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## MRS. FAWCETT'S LIFE OF QUEEN VICTORIA.\*

By CLOTILDA MARSON.



THE QUEEN'S MOTHER.  
(From a painting by H. Colten.)

a sketch of the degenerate courts of George IV. and William IV., which were full of selfishness, vice, and prejudice. Some of the brothers of King William, especially the Duke of Cumberland, did little to smooth the path of the young Princess who blocked their way to the throne, and it must have been an anxious task for the Duchess of Kent to maintain the rights of the little girl. But adversity proved a good school for the fatherless baby, and the injustice of the future King of Hanover enlisted popular sympathy on the side of the heir-presumptive. Mrs. Fawcett recalls the laconic remark of Charles II., when he said to his brother James, "They will never kill me to make you king."

The chief characteristics of the little girl were a great sense of truth and a conscientiousness beyond her years. When told at the age of eleven that she was heiress to the throne of England, the child said simply, holding up her little forefinger, "I will be good." That was the key-note of all her future life.

William IV. was slow in relinquishing his hopes of an heir, and hence it came that the young princess was spoken of as "Heiress-Presumptive" rather than "Heiress-Apparent." The future Queen benefited in two ways from this fact. The uncertainty



THE QUEEN AT THE AGE OF TWELVE.  
(From a drawing by F. J. Jenkins.)

BEFORE giving some account of this book, which, though small in compass, yet bears evidence of wide knowledge of the subject and its historical background, it is well to dwell upon some of the reasons which make the book especially worth reading. The author's intimate knowledge of the inner working of politics enables her to bring out clearly the Queen's influence upon them, and to substitute for mere adulation an intelligent account of Her Majesty's powers and her services to her country.

A sense of humour gives a charm to the work, for, in a mass of anecdote and detail, Mrs. Fawcett has known how to separate what was human and touching from what was trite and pompous. Her strong sense of justice has made her able to show the good work of Her Majesty in directions where their views widely differ, and her especial love of home-virtues has given her an unusual sympathy with our home-loving queen.

Before telling of the birth of the little Princess Victoria, the author gives

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of her future kept her in a certain retirement, and freed her from much pomp and adulation, while the probability of her future distinction caused her mother to devote her whole energies to an adequate preparation for it.

The distinguished men of the day, such as Wilberforce, Sir Walter Scott, and Mrs. Somerville, were eagerly welcomed at Kensington Palace, and the little girl was encouraged to reverence greatness of every kind and not only that bestowed by rank.

Dr. Wilberforce was struck by her Quaker-like habit of literal truth.

Baroness Zehzen, the little girl's governess, reports to her mother that she had been rather naughty once. "No, Zehzen, twice; don't you remember?" says the accurate child.

The Duke of Kent's sad and untimely death left his widow encumbered with debt, and perhaps it was thanks to this and other trials that she brought up her daughter to strict notions of honesty in money matters, which were not unlikely to win the hearts of those who, with rather an empty sneer, have been called "a nation of shopkeepers." In any case, the young girl, who received with such simplicity the news of her accession in the early morning at Kensington, was not long in winning the hearts of all those who came into communication with her. Perhaps some of the romantic interest that had been bestowed upon the poor young Princess Charlotte was transferred to the niece of her bereaved husband, Prince Leopold, who centred in the young queen all the hopes and affections which had been so cruelly crushed on the untimely death of his own wife.

It was owing to the influence of this same Uncle Leopold that the Queen began her reign as a partisan of the Whigs. In consequence of the wise guidance of his trusted friend, Baron Stockmar, she realised, as her powers ripened, that the function of a constitutional sovereign is to be above party, and she learnt to see what was good in the aims of both sides in spite of her natural friendship for and dependence on her Whig statesman, Lord Melbourne.

In these early times we hear much of the Queen's beauty and charm, and more still of the dignity and queenliness which we know so well now, and which has been so marked in her from her earliest years.

An American, called Mr. Willis, sees her at Ascot in her seventeenth year, and speaks of her as "quite unnecessarily pretty and interesting." Grim old Carlyle sees her just before her nineteenth birthday, and even he cannot help speaking gently of her as "a pretty-looking little creature—health, clearness, and graceful timidity looking out from her young face."

That the loyalty to this timid girl has grown almost to a passion with ordinary English folk is because she has always tried to act up to the solemn words of the coronation service, to "do justice, stop the growth of iniquity, and confirm what is in good order." "Expediency" and "trouble" were words she did not wish to hear, and her dictum has always been, "Only tell me how the thing is to be done, and done rightly, and I will do it if I can."

In spite of the coolness towards her felt at first by the Tories, Miss Martineau records the profound relief felt by the better spirits, that goodness and simplicity held the throne, in the person of the young Queen, rather than the gross sons of George III.

