

MY LOOK AT THE QUEEN.

ONE of the pleasantest incidents which I recall of a late tour in England was a look I had at the Queen. It happened under circumstances which gave it a singular interest to me, and I may possibly be able to communicate somewhat of this to the reader. I doubt whether, so far as I am concerned, I would have gone much out of my way, or paused long to look, had the present occupant of the throne been only the lovely but untried young girl who was projected upon the world's notice forty years ago; however highly trained she might have been for her great office, however accomplished, and however engaging for her romantic association with the handsome German prince. But Victoria has since then earned and achieved an individual reputation. She has set the seal of personal character upon the great system of government which she represents, and justified its wisdom and beauty before the world. She is known to us, not only as a monarch whose reign has been so unusually long, successful and brilliant, as to be already called the Victorian Age, on account of its splendor in literature, science, art, and the extension and consolidation of the Empire, but also as the prudent, good woman, the head of a model English home; with will enough to govern, and yet the sagacity to govern as little as possible; faithful, even in the midst of the desolateness of her widowhood, to every public duty; as intelligent and experienced in her cabinet as any of her counselors; with an individual character all her own; full of womanly kindness, sympathy and simplicity, and with so little regard for the mere pageantry of her position, as to retreat from the glare of the court and the stare of the people, and to claim, after every sovereign function had been performed, the privilege of retirement into the privacy of her woman's heart again.

Just as I was about leaving London, at the close of the season, for a summer circuit of the British Isles, intending to take the Isle of Wight in my way, a friend informed me that Her Majesty was spending her usual few weeks at Osborne, and that she was accustomed to attend church at Whippingham, near by. When I reached Portsmouth it was yet three or four days before Sunday, and I filled them up with a charming coast-wise ride around the

beautiful island, with here and there a divergence into the interior. As I bear it in memory now, it comes up as a sort of background to the closing event of the journey.

Starting in a ferry-boat from Portsmouth I was soon on the waters of the Solent Sea. In the distance, on the left, I could see the tower of Osborne, above the trees of its park, with the royal ensign floating from its summit, and on the right the little marine village of Cowes close to the water's edge. A few yachts, like seabirds, were resting on the tide, a full-rigged man-of-war was at anchor, and the Queen's yacht, upon which a few remaining flags of a recent decoration were still flying, lay close under the woody head-land of Osborne.

I spent the night at Cowes, in an inn so close to the edge of the low stone embankment that I could hear the waves plashing against it until I fell asleep. The next morning, finding an open carriage, with a rosy-faced old driver, I chartered it for the round trip, carefully stipulating that I was to be punctually dropped into Cowes again by Saturday night.

I need not detail my three days' impressions at length; but it may interest the reader if I gather them together in one vivid recollection, grouped as if under a sort of balloon-view. I have lovely memories of drives, continuing day after day, along roads full of picturesque objects; sometimes down into lanes almost overhung by the luxuriant growth of the wild hedge-rows on either side; the "great and wide sea also" almost always in view; the "Needles" shooting up their purple points within sight of the inn on the cliff where I spent the first night; Freshwater, on the next day, with its towering precipices of chalk, and the gay bathers disporting themselves in the surf which broke on the beach at their base; the treeless, hedgeless, endless, undulating "downs," through the short grass of which the chalky soil could be seen; the great "chines," terrible overhanging cliffs and gorges jagged out of the black soil and rock, contrasting strangely with the milk-white steeps elsewhere; the ride through Undercliffe, with its great terraces and land-slips tending to the sea; here and there stretches of wood full of noble trees; on the south side of the Island, Ventnor, with its

yellow-brown stone dwellings clinging one above another, to the hill-side; Brading and Bon-church, with their memory of Legh Richmond and Little Jane; John Stirling and William Adams sleeping nearly side by side in the same grave-yard: two young clergymen, in life and thought so far apart; one resting under the distant benediction of Carlyle and Julius Hare, the other literally under "the Shadow of the Cross," which lies supported by its nails above his tomb; both dismissed, at nearly the same age, to learn the great secret.

