar documents made it easy for me to furnish Her Majesty with the information desired, for which I presently received a gracious acknowledgment, with the happy assurance that she now saw her way clearly to deal with the measure proposed.

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This incident, long forgotten, was recalled to my mind on reading the statement made with an air

of assured knowledge,<sup>[7]</sup> that the Queen's "prejudice" against Mr Gladstone began from her "suspecting him of trying to overwork her." I have the best reason to know the groundlessness of this imputation. The Queen's distrust of Mr Gladstone—not her "prejudice" against him—was of a much earlier date than his first Premiership. It was deeply seated, and for reasons that grew more and more serious as the years rolled on. But this is a matter with which the future chronicler of the Queen's Life may be left to deal. Instead of complaining that she was overtaken by Mr Gladstone, Her Majesty's complaint more probably was, that she was not kept fully and timeously informed by him of important matters to which she conceived her attention should have been called. However this may be, the Queen was too fair-minded to allow "prejudice" to warp her judgment as to any of her Ministers; but her intuitively searching glance, her unflinching memory and long experience, would instinctively lead her to make of their characters a penetrating and conscientiously careful study.

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It seems like egotism to quote the following letter, but it shows better than anything I could write the position in relation to Her Majesty which, I scarcely know how, I had very early come to occupy.

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"BALMORAL, 5th June 1869.

"The Queen has received Mr Martin's *most* kind letter of the 3rd.... She really is at a loss to say how much she feels his constant and invariable kindness to her, and how deeply grateful she is for it. In the Queen's position, though it might sound strange, as she has so many to serve her, she feels the assistance rendered her by others in private matters, in which her official servants, from one cause or another, seem to feel little interest and to be very helpless, is of immense value; and she considers it *most fortunate*, to say the least, to have found so kind a friend as Mr Martin. The Queen likewise feels that in him she has found an impartial friend, who can tell her many important things which her own unbiassed servants cannot hear or tell her. This the Queen mentioned to Mr Martin the other day when she saw him at Windsor, when she alluded to the loss of Baron Stockmar."

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It puzzled me to think what the many little, by me "unremembered acts of kindness," could be which prompted such a recognition. It was always not merely an honour but a delight to be serviceable in any way to a lady so courteous, so unexact, so full herself of thoughtful kindness. Being in no way under the restraint which inevitably keeps official servants in a great measure aloof from a sovereign mistress, I could speak on all unofficial subjects on which my opinion was invited with a frank unreserve that was impossible to them. I had nothing to fear, nothing to gain, nothing to conceal. More deeply attached, more truly loyal to their Royal mistress it was impossible to be than were the able and accomplished officials by whom she was surrounded, and to whom her wishes were a law which it was their pride to obey. Still, she was their Royal mistress, and could not have the same feeling of unreserve with them as with one like myself, who was wholly independent. In my observation of Court life, I was often reminded of the words of the Queen in Browning's *In a Balcony*, isolated as she was, although surrounded by a loyal Court, and shut away from that frank communion with others, without which life must drag so heavily along:—

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"Oh, to live with a thousand beating hearts  
Around you, swift eyes, serviceable hands,  
Professing they've no care but for your care,  
Thought but to help you, love but for yourself,—  
And you the marble statue all the time  
They praise and point at!"

And yet, no marble statue, but human to the core, and craving for the homely sympathies of simple, healthy, human life. Such was our Queen.

Early in my attendances upon Her Majesty, the name of Baron Stockmar was frequently on her lips, and it was always coupled with expressions of the deepest respect and affection. How well these were justified I soon learned from his letters and memoranda, addressed to the Queen and Prince, which were placed in my hands. It was obvious that they would be of the greatest value for my Life of the Prince, and I told Her Majesty that I intended to make copious use of them there. On this she wrote to me:—

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"BALMORAL, Sept. 30, 1869.

"The Queen rejoices to think that the great character of her dear old Baron will be known now as it ought to be. Indeed, the greatest worth is often not known.<sup>[8]</sup> No one feels this so strongly as the Queen has done and does. What worth, what talent, what real greatness exist, unknown and unimagined, though not by the Great Judge of all men!"

I had made my selection of Stockmar's letters and memoranda for my purpose, when a volume by his son, the Baron Ernest von Stockmar, was published in the autumn of 1872, of *Memorabilia*

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from his father's papers, which threw not a little additional light upon the life and character of this remarkable man.<sup>[9]</sup> As he was to form a prominent figure in my book, and, though little known to the general public, had been frequently misrepresented as a dangerous influence at the Queen's Court, I made his son's book the text for a careful monograph of the Baron for the *Quarterly Review*.<sup>[10]</sup> I was the more impelled to do so, as the Queen, the Princess Royal (Empress Frederic), and others of the Baron's friends thought the book had failed to do justice to the lovable and more attractive features of the Baron's character. His wisdom and great political sagacity spoke for themselves in the extracts from the published documents, but the finer qualities were not brought out which endeared him to his friends. His son had not, perhaps, had so many opportunities as his English friends for judging the Baron, for a large part of Stockmar's life had been spent away from his home in Coburg, first in attendance on Prince Leopold (King of the Belgians), and afterwards in long visits at the English Court. This might well have been, seeing that "Stockmar," as M. Van de Weyer, who had known him long and intimately, wrote to me, "concealed the tenderness of his heart, his loving nature, his sweet temper, his devotion to his friends, under a stoical appearance which deceived none of those who knew him well; and to know him was to love him." His son had, somehow, failed to appreciate this side of his character, and his book, therefore, left an impression of hardness and austerity which did injustice to his father, and which it was my endeavour to remove.

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That his influence upon the Queen and Prince was all for good, they were the first and always most eager to acknowledge. No one knew England and its people—what they would bear and what they would not bear in their sovereigns—better than he. Sir Robert Peel, Lords Aberdeen, Derby, Clarendon, John Russell, and Palmerston all deferred to his judgment as that of the wisest and most far-seeing politician of the day. Having very fully expressed my opinion of him from this point of view elsewhere, it only concerns me to say here, that the Queen considered that she owed much of the success of her reign to the sound constitutional principles which he had impressed upon her, and to the warnings, almost prophetic, as to how the changes of circumstance and of opinion were to be dealt with, which his statesmanlike sagacity foresaw were likely to arise in the epoch of transition into which England and Europe were, in his view, rapidly advancing.

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Stockmar, who had watched the Queen from childhood, wrote of her in 1847: "The Queen improves greatly. She makes daily advances in discernment and experience; the candour, the love of truth, the fairness, the considerateness with which she judges men and things are truly delightful, and the ingenuous self-knowledge with which she speaks about herself is amiable to a degree." Of that rare quality of ingenuousness I saw many illustrations. Thus, for example, how few would be ready to make so frank a confession as to any portion of their past lives as this, in a letter to me (February 18, 1869), which Her Majesty gave as a reason why she could not send, for the purpose of the Prince's biography, her letters during the first years after her accession:—

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"OSBORNE, *Feb. 18, 1869.*

"The Queen's own letters between 1837 and 1840 are not pleasing, and are, indeed, rather painful to herself. It was the least sensible and satisfactory time in her whole life, and she must therefore destroy a great many. That life of constant amusement, flattery, excitement, and mere politics had a bad effect (as it must have upon any one) on her naturally simple and serious nature. But all changed in 1840 [with her marriage]."

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The Queen's candour and love of truth, too, made her impatient at being praised where praise was not due, especially where praise should have been given to the Prince Consort. Thus she writes to Lord John Russell (November 18, 1860), on reading in a Cape journal a speech of Sir George Grey's extolling the nature of the education given to her eldest sons: "She feels, she must say, *pained* at such constant praise of *her* education of our sons, when it is *all* due to the Prince, and when his untiring and indefatigable exertions for our children's good is the chief, indeed sole, cause of the success which till now has attended our efforts.... The praise so constantly given to the Queen, and the popularity she enjoys, she knows and feels are due, in a great measure, to the guidance and assistance of the Prince, to be whose wife she considers so great a privilege, and she feels it almost wrong when praise is given to *her* for what she knows *he* deserves."

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Every inch a Queen as she was, and careful that the Royal authority which she inherited should suffer no detriment in her hands, there ran through Her Majesty's nature a vein of modest humility as to her own knowledge and powers in things of common life, a seeking for guidance and help, which was infinitely touching. She made no secret to herself of her own faults and shortcomings. One does not expect queens to make acknowledgments of these, but even these were made upon occasion. Thus in her anxiety to throw light for me upon the Prince's character, she sent me a copy of a letter (July 13, 1848) in which he rebuked her, tenderly but firmly, for writing to him when he had gone from home on a public occasion, in what she calls "a very discreditable fit of pettishness, which she was humiliated to have to own," to the effect that he could do without her, and did not take her miniature with him. In her letter to me she says, that she would not have written as she did had she not been spoiled by his never really leaving her. The Prince's reply is too sacred to quote in full; but what wife's heart would not leap with joy to read the concluding words? "Dein liebes Bild trage Ich in mir; und die Miniaturen bleiben stets weit

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hinter diesen zurück; eine solche auf meinem Tisch zu stellen um mich *Deiner* zu *erinnern* bedarf es nicht."<sup>[11]</sup>

### CHAPTER III.

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THE dominant quality in the Queen's character, it seemed to me, was her strong common-sense. It enabled her to see things in their just proportion, to avoid extremes, as a rule, in her estimate of persons, of opinions, and events; to accept the inevitable without futile murmur or resistance. Very early this quality must have been developed, and it will account for that perfect self-possession on the announcement of her accession and at her first Privy Council, which created surprise and admiration in all who witnessed it. Those who read of it were often incredulous, and stories of her agitation on these occasions have found a place from time to time in newspapers and elsewhere. One of these, which appeared in a respectable journal so late as November 1886, drew from the Queen the following very suggestive remark in a letter to me: "The Queen was *not* overwhelmed on her accession—rather full of courage, she may say. *She took things as they came, as she knew they must be.*" It was so with her through life. She met trial, difficulty, or danger "with courage," and reconciled herself with a thoughtful constant spirit, and without passionate remonstrance, to what she "knew must be." What but this quality of mind, and her strong sense of the claims of duty upon her as Sovereign, could have enabled her within a few days after the loss, which for a long time took all sunshine out of her life, to resume her active duties as Queen, and to continue them unbrokenly through feeble health and the many domestic anxieties and bereavements which during her long life pressed frequently and heavily upon her? The Queen's historian will have much to tell in illustration of her breadth of view, her prompt decision, and undaunted spirit in times of political difficulty. At these times, the truly Royal spirit within her answered to the call. A judgment enlightened by a vast experience, and unwarped by prejudice, then came into play. Her sole thought was for the good of her people, and to see that neither this, nor the position of her Empire before the world, should be in anywise impaired. To this end she brought into play the well-balanced judgment, which begets and is alone entitled to the name of common-sense.

