CHAPTER L

CINDERELLA IS CROWNED

When Earl Grey's government was reconstructed (June 18, 1834) and Althorp announced the first name, Lord Conyngham as Postmaster, Hume the Radical exclaimed in the House, "God bless us! is it possible?" And a satirist would enjoy, perhaps, the circumstance that the Princess Victoria was informed of her high destiny by a Conyngham as Lord Chamberlain, accompanied by the Primate of the Established Church:

August 30, 1837: . . . On the morning of the King's death, the Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord Conyngham arrived at Kensington at five o'clock, and immediately desired to see "the Queen." They were ushered into an apartment, and in a few minutes the door opened and she came in wrapped in a dressing gown and with slippers on her naked feet. Conyngham in a few words told her their errand, and as soon as he uttered the words "Your Majesty," she instantly put out her hand to him, intimating that he was to kiss hands before he proceeded. He dropped on one knee, kissed her hand, and then went on to tell her of the late King's death. She presented her hand to the Archbishop, who likewise kissed it, and when he had done so, addressed to her a sort of pastoral charge, which she received graciously and then retired.

At eleven o'clock, "the young Queen met the Council at Kensington Palace." And as Clerk of the Council, Greville had a busy morning. "The impossibility," says he, "of getting the summonses to two hundred and twenty Privy Councillors conveyed in time caused the greatest irregularities in the arrivals, and the door was continually opened to admit fresh comers." But on the sovereign herself, the verdict was unanimous and immediate:

June 21, 1837: . . . The young Queen met the Council at Kensington Palace at eleven. Never was anything like the first im-

pression she produced, or the chorus of praise and admiration which is raised about her manner and behaviour, and certainly not without justice. It was very extraordinary, and something far beyond what was looked for. Her extreme youth and inexperience, and the ignorance of the world concerning her, naturally excited intense curiosity to see how she would act on this trying occasion, and there was a considerable assemblage at the Palace, notwithstanding the short notice which was given. The first thing to be done was to teach her her lesson, which for this purpose Melbourne had himself to learn. I gave him the Council papers, and explained all that was to be done, and he went and explained all this to her. He asked her if she would enter the room accompanied by the Great Officers of State, but she said she would come in alone. When the Lords were assembled, the Lord President informed them of the King's death, and suggested, as they were so numerous, that a few of them should repair to the presence of the Queen and inform her of the event, and that their lordships were assembled in consequence; and accordingly the two Royal Dukes, the two Archbishops, the Chancellor, and Melbourne went with him. The Queen received them in the adjoining room alone. As soon as they had returned the proclamation was read and the usual order passed, when the doors were thrown open and the Queen entered, accompanied by her two uncles, who advanced to meet her. She bowed to the Lords, took her seat, and then read her speech in a clear, distinct, and audible voice, and without any appearance of fear or embarrassment. She was quite plainly dressed, and in mourning. After she had read her speech and taken and signed the oath for the security of the Church of Scotland, the Privy Councillors were sworn, the two Royal Dukes first, by themselves; and as these two old men, her uncles, knelt before her, swearing allegiance and kissing her hand, I saw her blush up to the eyes, as if she felt the contrast between their civil and their natural relations, and this was the only sign of emotion which she evinced. Her manner to them was very graceful and engaging; she kissed them both, and rose from her chair and moved towards the Duke of Sussex, who was farthest from her and too infirm to reach her. She seemed rather bewildered at the multitude of men who were sworn, and who came one after another to kiss her hand, but she did not speak

to anybody, nor did she make the slightest difference in her manner, or show any in her countenance, to any individual of any rank, station, or party. I particularly watched her when Melbourne and the Ministers and the Duke of Wellington and Peel approached her. She went through the whole ceremony, occasionally looking at Melbourne for instruction when she had any doubt what to do, which hardly ever occurred, and with perfect calmness and self-possession, but at the same time with a graceful modesty and propriety particularly interesting and ingratiating. When the business was done, she retired as she had entered, and I could see that nobody was in the adjoining room. Lord Lansdowne insisted upon being declared President of the Council (and I was obliged to write a declaration for him to read to that effect), though it was not usual. The speech was admired, except by Brougham, who appeared in a considerable state of excitement. He said to Peel (whom he was standing near, and with whom he is not in the habit of communicating), "Amelioration, that is not English; you might perhaps say melioration, but improvement is the proper word." "Oh," said Peel, "I see no harm in the word; it is generally used." "You object," said Brougham, "to the sentiment, I object to the grammar." "No," said Peel, "I don't object to the sentiment." "Well, then, she pledges herself to the policy of *our* government," said Brougham. Peel told me this, which passed in the room and near the Queen. He likewise said how amazed he was at her manner and behaviour, at her apparent deep sense of her situation, her modesty, and at the same time her firmness. She appeared, in fact, to be awed, but not daunted, and afterwards the Duke of Wellington told me the same thing, and added that if she had been his own daughter he could not have desired to see her perform her part better. It was settled that she was to hold a Council at St. James's this day, and be proclaimed there at ten o'clock, and she expressed a wish to see Lord Albemarle, who went to her and told her he was come to take her orders. She said, "I have no orders to give; you know all this so much better than I do, that I leave it all to you. I am to be at St. James's at ten to-morrow, and must beg you to find me a conveyance proper for the occasion." Accordingly, he went and fetched her in state with a great escort. The Duchess of Kent was in the carriage with her, but I was surprised to

