appeal most to our sympathies are written by Agnes — notably the lives of Anne Boleyn, Katherine Howard, Queen Elizabeth, and Mary of Modena. To our intellectual Queen, Victoria of immortal memory, the two styles were at once apparent, and it would appear that she was the first person to discover that two very different brains had been at work in the production of the "Queenly" volumes.

The temperaments of the two sisters were as different as the styles of their writing. It is true that in their studies they took an equal delight, but while Elizabeth was the more thoughtful student, it was Agnes whose vivid imagination enabled her to become the eloquent and pathetic writer who has redeemed alike Mary Stuart and Elizabeth from unmerited obloquy, and whose accounts of Anne Boleyn and Katharine Howard, while condoning neither their frailties nor their misdoings, touch upon them with such womanly compassion that few can study their lives without feeling some degree of pity and emotion.

Probably the highly-strung nature of Agnes was more capable of sympathy than was that of Elizabeth, whose physical strength was unusual, and whose mental grip included mathematics and cognate subjects which were a terror to her younger sister.

The Strickland family were entirely educated

by their parents; and, though nowadays such a method of education is considered as undesirable as it often is impracticable, they had no reason to regret it.

Mr Strickland appears to have been somewhat of a "martinet," for, unlike so many literary aspirants who were able to browse at will in the libraries of their fathers and friends, these young people were only allowed books "of a superior order" under his own careful jurisdiction.

By accident, however, Shakespeare fell into their hands, and we may feel sure that never was the "immortal bard" more diligently read and more warmly appreciated than by these precocious children, who had been brought up upon such heavy diet as 'Rapin's History of England,' Harrison's 'Survey of London,' and Plutarch's 'Lives.'

It seems surprising that mental indigestion, not to say nausea, did not result from such solid reading; but the powers that could assimilate and derive inspiration therefrom must surely have been abnormal.

Rapin lies before us now— two ponderous folio tomes— a book of reference to which no one refers; a mighty work, indeed, but the covers of which are better worn than its pages. Strange "milk for babes," one would think; but those were pre-kindergarten days, when the path of learning lay narrowly between walls and fences rather than

amid flowery ways, where all that is beautiful in art or literature lies on either hand waiting to be gathered. The works of Milton, Gray, and Collins are not those which a modern parent would select as gift-books for a child of twelve, but the general result was satisfactory, so that we must not criticise too harshly a mental training which appears somewhat drastic.

Reading, with Agnes, was not only a pursuit but a passion, though fortunately she was also devoted to needlework and music and flowers, so that country life was never dull to her, and time never lay heavily on any of the group. Some such homes may still exist, but in these days they must be yearly decreasing, for outside influences are now so early brought to bear upon child-life, that few indeed are the parents who could find it possible to bring up their children in the self-sufficing fashion of last century.

The spirit of change has permeated even the remotest villages. To "go with the times" is often only a euphemism for going to the devil; but it seems inevitable. Public opinion, public schools, public houses— all is public now. Is this all for the better? It may be so; but when the unruly force of some unlooked-for "Movement" threatens to overthrow all our cherished traditions, we think with regret of the quieter days when life was not lived at such high pressure,

and when boys and girls did not tire of it so quickly. It is the *pace* that kills. Is it not a fact that in 1800 suicide was a rarer thing among young people than it is now, when time after time in the columns of our daily papers we read of mere children plunging into the "Great Perhaps," either because of their inadequate preparation for the race which we call Living, or from a pathetic satiety of life as they have found it?

> "They know the grief of man, but not the wisdom;
> They sink in man's despair, without its calm—
> Are slaves without the liberty in Christdom,
> Are martyrs by the pang without the palm."

"Wonderful and horrible things are committed in the land," but the most wonderful thing of all, and the most horrible, is that the "people love to have it so."

Early in her teens Agnes went on a visit to a friend of her mother, who afforded her many hours of romantic excitement by the loan of such works as 'The Scottish Chiefs,' 'The Simple Story,' and 'The Moral Tales.' The Misses Porter, Mrs Inchbald, and Miss Edgeworth were "writers of merit" who could safely be trusted to provide healthy reading; but an ordinary High School girl of to-day scarcely knows their names, and would think their writings slow and dull, for the form and fashion of literature varies as much as does that of dress.

