



Vol. XXII.—No. 1105.]

MARCH 2, 1901.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]

OUR NEW QUEEN—QUEEN ALEXANDRA.



LATE DUKE OF CLARENCE.



DUKE OF CORNWALL AND YORK.

GOD  
SAVE



THE  
QUEEN.

THE QUEEN CONSORT IN THE YEAR OF HER MARRIAGE.  
(From an engraving by Samuel Cousins.)



PRINCESS LOUISE  
(DUCHESS OF FIFE).

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PRINCESS VICTORIA.

Photos by W. & D. Downey.



PRINCESS MAUD (PRINCESS  
CHARLES OF DENMARK).



## OUR NEW QUEEN—QUEEN ALEXANDRA.

THE STORY OF THE LIFE OF "THE SEA-KING'S DAUGHTER FROM OVER THE SEA."

BY JAMES AND NANETTE MASON.

AFTER a long apprenticeship as Princess of Wales her Majesty Queen Alexandra has succeeded in title, if not in actual authority, to one of the best Queens that a favoured land ever possessed, and has come to the highest position she can occupy, that of Consort to the reigning Sovereign of our country. It is a duty, then, laid on us faithful subjects to revive our recollections of her career, to add to our information regarding it, and—without intruding into what is not our business—to make ourselves familiar with the doings of one who, we hope, will be spared to fill her exalted and influential station for many a day.

For these reasons the following pages are written. The narrative is full of interest: not exciting by any means, but sure to attract by what it reveals of common-sense in high life—a happy union of a great position, refined tastes, and devotion to those manifold duties laid on all wives and mothers, high up or humble.

Queen, they say, is just the old word for mother, and to speak of "the Queen" in far-back times was only another way of naming the highest of mothers in the kingdom. This would be appropriate enough with her Majesty. In bringing up a family she has shown herself to be a good sort, and her life-story, whatever additional lessons we may derive from it, will be found to contain many a hint for mothers in all stations of life, and not only for them but for maidens who, one of these days, are to have homes of their own, and reign in their own way queens of happy firesides.

Queen Alexandra was born at the Gule Palais in Copenhagen on the 1st of December, 1844. It was a Sunday, which was a fitting day for a princess to enter the world, if there is anything in the rhyme which says that the child of the first day of the week is "good and fair and wise and gay." She was christened under the lengthy name of Alexandra Caroline Marie Charlotte Louisa Julia.

Her father was Prince Christian, the sixth child of Duke Frederick William of Holstein-Sonderburg-Glücksburg. He became King of Denmark in 1863, but at the time of his daughter Alexandra's birth there seemed little chance of his ever sitting on the Danish throne. In fact, so far was he from close relationship to the reigning sovereign that to find common ancestry for them both he had to go as far back as the fifteenth century.

Her mother was Louise, the third daughter of the Landgrave William of Hesse-Cassel. She was a princess possessed of great ability, which was made the most of by careful training, was a good linguist and had a marked natural taste for music and painting. These gifts were inherited by all her children, and notably by her eldest daughter, the Princess Alexandra.

Relationships are puzzling things and to many a little tedious, so we shall content ourselves with recording what in the light of subsequent events is a curious fact. Father and mother were second cousins, both tracing their descent from the marriage of a Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel with the Princess Maria, daughter of King George II. of England. And thus it came about that their daughter, the Princess Alexandra, was by two distinct lines of descent the great-great-granddaughter of George II., which is worth taking note of, seeing she was to marry our present King, who is the great-great-grandson of the same monarch.

The birthplace of the Princess Alexandra, we have said, was the "Gule Palais" or Yellow Palace in Copenhagen. It was there that all her brothers and sisters were also born. It was a house of modest proportions, in the street called Amaliegade, near the Amalienborg Palace, the Court residence, in the most fashionable part of the capital. A few miles out of town the Prince had a country seat, Bernstorff Palace, surrounded by a small park and in a pleasant rural neighbourhood. This was the holiday place for the children.

Until 1852, when Prince Christian was declared heir-presumptive to the Danish throne, his means were somewhat restricted. There is no truth, however, we are informed on trustworthy authority, in the absurd stories which have been circulated, based on his supposed poverty, such as the statement that he was obliged to give drawing lessons, and that his daughters from necessity learned to make their own clothes.

The truth is that the princely family lived simply and without ostentation at the Gule Palais. They had no comings and goings with the Court, for the Court of Denmark was at that time rather peculiarly constituted, and possessed features to which prudent parents were not likely to introduce their young people.

The Princess and her brothers and sisters were carefully brought up, their education being conducted on what were then exceptionally enlightened principles. Particular attention was paid to gymnastics and riding, and they gained much educational advantage through accompanying their parents on frequent visits to relations in Germany. It is worth mentioning that the Princess Alexandra was provided by her mother with an English nurse, and began the systematic study of the English language at the age of thirteen.