hear so little shouting, and to see so few hats off as she went by. I rode down the Park, and saw her appear at the window when she was proclaimed. The Duchess of Kent was there, but not prominent; the Queen was surrounded by her Ministers, and curtsied repeatedly to the people, who did not, however, hurrah till Lord Lansdowne gave them the signal from the window. At twelve she held a Council, at which she presided with as much ease as if she had been doing nothing else all her life, and though Lord Lansdowne and my colleague had contrived between them to make some confusion with the Council papers, she was not put out by it. She looked very well, and though so small in stature, and without much pretension to beauty, the gracefulness of her manner and the good expression of her countenance give her on the whole a very agreeable appearance, and with her youth inspire an excessive interest in all who approach her, and which I can't help feeling myself. After the Council she received the Archbishops and Bishops, and after them the Judges. They all kissed her hand, but she said nothing to any of them, very different in this from her predecessor, who used to harangue them all, and had a speech ready for everybody.

"Peel," writes Greville, "repeated in the House of Commons, in more set phrases, the expressions of his admiration of the conduct of the Queen on her first public appearance, which he uttered to me when I saw him after the Council on Tuesday."

In Sir David Wilkie's picture of the Queen's First Council, Greville was included. And he gave a sitting to the artist:

March 27, 1838: . . . The likenesses are generally pretty good, but it is a very unfaithful representation of what actually took place. It was, of course, impossible to preserve all the details without sacrificing the effect, but the picture has some glaring improprieties, which diminish its interest, and deprive it of all value as an historical piece. There were ninety-seven Privy Councillors present on the occasion, and among them most of the conspicuous men of the time. He has introduced as many figures as he well could, but has made a strange selection, admitting very ordinary men, such as Lord Burghersh and Lord Salisbury, while Brougham and Stanley do not find places. He told me that great anxiety prevailed to be put into this picture, and many pressing applications had been made; and as only

vain and silly men would make them, and importunity generally prevails to a great extent, it ends in the sacrifice of the picture by substituting these undistinguished intruders in place of the celebrated persons who are so much better entitled to be there.

That the picture shows the Queen in white whereas she wore deep mourning was perhaps a detail. What "scandalized" not only Greville but Croker was the fact that Wilkie had inserted on his canvas "the Lord Mayor of London and the Attorney General, who, not being Privy Councillors, could not be present when the Queen was sitting in Council." Wilkie explained that "they both entreated to be put in the picture, and each asserted that he was actually present." In fact, "the Attorney had described to him [Wilkie] what had passed." Greville continues:

March 27, 1838: . . . The fact was this: when the Lords assemble they order the Queen to be proclaimed, and when the Proclamation is read the doors are thrown open and everybody is admitted. The Lord Mayor came in together with several Common Councilmen and a multitude of other persons. When this is over they are obliged to retire, and I called out from the head of the table that "everybody except Privy Councillors would have the goodness to retire." It was necessary to clear the room before Her Majesty could hold her Privy Council. The people did retire, slowly and lingeringly, and some time afterwards, espying the fur and scarlet of the Lord Mayor, I requested somebody (I forget whom) to tell him he must retire, and he did leave the room. Shortly after, the Queen entered, and the business of the Council commenced. . . . In such a scene of bustle and confusion, and in a room so crowded, it is extremely probable that the Lord Mayor and the Attorney General smuggled themselves back into the apartment, and that they were (very improperly) spectators of what passed; but that forms no reason why they should be represented in an historical picture as actors in a ceremonial with which they had, and could have, no concern. Wilkie was very anxious to have Lord Conyngham, the Lord Chamberlain, in the picture, but both he and Albert Conyngham decided that it would be improper, because not only he was not present, but according to etiquette could not be present, as it was his duty to remain in

constant attendance upon the body of the late King up to the moment of his breaking his wand over his coffin.

