CHAPTER LXXXVI

KING EDWARD'S BOYHOOD

A QUEEN's Most Excellent Majesty grows day by day on the mind that is invested with it.' Victoria was becoming a power upon her throne.

September 22, 1840: . . . She has just made a fresh regulation as to the precedence of Ministers Plenipotentiary taking from them that which she before gave them, and reducing them to their ancient places, that is giving them no place but what their individual rank entitles them to, and making them as Ministers go after all peers. (Note: This is erroneous, they come after Dukes and Duchesses, but before all others.)

July 14, 1846: Meanwhile the Queen is evidently out of humour, and in various little ways evinces her sentiments. There has been a sort of squabble about some of the appointments; not that anybody has been forced upon her, but she took umbrage at some intention she chose to fancy there was, to propose persons disagreeable to her, which in fact was only an ebullition of ill-humour. The simple truth is that she can't endure any of these people, John Russell especially, and she is miserable at losing Peel and still more Aberdeen.

London, August 28, 1845: . . . He [F. Lamb] said she was often positive and took strange notions into her head, and that one of the greatest difficulties he had ever had with her was to get her to give the Garter to the Duke of Sutherland. I was very much surprised and asked why. He said partly because she disliked the Duchess of Sutherland and partly because she fancied the Duke was already too great with his riches and magnificence and she did not like to aggrandize him. (Note: He said he never could get this done, till he spoke to Albert, and then it was done directly.) . . . Rather curious and what few would believe for she is by no way of being very intimate with the Duchess, who no doubt with all her family fancy the Queen is very fond of her.

August 14, 1849: . . . I saw Lord Lansdowne last night, just returned from Ireland, having had an escape on the railroad, for the train ran off the rail. He said nothing could surpass the success of the Queen's visit in every respect; every circumstance favourable, no drawbacks or mistakes, all persons and parties pleased, much owing to the tact of Lord Clarendon, and the care he had bestowed on all the arrangements and details, which made it all go off so admirably. The Queen herself was delighted, and appears to have played her part uncommonly well. Clarendon of course was overjoyed at the complete success at what was his own plan, and satisfied with the graciousness and attention of the Court to him, which he was not before. In the beginning, and while the details were in preparation, he was considerably disgusted at the petty difficulties that were made, and at what he thought the want of consideration for him they evinced, but he is satisfied now. Lord Lansdowne said the departure was quite affecting, and he could not see it without being moved; and he thinks beyond doubt that this visit will produce permanent good effects in Ireland.

It was by sea, not rail, that the Queen went to Scotland:

September 24, 1842: . . . Peel described the Scotch tour as very nervous, inasmuch as they went through all the disturbed districts, but that loyalty and interest in seeing the Queen triumphed over every other feeling and consideration, and all went off as well as possible.

Adolphus Fitzclarence told me nothing could be more agreeable and amiable than she was, and the Prince too, on board the yacht, conversing all the time with perfect ease and good humour, and on all subjects, taking great interest and very curious about everything in the ship, dining on deck in the midst of the sailors, making them dance, talking to the boatswain, and, in short, doing everything that was popular and ingratiating. Her chief fault, in little things and in great, seems to be impatience; in sea phrase, she always wants to *go ahead;* she can't bear contradiction nor to be thwarted. She was put out because she could not get quicker to the end of her voyage, and land as soon as she wished. She insisted on landing as soon as it was possible, and would not wait till the authorities were ready and the people assembled to receive her. An hour or two

of delay would have satisfied everybody, and though it might be unreasonable to expect this, as Peel said it was, it would have been wise to have conceded it. Adolphus says there was very alarming excitement in the town for a little while, and much discontent among the crowds who had come from distant parts, and who had paid large sums for seats and windows to see her go by.

September 16, 1845: On Saturday [14th] we went to Osborne House, Isle of Wight, to a Council; special train to Gosport in about two hours and a quarter, Black Eagle Steamer to East Cowes, very agreeable trip. Osborne a miserable place and such a vile house that the Lords of the Council had no place to remain in but the Entrance Hall, before the Council. Fortunately the weather was fine, so we walked about, looking at the new house the Queen is building. It is very ugly and the whole concern wretched enough. They will spend first and last a great deal of money there, but it is her own money and not the nation's. I know not where she gets it, but Graham told me she had money. . . . Nothing can exceed the universal indignation felt here by people of every description at the brutal and stupid massacre of the deer, which Albert perpetrated, and at which she assisted. It has been severely commented on in several of the papers, and met by a very clumsy (and false) attempt to persuade people that she was shocked and annoyed. No such thing appeared and nothing compelled her to see it. But the truth is her sensibilities are not acute, and though she is not at all ill-natured, perhaps the reverse, she is hard-hearted, selfish, and self-willed.