From her earliest years, we are told, she was remarkable for a gentle amiability of demeanour and great discretion of speech. Quiet common-sense was her leading characteristic, and by the exercise of that useful faculty she escaped many of the dangers that commonly assail a young girl in the shape of flattery and admiration.

What her future was to be no one knew, and even by her parents it was little discussed. But there is a place in life seeking for each of us, and the place for the Princess was not long of coming to the front.

One advantage for settling down well in the world she certainly possessed. She was very good-looking, and everyone knows that a fair face is half a portion. And all the better, in the estimation of those who do not choose by the eye alone, when one has in addition a good and noble disposition. "Beauty in woman is like the flowers in spring, but virtue is like the stars in heaven."

Now we have brought the Princess to the beginning of the wooing which ended in union with the heir to the British throne, and brought her from a quiet Danish home to be first Princess of Wales and at last Queen Consort in this Realm on which the sun never sets.

There are romantic incidents brightening up the lives of Princes and Princesses as well as those of other folk, and the romance in this case, it is said—and the story is probable enough—began with a photograph. The Prince of Wales, some time about the beginning of 1861, when he was nineteen years of age, and the Princess Alexandra sixteen, chanced to see a photograph of the Princess in the hands of one of his companions. It made a considerable impression upon him, and he conceived a strong desire to make the acquaintance of the original.

The prospect of a match between their eldest son and the Princess was far from displeasing to either Queen Victoria or the Prince Consort. The Prince had about arrived at man's estate, and it was a matter of great importance, not only from the political, but from the social, point of view, that he should contract a suitable and happy matrimonial alliance.

An arrangement was therefore entered into that he was to be introduced to the Princess. Nothing was to be binding on either side. If the young people liked each other it was to be a match; if not, there would be no harm done. It was either to be a love-affair or nothing.

So much being settled, in the autumn of 1861 the Prince



of Wales went on a visit to Germany, ostensibly to witness the Prussian military manœuvres on the Rhine, but really to look after a possible bride. The introduction took place at the old town of Speier. It was in the cathedral that they first met, a building with an ancient history and a look like a benediction for any young people clasping hands for the first time within its walls.

Unfortunately the course of true love seldom runs quite smooth. There were busybodies about, and though every precaution had been taken to ensure secrecy, until at least the inclinations of the principal parties had been ascertained, the projected match got wind. Even before the Prince and Princess met it was discussed by the Press, both on the Continent and in this country, much to the annoyance of those chiefly interested.

Leaving the worry out of account, however, no great harm was done. The two saw in each other the fulfilment of their highest expectations, and were not only eager to meet again, but glad to entertain the prospect of a lifelong connection. "We hear nothing but excellent accounts of the Princess Alexandra," the Prince Consort wrote in his diary on the 30th of September, and he added with obvious satisfaction that "the young people seem to have taken a warm liking for each other." At a little later date the Prince Consort, communicating with an intimate friend of the Royal circle, remarks, "The Prince of Wales has come back greatly pleased with his interview with the Princess of Holstein at Speier."

The mutual attachment, which thus sprang up in so natural and pleasing a manner, was deepened about a year afterwards, when the Prince of Wales again met the Princess, this time at Laeken, the country seat of the King of the Belgians.

The lovers were now inclined to hurry on matters. The consent of Queen Victoria and that of the father and mother of the Princess to their betrothal was readily obtained, and preparations were set about for the wedding. The Prince Consort, the father of the Prince of Wales, had passed into the other world in December of the preceding year, and both the Court of Great Britain and the country were in consequence passing through a period of gloom. This, it was hoped, would give way before the sunshine of a happy marriage on the part of one of so much importance to the nation.

After the date of the engagement about six months passed, and then the time arrived when the Princess was to be transplanted to new soil, taking up there the position of the first lady in rank after the Queen.

When the British Parliament met in the beginning of February, 1863, the first clause of the Royal speech informed both Lords and Commons of the fact, which by this time everybody was aware of, that, since they last met, Her Majesty had "declared her consent to a marriage between His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales and Her Royal Highness the Princess Alexandra, daughter of Prince Christian of Denmark."

A wedding—no matter in what rank of life—can never end satisfactorily without provision for the housekeeping, and where great state has to be kept up it is all the more necessary to consider well the financial question. The House of Commons acted generously by the young couple. With scarcely a dissentient voice it voted the Prince £40,000 a year, and £10,000 a year for the Princess. These sums, together with the large annual revenue derived by the Prince from the Duchy of Cornwall, made their minds easy enough regarding the future—it is said they had in all an income of considerably over £110,000 a year.

