

he had ridden miles through a thick snow storm to be there.

Imagine her surprise to be asked, "Are they still here! Is all well?" And imagine the surprise of Dorinda when the doctor brought to the side of her couch looked at her out of Oliver Ransome's eyes, spoke to her with Oliver Ransome's voice.

Fancy, too, the consternation of Perks to be told that roads were impassable, mails stopped, and no other doctor to be had.

"Master'll never see you, sir, I know he won't. He's that obstinate he'd die first. If he knew this was your house, sir, he'd have himself carried out if he died in the road."

He was willing to see the old country doctor whose hat was tied on with a handkerchief over his scratch wig, and who looked at his furred tongue through clumsy horn spectacles, though he groaned in spirit when told in a day or two that Dorinda was no longer able to sit by his pillow, needed the best attention and advice, and that the fellow in the wig and spectacles was the only doctor within reach, always except Dr. Ransome, who lived near.

There was a tremulous quaver in the old doctor's voice when he spoke of his grave fears for Sir Clement's daughter. Her system had received a severe shock, he said, and he had fears lest she might not rally. He wished from his heart there was some physician at hand to consult.

The red-hot pincers of the gout are nothing to the pincers of remorse. In his impetuosity he had brought all this agony on himself—this danger to his darling. He had insulted the only man there was at hand with ability to save her; and for what? For a graceless nephew, who had not even had the decency to offer his cloak to his cousin, or to inquire whether they were dead or alive.

He did Sylvester injustice. He was back at Repton, and the Manor House was snowed up.

A day went by. The old surgeon's spectacles were dim when he spoke of Miss Ducie with a mournful shake of his bewigged head.

"Then send for Dr. Ransome," burst from the father's lips in fear and anguish.

"Dr. Ransome can do no more for her than I have done," was the mournful rejoinder; and as Sir Clement denounced his doctor "a conceited quack," spectacles and wig were slowly removed, and Oliver Ransome himself made confession that Miss Ducie was in so critical a state he would be glad of another opinion, if obtainable for love or money. "At the same time, Sir Clement, be assured nothing will be wanting either Mrs. Dalrymple or myself can do for her. I would give my life to save Miss Ducie's."

Sir Clement was confounded. Was this trickery or truth? He insisted on being carried into his daughter's chamber.

There was no trickery. Dorinda was indeed in a perilous state, and Mrs. Dalrymple herself was doing duty as her nurse.

Thanks to a thaw, in three more days a messenger on horseback reached London, and in less than an hour an eminent physician was on the road.

By that time, however, the crisis was past, the grateful blue eyes had hope in them, and the physician pocketed his hundred guineas for simply saying the patient had been skilfully treated, and was in a fair way to recover—with care.

She did recover; and then Sir Clement, in his gratitude, would have loaded Mrs. Dalrymple and Dr. Ransome with favours.

But nothing would either accept.

"My mother and myself are amply repaid in Miss Ducie's restoration," said Oliver,

"Dalrymple—Ransome! I don't understand."

"My mother has been married twice. Sir Clement, my father, was Colonel Ransome, of the — Hussars."

"You don't say so! He took charge of Lady Ducie on her tedious passage from India, before Dorinda was born. The kindest of kind friends!"

Not one word of love or marriage did Dorinda hear either from Oliver Ransome or her father under that roof.

But Dr. Ransome and Mrs. Dalrymple were invited to spend a month at Ducie West in the spring, and whether Sir Clement spoke first to the young man, or he to the young lady, it is certain that when the news of Sylvester Ducie's marriage to Lucy Repton reached them, they were far gone in preparations for a bridal. And years afterwards Dorinda Ransome said she never regretted that cold ride in the New Year's snow, since it led her to the safe shelter of a true heart, and enabled her father to distinguish between the crooked policy which was all for self, and the nobler nature which overmastered self in consideration for others.

THE QUEEN'S DOMESTIC LIFE.

By ARDERN HOLT.

I.



It is only in modern days that, with the pomp and ceremony which of necessity surround royalty, we have also learned to associate a love of domestic life. Lord Beaconsfield speaks of the Queen as one who "has elected, amid all the splendour of empire, to establish her life on the principle of domestic love," and the insight which Her Majesty has permitted her loyal subjects of her daily existence, has shown how, even to one so exalted, a happy home is "world wide enough." I quote her own words: "We must all have trials and visitations, but if one's home is happy, the rest is comparatively nothing." And again and again she herself testifies to the happiness of that home which has always been a pattern of what a home should be—a pure moral atmosphere, distinguished by refined and simple tastes, and warm family affections. Here all the graces were cultivated; all the charities fostered; it was "the seat of conscientious unremitting work, which had for its object the protection and promotion of the country's welfare."

