

*THE PASSING OF A
GREAT QUEEN
A Tribute to the Noble Life
of VICTORIA Regina
MARIE CORELLI*

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



A
0
0
0
4
6
7
2
8
9
5

198

E. R. Dickson;



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

THE PASSING OF THE
GREAT QUEEN  

A TRIBUTE
TO THE NOBLE LIFE OF
VICTORIA REGINA

By MARIE CORELLI
Author of "The Master Christian"



NEW YORK 
DODD, MEAD AND COMPANY
MDCCCCI

Copyright, 1901,
By DODD, MEAD AND COMPANY

SRLZ

JRE

DA

558

C81p

The Passing of the Great Queen.

WAR and rumours of war,—nation rising against nation,—these fulfilled and yet threatening disasters have culminated in the worst disaster of all, the “passing” of the greatest, purest, best, and most blameless Monarch in our history. England’s Queen is dead! The words sound as heavily as though one should say, “The sun is no longer in the sky!”—Strange indeed is it to think of England without the Mother-Queen of the great British people;—to realize

The Passing of the Great Queen

that she, the gentle and beneficent Lady of the Land, has left us for ever! We had grown to think of her as almost immortal. Her goodness, her sympathy, were so much part of ourselves, and were so deeply entwined in the very heart and life and soul of the nation, that we have seldom allowed ourselves to think of the possibility of her being taken from us. Always apparently "well,"—never permitting her subjects to think there was anything the matter with her,—bearing bravely such trials and bereavements as would have broken down the health and nerve of many a stronger and younger woman, she was always as it seemed, ready to our call. We,—spoilt children of long-favouring fortune,—had grown accustomed to believe she would

The Passing of the Great Queen

always be thus "ready,"—that our constant prayer and chant which all we in our generation have 'sung since we were children—"God Save the Queen!"—would be so potent and persuasive as to altogether disarm the one invincible Angel who, when the hour of his solemn visitation comes, will take no denial, but

"Beckons, and with inverted torch doth stand
To lead us with a gentle hand
Into the Land of the Great Departed,
Into the Silent Land."

Thither she has gone, the great Mother of a great people; a people growing out like their own English oaks, far and wide, taking broad root, and spreading mighty branches in all lands,—just as her new Empire of the South has been affixed like another jewel to her crown, she has put off the earthly

The Passing of the Great Queen

diadem and robes of earthly state and has "passed" into that higher condition of being, wherein all things that seemed sorrows become joys, and where eyes grown blind perchance with tears for lost and loved ones, suddenly see "not as in a glass darkly, but face to face."

We grieve for the loss of our beloved Monarch because it is a most personal loss,—one which is irreparable, and which will tell on the English Empire for many years to come. But we do not grieve for her *death*, because we know, not only through the Christian faith, but also through the wondrous workings of Science and its recent heaven-sent discoveries, that there is no such thing as Death. We know that when the soul is ready for Heaven the body drops from

The Passing of the Great Queen

that radiant Essence like the husk from ripe corn, and sets it free to an eternity of endless joy, work and wisdom ; and we are beginning to learn that all our trials and difficulties in this world, be they the trials and difficulties of an exalted position or an humble one, are but the necessary preparation for this divinely-ordained consummation.

The Queen, our Mother and our Friend, lived her life with a noble simplicity commanding the admiration of the world. She accepted her many bereavements with a patience and dignity which silently expressed to all who cared to note it the purity of her faith in God. Occupying the proudest position on earth, her days were passed in the quietest pleasures, — and she stood before us, a daily unmatched

The Passing of the Great Queen

example of the inestimable value of Home and home-life, with all its peaceful surroundings and sacred influences. There was nothing her Majesty so greatly disliked as vulgar show and ostentation ; nothing she appreciated so thoroughly as quiet and decorous conduct, simplicity in dress, gentleness of manner. The extravagance, loose morals, and offensive assertion of flaunting wealth so common to London society nowadays, met with her extreme disapproval, and such faults of modern taste have often been set forth as the reasons why she so seldom visited the Metropolis. She was an incarnation of womanhood at its best ; as a girl she is described by the chroniclers of the time as being simple and modest, unaffected and graceful ; as a wife and mother she was devoted

The Passing of the Great Queen

to her duties, and adored her husband and children ; as a widow, no more faithful worshipper of a beloved memory has ever been writ down in our annals. As in our old legends the mythical King Arthur was called "the blameless King," so perchance, in the far ages to come, when we, and all our progress, advancement, Imperialism and power shall have disappeared into the infinite, leaving only a faint echo, like the sound of a breaking wave upon the shore, future generations may know Victoria as "the blameless Queen," in whose long reign England's glory rose upward to an almost falling height !

And now we stand, sorrow-stricken, even as the Queen's own Laureate, Tennyson, wrote of his 'Sir Bedivere,'—

The Passing of the Great Queen

“The stillness of the dead world’s winter dawn
Amazed him, and he groan’d, ‘The King is
gone!’
And therewithal came on him the weird
rhyme,
‘From the great deep to the great deep he
goes!’”

The Queen is gone! It will take us a long while to believe it. The solemn and majestic death-march—the rolling of muffled drums—the tolling of funeral bells do not help us to realize it any the more plainly. We read the news, we shed tears,—we think of it and we ponder it, but we do not really yet understand the full weight of the blow that has fallen upon the English Empire in the death of the Queen at this particular juncture in history. We shall realize it by-and-bye; but not yet—not yet for a long while! We cannot believe but that she is

The Passing of the Great Queen

still with us ; and the black pageant of death, we think, must be a mere bad dream which will pass presently with the full light of morning. It is not for me to play biographer ; there are hundreds of brilliant men and women in the land ready to write full and detailed memoirs of the Queen, and to chronicle her virtues, her good deeds, her never-failing sympathy with the suffering and the poor. I am merely trying to express in this brief tribute to her imperishable glory what I feel to be the special lesson of this noblest Woman's life to women. In a time like the present, when the accumulation of wealth seems to be the chief object of existence, and the indulgence of self the rule of daily conduct, and yet, when despite our exceptional advantages, our

The Passing of the Great Queen

modern luxuries and conveniences, so many of us are weary, restless and ill at ease, travelling from one place to another in search of some chimera of happiness which for ever eludes our grasp, is it not plain and paramount, after all, that simple goodness is best? The "old-fashioned" virtues,—is there not something in them?—something sweet and penetrating like the perfume of thyme and lavender in the "old-fashioned" garden? One recalls to-day the words of the great Napoleon to a lady who, deploring lack of energy and enthusiasm in France, said to him—

"Sire, we want *men*."

"No, Madame," was the curt rejoinder,—“we want mothers!”