The marriage etiquette of princes is not always that of humbler folk. The Princess came to this country for the wedding, accompanied by her father, mother, and eldest brother. She left Copenhagen on the 26th of February, making an almost triumphal progress, by way of Kiel, Hanover, and Cologne to Brussels, which she reached on the 2nd of March. She was received there by the Duchess of Brabant, the Count of Flanders, the English and Danish Ambassadors, and the Burgomaster and civic officials. After a stay of three days she proceeded to Antwerp, and there

set sail, she and her suite, on board the royal yacht *Victoria and Albert*, which had been entrusted with the important mission of bringing her across the North Sea. There was an escorting squadron of the English Channel Fleet, one of the ships being the then formidable ironclad the *Warrior*.

After a singularly fine passage she landed at Gravesend, and there was met by the Prince of Wales, who was eagerly waiting for her. He stepped quickly on board, and, says an eye-witness, "As he reached the deck, Princess Alexandra, clad in white and wearing a little white bonnet, advanced to the door of the state-cabin to meet him. His Royal Highness, with a quick step, proceeded towards the doorway, and taking his bride by the hand, gave her a warm lover-like kiss."

This hearty and appropriate greeting was seen by the assembled thousands, who set up such cheering as had never been heard before at Gravesend.

The Princess stepped on shore, treading on flowers which had been strewed on the pier by sixty young ladies dressed in red and white, the national colours of Denmark. More flowers were scattered before her as, pale with excitement, she walked to the railway station leaning on the arm of her lover.

At the Bricklayer's Arms Station in London the Duke of Cambridge, the Prince of Prussia, the Count of Flanders, and other royal and distinguished personages, and the Lord Mayor, Sheriffs and Corporation of the Metropolis were waiting to receive her.

And now began a memorable progress through the streets of the heart of the Empire. Being the heart of the Empire, her reception there may be taken as a sure indication of the feeling with which she was regarded all over the country, and of the warm welcome which everyone was disposed to give her from Land's End to John o' Groat's. The London demonstration showed that the Poet Laureate, afterwards Lord Tennyson, had in his "Welcome to England" only put in verse what was the universal sentiment:—

"Sea-king's daughter, as happy as fair,  
Blissful bride of a blissful heir,  
Bride of the heir of the Kings of the Sea,  
O joy to the people, and joy to the throne,  
Come to us, love us, and make us your own!  
For Saxon, or Dane, or Norman we,  
Teuton, or Celt, or whatever we be,  
We are each all Dane in our welcome of thee,  
Alexandra!"

The good looks of the Princess no doubt went a long way towards captivating the public. They were taken as evidence of an admirable disposition, it being generally concluded that she must be as good as she looked, and that the approaching marriage would on that account turn out one of the greatest of successes.

The Prince and his bride made their way through the brilliantly decorated streets, wreaths of flowers and evergreens everywhere, flags flying, bells ringing, and people cheering themselves hoarse. Half a million of those who were to be their subjects one of these days thronged the streets and swarmed like bees on the house-tops.

A way for the carriages was made with difficulty through the crowd. Once, indeed, in Cheapside it was so dense that the Princess not unnaturally was afraid. Her carriage was stopped, and there seemed no possible passage through the sea of upturned human faces. She rode with her father and mother and the Prince of Wales, who calmed her apprehensions, and soon the crowd gave way and the carriage was once again on the move.

In Hyde Park her timid girlish figure was the central point in a demonstration by the volunteers. She was saluted there by the representatives of a hundred corps from different parts of the country. Late in the afternoon the Great Western station was reached, and from that to Windsor was only a short journey of little over half an hour.

Queen Victoria and her two youngest daughters, the Princesses Louise and Beatrice, sat anxiously waiting the arrival of her son's bride at the window of Windsor Castle, immediately above the suite of rooms which were occupied



by the Princess Alice. At last the firing of a gun and the waking into life of all the church-bells of Windsor announced the welcome event. The Princess and her escort passed under the York and Lancaster Gateway to the grand entrance, and there she was received by the Queen, who conducted her to the apartments prepared for her.

To an old friend, we are told, the Princess said afterwards that the magnificence of all the preparations for her wedding, the splendour of her *trousseau*, and the jewels presented to her by the royal family, as well as the demonstrations of the various civic authorities, were fairly overpowering, contrasted as all was with the simplicity of her former way of life. "My *trousseau*," she said to this friend, "cost twice as much as my father's whole income for a year." But everyone is agreed that during this most exciting period of her life the young Princess showed no signs of undue elation, but received everything and met everyone with the same frank simplicity of manner that had characterised her girlhood at home.

The wedding-day was three days later, that is to say, on the 10th of March; the place was St. George's Chapel at Windsor, of which everyone interested in the history of our country has heard, and everyone who has had a chance has visited. It was the first ceremony of the kind that had taken place within its walls since the days of Henry I. The invited guests numbered nearly a thousand of the most distinguished, either for rank or services, in the country, and the dresses of the ladies and the gorgeous uniforms of the men combined to form a spectacle never to be forgotten.