Before her accession Melbourne had been no partisan of the Queen, yet she was able to learn much from him, owing to her friendly spirit, and she relied on him as a man whose frivolity was assumed, but whose disinterestedness was genuine.

The Queen's first experience of the game of politics was over Lord Durham's difficulties in Canada. She was able then to see how valuable was the attitude of the Duke of Wellington, who cared more to uphold the nation's honour, than to prove either party in the right.

Mrs. Fawcett brings out with a few touches the character of everyone she describes, and this is emphatically the case with "the Iron Duke." His party was furious at his speech—"Depend upon it it was true," he remarked, with Spartan indifference.

The Queen's first indiscretion was an objection to the customary change being made in the ladies of the bedchamber when the Tories came in with Sir Robert Peel. In 1858, with characteristic simplicity, she tells Lord John Russell, "the mistake was entirely my own foolishness," showing, as in so many other instances, that, like Sir Lancelot, she is capable of:—

"That far off touch of greatness,  
To know she is not great."

The account of the Queen's betrothal and her utter devotion to her lover is a very touching one. The letter of the Prince sounds less warm, but that may possibly be owing to the English translation, as homely German words carry more warmth than their English equivalents. Though the Queen had no love troubles, yet she had much to suffer in the nation's stupidity about the Prince. The courtiers of the last reign objected to the domestic atmosphere of the palace, and the Prince's determination to have only men of character about the Queen.

Though the rain poured down, the Queen's was a sunshiny wedding, and everyone noticed her radiant look. The Prince by his straightforward efforts to act rightly soon won many hearts. He helped the Queen in her endeavour to change the tone of the court, by his own irreproachable conduct, and so far combated the prejudices against him that before the birth of the Princess-Royal he was provisionally appointed regent with only one dissentient voice.

The Queen regretted the change of ministers, but eventually made a firm friendship with Peel, and respected him more and more, as she found that he thought more of the welfare of the nation, than of party. He did not lose her confidence over the great crisis of the Repeal of the Corn Laws, when, to stay the awful Irish famine, he first kept, and then "he left office," as Cobden said, "to save his country." His other claim to honour was the introduction of great fiscal reforms, the fashion for which had been set by the Queen's wise economy.

An interesting chapter in the book is the account of Baron Stockmar, who originally came to England in 1816 as physician in the household of Prince Leopold, husband of the beloved and unfortunate Princess Charlotte. Stockmar was no mere courtier, and his descriptions of his contemporaries are very racy and amusing. He writes of "the mulatto countenance of the Queen-mother, Queen Charlotte; the hideous face of the Duke of Cumberland, with one eye turned quite out of its place; the quiet kindness of the Duke of Kent; the erect figure, with black hair simply cut, immense hawk's nose, tightly compressed lips, strong, massive underjaw of the Duke of Wellington, with his easy, simple, friendly manners, and his moderation at table, are all noted; so are Castle-reagh's bad French, and not very good English; the Grand Duke Nicholas—afterwards the Emperor Nicholas of the Crimean war—a singularly handsome, attractive young fellow . . . very well-mannered, with a decided talent for flirting. . . . When Countess Lieven played after dinner on the piano, he kissed her hand,

which struck the English ladies present as peculiar, but decidedly desirable."

Stockmar had early conceived an enthusiasm for the principles of constitutional monarchy, and his influence over our Queen, fostered by her Uncle Leopold, was excellent in its promotion of a spirit which aimed at being above party considerations. Melbourne was jealous of Stockmar's influence, but the nation may well be grateful that he helped to raise the Queen above faction. He was a very outspoken critic, and kept his influence by his honesty.

His unusual intelligence is shown by his belief in the importance of a united Germany before the advantages of it were realised by other than a very few.

Palmerston and Stockmar were not the best of friends. They were at one in their enthusiasm for the English constitution, but Palmerston wanted to force it on the foreigner from a distance, Stockmar to display its advantages by ocular demonstration. In spite of this Palmerston bears emphatic testimony to the disinterestedness and intelligence of Stockmar in political matters.

In spite of her intense interest in politics no mother could have devoted more care to the organisation of the nursery than our Queen, or have had more healthy children. As the family grew year by year the nation watched with deep interest the happy home of the Queen. When Princess Alice was born, the young mother asked her uncle, the King of Hanover, to be godfather, thus showing great magnanimity, as he had been hostile to her from the earliest days, and had not shown a friendly spirit even to Prince Albert.

Touching enthusiasm was shown on the Queen's first visit to Ireland in 1849 with her four children. An old Irishwoman called out, "Oh, Queen dear, make one of them Prince Patrick and all Ireland will die for you." In consequence of this admirable advice the Duke of Connaught was named Arthur Patrick.