The Queen's marriage was one of pure affection—a "marriage of true minds." The Prince Consort, possessed of a noble nature and clear sound intellect, entirely forgot his own individuality in his devotion to her. He was her over from first to last. "Very few can say with me," writes his wife, "that their husband at the end of twenty-one years is not only full of the friendship, kindness, and affection which a truly happy marriage brings with it, but of the same tender love as in the very first days of our marriage." And in addition he was her helpmate in very deed, the "ocean to the river of her thoughts," the natural head of the family, her private secretary, and the only recipient of her confidence

in matters relating to state affairs. He spared no pains in acquiring accurate knowledge on all topics, and his systematic labours gave him a great power of mastering details. The perfect union of mind, interests, and tastes between the husband and wife shows itself in a hundred little touches. The Prince was an early riser, and even in winter was up by seven in his study, reading, writing, and preparing documents for the Queen, who by-and-bye would join him at her writing table beside his own. By half-past nine breakfast and the family prayers with the household in the chapel would be over, and in the earlier days of their marriage the husband and wife would stroll in the grounds together, but as the demands on their time grew greater this was discontinued, or came later in the day. The Prince never went out without an equerry, and the visits he paid in London were not to individuals, but to studios or charitable institutions. But wherever he went he returned always to the Queen to tell her about it, a loving smile on his handsome face. As time went on, and their children were born, he proved himself a most tender and precious nurse, always at hand to do anything for the Queen's comfort, sitting in her darkened room reading and writing for her, and no one but himself ever lifted her from her bed to the sofa.

The husband and wife delighted in the companionship of each other. Besides a community of interests, they had the same tastes. Baron Stockmar, one of the Queen's oldest and most valued friends, who had known the Prince and herself from childhood, and as Lord Palmerston—a not too favourable critic—said, the only thoroughly disinterested person he had ever known, describes Her Majesty as quick and acute in her perceptions, straightforward, and of singular purity of heart, without a trace of vanity or pretension. Others who knew her when she ascended the throne testify to her intelligence, the acuteness of her judgments, then mature beyond her years. She never forgets a name or a countenance, and this royal faculty has been a continual source of pleasure to those among her subjects, who have been honoured with interviews, in which she invariably shows a minute knowledge of events interesting to them. All this was fostered by her husband. He was of opinion that the sovereign should be the best-informed person in her dominion as to the progress of political events, and those who now transact business with the Queen are astonished at her thorough knowledge, not only of political and social questions, but of the necessary etiquette and forms of procedure.

The Prince Consort was a clever artist, a good musician, and no mean composer. Many a happy leisure hour they spent together, etching, sketching, and playing, he composing many a chansonnette, which she helped him to put on paper. The Prince specially delighted in the organ; to it he spoke out his whole heart, without fear of being misunderstood, and his wife was his most appreciative listener. In the "Leaves from the Journal of Our Life in the Highlands," "The Early Days of the Prince Consort," and the five subsequent volumes of "The Life of the Prince Consort," the Queen has been brought very near to the hearts of her people, who have thereby learned to realise how warm her interest is in all that concerns them, how large her heart for family affection, how good a daughter, how devoted a wife she has proved herself. But it is as a mother, perhaps, that we realise best that "one touch of nature" which "makes the whole world kin."

No parents could have been more self-sacrificing or have shown more wisdom in the education of their offspring. The prevailing idea was that the children were to be brought up as simply and as domestically as possible.

They were to be as much with their parents as their lessons and public duties permitted, and they were to learn to place their greatest confidence in them in all things. The head was to be well provided for, but the heart was to be the primary consideration. Religious training, according to the Queen's opinion, was best learnt at the mother's knee, and she grieved sadly that her many occupations prevented her being present when the Princess Royal as a child said her prayers, though she found time occasionally to hear her lessons.