And, going back again to the beginning of the journey, my mind brings up Carisbrooke Castle, where Charles the First was confined and where his daughter died, now as far gone in ruin as the poor king himself; as roofless as he is headless; its walls and towers crumbling, like great bones, into decay, and its circling moat as dry as the royal arteries. And again, when nearly half-way round the island, as I drew near the residence of the Queen's Laureate, my coachman told me how he had driven him for hours, sitting by his side, and "not a word did he say to him all the way." And—most curious of all—that odd little church of St. Lawrence, which, when near the end of my circuit, I was told to get out and look for up a side-road on the hill, and found, after I had almost stepped upon it, nearly hidden behind its hedge and quite buried by the trees which stretched their branches over it. "The smallest church in Great Britain!" eleven feet high, eleven feet wide, thirty-five feet long (ten feet of this added a few years ago), and more than six hundred years old. There it crouched, like an aged dwarf, black with antiquity, its ridge-pole bent in like a decrepit back, and its low gable stubbly bearded with hoary moss. And what a Lilliputian interior! a nave, and a raised chancel, and an altar, and a lecturn, and a pulpit, and a service held every Sunday, the children of the hamlet put inside, and the grown people of the congregation sitting on forms under an awning in the grave-yard. What mutations had the tiny creature seen! What tides of life had swept over it, or near it, since the reign of Henry the Third! It had seen masses celebrated in it, and heard good Protestant sermons preached in it. Here, tucked away in its nook, the venerable little object had borne its vicissitudes like a Christian, and stooped under the trees and almost hid itself in the grass, as history sometimes trundled near it, and great kings were heard of as living, fighting, and dying; and priests

fled away and appeared again; and generation after generation sent each its lord and lady of the manor, and a thimbleful congregation of rustics to worship in it or upon it; and all the big world beyond went on with its mighty perturbations, leaving the pigmy sanctuary finally at peace under its bower of leaves, to amuse a tourist like me, who could only lean over its gate and laugh outright at the sight of it.

And now Saturday afternoon comes. We have passed through Ryde, and begin to touch, on the right, the farthest limit of the Queen's private domain of twenty-three hundred acres, once owned jointly by herself and Prince Albert. Here they had lived as English householders, and enjoyed each other in the seclusion of domestic life. The driver's homely gossip about the Queen's annoyance when intruders were seen by her on the grounds, and her failures in keeping them off, gave quite an air of its being only a fine gentlewoman's place that we were riding by.

It seemed as if we had proceeded a mile or two along the neat and well-kept "farm," as some would have called it, looking hard and curiously that way all the time, when we came suddenly, on the opposite side of the road, upon a pretty Gothic church of gray stone, somewhat peculiar in construction, and, if I remember rightly, with a square lantern tower at the intersection of the transept. It stood, like all English churches, in a grave-yard, the gate-way of which was the common lich-gate,—a pyramidal canopy resting on four pillars. Close by, in a grove of fine trees, was the rectory. This was the church at Whippingham, designed and built by Prince Albert, and which the Queen was accustomed to attend. The unusually deep chancel-recess, fronting eastward and on the road, was accounted for as having something to do with the accommodation of the royal household. A door on the south side, opening directly into it, surmounted by armorial carving and the sculptured monogram, V and A, indicated the private entrance of the Queen and her family.

I called on the Reverend Canon Prothero, who holds this interesting post, and received from him at once the kind promise that next morning he would place me in the church where I could see Her Majesty. He mentioned the fact that there was only one seat in the whole edifice from which she could be seen.