This is what every great nation needs—mothers,—true good wo-

The Passing of the Great Queen

men, content with their husbands and their homes—women whose dearest joy in life is so to influence their sons that they may grow up to be useful, clever, brave and honourable men. This invaluable influence of pure and modest womanhood is what England is fast losing. For many of her matrons, especially those of the upper classes, are no longer content to be matronly,—they must have the pleasures, the dissipations, the frivolous gaieties of the extremely young, and the girl of to-day is often brought into reluctant rivalry with her own mother in the contest for the unmeaning flatteries and attentions of men. Our late Monarch has given to women a supreme example of what mothers should be, — wise, prudent, patient, never weary in

The Passing of the Great Queen

well-doing, and for ever tender, for ever loving. How sweet it is to-day to remember the little endearing words which she wrote when he who is now our King was a newborn infant in her arms :—

“As my precious, invaluable Albert sat there, and *our little love between us*, I felt quite warm with happiness and love to God !”

The gentle woman's heart, then so “warm with happiness,” was destined to know the coldness of a life-long sorrow, but the “love to God” never failed ;—never relaxed in its firm trust and faith, and herein was the great light that seemed to spring mystically from England's throne and spread a halo round England's Sovereign.

“I am quite clear,” said the Queen, speaking of her eldest

The Passing of the Great Queen

daughter, then a child, "that she should be taught to have great reverence for God and for religion, and that she should have the feeling of devotion and love which our Heavenly Father encourages His earthly children to have for Him and not one of fear and trembling."

"Reverence for God!" No one will deny that the Queen in the closing years of her long and splendid reign must have seen this reverence dying out and that her heart must often have been surcharged with weeping when she considered the great change that has come over modern thought and modern life since she first ascended the throne, a shy, pretty little girl, with all England waiting to do her homage. She must have noticed a complete departure from old ways and cus-

The Passing of the Great Queen

toms which, however simple they were, certainly did mark English women as the Queen-roses of the world, and did so influence men to love their homes and to work for the glory of their country that they were able to leave it greater than they found it. She must have watched Progress marching with swift, impetuous strides in one direction, — but Retrogression and Decay marching as steadily, though more slowly in another,—progress let us say in machinery, but retrogression in men. Who shall count the tears the Queen has shed for the evils which she, with her well-known wisdom and prescience, may not have foreseen coming upon England! Who shall estimate the grief and pain she has suffered on account of the cruel war which has

The Passing of the Great Queen

ravaged the homes of a people who are one with ourselves in the Christian faith,—a war which, in her last days on earth, she had to learn was not ended, but rather likely to be prolonged! Noble-hearted, deeply God-loving woman as she was, her beautiful spirit on the verge of eternal glory, must have often contemplated the dark clouds on England's horizon with the most poignant and tender sorrow, and her anxiety for the many difficulties likely to surround her son, our King, must have been acute and pitiful indeed. For there can be no doubt that much of the peace of Europe was the result of her personal influence; and personal influence is a far more important factor in the welding together and holding of countries and peoples

The Passing of the Great Queen

than is generally taken into account by such of us as are superficial observers and who imagine everything is done by Governments.

How many times in the history of the world has it been proved that Governments are paralyzed in a great national crisis, and powerless to avert a great national disaster! How often have the men composing the governing body lost their heads in emergency, and thrown aside their responsibilities in desperate dismay at the suddenly rising tide of difficulties, many of which they had not foreseen! But the Queen's heart was true; her trust in God never faltered,—and her woman's hand, so small and delicate, held all things in the clasp of a fearless love and faith such as

The Passing of the Great Queen

we are told can remove mountains. One may say of her that she taught all her fellow sovereigns the dignity of sovereignty. There was no German Empire when she first came to the throne. There was no free or united Italy. England's chief foes were France and Russia,—and may it not be said that they are her foes still? Yet in Russia the personal influence of our late beloved Monarch has been of weight, apart altogether from the ties of blood which unite her family with that of the Tsar. Her personal word,—the benign action of her quiet personal authority—these have smoothed over many animosities which might otherwise have become subjects of hot international dispute. The woman's word and the woman's touch are marvellous in their work-

The Passing of the Great Queen

ing for good if the woman herself be pure and true! When Bismarck, known as "the man of blood and iron," called the Queen "the greatest Statesman in Europe" his remark was neither a flattery nor an exaggeration. It was strictly correct. The Queen possessed the two supreme gifts with which God endows unspoilt women, Instinct and Tact. While men with heavy logic and contentious disputes wearily argued pros and cons of various deep questions, the Queen, bringing her quick brain to bear on the subject in hand, easily sprang to a straight issue, and by a word here, a gentle suggestion there, skilfully guided slower perceptions and duller wits out of darkness into light. Her loss means much more than is at present apparent to Europe. The

The Passing of the Great Queen

very fact of her sex commanded reverence and respect; a woman's prayer has often proved more potent than a man's command!

Strange, beautiful and pathetic is the picture given to our thoughts of the dead Majesty of England,—white and still, lying in her snowy death-ropes with the first snowdrops of the year and lilies around her, and the golden Cross shining above her,—that emblem of the Christian Faith which, in its simplest form, the Queen followed fervently without any faltering doubt or fear. The words of one of her favourite hymns were the daily echo of her own heart's trust in the Divine,—

“ Thy way, not mine, O Lord,
 However dark it be;
Lead me by Thine own Hand,
 Choose out the path for me.
* * * * *

The Passing of the Great Queen

“ Not mine, not mine the choice
In things or great or small ;
Be thou my Guide, my Strength,
My Wisdom and my All.”

The Queen's piety was of a simple and fervent nature, and ostentatious or decorative ritual never met with her sympathy or approval. The private chapel at Osborne is as simple as a mission house, and if her Majesty had any preference for a devotional service other than that of the Church of England, it was for the Presbyterian form, which she always adopted when at Balmoral. The religious side of her character, as displayed through her whole life, was a direct contradiction to the statement rashly made in certain quarters that she favoured the idea of what Leo XIII calls “the conversion of England,” that is, the retrogression of England to

The Passing of the Great Queen

Rome. Never did she warrant such a report ; never did she give the slightest ground for even a suspicion of the accusation, though she was broad-minded and tolerant of all shades of religious belief, as indeed every true Christian worthy of the name should be, provided he is not asked to entertain the wolf of money-grubbing and self-aggrandizement under the sheep's clothing of a Creed. The Queen was not a bigot ; she was in herself the representative of England and England's freedom, and she would have been the last to approve of any form of religious intolerance or persecution. Once in long years back she was told by the then Bishop of London that two members of the Royal band who were Wesleyans had refused to attend Sunday rehearsals.

The Passing of the Great Queen

“These men,” said the Bishop, “have since been dismissed from the Service for their scruples.” “What,” exclaimed her Majesty, “two of my men dismissed for conscience sake! They shall be immediately reinstated. I will have no more persecution in my service on account of religious belief, and I will have no more Sunday rehearsals.” And she kept her word.