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The same quality was equally conspicuous in her judgment of the affairs of ordinary life. Of this I might have been able to give many examples, had I not made it my rule never to make a memorandum of any remarks on men and things that fell from Her Majesty at any of my interviews with her. In her letters to me, acute and characteristic remarks like the following frequently occurred: "The wisest and best people are sadly weak and foolish about Great Marriages. The Queen cannot comprehend it." With her experience of the private history of the many homes of both the noble and the rich, who so able as she to judge how little of the true happiness of life results from the gratification of such an ambition? "Her sagacity in reading people and their ruling motives and weaknesses" was remarkable. This was noted by Archbishop Benson, and it often broke into remarks touched more with kindness and humour than with sarcasm. The Archbishop also remarks, truly, that the Queen "was shrewder and fuller of knowledge than most men." "She had not much patience with their follies and the pettiness of their desires." One recognises as very characteristic a remark of hers which the Archbishop quotes: "I cannot understand the world—cannot comprehend the frivolities and littlenesses. It seems to me as if they were all a little mad."<sup>[12]</sup>

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Here, too, may be noted the gentleness of her judgments, even in cases where not to condemn would have been impossible. One was often reminded that the axiom, *Tout comprendre c'est tout pardonner*, was habitually present to her mind. If a kind construction could be put upon an action rather than a severe one, she was prompt to seize it. But at the same time her condemnation of falsehood, cant, party intrigue, egotistical ambition, or proved unworthiness was swift and stern.

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The time had been when Mr Disraeli's attacks on her friend Sir Robert Peel had prepossessed her greatly against him. In one of my letters on the subject of the Prince's *Life*, I must have had occasion to refer to these attacks. This was her reply (7th of June 1870):—

"The Queen quite agrees with what Mr Martin says about Mr Disraeli's conduct to Sir R. Peel. It was and is a great blot, and it is to her the more extraordinary, as he seems a very kindhearted and courteous man. But he was at that time very young, bitterly disappointed, not thought much of, and probably urged on by others."

As the years went on Mr Disraeli won for himself a very high place in Her Majesty's regard. In him she recognised the patriotic statesman, free from all mean ambition, superior to the prejudices of party, looking with keen sagacity beyond "the ignorant present," his every thought directed to the weal, the safety, the expansion of the Empire. She also found in him a man of generous instincts, on whom she could depend for consideration and sympathy. Among the other qualities for which she admired him were the constancy of his devotion to Lady Beaconsfield, and the honour which he paid to her memory upon her death. "How touching," she writes to me (December 26, 1872), "is the account of Lady Beaconsfield's funeral! *He* is a *very fine* example to set before us in these days of *want* of affection and devotion, and of belief in what is true, unselfish, and chivalrous."

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When in 1870 the land was deafened by the outcry about "Woman's Rights," which has not yet wholly subsided, the Queen writes to me (29th May):—

"The Queen is most anxious to enlist every one who can speak or write to join in checking this mad, wicked folly of 'Woman's Rights,' with all its attendant horrors, on which her poor feeble sex is bent, forgetting every sense of womanly feeling and propriety. Lady — ought to get a *good whipping*."

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"It is a subject which makes the Queen so furious that she cannot contain herself. God created men and women different—then let them remain each in their own position. Tennyson has some beautiful lines on the difference of men and women in *The Princess*.<sup>[13]</sup> Woman would become the most hateful, heartless, and disgusting of human beings were she allowed to unsex herself; and where would be the protection which man was intended to give the weaker sex? The Queen is sure that Mrs Martin agrees with her."

In regard to the prevailing extravagance and want of individuality in dress, also, the Queen held strong opinions. Thus she writes to me (January 14, 1875):—

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"The Prince had the greatest possible dislike for extravagance in dress, and, above all, for always *following* in fashion. He liked people to be *well* and elegantly and neatly dressed, but abhorred in men as well as in women anything loud, or fast, or startling. He would not have allowed me or any of our daughters to appear in any dress or coiffure or bonnet not becoming or proper, and he would have made us take it off. I never bought a dress or bonnet without consulting him, and his taste was always good. I remember so well, when my French coiffeur came from Paris every year, and brought over things which were tried on, the Prince has come in and said, '*Das trägst Du nicht!*' [That you shall not wear!] The Queen and Princesses, he said, ought never to *follow* foolish and ugly fashions, only because they were new. This was entirely out of place."

"What would he say now, when every one dresses so overmuch, and thinks so much more about dress than they ever did before! He thought, and I think the same, that people ought to adopt what is really becoming, but not because it is the fashion, and especially what does not suit their face and figure."

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Wise words, no doubt; but how few are they, in all ranks of life, who have the courage to be in what Falstaff calls "the rereward of the fashion," however fantastic the fashion may be, and out of harmony with their face and figure?

The Queen's passionate love for Scotland, with which her little books have made the world familiar, her delight in the prospect of going to Balmoral, her dejection at the thought of leaving it, constantly broke out in her letters to me. Thus (28th June 1867) she writes from Balmoral:—

"The Queen hopes Mr Martin will find a good place in the *Life* for the Prince's love and admiration for our beloved Scotland. Mr Martin remembers his memorable words spoken not three weeks before his fatal illness: 'England does not know what she owes to Scotland.' Beloved country! The Queen's whole heart yearns to it more and more, and the 14th will be a sad day when she leaves it again."

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Notwithstanding my love for my own native land, I found so much of graver matter to deal with in the Prince's life that I fear I did not gratify this phase of the Queen's feelings so fully as she desired. Greatly as the Prince enjoyed his Scottish holidays, Scotland was not to him what it was to the Queen, especially after his death. She was never so well in health as there, and with health came fresh vigour of mind and cheerfulness of spirits. She rejoiced, too, in the contrast of her comparatively simple and genial life there with the life of state and courtly convention which awaited her at Windsor, where, as she has told me, even the measured tread of the sentinels under her windows was irksome to her. The very splendour of Windsor Castle, that stateliest and most richly endowed of palaces, weighed upon a spirit that yearned for the freedom of life and movement, for which monarchs have ever yearned, but must, perforce, school themselves to forego. Her Majesty's feeling on this subject finds striking expression in the following passage of a letter to me from Windsor Castle (November 8, 1869):—

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"The departure from Scotland, that beloved and blessed land, 'the birthplace of valour, the country of worth,' is very painful, and the *Sehnsucht* [yearning] for it, and proportionate chagrin on returning to this gloomiest, saddest of places, very great.<sup>[14]</sup> It is not alone the pure air, the quiet and beautiful scenery, which makes it so delightful—it is the atmosphere of loving affection, and the hearty attachment of the people around Balmoral, which warms the heart, and does one good, and the absence of which, replaced by a cathedral church, with all its bells and clergy, a garrison town, and a very gossiping one, a Court with all its chilling formality, and the impossibility of going among the poor here, who are in villages of a very bad description, makes the change a dreadful one."

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While, for the reason I have stated, Scotland took no prominent place in my *Life* of the Prince, I made the Queen such amends as I might by my assistance in the preparation and passing through the press of the profusely illustrated edition of the *Leaves from a Journal*,<sup>[15]</sup> in the details of which Her Majesty took great interest. With her accustomed courtesy the Queen acknowledged a service which was a pleasure to me from the frequency with which it brought me into communication with her, by presentation of a fine copy of the book, inscribed (January 11, 1869) by her own hand, "To Theodore Martin, Esq., with the expression of sincere gratitude for the pains he has taken with this illustrated volume." And here I may say that I have not met in life

a nature more grateful than the Queen's for service done, however slight, or more courteous in the acknowledgment of it. This perfect courtesy showed itself in many ways. Thus, for example, if a letter remained without answer for a day or two, the reply was sure to open with an apology for the delay. If the delay extended to several days, then "the Queen is shocked" at her own tardiness, although it was due to the urgent demand of business of State, or to some other important claim on her attention. Again, when she has been sitting at work, surrounded by despatch-boxes, in the open air at Osborne, and I have come to make my adieu, taking off my hat as I approached, she would desire me to replace it; and when I deprecated doing so, "Put on your hat," she said with a peremptory playfulness—"put on your hat, or I will not speak to you! I know you suffer from neuralgia,"—though how she came to know it I could not imagine.

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The marriage of H.R.H. the Princess Louise, for whom my wife as well as myself had a warm regard, was sure, as the Queen knew, to be a matter of deep interest to us. No sooner was it arranged than Her Majesty wrote to inform us. The announcement was followed by another letter (12th March 1871), in which she wrote, in anticipation of the official invitation to the ceremony at St George's Chapel, Windsor, on the 21st: "The Queen is anxious that Mr Martin should know that he is specially invited to Princess Louise's marriage as *the Queen's personal friend*." The signal honour thus done me was continued at all the subsequent marriages of the Royal children.

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The period between the short Administration of Mr Disraeli in 1868 and his return to office in 1874 was one of great political agitation and unrest, both at home and abroad. Problems that had not hitherto got beyond academical discussion took a practical form under the impulse given to reform by Mr Gladstone on his accession to power. Bills, among others, were launched for the Abolition of the Irish Church, for Compulsory Education, for the Establishment of the Ballot, for the Abolition of University tests, and for Army Reform. These were all measures novel and of a wide-reaching scope, upon which public opinion was greatly divided, and on which the Queen, according to her method, had to form an independent judgment. The state of affairs abroad, also, demanded close attention. The plots and counterplots, not always favourable to England, which came to a climax in the outbreak of the Franco-German war, the attitude of America in regard to the Alabama Claims, and of Russia in denouncing the clauses of the Treaty of Paris which provided for the neutralisation of the Black Sea, all fell within the same period, and in the policy to be maintained in regard to them Her Majesty's Ministers looked for her advice and assistance.

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Early in 1870 an extra pressure of work was thrown upon the Queen by the death of General Grey, formerly secretary to Prince Albert, and afterwards her own Private Secretary, on whose vigorous judgment and political sagacity she had long been accustomed to rely. A passage in a letter to me (29th March), the day before he died, shows how deeply she felt his loss: "Alas! poor General Grey will hardly live through the day! This is very, very sad, for in many, many ways he was most valuable to the Queen, and a very devoted, zealous, and very able adviser and friend.... It is too dreadful to think of his poor wife and children, whom he quite doted on, and who are remarkably fine children. The poor dear Duchess of St Albans, too, who was confined in the same house, and very near the father she adored, was struck down. It is too, too sad!"

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The double tragedy was indeed sad, and these words express what was felt by all who knew General Grey and his beautiful daughter, and the great love by which they were united.

Apart from all considerations of personal feeling, the loss of a friend so long and intimately associated with the daily work of the Queen as Sovereign must have been serious indeed.<sup>[16]</sup> The strain upon her mind, great enough before, became inevitably greater, and it is not surprising that in the course of 1871 her health, as she says in the letter of 17th September of that year, above cited (p. 40), broke down. I saw much of her, in connection with my work, at this time, and on one occasion she said: "I wonder what my ladies think of my want of courtesy. Sometimes I drive out with them for a couple of hours, and all the time do not exchange a word with them. I am so taken up with thinking what answers to make to the despatches and letters of the day."

