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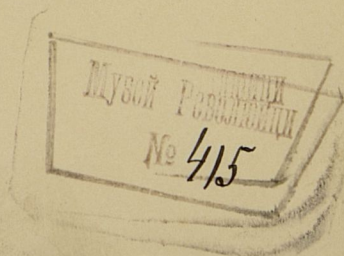
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THE
LETTERS OF QUEEN VICTORIA
VOL. II





H. M. Queen Victoria
1843

From the picture by F. Winterhalter at Windsor Castle

Amra. Victoria

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THE LETTERS OF QUEEN VICTORIA

A SELECTION FROM HER MAJESTY'S
CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE
YEARS 1837 AND 1861

PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY OF
HIS MAJESTY THE KING

EDITED BY ARTHUR CHRISTOPHER BENSON, M.A.
AND VISCOUNT ESHER, G.C.V.O., K.C.B.

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. II.

1844-1853

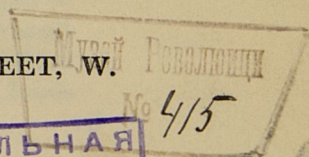
LONDON

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

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THE LETTERS OF
QUEEN VICTORIA

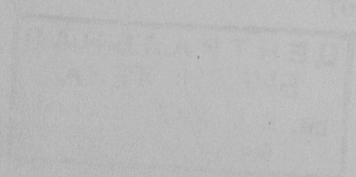
A SELECTION FROM HER MAJESTY'S
CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE
YEARS 1837 AND 1901

FORWARDED BY AUTHORITY OF
HER MAJESTY THE KING

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ERRATUM.

P. 1, line 12, Introductory Note. For “securities” read “stock of gold.”

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

TO CHAPTER XIII

10 THE new year (1844) opened with signs of improved trade, and a feeling of confidence, partly due to the friendly *entente* with France. In Ireland, soon after the collapse of the Clontarf meeting, O'Connell and some of his associates were indicted for seditious conspiracy, and convicted. The conviction was subsequently quashed on technical grounds, but O'Connell's political influence was at an end. In Parliament, owing chiefly to the exertions of Lord Ashley (afterwards Earl of Shaftesbury), an important Bill was passed restricting factory labour, and limiting its hours. The Bank Charter Act, separating the issue and banking departments, as well as regulating the note issue of the Bank of England in proportion to its securities, also became law. Meanwhile the dissensions in the Conservative party were increasing, and the Ministry were defeated on a motion made by their own supporters to extend the preferential treatment of colonial produce. With great difficulty the vote was rescinded and a crisis averted; but the Young England section of the Tory party were becoming more and more an embarrassment to the Premier. Towards the end of the year the new Royal Exchange was opened amid much ceremony by the Queen.

The services rendered by Sir Charles Napier in India were the subject of votes of thanks in both Houses, but shortly afterwards Lord Ellenborough, the Governor-General, was recalled by the Directors of the East India Company: their action was no doubt due to his overbearing methods and love of display, but it was disapproved by the Ministry, and Lord Ellenborough was accorded an Earldom.

During the year there was a recrudescence of the friction between this country and France, due partly to questions as to the right of search of foreign ships, partly to a *brochure* issued by the Prince de Joinville, a son of Louis Philippe, partly to the assumption of French sovereignty over Tahiti and the seizure of the English consul there by the French authorities. Reparation however was made, and the ill-feeling subsided sufficiently to enable the King of the French to visit Queen Victoria,—the first friendly visit ever paid by a French king to the Sovereign of England. Louis Philippe was cordially received in this country.

Another historic royal visit also took place in 1844, that of the Emperor Nicholas, who no doubt was so much impressed with his friendly reception, both by the Court and by Aberdeen, the Foreign Secretary, that nine years later he thought he could calculate on the support of England under Aberdeen (then Premier) in a scheme for the partition of Turkey. Lord Malmesbury, who a few years later became Foreign Secretary, states in his memoirs that during this visit, the Czar, Sir Robert Peel, the Duke of Wellington, and Lord Aberdeen "drew up and signed a Memorandum, the spirit and scope of which was to support Russia in her legitimate protectorship of the Greek religion and the Holy Shrines, and to do so without consulting France," but the Memorandum was in reality only one made by Nicholas of his recollection of the interview, and communicated subsequently to Lord Aberdeen.

