flower garden as old (though I feel still little) Victoria of former days used to do."

There is a touch of sadness here—"my otherwise dull childhood ": no doubt the high-spirited, affectionate child must have yearned sorely for playmates; and that in spite of the care observed in the young Princess' education, and her mother's untiring and watchful love, the young heart must have had lonely hours, and she must often have regarded with feelings akin to envy the groups of happy children sporting under the trees.

There is a charming passage in a letter written by the Dowager Duchess of Coburg to the Duchess of Kent upon the Princess's eleventh birthday. "My blessings and good wishes for the day which gave you the sweet blossom of May! May God preserve and protect the valuable life of that lovely flower from all the changes that will beset her mind and heart. The rays of the sun are scorching at the height to which she may one day attain. It is only by the blessing of God that all the fine qualities He has put into that young soul can be kept pure and untarnished."

"Very seldom," as Dr. Macaulay informs us, "has a young mind and heart been more wisely and carefully cultivated, judging by results." He goes on to say, "What was the- progress of the training in those early years we do not know, and are not likely to know except by the publication of any records that may have been kept by the governesses and teachers of the Princess, especially by the late Baroness Lehzen, who was with her from childhood." If her correspondence or diary should ever see the light, we shall know more of the girlhood of the Queen.

How interesting her statement would be, may be inferred from a single recollection which she gave in a letter to the Queen as lately as December 2nd, 1867. This was long after the faithful governess had retired to spend the evening of her life in her own country.

"I ask your Majesty's leave," writes the Baroness, "to cite some remarkable words of your Majesty when only twelve years old, while the Regency Bill was still in progress. I then said to the Duchess of Kent that now for the first time your Majesty ought to know your place in the succession. Her Royal Highness agreed with me, and I put the genealogical table into the historical book. When Mr. Davys" (the Queen's instructor, afterwards Bishop of Peterborough) "was gone, the Princess opened, as usual, the book again, and seeing the additional paper, said, 'I never saw that before.' 'It was not thought necessary you should, Princess,' I answered. 'I see I am nearer the throne than I thought.' 'So it is, Madam,' I said. After some moments, the Princess resumed, 'Now, many a child would boast; but they don't know the difficulty. There is much splendour, but much responsibility.' The Princess, having lifted up the forefinger of her right hand, gave me that little hand, saying, 'I will be good, dear Lehzen; I will be good.' I then said, 'But your Aunt Adelaide is still young and may have children, and of course they will ascend the throne of their father William IV., and not you, Princess.' The Princess answered, 'And if that were so, I should never feel disappointed, for I know by the love my Aunt Adelaide bears me how fond she is of children.'"

One must surely allow that these were remarkable words to be spoken by a child of twelve; and in their calm seriousness they recall to our mind Mrs. Oliphant's pleasant description of the personal appearance of the young Princess. "I remember very distinctly," she says, "when I saw her first, being myself very young, how the calm, full look of her eyes impressed and affected me. Those eyes were very blue, serene, still, looking at you with a tranquil breadth of expression which somehow conveyed to your mind a feeling of unquestionable power and greatness, quite poetical in its serious simplicity. I do not suppose she was

at all aware of this, for the Queen does not take credit far being so calmly royal; but this is how she looked to a fanciful girl, seeing Her Majesty for the first time."

G. Barnett Smith, in his interesting "Life of the Queen," informs us that "the Duchess of Kent early familiarised her illustrious daughter with the features of her own country, interesting her in it by personal visits to its chief cities and towns." In this way they visited Birmingham, Worcester, Kenilworth, and Carnarvon, and other places, and accepted invitations to beautiful English country seats, such as Eaton Hall, Alton Towers, and Chatsworth.

