

Editors' Table.

VICTORIA'S BOOK.*

A NEW sensation for the reading public will be found in this volume from the heart and head, if not the hand of a living and reigning queen! And, what is of more importance, it shows Victoria as a woman worthy of holding, as she does, the mightiest sceptre, considered in all its influences, that now sways the world.

This remarkable book deals with personages of royal blood and regal power; with the highest ranks of officials in great kingdoms; with princes and nobles, lords and ladies, who are familiar guests in queens' palaces; and yet the story it tells is so natural in its simplicity of feelings and affections, that its truth and tenderness will touch and sway the best impulses of every reader. It shows pictures of human nature so noble in aspirations for the good, so true and pure in love, and so lofty in ideals of duty, that it must become a standard work in our family literature among all classes of people who love and honor virtues that exalt a nation.

For young men and women it should be a favorite study. The character of Prince Albert, the hero of the history, is a model of excellence in real life that no examples of romance heroes can parallel. And then it is not a fanciful or unattainable excellence set before the world. Albert's noble resolve to do good in his life-work, and his patient perseverance in duty, by which he won the highest renown of human greatness—the title of "Albert the Good;" these opportunities of resolve and action are open to every boy and young man in the United States. In American homes, be they ever so lowly, the princely virtues of truth, patience, self-denial, and perseverance in the right, may find room, and scope, and reward.

Queen Victoria, also, in her home-life, so far as revealed (the aim of the book is to portray her "dear Albert," not herself), is a beautiful example for all young wives. In reverence for her husband and submission to his will as head of the household, we see the divine root of domestic peace and mutual love in the royal family. They lived in conformity with God's law of marriage; the husband gave honor to his wife and loved her as himself; the wife loved, obeyed, and revered her husband; this made the perfect confidence of their conjugal affection, the happiness that no royal rank or earthly splendor could have conferred.

In such a marriage union the good promoted in each other by the faithfulness of both in duty, exalts the tender affections and private virtues into ennobling influences on social life and national character. Such marriage unions should be the rule in America, where the highest greatness that moral virtue and material wealth can reach may be won. So we will give examples from this royal book for our republican sovereigns and the young queens of American society.

Our selections will be from the story of the Royal wooing, wedding, and the first year of married life. Those who read the book (we should like to place it in every American home) will find much interest in the early years

* "Queen Victoria's Memoirs of the Prince Consort." Harpers. See Literary Notices, page 449.

of the Prince and also in the development of his manly character.

THE QUEEN'S OFFER.

On the 9th of October, 1840, the Prince arrived at Windsor, and on the 15th the Queen, having previously communicated with Lord Melbourne, offered him her hand. The circumstances are thus narrated:—

"On the 15th there was an important interruption to the ordinary routine of the day. The Queen had told Lord Melbourne the day before that she had made up her mind to the marriage, at which he expressed great satisfaction, and he said to her, as her Majesty states in her journal, 'I think it will be very well received; for I hear that there is an anxiety now that it should be, and I am very glad of it; adding, in quite a paternal tone, 'You will be much more comfortable; but a woman cannot stand alone for any time, in whatever position she may be.' Can we wonder that the Queen, recalling those circumstances, should exclaim, 'Alas, alas! the poor Queen now stands in that painful position!'

An intimation was accordingly given to the Prince, that the Queen wished to speak to him the next day.

On that day, the 15th, the Prince had been out hunting early with his brother, but returned at twelve, and half an hour afterwards obeyed the Queen's summons to her room, where he found her alone. After a few minutes' conversation on other subjects the Queen told him why she had sent for him; and we can well understand any little hesitation and delicacy she may have felt in doing so; for the Queen's position, making it imperative that any proposal of marriage should come first from her, must necessarily appear a painful one to those who, deriving their ideas on this subject from the practice of private life, are wont to look upon it as the privilege and happiness of a woman to have her hand sought in marriage, instead of having to offer it herself."