The next morning, with my rosy friend, the

coachman, I drove over from West Cowes, and, on entering the yard, found it already quite full of people, evidently bent as much upon offering the homage of a look to the august worshiper, as upon attending divine service. The church, also, appeared to be well filled. As I was passing through the crowd in order to reach the entrance in the rear, a lady came up to me, and, after asking whether I was the gentleman expected by Mr. Prothero, said that he had requested her to wait for me, in order that I might be sure of securing the one coveted seat. This great kindness was only one instance out of many which, as a stranger, I had shown me everywhere in England. I was ready to go in at once. But she added to her kindness by suggesting that, as the point of view inside might not prove to be all I desired, and as the Queen usually came about the commencement of the litany service, perhaps I might prefer to remain where I was, and see her alight and enter. After taking me in and making me known to the sexton, the courteous lady retired, and I withdrew to seek a good position outside.

Soon the service began, and from where I stood, close to the open window, it could be distinctly heard. I followed it with a consciousness curiously commingled; thinking, at one moment, of the worship due to the King of kings, and, at another, of the semi-deification which the sovereigns of the earth had received and claimed, of the deep obeisances and kneeling attitudes, the humble petitioning for favor, and the lauding ascriptions of power and glory which had surrounded the ancient ancestors of the very monarch who might now appear at any moment. I recalled to mind, also, the grand ideal of the British sovereign which Blackstone had painted on my imagination years ago, when I was a boy. I remembered that Constitutional picture now, as a magnificent amplification, in legal detail, of Shakspeare's

"There's such divinity doth hedge a king."

As the whole beauty of that wondrous fabric broke upon me which now perpetuates the old Divine Right of Kings in the new form of the Divine Right of Government, and which makes the old title, "Majesty," once given to the royal person in itself, even more befitting the person who sits within the political, almost poetic, periphery of this great sovereignty, the fact still forced itself through all, how intrinsic—how essential was the woman herself, whom

I was waiting to see, in her own bodily presence to the very strength, vitality, possibility—divinity if you please—of the whole structure. For it was the Queen who sustained the Throne, as much as the Throne the Queen. It had been built about her royal line. The virtue which lay in her dynastic blood was its interior support. At its back stood the right and the prestige of an ancestral house which had reigned by universal consent for one thousand years. And she had come by this long appointment of time,—time, that unpurchasable thing, unprocurable by any means but itself, the instrument and vehicle of Providence in the evolution of human progress. She was here in the necessity of a historic destiny, in the character of a historic being, the present evidence and assurance of the national unity, the ensign, still foremost though not unfurled, of the national identity during all this march of ages.

While thinking of this, in the fifteen or twenty minutes I had to wait, I looked round at the people standing about, and observed them curiously in their peculiar relation to it all. Here they were, English, every man and woman of them. Yellow-haired, fresh-featured, bluff, stout, sturdy, fattened on this soil, born to this allegiance, familiar with this idea. Their faces were full of expectancy. What was *their* interest in their monarch?

Just then the rustle of the congregation within the church was heard as they were going down upon their knees in prayer, and the voice of the minister came out to us:

"O Lord, save the Queen!"

Answered by the people:

"And mercifully hear us when we call upon Thee."

In a few moments the anthem burst forth; which is a custom in the English church before the litany. Now, three or four uniformed policemen, with the usual felt-covered helmets, looking as if they had come down from London, began to move busily about, warning the crowd, this time, to get *on* the grass and to stay off the paths. The anticipated moment had evidently come. The church bell gave three startling taps. The Defender of the Faith was just issuing forth from her stately gates a little way down the road. In a few moments, with a sudden dash, a man, dressed like a groom, trotted by the lich-gate, on a white horse, and reined up somewhere out of