There could hardly have been a happier family circle than the highest in the land when the Sovereign's children were growing up around her. You gather somewhat of the mother's affectionate solicitude, when you read how, in 1845, on the morning of their parents' visit to Germany, the young princes and princesses were with them at breakfast, and with what a heavy heart the adieux were made, and how lonely and deserted Buckingham Palace seemed that night when the Queen writes, "I miss the poor children so much." It made the delight of the return the greater when the four little ones welcome them, looking "like roses, so well and so fat!" As they grew in years the young people showed themselves worthy of the love and care lavished on them. On birthdays, and other pleasurable anniversaries, many are the surprises planned to delight the Prince and Queen. Sometimes it is the acquiring of some fresh knowledge, sometimes it is a gift secretly prepared. On one occasion they arrange a masque of the seasons. Princess Alice represents Spring; Princess Royal, Summer; Prince Alfred (Alfie), Autumn; the Prince of Wales (Bertie), Winter; the Princess Helen Leuchen, as she is called by them all (for pet names are common in the royal circle), pronouncing a blessing on the Prince Consort and the Queen by way of conclusion. The Princess Royal during babyhood rejoiced in the name of Pussy, and the Queen herself draws a charming family picture when she tells us how a few days after her eldest son was born, her father brings in the little Princess "in such a smart white merino dress trimmed with blue which mamma had given her, and a pretty cap, and placed her on my bed, seating



BALMORAL.

himself next to her; and she was very dear and good; and as my precious invaluable Albert sat there and our little love between us, I felt quite moved with happiness and gratitude to God." The years as they rolled on brought changes. The Queen deplored that the state of her health prevented her being with her elder children on the occasion of their first public appearance in the City in 1847, and three years before she lives her own life over again in her eldest daughter, and can hardly believe that it can be her own child that is travelling with them to Dundee, "it puts me so in mind of myself when I was 'the little Princess.'" But in 1855 her thoughts are full of the coming marriage of this same Princess, little no longer; and a few years later another love story has to be told. Prince Louis of Hesse wins the heart of the Princess Alice, and the two are as happy and as lover-like as any middle class couple. He is dear to the Queen's heart. Also, writing of the engagement, she says, "Louis has a warm and noble heart. We embraced our dear Alice and

praised her much to him; he pressed and kissed my hand, and I embraced him. After talking a little we parted, a most touching and to me most sacred time."

Young as the Prince Consort died, he was a happy grandfather, another and deep source of happiness. In her diary the Queen writes: "Soon after we sat down to breakfast came a telegram from Fritz; Vicky had got a daughter at 8.10, both well. What joy! children jumping about, everyone delighted. So thankful, so relieved." A very merry-as-well 'as very intellectual and virtuous family circle the Queen enjoyed throughout her married life.

The Prince Consort was particularly notable for cheerfulness, which neither hard work nor close application to affairs of state at all diminished. During dinner, breakfast, and luncheon, he had always a store of amusing stories to tell, and, blessed with a good memory, he had also the knack of seeing the comical side of everything. The Queen now, and during her husband's lifetime, has ever



OSBORNE.

been a diligent reader of the leading newspapers, which find a place daily in the breakfast-room. The Prince examined them attentively during and after breakfast, reading any particular items of news aloud.

All the work regarding public affairs, which the Prince did for her, the Queen now does for herself, and a certain number of hours are set aside daily for writing, for Her Majesty has an unusually large correspondence with friends and relatives, and gives up one day in the week entirely to this letter-writing. Those who have perused her printed letters to her sister, the Princess Hohenlohe, and other relatives, will recognise that she has a special faculty for expressing herself clearly, and putting her very soul into the loving words of sympathy and interest prompted by a warm heart, brimful of tender thought for others. Her Majesty's letters do not go through the ordinary post; they are placed in special letter-bags and despatched from Whitehall by Queen's messengers; letters to and from foreign potentates reaching her through the several embassies. When the bags arrive at the palace where the Queen is, they are sorted, and family letters left unopened. The rest are prepared for her perusal, and when ready she spends many hours, with the help of her private secretary and minister in attendance, transacting the necessary business, which involves so much knowledge, care, and concentration, the power of mental concentration being one of Her Majesty's strong points. The demands made by matters of state on her time will be best realised if I tell you that as many as fifty telegrams reach her daily, and that when far away in Scotland it is the duty of the Vice-Chamberlain to telegraph nightly all the doings in Parliament.

(To be concluded.)

THE QUEEN O' THE MAY.

By ANNE BEALE.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WEDDINGS.