By numberless little anecdotes such as this, many of which will be quoted for years and years to come, we recognize the steadfast simplicity and candour of the Queen's religious faith, and we know that the angry quarrels of sects, the intolerant pride of precedence in forms and rituals, the wrangling, the bitterness and malice which have recently and regrettably dis-

The Passing of the Great Queen

turbed the equanimity of some of those ministers of Him whose New Commandment was "Love one another," could not have been otherwise than lamentable to the mind of that crowned Defender of the Faith whose woman's weakness made her stronger than many armed hosts, and more potent than all other rulers of the kingdoms of this world. Her devotion to the highest ideal of sovereignty—namely, "Queen, *by the Grace of God!*"—enabled her to hold the delicate balance of things aright, and to maintain the equilibrium of national policy by the mere fact of her existence. Not only will the British Empire miss Her, who, as the King has said, "united the virtues of a supreme domestic guide with the affection and patriotism of

The Passing of the Great Queen

a wise and peace-loving Monarch," but all Europe will be the poorer for lacking her gentle counsel. True, she fulfilled a more than ordinary length of days,—true, her reign extended beyond that of all our other Monarchs,—but the fact that the blessing of her presence and influence was vouchsafed to us so long does but little to console us for its withdrawal. She was our Mother as well as our Queen,—and a mother's place can never be filled.

There is a deep melancholy in the thought that the nation begins its first year of the Twentieth Century clad in "the trappings and the suits of woe." The sombre black under which the Ship of State sets sail again upon the uncertain ocean of life strikes a dismal hue against

The Passing of the Great Queen

the arching azure of the sky, and many there are of us who deem it un-Christian to wear mourning robes if truly we believe in Heaven. Unfortunately, however, at this time of day thousands of us do not believe in Heaven—will not believe, no, not for all our preachers and teachers, and would not, if an angel brought us the assurance straight from God! We believe in the dark grave because we see it with our finite eyes, and we put on the sable colour of the earth to match the dimness of our sight. What we see, or what we think we see with our limited and doubtful vision we accept as actual; but what we feel in the innermost recesses of our souls, when we are alone to think, alone to realize in the deep silence that we are *not*

The Passing of the Great Queen

alone, this we put aside hastily, sometimes with a careless laugh or nervous shudder calling it "imagination," "fancy," or "morbidness." It is "morbid" some people will tell us to believe that there is a Divine Intelligence from whose observation no smallest thing escapes; and yet if the conscience be clear how far from "morbid," how healthy, how reasonable, how comforting is such belief!—for, no matter how evilly we are spoken of, how vilely we are slandered,—no matter what sorrows we suffer or what losses we endure, all will be righted by that Eternal Justice at the end, when, "through the gates that bar the distance comes a gleam of what is higher."

The great thing, therefore, is to live here and now, the daily life of

The Passing of the Great Queen

simplicity and self-denial such as our late glorious Queen lived. For if by the rule of courts we must wear outward black as a sign of mourning for her loss, let us in our hearts inwardly rejoice that God found her so pure, so ready for the highest bliss of Heaven. Sixty-three years of the most exalted position in the world, sixty-three years of undisputed sovereignty over millions of human beings, neither spoilt the earthly Woman nor the heavenly Soul which God had made our Queen. Shall we not be grateful for this? Shall we not give hearty thanks amid our lamentation? There is cause for very profound rejoicing that the Queens of the earth to-day are proverbially of simple tastes and gentle characters, and we may be proud that our

The Passing of the Great Queen

Queen was the simplest of them all. Remembering her, and cherishing her memory as we shall ever do, it may be we shall help ourselves to measure things rightly by the standard she has left us, so that we may be no longer deceived by false appearances. We shall learn to recognize extravagance and ostentation as mere vulgarity,—materialism and atheism as the action of diseased brains, and social “swagger” as bad manners. We shall demand of women that the matrons deserve our homage and the maidens our respect,—that the aged command our reverence, and the young our tenderness. We shall perhaps learn by-and-bye that paint and dyed hair are not beautifiers of any woman’s face, and we shall give the wearers of such the kindly com-

The Passing of the Great Queen

passionate cold shoulder. We may even ask—who knows!—that certain of our “ladies” shall give up smoking and the use of stable slang. This would be a great concession, no doubt, but perhaps it will come. The memory of the great Queen who has passed from our midst without a stain upon her character as a woman, or a flaw in her wisdom as a Monarch, may exercise a softening charm and refining influence upon us through the chastening sorrow we feel at her irreparable loss. But that there are breakers ahead for England, who shall deny? Who can refuse to see the gathering clouds? Who that is not wilfully deaf cannot hear the ominous rising of the storm-wind?

“ We live in a time of sorrow,
A time of doubt and storm,

The Passing of the Great Queen

When the thunder-clouds hang heavy,
And the air is thick and warm ;
When the far-off lightnings gather
On the verge of the darkening sky,
And the birds of the air, fear-stricken,
To nest and cover fly :
Look up ! ye drowsy people,
There's desolation nigh.

“ Look up ! ye drowsy people,
And shield yourselves in time,
From the wrath and retribution
That track the heels of crime ;
That lie in wait for the folly
Of the lordly and the strong ;
That spare not high nor lowly
From vengeance threaten'd long,—
But strike at the heart of nations,
And kings who govern wrong.

* * * * *

“ Kneel down in the dust and sackcloth,
And own, with contrite tears,
Your arrogant self-worship,
And wrongs of many years ;
Your luxuries hard-hearted ;
Your pride so barren-cold,
Remote from the warmth of pity
For men of the self-same mould,
As good as yourselves or better,
In all but the shining gold.

The Passing of the Great Queen

- “ Kneel down, ye priests and preachers,
Ye men of lawn and stole,
Who call yourselves physicians
And guardians of the soul,
And own if ye have not hated
Your brethren, night and day,
Because at God’s high altars
They bent another way,
And sought not *your* assistance
To worship and to pray.
* * * * *
- “ Awake ! awake ! ye sleepers,
There’s danger over all,
When the strong shall be sorely shaken,
And the weak shall go to the wall ;
When towers on the hill-top standing
Shall topple at a word,
And the principles of ages
Shall be question’d with the sword,
And the heart’s blood of the nations
Like fountains shall be pour’d !
- “ When a fierce and a searching Spirit
Shall stalk o’er the startled earth,
And make great Thrones the playthings
Of his madness or his mirth ;
When ancient creeds and systems,
In the fury of his breath,
Shall whirl like the leaves of Autumn,
When the north wind belloweth,
And drift away unheeded,
To the deep, deep seas of death !”