The Queen thus announces what had occurred, the next morning, to the King of the Belgians:—

"MY DEAREST UNCLE: This letter will, I am sure, give you pleasure, for you have always shown and taken such a warm interest in all that concerns me. My mind is quite made up; and I told Albert this morning of it. The warm affection he showed me on learning this gave me great pleasure. He seems perfection, and I think I have the prospect of great happiness before me. I love him more than I can say, and shall do everything in my power to render this sacrifice (for such in my opinion it is) as small as can be."

THE BRIDEGROOM ELECTION.

What Prince Albert himself felt on the subject we can learn from his own letters. He thus wrote to his grandmother:—

"The subject which has occupied us so much of late is at last settled. The Queen sent for me alone to her room a few days ago, and declared to me in a genuine outburst of love and affection (*Ergüsse von Herlichkeit und Liebe*), that I had gained her whole heart, and would make her intensely happy (*übertücklich*) if I would make her the sacrifice of sharing her life with her, for she said she looked on it as a sacrifice; the only thing which troubled her was that she did not think she was worthy of me. The joyous openness of manner in which she told me this quite enchanted me, and I was quite carried away by it. She is really most good and amiable, and I am quite sure Heaven has not given me into evil hands, and that we shall be happy together.

"Since that moment Victoria does whatever she fancies I should wish or like, and we talk together a great deal about our future life, which she promises me to make as happy as possible. Oh, the future! does it not bring with it the moment when I shall have to take leave of my dear, dear home, and of you? I cannot think of that without deep melancholy taking possession of me. It was on the

15th of October that Victoria made me this declaration, and I have hitherto shrunk from telling you; but how does delay make it better?"

MARRIED LIFE.

"The First Year of Marriage." The demeanor of Prince Albert is thus alluded to:—

"It must be admitted, however, that constantly, unostentatiously, and perseveringly as he now gave himself up to the discharge of his new duties, he was exposed, almost during the whole period of his life in this country, to much misconception and much misrepresentation. Not for that, however, did he for one moment relax in his efforts or allow his zeal to flag, in seeking to promote all that was for the good of the British people. His actions might be misunderstood, his opinions might be misrepresented (of which there was more than one notable instance). He accepted such injustice as the inevitable lot of one placed, as he was, in high station, trusting surely to the coming of the time when his motives and actions would be better understood and better appreciated by his adopted country.

"The principle on which he always acted was (to use his own noble words) 'to sink his own individual existence in that of his wife, to aim at no power by himself or for himself, to shun all ostentation—to assume no separate responsibility before the public'—but, 'making his position entirely a part of the Queen's, continually and anxiously to watch every part of the public business in order to be able to advise or assist her at any moment in any of the multifarious and difficult questions brought before her—sometimes political or social, or personal, as the natural head of her family; superintendent of her household, manager of her private affairs, her sole confidential adviser in politics, and only assistant in her communications with the officers of the government.'"

THE FIRST BORN.

When the Princess Royal was born, "for a moment only," the Queen says, "was he disappointed at its being a daughter and not a son. During the time the Queen was laid up his care and devotion," the Queen records, "were quite beyond expression." He was content to sit by her in a darkened room, to read to her, or write for her. A memorandum by her Majesty says:—

"No one but himself ever lifted her from her bed to her sofa, and he always helped to wheel her on her bed or sofa into the next room. For this purpose he would come instantly, when sent for, from any part of the house. As years went on, and he became overwhelmed with work (for his attentions were the same in all the Queen's subsequent confinements), this was often done at much inconvenience to himself, but he ever came with a sweet smile on his face. 'In short,' the Queen adds, 'his care of her was like that of a mother, nor could there be a kinder, wiser, or more judicious nurse.'"

PERSONAL HABITS OF PRINCE ALBERT.