MANY changes took place amongst our friends which were the result of the explosion. Leah slowly recovered from her illness, but her infant died. Meredith also recovered from the shock and injuries he had sustained. During the ensuing few months it was arranged that Leah and her two children should live with her father and mother, and that Meredith should occupy the house provided for the manager of the mines. This was much insisted on by Mr. Richards, who had conceived a high opinion of Meredith's fidelity, zeal, and shrewdness. Indeed, he considered that the submission of the men who had resolved to strike was due as much to the young man's reasoning, as to horror at the explosion.

Evan and Peggy had been so much distressed by the grief of Little Davy at his father's funeral that they had actually taken the lad home with them to Derwen Fach. May was much delighted at this, though they scarcely knew what to do with him, and found it difficult to make him a temporary shakedown amongst the cheeses in the loft. But in the course of time Meredith came to the rescue. He asked and received permission from Mr. Richards to take the poor boy into his office as a sort of clerk, volunteering to teach him what was

necessary; and thus Davy found a protector and Meredith a devoted friend.

As Mr. Richards was compelled to be a good deal absent from home, much responsibility fell upon Meredith. The name of his house was Penpant, or the Head of the Brook, and it was some distance from Derwen Fach, being near a more important mineral district. Laban still continued overman, or gaffer, as it is familiarly called, of the old pit, while his son was more especially overseer of the new—was, as the word imports, manager of all the works in the district. As father and son went hand in hand, affairs gradually resumed their old aspect, and school and institute were well attended.

While these events took place May was diligently pursuing her organ studies. She had a lesson once a week at Derwen Church, and went there to practise as often as she could. Her master was much struck with her musical genius, as well as with her voice, and urged her devoting herself to music as a profession. But she had always in her mind the thought "They cannot do without me." Indeed, she would have been loth to be away from home so much for her lessons and practise, had not Mally been secretly hired by Meredith to remain all, and every, day at Derwen Fach. Thus the young, as is meet, laboured for the old.

During the autumn Rachel was married, and May was bridesmaid, Meredith being best man, or "Tailor," as the Welsh call it. There was a grand "bidding" at Tygwyn, and it seemed strange to May to remember melancholy funerals in the spring, and to look at the widowed Leah and her orphan children, while all was mirth and gaiety on Rachel's account. But she had been a good daughter, and now that Leah had taken her place, could marry without feeling that her parents were neglected. Sorrow had greatly softened Leah's character, and she could now scarcely make enough of May, who was much devoted to her children.

Everybody came to Rachel's "bidding," and May, who had never been at a wedding before, felt important when she presented a piece of rosemary to each of the guests, in return for such gifts or loans as they brought with them. The church was crowded, and it was quite an imposing ceremony; but, in May's eyes, no one looked so handsome as her "Fairy Prince." Mrs. Richards and her daughters were amongst those who came to Tygwyn with wedding presents after the ceremony, and May thought that she had never seen so nice a young lady as Miss Edith. She said so to Meredith, and was almost surprised at his emphatic, "Yes; there is no one so good and pretty—except, perhaps, you, Cousin May."

We cannot wonder if colour mounted to May's fair face at this compliment from one she loved so well. But she fancied and feared that Meredith cared more for Miss Edith than was good for one in his position of life. She thought she had never been so merry as she was on that wedding day, and she found her-

self asking her grandmother if her mother's wedding had been so bright and cheerful. Peggy shook her head and replied that it could not be so, because Eyan had disapproved of the match, and would not sanction it.

"She was married from Tygwyn, you know, and I only saw the wedding by the sly," said old Peggy. "But it was pretty enough, and your father was a good-looking man, with a smart coat and a lot of long, dark hair. Not like yours, child. They said that was how those painting people wore their hair. Pity he should ever have seen our Mary, for we never heard a word about her till that letter came from Mr. Everton. She was pretty! why, you can't light a candle to her."

"Oh, no, grandmother," sighed May. "I suppose she had never such funny hair as mine."

"Smooth as a golden pippin, child," replied Peggy.

The day after the wedding, May went to Derwen for her lesson. When she was leaving the church she was met by the vicar, and, to her joy and surprise, Mr. Everton.

"Oh, dear, sir! I am so glad!" she exclaimed, as he took both her small hands in his.

"How much you are grown!" he said, looking at her kindly. "I have been listening to your lesson, and wonder still more at your growth in music. I have my holiday late this year, and have run down to see you—and—your kind friends. I will walk with you to Derwen Fawr."