The Passing of the Great Queen

No one, save those who have selfish interests to serve and who for latent purposes of their own may think it advisable to soothe or to flatter the King, will for a moment question the dangers and difficulties which surround our present Monarch at the opening of his reign. His worst foes are not rival nations, for he has inherited from his august Mother a certain fine and courteous tact which is rare to find even in the most accredited diplomat. It is a helpful endowment, and will of a certainty aid him to unknot many a perplexing tangle of dispute. He is undoubtedly regarded by all foreigners with respect and liking, and his broad-minded, liberal views are well known, so that as a leading Austrian newspaper says, "It is antici-

The Passing of the Great Queen

pated that he will prove a mild and wise ruler, under whom England will lose enemies and gain new friends."

It can scarcely be considered then too much to say that the whole Continent is favourably disposed towards him, and that from this particular standpoint alone he is surrounded by friendly and prospering influences. In our own England he has long been regarded as the "popular" Prince, and so begins his reign as a "popular" King. He is full of kindness and generosity; and there are many who assert that to those who deserve it least he is too kind and too generous. But "a good heart never changes," as Shakespeare makes his Henry V say, and we may hope that the King's reputa-

The Passing of the Great Queen

tion for this "good heart," which he won as Prince of Wales, will be the rock on which the Empire may rest secure. Yet, without assuming the rôle of a soothsayer crossing the pathway of a Cæsar, those who truly "fear God and honour the King," and have neither favours to ask, nor interests to serve, cannot but entertain without undue foreboding certain fears for his well-being. Dark to him, personally speaking, must be this particular turn in his pathway, when he takes up the Imperial Crown, glistening more with tears than with jewels, and dons the heavy robes of ceremonious state, for he has already lived long and lost much. Sorrow has dealt hardly with him in many ways, and the dangerous condition of his dearly

The Passing of the Great Queen

beloved sister, the Empress Frederick, is an additional pang to his already grieving heart. Between duty and love his spirit must be sadly exercised.

“A man is not as God,
But then most Godlike being most a man.”

Scores of nobodies have for years been in the habit of talking glib nonsense about “the Prince of Wales,” and of casually alluding to “Albert Edward” as if they knew him personally, or as if he were hail-fellow-well-met with every little “nouveau riche” that comes to the social scum-top for a moment like a minnow in a garden cistern; and the present writer has often been vastly entertained to hear persons who have never seen the Prince, much less spoken to him, jabbering about him very much after the fashion of

The Passing of the Great Queen

monkeys discussing the *habitat* of the lion. There was never a great name but was not slandered by the envious,—never a high reputation that some coward did not strive to attack and tarnish—never a splendid fame that did not serve as a target for the arrows of the mean and the malicious. And the worst lies and slanders are always said and written of those whose position is too exalted to allow them either answer or self-defence. When persons are themselves ignoble they love nothing better than to defame nobility, and if they could force an answer from those whom they malign, they would be happy to have dragged down the higher than themselves to their own base level. Thus it chances that we have often heard male and female word-mon-

The Passing of the Great Queen

gers mouthing idiot conversation concerning our present King which has marked them as altogether outside the pale of good manners, and has debarred them from every suspicion of either patriotism or loyalty. "The King can do no wrong" is, of course, too far-fetched a statement in any period or in any country, as has been proved over and over again, but until some wrong has been manifested, the King's name should surely be set well beyond the limit of vulgar society jesting.

It may be asked, why should this be said now, and why should I say it? To which I would reply, that having had the honour of a personal acquaintance with his Majesty, when Prince of Wales (through the late Recorder of London, Sir Charles

The Passing of the Great Queen

Hall), and having been treated by him with great courtesy and attention, I was and am still sufficiently impressed by his kindness to be conscious of gratitude. And that out of this, my sense of gratitude, I have, whenever I have heard people discussing the Prince, now the King, taken care to exercise those particular privileges belonging to the profession of Literature, which are, to hear, to observe, and to chronicle such things as may be useful to remember in the history of the time. And so it has chanced that I, being deemed altogether unimportant by that particular section of Society which judges Literature merely as a sort of bill-posting or press-reporting, which giggles foolishly at the names of Homer and Shakespeare, and can never be

The Passing of the Great Queen

brought to realize that all day and every day, millions of pens are constantly at work, writing down such impressions of the hour as will outlast thrones, and be read by future generations,—even I, one of the least of these wielders of pens, have had the opportunity of seeing and noting much which it might be well and honest to set down. It can do no harm, and it may do good, to say that I have seen women of birth and position so lost to every sense of the true dignity of womanhood as to descend to the meanest tricks and subterfuges in the endeavour to secure the notice of, or an introduction to, the Prince of Wales, and that then, when such notice or introduction has been obtained, I have heard them vilify him behind his back with the fluency and choice

The Passing of the Great Queen

diction common to the ladies of Billingsgate. It can do no harm, and it may do good, to say that a certain prominent American politician, professing to be a friend of the Prince's and having been entertained at dinner by His Royal Highness on a certain evening in Homburg, met the present writer hard by Ritter's Park Hotel next morning, and did then and there point to the Royal Standard flying above the door, with the remark,

“See that old rag! It ought to be rolled up and put away with all the racks, thumbscrews, and other useless rubbish of Royalty!”

And, on my replying that it was not customary in Europe to accept the hospitality of a Prince one evening, and attack his arms and in-

The Passing of the Great Queen

signia the next morning, that proud tall-talking son of the Stars and Stripes "cut" me from henceforth, for which I have ever since been thankful. From such men as these,—and there are, we know, Englishmen who are to the full as ill-mannered as any ill-mannered American,—and from such women as have in the past struggled and fought against each other to obtain the Prince of Wales's kindly courtesies, merely to gain personal advantage out of them, and who may be trusted to pursue the same old campaign with regard to the King, may, and probably *will* come many vexations and difficulties, not directly from the actually offending persons, but from the pernicious influences such mischief-makers exercise on the weak minds of those who listen

The Passing of the Great Queen

to their unwarranted and unwarrantable accounts of the doings of Royalty. Such irresponsible sources are the fountain-heads of all the foolish and erroneous statements which often appear in the press, and though Fleet Street knows "how things get into the papers," the provinces are ignorant of Fleet Street mysteries, and provincial people have the unfortunate habit of accepting everything they see in the often brilliantly imaginative columns of the cheap London press as truer than Gospel. And though the cheap London press is a very useful institution, there are times when its zeal outruns its discretion. We have had several notable examples of this lately, and the shocking scene described by the *Times* Special Correspondent, as occur-

The Passing of the Great Queen

ring outside the gates of Osborne House on the night of our great Queen's death, was a disgrace to the very name of journalism.

