

THURSDAY, JANUARY 24, 1901.

*THE DEATH OF THE QUEEN.*

NOT only the British Empire, but the whole world is mourning the death of one of the most beneficent Sovereigns who has ever adorned a throne. History will for many centuries record the fact that her long reign has been contemporaneous with the most tremendous advances of science which the world has so far seen. In consequence of one of these advances, the civilised communities spread over the whole surface of the planet have mourned simultaneously, and as with one voice, the loss of one universally beloved.

But besides the advances in pure science which have characterised the reign, and the applications of it to the amelioration of human ills and to the greater well-being of humanity, there has been progress along other lines which have been largely dependent upon the Queen's own perfect life and character; her efforts to keep the world's peace, and her intense anxiety that the well-being of even the humblest of her subjects should be fully cared for.

Thanks to all these causes, constantly at work, her glorious reign has possessed a special characteristic, and it has been well called the Victorian age.

What we owe to the circumstances of the time, and Her Majesty's unceasing efforts to mould them for the nation's good, has been well stated in the *Times*.

"Her reign coincides very accurately with a sort of second renaissance, an intellectual movement accomplishing in a brief term more than had been done in preceding centuries. Since the days of Elizabeth there has been no such awakening of the mind of the nation, no such remarkable stride in the path of progress, no such spreading abroad of the British race and British rule over the world at large, as in the period covered by the reign whose end we now have to deplore. In art, in letters, in music, in science, in religion, and, above all, in the moral and material advancement of the mass of the nation, the Victorian age has been a time of extraordinary activity."

To mention these facts is sufficient to recall the increased national activities, along these several lines, not long after Her Majesty began her reign, when she had by her side the late Prince Consort, to whom the nation owed the idea of the

Exhibition of 1851 and everything which flowed from it. His wide culture and complete training enabled him to foresee then (that is, half a century ago) what very few of our statesmen recognise now, that brains and complete mastery of all the arts of peace are the most stable bases of a nation's greatness.

Few young rulers were so happy as the Queen in her family life until the lamented death of the Prince Consort—one of the best friends that the English nation has ever had. It was largely owing to his wise foresight and influence that the improvement of our British system of education was undertaken; and in 1852, in the Speech from the Throne, Her Majesty spoke as follows:—

"The advancement of the Fine Arts and of practical Science will be readily recognised by you as worthy the attention of a great and enlightened nation. I have directed that a comprehensive scheme shall be laid before you, having in view the promotion of these objects, towards which I invite your aid and co-operation."

The death of Prince Albert in 1861 was a blow from which Her Majesty may be said to have never recovered. It was also a blow to British science which the nation still feels.

The late Lord Playfair told the story how Her Majesty, not long after the commencement of her reign, expressed her desire to show, by distinctions conferred upon them, that she regarded men of science as fellow-workers for the nation's good. He also told us how it came about that at the time this desire was not carried into effect. But during recent years Her Majesty from time to time has shown in this way her interest in scientific progress, and the position of science in the national regard is vastly different to-day from what it was on Her Majesty's accession.

The world is all the poorer for the departure from us of our noble Queen. The nation is stunned: each of her late subjects is mourning a personal loss, but that does not prevent a universal sympathy with those near the throne who, as children or grandchildren, stood at the bedside at so great a passing.

The Royal Family may rest assured that, among the millions of mourners for the loss of one who was truly the Beloved and Revered Mother to all her subjects all over the world, there are none whose sympathy is deeper or more respectful than that felt by the students of science throughout the Empire.

EDITOR.