They set out side by side, no longer hand in hand.

"I suppose I am too old," sighed May to herself. "I wish I could be always young." She was not yet sixteen!

"Have you found Mrs. Pope, sir?" was her first question.

"No, May; I have quite lost sight of her. Indeed, I have myself removed from that part of London. I have been so fortunate as to have a living presented to me at Norwood, and— How are Mr. Richards and his family?"

"Quite well, thank you, sir; and so are great grandfather and grandmother, considering their age. We have all recovered from the explosion that I wrote to you about, and cousin Rachel was married yesterday."

"But for you, May, I should never have known all these good people, seen this lovely country, or heard from—your kind friend, Miss Edith. Is she at home?"

May looked up at Mr. Everton as she replied in the affirmative. There was a vibration in his voice that touched a chord in her heart.

"It is long since you were here last, sir. I think Miss Edith has been sorry, and so have I."

"What reason have you for supposing your friend was sorry, May?"

"Because she looked so sad when she said she liked you very much."

They walked on a little way in silence. At last he resumed—

"Perhaps I may be grateful to you all my life for bringing me to these parts.

"My father and mother will be lost without her," put in Laban. "I think it would be their death if we returned without her."

Their death! The thoughtless words electrified May, and brought back the wild look into her father's eyes. He suddenly seized her hand and, looking at her entreatingly, cried out in despair—

"Madeline, my child! my only hope! you will not leave me? Minister, my friend! say she shall not go from us."

"It shall all be arranged. We will manage it," replied Minister, with a warning glance at Laban.

May was terrified. Either she must never see her beloved grandparents again, she thought; or must forsake the strange, lonely, sorrowing father she had just found. Mr. Everton saw her perplexity and whispered to her—

"The Lord will make your path straight, dear child."

"Yes, dear sir, I know," she returned, with one of the wise little nods her friends used to notice; and the perplexity departed from her fair face, leaving a loving security in its stead.

Meredith, too, as if to strengthen her, rose and stood behind her and her father.

"I know exactly what to do, dear papa," she said. "I will write to great-grandfather, and he will tell me what is right. He always knows exactly."

"He will take you from me. He will never part with you. And he has the first right in you, for has he not saved you?" said her father, excitedly.

"Perhaps I can be half with you and half with them," suggested May, the irrepressible tears starting to her eyes.

"I have quite a large house, all to myself," here broke in Meredith. "Perhaps, by-and-bye, you could come and visit me, sir, and so cousin May would be amongst all of us. It is situated in the loveliest valley in the whole world."

"Delightful!" exclaimed the artist. "I will come, too; and Goldworthy and I will have a sketching tour, and produce such pictures as shall make all our fortunes. Upon the strength of it, you cannot do better than share a poor artist's humble fare. Now, Goldworthy, make yourself presentable, and do me the favour of taking off that artistic robe, and donning your proper coat, for have we not a young lady to tea to-night?"

"Do you wish it, my child?" asked Goldworthy, with anxious eagerness.

"Oh yes, dear sir," replied May, catching the tone of her father's friend; "if you do not dislike it yourself."

He rose slowly and left the room.

"A good beginning," cried Minister, clapping his hands. "He has not laid aside that dressing-gown for months. Now, sweet May, take off the obstreperous bonnet, which will not keep on, and preside at our five o'clock—no, six o'clock tea."

May was looking at the door through which the gaunt man and flowered robe had just passed, and was thinking how she could best "minister to a mind diseased" and, at the same time, do her

duty to those she loved best. She started at the words addressed to her.

"Oh, sir! I cannot, indeed I cannot," she exclaimed.

"Indeed you can, May. You always pour out tea at home," said Meredith.

"Come, and surprise your father. He will think himself in civilised life again. He avoids company, and flies from a stranger as from a fiery serpent. Nay, Mr. Morrison, you must stay. Unaccustomed! I take it an honour that you should sup with me."

The artist turned from one to another, pleadingly. Laban excused himself, because, he said, quietly, he had never sat at a gentleman's table. Mr. Everton was afraid his wife would expect him, but Mr. Minister overruled them all. He led the way across a passage to a small dining-room, where tea was laid. He placed a chair for May at the head of the table with the words—

"You must sit here; I will help you. Your father will think himself at home. He shall sit on one side of you, I on the other. This will probably be your home for the present. You may save him yet. All he wants is something to live for. His disease is nervous despondency."