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The position of a sovereign in regard to foreign policy must often be rendered embarrassing by the ties of relationship or personal friendship. The Queen must have felt this on the outbreak of the Franco-German war. With Germany she had the closest family ties, and she saw with satisfaction that, with the progress of the war, German unity, which she knew had been the cherished dream of the Prince Consort, and which she herself felt would tend in the long-run to the peace of Europe, became a fact. On the other hand, she had formed a warm personal regard for Napoleon III., and also for his Empress, remembering how much they both loved our country, and how loyally he had, on several occasions, behaved to England when his support was of importance. While, therefore, maintaining politically an attitude of perfect neutrality, the Queen's kind heart gave to the fallen sovereigns a sympathetic welcome when they came to England. On the 3rd of December 1870 she wrote to me from Windsor Castle:—

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"The Queen has seen the poor Empress, who shows great dignity and great gentleness.... The Queen is pleased to say she was cheered at the station on arriving. There is a great and kind feeling here for those who are in misfortune and sorrow, especially among the working people, and that is not the case in many other countries."

Again, when the Emperor came to Windsor Castle in the following March, the Queen wrote (31st March):—

"The visit of the Emperor Napoleon—his *first* return to Windsor since his triumphal visit here in 1855—was very trying. He was very much moved, but he behaved beautifully and with all the peculiar charm of simple, unaffected graciousness which he possesses in a wonderful degree. He

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spoke readily of the present and the past...."

The Queen's interest in the Emperor did not diminish during the brief span of life which was left to him. On the 8th of January 1873 she writes: "We are all so grieved for the poor Emperor Napoleon, whose state, the Queen fears, is very critical. She is sure the country is full of sympathy." Again, on the 15th, she writes: "The Queen is much pleased with Mr Martin's observations on the poor Emperor Napoleon, whose sudden death she truly grieves at, and she is proud to see the sympathy and feeling shown by the nation.... Did Mr Martin go to the lying-in-state at Chiselhurst yesterday?"

This I was unable to do, and I expressed my regret to the Queen, and mentioned that I should go down for the funeral. This was Her Majesty's answer:—

"OSBORNE, 22nd January 1873. [Pg 83]

"The Queen sends Mr Martin the copies of two letters that will interest him.<sup>[17]</sup> The Empress Augusta's especially is very generous and kind. The Queen thanks Mr Martin for his last letters, and is very sorry he could not have the last look, which she so very deeply regrets not having had herself. As soon as she returns to Windsor, she will go to the poor Empress...."

I had written to the Queen a full account of the funeral. To this she refers: "The reception on Thursday must have been most affecting. The dear boy is said to behave so well. The Queen sends on the copy of a letter which gives a touching trait of him. The Dean of Westminster [Stanley] the other day said it would be such a good thing, if the poor Emperor's great charm of manner, great amiability and kindness, and wonderful power of attracting people—in short, *fascination*—which the Queen herself felt very strongly, could be generally known; but he did not exactly know *how*. The Queen said she thought it might be possible to do it in Mr Martin's *Life of the Prince*; for the visits to Boulogne of the Prince *alone* in 1854, of the Emperor and Empress to Windsor in 1855, and of ourselves to Paris in the same year are full of the greatest interest, and the Queen has a very full account of them in her Journal, which she thinks of having extracted, and she feels Mr Martin would be pleased to pay a tribute to one whose reverse of fortune and great misfortunes were borne with such dignity and patience, and without any bitterness towards others." [Pg 84]

The Queen placed in my hands a manuscript copy of her Journal of these visits. The attractive qualities of the Emperor were so fully illustrated by the copious extracts of which I made use in the Prince's *Life*, that it required no commentary or eulogium of mine to show them in relief. The complete Journal of these visits was printed for the Queen in 1881. It is a historical document, which will be of permanent interest. In sending me a copy on the 10th of October of that year, the Queen writes:— [Pg 85]

"The little account of the two French visits in 1855 has delighted those of the Queen's children and friends—only two of the latter, as yet—to whom she has given it. But she finds a great omission on her part, and that is, of *all* the names of all those who accompanied us to Paris. She here sends the list, and would ask how it could be added, and sends one of the copies for him to look at and see how it could best be done,—whether as a leaf at the end of the book, or as a note like the dinner-list at Windsor, and include the Emperor and Empress's suite who came with them to Windsor."

The reply was to send a printed slip with the list of the names to be inserted at the end of the volume. With the exception of Lady Ponsonby, then Miss Bulteel (Maid of Honour), not one of the numerous persons named in the list is now alive. She is, therefore, the sole survivor of the Queen's suite who was present on the occasion of the Queen's reception at the Opera House in Paris, of which the very graphic description is given in the *Quarterly Review* article of April last, already referred to.<sup>[18]</sup> It is a very welcome addition to the Queen's own very modest account of what must have been a remarkably brilliant and memorable scene, but of which the most she records is, that her "reception was very hearty," that *God save the Queen* was sung splendidly, and that "there could not have been more enthusiasm in England." [Pg 86]

In the midst of the public cares and perplexities of the time, the Queen had to face, at the end of 1871, a deeper anxiety than all other in the dangerous illness of the Prince of Wales. To place herself by his bedside, to cheer and to encourage, and never to surrender hope, however dread the symptoms, was characteristic of her strong, loving nature and brave spirit. Her conduct at that trying time drew her people nearer to her, and their sympathy bound her to them by a very tender tie. Through her kindness I was kept informed by telegram of the progress of the Prince through the extremes of danger to convalescence. Among the letters which the Queen wrote to me from Osborne after her return there with the Prince from Sandringham, the following passage occurs:— [Pg 87]

"OSBORNE, Feb. 13, 1872.

"Two new sad and shocking events have overclouded the joyful return of the dear Prince of Wales: the one which, contrasting as it did with the Queen's own case, made her feel it most



keenly—viz., the death of her dear niece<sup>[19]</sup> from scarlet fever, a terrible blow to her dear sister, who is so delicate herself; the other, the horrible assassination of poor Lord Mayo, a noble and most loyal subject, and most admirable Viceroy, which has shocked the Queen dreadfully! It is awful, and *how* could it happen? Some dreadful neglect, surely.

"The dear Prince of Wales, though quite himself, bears great traces of his fearful 'death-illness.' He seems like new-born, pleased at every tree and flower, ... and gazing on them with a sort of 'Wehmuth' which is quite touching...." [Pg 88]

Fortunately for the recovery of the Prince of Wales, the treatment of typhus was now better understood than it had been but a few years before. "Ah!" the Queen said to me soon after this time, "had *my* Prince had the same treatment as the Prince of Wales, he might not have died!"—one of those sad, vain imaginings of "what might have been," common to us all, but on which the Queen was too wise to allow her mind to dwell.

The Queen had long ceased to have reason to complain of want of appreciation on the part of the people. On the contrary, it was enthusiastically shown whenever she was seen in public, and most impressively when she went in January 1872 to the thanksgiving service in St Paul's for the recovery of the Prince of Wales. Her letters are full of expressions of satisfaction at these demonstrations of public feeling. Thus she writes, for example, to me on the 10th of April 1872: "There never was a greater success or a greater exhibition of spontaneous loyalty than the Queen's visit to the East End the other day;" and a few days later (23rd April) she calls my attention to a similar display "at two very pretty military events which took place at Parkhurst last Thursday, and here [Osborne] yesterday, on the occasion of giving new colours to the 79th Cameron Highlanders," and of her acceptance from them of the old colours. "Their former chaplain," she adds, with her usual love of detail, "who has been fourteen years with them, and in Lucknow, came on purpose to bless the colours, which he did extremely well and touchingly. It is a splendid regiment." [Pg 89]

The great change in the public mind, which resulted in the fall of Mr Gladstone's Ministry at the beginning of 1874, took the Queen somewhat by surprise. "The result of the elections," she writes to me (10th February 1874), "is astounding. What an important turn the elections have taken! It shows that the country is not *Radical*. What a triumph, too, Mr Disraeli has obtained, and what a good sign this large Conservative majority is of the state of the country, which really required (as formerly) a strong Conservative party!" [Pg 90]

Amid the turmoil of the elections which led to this important result a domestic incident took place—the Confirmation of the Princess Beatrice, which was communicated to me in the following letter (January 13, 1874):—

"The Queen cannot resist sending the lines which Mlle. Norèle wrote on her sweet Beatrice at her Confirmation. She did so look like a lily, so very young, so gentle and good. The Queen can only pray God that this flower of the flock, which she really is (for the Queen may truly say she has never given the Queen one moment's cause of displeasure), may never leave her, but be the prop, comfort, and companion of her widowed mother to old age! She is the Queen's Benjamin."

The prayer, we know, was granted. Mlle. Norèle's graceful lines form a worthy pendant to the charming picture presented in this letter. I give them with my own translation, as it pleased the Queen at the time:— [Pg 91]

"Seule, au pied de l'autel,  
Nous l'avons contemplée,  
Au bonheur immortel,  
Comme un ange, appelée.

"Alone, at the Altar's foot,  
Thus was she seen,  
Humbly adoring, mute,  
With looks serene.

De son front la candeur  
Imprimait le respect,  
Et toute sa blancheur  
Du lis avait l'aspect.

Awe touch'd us, and we felt  
How pure that sight,  
Fair lily! as she knelt,  
Robed all in white.

Son âme calme et pure  
Semblait en ce saint lieu  
Oublier la nature,  
Et monter vers son Dieu.

Within that holy spot,  
Her soul did seem  
To soar, all earth forgot,  
To the Supreme.

Seigneur, bénis sa foi,  
Garde-lui ton amour,  
Que sa vie sous ta loi  
Ressemble à ce beau jour!"

Bless, Lord, the vow she pays,  
Make her Thy care,  
So blest be all her days,  
Like this, and fair!"

In the spring of 1874 the Queen suffered a great loss in the death of her devoted and most trusted friend, M. Silvain van de Weyer.

On the 24th of April she writes:—

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"The Queen has felt much regret at poor Livingstone's fate, and we are now very anxious, alas! again about dear M. Van de Weyer.<sup>[20]</sup> She herself is very much overdone and overworked, and her nerves overstrained. Never did so many things come together as this winter and spring. On the 18th of May she hopes, *D.V.*, to get off to the North for a month, and then really to get rest."