June 25, 1837: I remember when George IV died, seven years ago, having been struck by the small apparent sensation that his death created. There was, however, at that time a great deal of bustle and considerable excitement, which were caused by the activity of the new Court, and the eccentricities of the King; but in the present instance the Crown has been transferred to the head of the new Queen with a tranquillity which is curious and edifying. The first interest and curiosity to see the young Queen and observe her behaviour having passed off, there appears nothing more to do or to think about; there are no changes, and there is no talk of change. Her Majesty has continued quietly at Kensington, where she transacts business with her Ministers, and everything goes on as if she had been on the throne six years instead of six days.

June 29, 1837: All the accounts continue to report well of the young Queen, of her quickness, sense and discretion, and the remarkable facility with which she has slid into her high station and discharges its duties.

August 30, 1837: . . . She seems to be liberal, but at the same time prudent with regard to money, for when the Queen Dowager proposed to her to take her band into her service, she declined to incur so great an expense without further consideration.

The first letter that Victoria had ever received, when Cinderella, had been from Queen Adelaide. Mindful of her lost daughters, the gentle lady had addressed her niece as "My dear little Heart." And she had added tender sentences. "I hope you are well and don't forget Aunt Adelaide, who loves you so fondly" and "God bless and preserve you is the constant prayer of your most truly affectionate Aunt, Adelaide."[1]

The "dear little Heart" was now on the throne. Queen Adelaide was no more than Dowager. And she accepted the position and wrote: "Accept the assurance of my most affectionate devotion, and allow me to consider myself always as your Majesty's most affectionate Friend, Aunt, *and Subject.*" The italics are our own. The words "and subject" must have endeared Aunt Adelaide yet more than ever to Queen Victoria.

[1] *Letters of Queen Victoria, 1837–1861,* Vol. I, page 31.

To the Queen Dowager, Victoria displayed a tender regard:

June 21, 1837: . . . Conyngham, when he came to her with the intelligence of the King's death, brought a request from the Queen Dowager that she might be permitted to remain at Windsor till after the funeral, and she has written her a letter couched in the kindest terms, begging her to consult nothing but her own health and convenience, and to remain at Windsor just as long as she pleases. In short, she appears to act with every sort of good taste and good feeling, as well as good sense, and as far as it has gone nothing can be more favourable than the impression she has made, and nothing can promise better than her manner and conduct do, though it would be rash to count too confidently upon her judgment and discretion in more weighty matters.

On proceeding, as she did in due course, to Windsor, the Castle that she entered for the first time as Queen, Victoria's tact rose to the height of genius:

August 30, 1837: . . . The day she went down to visit the Queen Dowager at Windsor, to Melbourne's great surprise she said to him that, as the flag on the Round Tower was half-mast high, and they might perhaps think it necessary to elevate it upon her arrival, it would be better to send orders beforehand not to do so. *He* had never thought of the flag, or knew anything about it, but it showed her knowledge of forms and her attention to trifles. Her manner to the Queen was extremely kind and affectionate, and they were both greatly affected at meeting. The Queen Dowager said to her that the only favour she had to ask of her was to provide for the retirement, with their pensions, of the personal attendants of the late King, Whiting and Bachelor, who had likewise been the attendants of George IV; to which she replied that it should be attended to, but she could not give any promise on the subject.

For the Fitzclarences, bereft of a solicitous parent, it was, of course, an anxious time:

July 28, 1837: . . . The Queen has been extremely kind and civil to the Queen Dowager, but she has taken no notice of the King's children, good, bad, or indifferent. Lord Munster asked for an audience to deliver up the keys of the Castle which he

had, and was very graciously received by her, but she did not give him back the keys. Adolphus Fitzclarence has lost his Lordship of the Bedchamber, but then they only retained Peers, and he keeps the command of the Royal yacht. He has had no intimation whether his pension and his Rangership of Windsor Park are to be continued to him.