No events of special interest took place in other parts of Europe; the condition of affairs in the Peninsula improved, though the announcement of the unfortunate marriage of the Queen Mother with the Duke of Rianzares was not of hopeful augury for the young Queen Isabella's future; as a matter of fact, the marriage had taken place some time previously.

CHAPTER XIII

1844

Queen Victoria to the King of the Belgians.

WINDSOR CASTLE, 9th January 1844.

MY DEAREST UNCLE,—I had the pleasure of receiving your kind letter of the 4th, which is written from Ardenne, where I grieve to see you are again gone without my beloved Louise.

Charlotte is the admiration of every one, and I wish much I could have seen the three dear children *en représentation*.

Our fat Vic or Pussette learns a verse of *Lamartine* by heart, which ends with “le tableau se déroule à mes pieds”; to show how well she had understood this difficult line which Mdle. Charier had explained to her, I must tell you the following *bon mot*. When she was riding on her pony, and looking at the cows and sheep, she turned to Mdle. Charier and said: “*Voilà le tableau qui se déroule à mes pieds.*” Is not this extraordinary for a little child of three years old? It is more like what a person of twenty would say. You have no notion *what* a knowing, and I am sorry to say *sly*, little rogue she is, and *so obstinate*. She and *le petit Frère* accompany us to dear old Claremont to-day; Alice remains here under Lady Lyttelton’s care. How sorry I am that you should have hurt your leg, and in such a provoking way; Albert says he remembers well your playing often with a pen-knife when you talked, and I remember it also, but it is really dangerous.

I am happy that the news from Paris are good; the really good understanding between our two Governments provokes the Carlists and Anarchists. Bordeaux¹ is not yet gone; I saw in a letter that it was *debated* in his presence whether he was on any favourable occasion *de se présenter en France!* Do you think that possible? Then again the papers say that there are fortifications being made on the coast of Normandy for fear of an invasion; is this so? These are many questions, but I hope you will kindly answer them, as they interest me. With Albert's love. Believe me, ever, your devoted Niece,

VICTORIA R.

Queen Victoria to the Earl of Aberdeen.

CLAREMONT, 10th January 1844.

The Queen understands that there is a negotiation with Sweden and Denmark pending about the cessation of their tribute to Morocco, likewise that Prince Metternich has sent a despatch condemning as unfair the understanding come to between us and France about the Spanish marriage;² that there is a notion of exchanging Hong Kong for a more healthy colony.

The Queen, taking a deep interest in all these matters, and feeling it her duty to do so, begs Lord Aberdeen to keep her always well informed of what is on the *tapis* in his Department.

Queen Victoria to the Earl of Aberdeen.

CLAREMONT, 13th January 1844.

The Queen has received Lord Aberdeen's letter of the 10th, and returns him the papers which he sent her, with her best thanks. She does not remember to have seen them before.

¹ The Duc de Bordeaux, only son of the Duc de Berri, had by the death of Charles X. and the renunciation of all claims to the French Throne on the part of the Duc d'Angoulême, become the representative of the elder branch of the Bourbons. He had intended his visit to England to have a private character only.

² See *ante*, vol. i. p. 609.

The Queen takes this opportunity to beg Lord Aberdeen to cause the despatches to be sent a little sooner from the Foreign Office, as drafts in particular have often come to the Queen a week or fortnight after they had actually been sent across the sea.

With respect to the Hanoverian Orders, Lord Aberdeen has not quite understood what the Queen meant. It was Sir C. Thornton and others to whom the Queen had refused permission to accept the favour, on a former occasion, by which the King of Hanover was much affronted. The Queen would not like to have herself additionally fettered by any new regulation, but Lord Aberdeen will certainly concur with the Queen that it would not be expedient to give to the King of Hanover a power which the Queen herself does not possess, viz. that of granting orders as favours, or for personal services; as the number of the different classes of the Guelphic Order bestowed on Englishmen is innumerable, it would actually invest the King with such a power, which, considering how much such things are sought after, might be extremely inconvenient.

The Queen will not give a final decision upon this case until she returns to Windsor, where she has papers explanatory of the reasons which caused her to decline the King of Hanover's application in 1838.

Queen Victoria to the King of the Belgians.

CLAREMONT, 16th January 1844.