Among the many deaths of relatives and friends which the Queen had to mourn within the last few years, no one was more deeply felt than that of her half-sister on 23rd September 1872. "Divided in age by eleven years, and separated by long and unavoidable absences, yet the affection of the Queen for the companion of her early childhood never failed, and the connection of the Princess as sister and aunt of the Royal Family of England was maintained with a fidelity which was never interrupted, either on the part of the Princess herself or of her illustrious relatives." A memorial volume of the Princess's Letters to the Queen was printed in 1874 by Her Majesty, of which I had the honour to receive an early copy. A more beautiful picture of sisterly devotion it would be hard to find than is presented in this volume. From the brief introduction, in which the hand of Dean Stanley may be recognised, I have taken the words above cited. The letters themselves give the impression of a highly refined, intellectual, and sympathetic nature, which must have made the Princess very dear to those who knew her. The opinion of the volume which I expressed in thanking Her Majesty for the gift was acknowledged in the following letter, the closing words of which are especially noteworthy:—

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"BALMORAL, Nov. 19, 1874.

"The Queen is greatly gratified by Mr Martin's opinion of the letters of her darling sister. *She* felt proud of them, but still she could not know what others might feel, but all who have seen them admire them much! No one who did not know her intimately *could* know what she was, for she was so modest and unobtrusive—not outwardly expansive, and she did not easily take to people whom she did not find sympathetic. But she was a remarkable, noble-minded, kind, good, and single-minded person, whose loss to the Queen, though we lived so much apart, is daily more keenly felt. The Prince had the greatest respect and admiration for her, and said she would have been worthy of a crown. But, oh! *how unenviable is that!*"

How the Princess loved and was beloved by the Queen may be seen from a passage, quoted at the end of the volume above referred to, in a letter found among the papers of the Princess, and marked to be given to the Queen after her death:—

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"I can never thank you enough for all you have done for me, for your great love and tender affection. These feelings cannot die; they must and will live on with my soul—till we meet again, never more to be separated,—and now you will not forget

"Your only own loving sister,

"FEODORA."

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## CHAPTER IV.

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It was the autumn of 1874, nearly seven years after I had undertaken to write the *Life* of the Prince Consort, before I found myself able to prepare the first volume for the press. Although I had from the first foreseen that the work would involve a greater amount of labour than was contemplated by the Queen, it soon became obvious that I had myself under-estimated it. As I advanced in my preparations the materials that came into my hands grew greater and greater, and I saw that, to give a true picture of the Prince, my book must be in effect a history of the Queen's reign from the time of his marriage till his death, while it would at the same time be a biography not of him only, but in a great measure of Her Majesty also. I had made considerable progress in the collection of my materials when I became aware of a body of information, valuable beyond all others, which had been accumulated by the Prince himself, and which had been shut away and seen by no one since his death. As if to assure himself that an authentic record of this period of the reign should not be wanting, every document, letter, despatch, private as well as public, which had passed under the eyes and hands of the Queen and himself in reference to affairs of State, to communications with foreign Courts, or to public events in which they had taken a part, had been classified and preserved in an immense mass of folio volumes, to which the Queen afforded me free access.

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These in a measure enabled me to live through the crowded years of the Prince's life. But the study of them, the bulk of the most important documents being in manuscript, and not a few of them in the cramped German *current Schrift*, was a severe strain upon both patience and eyesight. Months were spent in the perusal and selection of what might be used, especially as the contents of these volumes were often so confidential that they had to be read, transcribed, and

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translated solely by myself.

I had stipulated that I should not be expected to write of the Prince until I had followed his life to its close, and every step I made in my researches confirmed me in this resolution. It was a disappointment to the Queen that I could not show the fruits of my labour so early as she wished, naturally eager as she was that full justice should be done, and done quickly, to the Prince's memory. But when I was able to explain, in the numerous conferences which passed upon the subject, how elaborate were the preparations I was making, how important and voluminous the records to which I was trusting as the basis of what I had to write, Her Majesty became content to wait, and took a deep interest in the development of the narrative, which not infrequently recalled interesting incidents and discussions which had for a time, but for a time only, escaped her marvellous memory.

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Every chapter, as I wrote it, was submitted to the Queen, and most carefully read and noted by her. No slip in a date or name escaped her notice, and her fine tact never failed to call attention to any expression that could be modified with advantage. But from first to last I was left to the free development of narrative and the expression of my own opinions. The independence for which I had stipulated at the outset was most loyally respected; and I reflect with satisfaction on the fact, that at no point throughout the five volumes to which the *Life* extended did any conflict of opinion arise between Her Majesty and myself. An incident will serve to show how anxious the Queen herself was that my entire independence should be maintained. When I came in 1876 to write the story of the Crimean war I felt myself in a difficulty. The second son of Her Majesty had married the daughter of the reigning Czar in 1874. It was impossible to say what I had to say of Russia without giving expression to views that could not be otherwise than unacceptable at the Russian Court. How was I to act, as my work of necessity must have the sanction of the Queen? I therefore sought an interview with Her Majesty and explained my difficulty. What was her instant answer? "Do not let the fact of my son's marriage into the Russian family weigh with you for a moment! Whatever conclusions you come to upon the facts and documents before you, express them as if no such marriage existed!" Here, as always, truth I found was the paramount consideration with the Queen.

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It may be conceived how my responsibility was lightened and my labour cheered by the perfect freedom allowed to me as well as by the warm encouragement I received from the Queen, and her growing interest in the work as it advanced. Her heart was set upon the completion of an adequate and true memorial of the Prince, and, with all the information of every kind placed at my disposal, he became to me as if I had lived through the years with him.

Until they had seen the first volume of my book some of the Queen's children were rather adverse to the idea of any *Life* of the Prince being published so soon. They had a natural fear that it would not do justice to the father whose memory was so tenderly dear to them, and the incidents of whose life were in a measure sacred in their eyes. One of these was the Princess Alice, and in order to remove her impression the Queen wrote to her (24th June 1874) as follows, and sent me a copy of the letter:—

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"I do not think, that as so many memoirs of statesmen and people of the same time have been published, that it is too soon to publish a discreet *Life* of beloved Papa; indeed, much that has appeared without permission, or, I must think, reflection, in the dear old Baron's *Life*, rendered it necessary not to delay in putting things before the world, with all the sides to them, that did not appear in that *Life*. It will be of much use to posterity and to Princes to see what an unselfish, self-sacrificing, and in many ways hard and unenviable life beloved Papa's was."

After the first volume was published the doubts of the Princess Alice disappeared, and the Queen, with her habitual consideration, sent me a letter to read, which she received from the Princess, expressing her warm commendation of what I had done. The Princess wrote to me herself in the same strain, and from every member of the family I received the most warm congratulations on my work. This seemed to give great satisfaction to the Queen, for it was her desire that the biographical memorial should be as welcome to them as to herself.

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As each subsequent volume appeared, I received assurances from Her Majesty of her gratitude for the spirit in which I had carried out her wishes, and from all her children came the warmest acknowledgments of the success of my endeavour to do justice to their father's memory. When, in January 1880, I wrote to the Queen with the concluding chapter of the last volume of the *Life*, and mentioned, in doing so, with what emotion it was written, this was the answer I received:—

"OSBORNE, *January 27, 1880.*

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"The Queen thanks Mr Martin most warmly for his touching letter accompanying the *last* chapter of her beloved Husband's *Life*. She thanks him from her heart for the pains and trouble he has taken in the execution of this difficult and arduous undertaking, in which he has so admirably succeeded, and at the same time congratulates him on having completed it. She can well understand the tears that must have been shed in doing so, though Mr Martin did not know the dear Prince personally.

"In the meantime, before she can in a more public manner express her high sense of his services, the Queen asks Mr Martin to accept the accompanying bronze statuette reduced from Marochetti's monument in the Mausoleum.<sup>[21]</sup> The Queen would wish also to thank Mr Martin for

the kind and feeling manner in which he has performed his difficult task."

The Queen's kindness did not stop here. I was ill, overtaken with very heavy professional work, at the same time that I was writing the last chapters of my book. For months I had been engaged along with the late Mr Edmund Smith in negotiating, and successfully negotiating, for Lord Beaconsfield's Government, the purchase of the undertakings of all the London Water Companies, and preparing the Bill for vesting them in a public trust. The measure was defeated on Mr Gladstone's return to office in April 1880, and for this defeat it may safely be said the community of London has ever since had to suffer severely. Rest and change were essential for my recovery, and I at once determined to seek them in Venice and the north of Italy. Two days before I started I was commanded to dine with Her Majesty at Windsor, and on my arrival I was knighted and invested by her own hands with the Collar and Star of a Knight Commander of the Bath, the act being accompanied by words of commendation far more precious to me than any title of honour. The Queen had chosen for the ceremony the Prince Consort's working room, where all my conferences with her on the subject of the *Life* had taken place. Her Majesty, I subsequently found, had some difficulty in getting the Star and Collar of the Bath ready in so short a time: I could not, therefore, but recognise in the promptitude of her action the kind thought, that the honour, which would come upon me by surprise, might help to cheer me in the search for health on which I was going abroad. [Pg 104]

Some years before this time I had occasion to see how keenly the Queen suffered on the death of a friend. On the 7th of March 1875 Sir Arthur Helps, who held a very warm place in her regard, died, after a few days' illness, from a cold caught at the Prince of Wales' levee. I was summoned to Buckingham Palace and found the Queen in tears, and moved to a degree that was distressing to witness. She had lost in him not only a valuable official, but a friend to whom she had for years trusted for counsel in times of personal distress or difficulty. Her first thought was for his family, and what could be done to lighten the embarrassment of the position in which his sudden death had placed them, and arrangements with this view were at once resolved upon and carried into effect. But, seeing what on this occasion I saw Her Majesty suffer, I could not but think how much sorrows of this kind, coming as they did with unusual frequency, and leaving impressions which in her case were far from transitory, must have added to the exhausting effects of the Queen's busy life. [Pg 106]

It must have been about this time that the Queen one day, in speaking of her portraits, asked me which of them all I thought the best. "Your Majesty," I answered, "will smile at what I am going to say. None of them speak to me so strongly as well as pleasingly, or bring your Majesty so vividly to my mind, as the bust by Behnes, when you were between eight and nine years old." I then told her that I had studied it for years, being so fortunate as to possess the original cast in clay from which the marble bust in the Windsor great corridor was modelled by the sculptor. "Not only," I added, "is the bust beautiful as a work of art, but in it, if I might be so bold as say so, I saw not only the lineaments, but the latent character which years had developed." The Queen, I could see, while somewhat surprised, was also pleased. My criticism must have produced a favourable impression, for the next time I was at Windsor Castle I found that the bust had been removed from a comparatively dark corner to a most conspicuous position near the main entrance to the corridor, where it was shown to the best advantage, and continued thenceforth to remain. Passing along the corridor one evening I called Lord Beaconsfield's attention to it, and he quite concurred in my opinion as to its suggestiveness and peculiar charm.<sup>[22]</sup> [Pg 107]

I recall another conversation about this period that led to the grant, which gave great public satisfaction at the time, of a pension of £50 a-year to Edward, the Banff shoemaker and Naturalist. I had thrown into my despatch-box a copy of Dr Smiles's *Life of Edward*, just published, which reached me as I was leaving home to wait upon Her Majesty at Windsor. The box contained papers as to which I had to consult the Queen. On opening it in her presence, her quick eye took notice of the volume, and she asked me what it was. It contained a fine etched portrait of Edward by Rajon, and this, I knew, would interest the Queen. She admired it greatly, and asked, "Who is this Edward?" I told her briefly his story. "Is this not a case," she said, "for a pension from the Bounty Fund?" Some of the most eminent naturalists, I was able to answer, were anxious that he should have one, and a Memorial to Her Majesty praying for it was being extensively signed. "Go on with the Memorial," Her Majesty said. "That is essential; but leave the book with me. I will write to-day to Lord Beaconsfield, and I have no doubt the pension will be at once granted." The next day (20th December 1876), in a letter from the Queen, she wrote: "Lord Beaconsfield had already heard of the book, which with this letter the Queen return, and is most ready to recommend Edward for a pension of £50. He was most amiable about it." Thus some days before the formal Memorial was presented to the Queen its prayer had been granted, and the remarkable old man was made comfortable for life.<sup>[23]</sup> [Pg 108]

The following letter, while it shows on what friendly relations the Queen stood with Lord Beaconsfield, also shows with how gracious a welcome Her Majesty received a gift from one of her subjects:—

"Dec. 25, 1876, Christmas Day.