But "in the end," says Greville, "they retained everything, and the Queen behaved with equal liberality and kindness towards them all." In fact:

August 8, 1837: . . . Lord Munster has got back his keys of the Round Tower. Melbourne found out that the place was held for life, and he sent for Munster, and told him he had been hasty in disposing of it, that it was his own doing and not the Queen's, who had acted entirely by his advice, and that in his situation it was impossible for him to do otherwise than bestow any vacant appointment upon a person connected with his own party, but that he was extremely glad in the present instance to find that he was not at liberty to deprive Munster of the office. Munster afterwards saw the Queen, who was exceedingly gracious, and told him she was very glad to restore the keys to him. The Queen and Melbourne appear to have both evinced kindness and good feeling on this occasion.

The motive of the Queen was gratitude:

March 25, 1838: She now evinces in all she does an attachment to the memory of her uncle (King William IV), and it is not to be doubted that, in the disputes, which took place between him and her mother, her secret sympathies were with the King; and in that celebrated scene at Windsor, when the King made so fierce an attack upon the Duchess's advisers, and expressed his earnest hope that he might live to see the majority of his niece, Victoria must have inwardly rejoiced at the expression of sentiments so accordant with her own. Her attentions and cordiality to Queen Adelaide, her bounty and civility to the King's children and the disgrace of Conroy, amply prove what her sentiments have all along been.

Despite the Queen's favour and Lord Melbourne's complacence, Lord Munster's end was shocking:

March 23, 1842: . . . On Sunday Lord Munster shot himself. He had been in low spirits for some time, and was tainted with the hereditary malady. He was a man not without talent, but wrong-headed, and having had the folly to quarrel with his father, and estrange himself from Court during the greater part of his reign, he fell into comparative obscurity and real poverty, and there can be no doubt that the disappointment of the expectations he once formed, together with the domestic unhappiness of a dawdling, ill-conditioned, vexatious wife, preyed upon his mind, and led to this act. The horror of the deed excited a momentary interest, but he will be soon forgotten.

Over the Queen's personal appearance, Greville was complimentary, yet candid:

November 23, 1837: At Court yesterday when the Queen received the Address of the Commons. She conducts herself with surprising dignity: the dignity which proceeds from self-possession and deliberation. The smallness of her stature is quite forgotten in the majesty and gracefulness of her demeanour. . . .

March 23, 1838: On Wednesday I attended a Levee and Council. The Queen was magnificently dressed, and looked better than I ever saw her. Her complexion is clear and has the brightness of youth; the expression of her eyes is agreeable. If she [Victoria] had a better mouth and did not show her gums, and had more shade in her face, she would be pretty. Her manner is graceful and dignified and with perfect self-possession. I remarked how very civil she was to Brougham, for she spoke to him as much as to anybody. He was in high good-humour after it.

May 11, 1838: Last night I was at the ball at the Palace—a poor affair in comparison with the Tuileries. Gallery ill-lit; rest of the rooms tolerable. The Queen's manner and bearing perfect. She danced, first with Prince George [of Cambridge], then young Esterhazy, then Lord FitzAlan. Before supper, and after dancing, she sat on a sofa somewhat elevated in the drawing room, looking at the waltzing; she did not waltz herself. Her mother sat on one side of her, and the Princess Augusta on the other; then the Duchesses of Gloucester and Cambridge and the Princess of Cambridge; her household, with their wands, stand-

ing all round; her manners exceedingly graceful, and, blended with dignity and cordiality, a simplicity and good humour, when she talks to people, which are mighty captivating. When supper was announced she moved from her seat, all her officers going before her—she, first, alone, and the Royal Family following; her exceeding youth strikingly contrasted with their mature ages, but she did it well.

March 11, 1838: I dined yesterday at the Palace, much to my surprise, for I had no expectation of an invitation. There was a very numerous party: The Hanoverian Minister Baron Münchhausen, Lord and Lady Grey, the Chancellor, the Roseberys, Ossulston, Mahon, &c. We assembled in the round room next the gallery, and just before the dinner was ready the Queen entered with the Duchess of Kent, preceded by the Chamberlain, and followed by her six ladies. She shook hands with the women, and made a sweeping bow to the men, and directly went in to dinner, conducted by Münchhausen, who sat next to her, and Lord Conyngham on the other side. The dinner was like any other great dinner. After the eating was over, the Queen's health was given by Cavendish, who sat at one end of the table, and everybody got up to drink it: a vile, vulgar custom, and, however proper it may be to drink her health elsewhere, it is bad taste to have it given by her own officer at her own table, which, in fact, is the only private table it is ever drunk at. However, this has been customary in the last two reigns. George III never dined but with his family, never had guests, or a dinner *party*.

