

to ensure for us successful bloom. Briefly, then, let us sum up a few months' care that we ought to bestow upon them. Late in the autumn give a good dressing of manure, as also shorten the laterals that invite the wind and act like sails to your standard and strive to capsize it in a gale. Then comes the pruning closely

and sharply in the month of March, as also the suppression of the growth along the stock, which we take care always to secure well to the stake, and the syringing in May is followed by the sweet flower in June, when the more generously we gather the more generously does our standard bloom."

 ROYAL PRINCES AND THEIR BRIDES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "HOW TO BE HAPPY THOUGH MARRIED," ETC. ETC.

(Illustrated by Portraits contemporary with the Weddings.)



H.R.H. THE DUKE OF KENT.

(From a Painting by G. Dawe, R.A.)

was the case when the Duke of Clarence (afterwards William IV.) wished to marry Princess Adelaide Louisa Theresa Caroline Amelia, eldest child of George, Duke of Saxe-Meiningen. The House of Commons would not at first vote what was considered a suitable provision, but at length matters were arranged, and the marriage took place, and proved a not unhappy one despite the disparity in years (the bride was in her twenty-sixth, the bridegroom in his fifty-third, year) and the absence of any preliminary courtship. Princess Adelaide soon acquired great influence over her husband. She was not remarkable for personal attractions, but, having been brought up simply and strictly by an excellent mother, she greatly disliked anything like laxity of morals, and was herself all that was good and becoming. At the same time there was another marriage also on the tapis, as it is called, that of the Duke of Kent with the sister of Prince Leopold. They were first married in Germany, and afterwards according to the English rite in a room in Kew Palace.

The story of our present Queen's choice of her cousin, Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg, is well known.

IT is not mere vulgar curiosity that makes so many people take an interest in the details of royal betrothals and weddings. No doubt this and snobbery have something to do with it, but we think that the public is interested chiefly because Princes and their brides represent the feelings and sentiments of all other young people who are about to marry. We sympathise, too, because we know that difficulties beset the marriages of royal persons from which the alliances of the ordinary Edwin and Leonora or John and Jane are exempt. How to be happy though married is a problem which some people who have chosen for themselves cannot solve, and it must be even more difficult for those whose marriages are arranged for them, very much from considerations of State policy. And yet even in a palace, as the Emperor Marcus Aurelius has told us, life may be well led, and our own Queen has proved to us that there may be as much romance, as much happiness, and as much holiness in a royal marriage as in that of the simplest of her subjects.

The sympathy aroused by a love affair is always greater when some difficulty stands in the way. This



H.R.H. THE DUCHESS OF KENT.

(From a Painting by H. Colten.)

It was a love match, but it was one which approved itself to the Queen's own reason and conscience as well as to the reason and conscience of her advisers, and of the nation generally. No less than five other marriages had been contemplated for the young Sovereign, but she remained firm in her resolution—either to marry Albert or not to marry at all.

Even in Leap Year it is not easy for a girl of eighteen to propose marriage, but this is what the position of the Queen required. She has herself described what took place. "I sent for Albert. He came to the closet, where I was alone, and after a few minutes I said to him that I thought he would be aware why I wished him to come, and that it would make me happy if he would consent to what I wished—namely, to marry me." The Privy Council was summoned without loss of time to receive the formal announcement of the betrothal. All were touched by the maidenly modesty and sweetness of



HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN.

(From a Painting by W. C. Ross, A.R.A.)

the girl who had to read the declaration of her intention. A bracelet which she wore on the occasion with the Prince's portrait "seemed to give her courage." On every side the announcement was received with demonstrations of sympathy, and Sir Robert Peel spoke the prevailing sentiment when, in supporting the congratulatory address of the House of Commons, he said: "Her Majesty has the singular good fortune to be able to gratify her private feelings while she performs her public duty, and to obtain the best guarantee for happiness by contracting an alliance founded on affection. I cordially hope that the union now contemplated will contribute to Her Majesty's happiness, and enable her to furnish to her people an exalted example of wedded happiness."

On the 10th of March, 1863, the Prince of Wales was married to the Princess Alexandra of Denmark ("the Sea-King's daughter," as Tennyson called her), at St. George's Chapel, Windsor. It was the first royal marriage which had been celebrated in that chapel since the marriage of Henry I., in 1122.



THE PRINCE CONSORT.

(From a Painting by W. C. Ross, A.R.A.)

Happily, in this instance, Love kindled the fire of Hymen's torch. Young hearts had kissed each other and exchanged vows before national policy was consulted. If the rumour at the time spoke truly, it was sisterly intuition which first discerned the qualities which became a brother's bride, and sisterly affection which first brought them under the Prince's notice. The judgment of the people of England concurred with the affection of the Prince. The nation seemed to take the beautiful Princess to its heart as a daughter, and felt from the moment she landed at Dover the fascination of her presence. The ceremonial employed at the wedding was brilliant and effective to a degree which public pageants in England seldom are in these matter-of-fact days.

If one cause of the popularity of the Prince of Wales's marriage was that the Danish people came from the same original stock as ourselves, the fact that his son is now about to marry a Princess who is almost purely English gives even more complete satisfaction. Indeed, the nation may be said to have made the match. The great sorrow through which Princess May had been called upon to pass, and her well-known sympathy with and helpfulness in philanthropic work, especially amongst children, have endeared her to every heart.

