

# THE GREAT QUEEN'S LIFE

## Sketchy Story of the Life of Our Late Ruler.

The year 1817 was a memorable one in the history of England. Seldom had the prosperity of a country which had known no serious hitch or obstacle for a century been more seriously menaced; never were the destinies of a constitutional monarchy that had stood the storms of 800 years enveloped in a more forbidding gloom.

The death of the Princess Charlotte opened up the prospect of succession to the throne to the youngest son of George III., and had inspired him with a desire to marry. As yet the only sons who had taken wives were the Duke of York, who had children, and the Duke of Cumberland, whose first living child was not born till 1819.

The third brother was Edward, Duke of Kent, then 51 years of age. He was not on terms of ordinary friendship with any of his brothers. Suddenly he determined to marry.

Victoria, daughter of Duke Franz of Saxe-Coburg, at that time 32 years of age, had taken the Duke's fancy. On July 11, 1818, this lady became the Duchess of Kent, the future mother of the future Queen of England.

### HE WAS POOR.

When the Duke was informed by his consort that he had the prospect of an heir, it was his wish that the child should be born on English soil. The journey was attended with difficulty, for His Grace was much pressed for ready cash. In the spring of 1819, however, the journey was made. The Duke and Duchess were installed at Kensington Palace, then, as now, a place of residence for the members and proteges of the royal family, and on May 24, 1818, "a pretty little Princess, plump as a partridge," was born. The Duke was delighted with the child. He would dandle and caress her, and then hand her to the arms of admiring spectators, with the caution, "Take care of her, for she will be Queen of England." His Grace did not live to enjoy his parental happiness long.

It had been prophesied that two members of the family would die in the course of 1820. The Duke believed the prophecy implicitly, but he applied it to his brothers. In the winter of 1819 he had gone to the sheltered watering place of Sidmouth, in Devonshire, "to cheat," as he said, "the winter." One day he happened, when taking a walk, to get wet and to catch cold. Acute inflammation of the lungs supervened and carried him off. "The poor widow found herself, owing to the Duke's considerable debts, in a very uncomfortable position at the time of his death. Her brother, Leopold, enabled her to return to Kensington, where she henceforth devoted herself to the education of her child, Queen Victoria."

### PROPHECY FULFILLED.

Six days after the death of the Duke of Kent the prophecy above mentioned was completely fulfilled by the death of his father, George III. On Monday, the 31st, the new sovereign, the Prince Regent, was proclaimed George IV. The health of the new King was precarious; his age was advanced; he had no legal heir. The Duke of York, the heir apparent, was married, had no family, and his Duchess was in a declining state. The Duke of Clarence, the next in order, was of ripe age. He had had two daughters born to him. Each of them had died in infancy, but further issue, though not probable, was still not an impossible contingency. The next in succession was the infant Princess at Kensington Palace. Every year as it passed by made it more apparent that if only the life of the royal babe were spared upon her the monarchy ultimately must devolve. As a matter of fact the prophetic boast of the Duke of Kent was fulfilled earlier than might have been anticipated. The Regent reigned for just 10 years after his ascent to the throne as George IV., the Duke of Clarence just seven years as William IV.

On August 30, 1836, King William, who had acceded to the throne on the death of his brother, in 1830, gave a dinner party at Windsor on his birthday.

There was one person whom the King detested more even than his Ministers—the mother of the Princess, the Duchess of Kent, who had not been sparing in her criticisms on the reception she had met from the royal family in England. The Duchess had applied for a suit of apartments for her own use in Kensington Palace, and

had been refused by the King. She appropriated the rooms, notwithstanding the denial. The King informed her publicly that he neither understood nor would endure conduct so disrespectful to him. This, though said loudly and publicly, was only the mutterings of a storm which broke next day. It was the royal birthday, and the King had invited a hundred people to dinner. The Duchess of Kent sat on one side of His Majesty, one of his sisters on the other and the Princess Victoria opposite.

### DENOUNCED HER MOTHER.

When replying to a speech in which his health had been proposed, the King burst forth in a bitter tirade against the Duchess.

"I trust in God," he exclaimed, "that I may have the satisfaction of leaving the royal authority on my death to the personal exercise of that young lady (pointing to the Princess)—the heiress presumptive of the crown—and not in the hands of a person now near me who is surrounded by evil advisers, and who is herself incompetent to act with propriety in the station in which she would be placed. I have no hesitation in saying that I have been insulted—grossly and continually insulted—by that person, but I am determined to endure no longer a course of behavior so disrespectful to me."