" *May 10, 1851:* On the day of the opening of the Great Exhibition [held in what is now the Crystal Palace] I went into the park instead of the inside, being satisfied with fine sights in the way of processions and royal magnificence, and thinking it more interesting and curious to see the masses and their behaviour. It was a wonderful spectacle to see the countless multitudes, streaming along in every direction, and congregated upon each bank of the Serpentine down to the water's edge; no soldiers, hardly any policemen to be seen, and yet all so orderly and good-humoured. The success of everything was complete, the joy and exultation of the Court unbounded. The Queen wrote a touching letter to John Russell, full of delight at the success

of her husband's undertaking and at the warm reception which her subjects gave her. Since that day all the world has been flocking to the Crystal Palace, and we hear nothing but expressions of wonder and admiration. The *frondeurs* are all come round, and those who abused it most vehemently now praise it as much.

June 8, 1851: . . . M. Thiers has just been over here for a week. He came to see the Exhibition, and was lodged at Ellice's house. He was indefatigable while he was here, excessively amused and happy, and is gone back enchanted at his reception in the world, and full of admiration of all he saw. He was met by great and general cordiality, invited everywhere, had long conversations with Palmerston, John Russell, and Aberdeen, dined with Disraeli to meet Stanley, who, however, did not come, and he was the only conspicuous man he missed seeing. He was presented to the Queen at the Exhibition. Hearing he was there (for he usually went early every morning like herself) she sent for him, was very gracious, and both she and the Prince talked to him a good while. He talked very conservative language while he was here, and did not abuse anybody.

July 5, 1851: . . . The question that most interests the public is that of the retention or removal of the Crystal Palace. Curiously enough, the Prince, whose child it is, and who was so earnestly bent on keeping it in existence, has now turned round, and is for demolishing it.

June 22, 1858: . . . Among the events of last week one of the most interesting was the Queen's visit to Birmingham, where she was received by the whole of that enormous population with an enthusiasm which is said to have exceeded all that was ever displayed in her former receptions at Manchester or elsewhere. It is impossible not to regard such manifestations as both significant and important. They evince a disposition in those masses of the population in which, if anywhere, the seeds of Radicalism are supposed to lurk.

During the Crimean Era, we have this:

August 4, 1856: . . . Not a bit of news, the Queen still going on reviewing, she has a military mania on her.

London, September 15, 1849: On Monday, the 3rd, on returning from Hillingdon, I found a summons from John Russell to

be at Balmoral on Wednesday 5th, at half-past two, for a Council, to order a prayer for relief against the cholera. No time was to be lost, so I started by the five o'clock train, dined at Birmingham, went on by the mail train to Crewe, where I slept; breakfasted the next morning at Crewe Hall, which I had never seen, and went on by the express to Perth, which I reached at half-past twelve. I started on Wednesday morning at half-past six, and arrived at Balmoral exactly at half-past two. It is a beautiful road from Perth to Balmoral, particularly from Blairgowrie to the Spital of Glenshee, and thence to Braemar. Much as I dislike Courts and all that appertains to them, I am glad to have made this expedition, and to have seen the Queen and Prince in their Highland retreat, where they certainly appear to great advantage. The place is very pretty, the house very small. [Balmoral Castle was not yet built and there was simply the residence of a Scotch laird.] They live there without any state whatever; they live not merely like private gentlefolks, but like very small gentlefolks, small house, small rooms, small establishment. There are no soldiers, and the whole guard of the Sovereign and the whole Royal Family is a single policeman, who walks about the grounds to keep off impertinent intruders or improper characters. Their attendants consisted of Lady Douro and Miss Dawson, Lady and Maid of Honour; George Anson and Gordon; Birch, the Prince of Wales's tutor; and Miss Hildyard, the governess of the children. They live with the greatest simplicity and ease. The Prince shoots every morning, returns to luncheon, and then they walk and drive. The Queen is running in and out of the house all day long, and often goes about alone, and walks into the cottages, and sits down and chats with the old women. I never before was in society with the Prince, or had any conversation with him. On Thursday morning John Russell and I were sitting together after breakfast, when he came in and sat down with us, and we conversed for about three quarters of an hour. I was greatly struck with him. I saw at once (what I had always heard) that he is very intelligent and highly cultivated, and moreover that he has a thoughtful mind, and thinks of subjects worth thinking about. He seemed very much at his ease, very gay, pleasant, and without the least stiffness or air of dignity. After luncheon we went to the Highland gathering at Braemar

—the Queen, the Prince, four children and two ladies in one pony carriage; John Russell, Mr. Birch, Miss Hildyard, and I in another; Anson and Gordon on the box; one groom, no more. The gathering was at the old Castle of Braemar, and a pretty sight enough. We returned as we came, and then everybody strolled about till dinner. We were only nine people, and it was all very easy and really agreeable, the Queen in very good humour and talkative; the Prince still more so, and talking very well; no form, and everybody seemed at their ease. In the evening we withdrew to the only room there is besides the dining room, which serves for billiards, library (hardly any books in it), and drawing room. The Queen and Prince and her ladies and Gordon soon went back to the dining room, where they had a Highland dancing master, who gave them lessons in reels. We (John Russell and I) were not admitted to this exercise, so we played at billiards. In process of time they came back, when there was a little talk, and soon after they went to bed. So much for my visit to Balmoral. I was asked to stay there the first night, but was compelled to remain there the second, as the Braemar gathering took all the horses, and it was impossible to get away. The Prince was very civil about my staying when this was explained to him.