Bewildered May had never before heard of such a malady. It sounded awful! But she obeyed, and took the feminine post at the tea-table, not knowing what she did or what she ought to do. The others also seated themselves, leaving the place at May's right hand vacant. The host signed to a female servant, who appeared, to leave the room, and the little party sat expectant, all gazing on the door. It opened at last. Poor May's heart beat almost as painfully as when she had first met her father, as he appeared in frock coat and neat waistcoat and tie. He sat down by her side quite naturally.

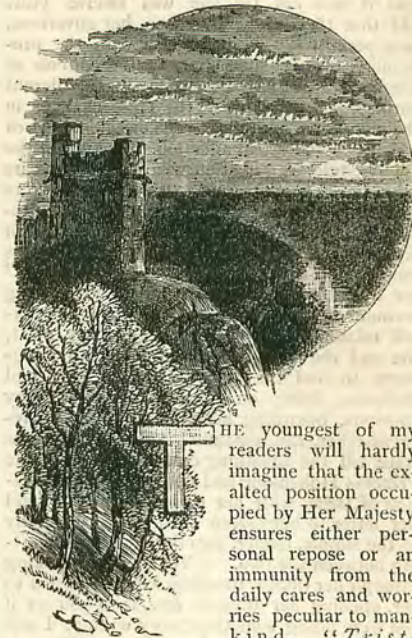
"I am afraid I have been keeping you," he said, glancing round; then, to May, with a sad smile, "Am I spruce enough for my little girl?"

Mr. Everton said grace, and May, trembling very much, began to pour out the tea under the direction of Mr. Minister. The table was spread with ample viands, and adorned with beautiful flowers. The room was pretty and artistic, and she felt truly as if she were in a strange dream. Still, her own father was near, and three of her dearest friends close by. That father watched her movements with eyes kindled into natural brightness, and sat entranced while the others talked. All strove to be at ease, but it was with effort that May restrained her tears. Perhaps Meredith understood her best, but he felt, with a sort of regret, that he must again yield his place in her affections to another, and not even wait upon and aid her as of old. He heard her father's oft-repeated "My darling, we will never, never part again," with a pang, and wondered sadly why so great a happiness as the reunion of father and child should, as this probably would, cause sorrow to loving hearts far away. But "I will write to great-grandfather," was all May could find to say.

(To be continued.)

THE QUEEN'S DOMESTIC LIFE.

II.



THE youngest of my readers will hardly imagine that the exalted position occupied by Her Majesty ensures either personal repose or an immunity from the daily cares and worries peculiar to mankind. "*Triste comme la grandeur*," is an expression of Napoleon I., and something of the same feeling which induced a long list of monarchs to "retire from business before death called upon them to resign the crown imperial," made their country homes peculiarly dear to Her Majesty and her family.

The Queen and Prince always disliked late hours, and never had any great liking for town gaieties. Soon after her wedding she writes, "I formerly was too happy to go to London, and wretched to leave it; and now since the blessed hour of my marriage, and still more since the summer, I dislike and am unhappy to leave the country, and could be content and happy never to go to town." "The solid pleasures of a peaceful, quiet, yet merry life, in the country, with my inestimable husband and friend, my all in all, are far more durable than the amusements of London, though we don't despise and dislike these sometimes."

Town engagements, such as they were, were most years compressed into a few weeks; even in the happier days, when the capital rejoiced greatly at the presence of the sovereign, Her Majesty writes, "As for going out, as people do here every night to balls and parties, and to breakfasts and teas all day long besides, I am sure no one could stand it worse than I should." The Queen derived great benefit and pleasure from Claremont when her children were young; it recalled the happiest days of her own childhood—her visits to her Uncle Leopold, King of the Belgians. The history of that childhood—the simple, thorough, and excellent system of education pursued—was a fitting prelude to the domestic happiness which followed her union with the Prince.