MY DEAREST UNCLE,—Many thanks for your kind letter of the 11th. Louise can give you the details of the little upset I and Lady Douro had, and which I did not think worth while to mention.¹ It was the strangest thing possible to happen, and the most *unlikely*, for we were going quite quietly, not at all in a narrow lane, with very quiet ponies and my usual postillion; the fact was that the boy looked

¹ On the 5th of January the Queen's phaeton was overturned at Horton, near Datchet, while driving to the meet of Prince Albert's Harriers.

the *wrong* way, and therefore did not perceive the ditch which he so cleverly got us into.

We leave dear Claremont, as usual, with the greatest regret; we are so peaceable here; Windsor is beautiful and comfortable, but it is a *palace*, and God knows *how willingly* I would *always* live with my beloved Albert and our children in the quiet and retirement of private life, and not be the constant object of observation, and of newspaper articles. The children (Pussette and Bertie) have been most remarkably well, and so have we, in spite of the very bad weather we had most days. I am truly and really grieved that good excellent Nemours is again *not* to get his *dotation*.¹ Really we constitutional countries are *too shabby*.

Now, dearest Uncle, I must bid you adieu, begging you to believe me, ever your devoted Niece,

VICTORIA R.

Queen Victoria to the King of the Belgians.

WINDSOR CASTLE, 30th January 1844.

MY DEAREST UNCLE,—I must begin by thanking you for your kind letter of the 26th, and by wishing you joy that the fête went off *so well*. I am glad Leo will appear at the next ball; he is nearly nine years old, and it is good to accustom children of his rank early to these things.

Guizot's speech is exceedingly admired, with the exception of his having said more than he was justified to do about the right of search.² Our speech has been very difficult to frame; we should like to have mentioned our visits to France and Belgium, but it has been found impossible to do so; *France* is mentioned, and it is the first time since 1834!

To-morrow we go up to Town "pour ce bore," as the good King always said to me; whenever there

¹ On the occasion of the marriage of the Duc and Duchesse de Nemours (1840), the proposal made by the Sout Government for a Parliamentary grant of 500,000 francs had been rejected.

² He insisted that French trade must be kept under the exclusive surveillance of the French flag.

were tiresome people to present he always said: "*Je vous demande pardon de ce bore.*"

I have had a tiresome though not at all violent cold, which *I was* alarmed might spoil the *sonorousness* of my voice for the speech on Thursday, but it promises well now.

I own I always look with horror to the beginning of a Parliamentary campaign.

With Albert's love. Ever your devoted Niece,
VICTORIA R.

Queen Victoria to the King of the Belgians.

WINDSOR CASTLE, 6th February 1844.

MY DEARLY BELOVED UNCLE,—*You* must now be the father to us poor bereaved, heart-broken children.¹ To describe to you *all* that we *have* suffered, all that we *do* suffer, would be difficult; God has heavily afflicted us; we feel crushed, overwhelmed, bowed down by the loss of one who was so deservedly loved, I may say adored, by his children and family; I loved him and looked on him as my own father; his like we shall *not see again*; that youth, *that amiability*, and kindness in his own house which was the centre and rendezvous for the whole family, will never be seen again, and my poor Angel's fondest thought of beholding that *dearly beloved Vaterhaus*—where his thoughts continually were—*again* is for ever gone, and his poor heart bleeds to feel *this* is for ever gone. Our promised visit, our dearest Papa's, and our fondest wish, all is put an end to. The violence of our grief may be over, but the desolate feeling which succeeds it is worse, and tears are a relief. I have never known real *grief* till now, and it has made a lasting impression on me. A father is *such a near* relation, you are a *piece* of him in fact,—and all (as my poor *deeply afflicted* Angel says) the earliest pleasures of your life were given you by a dear father; that can *never be replaced* though time may soften the pang.

¹ The Duke of Saxe-Coburg Gotha died on 29th January.

And indeed one loves to *cling* to one's grief; I can understand Louise's feeling in her overwhelming sorrows.

Let me now join my humble entreaties to Albert's, relative to the request about dearest Louise, which he has made. It is a sacrifice I ask, but if you *knew* the sacrifice I make in letting and urging Albert *to go*, I am sure, if you *can* you *will* grant it. I have *never* been separated from him even for *one night*, and the *thought* of *such* a separation is quite dreadful; still, I feel I *could* bear it,—I have made my mind up to it, as the very *thought* of going has been a comfort to my poor Angel, and will be of such use at Coburg. Still, if I were to remain *quite* alone I do not think I *could* bear it quietly. Therefore *pray* do send me my dearly beloved Louise; she would be *such* a comfort to me; if you could come too—or afterwards (as you promised us a longer visit), that would be still more delightful. I may be indiscreet, but you must think of *what* the separation from my *all and all*, even only for a *fortnight*, will be to me!