The Queen sat for some time at table, talking away very merrily to her neighbours, and the men remained about a quarter of an hour after the ladies. When we went into the drawing room and huddled about the door in the sort of half-shy, half-awkward way people do, the Queen advanced to meet us, and spoke to everybody in succession, and if everybody's "palaver" was as deeply interesting as mine, it would have been worth while to have had Gurney to take it down in shorthand.

I shall now record my dialogue with accurate fidelity:

Q.—Have you been riding to-day, Mr. Greville?
G.—No, Madam, I have not.
Q.—It was a fine day.

G.—Yes, Ma'am, a very fine day.

Q.—It was rather cold though.

G. (*like Polonius*)—It *was* rather cold, Madam.

Q.—Your sister, Lady Francis Egerton, rides, I think, does she not?

G.—She does ride sometimes, Madam.

(*A pause, when I took the lead, though adhering to the same topic.*)

G.—Has your Majesty been riding to-day?

Q. (*with animation*)—Oh, yes, a very long ride.

G.—Has your Majesty got a nice horse?

Q.—Oh, a very nice horse.

Gracious smile and inclination of head on part of Queen, profound bow on mine, she turned again to Lord Grey. Directly after I was (to my satisfaction) deposited at the whist table to make up the Duchess of Kent's party, and all the rest of the company were arranged about a large round table (the Queen on the sofa by it), where they passed about an hour and a half in what was probably the smallest talk, interrupted and enlivened, however, by some songs which Lord Ossulston sang. We had plenty of instrumental music during and after dinner. To form an opinion or the slightest notion of her real character and capacity from such a formal affair as this, is manifestly impossible. Nobody expects from her any clever, amusing, or interesting talk; above all, no stranger can expect it. She is very civil to everybody, and there is more of frankness, cordiality, and good-humour in her manner than of dignity. She looks and speaks cheerfully: there was nothing to criticize, nothing particularly to admire. The whole thing seemed to be dull, perhaps unavoidably so, but still so dull that it is a marvel how anybody can like such a life. This was an unusually large party, and therefore more than usually dull and formal; but it is much the same sort of thing every day. Melbourne was not there, which I regretted, as I had some curiosity to see her Majesty and her Minister together.

September 7, 1838: Nothing to record of any sort or kind: London a desert; I went to-day to Windsor for a Council, was invited by the Queen (through Melbourne) to stay and dine, but made an excuse on the score of business, and luckily had a

plausible one to make. It is too much of a good thing to cool one's heels for some four hours and a half in order to be boxed for three more in the evening, and then end with a nocturnal jaunt to town. To sit at the Royal table, and play at shilling whist with the Duchess of Kent, are great honours, but *le jeu ne vaut pas la chandelle.* The King and Queen of the Belgians are there.

That the Queen was not always easy as a hostess could scarcely be denied:

September 17, 1841: . . . At dinner she had the Duke next to her (his deaf ear unluckily) and talked to him a good deal. After dinner she spoke to Aberdeen and then to Peel, who could not help putting himself into his accustomed attitude of a dancing master giving a lesson. She would like him better if he would keep his legs still. When we went into the drawing room Melbourne's chair was gone, and she had already given orders to the lord-in-waiting to put all the Ministers down to whist, so that there was no possibility of any conversation, and she sat all the evening at her round table with Lady De la Warr on one side and Lady Portman on the other, perhaps well enough for a beginning, but too stupid if intended to last. The Queen has no conversation whatever, has never been used to converse with anybody but Melbourne and with him always either on business, or on trifles. She takes no interest in such miscellaneous topics as circulate in general society. There was no general conversation. The natural thing would have been to get the Duke of Wellington to narrate some of the events of his life, which are to the last degree interesting, but this never seems to have crossed her mind.

It must not be forgotten that she was surrounded by pitfalls:

July 30, 1837: Madame de Lieven told me yesterday that she had an audience of the Queen, who was very civil and gracious, but timid and embarrassed, and talked of nothing but commonplaces. Her Majesty had probably been told that the Princess was an *intrigante*, and was afraid of committing herself.