Mrs. Fawcett points out with justice how an unceasing intellectual strain did not unfit the Queen for performing her function of mother.

"In the seventeen years, from 1840 to 1857, the Queen had had nine children, all without exception of sound mind, and several very markedly above the average in intellectual vigour and capacity. She herself bore the strain of her confinements without any permanent deterioration of her natural vigour. The entry in the Prince Consort's life" in reference to the Queen's health after the birth of her children usually is, "the Queen made a rapid recovery. . . . The Queen throughout the whole of her married life down to the present time, . . . has been immersed in political work, often involving decisions of first-rate importance; she has therefore preserved her vigour of mind and power of work unimpaired; and it is not unfair to conclude that vigour of mind has come upon her 'frosty but kindly,' partly because she never was satisfied to regard her maternal duties on their physical side only."

The main object of the Queen in the education of her children was that they should be taught to exert themselves, and should be simple and upright servants of God.

The Queen had a difficult task to perform in the reorganisation of the Royal Household. The offices had been divided and sub-divided until "the Lord Chamberlain cleaned the inside of the windows and the woods and forests the outside." It would be a long story to enter on the amusing details of the confusion, all the most telling points of which Mrs. Fawcett fixes upon with her usual brevity and pointedness. Suffice it to say that when the Queen entertained in 1844 the Sovereigns of Russia and France she was able to make a



new departure owing to her economic reforms, and to defray all the expenses from the civil list, instead of imposing a special tax, as was done in 1814, when the Allied Sovereigns were entertained.

It would be impossible to point out all the many personal touches discerned by a perceptive eye to which this little book owes so much of its charm. Such are the account of the gardens at Osborne with the immense myrtle grown from the wedding bouquet of the Princess Royal, the description of the simple home-life at Balmoral, the Queen's good nature to the sailors on the royal yacht, the account of the Queen's spirit and thoughtfulness for others under the attacks of Francis and other rascals, Peel's horror at the cowardly actions and her determination to get the death punishment for such offences altered to one which was milder if more certain.

An interesting chapter is devoted to the account of the Queen's visit in 1843 to Louis Philippe, and her indignation at his disgraceful conduct in the matter of the Spanish marriage, in spite of which she received and clothed the French royal family when they fled to her protection in the European Revolution of 1848. England escaped unscathed, and Prince Albert was full of pride in our constitutional government when the 25,000 instead of the reputed 500,000 Chartists melted to 8000, who allowed their monster petition to be taken peaceably to the House of Commons in three four-wheeled cabs.

But though glad at John Bull's distaste for blood and thunder, the Queen and Prince did not look at the revolutionary spirit from a heartless or flippant point of view.

They consulted with Lord Shaftesbury on measures for the relief of the miseries of the poor, and the Prince Consort determined to turn his mind to the subject, and helped Lord Ashley by taking the chair at a meeting of the "Labourers' Friend Society." This may seem trifling, but a straw shows which way the stream flows.

It is impossible to read the chapter on the Queen's difficulties with Palmerston without being struck by the grasp of the situation which it shows. The great blame due to Lord Palmerston for his persistent ignoring of the rights of the Queen and the Prime Minister to have a sight of despatches and time to alter them, is condoned by the far-seeing nature of his policy and the natural irritation he felt in being thwarted. His righteous indignation at Austria made it hard to him to be just to her or to General Haynau,

and his wish for France as an ally against Russia blinded his eyes to the atrocity of the *coup d'état* and the unworthiness of Napoleon III.

The Queen, however, succeeded in maintaining her constitutional rights and yet let no personal animus prevent her from learning what was to be learnt from Lord Palmerston, and finally becoming his firm friend.

In the national emotions, stirred in time both of peace and war, the Queen has always shared to the full. She rejoiced eagerly at the success of the great exhibition of 1851, of which so much was hoped, though truly it cannot be said to have done very much more than accustom the country people to come up to London on the novel railways.

Her sympathy with her troops at the time of the Crimean war is too well known to need much comment. "You must hurry back to Sebastopol and take it, else it will kill mamma," said one of the royal children to Lord Cardigan when he was at Windsor. Though at first somewhat influenced by sympathy with the Russian Christians in Turkey, the Queen yet came to feel that their miseries were chiefly a cloak for Russian aggression, and hence she felt that the war was a just one, and threw herself into it. She did not sympathise with the "Peace at any price" party, but saw that the nobler feelings of a nation are often brought into play by the need for courage and united action in a war.

