EVENING BULLETIN.

Friday, January 31, 1868.

VICTORIA.

Of the few queens who have reigned in England now have been distinguished for womanly virtues as Victoria is. She has won the affection of her subjects and the respect of other peoples, by her excellence as a daughter, a wife and a mother. There have been, at times, bits of gossip concerning her, circulated among ignorant and prejudiced persons. But there has never been a well-grounded suspicion of her purity and goodness. She will never figure in history as Elizabeth does; but she is a much better woman, a more womanly woman, and as a sovereign, she suits the age she reigns in better than the high-spirited Tudor princess would have done.

A new volume from Queen Victoria's pen, describing some of her visits to the Highlands with her husband and children, has just been published by Harper & Brothers. Some extracts that appeared in the English papers, before the American edition of the book was published, have already been copied in this paper. These are, after all, among the best passages in the volume; certainly they are those best adapted for quotation in newspaper columns. The book, as a whole, cannot be called a superior literary production. There are thousands of women in America, as well as in England, who could write better books. For, as there is no royal road to learning, so there is no royal endowment of genius. The easiest gift of royal authors, which that amusing but somewhat flunkeyish gossip, Horace Walpole, was able to make, was very small, and their works were only noticed because they were the works of royalty.

In their very freedom from literary pretension consists the charm of the volume. Glimpses of domestic life in a family of royal rank, are permitted the public to see. The first was made up, in great part, of letters relating to her courtship and marriage. The second consisted entirely of extracts from her private diary, during her residence at Balmoral, and during several "expeditions" that she made in the Highlands of Scotland, in Ireland and among the Channel Islands. Most of these entries in the diary are the mere dry narratives of an itinerary. There are, it is true, occasional outbreaks of enthusiasm, but they are suggestive rather than descriptive, and they add, therefore, to one's liking for the book, for they show that the diary was meant for a personal memorandum book, without any intention of creating an impression upon the general public. There is nothing like style in the composition. Any woman of average education and intelligence could write as well as Victoria; for the Queen's English is quite common-place, and plenty of her subjects could pick flaws in it.

But no one can help reading with interest these personal records of a great woman, placed by Providence supreme above all other human creatures in one of the greatest empires of the earth. The story of her love, her marriage, her domestic joys and her sorrows, has in it, perhaps, nothing surpassing that of millions of other women who have been married. But it is the story of a queen told by herself in artless and unpretending style, but in the simple language of a good woman. The various entries of what "Albert said," about this or that other matter, show how lovingly she dwelt upon her husband and trusted to his judgment and taste. The allusions to "Vicky," now the Crown Princess of Prussia; to "Bertie," now the Prince of Wales; to "Affie," now the Duke of Edinburgh; to "Leuchen" (the German diminutive of "Helena") now the Princess Christian—these and many other things afford delightful glimpses of the domestic life of the royal family. One of the pleasantest passages in the book is the account of the "third great expedition," in which the queen, prince, children, and attendants journeyed on ponies and *Linnet*, to Glen Finlas, Dalwhinnie and Blair Athole; lunching in the woods; lodging in rustic inns on the commonest fare; the whole party at a dress or two having on one occasion nothing but "two starved chickens" for supper.

In the far future all these little personal details, concerning characters who will have taken place in history, will be read with a pleasure much exceeding that which is felt by readers of the present time. Imagine the sensation of people of this day would read even a fragment of authentic autobiography of Mary or Elizabeth, of England, or Mary Queen of Scots, or Queen Dido of Carthage, or even of Jull, phlegmatic Anne. Here, in two volumes, are given quite minute accounts of the free, healthy, outdoor life, the marriage, and the mode of living, away from the palaces, of a queen who, while not a great political character, is better worthy of an honorable place in history as a woman, than either of the queens we have named. Here are even some fac simile wood-engravings of sketches made by the queen in her journeyings—a stag brought down by a shot from the dear prince; a quaint Welsh or Cornish cottage, a bit of landscape among the Highlands, or the outline of a coast in the channel. They are roughly made, but they are authentic, and they help to illustrate the text, as the text and drawings help to illustrate the character of the author. Let malicious people say what they please about Queen Victoria, she is still the best sovereign England has had for many a day; and it is to be feared that, in spite of her good teaching and example, the prince likely to succeed her will be less worthy of the respect and love of the people of Great Britain.

THE SITUATION IN MEXICO.

Since the overthrow of the bastard Empire in Mexico, the execution of Maximilian, and the complete restoration of the Republic, and the consequent vindication of the Monroe Doctrine, the American people have ceased to feel deeply interested in Mexican affairs. The fierce political struggle at home, and the often hopelessly incomprehensible character of the agitations in Mexico, have tended to encourage this indifference, until now the American public read the telegrams from Mexico again with nearly as little interest as they do the obscure reports of revolutions and wars among the smaller States of South America.