sight. Two barouches then drove up with coachmen and footmen in mourning livery. A man, who had been seated on the coach-box of the foremost vehicle, jumped quickly to the ground, and, taking off his hat, came with rapid steps up the path, and I had before me the immortal, the redoubtable, the irrepressible John Brown, once gillie to Prince Albert, now the Queen's constant attendant. The whole appearance and manner of the man entertained me exceedingly. His large and quite imposing figure was clothed in Highland costume, as black as midnight; kilt and hose, with tartan plaid flowing picturesquely down in front from his left shoulder to the knees, and the national bonnet in his hand. He had what the Scotch call a "dour" look; grim, doggedly defiant and self-conscious, as if his mind was full of petty determinations. His close-cut iron-gray hair lay thick and shocky on his stubborn head, which was slightly bent forward, as he came swiftly toward us, apparently ready to butt any one who should question either his own high prerogative or that of his mistress. With a grave, fussy, self-important air, yet somewhat shy, as if aware of the concentrated gaze of those who were overcome by his appearance and tremendous functions, he turned, and, looking at the private door which the sexton had already opened from within, satisfied himself that the way was clear. This duty done, he whisked back again with that quick, jerky, twinkling movement of the legs, and shooting out of splay feet, which makes the walk of the Highland Scots so peculiar.

I saw the Queen lean forward in the carriage and look at the crowd, and, as the great John came back to her and stood motionless and bonnetless behind the step, she apparently placed her hand upon his arm, as a part of the machine, and royalty touched the earth. Following Her Majesty came the Princess Beatrice, her youngest daughter, in bright pink summer attire,—a slender, lovely girl, blooming like an English rose. Beside her was her brother, Prince Leopold, a graceful and somewhat tall young fellow, not handsome or otherwise, but as distinguished-looking as might have been expected of one in his station. Behind them came the other carriageful, Lord Alfred Paget and several ladies of the royal household.

The Queen looked much as her portraits had made her familiar to me, but neither photograph nor painting had succeeded in conveying the agreeable and satisfactory im-

pression which I received. At the moment I could only take in her general appearance. She was dressed in a sort of half-mourning, in some fabric of quiet gray or lavender color, and a gauzy, transparent white veil softened, but did not conceal her features. She came up the pathway with simple, modest dignity, not noticeable for any manner, and no differently from any lady who might have set out for the parish church that morning. The policeman had already ordered our hats off, and there we had to stand in huddled absurdity, with not even the satisfaction of raising them in sign of respect as she passed. I, and others, I suppose, could do nothing but stand bolt upright and stare. Whether there was any stupid bobbing at her by those behind me I do not know, but I suspect it was a converging battery of eyes which she had to meet, without the break of an uplifted arm to relieve her from the *mitrailleuse* fire of eyeballs which began at the gates, and continued until she reached the corner where I was standing, when she turned, and slightly dipping her sunshade over her calm, unembarrassed face, entered the church. I could fancy how, a hundred or more years ago, we should have all been down upon our marrow-bones on the grass, but the recent leveling up of the people to a sense of sovereignty, and the lowering of royalty to the point of its intrinsic worth, had brought us to this rather rude and improper attitude,—quite a significant trifle, by the way.

As the crowd broke up and made for the rear door, I caught a glimpse of John Brown's figure, stepping with jerky and mighty strides over the graves, and disappearing around a buttress of the chancel,—probably for a smoke.

It was now the turn of a sovereign of another order to receive the attentions of the sexton, whom I found already at the door awaiting my royal pleasure. I followed him up the aisle, leaving these "subjects" to find what place they could, and was conducted to a pew behind the pulpit and quite underneath it, so unpromising at first sight that I hesitated whether I should enter. But the people in it began to move down, as if they had been expecting me, and I passed them until I reached the further end against the wall. When seated, I found myself about as much in seclusion as the Queen herself, but Her Majesty was in full view before me, almost my *vis-à-vis*. The royal family occupied a cross-pew, a rather spacious compartment, sunk in the