The Princess appeared at the altar dressed regally in white satin heavily embroidered in silver, a train of purple velvet dependent from her shoulders, and on her hair, her bosom, her arms and her girdle a perfect blaze of jewels. The Prince wore a General's uniform with the mantle of the Garter and gold collar and jewel of that Order and the decorations of the Golden Fleece and the Star of India.

For bridesmaids the Princess was attended by eight daughters of the peers of the realm; the groomsmen supporting the Prince were his brother-in-law, the Crown Prince of Germany, and his uncle, the Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha.

It was in the early days of the widowhood of her late Majesty, Queen Victoria. She took no prominent part in the ceremony, but, dressed in black, watched it from the royal closet.

The wedding was described by the then Bishop of Oxford as "the most moving sight I ever saw—the Princess of Wales calm, feeling, self-possessed. The Prince of Wales with more depth of manner than ever before."

It was followed by a wedding-breakfast in St. George's Hall, after which the happy pair left for Osborne, where the brief honeymoon was spent.

All over the country the important event was celebrated in an enthusiastic manner—feasts and sports during the day and in the evening bonfires and illuminations on a grand scale. The universal rejoicings were an indication of our attachment to the royal family, an attachment, says

someone, "which might almost redeem us from the imputation of belonging to a prosaic and unimaginative race."

For better for worse the Prince and Princess were now united. There is no paradise on earth equal to the union of two loving hearts, and into that paradise they had now entered. When they returned from Osborne—it was only a fortnight that they stayed there—to enter on the business and gaiety of Royal and Court life, it was noticed that they looked the very picture of happiness. The Prince might well be the happy husband, proud of the charms and graces so conspicuous in his wife. "I saw a great deal of her," says Dean Stanley, who met her frequently about this time, "and can truly say that she is as charming and beautiful a creature as ever passed through a fairy tale."

It was a large family of which she had now become a member, at the head being a good mother-in-law, and that, in palaces and cottages alike, goes a long way to secure happiness and success to a young couple. There were three brothers-in-law, the Princes Alfred, Arthur and Leopold, and five sisters-in-law, the Princess Royal, and the Princesses Alice, Helena, Louise and Beatrice. Of these, two sisters-in-law had already been married—the Princess Royal five years before to the Crown Prince of Prussia, and the Princess Alice the preceding year to Prince Louis of Hesse Darmstadt.

There never was a more united family, and apart from its public duties it enjoyed a quiet, sensible home life that might be taken as a pattern by every family circle in the kingdom. How quiet and sensible it was the public were permitted to learn from the confidential revelations of her late Majesty in her *Leaves from the Journal of Our Life in the Highlands*, and her *More Leaves* from the same journal—two books which may be strongly recommended for every girl's reading.

"Be sure before you marry," says the proverb, "of a house wherein to tarry." The Prince and Princess had made themselves safe as to that important item, setting up their establishment in London at Marlborough

House, which was maintained for them at the public expense.

This house, which was to see so much of them for so many years, and in which they were to entertain such a long succession of distinguished guests, possesses considerable historical interest. It is a stately building of red brick with stone dressings, standing at the west end of Pall Mall on the south side, and separated by a carriage-way from St. James's Palace. It was built by Sir Christopher Wren for the great Duke of Marlborough. Defoe says it was "in every way answerable to the grandeur of its master," and here the great Duke passed his last years. After his death, and so long as she lived, its rooms echoed to the shrill voice of his widow, the domineering and sharp-tempered Duchess Sarah.

In 1817 the house was bought by the Crown for the Princess Charlotte and her husband, Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg. The Princess died before the completion of the purchase, but her husband lived here till 1831, when



QUEEN CONSORT.

[Photo by Lafayette.]



he went to reign over Belgium. In 1837 it was settled on Queen Adelaide, and the Queen Dowager lived at Marlborough House till she died in 1849.

But a town residence was not enough. Both the Prince and Princess had a taste for the open-air life of the country, and with a view to indulging in this it was decided to purchase the estate of Sandringham Hall in the county of Norfolk. It was not a remarkable place in any way—of no consequence either historically or traditionally—but it suited their purpose, and quite early in their married life became the scene of much enjoyment and activity that would have been impossible otherwise. The purchase money absorbed a portion of the accumulations realised during the minority of the Prince from the Duchy of Cornwall.