But the political situation in Mexico is not only interesting, but important. The Juarez government, with the prestige gained by the support given it by the United States, is perhaps more firmly established than any one of the many administrations which have controlled the affairs of Mexico for many years. And it is strengthened in this position by the wisdom, tact and liberality with which it is conducted. But the people are afflicted with a restlessness that has become chronic from long indulgence, and it has not disappointed any careful observer that even under the mild and generous sway of Juarez the turbulent spirits in several of the states have succeeded in creating great discontent, which, in one of them, has assumed the shape of actual offensive revolution and defiance of the national authority.

A rebellion is in active progress in Yucatan, and President Juarez has brought all the force of his Government to bear upon it to ensure its speedy suppression. Large bodies of troops have been sent to the disaffected district, and some sharp fighting has resulted without any decided advantage being gained by either side. Latest advices state that Bissi, the principal seaport town of the State, was undergoing a terrific bombardment, which promised to level it with the ground, and this would indicate that Juarez means work, and is determined to break "the backbone of the rebellion" as specifully as it can be done by energetic fighting. It is asserted, with some plausibility, that the venerable agitator, Santa Anna, is the main-spring of this revolutionary movement. The agitation, however, is not confined to this single State. In Guatemala several disaffected military men are busy organizing an army for the purpose of making war upon the neighboring State of Chiapas, and an outbreak of the most alarming character is daily expected in this direction. In San Luis Potosi, also, there are some indications of revolt. The Legislature endeavored to negotiate a loan; but the moneyed men, not having absolute confidence in the integrity of their representatives, refused to subscribe. A forced loan was then ordered, and this being peremptorily refused by the merchants, several of them were thrown into prison, and there is a bitter feeling had been consequently engendered against the State government. In addition to all this, the Republic is filled with brigands, who commit acts of lawlessness with impunity, so that no man's life or property is safe outside of the great towns.

This condition of affairs apparently does not speak well for the efficiency of the government, or promise much for its permanence. But it must not be forgotten that upon Juarez has fallen the task of organizing order out of a chaos that has existed for nearly forty years, and that, bad as matters are now, they are much better than they have been at any former during that period. Force, wielded with careful discrimination, is needed to redeem Mexico, and even then the work will be tedious and difficult. Juarez has the power, and his conduct, so far, seems to indicate that he possesses sufficient wisdom for the task, and it is only reasonable to believe that in his hands Mexico will in the course of time become a worthy sister of the great Northern Republic.

GRANT AND VANDERBILT.

Nobody will deny that the veteran millionaire, Cornelius Vanderbilt, is a great and influential man. All very rich men, especially in New York, are great and influential men. Mr. Vanderbilt is a great horseman, a great stock-speculator, a great railroad and steamboat man, and no mean politician. But Mr. Vanderbilt, like many another very wealthy citizen, has fallen into the old error that there is nothing that money cannot do, and he has therefore been lonely enough, in company with Mr. A. T. Stewart and other moneled men of New York, in President-making, the subject of this financial operation being General Grant.

The Cooper Institute movement in favor of Grant for President, was mainly a movement of money-bags, and the array of substantial capital brought together on that occasion was most imposing. We are far from disparaging the dignity and importance of wealth, but wealth, as it represents industry, skill, shrewdness, prudence, nerve, energy, perseverance and proper ambition, is deserving of all due honor. Only, it is not by any means the only power in the world, or, so far as political movements affect the nation, the principal one. So that when it is announced that Mr. Vanderbilt has withdrawn his support from Gen. Grant because Gen. Grant would not withdraw his support from Mr. Stanton, it may be doubted whether General Grant's chances for the Presidency are very materially lessened by the defection. We can imagine Mr. Vanderbilt sinking a railroad or swamping a steamboat line by suddenly standing from under it, but all the Vanderbilts in America combined would have no more effect for or against the election of Gen. Grant than a child would have in controlling the revolution of the earth. General Grant's strength is purely popular one. The people are for him and it is in vain to be against him. His nomination by the Republican Convention and his election by an overwhelming majority of the popular vote are facts as certainly assured as anything future can be.

But there is just one element of significance in Commodore Vanderbilt's action. It is based upon General Grant's support of Secretary Stanton and, viewed in this light, it commends its main force of the controversy between the President and General Grant. Neither General Grant nor the Republican party want any allies who do not go with him, heart and soul, in an honest, bold, and even vindictive war against the President. Grant is the popular servant of the people, like Edwin M. Stanton. General Grant's support of Stanton is too intimately linked with his defence of Sheridan to be separated from it, and there has been no official act of his, apart from his military achievements, which has so stirred the enthusiasm of the people in his favor, as this very fearless letter to the President over which Mr. Vanderbilt has so unfortunately stumbled.

To be thoroughly effective, it would certainly be well for the veteran millionaire Commodore to start a new anti-Stanton-Grant Cooper Institute movement, and try conclusions with his money-bags against the great tide of popular enthusiasm in Grant's favor. He is said to have declared, not long ago, that he was prepared to spend half his fortune to help make General Grant President. If he will spend the whole of it to make any one else President, Commodore Vanderbilt will find that he has made a wretchedly bad investment.