The King particularly complained of the manner in which the Princess had been prevented from attending at court by her mother.

"For the future," he said, "I shall insist and command that the Princess do upon all occasions appear at my court, as it is her duty to do."

Having begun with an anathema the King ended with a benediction, speaking of the Princess and her future reign in a tone of paternal interest and affection. The effect, however, which the royal utterances produced was alarming. The Queen looked in deep distress, the Princess burst into tears, the Duchess of Kent said not a word, but soon after leaving the room, announced her immediate departure, and ordered her carriage.

There was but one event which His Majesty wished to live to witness in his "God-forsaken realm." He devoutly prayed that he might live till the Princess Victoria was of age. His prayer was just granted, but only just.

It was not until she was 12 years old that the Princess Victoria was permitted to know the high destiny reserved for her, and even then the knowledge came in an almost accidental manner.

### ASSAILED A LORD.

Meanwhile the future husband of the Princess and her cousin was growing up in Germany. Prince Albert, the son of the Duke of Coburg, was born at Rosenau in the August of the same year as Princess Victoria, and it is a curious coincidence, considering the future connection of the children, that Mme. Siebold, the accoucheuse who attended the Duchess of Coburg, at the birth of the young Prince, had only three months before attended the Duchess of Kent at the birth of the Princess. "How pretty the little Mayflower," writes the grandmother both of Albert and Victoria, the Dowager Duchess of Coburg, to the Duchess of Kent, "will be when I see it in a year's time. Siebold can not sufficiently describe what a dear little love it is." The Mayflower above spoken of was, of course, the Princess Victoria. From a very early period the Dowager Duchess permitted herself to entertain the hope that her two grandchildren would thereafter become man and wife.

On February 25, 1831, when not quite 12 years of age, she attended her first drawing room. "Lady Jersey," writes the amusing Mr. Greville, "made a scene with Lord Durham. She got up in a corner of the room and said: 'Lord Durham, I hear that you have said things about me which are not true, and I desire that you will call upon me to-morrow with a witness to hear my positive denial, and I hope that you will not repeat such things about me.' She was in a fury, and he in a still greater. He muttered that he should never set foot in her house again which she did not hear, and, after delivering herself of her speech she flounced back again to her seat, mightily proud of her exploit. It arose out of her saying that he should make Lady Durham demand an audience of the Queen to con-



KING EDWARD VII.

The New Ruler of Great Britain and all Her Colonies.

tradict the things which Lady Jersey said of her, and to other Whig allies." These were days in which party spirit ran high, and penetrated the whole fabric of society in England. Within two or three years of this time Princess Victoria had taken her place in that society as the heiress to the English throne.

For national purposes the Princess completed her majority on the eighteenth anniversary of her birth.

On June 2, nine days after this event had taken place, the King was desperately ill and died on June 20. THE CORONATION.

The King died at 2:20 on the morning of June 20, and the young Queen met her Council at Kensington Palace at 11 a.m. the same day. After having received the two royal Dukes, the two Archbishops, the Chancellor and the Prime Minister—Lord Melbourne—the proclamation was read to the Council, the usual order passed, the doors were thrown open, and the young Queen entered.

Of the proceedings the Clerk of the Council wrote: "After she had read her speech and taken and signed the

oath for the security of the Church of Scotland the Privy Councillors were sworn, the two royal Dukes first by themselves, and as these two old men, her uncles, knelt before her, swearing allegiance and kissing her hand, I saw her blush up to the eyes, as if she felt the contrast between their civil and natural relations, and this was the only sign of emotion which she evinced. Her manner to them was very graceful and engaging. She kissed them both and rose from her chair and moved toward the Duke of Sussex, who was furthest from her and too infirm to reach her. She seemed rather bewildered at the multitude of men who were sworn and who came, one after another, to kiss her hand, but she did not speak to anybody, nor did she make the slightest difference in her manner, or show any in her countenance to any individual of any rank, station, or party. I particularly watched her when Lord Melbourne and the Ministers and the Duke of Wellington and Peel approached her. She went through the whole ceremony occasionally looking at Melbourne for instruction when she had any doubt what to do, which

hardly ever occurred, and with perfect calmness and self-possession, but at the same time with a graceful modesty and propriety particularly interesting and ingratiating."