It was a welcome change from London—near the metropolis, and yet not too remote, and with this great charm, without which no country property is worth holding, that it was capable of improvement, and of having always “something going on.” The Prince, not all at once, but gradually, developed into a typical Norfolk squire, leading a life of homeliness and simplicity, tramping through the fields in Norfolk garb of tweed and gaiters, and indulging his favourite hobbies of farming, horse-breeding and other pursuits of a country gentleman. The Princess played equally well her part as the squire’s wife, taking an interest in all that interested her husband, and making herself beloved in the neighbourhood by her simple unaffected ways.

Their life soon came to be brightened by the presence of children. The first to arrive was Prince Albert Victor, who was ushered into the world at Windsor Castle with rather amusing precipitancy on the 8th of January, 1864. The event not having been expected so soon, the chosen physicians were not in attendance, and the services had to be hastily summoned of a private practitioner at Windsor. This first-born son, who was generally understood to be his mother’s favourite, was he who, on reaching manhood, was created Duke of Clarence, and died on the 14th of January, 1892.

A second son—Prince George, who in the natural course of events will become George V.—was born at Marlborough House on the 3rd of June, 1865. These two sons were followed by three daughters—the Princesses Louise, Maud, and Victoria, who were born respectively on the 20th of February, 1867, the 6th of July, 1868, and the 26th of November, 1869. Last of all came a son, Alexander, whose birth occurred on the 6th of April, 1871, but he only lived a day.

Like a good mother, the Princess devoted herself to the up-bringing of her children, being ever with them, playing with or reading to them, encouraging their studies and taking a wise personal oversight in connection with everything that could in any way affect their healthful development. No humble mother in the land, says one writer, gave more attention to the details of nursery-life than she, her care being as particular as if she were conducting a model sanitarium. Her children claimed her attention, some thought, to the exclusion of public matters, but the majority of the nation were satisfied that the first business of the wife of the heir to the throne consisted in the wise management of her family.

She heard much common-sense on that subject from Queen Victoria, who had been a model mother in her time. Queen Victoria held firmly to the belief that only those parents are to be envied who are fortunate in their children, and the greatest maxim of all for the successful rearing of the little ones is, she once wrote, “that the children should be brought up as simply and in as domestic a way as possible, and that (not interfering with their lessons) they should be as much as possible with their parents, and learn to place their greatest confidence in them in all things.”

These wise words the Princess followed, and the Prince as well; the result was that the young Princes and Princesses grew up to be a credit to all connected with them, remarkable for their attachment to their parents, and as united a family as one could find anywhere.

The happy life of the Princess was broken in upon by a

misfortune in 1867. She was attacked by a rheumatic affection which threatened to make her a cripple, and for about a year was compelled to maintain a recumbent position. Skilful treatment, however, combined with a visit to the baths at Weimar, at last effected a cure, but for some time after her reappearance in public she walked with a slight limp. Every observer knows what silly geese there are in the world ready to imitate even the infirmities of distinguished people, but it will hardly be credited that the “Alexandra limp” became quite the fashion and might have continued so to this day had not the Princess fortunately got well again.

A heavier trial than her own illness followed in the close of 1871. The Prince of Wales, then in the eighth year of his marriage, was staying with his family at Sandringham when he was attacked by typhoid fever. It was exactly ten years after his father, the Prince Consort, had fallen a victim to that dangerous malady.

He grew worse and worse, and became at last so ill that fears were generally entertained that the illness would prove fatal. It was a time of terrible anxiety, the whole nation being given up to alternate hope and despair. His devoted wife watched by the Prince’s bedside and greatly added to her popularity by the self-sacrificing courage with which she faced what threatened to be the wreck of all her happiness.

At last on the 1st of December—the birthday, it will be remembered, of the Princess—the Prince recovered consciousness, but he had a relapse, and seemed again as ill as anyone could be and yet live. A slight improvement, however, at last set in, and the Princess was able to write thus to the Vicar of Sandringham:—

“My husband, thank God, being somewhat better, I am coming to church. I must leave, I fear, before the service is concluded that I may watch by his bedside. Can you not say a few words in the prayer in the early part of the service, that I may join with you in prayer for my husband before I return to him?”

The favourable turn, curiously enough, came on the anniversary of his father’s death, the 14th of December. By the 25th of the month all danger was over, so it was a happy Christmas that year for everybody, and after a few weeks the Princess settled down again to her calm pleasant life, all apprehensions on her husband’s account being at an end.

A permanent record of her gratitude for his recovery is to be seen in the church at Sandringham in the shape of a handsome brass lectern bearing the inscription:—

“To the glory of God, a thank-offering for His mercy. 14 December, 1871.—Alexandra. ‘When I was in trouble I called upon the Lord and He heard me.’”