September 15, 1838: Yesterday again at Windsor for a Council. I had made up my mind not to stay if invited, and meant to hasten away; but before I could do so Melbourne came after me and said, "You will stay here? the Queen desired me to

ask you." I said I had no evening dress, had come by the railroad, and walked from Slough; could not assume that I should be asked, and did not know what to do. He said, "She meant it as a civility, and thought you would like it." There was a sort of reproach conveyed in the tone, and that induced me to say, "So I should if I had only known of it, but as it is I can send for my things if you like." He ended by desiring I would do what I liked best myself, promised that he would take care the Queen was not offended, and that nobody else would know anything of the matter. I accordingly resolved to go, and went away with Lord Albemarle. My mind misgave me, and I had a great mind to stay, especially as Lord Albemarle told me they did not mean to turn me out after dinner, but that sleeping there was a matter of course. Then I was sorry I had not stayed, which I might just as well have done, for I had nothing else to do. At these Councils we meet in common morning dress, which we used not to do. The fact was, I was provoked that they did not give me notice (which certainly they might as well have done), and at the notion that the invitation was only meant to extend to dinner and not to bed, and this I considered as a sort of affront, and took it in dudgeon, and so I was fool enough to come away, when I should have on the whole preferred staying, not that I care about Court, but it is as well to see the whole thing for once.

It was thus only at the third invitation that Greville agreed to go to Windsor. And certainly no official had less reason than he to complain of the courtesy extended to him:

December 15, 1838: Went on Wednesday to a Council at Windsor, and after the Council was invited to stay that night; rode with the Queen, and after riding Melbourne came to me and said her Majesty wished me to stay the next day also. This was very gracious and very considerate, because it was done for the express purpose of showing that she was not displeased at my not staying when asked on a former occasion, and as she can have no object whatever in being civil to me, it was a proof of her good-nature and thoughtfulness about other people's little vanities, even those of the most insignificant. Accordingly I remained till Friday morning, when I went with the rest of her suite to see the hounds throw off, which she herself saw for the

nrst time. The Court is certainly not gay, but it is perhaps impossible that any Court should be gay where there is no social equality; where some ceremony, and a continual air of deference and respect must be observed, there can be no ease, and without ease there can be no real pleasure. The Queen is natural, good-humoured, and cheerful, but still she is Queen, and by her must the social habits and the tone of conversation be regulated, and for this she is too young and inexperienced. She sits at a large round table, her guests around it, and Melbourne always in a chair beside her, where two mortal hours are consumed in such conversation as can be found; which appears to be, and really is, very uphill work. This, however, is the only bad part of the whole; the rest of the day is passed without the slightest constraint, trouble, or annoyance to anybody; each person is at liberty to employ himself or herself as best pleases them, though very little is done in common, and in this respect Windsor is totally unlike any other place. There is none of the sociability which makes the agreeableness of an English country house; there is no room in which the guests assemble, sit, lounge, and talk as they please and when they please; there is a billiard table, but in such a remote corner of the Castle that it might as well be in the town of Windsor; and there is a library well stocked with books, but hardly accessible, imperfectly warmed, and only tenanted by the librarian: it is a mere library, too, unfurnished, and offering none of the comforts and luxuries of a habitable room. There are two breakfast rooms, one for the ladies and the guests, and the other for the equerries, but when the meal is over everybody disperses. and nothing but another meal reunites the company, so that, in fact, there is no society whatever, little trouble, little etiquette, but very little resource or amusement.

The life which the Queen leads is this: she gets up soon after eight o'clock, breakfasts in her own room, and is employed the whole morning in transacting business; she reads all the despatches, and has every matter of interest and importance in every department laid before her. At eleven or twelve Melbourne comes to her and stays an hour, more or less, according to the business he may have to transact. At two, she arrives with a large suite (and she likes to have it numerous); Melbourne always rides on her left hand, and the equerry in waiting

generally on her right; she rides for two hours along the road, and the greater part of the time at a full gallop; after riding she amuses herself for the rest of the afternoon with music and singing, playing, romping with children, if there are any in the Castle (and she is so fond of them that she generally contrives to have some there), or in any other way she fancies. The hour of dinner is nominally half-past seven o'clock, soon after which time the guests assemble, but she seldom appears till near eight. The lord in waiting comes into the drawing room and instructs each gentleman which lady he is to take into dinner. When the guests are all assembled, the Queen comes in, preceded by the gentlemen of her household, and followed by the Duchess of Kent and all her ladies; she speaks to each lady, bows to the men, and goes immediately into the dining room. She generally takes the arm of the man of the highest rank, but on this occasion she went with Mr. Stephenson, the American Minister (though he has no rank), which was very wisely done. Melbourne invariably sits on her left, no matter who may be there; she remains at table the usual time, but does not suffer the men to sit long after her, and we were summoned to coffee in less than a quarter of an hour. In the drawing room she never sits down till the men make their appearance. Coffee is served to them in the adjoining room, and then they go into the drawing room, when she goes round and says a few words to each (*judging from what fell to my own share*) of the most trivial nature, all however very civil and cordial in manner and expression. When this little ceremony is over, the Duchess of Kent's whist table is arranged, and then the round table is marshalled, Melbourne invariably sitting on the left hand of the Queen and remaining there without moving till the evening is at an end. At about half-past eleven she goes to bed, or whenever the Duchess has played her usual number of rubbers, and the band have performed all the pieces on their list for the night. This is the whole history of her day: she orders and regulates every detail herself, she knows where everybody is lodged in the Castle, settles about the riding or driving, and enters into every particular with minute attention. But while she personally gives her orders to her various attendants, and does everything that is civil to all the inmates of the Castle (*with the exception of Baroness Lehzen*) she really has nothing to do with anybody but