### HER ENGAGEMENT.

On October 14, 1839,—that is, four days after her lower had reached Windsor—the Queen informed Lord Melbourne that she had made up her mind as to her marriage. On the 15th she thus wrote to Baron Stockmar:

"I do feel so guilty I know not how to begin my letter, but I think the news it will contain will be sufficient to insure your forgiveness. Albert has completely won my heart, and all was settled between us this morning. . . . I feel certain he will make me very happy. I wish I could say I felt as certain of making him happy. Leopold must tell you all about the details, which I have not time to do."

The official and public announcement of the betrothal was not made either in Germany or England till the close of the year.

The Prince arrived in England for his marriage on February 6, 1840. The marriage took place on February 10 in the chapel of St. James's Palace. "The morning," writes Theodore Martin in his "Life of the Prince Consort," "had been wet, foggy and dismal, but the day was not to want the happy omen of that sunshine which came afterward to be proverbially known as 'Queen's weather.' Soon after the return of the bridal party from the chapel the clouds passed off, the sun shone out with unusual brilliancy and the thousands who lined the roads from Buckingham Palace to Windsor Castle to see the sovereign and her husband as they passed were more fortunate than those who had crowded the avenues of St. James's Palace in the morning, heedless of rain and cold, to witness the bridal procession on its way to and from the chapel."

Notwithstanding the hearty efforts of the Queen to identify herself with her subjects and to promote their welfare, three attempts have been made upon her life. An insane post boy, Edward Oxford, fired a pistol at Her Majesty as she was driving on Constitutional Hill. The attack was repeated by one Francis with a similar weapon on nearly the same spot. The pistol ball passed under the carriage. About two months after this a hunchback named Bean similarly essayed the assassin's role, but was prevented from accomplishing this object by a boy, Dasset, who happened to be near.

### THE ROYAL LINE.

The Queen was descended from William the Conqueror, who claimed connection with the previous regime, and included Alfred the Great among his ancestors. Here is the family line, traced backward from her Majesty to William:

- Victoria.
- Daughter of Edward, Duke of Kent, Third son of George III., Son of Frederick Lewis Prince of Wales,
- Son of George II., Son of George I., Son of Princess Sophia, who married the Elector of Hanover,
- Daughter of James I., Son of Mary Queen of Scots, Daughter of James V., of Scotland, Son of Princess Margaret, Daughter of Henry VII., Son of Margaret, wife of Edmond Tudor, Earl of Richmond, Daughter of John de Beaufort, Marquis of Somerset and Dorset, Son of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster and King of Castile and Leon,
- Son of Edward III., Son of Edward II., Son of Edward I., Son of Henry III., Son of John of Magna Charta fame, Son of Henry II., Son of Matilda, wife of Geoffrey Plantagenet,
- Daughter of Henry I., Son of William the Conqueror.

The Queen through the Georges was a Guelph. This family was founded in 489 by Anulphus Hunulphus of Guelph, the first of the northern Kings of Italy. He subsequently obtained possession of Bavaria, and the Guelphs ruled there for many centuries, and afterwards held sway in Saxony. One of the Guelphs, William, founder of the House of Lunenburg, had seven sons and eight daughters. The sons agreed among themselves not to divide the dukedom. One, to be selected by lot, was to marry, and he and his children after him were to rule. The unusual arrangement was observed to the letter, and George, the sixth brother, won the matrimonial prize. His youngest son, Ernest Augustus, succeeded him, marrying the Electress Sophia, daughter of the King of Bohemia, whose wife was the daughter of our James I. The Electress Sophia, granddaughter of James I., would have succeeded to the British Crown on the death of Queen Anne. But she died seven weeks before that monarch, and her son, George I., ascended the throne. By way of James I., and his daughter the Queen was connected with the Guelphs. She was also united in the same way to the Royal line of Scotland. James I., of England, and the sixth of Scotland, was the son of Mary, Queen of Scots, whose lineage is traceable back to Elizabeth, Duncan, and Malcolm, of tragic fame. The Scotch line, the Norman line, and the Hanoverian or Guelph line, all unite in the Queen and Royal family. So does the old British monarchy. It is claimed that one branch of the family tree reaches to Alfred the Great and Egbert. The various races united in the Queen made her distinctly representative of the English of today.



ALEXANDRIA QUEEN CONSORT OF ENGLAND.