Victoria at Balmoral.

(Translated for the Cincinnati Commercial from Robert Heck's Magazine.)

Far in the north of Scotland, on a green peninsula on the southern bank of the river Dee, lies the ancient Castle Balmoral, which built many centuries ago. The imposing was Craig-Gowan protects it toward the south, while to the north, a wide, majestic wreath of wild mountains shields it from the storms blowing from that quarter.

On the northern bank of the rapid river, opposite the castle, sat a plainly dressed lady on a field chair, on a fine summer day, about sixteen years ago. On her lap lay a drawing portfolio. She was engaged in sketching the castle in front of her. The young pleasant boy with his flock of sheep, which, following the same path, and intended to pass by the lady. The sheep got frightened by her unwonted appearance, and would not move from the spot. The boy, impatient at the delay, hastened to the lady, and shouted:

"Get out of the way, madam, and let my sheep pass." The lady smiled, rose, and stepped aside. It was of no avail. The sheep would not advance. Thereupon the boy shouted angrily, "Stand back, will you, and let my sheep pass? Stand back!" At this moment a footman went to the boy and said to him:

"But, young fellow, do you know whom you are talking to?"

"I dinna ken, and dinna care," replied the boy, in his Scottish dialect; "this is the road for the sheep, and she has no right to stand there."

"But, boy, it is Her Majesty, the Queen!" added the footman.

"The Queen?" asked the boy, in surprise. "Is it the Queen? Weel, but why dinna she put on claes that folk would ken her."

Yes, it was indeed the queen, who, in those kingdom the sun does not set, and to whom this naive compliment was paid by the young shepherd. She walked aside far enough to let the sheep pass.

Since 1848 the Queen and Prince Albert had selected Castle Balmoral, so rich in historical and legendary traditions, in the mountains country of Aberdeen, for their summer residence. The royal family of England settled peacefully in the midst of their Scottish subjects at the same place where the warlike Highlanders had so often had their rendezvous to fight for their independence, and where once the Earl of Mar unfurled the banner and concentrated his warriors to take the field against the Kings of England. The Queen sent back at once the two companies of a regiment of Highlanders which the Duke of Wellington sent to Castle Mar when her Majesty took possession of Balmoral.

The Queen, her husband and her family passed delightful days at the newly chosen summer residence. Prince Albert hunted a great deal, and often made excursions extending to Byron's far-famed "Dark Lochnagar," which belonged to his landed property, or occupied himself with his agricultural studies and labors, on which occasions his inseparable companions were the farmers and farm hands, who cordial and affable as that which the Queen held with her neighbors, rich and poor.

However, brilliant festivities were not wanting, either. Since the court resided at Balmoral, the Highland clans met there once a year to celebrate their national games and sports. The most splendid of these Highland festivals was the forelight Highland festival, transferred the beholders entirely back into ancient times.

It is after nightfall. A platform hewn out of the flank of the precipitous mountain is the scene; one side of this platform is floored and fenced in with a wooden railing on three sides; in fourth side is a rough cave from which the members of the court take their seats. Four strong Highlanders, with torches in their hands, stand at the corners of the square platform; six bagpipers are stationed in front of the throne, and twenty-four Highlanders, likewise with torches in their hands, now commence a wild and curious dance to the notes of the bagpipes, which they accompany from time to time with the shrill battle-cry of the ancient clans. And the torches shed their weird glare through the night, into the gorge yawning far below them, on the brilliant court, and on the dancing Highlanders, the witnesses of a half barbarous time, living only in the patriotic songs of Scotland.

In the meantime the ancient castle, which was entirely too small for all the royal guests, had to give way to a new building. A small colony of frame houses, erected for the English masons, carpenters and laborers, rose at no great distance from the palace, and the splendid granite structure made rapid progress from day to day. In the summer of 1855 one of these frame structures was discovered to be on fire, and the whole row burned down in the course of half an hour. It was an interesting sight on that occasion to see Prince Albert standing in the chain of laborers, extending from the conflagration to the river bank, and handing one bucketfull of water after another to his next neighbor, until the flames were entirely extinguished. Nor was the Queen an idle spectator on this occasion. Not only did she, by her presence, encourage the laborers engaged in extinguishing the flames, but she issued the necessary orders to her servants with the calmness and prudence peculiar to her. The royal couple indemnified the workmen for everything they lost by this conflagration.

Such noisy days of brilliant festivals and unforeseen accidents were followed by quiet days, such as the Queen loved above all things. Sunday was always her most delightful day. Opposite the castle, on the north side of the river Dee, lies the small village of Crathie, with its very plain and humble church. Thither every Sunday a devout couple, with prayer-book in hand, were seen to wend their way from the residence by the bridge; behind them followed the children and a few servants. Only when the weather was too unfavorable, the family, which, as was shown by the livery of the servants, was the royal family, drove in a carriage to the little village church. The worshipers in the village, in the beginning, stared not a little at the Queen and Prince Albert, who before long they were so well acquainted with each other that they exchanged greetings like old and intimate friends. In the afternoon the Queen, once accompanied by her servants, and only occasionally by one of her children, visited the cottages of the poor and sick. She enters now one cottage, now another, examines the kettles, presses and beds, makes inquiries about the education of the children, and gives the boys if they make good progress at school, if they remember what the preacher said, &c. She commits the sick to God's care and reads to them from the Bible; she scolds the lazy. After returning home she makes all sorts of notes—as a consequence of which, in the next few days, efficacious relief is given to the poor sufferer in many a lowly hut. Now she visits, during the week, the village school—now she converses with the village schoolman, on the spiritual condition of his flock and the improvement of the school. The children know her well, and, having once heard the Queen say to Prince Albert, "What has you think, Albert?" they henceforth call her only "Dear Mrs. Albert;" and while her husband establishes a model farm for the peasants of Crathie, she is at work upon the establishment of a model village school. However, the happy husband and wife do everything together.