"The Queen returns Mr Martin her sincerest thanks for his two kind letters, and for the splendid [Pg 109]

copy of his translation of *Faust*.<sup>[24]</sup> She had seen it, and sent it as a Christmas offering to Lord Beaconsfield; but she did not possess one, and therefore is much pleased to receive it at *his hands*. The Queen hopes Mr Martin will accept the book with photographs of the Albert Chapel, which will reach him to-morrow.<sup>[25]</sup> Most sincerely does she wish Mr and Mrs Martin every possible blessing for the season, which is unusually gloomy and dark....

"She has just received a most kind and graceful acknowledgment from Lord Beaconsfield, which she will later send Mr Martin to read."

1877 and 1878 were years of great anxiety in regard to foreign affairs, and from Her Majesty's letters to myself it is apparent how constantly she had to struggle against the severe headaches and weaknesses brought on by overwork. Thus on 14th February 1878 she writes: "The Queen is quite incapable of writing, having so much to do and think of, and suffers from headaches and an over-tired head. But she sees no chance of rest." Again, on the 8th of March: "The Queen has to apologise very much for not having answered Mr Martin's letter of the 1st. Could he come on Monday 11, before 6, and stay till the next day?... Her time is terribly taken up."

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The Queen was now never long without some great sorrow, and in the late autumn of this year it came in the form of serious illness and death in the home of her beloved daughter the Princess Alice. On the 20th of November 1878 she writes:—

"Mr Martin will excuse her for not answering upon —'s long letter yet. But her state of anxiety and anguish about all her dear ones at Darmstadt has been such—and they are still great—that what with letters and telegrams, she has been quite incapable of attending to any other things. Her poor child's grief and anxiety are only equalled by her resignation and marvellous courage. But the darling that was taken was one of the sweetest, cleverest, and most engaging little children possible—4½—the only one of her 31 grandchildren born to her who was born on the Queen's birthday."

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Five years before (June 29, 1873) the Princess Alice had lost another favourite child, who fell out of the window of the room from which she had gone out for a few seconds, and was killed before her eyes. The misery which this loss had caused the Princess might be read in the settled sadness of expression which thenceforth marked her beautiful face, and seemed to foreshadow the early death which Heaven so often gives its favourites. Now, in nursing all her numerous children through a virulent attack of diphtheria, she showed the noble, unselfish courage for which she had always been distinguished. One of them, the Princess May, died, as mentioned in the Queen's letter, and very soon (14th December) the Princess herself succumbed to the same dreadful epidemic. The other children recovered. It is well to recall what the then Prince of Wales wrote of his beloved sister to Lord Granville, in a letter read by his lordship to the House of Lords: "So good, so kind, so clever! We had gone through so much together—my father's illness, then my own; and she has succumbed to the pernicious malady which laid low her husband and children, whom she watched and nursed with unceasing care and attention. The Queen bears up bravely, but her grief is deep beyond words." Overwhelmed by it though she was, Her Majesty's instant care was to settle how she might fill a mother's place in looking after the young children that were left behind. And that she did fill it is well known, and she was requited by seeing them all before she died settled in life suitably to their rank, and the youngest called to share the Imperial throne of the Czar of Russia.

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In her natural anxiety to see a spot which had so many tender associations for her, the Queen visited Darmstadt in the spring of 1884, and in a letter to me (May 12) from Windsor Castle, after her return, she makes the following interesting allusion to her visit:—

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"The Queen has been living in the dear Grand Duchess's rooms at the Neue Palais at Darmstadt, where everything remains precisely as it used to be. The Queen's sitting-room was hers, and the Queen only placed a small writing-table in the room for her own use, leaving everything else untouched. This opens into the dear Grand Duchess's bedroom, where she died, and out of one of the windows of which poor little 'Frittie'<sup>[26]</sup> fell, where there is now a fine painted glass window, with the following words, 'Of such are the kingdom of heaven,' 'Not lost, but gone before.' It is a charming house.... The light air of the Continent is certainly very different from England, and more like Scotland. The country was brilliant, and lovely in its spring attire of most vivid green; the birch woods are quite beautiful.

"It seemed almost an irony of fate to see nature so bright and beautiful, when the heart was so sad, and could feel no pleasure."

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When my *Life* of the Prince Consort was completed I should not have been surprised if the Queen, with all her manifold, fatiguing, and ever-increasing engagements, had no longer continued the intimate correspondence with which I had hitherto been honoured. But in this respect no change took place. The number of letters grew less as the necessity diminished for constant reference to Her Majesty on the subjects dealt with in the Prince's *Life*; but I was as frequent a guest as ever at Windsor Castle, and treated with the same frankness and confidence as before. When I could be of use to Her Majesty my services, she knew, were always cheerfully at her command, and they were invariably acknowledged with the exquisite courtesy and thankfulness of which I have already given some examples. I had thus constant opportunities of verifying the justice of the estimate of the personal qualities of Her Majesty which I very early formed, and to which I have in previous pages tried to give expression.

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In 1883 the Queen had found distraction in preparing further extracts from her Diary of her life in the Highlands. When it was well advanced towards publication my assistance in revising the final proofs was asked. She had no longer her friend Sir Arthur Helps to advise with, who had edited her first *Leaves from a Journal*. A great deal of correspondence in regard to the book, I find, took place, and I must, I suppose, have been somewhat severe in my criticisms, for in sending me her final sketch of the Preface and Epilogue to the volume, the Queen writes that she stood "somewhat in awe of me"—a compliment to my independence which, while it amused me, could not be otherwise than gratifying. The warm reception given to the volume gave the Queen great pleasure. Thus on the 14th of February 1884 she writes: "The Queen is really startled at the success of so humble a production," and again on the 29th, "The Queen must say, she believes few sovereigns, and fewer people, have been so kindly spoken of as herself." In a paper written in 1883, now before me, the Queen speaks of the importance to herself of anything which "has a cheering and invigorating effect on one so depressed, and so often disheartened as I am." It was therefore very pleasant to see that she had found this temporary solace in the public feeling, which had been vivified by her little book.

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To add to the Queen's depression, a lameness due to a sprain of the knee robbed her of the freedom of movement in which she had always delighted. Of this she speaks in a letter (May 29, 1883):—

"Many things unite in rendering the Queen's remaining years terribly hard and desolate. Her lameness does not improve much. She can walk very little indeed (and that is great labour) out of doors, and never without two sticks indoors, and is carried, which the newspaper reporters with singular ignorance consider a proof of her great 'delicacy of health,' complaining also of the public *not* being admitted everywhere, as if it would be pleasant for any lady to be carried in and out of a carriage before crowds of people! But the people are very kind and anxious, though very unreasoning in thinking a sprain can be cured in a few days, especially when she is no longer young."

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In the autumn of 1881 the Queen held a review in the Queen's Park, Edinburgh, of the Scottish Volunteers, considerably over 40,000 of whom passed before her. The march past occupied more than three hours, during which the rain descended in torrents. The Queen was in an open carriage, and however much they might have been disappointed, none of her volunteers would have murmured had Her Majesty withdrawn at an early stage of the review. But, true soldier's daughter as she was, she paid no heed to the weather, thinking only of her duty to let herself be seen by those who had come from all parts of the country in the hope of seeing and being seen by their Queen. She did not leave the Park until the last man had passed. By this time the carriage was full of water, and pools of it, I have been told, dropped from the dresses of herself and ladies when they returned to Holyrood.

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In a like determination never, if she could, to cause disappointment to her people, when she visited Liverpool about four years later, the Queen drove slowly through more than three miles of streets under a drenching rain which lasted throughout the whole route. The open-air drives in the Highlands had, no doubt, accustomed Her Majesty to bear exposure so trying without injury to her health. The stimulus, too, given by the heartiness of the greeting, which her courage and gracious courtesy evoked, may have helped to keep all evil consequences at bay. In writing to me, May 17, 1886, the drenching rain was not mentioned. "The Liverpool visit," she only said, "was a perfectly triumphal ovation, so warm and hearty ... from a million and a half of people. The feeling against Home Rule is on the increase."

It was well that the Queen, in all her sorrows, could find solace in the sympathetic and ever-increasing loyalty of her people. Another heavy blow was soon to fall upon her in the death of Prince Leopold (March 28, 1884). Only two years before, his marriage had been solemnised in St George's Chapel at Windsor under circumstances of unusual splendour, in which Her Majesty had taken a prominent part. Who that witnessed it could ever forget the figure of the Queen as she passed up the aisle to the altar. In the bridal train and the general assemblage many of the most beautiful women in England, arrayed in the costliest robes and adorned with an infinite wealth of jewels, preceded Her Majesty. Whatever high blood and bearing, whatever wealth and beauty could give to delight the eye, was there. But all was eclipsed by the unpretending figure in black, moving onwards with the simple unstudied grace, unconscious of its own charm, but insensibly by its perfect composure filling you with the impression that in her the Majesty of England was represented. *Vera incessu patuit Regina*. No doubt the memory of that moment came back to many as it did to me, when the body of Prince Leopold was borne by the Seaforth Highlanders up the same aisle for the funeral benediction only two short years after, and the Queen was seen looking down from the Royal pew upon the group of mourners gathered round the bier. I had known the Prince well for years, and I believe was a favourite with him. My letter of condolence to Her Majesty after the funeral brought me the following reply:—

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"WINDSOR CASTLE, *Apl.* 10, 1884.