Melbourne, and with him she passes (if not in *tête-a-tête* yet in intimate communication) more hours than any two people, in any relation of life, perhaps ever do pass together besides. He is at her side for at least six hours every day—an hour in the morning, two on horseback, one at dinner, and two in the evening. This monopoly is certainly not judicious; it is not altogether consistent with social usage, and it leads to an infraction of those rules of etiquette which it is better to observe with regularity at Court. But it is more peculiarly inexpedient with reference to her own future enjoyment, for if Melbourne should be compelled to resign, her privation will be the more bitter on account of the exclusiveness of her intimacy with him. Accordingly, her terror when any danger menaces the Government, her nervous apprehension at any appearance of change, affect her health, and upon one occasion during the last session she actually fretted herself into an illness at the notion of their going out. It must be owned that her feelings are not unnatural, any more than those which Melbourne entertains towards her. His manner to her is perfect, always respectful, and never presuming upon the extraordinary distinction he enjoys; hers to him is simple and natural, indicative of the confidence she reposes in him, and of her lively taste for his society, but not marked by any unbecoming familiarity. Interesting as his position is, and flattered, gratified, and touched as he must be by the confiding devotion with which she places herself in his hands, it is still marvellous that he should be able to overcome the force of habit so completely as to endure the life he leads. Month after month he remains at the Castle, submitting to this daily routine: of all men he appeared to be the last to be broken in to the trammels of a Court, and never was such a revolution seen in anybody's occupations and habits. Instead of indolently sprawling in all the attitudes of luxurious ease, he is always sitting bolt upright; his free-and-easy language interlarded with "damns" is carefully guarded and regulated with the strictest propriety, and he has exchanged the good talk of Holland House for the trivial, laboured, and wearisome inanities of the Royal circle.

December 24, 1837: . . . The Queen went to the House yesterday without producing any sensation. There was the usual crowd to look at the finery of carriages, horses, Guards, &c.,

but not a hat raised nor a voice heard: the people of England seem inclined to hurrah no more.

May 7, 1838: . . . There has been much foolish chatter about the Coronation, and whether there should be a banquet or no; the Tories calling out for one because the Whig Government have settled that there should not be any. The Duke of Wellington, as usual, sensible, and above such nonsense, says it will all do very well, and that the Palace of Westminster having been destroyed by fire, a banquet and procession would not be feasible, as there exist no apartments in which the arrangements could be made.

June 27, 1838: There was never anything seen like the state of this town; it is as if the population had been on a sudden quintupled; the uproar, the confusion, the crowd, the noise, are indescribable. Horsemen, footmen, carriages squeezed, jammed, intermingled, the pavement blocked up with timbers, hammering and knocking, and falling fragments stunning the ears and threatening the head; not a mob here and there, but the town all mob, thronging, bustling, gaping, and gazing at everything, at anything, or at nothing; the park one vast encampment, with banners floating on the tops of the tents, and still the roads are covered, the railroads loaded with arriving multitudes. From one end of the route of the Royal procession to the other, from the top of Piccadilly to Westminster Abbey, there is a vast line of scaffolding; the noise, the movement, the restlessness are incessant and universal; in short, it is very curious, but uncommonly tiresome, and the sooner it is over the better. There has been a grand bother about the Ambassadors forming part of the Royal procession. They all detest it, think they ought not to have been called upon to assist, and the poor representatives of the smaller Courts do not at all fancy the expense of fine equipages, or the mortification of exhibiting mean ones. This arrangement was matter of negotiation for several days, and (the Lord knows why) the Government pertinaciously insisted on it. Public opinion has declared against it, and now they begin to see that they have done a very foolish thing, odious to the Corps Diplomatique and unpleasing to the people.