"I cannot close," wrote the correspondent in question, "without a description of a very painful scene witnessed last night, which is described only out of a sense of duty, and in obedience to an instinct of journalistic self-preservation. It happened that I was not at the gates of the lodge last evening when the news of the Queen's death was announced by Mr. Fraser, nor was there any object in being there, since the news was certain to be received in London ; in fact, it was received some minutes before it could be received at the gates. They are about a quarter of a mile from the house, and it was certain that the

The Passing of the Great Queen

telegraph from the house to London would be quicker than human transmission from the house to the gate. But a few moments after the news had been made known at the gate I was driving up the York Avenue to Osborne in obedience to the summons, and in ignorance of the calamity which had befallen the nation, when I was apprised of it in a very shocking and unprecedented way. Loud shouts were heard in the distance, then came a crowd of carriages at the gallop, of bicycles careering down the hill at a break-neck speed, of runners bawling 'Queen dead' at the top of their voices. The sound suggested a babel of voices at a foxhunt rather than the very solemn occasion which had called them forth; and it has to be confessed with shame that they

The Passing of the Great Queen

were emitted by persons connected with the Press, although not, of course, with any London paper of long standing. They were an outrage, and, taken in combination with a fictitious and disgraceful 'interview' with 'the Queen's physician,' which has caused much pain and annoyance, they contribute a real danger to the better class of journalism, and, through it, to the public. How can journalists expect to be treated with consideration when, on an occasion so mournful, they behave in a manner so horribly contrary to common decency? Individual cases of misconduct one has seen before, but this yelling stampede established a record in bad taste and in humanity. I am told that there was 'whooping' at the gates themselves, but that is

The Passing of the Great Queen

hearsay, and the evidence of my own eyes and ears is enough and to spare."

We may unite to this account the very extraordinary statement made in a well-known theatrical journal, namely, that Mr. Charles Wyndham, the actor, convened a meeting of his confrères to put forth the proposition that "as vast crowds would be in London on the day of the Queen's funeral, and as the procession would be over by three o'clock, would it not be advisable for all theatrical managers, especially those of the West End, to ask the Lord Chamberlain whether they might not be allowed to open on the Funeral night!" A more shocking, gross, and unpatriotic proposition was never set forth, and it is to be sincerely hoped

The Passing of the Great Queen

for Mr. Wyndham's own sake, that the journal which has so written him down has somehow been misled as to its information. The King has already (with a hasty officiousness which borders on excessively bad taste in the hour of his Majesty's bereavement) been called by theatrical gossips a "promising patron of the drama," but if he has been so in the past, the proposal of Mr. Wyndham to make profit out of his Mother's funeral will scarcely commend the stage so much to his future consideration and favour. During the brief time that has elapsed since our late glorious Sovereign's death, there has been far too much dragging-in of the King's name to matters "theatrical and sporting," in the Press,—and it is of far more interest to the nation

The Passing of the Great Queen

to remember how ardently he, as Prince of Wales, has worked for good and charitable aims, how much he has helped to promote the cause of the poor, the weak and the aged, and how generously and promptly he has always given his personal aid and influence to relieve any immediate suffering. I do not think it is possible to appeal to the King for a good cause in vain ; I have never heard that he turned a deaf or callous ear to the cry of suffering. Certain lines I wrote of him once I have now neither wish nor need to recall, and I venture to quote them here, not that they are worth quoting, but because many of my gentle enemies have taken much pains to pretend that I have written "against" our present Monarch, a disloyal task to which I

The Passing of the Great Queen

have never bent my pen. The lines are these :—

“To entertain the Prince, do little; for he is clever enough to entertain himself privately with the folly and humbug of those he sees around him without actually sharing in the petty comedy. He is a keen observer, and must derive infinite gratification from his constant study of men and manners, which is sufficiently deep and searching to fit him for the occupation of even the Throne of England. I say ‘even,’ for at present, till Time’s great hour-glass turns, it is the grandest Throne in the world. . . . There is nothing the Prince will appreciate so much as a lack of toadyism, a sincere demeanour, an unostentatious hospitality, a simplicity of speech, and a total ab-

The Passing of the Great Queen

sence of affectation. Of all the Royalties at present flourishing on this paltry planet I have the greatest respect for the Prince of Wales."

This, written four years ago, can be repeated to-day without a word of alteration for the benefit of the aforesaid gentle enemies.

Certes, those who are sincerely loyal in their devotion to the King will not be found in the train of flatterers, snobs and time-servers who are, alas, the inevitable encumbrance attendant on Majesty. Those who would serve him truly are not made in the mould of the Court-parasite, which particular insect feeds on Royal favour while it can, and stings when it can feed no more. Any student of human nature knowing King Edward, and having taken pains to observe little

The Passing of the Great Queen

personal traits of his disposition and character, cannot have failed to perceive how much that is to the superficial eye unsuspected lies behind the easy manner, the smiling *bon-homie* and invariable courtesy of his outward bearing. As one of our leading journalists has aptly said of him,—“ He has done a good many wise things, and no one can ever charge him with having said a foolish one. He is neither a bookworm nor a prig, and he possesses that *civilitas* which the old Romans lauded so strongly as the soul of social amenity.” Apart from these qualities, we, his subjects, have good reason to believe that in the weighty duties of kingship, which his Mother fulfilled so steadfastly and unerringly, he will be like Shakespeare’s heroic Henry,—

The Passing of the Great Queen

“ Hear him debate of commonwealth affairs,
You would say it hath been all-in-all his
study;
List his discourse of war, and you shall hear
A fearful battle rendered you in music;
Turn him to any cause of policy,
The Gordian knot of it he will unloose,
Familiar as his garter.”

And so, as the great Victorian epoch rolls away into the deep shadow of the past, the Empire rests as it were on a rainbow-edge between the storm and sunshine, grief and hope,—grief for the Monarch that was, hope for the Monarch that is. One invaluable influence Edward VII brings with him to the Throne in his Queen-Consort, the “ sea-king’s daughter from over the sea,” whom we all love and admire with a boundless love and admiration. Never has there been a more exquisite woman than the beautiful Princess whom we now

The Passing of the Great Queen

call Queen Alexandra; her sweet face has been a light in our land for many years, and her generous deeds of sympathy and love are known wherever her name is spoken. All manner of kindly thoughts have moved her spirit,—thoughts which have blossomed into kindest actions, and the very sorrows she has suffered have seemed merely to increase her sweetness, if such a thing could be possible. It will be strange at first to think of her as Queen Alexandra, having known her always as Princess of Wales, but if queenly deeds can make queenliness, then she has been a queen all the time. Of gracious manner and rare dignity, she, too, possesses the love of home and home surroundings which so notably distinguished our late Queen, and

The Passing of the Great Queen

it may be prophesied that her quiet influence will maintain the Court at that high standard of combined excellence, brilliancy and intellectuality which shall give the key-note to manners and culture throughout Europe. All the same we shall do well to remember that society is not what it was in the early Victorian days, and also that with the spread of educational systems, the masses of the people equally are not what they were. In the older times the middle and lower classes were uneducated and illiterate ; now they have sufficient learning to be able to think for themselves, and to judge men and matters more or less correctly. The toiling millions know while they toil, that they have a right to an opinion on government