"The Queen thanks Sir Theodore Martin for his kind letter, as well as for the previous ones, and for all the kind sympathy, but that is indeed universal. It has always been thus for her, and each loss intensifies it.... The accounts of the sad and impressive ceremony of last Friday and Saturday are excellent, and all in such a reverent tone—and the *Times* articles (3) so good. The *Standard*<sup>[27]</sup> is admirable, and the Queen thanks Sir Theodore for it.... The Queen is not ill, but

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greatly shaken, and this new shock has been overwhelming....

"The Queen feels the loss of that dear clever child of so many cares and anxieties more and more, and knows that again a great help and support has been taken from her in her declining years. She never felt easy when he was away, and his foreign trips never did him any good. *Now he is safe.*

"The Queen has been urged to have some complete rest and change of air, and is therefore going for a fortnight to Darmstadt on the 15th."<sup>[28]</sup>

In 1886 the idea became general of a great celebration of the Queen's Jubilee in the following year. The subject gave rise to a great display of loyal feeling, and much eloquent writing in praise of Her Majesty in the journals. I seem to have sent Her Majesty some of these which I thought would give her pleasure, for on June 28 she writes to me thus:—

"The Queen hastens to thank Sir T. Martin for his kind letters and enclosures. She was touched and gratified by the articles, as it is rewarding to find *Anerkennung*, as the Germans say, of a long and hard life of anxiety, that is not flattery, which the Queen hates...." [Pg 123]

"For the Queen all the loyalty shown and the celebration to take place (if she lives, *D. V.*) next year are very trying, and much mingled with deep sadness; for to be alone, bereft of her husband, to whom she and the country owe so much, of two dear children, and many, and especially *some*, dear friends, is very painful and trying."

In the Jubilee year it was understood that presents might be offered to Her Majesty upon her birthday. Very many, no doubt, availed themselves of the privilege, Lady Martin and myself among the number. We had both so frequently received memorial gifts from the Queen, that it was an especial pleasure to us to have an opportunity of offering our slight tribute of loyal respect, and we selected for the purpose an object of which it was not likely that a duplicate could be given. A telegram of warm acknowledgment from Balmoral the day it was received was followed next day (25th May) by this letter:— [Pg 124]

"The Queen thanks Sir Theodore and Lady Martin for their lovely gift, which she will ever value as coming from them, and on her birthday in this year. The loyalty and affection so universally exhibited by all classes and from all parts are very gratifying to her, and are an encouragement for the few remaining years of her arduous life, as they show that her efforts for the good of her country and people are appreciated."

No need to say how this loyalty and affection culminated within a month in the Jubilee demonstration on the 21st of June. In Westminster Abbey I had a position from which I could observe the emotions as they passed over the face of the Queen throughout the whole of the impressive ceremonial of that memorable day; and it seemed to me, familiar as I was with the feelings with which Her Majesty had looked forward to this event, that I could divine some of the thoughts which under that serenely dignified demeanour were passing through Her Majesty's heart and mind. Deep and manifold I felt they must be, as she looked back to the day when she had last sat there in the Coronation Chair, through the vista of years of happiness and trial, of anxiety and bereavement, of national struggle and peril and triumph, all culminating in an unparalleled demonstration of her people's love. At such a time would not memory recur to the words written to her on her Accession by Prince Albert fifty years before (26th June 1837)? —"Now you are Queen of the mightiest land of Europe. In your hand lies the happiness of millions. May Heaven assist you and strengthen you with its strength in that high but difficult task! I hope that your reign may be long, happy, and glorious, and that your efforts may be rewarded by the thankfulness and love of your subjects!" Full of the feeling I have expressed, on my return home it shaped itself without effort of mine into the words of the following sonnet. Some weeks elapsed before I had the courage to send it to the Queen; but it at once found such favour with Her Majesty that, in a letter to me next day (11th August), she wrote: "The Queen thanks Sir T. Martin for his kind letter, and for the very beautiful lines which he has written.... The Queen hopes he will print and even publish them." They were accordingly published next month in *Blackwood's Magazine*:— [Pg 125]

IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

21st June 1887.

Again within these walls, again alone!  
A long, long tract of fateful years between  
The day I knelt, to rise a crownèd queen,  
Vowed thenceforth to be all my people's own,  
And this, when, with an empire wider grown,  
Again I kneel, before high Heaven to lay  
My thanks for all, which since that earlier day  
Has blessed my goings, and upheld my throne.  
God! in this hour I think of him, who made  
My young life sweet, who lightened every care,  
In sorest straits my judgment rightly swayed,  
Lived, thought for me, all times and everywhere;  
For him I thank Thee chief, who by his aid

Nerved me the burden of a crown to bear!

Every Christmas had for years brought with it a letter from the Queen with her good wishes for Lady Martin and myself, accompanied by a beautifully painted card for Lady Martin, and some valuable book for my library enriched by a gracious inscription. In her letter of this year were the words, "*The Queen is loth to part with the year in which she has met with so much affection and kindness,*" and they suggested to me the following sonnet. It was my custom to send to the Queen a Christmas and New Year greeting, generally in verse, and I made the sonnet my greeting for the year 1888. The Queen in her reply requested that it might be published, and this was done:— [Pg 127]

OSBORNE.

*Before Midnight, 31st December 1887.*

One hour, and 'twill be numbered with the past,  
My year of Jubilee, that to my heart  
Has tribute brought from cot and hall and mart  
Of loyalty and love;—a treasure vast,  
There to be nursed and cherished to the last, [Pg 128]  
And with that one dear memory held apart,  
Still sweetening through the years its bitter smart  
With love in kingly story unsurpassed!  
Go, then, bright year, go with a fond good-bye,  
For all thy days with loving-kindness fraught!  
And may all blessings from the God on high  
Light on my people for their loving thought,  
Keeping them worthy of the days gone by,  
And the great name by their forefathers wrought!

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## CHAPTER V.

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IN the magnificent procession which attended the Queen to and from Westminster Abbey, no figure attracted more attention, or excited greater admiration, than that of the Crown Prince of Germany, in his white Cuirassier's uniform, and rivetting all eyes by his noble head and majestic bearing. Little was it then dreamed that within a year he was to succeed his father as Emperor of the Germans, when himself stricken by the cruel malady under which he sank within a few months after his accession. The tragic circumstances of his death awakened a very profound feeling throughout this country, and men's thoughts turned to the uncrowned Empress whom he left behind, and also to the Queen, who thus saw the fair hopes blighted, with which she and the Prince Consort had resigned their first and highly gifted child to the man of her heart, by whose side they might expect in time to see her throned as sovereign over a mighty kingdom. [Pg 130]

The Emperor Frederic died on the 15th of June 1888. As soon as her health permitted, the widowed Empress decided to come to England for a time; and the Queen wrote to me suggesting that some special expression of public sympathy should meet her daughter on her arrival. That this sympathy would be generally and warmly expressed through the usual channels could not be doubted. But I ventured to think, that the expression of it might not unfitly be concentrated in the compacter form of verse. With this view I wrote the following sonnet, which appeared in the *Standard* two days before the Empress reached England:— [Pg 131]

TO THE EMPRESS FREDERIC.

*On her arriving in England, 17th November 1888.*

When England sent thee forth, a joyous bride,  
A prayer went through the land, that on thy head  
Might all best blessings bounteously be shed,  
And his, the lover-husband by thy side;  
And England marked with ever-growing pride,  
As onwards still the years full-freighted sped,  
How wrought in both the grace of worth inbred,  
To noblest acts and purposes allied.

With eyes of longing, not undimmed by tears,  
England now greets thee, desolate and lone,  
Heart-stricken, widowed of the twofold crown  
Of love and empire; and the grief endears,  
Remembering all the cherished hopes o'erthrown,  
When at their height thy heart's lord was struck down.

I also wrote this other sonnet, which appeared in the *Morning Post* on the day of the Empress's arrival:—

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19th November 1888.

Oh lady, how our hearts were pang'd,<sup>[29]</sup> when he,  
 Whom late we saw, in England's festal hour,  
 Ride through our streets in manhood's stateliest power,  
 Hail'd by all eyes a star of chivalry,  
 Through long sad months of sorest agony,  
 Faced martyr-like the doom, that hour by hour  
 He saw still near and ever nearer lour,  
 To tear him from his country and from thee;  
 Thee of the childlike heart and manlike brain,  
 Fit in all ways to share a monarch's throne,  
 Who made his people's good his chiefest care!  
 Oh noble heart, all England shares thy pain,  
 And in thy grief thou wilt feel less alone,  
 'Midst all the love that waits to greet thee there!

The 9th line of this sonnet was prompted by an incident on the last occasion that I met the Crown Prince and Princess together at Windsor Castle. "Do you know," he said to me, "what her father said of her?" "Oh, Fritz," the Princess broke in, anticipating what he was going to tell me, "you should not speak of such a thing." "I will speak of it," he continued, looking at her with eyes of affectionate pride. "Why should I not? It is only the truth. The Prince Consort said, 'She has the heart of a child, the brain of a man!'" That her father so thought of her I had seen many proofs in the private correspondence which was placed in my hands while I was writing his life.

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I sent these Sonnets to the Queen, and on November 13 she wrote: "The Queen thanks Sir T. Martin for his two kind letters, and the two exquisite little Sonnets. They should certainly be published, and a special copy be prepared for her poor dear persecuted daughter." A few days afterwards (November 20) the Queen again wrote: "The Queen encloses a letter from her dear daughter the Empress, which she is sure he will be pleased to receive." This was a letter thanking me in very gratifying terms for my Sonnets. "She thanks him again," the Queen continued, "for her two kind letters and the lovely poems.... The dear Empress is very sad. The arrival upset her terribly, but she struggles bravely with the dreadful misfortune, and takes an interest in other things. But it is a misfortune which one cannot understand, and which is a great trial to one's faith. One can but say, as one of her Indian attendants (who are all Mohammedans), an excellent, very refined, and gentle young man, said, 'God ordered it!'"

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A few days afterwards I had a long and most interesting interview with the Empress at Windsor Castle, and was told of things which explained what was meant by the Queen in speaking of her as her "poor dear persecuted daughter." They have now happily sunk into oblivion.

Early in the 'Seventies the Queen intimated to me her great desire to visit North Wales, if a house could be found there suitable for her stay. On looking round the counties of Denbigh and Merioneth, where the Queen wished especially to go, so as to be within reach of some of the best Welsh scenery and also to be seen by the large bodies of workers in coal and other mines and industries, to which the county chiefly owes its prosperity, the mansion of my friend the late Henry Robertson, C.E., at Palè on the Dee, between Corwen and Bala, seemed the most eligible in itself, besides having the advantage of being close to the Llanderfel station on the railway from Ruabon to Dolgelly and Festiniog. It was at once placed by Mr Robertson at Her Majesty's disposal; but the projected visit fell through, owing to the pressure of various engagements which compelled the Queen to abandon it for the time.