Princess Victoria was born May 24th, 1819, some few months before the death of her father. Her mother, for a second time widowed, with very circumscribed means for her position, far removed from her own German relatives, nevertheless realized the importance of educating her youngest daughter in England, and the Queen's girlhood was spent at Kensington Palace, carefully watched over by her mother and her Uncle Leopold, for whom she ever entertained the tenderest affection, and blessed by the companionship of her dearly-loved half-sister,

Feodora. Very strict economy and great regularity marked the daily routine of life, and it was not till she was twelve years old that the Baroness Lehzen, her governess, was permitted to acquaint her with the probability of her succession to the throne of England. Visits to Brighton, and to different parts of England, were the chief changes in the monotony of her life, the sweetest part of which was the warm affection subsisting in the family circle, an affection which grew as years went on. Up to the day of her death there was daily, often almost hourly, communication between the Queen and the Duchess of Kent. "Never a day I did not get letters from or about her several times in the day," her daughter writes, in that most interesting account of her mother's death, which she herself relates when, on the 21st February, 1861, she and the Prince were summoned to Frogmore, to find the Duchess, in her darkened bedroom, lying on a sofa supported by cushions, breathing heavily, not able to recognise her, and remaining in this unconscious state till the breathing ceased for ever. The Princess Hohenlohe had not even the consolation of being with her parent at the last, and her letter to her Queen is another testimony to the simple, tender, sisterly affection subsisting between the two. "You say that looking through her things, touching what belonged to her, opening her drawers, &c., is to you as if you were doing something very wrong; I and Hermann felt that, after dearest Ernest's (her husband's) death, I could hardly bring myself to do it, because I know how particular he was that nobody should get at his things, and then— Oh! it is too dreadful."

The fact that the Princess Louise received, after her death, the birthday presents her grandmother had been at such special pains to select for her, gives another glimpse of the kindly domestic relations between the several members of the Royal family.

At Windsor Castle the Queen has always passed some months of each year, and many who know the beauty of its surroundings, and of the building itself, will agree with Louis Philippe that "*il n'y a rien de plus beau que Windsor.*" It is at once among the finest royal residences in the world, the best suited to royal pageants, and the most perfectly secluded of homes. It has played an important part in the Queen's life. Here, in October, 1839, after a happy week of evening amusements and dining together, she accepted the Prince; here she spent her short honeymoon; and here she experienced the first agony of widowhood. Her children, the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Connaught, and Princess Alice were married at Windsor, where lie the ashes of those most dear to her.

The Prince Consort inherited from his father a talent for landscape gardening, and after he had devoted some attention to the gardens at Buckingham Palace, he much improved the pleasure grounds at Windsor, established a model farm, and devoted his attention to agricultural improvements. Amid the wealth of rooms filled with treasures of all kinds—china, pictures, busts, and bronzes; the apartments in which the Queen now chiefly passes her time are situated by what is known as the Queen's Entrance, whence she issues many times in the day for walks in the grounds, or drives in a pony-carriage with her constant companion, the Princess Beatrice, and some of her ladies. Her own sitting-room, with its square Gothic windows, opens out of the Grand Corridor, and looks upon the Long Walk. Her own dining-room is octagonal, lined with oak, and hung with Gobelines tapestry of boar hunts, severe and sombre, and above the chair usually occupied by Her Majesty hangs her portrait by Baron Von Angeli, depicting her in all the severity of

her widow's weeds. In these saddened days of her life, when the labours of the day exacted by State necessity are over, many hours are devoted to knitting, spinning, drawing, and music. The Queen is a great reader, and during his life the Prince and she read much together; now the Princess Beatrice and her ladies read aloud to Her Majesty.

Osborne and Balmoral are the royal homes which the Queen and her husband made for themselves—delightful retreats from the oppressive splendour and formality of Court life.

Sir Robert Peel first brought Osborne to their notice, and the first portion of 800 acres was bought from Lady Isabella Blatchford. The Prince showed great ability in the laying out and planting of the gardens, and in 1846, when the fine Isle of Wight air was doing them all so much good, he describes himself as "partly forester, partly builder, partly farmer, partly gardener;" and the Queen herself tells how "Albert is so happy here—out all day planting and directing, and it is so good for him." A delightful domestic country life has always been led here. "When we are in the Isle of Wight we are not surrounded by a Court and its formalities—our life is so quiet and simple," she presently adds. They left it ever with regret, the children as much as their parents, their enjoyment of summer sunshine was intense, as they strove to catch butterflies or worked in their little gardens. The Swiss Cottage was entirely given up to them for pastime and instruction, and it is here that the princesses gained a practical knowledge of the mysteries of cooking, their arms bare, and large bibbed aprons covering their dresses. In addition Osborne affords all the various amusements which the sea gives, bathing, boating, yachting, all of which now and in the past the Royal family have particularly appreciated.