The Passing of the Great Queen

and social questions, and they give utterance to that opinion sometimes in unexpected ways. The feudal system no longer works; and the most careful, prudent and painstaking rulers of countries and peoples are sometimes called to account sharply when altogether unprepared. The militarism of the German Emperor is exceedingly picturesque, but it would not find favour with free Britons, and though it is well that the ties of amity and good-will should be cemented between nations, the Englishman is not over fond of his German brother, or his German rival in every branch of trade. "Made in Germany" has become a contemptuous by-word with the British artisan, and the spirit which is at the root of that contempt is a very

The Passing of the Great Queen

strong spirit indeed. It can scarcely be called pessimistic to feel, aye, to almost see, much political and social agitation for England in the immediate future,—much trouble and difficulty for all concerned in England's government, when the last tears have been shed, and the last farewells spoken in pulpit and on platform for the "passing" of the great Queen! For with her passes more than herself; her death sets the closing seal on the scroll of the nineteenth century; and with her departs for ever a Royal dynasty! We do not quite grasp the meaning of the grave historical events through which we have rushed, half blind with amazement, during the first month of the Twentieth Century; many of us do not yet fully understand that we have

The Passing of the Great Queen

done with the House of Hanover, and have accepted as reigning Sovereigns the House of Saxe-Coburg Gotha. It means nothing very much to our ears as yet, but who shall predict that it may not in future mean something more than we can anticipate? Edward VII is King over a generation of people whose modes of thought and life are totally different to the modes of thought and life which distinguished the English during the first half of his Mother's reign. Few will deny that there is much in modern society which would be better eliminated, and that the general callousness and carelessness shown for most things save self and money are not good signs of the times. People who made our late Queen's Funeral an

The Passing of the Great Queen

excuse for private rowdyism, who engaged "windows with luncheon inclusive," for £50 and £100, and laughed and giggled in their "fashionable" black as the solemn cortège went by, as if the whole pageant were a circus fair, are not promising subjects of our great realm. Such persons, however, it must be remembered, were of the ultra-moneyed class, and it is the ultra-moneyed class who are likely to have much to do in the ruling of social matters. The actual People of Great Britain have nothing in common with these; these, who in their millions watched the mortal remains of their great Queen carried through the streets of London in a silence that was almost terrible, because so pregnant with unuttered meanings. These millions are they

The Passing of the Great Queen

who are most deeply and loyally conscious of their loss in the death of the good Queen,—these are they who take up the labour of their days again with heavy hearts, and doubting, puzzled brains wondering what is to come next. War is draining out young brave lives through the country,—trade is slipping from British hands to Americans and foreigners,—taxation is heavy; food and fuel are dear. Speculators in South African holdings are preparing largely for their own self-aggrandizement, regardless of the country's welfare, or the life-blood that has been shed in the long and cruel contest with the Boers; and it is, under the circumstances, which are visible to the most casual observer, and need no exaggeration to make them more

The Passing of the Great Queen

serious, that Edward VII ascends the Imperial Throne of England. He has what none of his early ancestors had,—a cheap Press ready to flatter him,—to note his every movement,—to eulogize his every smile and nod, to crawl and cringe and clean his boots with paragraph blacking daily, and editors who want to be “Sirs” and “Barts” will so demean themselves before him as to make him wonder, perchance, in an idle moment why God made such men! Unfortunately he cannot avoid this kind of thing, only it is devoutly to be wished that the people who read such gratuitous accounts of his Majesty’s doings would once for all understand that they are merely reading “smart” fiction, and that for news of the King which shall

The Passing of the Great Queen

be correct and legitimate, they had best pin their faith on the *Court Circular*. Otherwise they will soon lose their way in the wonderful web of Fleet Street imaginings, which are more potent to transform a truth to a lie, and a wise man to a fool, than the most direful spells of Circe.

A leading and popular journalist has lately penned the following :—

“ That we have loved our Queen is beyond dispute, but the pretence that has been offered that her departure brings a great epoch to a close is ridiculous.”

Nevertheless, “ ridiculous ” as it seems to this one individual, there can be no doubt that a great epoch has closed, and that it is particularly doubtful whether as great a one will ever dawn again. Nations

The Passing of the Great Queen

have their lives and deaths like individuals, and in the opinion of many, both here and abroad, the more active life of England has already begun to decline. "For," as Carlyle says, "never on this earth was the relation of man to man long carried on by Cash-payment alone. If at any time a philosophy of Laissez-faire, Competition, and Supply-and-demand start up as the exponent of human relations, expect that it will soon end."

We will not, however, shall not accept forebodings of disaster ; and yet there are hints in the very air of a coming battle and a dawning change.

"Great thoughts are heaving in the world's
wide breast ;
The time is labouring with a mighty birth ;
The old ideals fall.
Men wander up and down in wild unrest ;

The Passing of the Great Queen

A sense of change preparing for the Earth
Broods over all.

There lies a gloom on all things under
Heaven—

A gloom portentous to the quiet men,
Who see no joy in being driven
Onwards from change, ever to change
again;

Who never walk but on the beaten ways;
And love the breath of yesterdays;—
Men who would rather sit and sleep
Where sunbeams through the ivies creep,
Each at his door-post all alone,
Heedless of near or distant wars,
Than wake and listen to the moan
Of storm-vex'd forests nodding to the
stars—

Or hear, far off, the melancholy roar
Of billows, white with wrath, battling
against the shore.

“ Deep on their troubled souls the shadow lies;
And in that shadow come and go—
While fitful lightnings write upon the skies,
And mystic voices chant the coming woe—
Titanic phantoms swathed in mist and
flame,
The mighty ghosts of things without a name,
Mingling with forms more palpably defined,
That whirl and dance like leaves upon the
wind;

The Passing of the Great Queen

Who marshal in array their arrowy hosts,
And rush to battle in a cloud-like land;
Thick phalanx'd on those far aërial coasts,
As swarms of locusts plaguing Samarcand.
'Oh, who would live,' they cry, 'in time
like this !

A time of conflict fierce, and trouble strange;
When Old and New, over a dark abyss,
Fight the great battle of relentless change ?'
And still before their eyes discrownèd kings,
Desolate chiefs, and aged priests forlorn,
Flit by — confused — with all incongruous
things,
Swooping in rise and fall on ponderous
wings."