The year 1861 destroyed the happiness of the royal couple. The excellent German prince who once said of himself, "he was not only the Queen's consort, but the edificator of her children, the private Secretary of the sovereign and her permanent minister," was torn from her side by his premature death. "Lonely and dreary," she says in the preface of her husband's speeches, "lay her path before her from this time on. She was in path of duty and toil, which, confiding in the loyal attachment and sympathy of her people, she would, with God's blessing, strive to pursue."

Henceforth the Queen pursued her path solitary and alone. We saw her in 1849, at Glasgow, where we stood very close to her. Seen from her appearance, she was of no great deal. She was always plain; but her delicate and expressive features, her well-shaped forehead, and her honest eyes form a face, which, it is not beautiful, is by no means common and uninteresting. At the present time a mild expression of subdued melancholy plays round her mouth, which is framed on both sides with tell-tale wrinkles; a widow's cap covers her hair, which is turning gray already, and a widow's dress enveloping her surrounds her neck. But even though she should not wear a mourning fashion, it would be easy to recognize a widow in her. Her thorough womanly features are expressive of extraordinary benevolence, a calm, motherly character, and profound, though subdued grief.

She has been bitterly assailed for the retired life which she led for years after her husband's death, but antewilliamsburg for the of the London shopkeepers, she has preserved her popularity among the lower classes and the masses of the population. This is shown by the words of the mason who, after returning from a visit to her, he had been a witness, said to his companions: "The Queen was in my cottage; she talks as plain as you and I, and has nice pictures for the bairns. I like a hundred times better to speak with her than with the bigwig on the bench." Once a photograph of the Queen, which she had given to a poor family, was to be gotten up. Victoria, in the beginning, stared not a little at the Queen and Prince Albert, who before long they were so well acquainted with each other that they exchanged greetings like old and intimate friends. In the afternoon the Queen, once accompanied by her servants, and only occasionally by one of her children, visited the cottages of the poor and sick. She enters now one cottage, now another, examines the kettles, presses and beds, makes inquiries about the education of the children, and gives the boys if they make good progress at school, if they remember what the preacher said, &c. She commits the sick to God's care and reads to them from the Bible; she scolds the lazy. After returning home she makes all sorts of notes—as a consequence of which, in the next few days, efficacious relief is given to the poor sufferer in many a lowly hut. Now she visits, during the week, the village school—now she converses with the village schoolman, on the spiritual condition of his flock and the improvement of the school. The children know her well, and, having once heard the Queen say to Prince Albert, "What has you think, Albert?" they henceforth call her only "Dear Mrs. Albert;" and while her husband establishes a model farm for the peasants of Crathie, she is at work upon the establishment of a model village school. However, the happy husband and wife do everything together.

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THE CHOLERA.

Its Terrible Ravages in the Papal States.

(Rome (Subject to Revision) Correspondence of London Post.)

A little time ago the emperors of the Eternal City promised to be exceedingly brilliant during the *villeggiatura* season. But the cholera had been driving numerous visitors out of the city until hardly a single person remained; while at Albano, Frascati, Genzano, or any of the other little towns that cluster round the Alban and Tusculan Hills, Albano was particularly crowded with visitors of high and low degree, from the royal family of Naples, and various members of the Roman aristocracy, to the thrifty Jewish tradesman from the Ghetto who contrives to bring a stroke of business with advantageous change of air. The Pope himself, the pontiff of Castel Gandolfo, which village overlooks the lake about a mile from Albano, and preparations had been made for his arrival at the Pontifical Palace there, when it was announced that his Holiness had resolved to remain in Rome, and to devote to the relief of sufferers from cholera the time he had meant to spend in *villeggiatura* in Castel Gandolfo. On Sunday Albano was overflowing with visitors, there being festivals at Marino on one side, and at Ariccia on the other, with the usual mummeries, pomps and profane accompaniments of horse-racing, lotteries and fireworks. These festivities were succeeded by a sudden and total cessation of all festivities. On Tuesday night cholera broke out in the town with such fury as to give the disease a fulminating character, and while still early on Wednesday morning 117 cases and 15 deaths were officially announced in a population of 6,000 souls. I was among those who were resident in the town at the time, and the first sounds I heard in the morning were those of anxious inquiry and consultation among the groups of people collected at the doors of their houses, and others looking out of windows, occasionally interrupted by the lugubrious chanting of priests carrying the communion to dying folks. There was a great bustle of preparation among the families resident in the Villa di San Paolo, in which I was staying, and which is the loftiest and healthiest part of Albano. Horses and carriages were hastily brought up, bags and baskets hurriedly tossed into the vehicles, and early after party were soon on the way for Rome or the neighboring towns. A walk through the streets soon convinced me that the accounts I received had not been exaggerated—the prevailing features of the scene were those of the unconscious and priests the consecrated host, litters conveying the sick to the hospital, and carts conveying the dead to the cemetery. I heard one female in the latter operation being by no means adequate in number to the amount of 5,000 work that devoted upon them, were aided by the soldiers of a company of Zouaves, who had been sent to Albano for change of air after recovery from fever, and who arrived apparently on the very morning when their aid was so much needed. Telegraphic messages were sent to Rome repeatedly in the course of the day, requesting medical aid, instructions, and vehicles. Cardinal Alfieri, leg