The recovery of the Prince was made the subject of a national demonstration of an enthusiastic character. A thanksgiving service was held in St. Paul’s Cathedral on the 27th of February, 1872. Queen Victoria, accompanied by the Prince and Princess, drove to the Cathedral through a seven-mile avenue of rejoicing people—one of the most remarkable and spontaneous exhibitions of popular good feeling that the metropolis has ever witnessed. No fewer than 13,000 people, including all the great officers of State, took part in the service, which was conducted by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Frequent visits were paid in these days to Deeside, the beautiful Aberdeenshire district in which Queen Victoria had her Scottish home of Balmoral Castle. The Princess had paid her first visit there in the autumn of the year in which she was married, the Prince and she establishing themselves at Abergeldie Castle, a short distance to the east of Balmoral, that is to say, a little nearer Ballater. The name is familiar to Scotch folk in connection with the song:—

“Bonnie lassie, will ye go  
To the Birks o’ Abergeldie?”

Queen Victoria, recounting in her Diary the incidents of the 15th of September, 1863, tells how when she arrived at Balmoral, “Bertie and Alix” (the Prince and Princess of Wales) “were at the door, and stayed a little while afterwards. How strange they should be at Abergeldie!”



They were all together in the Highlands three years after his illness—that is to say, in 1875—when the Prince started on his memorable journey to the Indian Empire of his mother—a journey which extended over six months, and has been described as “bringing home to millions of our darker fellow-subjects in a pleasant and personal manner the reality of British rule.”

Queen Victoria in quite a motherly way tells in her Diary how he set out. The previous night—it was that of the 17th of September—after they had dined together at Balmoral, she says, “At eleven I took Bertie and Alix upstairs, and talked over various details of this anxious journey to India . . . . Poor dear Alix seemed to feel it much, and so did I, as I embraced them both several times and said I would go to see them off next morning.”

The next morning was “dull and rather raw.” At half-past nine the Queen drove to her son's residence at Abergeldie. “There,” she says, “we found all in considerable confusion . . . . I went up and found poor Alix putting up her things in her bedroom—the little girls there. At length at a quarter-past ten they left. Dear Bertie wished all good-bye . . . . I wished him every possible success, and that God would bless and protect him during this long and anxious journey to the East. It was very sad to see him drive off with Alix and the boys (the little girls followed in another carriage), not knowing what might not happen, or if he would ever return. May God bless him!”

This domestic picture sketched by a royal pen gives one a vivid idea of the relationship in which Queen, Prince and Princess stood to each other—three exalted personages in rank, but apart from rank only a loving mother and two loving children animated by the same affections and hopes and anxieties as the rest of us.

The Prince returned to this country, after what was in every way a successful journey, on the 11th of May, 1876. The Princess was with him on the 17th of the month at a grand congratulatory concert and reception given in his honour at the Albert Hall. Two days afterwards she was with him at a banquet and ball at the Guildhall. Five thousand were invited, and the City presented the Prince with an address of welcome in a golden casket of Indian design.

To such public gatherings the presence of the Princess, with her good looks and quiet dignified bearing, always lent considerable charm, and any ceremony in which she was announced to take part had its success made sure beforehand. In two great national demonstrations connected with the long reign of Queen Victoria, she—naturally, as the wife of the heir to the throne—attracted much attention.

The first of these was the Queen's Jubilee demonstration on the 21st of June, 1887, the object of which was “to testify to the loyalty, gratitude and affection inspired by the Queen's fifty years of unswerving devotion to duty and undeviating regard to her people's well-being.” In the procession to the thanksgiving service at Westminster Abbey, the Princess of Wales rode in the Queen's open barouche in company with Her Majesty and the Crown Princess of Germany. She wore a cream silk dress, lightly brocaded with gold, and a tulle bonnet with pink roses.

Ten years later—it was on the 22nd of June, 1897—she was one of the prominent figures in Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee procession to a solemn service of thanksgiving at St. Paul's Cathedral, the Queen having two days before completed the sixtieth year of her reign. On this occasion she and the Princess Christian sat opposite to the Queen in the royal carriage. She was dressed in a lovely gown of pale heliotrope, trimmed with elaborate pearl *passementerie*, with a bonnet to match.

On the 24th of June we find her, in company with the Prince, taking a prominent part at the Jubilee dinners to the poor, which owed their origin to her Royal Highness's suggestion. The Princess, while expressing regret that she could not be present at all the dinners for “my poor,” personally visited some of the centres at which, to the number of 300,000, they were entertained.

But to speak of 1897 is to move too fast in our story. We must return to 1888, when the Princess and her husband celebrated their silver wedding. It was then a quarter of

a century since the two had plighted their troth to each other at the altar of St. George's Chapel at Windsor.

The happy and auspicious event was marked by many interesting circumstances, one of the most noteworthy of these being the presentation of an address and a handsome and appropriate gift by the City of London. The gift of which the City asked the Princess's acceptance consisted of a silver model of the Imperial Institute, towards the foundation of which her husband had done so much.