June 29, 1838: The Coronation (which, thank God, is over) went off very well. The day was fine, without heat or rain—

the innumerable multitude which thronged the streets orderly and satisfied. The appearance of the Abbey was beautiful, particularly the benches of the peeresses, who were blazing with diamonds. The entry of Soult was striking. He was saluted with a murmur of curiosity and applause as he passed through the nave, and nearly the same as he advanced along the choir. His appearance is that of a veteran warrior, and he walked alone, with his numerous suite following at a respectful distance, preceded by heralds and ushers, who received him with marked attention, more certainly than any of the other Ambassadors. The Queen looked very diminutive, and the effect of the procession itself was spoilt by being too crowded; there was not interval enough between the Queen and the Lords and others going before her. The Bishop of London (Blomfield) preached a very good sermon. The different actors in the ceremonial were very imperfect in their parts, and had neglected to rehearse them. Lord John Thynne, who officiated for the Dean of Westminster, told me that nobody knew what was to be done except the Archbishop and himself (who had rehearsed), Lord Willoughby (who is experienced in these matters), and the Duke of Wellington, and consequently there was a continual difficulty and embarrassment, and the Queen never knew what she was to do next. They made her leave her chair and enter into St. Edward's Chapel before the prayers were concluded, much to the discomfiture of the Archbishop. She said to John Thynne, "Pray tell me what I am to do, for they don't know"; and at the end, when the orb was put into her hand, she said to him, "What am I to do with it?" "Your Majesty is to carry it, if you please, in your hand." "Am I?" she said; "it is very heavy." The ruby ring was made for her little finger instead of the fourth, on which the rubric prescribes that it should be put. When the Archbishop was to put it on, she extended the former, but he said it must be on the latter. She said it was too small, and she could not get it on. He said it was right to put it there, and, as he insisted, she yielded, but had first to take off her other rings, and then this was forced on, but it hurt her very much, and as soon as the ceremony was over she was obliged to bathe her finger in iced water in order to get it off. The noise and confusion were very great when the medals were thrown about by Lord Surrey, everybody scrambling with all their

might and main to get them, and none more vigorously than the Maids of Honour. There was a great demonstration of applause when the Duke of Wellington did homage. Lord Rolle, who is between eighty and ninety, fell down as he was getting up the steps of the throne. Her first impulse was to rise, and when afterwards he came again to do homage she said, "May I not get up and meet him?" and then rose from the throne and advanced down one or two of the steps to prevent his coming up, an act of graciousness and kindness which made a great sensation. It is, in fact, the remarkable union of naïveté, kindness, nature, good-nature, with propriety and dignity, which makes her so admirable and so endearing to those about her, as she certainly is. I have been repeatedly told that they are all warmly attached to her, but that all feel the impossibility of for a moment losing sight of the respect which they owe her. She never ceases to be a Queen, but is always the most charming, cheerful, obliging, unaffected Queen in the world. The procession was very handsome, and the Extraordinary Ambassadors produced some gorgeous equipages. This sort of procession is incomparably better than the old ceremonial which so much fuss was made about, for the banquet would only have benefited the privileged few and the rich, and for one person who would have witnessed the procession on the platform five hundred enjoyed a sight of this. In fact, the thing best worth seeing was the town itself, and the countless multitudes through which the procession passed. The Chancellor of the Exchequer told me that he had been informed £200,000 had been paid for seats alone, and the number of people who have flocked into London has been estimated at five hundred thousand. It is said that a million have had a sight of the show in one way or another. These numbers are possibly exaggerated, but they really were prodigious. From Buckingham Palace to Westminster Abbey, by the way they took, which must be two or three miles in length, there was a dense mass of people; the seats and benches were all full, every window was occupied, the roofs of the houses were covered with spectators, for the most part well dressed, and, from the great space through which they were distributed, there was no extraordinary pressure, and consequently no room for violence or ill-humour. In the evening I met Prince Esterhazy and asked him what the foreigners said.

He replied that they admired it all very much: "Strogonoff and the others don't like you, but they feel it, and it makes a great impression on them; in fact, nothing can be seen like it in any other country." I went into the park, where the fair was going on; a vast multitude, but all of the lower orders; not very amusing. The great merit of this Coronation is, that so much has been done for the people: to amuse and interest *them* seems to have been the principal object.

July 3, 1838: I was at the ball at Court last night to which hundreds would have given hundreds to go, and from which I would have gladly stayed away: all was very brilliant and very tiresome.

On the Coronation, Greville's characteristic comment was to inscribe in his Journal a stanza from Coleridge's "Ode to Tranquillity," adding "my own thoughts about myself."