side of the chancel recess opposite, and the pew I occupied was also a cross-pew in the body of the church. But the pulpit, which I suppose was intended to intercept the vision from this part of the edifice, had been placed about a foot from the pilasters of the chancel-arch, so that the seat, which had been, with such kindness, reserved for me, possessed the exclusive advantage of commanding that of the anointed presence itself. Her Majesty, the Princess Beatrice, and Prince Leopold sat in the front row. Their manner during service was like that which we have so much reason to admire in all English people at church; their attention was given to their prayer-books, and, in devout conformity with its requisitions, they sat, stood, or knelt, as they were called upon to listen, to praise, or to pray. While the service proceeded this was pretty much all that I noticed, but when the time for the sermon came I felt released from the obligation to attend, for the seat which was so excellent for observation, and perhaps meditation, was an utter failure for the appreciation of the discourse which was going on above, and with its back to me. All I could do, therefore, was to observe and meditate, and this I accordingly did. I had an opportunity, now, of looking at the Queen more attentively, and I was so placed that I could do so without impertinence. There was no mistaking the high-bred contour of her face, and the indications of one born to command, and accustomed to be obeyed. Pride, will, dignity, determination and even imperious force were written all over it, and yet the fair full brow and the beautiful, delicately chiseled nose, while they seemed, with the drooping eyelids, to add to this haughty look, contradicted the full and strong lower face, betokening as fine and womanly a nature as any one could desire. This expression of strength was by no means confined to the will, but suggested a capacity for intense, almost fierce affections and earnest sympathies. There was, besides, an evident honesty and directness of character, in which feminine subtlety had not even its usual proportion. No one, upon seeing her, unknown, in a group of women, would have failed to notice her before any other, and to wonder what circumstances could have produced such a face. Over all this was spread a settled melancholy. She had the look of one whose life had been blighted by a fearful grief,—a grief so overwhelming that it had become unendurable and irrepressible. We do not need

to revive the early romance of her life to understand why. All the world has heard of "the beauty of that star which shone so close beside her."

"How modest, kindly, all-accomplish'd, wise,

Wearing the white flower of a blameless life,

A Prince indeed,
Beyond all titles, and a household name,
Hereafter, thro' all times, Albert the Good."

Any one, looking now upon that pensive face, after a widowhood of nearly seventeen years, is ready to say, as earnestly as the Laureate:

"Break not, O woman's heart, but still endure;
Break not, for thou art Royal, but endure."

But it was not only the woman that was before me. This was the Queen of England, the sole monarch of the vast British empire, the mistress of more than two hundred and forty millions of people. And now whatever interest I may have already felt was magnified by the dynastic romance which lay about her. Here is the lineal descendant of William the Conqueror. Here is, beside, the result of how much great and commingled blood? My memory flew back past the Conqueror to *his* forefather, Rolf the Dane, the old Norse sea-robber at the mouth of the Seine, the fierce founder of the dukedom in Normandy. Then I bethought me of William's great-grandson, Henry the Second, and the two diverging lines behind *him*: on the one hand, through the Saxon Matilda, through Alfred the Great, to Egbert, of the house of Cerdic; and, on the other hand, through Geoffrey the Handsome, of the house of Anjou, through Fulc of Jerusalem, Fulc the Black, Fulc the Good, Fulc the Red, to Tortulf the Forester, half-brigand, half-hunter in the woods of Rennes, on the Breton border. Then James the First came before me, and the Queen's lineage opened anew through Mary, Queen of Scots, through Robert Bruce, through Malcolm Canmore, till it touched the tragedy of "Macbeth" in "the gracious Duncan." And, on the other side, I could see, spreading out, the many successive lines which had admitted the royal blood of France into almost every reign of her ancient forefathers. And last of all—as if a replenishing from the fountain-head of English origin—I saw descending to her, through the house of Brunswick, the Teuton-Saxon stream of the German princes.