On Balmoral, Greville added (September 27, 1857), "Dinner formal and tiresome, evening dull. Queen came and said a few words to me just as she was retiring for the night."

January 18, 1845: . . . I returned a few days ago from the Grange, where I met Dr. Buckland and Archdeacon Wilberforce; the latter a very quick, lively, and agreeable man, who is in favour at Court, and has the credit of seeking to be Preceptor to the Prince of Wales, an office to which I should prefer digging at a canal, or breaking stones in the road, so intolerable would be the slavery of it. Buckland gave us a great dose of geology, not uninteresting, but too much of it. Lord Ashburton was in great force, and it is droll to see the supreme contempt which he and Palmerston entertain for each other.

Brocket, January 22, 1848: . . . Lady Beauvale told me some anecdotes of the Royal children, which may some day have an interest when time has tested and developed their characters. The Princess Royal is very clever, strong in body and in mind;

the Prince of Wales weaker and more timid, and the Queen says he is a stupid boy; but the hereditary and unfailing antipathy of our Sovereigns to their Heirs Apparent seems thus early to be taking root, and the Queen does not much like the child. He seems too to have an incipient propensity to that sort of romancing which distinguished his uncle, George IV. The child told Lady Beauvale that during their cruise he was very nearly thrown overboard, and was proceeding to tell her how, when the Queen overheard him, sent him off with a flea in his ear, and told her it was totally untrue.

April 4, 1853: . . . Lady Lyttleton, whom I met at Althorp, told me a great deal about the Queen and her children; nothing particularly interesting. She said the Queen was very fond of them, but severe in her manner, and a strict disciplinarian in her family. She described the Prince of Wales to be extremely shy and timid, with very good principles, and particularly an exact observer of truth, not clever; the Princess Royal is remarkably intelligent. I wrote this because it will hereafter be curious to see how the boy grows up, and what sort of performance follows this promise, though I shall not live to see it. She spoke in very high terms of the Queen herself, of the Prince, and of the simplicity and happiness of her private and domestic life.

December 12, 1858: . . . He entered upon this occasion into many details concerning the education of his children and expressed something like regret or doubt about what he called the "aggressive" system, that the Queen had followed toward them. Clarendon said,

"Your Royal Highness must permit me to express my thoughts with freedom, or I had better not say a word to you on the subject."

The Prince acquiesced, when he resumed by a strong protestation against the word "aggressive" as totally inapplicable to any sound system of education.

"I," he said, "have six children, and after all our children are much like Royal children, and require the same treatment. Now we have never used severity in any shape or way, never in their lives had occasion to punish any of them, and we have found this mode of bringing them up entirely successful."

The Prince said to Clarendon what Stockmar had before said,

that he had always been embarrassed by the alarm he felt lest the Queen's mind should be excited by any opposition to her will and that in regard to the children the disagreeable office of punishment had always devolved upon him. Clarendon said all that he had promised Stockmar he would in backing him up. The Prince listened very complacently to all he said, and when he went away the next day, they both took leave of him in a manner which showed that they had taken all he had said in very good part, and left him with the impression that he had done much good.

He told me that the Prince himself, in spite of his natural good sense, had been very injudicious in his way of treating his children and that the Prince of Wales resented very much the severity which he had experienced. The Queen, it seems, was never really fond of the Princess Royal because she thought her ugly and unlike most mothers who think their children better looking than they are, the Queen was always finding fault with her daughter's looks, and complaining of her being ugly and coarse very unjustly and in which Clarendon said he had often contradicted her Majesty.

September 17, 1855: . . . He [Clarendon] thinks the Queen's severe way of treating her children very injudicious and that the Prince will be difficult to manage as he has evidently a will of his own and is rather positive and opinionated, and inclined to lay down the law; but he is clever and his manners are good. One day in the carriage some subject was discussed, when the Prince said something which Clarendon contradicted to which he replied, "at all events, that is my opinion," when Clarendon said, "then Your Royal Highness's opinion is quite wrong," which seemed to surprise him a good deal. Another day he told him what he ought to do or say and added that the Queen had commanded him to instruct his Royal Highness who said that he was aware of it, the Queen having told him so herself.

London, November 4, 1858: . . . I hear the Queen has written a letter to the Prince of Wales announcing to him his emancipation from parental authority and control, and that it is one of the most admirable letters that ever were penned. She tells him that he may have thought the rule they adopted for his education a severe one, but that his welfare was their only object, and well knowing to what seductions of flattery he would

eventually be exposed, they wished to prepare and strengthen his mind against them, that he was now to consider himself his own master, and that they should never intrude any advice upon him, although always ready to give it him whenever he thought fit to seek it. It was a very long letter, all in that tone, and it seems to have made a profound impression on the Prince, and to have touched his feelings to the quick. He brought it to Gerald Wellesley in floods of tears, and the effect it produced is a proof of the wisdom which dictated its composition.