No one, even with the most persistent cheerfulness of disposition, can say the political outlook is otherwise than stormy, or the social one otherwise than depressing. Half the country is in mourning for itself as well as for the Queen ; so many loved ones have been lost on the field of battle that there is scarcely a home to which grief has not brought a cup of cruel bitter-

The Passing of the Great Queen

ness during the past year. On the one side is a section of humanity overbalanced with excess of money and love of luxury ; on the other an infinitely larger mass which is struggling night and day for the barest means of subsistence, and between these two is the strong wedge of a steady thinking, hard-working middle class, whose vote of preference, if asked for, would unquestionably be given to their poorer rather than their richer brethren ; and over them all the Heavens flame "War!" War means taxation ; War means loss of able-bodied men, and, therefore, loss of trade ; War means to some people, who can barely afford to buy bread in time of peace, sheer famine. But, say the militarists, War means conquest ; War means

The Passing of the Great Queen

gold! So thought Rome in her palmy days;—even so, Rome fell!

“One might have thought,” wrote Sir George Mackenzie, in the sixteenth century, “that as the world grew older luxury would have been more shunned; for the more men multiplied, and the greater their dangers grew, they should have been the more easily induced to shun all expense, that they might the more successfully provide against those inconveniences. But yet it proved otherwise, and luxury was the last of all vices that prevailed over mankind; for after riches had been hoarded up, they rotted, as it were, into luxury; and after that tyranny and ambition had robbed many poor innocents, luxury, more cruel than they, was made use of by Provi-

The Passing of the Great Queen

dence to revenge their quarrel, and so triumphed over the conquerors. Thus, when Rome had by wit and courage subdued the world, it was drowned in that inundation of riches which these brought upon it."

"Drowned in an inundation of riches!" A similar inundation threatens to engulf the higher ideals, the nobler morals of our English tradition. The ostentatious assertion of wealth was never more in evidence among us than it is to-day; an entrance into so-called "society" can, we know, be bought for cash, and even on such a solemn occasion as that which saw our great Queen's body carried across the sea from her island home to London, and thence to Windsor, it was not the most love or loyalty which was rewarded by a full sight of the great historic

The Passing of the Great Queen

pageant, but merely the most push and the greatest amount of gold. No one who witnessed it will be likely to forget the levity with which bargains were made and luncheons "planned" for the occasion, and sensitive ears will long remember the light jesting carried on in certain of the more "smart" resorts of London among the "high-class" revellers, when the solemn procession had passed by. Those who saw and heard will not fail to chronicle the taste and conduct of the "upper" mob on this supreme and historic occasion, for the edification of future students who may desire to know something of the manners and customs in vogue among the educated ladies and gentlemen at the beginning of the Twentieth Century. The slangy

The Passing of the Great Queen

epithets heaped on the somewhat dull weather which prevented these *élite* from thoroughly "enjoying" the "general holiday," might have stirred envy in the soul of a prize-fighter,—and the utter vulgarity, coarseness and indifference displayed by persons whose names figure in newspaper paragraphs as "leaders" of society, seemed to call urgently for a visitation of the King's displeasure.

"To Apes by the Dead Sea, this Universe is an Apery, a tragic humbug, which they put away from them by unmusical screeches, by the natural cares for lodging, for dinner, and such like," only, unfortunately, it often chances that these Ape-persons are the very ones who, in the King's presence, would be the first to bend the knee, and wear

The Passing of the Great Queen

the most close and becoming masks of decorum and respectful homage, for there is no flattery so subtle or so difficult to deal with as that which affects straightforwardness and sincerity. His Majesty is known to despise compliments, therefore those who are anxious to ingratiate themselves in the Royal favour will be careful not to make them. But open adulation is a far less dangerous evil than the appearance of blunt and bluff honesty which covers the deepest motives of self-interest. And the men who practise this specious form of candid and fair dealing are those who are likely to work mischief to both society and government. The King's position is one of far more difficulty than that of the late Queen ; in her case a sense of chiv-

The Passing of the Great Queen

alry and respect for noble and pure womanhood held many evil tongues silent, and fastened invisible fetters on the hands of evil-doers.

“She was,” says a leading journal, “a Constitutional Sovereign with limited powers of controlling politics in this country, but let it never be forgotten that she could bring the influence of a parent or relative to bear upon sovereigns whose personal power was enormous. We can see, negatively, what this influence was worth from the constant alarm which it excited in Bismarck, who resented it. It is not to be supposed that her Majesty’s successor can have at once either the same personal authority, or a similar claim to the deference of other sovereigns. Those things were the fruits of a long reign and

The Passing of the Great Queen

unremitting labours through sixty years. Yet it remains the function of the Crown to mitigate the isolation of British politics and to remove the asperities which may arise out of small matters as well as big. We do not doubt that the King will work to that end, but statesmen also must remember that the removal of the Queen makes a difference to the position of the country, that there is less forbearance to be counted on, and that some mistakes may, therefore, be less easy to retrieve."

Taking into consideration various splits, discontent, and restlessness in the Churches, brief attention may here be called to the unnecessary announcement made by Leo XIII to the effect that he was "unwilling to be represented at the

The Passing of the Great Queen

funeral of a Protestant Queen," and also to the equally gratuitous information given out in all the Roman Catholic Churches that "no Masses would be offered up for the soul of the Queen." The Imperial English nation has not asked for "Masses" for its late Queen, nor did His Majesty the King and Emperor supplicate the Pope to represent himself at the world-famed obsequies. Hence Roman Catholic dignitaries had no cause whatever to make so loud and public a statement of their particular form of bigotry, or to emphasize the special width and height of their own little door into Heaven. Thanks be to God, Heaven is wide, and the bounty and beneficence of the Creator are infinite, and a pure and perfect soul will take its place

The Passing of the Great Queen

among angelic and immortal spirits without the assistance of finite persons, who, according to the words of Christ, are "hypocrites," who "shut up the Kingdom of Heaven."

At this particular moment when the great Timepiece of the Universe strikes away for us one era and rings in another, it is well for us that we should be brought to consider exactly where we stand in our national life, and to remember that England has just completed a thousand years of historical upward progress. From Alfred the Great to Edward VII, one thousand years intervene, and during that immense period the rise of the English nation has been steady, glorious, and supreme. And in this present year of our Lord, 1901, when we not only enter upon the accession of

The Passing of the Great Queen

Edward VII, but are also preparing to celebrate the thousandth anniversary of Alfred the Great, it is curious and instructive to turn back to very ancient records, and read what such an old-world chronicler as Stow says in his "Annales of Englande" of the Monarch, who though dead and buried for such a vast period of time is still remembered for his good and useful deeds. In an edition of the antique volume dated 1605 occurs the following passage :—

"The victorious Prince, the studious provider for widowes, orphanes, and poore people, most perfect in Saxon poetrie, most liberall, endued with wisdome, fortitude, justice, and temperance, the most patient bearer of sicknesse, wherewith he was dailie vexed, a

The Passing of the Great Queen

most discrete searcher of truth in executing judgment, a most vigilant and devout Prince in the service of God, Alfrede, the XXIX yeere and sixt moneth of his raigne departed this life, the XXVIII day of October and is buried at Winchester. He ordained common schooles of divers sciences in Oxonford, and turned the Saxon laws into English with divers other Bookes. He established good lawes by the which he brought so great a quietnesse to the country that men might have hanged golden bracelets and jewels where the ways parted and no man durst touch them for feare of the lawe."