There was no possibility of questioning the

accuracy of the genealogies which found their convergence in the woman sitting so quietly near me. There may be noble lineages as long and as varied as hers, and the tables may be extant which give them; but this has come down in

“The fierce light which beats upon the throne,”

and it lies on the surface of the world's history. In the atoms of her body do any of these ancestors linger? Is Rolf, is Tortulf, is Egbert, in the corpuscles of her blood? Is William the Norman still living in her brain? Does Alfred the Saxon survive in her heart? Do the lineaments of the Plantagenets, or the Tudors, or the Stuarts, play now and then unrecognized in the countenance of the Guelph?

I had another curious thought suggest itself. As a lineal descendant of the Conqueror, a vista seemed to open behind her directly up to him. There are thirty-one reigns, I believe, between her own and his. The historic line runs zigzag; but her *direct* personal ascent to him passes through only fifteen kings. She is the first queen regnant of her own private lineage. These are her grandfathers; the other royal personages, preceding her two uncles, are only her forty-second cousins. In the perspective of this vista some of the most remarkable characters which the world has known, or which ever filled the British throne, come into view.

First we see the Conqueror, gigantic in person, majestic in bearing, fierce in countenance, the inheritor of the terrible Norse nature; of such enormous strength that no one could bend his bow or wield his battle-ax; frightful in the field, bearing down with his lance every knight who met him; a natural sovereign, also, in affairs of state, with a genius equal to every emergency created by the establishment of a new empire; a consummate administrator, laying its foundations so deep and broad that it stands firm to this day; cruel and vindictive, yet often noble and generous; this was the tremendous personality who sent his propelling blood down the line of eight hundred years to Victoria.

Next to him is Henry the First (William Rufus is not in sight). Beauclerc, because well-learned for the age in which he lived, inheriting his father's genius for statesmanship, brave in battle, fascinating in manner, but vicious and violent.

Next, Henry the Second (Stephen is on one side), standing at the fork of two ancestries; by his father, the Angevine, by

his mother, the Saxon; Plantagenet, from the broom in his father's helmet; in person stout, bull-necked, gibbous-eyed; in character licentious, yet in disposition sensitive and noble; charming in address, in action practical and business-like; a progressive statesman, introducing measures which produced a permanent improvement in arts, laws, government, and civil liberty; (Richard, Cœur de Leon, does not appear), but Victoria must accept, in her retrospect, the able, fascinating, yet infamous John. Then Henry the Third, who commenced the present Westminster Abbey, the patron of arts, a man of letters, ostentatious and magnificent in expenditure, frivolous, changeable, false and superstitious. Then Edward the First, whose tall, deep-chested, long-limbed frame was found entire, five hundred years after his death, in his brown stone sarcophagus in the Abbey; in nature as in name a thorough Englishman; so insular in policy as to neglect his dominions on the continent. The admiration of his subjects, inheriting the force of his ancestors in war and in the state; wise, stubborn, cruel, revengeful; the founder of the Parliament and of the constitutional government which obtains to-day. Then Edward the Second,—weak, indolent, inoffensive. Then Edward the Third, of noble and gracious figure, in whom the powerful genius of his house re-appeared both in the cabinet and in the field; the builder of Windsor Castle. (Richard the Second is not in view.) Then Henry the Fourth, of Lancaster, full of political sagacity and military vigor, out of the legal line, but a grandson of Edward the Third. Then Henry the Fifth, “gallant prince Hal,” an heroic monarch, able in statecraft, a splendid soldier, affable, magnanimous and generous. (Henry the Sixth is invisible.) Then Edward the Fourth, of York, beautiful in person, gay, voluptuous, indolent, treacherous, cruel and bloodthirsty, but with profound political ability. (Edward the Fifth, unseen, and the bad blood of Richard the Third, also out of this descent.) Then Henry the Seventh, Tudor, uniting Lancaster and York by a union with the daughter of Edward the Fourth, tying the loop of a double lineage from Edward the Third; valiant in the field, despotic in disposition but pacific by policy, sagacious in affairs, the promoter of industry, commerce and the arts. (The burly figure of Henry the Eighth does not cross the vista; neither does Edward the Sixth, nor Mary, nor Elizabeth appear.) Then James the First, Stuart, great-great-