In the following year the first of their children left the paternal home for a home of her own. This was their eldest daughter Louise, who was married on the 27th of July, 1889, to the Duke of Fife. It was a wedding of affection and a good match indeed every way, the bridegroom being of ancient family and very wealthy. As a landowner he possessed about 249,300 acres.

Marriages seldom come singly, so next came the news that the eldest son of the Prince and Princess—“Prince Eddy”: to give him his full title, the Duke of Clarence and Avondale—was engaged to the Princess Victoria Mary—“Princess May”—of Teck.

This news gave great satisfaction, but joy was turned to mourning by the death of the Duke, after a brief illness, on the 14th of January, 1892. The wedding had been fixed to take place before Lent. It was a grief to his mother hard to bear. He was, as we have said, her favourite son, and well deserving of being loved. “Nothing about him,” says one who knew him well, “was more remarkable than the affection he bore to his mother and sisters.”

The second son of the Prince and Princess thus became heir to the throne. Prince George—now created Duke of York—had always been a contrast to his brother, his quickness and liveliness being the more noticeable in comparison with the quiet ways of the Duke of Clarence. It was recognised that he had undoubted brain power, some of it derived, people said, through his mother from the Queen of Denmark, and some of it through his father from the Prince Consort.

An engagement was entered into between him and the Princess May, who was to have wedded his brother. She was a princess of whom everyone spoke well; a clever girl, too, from the intellectual point of view. In her origin she could claim to be of doubly royal descent, having an English sovereign for a grandparent not only through her mother but her father. On her mother's side she had George III. for a great-grandfather, and her father, the Duke of Teck, was the direct descendant of George II. through the latter's daughter Anne, Princess of Orange.

The marriage took place on the 6th of July, 1893. The first child of the marriage was born on the 23rd of June, 1894, its arrival being regarded with great interest on account of the relation of the newcomer to the succession to the throne. It was the first grandson of the Prince and Princess of Wales: not their first grandchild, however, for they already had two granddaughters, children of the Duke and Duchess of Fife.

The little one was christened at White Lodge, Richmond Park, that most homely and prettiest of royal residences, on the 16th of July. Queen Victoria was present, and the Archbishop of Canterbury officiated. The gold bowl was used which had been the christening font for all Queen Victoria's descendants born in the United Kingdom, and the rite was performed with water brought from the Jordan. The names given to the infant prince were Edward Albert Christian George Andrew Patrick David—the last four, it will be noticed, being those of the patron saints of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales.

It is a reminder that we are getting on in life when our children marry and settle down, and grandchildren come into the world to be christened, but it is still more of a reminder when our own parents remove to their last home. In the autumn of 1898 the Princess was summoned to Copenhagen in consequence of the serious illness of her mother. The Queen was in her eighty-first year—the oldest Queen in Europe—and was really suffering from the gradual exhaustion of vital powers.

The King of Denmark, the Princess of Wales and her brother, the King of Greece, alternately held the hands of



the dying Queen till, on the morning of the 29th of September, she peacefully expired. It was a great loss, for, as we have already told, she had many virtues and talents, and was deservedly honoured and respected as the dignified head of a royal family. She and the King had been bound together by tender affection, and the Danish Court had been a scarcely less notable example of all domestic virtues than the Court of Queen Victoria.

Such are the more prominent events in the past life of our Queen Alexandra. Many minor incidents might have been spoken about, such as the tours she has made in company with her husband in this country—with the beauty and interest of which she is now so familiar—and on the continent, where she has always enjoyed the well-deserved popularity that comes to those who, wherever they go, are gracious, courteous, and friendly. Her continental experiences included, of course, frequent visits which, like a good daughter, she paid to the home of her youth at Copenhagen.

The most memorable of her foreign tours, made in company with her husband, was that which in the early part of 1869 took them from Denmark through Germany, Austria, and Italy to Egypt. They then made a voyage up the Nile, visited the Suez Canal, then in progress, and returned home by Constantinople and Athens.

At Constantinople the two had a reception wonderful for its magnificence; it rivalled, it is said, the splendours and gorgeous hospitalities of the Arabian Nights. There was a State dinner in their honour provided by the Sultan, the first banquet ever given to Christians by the Father of the Faithful. As a special favour the Princess and one of her ladies were admitted to the harem, where "they remained for an hour and a half chatting with the fair houris in the Temple of Turkish bliss, while the Prince smoked a friendly pipe with the Padishah outside."

We might have described the part Queen Alexandra has taken as Princess in the many public engagements that enter into the everyday business of royalty. But to attempt that would be to provide ourselves with an almost interminable occupation. Such a business as it is, so full of movement, so crowded with circumstances, often so uninteresting, fretting, and exhausting. "The uncompromising royal programme," says someone, "makes no allowance even for a headache."