Since then we may assert that we have made much progress; but assuredly our progress has not been of such a character that we can

The Passing of the Great Queen

“hang up golden bracelets and jewels at the parting of the ways and no man durst touch them.” We have discovered a good many things and invented a good many things; we have secured many little comforts and conveniences for the greater ease of the lazy and the slothful, and our mechanical appliances and contrivances for reducing human labour are ingenious and numerous. Nevertheless, while gaining some little useful information, we have lost much high faith and a good deal of happiness. Some of us seem to be, as it were, “born tired,” and the fatigue of our minds does not lessen with increasing knowledge. There is a deep symbolical truth in the old Biblical legend which tells us how man, after having eaten of the

The Passing of the Great Queen

Tree of Knowledge, was driven out of the Garden of Eden, and that now, "lest he put forth his hand and take also of the Tree of Life, and eat and live for ever," there is indeed a "flaming sword" turning every way to keep him from the fulfilment of his heart's desires and dreams. East and West, North and South, the sword turns invincibly, and we can never pass it, save as Victoria, by the Grace of God, has passed it, across the dark river we call death. For ever we strive to be what we consider "happy," and the majority of us strive in vain. Much of our restlessness combined with discontent is our own fault, because so many of us go the wrong way to work with our lives, and try, not to help each other, but to overbear each

The Passing of the Great Queen

other down. Simplicity of life is best ; natural and innocent pleasures are best ; and happiness comes quickest to those who are not seeking it. Our late Queen chose a simple life because she knew it was the wisest, the healthiest, and the nearest to God ; she disapproved of vanity, ostentation, and extravagance, because she knew that these things have only one ending, vice and ruin. Her long and magnificent reign is much more than a great Sovereign's rule ; it is a matchless Example which will shine in history like a great Light for all time. None who saw it will ever forget the great British Navy's farewell to the little yacht *Alberta* as it bore across the glittering Solent the "robed and crowned" coffin which held all that was mortal

The Passing of the Great Queen

of England's Greatest Queen ; none will ever forget the massed crowds of loyal, patient, sympathetic people in London who rose in their thousands in the chilly winter's dawn, content to stand where they could and how they could for hours and hours, just to breathe a prayer as that same robed and crowned coffin passed them by. For many of them could not see it ; many could only *feel*, with deep and tender awe, the momentary presence of their dead Sovereign. It was a wonderful sight ; nothing so wonderful has ever been witnessed before in England. It was the most eloquent, touching, and magnificent testimony of the strong loyalty, love and truth of the British people that has ever been chronicled in history.

There are more reasons than our

The Passing of the Great Queen

personal sense of deep loss which make us linger round the tomb of Victoria the Great and Good, with aching hearts and tearful eyes. Under the fragrant wreaths of violets and the great garlands of lilies, by the side of the husband she loved so well, the body of our noble Queen rests, in peace and honour, while her Soul has "passed," like Arthur's,—

"To the island-valley of Avilion;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard
lawns
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer
sea."

The golden gates of Heaven have opened to receive Her who was so long England's Good Angel; she has entered into her well-earned joy and rest. Age has fallen

The Passing of the Great Queen

from her as falls a worn-out garment ; and she has taken upon herself the nature of immortal youth, eternal love, and endless happiness. But for us who remain behind, striving to peer beyond “the portals of the sunset ;”—for us who enter on a new era without her, there are dim shadows of fear and doubt which we cannot altogether dismiss from our minds. They may be vain shadows,—deceptive and transitory like the mists which sometimes herald the breaking of a glorious summer day, but they are sufficient to make such of us as take the trouble to think about anything but ourselves, pause ere we turn away from the grave of our late beloved Monarch, and with all our hearts and minds, in loyalty and faith and hope, pray beside that

The Passing of the Great Queen

grave for our Sovereign Lord, the King. Who can forget his care-worn face, as he rode, Chief Mourner for the noble dead, behind his Mother's coffin,—who was there amid all the gazing thousands that watched him on that memorable Funeral Day that did not feel the deepest compassion for the grief which so visibly and heavily weighed upon him! Never was a sadder countenance than that of him whom we have loved as our ever genial, ever kindly, ever popular Prince of Wales; and when we think of the immense burden of public duty now laid upon his shoulders, the thousand and one things which claim his attention, the importance and necessity of his constant and unremitting study of all the affairs of State, we shall do well to remember once and

The Passing of the Great Queen

for all that he is about the most hard-worked man in the realm, with the least independence, and the smallest chance of having any relaxation from the routine of his onerous splendor. Hating ceremony, he must now always be surrounded by it; loathing the servility of courtiers and the etiquette of Court functions, he must now of all these things be the chief and centre; loving freedom, peace and privacy, he must now be everywhere in evidence, with every word commented upon, and every action noted. His position, stately and magnificent and imperial as it, is less to be envied than that of any "gentleman at ease" living on his private means, with liberty to do as he likes,—for while a monarch is not always made aware of disloyal hearts, he has ever

The Passing of the Great Queen

found it difficult to be sure of true ones, inasmuch as “they do abuse the king that flatter him.”

Self-interest often wears the garb of honesty, and it is only the quickest ear that can catch the Falstaff whisper,—“I will make the king do you grace; I will leer upon him as he comes by; and do but mark the countenance that he will give me.” ALL thrones are surrounded by such time-servers and creatures of circumstance, yet it is likely that the throne of King Edward VII will be more than lavishly supplied with their company. The good heart, the generous nature, the invariable kindness of the King’s disposition shed forth a sunshine and honey which must needs attract flies. God save him, therefore, not so much from for-

The Passing of the Great Queen

eign foes, for he can quell them, but from treacherous friends. God save him from the liar and the sycophant, the self-seeker and the hypocrite! God save him from the smiling mouth which carries a poisonous tongue, from the false heart which offers the open hand! These are the enemies against which mighty armies are of no avail, and cannons thunder in vain. These are not fair foes; they do not march out on the open field; they are cowards who shun discovery. GOD SAVE THE KING! Again and yet again we offer up this prayer, kneeling among the flowers which cover our greatest Queen's last resting-place. God save him, and endow him with such high faith as shall befit England's highest ideals, strengthen his spirit that he may

The Passing of the Great Queen

unflinchingly lift the glory of the Empire to still greater glory, give to him and his fair Queen-Consort full grace of good days and happy life, and may we, his faithful subjects, love and honour him for high purposes, great deeds and kindly words as we have loved and honoured his Mother, our late dear Sovereign-Lady Victoria! More love he could not ask from us,—and less we will not give!



UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



A 000 467 289 5