grandson of Henry the Seventh, learned and ingenious, but pedantic, the king of Shakspeare and Bacon, the projector of the present English Bible. (Charles the First, and the Great Rebellion, Charles the Second, and the Restoration do not pass across the avenue of Victoria, nor does James the Second, nor William and Mary, nor Queen Anne.) But George the First, great-grandson of James the First, comes into the near distance with his Hanover figure and dullness. Then George the Second, active, warlike, intelligent. Then George the Third, the fine old English gentleman, who could not appreciate Shakspeare, the despotic old king who, in his craze, knocked out a large piece of his crown. (George the Fourth, and William the Fourth, go behind the scenes.) And here, in the foreground, not before the foot-lights like too many of them, but quietly at church,—Victoria.

Again did my mind contemplate her in another relation to the Conqueror. He earned his title, not by the battle of Senlac, but by the slow and successive conquest of his realm, and even this did not extend over the whole of the little island. In eight centuries from his day the empire he founded extends into four continents, and wholly envelops what must be considered a fifth.

As I thought of its all-encompassing extent, it seemed as if I could see the red cross of St. George floating in every breeze that was blowing round the earth. While the Conqueror could scarcely hold his dukedom across the channel, the Queen controls the destinies of countries and nations which have the great oceans of the globe rolling between them. While his Norse forefather coasted down to Normandy and was content to govern there, his royal daughter sends her navies into every sea, and her subjects have planted empires for her in every clime.

“In the dawn of this ampler day”

I could imagine her seated in the great golden throne of the House of Lords, clad in the magnificent investiture of her sovereignty; or, like an embodied Britannia, as I would figure her, surrounded by the radiance of civilization, in the fore-front of human progress, holding in a hand,—whose five mighty fingers are the printing-press, the steam-engine, the magnetic-telegraph, the mechanical arts, the mercantile marine,—whose palm is peace, and whose grasp is the whole armament of war,—England in

the palm, and her possessions under the inclosing touch of these fingers—holding in her hand—the world! What do I see? The hard-earned title “Conqueror” become the auspicious name “Victoria.”

Had there not been enough to interest me? Sovereignty wrought into its highest ideal; ancestry regnant for a thousand years; dominions extending all over the earth, and an able, noble, pure, faithful, high-principled woman as the representative and frontispiece of it all! Here is one who has carried such a magnificent consciousness about with her for more than forty years. What a phenomenon in human nature and experience! What a strange inner life! What isolation!—as a woman, sharing with the humblest of her subjects a woman’s heart and a woman’s sphere; but, as a Queen, lifted up an immeasurable distance above sons and daughters, nobles and people. Wherever she moves the profoundest expression of respect must attend her, and silence must reign unless she speaks, or permits to speak. Is it strange that she feels her widowhood as no other can? for the stronger her nature is, the deeper must her loneliness be in such an allotment as hers!

The sermon closed, the concluding prayers were said, the benediction was pronounced, and, when I raised my head, she was gone.

After the crowd had departed, I went into her spacious blue-upholstered pew, with its double row of empty chairs. Her own was at the upper end, toward the body of the church, and was placed with its back against the intervening wall. Close at her right hand stood a beautiful mural monument. Making the royal seat my desk, while the sexton at the gate watched me uneasily, I copied the touching inscription on the back of a memorandum of the service which she had left under her prayer-book:

To the Beloved Memory

of

Francis, Albert, Charles, Augustus, Emmanuel,
PRINCE CONSORT,

Who departed this life December 14, 1861,

In his 43d year.

“Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”

Rev. 2, verse 10.

This Monument is placed

In the Church erected under his direction,

By

His broken-hearted and devoted widow,

QUEEN VICTORIA.

1864.