

QUEEN VICTORIA.



SIXTY years have come and gone since the crown of Great Britain first rested, by right of descent, upon the head of the daughter of the Duke of Kent, and a girl of eighteen was enthroned as Victoria, Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, to which has since been added the title of Empress of India. Among the people who have lived happily and with growing prosperity under her long and just sway, naturally and by a common impulse has been begotten a desire that the year which registers the longest and the happiest reign by a British sovereign should be marked indelibly by their earnest, sincere, and grateful recognition.

In these threescore years there has been no interregnum, no lapse for an instant, when any of the multitude of powers, duties, and high prerogatives constitutionally vested in the throne has been yielded to the hand of another, or has not personally, laboriously, and honorably been fulfilled by the present Queen. No more interesting episode in history has occurred, or is likely soon again to be repeated, than this remarkable accompaniment of ripened maturity, of long official life dedicated unflinchingly to the public service, with personal excellence and unstained good example to the human race in every region of the globe.

Surely it is worth while for all who study and seek to discover the secret of good government in any of its forms to pause in the rapid and often heated journey of daily life, and, contemplating such a career and record, to ask upon what basis it has proceeded, and by what agencies a reign so prolonged has been so impressively and unquestionably marked by the increased welfare, the elevation of moral, intellectual, and material standards, which to-day cause the empire of Great Britain to be the most extended and powerful in the world's history.

Perhaps no single reply can be made to this suggestion, or none can be more instructive in accounting for the place Queen Victoria has gained in history, the firm hold she has acquired upon the confidence and respect of mankind, and the permanent and

secure place she has in the hearts of her people, than is contained in the instinctive response made by her when consulted as to the form of manifestation of the universal wish of her people that the year which records the prolongation of her reign beyond that of any of her predecessors should be distinguished in the annals of her country as a year of popular jubilee, and witness the erection of permanent and impressive monuments to emphasize to the present and future generations her just renown and glory. In other times, and in Great Britain as in other lands, the glorification of powerful and successful rulers has been attested by huge grants of public property in its many forms of material wealth. Architecture, sculpture, painting, and kindred arts have all lent their aid to swell the current of munificent embellishment, and with such permanence as earth can secure have built high the structure of personal adulation to those who became the objects of admiration and patriotic devotion. But such was not the thought of the venerable sovereign who, from youth to old age, from her high post of duty has so solicitously watched over a vast body of human interests. Her long life has been checkered with lights and shadows. Sorrows have necessarily and inevitably followed upon the steps of joy, and her ear has not been insensible to the surging Vergilian cry, the *«lachrymæ rerum,»* sobbings ever in the hearts of mankind.

The tasks of real life soon surrounded her, and early indeed were the maidenly virtues brought into the companionship of serious and responsible public duties. Grave duties to the state, religious duty, social duty in its fullest, strongest sense, and the claims of benevolence and charity, walked ever hand in hand at her side. Upon these were ingrafted the natural affections of domestic life, with its strong and holy ties; and as a true wife and mother she has presented to her people the example of a modest, refined, self-respecting home life.

And who that is acquainted with the circle of domestic duty, with the currents of such a life, does not perceive how, with quiet yet persistent force, they connect themselves with the great stream of governmental

power, until the whole sphere of public action is refreshed and strengthened by the unflinching purity of such fountains of supply, and it becomes plain that the qualities that make a state strong, self-respecting, and honored are best nourished by the domestic virtues of well-ordered and happy homes?

Such was and is the home of Victoria; and when consulted as to the form in which her great age and long reign should best be commemorated, her heart gave the wise answer: «Let it all take the shape of charity. Let your offerings be given to the poor and lowly, and your aid to those who are in want and are about to perish. Let this intent govern your systematized effort to heal the inevitable inequalities of human society, so that the gifts of God, in a spirit of reasonableness and mercy, may be distributed among his creatures.»

From her decision in this matter may best be discerned the spirit in which the Queen has sought to shape her life. It is no sudden impulse, no startled reaction from cold indifference, or a reproachful sense of days wasted in selfish disregard of painful or unpleasant duty. No country in the world presents at this day a more sustained, efficient, and honorable system of voluntary charities for every class of suffering humanity, and relief for the countless ills that flesh is heir to, than Great Britain.

No intelligent observer could fail to be convinced that important among the sources of true strength of the government of that country is the warm, strong flood of human brotherhood that makes itself felt and is recognized as it pulsates through all the arteries of the community, from opulence to poverty, lessening misery and strengthening «the tie that binds» men together in the sense of their interdependence and mutual needs for aid and sympathy.

Before these words shall have been read the voice of her people will have been distinctly heard giving vent to their feelings in their own way toward one who has ruled

their affairs so long and faithfully, with not a trace of personal ambition, selfishness, or desire for arbitrary power. In this sixtieth year of Victoria religious liberty and toleration are absolute, and the rules of the public service contain no sectarian proscription or exclusion. Justice between man and man is in all cases publicly, freely, and impartially administered to all classes and occupations, without distinction of race, age, sex, or condition of fortune; and in the presence of equal laws all are alike protected, restrained, or punished, with an eye single to the public safety and the security of private freedom. This is the ingrained belief and immovable confidence of the body of the people, and herein lies the true bulwark against invasion and overthrow from within or without.

When, therefore, it is asked why the Queen's long reign is a subject of such deep general feeling, grateful joy, and marked congratulation among those over whom it extends, numbered by hundreds of millions, scattered as they are all over the earth's surface, separated by seas, and composed of races so variant in origin, tradition, customs, and creeds, the answer will be found in the heart of contented humanity, and its recognition of the progress of the principles of Christian civilization. They read in the features and discern in the long and laborious life of the head of their government

The holy pride of good intent,
The glory of a life well spent;

and love and pride are mingled in the tribute they gladly bring to greet their Queen in the sixtieth year of her reign. Wiser than her ancestor of 1776, the monarch of Great Britain has accepted the great lesson of government, the chief instructor of which was our own and only Washington, who

Taught Prince and Peer that power was but a trust,
And rule alone that served the ruled was just.

Thomas F. Bayard.