"From the moment of his establishment in the English palace as the husband of the Queen, his object was to maintain and, if possible, even raise the character of the court. With this view he knew that it was not enough that his own conduct should be in truth free from reproach—no shadow of a shade of suspicion should by possibility attach to it. He knew that in his position every action would be scanned—not always possibly in a friendly spirit; that his goings out and comings in would be watched, and that in every society, however little disposed to be censorious, there would always be found some prone, were an opening afforded, to exaggerate and even to invent stories against him, and to put an uncharitable construction on the most innocent acts. He, therefore, from the first, laid down strict, not to say severe, rules, for his own guidance. He imposed a degree of restraint and self-denial upon his own movements which could not have been otherwise than irksome, had he not been sustained by a sense of the advantage which the throne would derive from it. He denied himself the pleasure—which to one so fond as he was of personally watching and inspecting every improvement that was in progress, would have been very great—of walking at will about town.

"Wherever he went, whether in a carriage or on horseback, he was accompanied by his equerry. He paid no visits in general society. His visits were to the studio of the artist, to museums of art or science, to institutions for

good and benevolent purposes. Wherever a visit from him, or his presence, could tend to advance the real good of the people, there his horses might be seen waiting; never at the door of mere fashion. Scandal itself could take no liberty with his name. He loved to ride through all the districts of London where building and improvements were in progress, more especially when they were such as would conduce to the health or recreation of the working classes; and few, if any, knew so well, or took such interest as he did, in all that was being done, at any distance—east, west, north, or south of the great city—from Victoria Park to Battersea; from the Regent's Park to the Crystal Palace, and far beyond. 'He would frequently return,' the Queen says, 'to luncheon at a great pace, and would always come through the Queen's dressing-room, where she generally was at that time, with that bright loving smile with which he ever greeted her, telling where he had been, what new buildings he had seen, what studios, etc., he had visited. Riding for mere riding's sake he disliked, and said, 'Es ennuyt mich so' (It bores me so)."

THE LAST THURSDAY OF NOVEMBER.

"Where are the flowers, the fair young flowers, that lately sprang and stood
In brighter light and softer airs, a beauteous sisterhood?
Alas! they all are in their graves; the gentle race of flowers
Are lying in their lowly beds, with the fair and good of ours.
The rain is falling where they lie; but the cold November rain
Calls not from out the gloomy earth the lovely ones again."

So sang the American Poet Laureate of nature. But surely Mr. Bryant could not thus have given the month up to melancholy if he had recollected the scenes of his boyhood, and how mirth and charity hold, in our land, their happiest carnival in November. A vision of the Thanksgiving dinner in his New England home, with roasted turkeys and pumpkin pies, and the family "round the board," would have brightened the gloomiest picture his fancy could have painted. Next to Christmas, in the household festivities, comes

AMERICAN NATIONAL THANKSGIVING-DAY.

The important festival falls this year on the 25th of November. On that DAY we trust that every household in our land will have a good portion in the feasting and a grateful heart in the Thanksgivings. Think of the grand spectacle!

"Six millions of families gathered together on the last Thursday in November, and uniting as one Great Family Republic, whose States and Territories are all enjoying this AMERICAN FESTIVAL OF THANKSGIVING-DAY; is not this a spectacle to move the Old World with admiration and respect for the domestic, social, and religious characteristics of the American nation, as well as to impress the idea of an invincible moral power in our political institutions?"

"No wonder that Americans abroad, wherever they may be found, are glad and proud to keep this National Thanksgiving-Day. For years past it has thus been celebrated—the last Thursday in November—in many cities of Europe and Asia, and on board of our American fleets at sea and in harbor. Our missionaries in Turkey, India, and China have kept the day; and wherever the tidings of appointment can reach, there this festival will be held, as the best exponent which American residents in foreign lands can give the native population of the prosperity and happiness of the American people."

Moreover, this year is distinguished by a great enlargement of our borders. Walrussia is now American territory. From the icebergs of the North Pole to the Gulf of Mexico stretches the latitude of our Republic, while the two wide oceans wash its eastern and western borders. Around this circuit of half a world the proclamation for "a Day of public Thanksgiving" will draw the golden cord of National Union; and lift up the heart of the American People in grateful adoration of their Almighty Benefactor.