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The project was again mentioned to me by Her Majesty in the following letter, November 4, 1889;—

"The Queen thanks Sir Theodore for the newspaper, and his article on Wales, which interests her very much. This brings her to the subject of the visit, once contemplated, to Wales. Would that be possible? by the loan of a house like the one mentioned at that time by Sir Theodore? She believes a short visit of four or five days there would do good. She can no longer ride up hills, but she can drive, and go to some places where her presence might be useful."

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Mr Robertson was dead, but his son and successor in the Palè estate, Mr, now Sir Henry Beyer Robertson, was delighted to have the opportunity of fulfilling his father's intention. On being made aware of this, the Queen decided to make the visit in the summer of the following year on her way to Balmoral. When this decision became known, the people of the principality, who are as a rule most loyal, looked forward with enthusiasm to the prospect of seeing among them the Queen, who had hitherto been to them only a revered name. Everything was done which loyalty could devise to show how highly the royal presence among them was valued. The only cloud on the general satisfaction was the knowledge that the visit could only be for a very few days—from the 23rd to the 28th of August, one of which was a Sunday.

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The Queen arrived at Palè on the 23rd at 7 A.M., and had not been many hours there before she received a deputation of the farm tenants of the adjoining district, who had prepared a walking-stick of their native wood for Her Majesty's acceptance. They were surprised, and more than delighted, by the royal acceptance of it being made in Welsh, the Queen having immediately on her arrival taken pains to learn so much of that far from easy language as served her for this and

other similar occasions. In no other way could Her Majesty have so thoroughly touched the hearts of her Welsh subjects. The incident, of which the tidings spread over Wales within a few hours, heightened the enthusiasm with which she was everywhere received. Two days afterwards this was markedly shown in her public visit to Wrexham, the centre of the mining and other industries of Denbighshire, where a reception in Aston Park, the property of Sir Robert Cunliffe, admirably arranged by the Mayor and Corporation of Wrexham, awaited Her Majesty. All the leading people of the adjoining counties were present, and many hundred thousands of the working population assembled both there and on the five miles of road along which the Queen drove from Ruabon, to which the royal train had come from Palè. A choir of 600 singers gave the Queen her first idea of the choral singing for which Wales is famous. The demeanour of the working men, rough in exterior, and not always on ordinary occasions gentle in manners, produced a most favourable impression on Her Majesty. "They all behaved like gentlemen," she said to me when, two days afterwards, accompanied by the Prince and Princess Henry of Battenberg and the Princess Alix of Hesse (now the Czarina), she honoured Lady Martin and myself by a visit to our villa near Llangollen. It had not occurred to us why the Queen had chosen that day, the 26th of August, for the visit. But the reason flashed upon us, when, turning to Lady Martin as she inscribed her name with the date on a sheet of paper prepared for the purpose, she looked up and said, "The dear Prince's birthday!" Then we saw that as the Prince's *Life* had been written in my study there, Her Majesty had chosen that day for her visit—surely a very delicately imagined tribute to the author.

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Several Welsh airs were sung for the Queen on this visit by a selected number of the Llangollen choir, chiefly young ladies. When they had finished, Her Majesty asked me to what class the singers belonged, as she had observed greater refinement in their execution than in any of the other choirs she had heard in Wales. She was also struck by the admirable way they had sustained the pitch from beginning to end of all the choral pieces sung without the drop of half a tone. Only an ear finely trained to a subtle appreciation of musical execution could have noticed these points.

It had been greatly desired that the Queen should visit Festiniog, both for the beauty of the scenery and to satisfy the loyal feelings of the large and intelligent slate-making population of that district. This was found to be impracticable, but a hope was held out that the omission might be remedied by another visit to North Wales. A few days after her arrival at Balmoral the Queen wrote: "The Queen and her children have brought with them the pleasantest recollections of Wales, its beauty, and the kindness and loyalty of its people. The Queen was greatly pleased to have been able to see Sir Theodore and Lady Martin's charming home."

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Again in the following year (September 3, 1891) Her Majesty wrote:—

"The Queen thanks Sir T. Martin for his letter of the 26th, on which dear day last year we made that charming expedition to Llangollen and visited Sir Theodore and Lady Martin at their delightful little Welsh home at Bryntysilio. The recollection of the Queen's visit to Wales is a most pleasing one, to which she often looks back, and hopes to repeat some day. She would wish to go again to Palè, to which most pleasant and comfortable house Sir H. Robertson has again and again invited her to return. The Queen could visit Harlech Castle and Llanberis, &c., from Palè, returning at night, could she not? The Queen uses the Welsh stick, so kindly given her by the farmers and people at Palè, very often, and always when she travels and wants a good strong one."

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Greatly to the disappointment of the good people of Wales, Her Majesty never found it possible to fulfil this contemplated second visit.

In the correspondence which continued at intervals during the ensuing years there is nothing that is available for the object of this monograph. But in November 1896 Her Majesty gave me an opportunity of expressing briefly my views of what an authentic Life of herself should be, of which I was not sorry to avail myself. On the 10th of that month she wrote to me:—

"The Queen is glad that Sir Theodore approves the idea of a short Life of her husband being set in hand and published.

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"She so much wishes that something should be done about her own Life, as so many people have published and are publishing her Life, with the best intentions, full of extraordinary fabrications and untruths."

Some further communications on the subject took place, and on the 22nd of that month I wrote as follows:—

"Sir Theodore Martin, with his humble duty, has the honour to acknowledge the receipt of Her Majesty's gracious letter of the 20th.

"Sir Theodore is much impressed by what the Queen says as to the desirableness of a Life of Her Majesty, which might put a stop to the gossiping fabrications which have of late become so current. The subject has long been present to his mind. While the Queen lives, he fears the inventors of these fictions must have their way. But that the story of Her Majesty's Life should be truthfully and sympathetically told for posterity is a matter of the highest importance. In a great measure the work must be historical, and will demand the skill of some one capable of dealing with the events of Her Majesty's reign, and of the political history of the civilized world, from the date of the Prince Consort's death onwards. It would be most desirable to lay the foundation of such a work with Her Majesty's direct assistance, could a biographer with the necessary

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qualifications be found. There will be the difficulty; but, until he can be found, would it be possible for Her Majesty to suggest the lines on which the Life should be written, and to furnish to some trusted person the facts and incidents of which Her Majesty would wish a record to be made?

"The materials must be abundant in Her Majesty's diaries and correspondence, and they would form the basis of a work of infinite value and instruction to future times. So much that is false and misleading is sure to be written in these days of reckless and unscrupulous writing, that every loyal subject of Her Majesty must wish that it should in Her Majesty's case be crushed at the outset. Nothing would do this so effectually as the knowledge that the true story would be told, based upon authentic information as to the private as well as public life of the Queen.

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"Sir Theodore makes the above suggestion with all deference to Her Majesty's better judgment. His excuse must be his ardent desire that the story of a life, which he most deeply honours and reveres, should be fitly told for the days to come."

The Queen, I believe, in so far concurred with my suggestion, that she endeavoured to persuade at least one writer of distinction as a historian to agree to become her biographer. He came to the conclusion that the task of dealing with a subject so vast, and also with a character so complex as that of Her Majesty, was one with which he could not grapple consistently with the duties of a high position which he had already undertaken. Whether any further attempt was made in the same direction I am not aware.

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And so the years went on, bringing us from time to time assurances of the Queen's continued interest in Lady Martin and myself. In 1896, when the new Victorian Order was established, I was among the first on whom the Commandership of the Order was conferred. The Insignia of the Order reached me with the following letter:—

"BALMORAL CASTLE, *Sept. 14, 1896.*

"The Queen has heard that Sir Theodore Martin will celebrate his 80th birthday on the 16th, which seems to her hardly possible from his appearance. She wishes him to accept her warmest and most heartfelt good wishes for his happiness and welfare for many a year. The Queen wishes on this occasion to mark her sense of Sir Theodore's valuable services, and sends him the decoration of Knight Commander of her new personal 'Victoria Order.'

"She hopes Lady Martin has recovered from her last indisposition, and that no anxiety on her account may mar the happiness of this day."

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On every Christmas morning the Queen sent greetings and good wishes to my wife with an inscribed Christmas card, and to myself, with some framed work of art, or valuable book. In 1897, when all the world was alive with congratulations on the memorable celebration of Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee, the words which appeared in two of her perfect Addresses to her people inspired me to express, as before, what I conceived was in her heart in writing these Addresses. I give them here, because they were stamped with Her Majesty's approval. "The Queen," she wrote, "thanks Sir Theodore Martin very much for his most kind letter, and the Sonnets enclosed, which it has touched her much that he should write. Of course they may be published in the *Times*;" and they were published there accordingly.

THE QUEEN AT ST PAUL'S.

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*June 22, 1897.*

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

Not unto me, O Lord, not unto me  
The praise be given, that my beloved land  
This day in all men's eyes from strand to strand  
Shines first in honour and in majesty;  
That borne from every clime, o'er every sea,  
Around me clustering close on every hand,  
Liegemen from far I see, a noble band,  
Type of a nobler Empire yet to be!  
Oh, my beloved people, yours the praise,  
Yours, who have kept the faith, that made your sires  
Free, fearless, faithful, through the nights and days,  
True to the zeal for right, that never tires;  
May God's best blessing rest on you always,  
And keep you blameless in your heart's desires!

THE QUEEN AT KENSINGTON.

*June 28, 1897.*

["I gladly renew my association with a place which, as the scene of my birth and my summons to

the Throne, has had, and ever will have with me, tender and solemn recollections."]

Again the dear old home, the towering trees,  
The lawns, the garden-plots, the lake, that were  
My childhood's fairyland,—the dear ones there,  
Who tended me so lovingly,—the ease  
Of heart when, sporting at my mother's knees,  
I dreamed not of a crown, nor knew a care,  
The call at early morn that crown to wear!  
Ah me, the host of tender memories,  
Tender and solemn, that around me throng,  
Of all that then I was, and since have been,  
The many loved and lost, the One so long  
Missed from my side, and I, a lonely Queen!  
Yet in the love my people bear me, strong  
To front an Empire's cares with brow serene.

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Yet once again I had the honour of being permitted to express Her Majesty's sentiments in verse. It had long been my earnest hope that peace should reign in Her Majesty's realms while she lived. But this was not to be; and the South African war, with all the loss of life and waste of treasure which it involved, threw many a dark shadow over the last year of the Queen's life. But the shadows were not without breaks of brilliant sunshine. She was proud of the way in which her subjects rose to the difficulties of the time; she was proud of the response of the army and navy, which she loved, to the call upon their valour and endurance. She was proud, too, of the common feeling that bound the colonies to the mother-country, as but for this war they might not for years have been bound, and that they had sent their sons to share its perils and glories—a first step to the consolidation of her Empire. This was a suggestive theme, to glance at which I thought might please the Queen. I had for years been in the habit of writing a letter of congratulation to Her Majesty upon her birthday. Little weening that it was to be her last, I sent the following sonnet with my letter. It so pleased the Queen, that she gave her sanction to its being published in the *Times*, where accordingly it appeared.