During this visit it is recorded that one morning Agnes had carried out her hostess's baby for a walk, when a swarm of bees settled upon her, which, however, departed as suddenly as it had come. The old nurse, who saw the incident, warmly congratulated her, not upon her escape, but upon the good luck which the incident would bring to her in the future. This ancient Roman superstition is, we are told, naturalised in Suffolk, but it is interesting to notice that Emerson, in his masterly essay on Plato, alludes to it, so that it had evidently found its way across the ocean to New England with the Puritan fathers, who were mostly emigrants from our eastern counties.

Although Reydon was endeared to all the family by many associations, it is probable that it was no great hardship to the younger members when Mr Strickland found it necessary, owing to financial complications, to live in Norwich during a portion of every year. It was at this time that the future historian made her first appearance in print—albeit anonymously; and it is somewhat remarkable that this, her first effort, should have been a monody upon the death of the Princess Charlotte of Wales, the presumptive heiress of the English throne, which brought home to the nation in sternest guise the realisation that Death is no respecter of persons.

Romance in Royal circles is considered somewhat

of an anomaly; but in the case of this "amiable and high-spirited" young princess it would appear to have been an integral part of her nature. Nothing would prevail upon her to encourage the suit of the hereditary Prince of Orange, although for a short time she consented to a betrothal which her father, the Prince Regent,— afterwards George IV.,— was most anxious to promote. Fate, in the shape of Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, had rendered the young lady impervious to any other attachment, and it is not to be wondered at that the Regent's wishes were disregarded by her, for his dislike of his daughter was a matter of notoriety, and his own matrimonial experiences had been singularly unfortunate.

Princess Charlotte evidently knew her own mind, and her father's consent having been given— albeit somewhat tardily— to her union with Leopold George Frederick, Prince of Coburg, the marriage was celebrated, within two months, on the 2nd of May 1816. After the wedding the bridegroom displayed himself to the admiring crowds "dressed in a blue coat and a star,"— a costume which strikes us as being scarcely more serviceable than that of the Samoan princess, of whom Dr George Kingsley says that "she was dressed solely in a most lovely mat"! There was a romantic flavour about the proceedings which speedily won for His Serene Highness the suffrages of Londoners generally;

and, as a nation, we have every reason to be thankful for a relationship which afforded to our own late Queen a counsellor both wise and kind. The happiness of the young couple was destined, however, to be very short. Eighteen months later, on the 6th of November 1817, "the fair-haired daughter of the Isles" lay dead. Her still-born son was born on the previous day, and she was reported as doing well; but twelve hours afterwards all was over. With great pomp they buried her at Windsor, and the husband of a year was left disconsolate.

In the early part of 1831 the Congress of Belgium offered him the crown, and the friendliness of England and Belgium was intensified by the courtesy and unostentatious kindliness which, when king of that country, he invariably showed to his young kinswoman Victoria.

Before us lies a quaint memorial card issued in 1817. In the centre is a medallion of the hapless

Princess Charlotte, while behind her in grimmest picturing stands a grinning spectre, lifting with skeleton fingers the crown from off her head. Old Time with his sickle sits on one side as if waiting, cynically, to see what next would happen, while on the other Britannia sits weeping. The old card is yellow with the passage of years, but underneath, in microscopic printing, we can still read the words which shadowed forth the sentiments of the hour.

A few lines from Miss Strickland's monody may be quoted at this point, as being interesting both from a historic and a biographic point of view.

"In vain arose the general prayer
That sought the nation's Grace to save,
So young, so virtuous, and so fair—
E'en Death's stern hand we thought might spare
Such victim from the grave.
A mother's anguish racked her frame,
But Heaven denied a mother's name,—
Not hers with dying tenderness
Her Britain's future king to bless.

'No smiling infant met her sight,
Repaying each maternal pain;
For ne'er to view the morning's light,
His eyes were closed in endless night—
Her life was given in vain.
Perchance it had been sweet to give
Her life to bid her infant live:
To bless him with her dying breath
Had softened e'en the pangs of death.

Mysterious are the ways of Fate,
Inscrutable and awful still;
And man is weak and God is great,
And lowly in this mortal state
We bow us to His will."

Such an event aroused even the passionate pity of Lord Byron, who in far-off Venice wrote with sad tenderness of the "mother of a moment"—"the love of millions" for whom, in deepest mourning, the nation wept.

That "Marquis Peu-a-peu," or "Monsieur Tout-doucement" as he was often called, should have been able to inspire ardent affection in the warm