There was much unjust distrust of the Prince Consort during the Crimean war which pained the Queen very much, and Mrs. Fawcett points out an analogy between his trials in England and those of the Princess-Royal in Germany, who was the first of the Queen's children to leave her on her marriage in 1858 to the Crown Prince of Prussia. The substantial benefits bestowed by these two princes consort on the country of their adoption have not failed to secure for them in the end the gratitude of all the wisest among their subjects.

After the horrors of the Indian mutiny, the Queen threw her influence as a woman into the side of justice tempered with mercy, and strengthened the hands of "Clemency Canning." She did great service to the rule of England in India, by insisting on the expression of a spirit of fairness and toleration towards the religions of India, and by so doing showed that it is a mistake to imagine that a constitutional sovereign has no function but that of assenting to whatever is put before her by her prime ministers. On her visit to Cherbung in 1858 the Queen realised the serious

increase in the military forces in France. This added to her sympathy in the volunteer movement which rose to meet any possible future danger. Mrs. Fawcett tells us that when a Frenchman sneered at the great volunteer review in 1860, and said that the English were a nation of shop-keepers, he was well answered by a homely Englishman, as direct as Captain Mirvan in Miss Burney's *Evelina*, who replied, "So they are, Moosoo; and these are the boys who keep the shop."

With deep sympathy Mrs. Fawcett describes the great sorrow of the Queen's life, and at this point the main interest of the book is over, for but little is known of the inner life of her Majesty after that date, and public events are too much in the hot light of the present hour to bear much comment in a book such as this.

Praise is chiefly due to our author for the spirit in which she has handled her material. Here was a great mass of detail on political business, court functions and royal births, deaths and marriages. It is not easy to make a vivid story out of such material. Mrs. Fawcett succeeded because she realised the enthusiasm and the real feeling at the root of the story.

The book might have told of some woman more full of genius and originality than our own home-like Queen, but there could not easily have been so deep a source for sympathy with any but one whose ruling passion was love of her country and its highest interests. Thankful may we be as a nation that we have had a woman such as this for our Queen, the intenser moments of whose life have not been those of pride and gratified ambition, but of union with her people in their simplest joys and sorrows. True prophet as she has often been in discerning what most made for glory in peace and in war, it is more by her sure touch for what is the noble feeling and what are the truly precious things of life, that she has formed the rallying-point of the nation and proved the truest friend of constitutional monarchy.

This never-flagging hunger for the plain bread and wine of human feelings has made the Queen dearer to her people than if she had been only a talented Carmen Sylva, or a statesman-like Queen Elizabeth.

Mrs. Fawcett seldom better shows her insight into this fineness of feeling in her Majesty, than when she tells us of her passionate outpourings of sorrow on anniversaries of her husband's death, and her simple words, "My poor birthday," on the anniversary of her own birth.

## VARIETIES.

"PRAYER," says an old divine, "pulls the rope below, and the great bell rings above in the ears of God. Some scarcely stir the bell, for they pray so languidly; others give but an occasional pluck at the rope; but he who wins with heaven is the man who grasps the rope boldly, and pulls continuously with all his might."

NO KISSING IN JAPAN.—Kisses and embraces are simply unknown in Japan as tokens of affection, if we except the solitary fact that Japanese mothers, like mothers all over the world, kiss and hug their little ones. But after babyhood there is no more hugging or kissing. Never do girls kiss one another; never do parents kiss or embrace their children who have become able to walk. And this holds good of all classes of society, from the highest nobility to the humblest peasantry.

ABOUT RED HAIR.—The phenomenon of red hair is said by scientific men to be caused by a superabundance of iron in the blood. This it is that imparts the vigour, the elasticity, the great vitality, the overflowing, thoroughly healthy animal life which runs riot through the veins of the ruddy-haired, and this strong animal life is what renders them more intense in all their emotions than their more languid fellow-creatures.

GOOD FORTUNE AND BAD FORTUNE.—Adversity is sometimes hard upon a girl, but for one girl who can stand prosperity, there are a hundred that will stand adversity.

SILENCE IS GOLDEN.—If there is any person to whom you feel dislike, that is the person against or of whom you ought never to speak.

THE LADY IN THE MOON.—The "man in the moon" has been for ages quite a familiar friend. But it is not so generally known that he shares his throne and divides his honours with a very comely representative of woman-kind. "Would you see her at her best," writes an amateur astronomer, "let it be on a cloudless night as near full moon as possible. Use a good opera or field glass. Be patient; some fail to see her at first. The face is in profile and looks towards your left as you gaze, occupying half the surface of the moon; the hair dark and coiled rather high. Her throat and neck are radiantly beautiful. Beyond her profile is seen the dark face of a man looking straight forward."

LIVING FOR ONESELF.—The girl who lives only for herself is in a very small way of business.