To lay foundation stones of municipal and other buildings; open bridges, parks, town halls, hospitals, exhibitions and bazaars; unveil statues; name battleships; dance with unflagging zeal at balls; attend state ceremonials and receptions; receive royal and distinguished visitors; sit through uninteresting oratory; observe the etiquette and thousand and one formalities tradition has made inseparable from high life; pretend interest even when bored to distraction, and put up smilingly with dust, noise, and clatter; these and suchlike are the deeds which, during her Princess-life, have had so large a share of her Majesty's time, and which she has always performed so admirably.

There can be no question that in all her public appearances the Queen has carried her dignity well. In manner and looks she has been "every inch a princess," as a working-man was once heard to say when she stepped from her carriage to attend a banquet at the Mansion House. "Slender almost to fragility," says an American writer who has met her, "with hair still luxuriantly and richly brown, eyes of darkest blue and features finely chiselled and almost too perfect in their regularity, she looks, whether in Court costume, with the flash of jewels and the sweep of velvet, or in the simple cloth garments, high standing linen collar, and quiet little bonnet she is fondest of wearing, exactly what the English people love to call her, 'The Princess.'" It is the same opinion as that of the working-man, but expressed with more elaboration.

But her greatest charms with sensible people have undoubtedly been her attitude towards home life, her unobtrusive ways, her reluctance to express pronounced opinions even if she entertains them, her devotion to her husband and the remarkable tact with which she has played her part during all the many years that she has stood on the steps of the throne.

It has been a difficult position to occupy—prominent and influential, and yet strictly subordinate to that of the beloved occupant of the throne who has now passed away. But there never has been the least suggestion of friction, the good disposition of Queen Alexandra enabling her to avoid what with more pronounced and self-asserting characters would have been sure to happen.

Whatever the difficulties of her public position, with its often tiresome ceremonial and its unwelcome consciousness of being stared at, the observed of all observers, there was always a quiet and happy home life in which to take refuge. And as Queen Victoria, in one of her letters, very well says, "We all have our trials and vexations, but if one's home is happy then the rest is comparatively nothing."

As princess, Queen Alexandra has been always remarkable for the pleasure she has taken in intercourse with well-chosen friends, to whom—and especially to those of her early life—she has shown warm attachment. Music has been a great solace to her, and her thorough understanding of that captivating art has often been noticed by the professionals who have had the honour of playing and singing before her. She has a great liking, too, for pets of all kinds—pet dogs, cockatoos, cats and ponies—of whom the number at Sandringham is such that merely to enumerate their names would tax a good memory.

All who have ever been in her service speak in enthusiastic terms of her thoughtful consideration for those about her, of her reluctance to give unnecessary trouble, and of the kind way in which she recognises the efforts of others, making it a pleasure to be in attendance, and drawing out the best qualities of every member of her household.

Her good-heartedness towards the suffering, the unfortunate and the hard-working has become proverbial, and it will form an appropriate and pleasant conclusion to this article if we give by way of illustration an incident which happened quite early in her career as Princess of Wales. We give it as it has come to us, and we have every reason to believe that it is as authentic as it is creditable to the amiability and sympathy ever present in the heart of her Majesty:—

Late one afternoon just before Christmas, the Princess in crossing the hall of Marlborough House, saw a delicate-looking girl standing there waiting. Her tired look and modest demeanour induced the Princess to ask her on what errand she had come.

She had brought, the girl told her, some little garments for the children which the Princess had ordered to be made by the then newly-invented sewing-machine.

"Come with me," said the Princess, and she led the way to her own private sitting-room where she examined the garments and praised the neatness with which they were made. "Who did them?" she asked.

"It was I," answered the girl, and led on to be confidential by the kind way in which she was being spoken to, and ignorant all the time of who her questioner really was, she told that she had an invalid mother to support and that she hoped, by becoming an expert worker on the new machine, that she might be able to save enough to purchase a machine of her own. "And then," she added, "I shall be able, I think, to earn a little more than bare bread for my mother."

The Princess rang the bell and ordered a basket to be brought with some wine, oranges, and biscuits in it. This, after taking note of her address, she asked the girl to take home.

Early on the morning of Christmas Day what was the girl's surprise to receive a handsome new sewing-machine with a card attached to it bearing the words—

"A Christmas gift from Alexandra."

As a straw shows which way the wind blows, so a deed such as this may be taken as a sure indication of disposition and character. Long life then to our Queen! "The sea-king's daughter from over the sea" has in this and many other recorded incidents, and indeed in every way, shown herself so good a princess that, now she has come to a still higher station, she has a claim, most joyfully to be met, on the loyalty and good wishes of every one of us.





*Photo by]*

*[W. & D. Downey.*

HER MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY QUEEN ALEXANDRA.