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#### A BIRTHDAY MEDITATION.

*Balmoral, 24th May 1900.*

Am I not blest? I cry, as I retrace,  
Through gathering mists of not unwelcome tears,  
All I have seen and known through the long years  
Vouchsafed to me by Heaven's abounding grace;  
How evermore I have found strength to face  
Their cares, their griefs, their overshadowing fears,  
Nerved by the loving loyalty that cheers  
My heart in all its lonely pride of place.  
Oh, my dear land, whose sons, where'er they came,  
Of freedom and of right have sown the seed,  
Behold, *their* sons in serried thousands claim  
A place beside thee, in thine hour of need,  
Thy peril theirs, thy fortune theirs, thy fame!  
Thinking of this, am I not blest indeed?

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As it happens, I write the concluding pages of this humble tribute to the memory of my beloved Queen in my study at Bryntysilio, on the anniversary of the day when the noble woman passed from earth, who was for more than fifty years the crown and comfort of my life. It is a day intimately associated with my thoughts of Her Majesty, for late in the evening of this day, after the constant inquiries of many weeks, a telegram asking for information came from the Queen only a few hours before my wife fell asleep. Its words were the last she read. She tried to reply to the Queen with her own hand, but had to give up the attempt. To the Queen the first news of my loss was sent, and it was answered by a message right from the heart in a few of those incisive words, for which the Queen had a special gift, that speak directly home to the heart. Nor did her sympathy end here. She so arranged that on the morning of the funeral in London a letter in her own hand from Balmoral should reach me with words of encouragement such as those from which she had herself so often had to seek courage in her own hours of desolation and bereavement.<sup>[30]</sup> Nor was this all. Next morning, between eight and nine, I received a telegram from Her Majesty, inquiring how I had borne the ordeal of the previous day. Can more be said to show the tender, thoughtful, womanly nature, which won the gratitude and reverence of those who knew her best, and which also operated to create a feeling of affectionate regard in all her subjects, and indeed throughout the world?

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One more instance of Her Majesty's never-failing kindness to myself! The Christmas morning of 1900 brought me its wonted offering from her in the shape of a beautifully framed copy of Angeli's last portrait. As I looked at it my heart was full of sadness, for I read in the familiar face, as there depicted, the manifest indications of physical weakness, and of the probably early fulfilment of an apprehension, which had for some time possessed me, that the end of this "great woman" was near. What pathos to me in the thought, that in a time of so much weakness and preoccupation the Queen had taken care that I should not be without the accustomed Christmas

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memorial from her. There are memories that "lie too deep for tears." This is one of them.

Yet a few words more! I have lived too long not to have learned forbearance in my judgments of character in man or woman, even when its qualities seem to lie very much upon the surface. I have also learned to revere the memories of all who have earned honourable distinction by act or word. Experience has taught me how little we can know of the true nature even of those with whom life has made us familiar, how infinitely less of those whom we have never known, or who have followed pursuits in which we have never shared, or lived in a sphere remote from our own.

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Much, therefore, as I saw of the Queen as a woman, much as I had occasion to know of the remarkable powers of mind which she brought to bear upon the performance of her functions as a sovereign, I should not venture to form, much less to publish, an appreciation of these powers, without those full materials for a judgment which are not at present before the world, but which may in due season be expected to see the light. Enough, however, came under my observation to show me how great the Queen could be, when occasion called for the exercise of her higher powers. I know how richly endowed she was with the "instincts of the heart, that teach the head,"—intuitions which prompted her to say the right word and do the right thing without fail, whenever a grave or great purpose was to be served. Perched as she was, to use her own words now lying before me, "on a dreary, sad pinnacle of solitary grandeur," I know with what constancy and courage she bore the isolation. I know how simple, how humbly-minded she was, how truthful, how full of loving-kindness, how generous, how constant in her friendships. I know how she leant for consolation and support upon the love of her people, how earnestly she sought to gain it by sympathy with their interests and their sorrows, by constant watchfulness for the wellbeing of all throughout the world who owned her sway. I know, too, how resolute she was to uphold justice, and honour, and right, wherever her voice could be heard.

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Others may find pleasure, when they write of Queen Victoria, in speaking slightly of the qualities of mind and heart which went to form a truly noble character, of which personally they can know nothing. To such I answer, Who in the history of monarchies has lived a life so exemplary, so pure, so absolutely devoted to the service of the State,—who of all we read of so won the affection of their people, the admiration of the world, as she has done? I think of the mighty task she was called upon to fulfil, and how admirably she fulfilled it, under trials and drawbacks of which the outside world can form no estimate. I think of her, borne to her tomb along the London streets, through threefold ranks of her people, all pale, silent, and with heads reverently bowed, as though in mourning for one they loved. I see her bier borne to the altar in St George's Chapel, followed by men who represented all the Rulers of all the Nations—a gorgeous throng that crowded the central aisle of the great chapel from the western door up to the altar steps. Was ever such tribute paid in the world throughout all the ages past? Is such tribute ever likely to be paid again?

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It is of this marvellous tribute, and how it was won, that we should think,—not of this or that foible or shortcoming, for who is without them? Above all, we should think of the heavy, unceasing burden that lay upon brain and heart through a long life, and with how brave and constant yet how meek a spirit it was borne. Then, remembering all this, let us, while we live, cherish in our hearts the name of our departed Queen, and pass it on to those who shall succeed us, as

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## Victoria the Great and Good.

PRINTED BY WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS.

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### FOOTNOTES:

- [1] He died in May 1874. "Dear M. V. de Weyer's death," Her Majesty wrote to me on the 30th of that month, "is a terrible loss to the Queen, and she has been deeply grieved by it."
- [2] A translation of Oehlenschläger's drama of that name.
- [3] General Grey's book.
- [4] A ruby and diamond bracelet.
- [5] I must have expressed in some letter at this time regret that none of Her Majesty's Ministers had taken the opportunity of explaining the circumstances which had hurt Her Majesty's health, and compelled her to avoid the fatigues of the public appearances which were called for, and which were undoubtedly desirable, if the Queen's health had admitted of their being made.
- [6] They came with the following note:—

"OSBORNE, *May* 3, 1869.

"The Queen sends Mr Martin to-day a volume of the beloved Prince's and her own etchings, which she has had purposely bound for him, and which she hopes he will place in his library, as a trifling recollection of his kindness in carrying out so many of her wishes."

- [7] *Quarterly Review* for April 1901: article "Queen Victoria," p. 305.
- [8] It is of such that Sir Henry Taylor writes in his *Philip van Artevelde*, Act I. Sc. v.:—
- "He was one  
Of that small tally, of the singular few,  
Who, gifted with predominating powers,  
Bear yet a temperate will, and keep the peace.  
The world knows nothing of its greatest men."
- [9] *Denkwürdigkeiten aus den Papieren des Freiherr's Christian Friedrich v. Stockmar*. Braunschweig, 1872.
- [10] *Quarterly Review* for April 1872, p. 386 *et seq.*
- [11] "Thy dear image I bear within me, and what miniature can come up to that? No need to place one on my table to *remind* me of *you*."
- [12] Life of Archbishop Benson, vol. ii. pp. 2 and 561.
- [13] The allusion is to the lines in the fine passage in the seventh section of that poem, beginning, "Blame not thyself too much":—
- "Let woman make herself her own  
To give or keep, to live and learn, and be  
All that not harms distinctive womanhood.  
For woman is not undeveloped man,  
But diverse; could we make her as the man,  
Sweet love were slain; his dearest bond is this,  
Not like to like, but like in difference."
- [14] I had occasion to record in the Prince's *Life* (vol. iii. p. 248) a somewhat similar impression on Napoleon III. and his Empress with regard to the Tuileries, in the following extract from the Queen's Diary: "Speaking of the want of liberty attaching to our position, he (the Emperor) said the Empress felt this greatly, and called the Tuileries *une belle prison*."
- [15] Published, London, 1868, by Smith, Elder, & Co.
- [16] General Grey's duties were immediately taken up by Colonel, afterwards General, Sir Henry Ponsonby, who discharged them with conspicuous zeal and ability till he was struck down by fatal illness in January 1895.
- [17] These letters were from Royal personages on the subject of the Emperor's death.
- [18] See p. 51, *ante*.
- [19] Féodore Victoire, Duchess of Saxe-Meiningen, who died on the 12th of February 1872. Her mother, the Queen's half-sister, Feodora, Princess of Hohenlohe-Langenburg, survived her only a few months, dying on the 23rd of September 1872.
- [20] He died on the 23rd of May 1874. The Queen came from Windsor to visit him at his house in London, when he was near his end. A few days before his death I took my leave of him. He was in great pain, but his bright sparkling spirit remained. He touched my heart by saying how sorry he was he had only known me within the last few years. On my expressing a hope that we might meet again in the Hereafter, "Ah! let us hope so!" he replied, adding, like the bibliophile of bibliophiles that he was, "and that you will find me in an *editio nova et emendatior*."
- [21] In my library in London there happened to be a niche, as if made to receive this beautiful replica of the Mausoleum monument, where it has ever since remained.
- [22] I had given to the Queen a fine proof before letters of her portrait, as a girl, by Fowler, and she wrote to say that "the bust by Behnes, from which Fowler took his picture, was done in 1827, when the Queen was eight years and a half."
- [23] The Sovereign *nominally* is the dispenser of these pensions, but the Queen delegated this function to the First Lord of the Treasury. This was why the concurrence of Lord Beaconsfield was necessary. With him the Queen's wish in such matters was paramount.
- [24] A volume published in Germany in imperial folio, with a series of very spirited illustrations, and remarkable for the beauty and originality of the binding.
- [25] A magnificent volume, including, among other illustrations, photographs of all Baron Triqueti's designs in inlaid marble.
- [26] The pet name substituted for Friedrich.
- [27] This refers to an obituary notice of the Prince by myself.
- [28] As to this visit, see *ante*, p. 114.
- [29] It seems a pity that this word should have fallen into disuse. Shakespeare employs it with great effect in the fine scene (*Cymbeline*, Act III. sc. iv.) where Imogen says—
- "I grieve myself to think,  
When thou shalt be disedged by her  
That now thou timest on, how thy memory  
Wilt then be *panged* by me."
- [30] A representative of Her Majesty attended Lady Martin's funeral and placed on her bier a beautiful wreath, inscribed by the Queen, and also a rich floral cross, inscribed by the Princess Beatrice.

## TRANSCRIBER'S NOTES:

Obvious typographical errors have been corrected as follows:

Footnote 9: Braunscheig changed to Braunschweig

The original text appears to be missing words on page 54. The original is printed "... it was impossible to be than were the able and accomplished officials...".

\*\*\* END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK QUEEN VICTORIA AS I KNEW HER \*\*\*

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