THE SIDE-WALK QUESTION.

A very striking example of a generally prevailing condition of things, in contrast with the beginning of a reform which has frequently been urged in these columns, is now presented on the north side of Chestnut between Eleventh and Twelfth streets. As is generally understood, as soon as the beams on the old dwellings which form Girard row expire, the buildings are converted into stores. Several have been finished and they have been handsomely fitted up and tenanted, while others are in the transition state of partial conversion from dwelling to store. In making these improvements the marble door-steps are in every case removed, and no obstruction is allowed to project beyond the lines of the buildings. Where the change has been made there is a fine wide side-walk, on which a regiment of infantry might march with full platoons; where no change has been made, great masses of stone step projecting nearly one-third of the footway, and with the aid of hitching-posts, stepping-stones and other impediments, carrying contrivances that are generally hung from the curb-stones, there is scarcely sufficient room left for a brace of full-dressed ladies to pass abreast, and with the lively probability of the lady upon the inside being brought up "all standing" by the entanglement of her crinoline in a "scraper." Philadelphia has attained a great success in the art of blocking up streets that are already entirely too narrow for the throngs of people who crowd them. Along the house fronts, great masses of stone steps, some of which might serve for the main doorways of the Coliseum, project; there are cellar-doors that would almost roof in an ordinary dwelling; areas that make a yawning chasm of half the side-walk; portices large enough for a respectable Grecian temple; show-cases that are almost wide enough to hold half the stock in trade of their proprietors; signs that fare out like wings from the flanks of store doors; and last, though not least of nuisances, the inevitable "scraper," that, both in respect to pattern and location denotes high art in the contriving of a thing that can be most thoroughly in the way and most effectual in tripping up the heels and tearing the clothing of suffering humanity. After the nuisances just described have usurped the lion's share of the foot-way, the curb-stone range of obstructions claim their share of the common spoil. Awning posts, hitching posts, stepping stones, and that peculiarly Philadelphia institution, the ash barrel, take up a good portion of what the steps and area-railings have left, and in many places, pedestrians have scarcely more than room enough for a single file to march through these manifold and multiform sidewalk obstructions. Trees and tree-boxes, that are very desirable things in the retired streets of the city, are out of place on the business thoroughfares, and when they are placed upon them they fall within the category of street nuisances and sidewalk obstructions.

It would be unreasonable to expect City Councils to reform forthwith these nuisances, the inheritance of the old time when Philadelphia was a town of a few thousand inhabitants. But partial reforms could easily be brought about, as is demonstrated by the clean sweep that has been made of all side-walk obstructions in the Girard Row improvement. An ordinance forbidding the construction of any new obstructions beyond the lawful house line of the street, or along the curb-stones within reasonable limitations in respect to neighborhoods and localities) would have a most wholesome effect, and in time it would work a great reform, for which posterity would bless their city grandfathers who set the ball in motion. Such an ordinance cannot be passed too soon. The anti-frame and anti-bay and the court-forbidding laws passed half a century later than they should have been for the good of the city; and if those who had the conduct of public affairs in that century ago could have seen the city and the sidewalks as they are in 1868, and had acted on the hint, there would have been such wholesome regulations made as would enable the Philadelphians who live under the happy administration of Mayor McMichael to enjoy a fair share of comfort, and a reasonable immunity from broken shins as they pass through the streets.

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See Tuesday's and Saturday's advertisements and catalogues.

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N. W. corner Sixth and Wood Streets.

PHILADELPHIA, Jan. 1, 1868.

The following statement of the assets of the Company is published in compliance with the provisions of the act of the Legislature of the State of Pennsylvania, April 1, 1861:

Cash on hand	$13,385 00
Ground Rents, improved	1,600 00
Mortgages	280,033 25
Interest unpaid	2,400 00
United States Loan, 1881	15,537 00
Philadelphia City Loans, par value	62,000 00
Pennsylvania Loan, par value	6,050 00
200 shares stock N. Liberties Gas Company	4,000 00
100 do do Northeastern National Bank	6,540 00
314 do do Penn National Bank	5,800 00
300 do do Commercial National Bank	4,800 00
161 do do Spring Garden Fire Ins. Co.	2,454 20
Cash	1,254 00
	$435,814 14

The Company has no corporate debts or unpaid debt notes.

The MORTGAGES held by the Company are all on first-class new property, in the improved parts of the city of Philadelphia, being first incumbrances, clear of ground rent or any other claims whatever, examined by and the valuation made by a committee of the Board of Directors, at each price, previous to making the loans, the property thus being worth separately FORTY PER CENT. over the mortgages, and the interest promptly paid.

The Company, in thirty-five years, has paid losses by fire amounting to upwards of $1,500,000. So liberal has been the settlement of all claims that not a single one has occurred, since its organization, that the Company has permitted the insured to resort to a Court to seek payment.

Edward Lafourcade, Jr., Secretary.

INSURANCE

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