In 1833 the Duchess and her daughter took up their residence at their beautiful seat of Norris Castle, Isle of Wight. It was here the young Princess first acquired her love of ships and the sea. Here we have another idyllic sketch, delightful in its simplicity. "A tourist on one occasion strolled into the old churchyard at Arreton, near Brading, to search out the grave of Elizabeth Wallbridge, the heroine of Legh Richmond's popular religious story, 'The Dairyman's Daughter.' Beside a grassy mound he discovered a lady and a young girl seated, the latter reading aloud in a full, melodious voice, the touching tale of the Christian maiden. The tourist turned away, and soon after was told by the sexton that the pilgrims to that humble grave were the Duchess of Kent and Princess Victoria."

When, in 1830, George IV. died and the Duke of Clarence, afterwards William IV., ascended the throne, it became necessary, we are told, "to provide for the contingency of the Princess Victoria's accession to the throne before attaining the age of eighteen, that being the period of her majority."

A Regency Bill was passed, and the Duchess of Kent was named guardian of the infant Princess and Regent of the Kingdom, assisted by a Council of Regency. A sum of £10,000 a year was voted, in addition to the original

annual grant of £6000, for the maintenance and support of the heiress presumptive.

The young Princess made her first appearance at Court on Queen Adelaide's birthday, on February 24th, 1831, when she was thirteen. We read that "she wore a dress of English blonde over white satin, a pearl necklace, and a rich diamond agrafe fastened the Madonna braids of her fair hair at the back of her head."

There was much comment and questioning at the absence of the heiress presumptive on the occasion of the coronation of William IV. and Queen Adelaide; but controversy was silenced by the statement that the Duchess of Kent had been anxious about her daughter's delicate health, and had obtained the King's sanction for her absence; and indeed, at the close of the Princess Victoria's fifteenth year, her condition gave general concern.

On August 30th, 1835, the Princess was confirmed in the Chapel Royal of St. James'. The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London officiated. The ceremony was private; only the King and Queen, the Duchess of Kent, the Duchess of Saxe-Weimar, and other members of the Royal Family were present. But the scene was a touching one, for during the Archbishop's pathetic and tender exhortation the Royal girl was deeply affected, her face was bathed in tears, and unable at last to restrain her emotions, she laid her head on her mother's shoulder and sobbed aloud.

In painful contrast to this affecting scene Greville gives us a singular account of the King's birthday dinner—when about a hundred persons were present, and among them the Duchess of Kent and the Princess Victoria, when the King delivered a most extraordinary speech. "I trust in God," he is reported to have said, "that my life may be spared for nine months longer, after which period, in the event of my death, no regency would take place. I should

then have the satisfaction of leaving the royal authority to the personal exercise of that young lady," pointing to the Princess, "the heiress-presumptive of the crown, and not in the hands of a person near me, who is surrounded by evil advisers, and who is herself incompetent to act with propriety in the station in which she would be placed." The King went on to complain of the manner in which the Princess had been kept away from Court and from the Drawing-room, and in a most peremptory manner commanded that the Princess should for the future appear at Court on all occasions. Greville adds that this awful philippic was uttered with a loud voice and an excited manner, and that though the King concluded with an affectionate allusion to the Princess, it created a most painful sensation. The Queen was in great distress, the young Princess burst into tears; as for the insulted Duchess, she said not a word, but announced her immediate departure.

One can only hope that the scene is exaggerated, but it is well known that the King frequently lost his temper, and that more than once he had vented his displeasure on his sister-in-law. A sort of reconciliation was on this occasion effected, and the Duchess was induced to remain at Windsor until the next day.

May 1836 was a memorable month for Princess Victoria, for it was then that she first saw her future husband.

The " little May flower" had always been an object of interest to her relatives in Coburg, and the idea of her marriage to one of her cousins had taken deep root in the family. The Prince used to relate that when he was a child of three years old his nurse always told him that he should marry the Queen, and that when he first thought of marrying at all, he always thought of her.

This idea was warmly encouraged by King Leopold, and his friend and adviser Baron Stockmar, but the latter