Twenty-six years ago, Princess Victoria Mary Augusta Louisa Olga Pauline Claudine Agnes—to give all her names—was born in the quiet old palace of Kensington, where many years before the Queen had also been born. A few years afterwards her parents went to live at Florence, and here Princess May spent much of her time in the art galleries. When the family returned to England, White Lodge, near Richmond, was chosen as a place of residence. In this pleasant abode the bride-elect has lived a happy open-air life, joining in the games of her three brothers—riding, skating, and enjoying country pursuits. Much of her time indoors is spent in reading, singing,



T.R.H. THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS OF WALES.
(From contemporary prints.)

and knitting warm garments for the poor. She is particularly fond of history. Her voice, trained by Signor Foli, is very sweet, though not powerful.

"God bless the dear child! She deserves to be happy if ever anybody did." This sentiment of an old woman living near the Lodge is just what all other

aged, infirm, and sick people in the neighbourhood feel. The Princess has endeared herself to them by kindly acts, of which the following is a single specimen. Her mother was having a garden party. Carriage after carriage drove up, and a band was playing on the lawn. An old woman, not knowing that gaieties



H.S.H. PRINCESS VICTORIA MARY OF TECK.
(From a photograph by Elliott & Fry, Baker Street, W.)



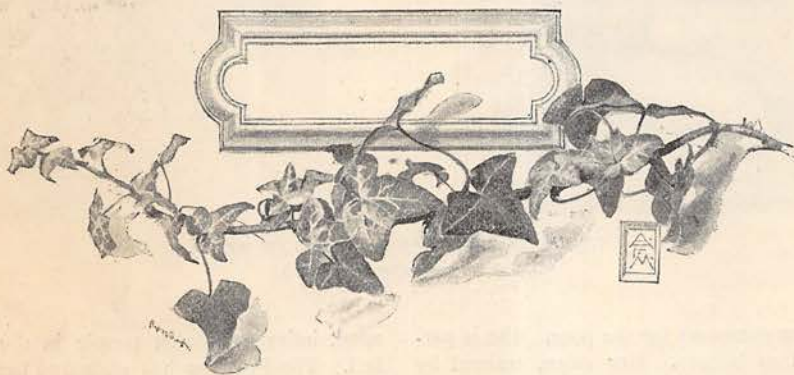
H.R.H. THE DUKE OF YORK.
(From a photograph by Lafayette, Dublin.)

were going on, came to fetch some promised present. Bewildered and shy, she tried to make her way to the back door, but found herself suddenly on the lawn, where a fashionable crowd was assembled. In a moment Princess May came forward, with a sweet smile and kind words, and received the poor old dame as an honoured guest.

Prince George Frederick Ernest Albert, who is about two years older than his *fiancée*, is also much liked by all who know him, especially by the men and officers of the Royal Navy. Only the other day one of the latter, who had been shipmate with him on at least one commission, told the writer that our future king was a real sailor, who liked, and had worked hard at, his profession. "And a good sort, too," he added; "for I know that whenever another lieutenant wished

to go on shore Sailor George would very frequently offer to take his watch for him."

Some fourteen years ago, when I was stationed at the Bermudas, those summer but rather sleepy islands were enlivened by the arrival of two young royalties, naval cadets on board H.M.S. *Bacchante*. Prince George was then a very bright, fresh-looking boy. At a garden party at Admiralty House he seemed to enjoy himself much, talking and laughing as only sailor boys can with a pretty girl his own age, the daughter of a military officer. How quickly time passes! The small boy has grown up, and is going to be married. We all hope that he will be very happy. Indeed he ought to be, if it be true that the Prince always admired his future wife, and has been heard to say that if his brother did not marry her he would do so himself.



A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A CABINET MINISTER.

BY RAYMOND BLATHWAYT.



THOUGH the sun blazed down upon the hot and crowded and dusty streets beyond, and though the roar and bustle of the great city lying around ceased not for a single moment, yet, within the cool secluded precincts of the India Office, and the stately

building which affords a shelter to the Local Government Board, a deep, unbroken silence reigned supreme. An official would now and again cross the wide-stretching quadrangle, or a harmoniously-cooing pigeon would flutter through the hot air, its white wings glancing and flashing in the golden sunshine, the strains of a distant band came thrilling across St. James's Park, but otherwise it was as still and secluded as one might imagine would be the courtyards of a mediæval monastery buried in the heart of the Black Forest. Here within this charming wilderness of silence I paced slowly up and down, waiting for the moment when I could keep my appointment with Mr. H. H. Fowler, the President of the Local Government Board, for in the case of so tremendously worked and busy a person as a Cabinet Minister, the compliment of exact punctuality is not only a desirable courtesy but a veritable necessity.

At last there came booming through the air the solemn, albeit rather cracked notes of the bell familiarly known to all the world as Big Ben.

Punctually, therefore, to the moment, I found myself ascending a deep, wide stone staircase, passing down long resounding corridors, through the misty, solemn gloom of which many a golden ray of sunshine pierced its way, until at last I was ushered into the presence of the hard-worked and energetic minister himself. For I do not suppose that even our indefatigable Premier is a harder worker than the President of the Local Government Board.

"No eight hours for me, Mr. Blathwayt, I can assure you," he remarked, as he rapidly opened and glanced through letter after letter from the tremendous pile which lay in front of him.

"No," re-echoed his son, who is also his private secretary; "I don't think my father ever ceases work; his recreation is merely change from one kind of work to another."

Mr. Fowler is a grey-haired, middle-sized man, with small grey whiskers, a firm, clean-shaven mouth and chin, a dry, business-like manner and expression, which is, however, illuminated now and again with a pleasantly-humorous smile. He is, I believe, the senior member of a firm of lawyers in Wolverhampton, which town, in conjunction with Mr. Villiers, the