At Balmoral the Queen has been able to throw off still more the trammels of State surroundings. It was in September, 1848, that Her Majesty records her first impressions of the pretty little castle in the old Scottish style, hills rising all round, the Dee flowing at the rear, the scenery wild, the soil dry. The accommodation the castle afforded was, however, not equal to the requirements of the household; a nice little hall and billiard room and dining room, over this the sitting-room, bedroom, and dressing-room of the Queen and Prince, with the children's rooms near at hand, the gentlemen living above, the ladies below, were the chief resources of the house; and in 1853 the stone of the present new building was laid, which was completed within the year. On the 7th September, 1855, the Royal family took possession, an old shoe thrown after them for luck as they entered the hall. October 13, 1856, the Queen writes:—"Every year my heart becomes more fixed in this dear Paradise, and so much more so now, that all has become my dear Albert's own creation, own work, own building, own laying out, as at Osborne, and his great taste and the impress of his dear hand have been stamped everywhere."

Sir James Clarke had urged the purchase of the estate from Sir R. Gordon, and the fee simple was obtained from the Earl of Fife. Few sovereigns have been able so completely to throw off the shackles of court pomp in favour of a simple, secluded, mountain life, amid beautiful scenery and the purest air. The Prince Consort enjoyed the shooting and fishing thoroughly, but he by no means gave himself up to selfish enjoyment; he introduced a completely new system of agriculture, and his first thought was the good of the surrounding people, whose moral tone he greatly raised. School houses have been built on the estate, and an excellent library formed, the latter with the money which Her Majesty's "Leaves from the Journal of Our Life in the Highlands"

realised. This book brings the life which Her Majesty and her family lead in their highland home vividly before us. In her accounts of her visits to the old women (p. 119) we see her making purchases for the poor, bestowing gifts upon them, and visiting them by their "ain firesides" like any ordinary *châtelaine*, and we know that the friendly relations subsisting between her and them is founded on affectionate respect, that every year the bond grows stronger, the deep shadow of her widowhood having strengthened and enlarged her charities more and more. In Scotland the Queen is adored by her dependants; every name is familiar to her, and she joys in their joys and sorrows with them. The independence, simple-mindedness, and kindheartedness of the Highland race are specially appreciated by her, and she is learned in the customs and traditions of the country.

The accounts given by Her Majesty of the several expeditions made *incognito* to Glen Fishie, Invermark, Loch Avon, Blair Athole, &c., are so simply and naturally told that her readers follow in her footsteps, enjoying the lovely scenery, and realising to the full how charming it must have been after the turmoil of State observance, to be dining in a quiet country inn, or picnicking in the open air like ordinary mortals, amid mountain solitudes, face to face with nature, and making occasional sketches as time served.

When in December, 1861, the Queen experienced the great and irreparable loss of her dearly-loved husband, the whole current of her domestic life changed. But her children were still left to her. Since then the Princess Alice has passed away on the anniversary of her father's death, most deservedly lamented. But through all these trials and changes the Queen's daily life has been a noble example to her people of what home life should be, and the more we learn about it the more our affectionate respect strengthens. She spends only a few days annually in London, and from time to time pays short visits abroad; the rest of the year is divided between Windsor, Osborne, and Balmoral. Early rising, a morning given up to business letters and affairs of State, daily drives and walks, an eight o'clock dinner, and an evening amid her ladies and her family, is the daily routine of her present life. "In love consists the inward tie, in love is the fundamental principle of happiness," wrote the Prince Consort to the Princess Royal. It is the best illustration of the Queen's domestic life.

ARDERN HOLT.

MURDER WILL OUT.

THE AVENGING CROWS.—A traveller fell among thieves, who resolved to murder him. Whilst they were committing this horrid crime, the unfortunate man, looking up, saw a flock of crows hovering in the air. "Avenge my death," he cried, "ye birds of luckless ill-omen!" A few days after the thieves entered an inn, when one of the party, who observed a large number of crows gathering round, said sarcastically, "Here they come to avenge the death of the traveller whom we killed the other day." The servant of the house heard these words, repeated them to the master, and he to the magistrate, and the rascals soon suffered the punishment due to their crimes. So the proverb that "murder will out," proved true in this case, as it has often done before. Nothing in the whole history of crime is more curious than the way in which nature seems to conspire against murderers, and the equally remarkable manner in which murderers seem to conspire against themselves.