We feel some *years* older since these days of mourning. Mamma is calm, but poor Aunt Julia¹ is indeed much to be pitied. Ever, dearest Uncle, your devoted and unhappy Niece and Child, VICTORIA R.

Queen Victoria to the King of the Belgians.

WINDSOR CASTLE, 13th February 1844.

MY DEAREST UNCLE,—I received your dear, kind but sad letter of the 8th on Sunday, and thank you much for it. God knows, poor dear Uncle, you have suffered *enough* in your life, but you should think, dearest Uncle, of *that blessed* assurance of *eternity* where we shall *all meet again never* to part: you should think (as we constantly do now) that those whom we have lost are far happier than we are, and *love us* still, and in a far more perfect way than *we can* do in this world! When the first moments and

¹ The Grand-Duchess Constantine of Russia, sister of the Duchess of Kent and of the deceased Duke of Saxe-Coburg.



Baroness Lehzen
From the miniature at Windsor Castle

days of overwhelming grief are over these reflections are the greatest balm, the greatest consolation to the bleeding heart.

I hope you will kindly let me have a few lines of *hope* by the Tuesday's messenger. Ever your truly devoted Niece and Child,

VICTORIA R.

P.S.—O'Connell's being pronounced guilty is a great triumph.¹

Viscount Melbourne to Queen Victoria.

SOUTH STREET, 3rd April 1844.

Lord Melbourne presents his humble duty to your Majesty, with many thanks for your Majesty's note of the 28th ult. Lord Melbourne believes that your Majesty is quite right in saying that Lord Melbourne has still some health left, if he will but take care of it. Lord Melbourne told Dr Holland, without mentioning your Majesty's name, that this had been said to him by a friend, and Dr Holland immediately said that it was very just and true, and very well expressed, and quite what he should have said himself. At the same time, the change from strength to weakness and the evident progress of decadence is a very hard and disagreeable trial. Lord Melbourne has been reading Cicero on old age, a very pretty treatise, but he does not find much consolation after it; the principal practical resources and alleviations which he recommends are agriculture and gardening, to both of which, but more particularly to the latter, Lord Melbourne has already had recourse. It is certainly, as your Majesty says, wrong to be impatient and to repine at everything, but still it is difficult not to be so. Lady Uxbridge's death² is a shocking event, a dreadful loss to him and to all. Lord Melbourne always liked her. Lord Melbourne is going down to Bocket Hall to-morrow, and will try to get Uxbridge and the girls to come over and dine.

Lord Melbourne has felt very much for the grief

¹ He had been indicted with Charles Gavan Duffy and others for seditious conspiracy.

² Henrietta Maria, daughter of Sir Charles Bagot, G.C.B.

which your Majesty must feel at a separation, even short and temporary, from the Prince, and it is extremely amiable to feel comforted by the recollection of the extreme pleasure which his visit will give to his and your Majesty's relations. It is, of course, impossible that your Majesty should in travelling divest yourself of your character and dignity.

Lord Melbourne has just driven round the Regent's Park, where there are many almond trees in bloom, and looking beautiful.

Sir Robert Peel to Queen Victoria.

WHITEHALL, 23rd April 1844.

Sir Robert Peel, with his humble duty to your Majesty, begs leave to acquaint your Majesty that he has every reason to believe that the Court of Directors will *to-morrow*, by an unanimous vote, resolve on the actual recall of Lord Ellenborough.¹

Queen Victoria to Sir Robert Peel.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE, 23rd April 1844.

The Queen has heard with the greatest regret from Sir R. Peel that the Court of Directors, after all, mean to recall Lord Ellenborough. She cannot but consider this *very* unwise at this critical moment, and a very ungrateful return for the eminent services Lord Ellenborough has rendered to the Company in India. They ought not to forget so soon in what state Lord Ellenborough found affairs in 1842. The Queen would not be sorry if these gentlemen knew that this is her opinion.

The King of the Belgians to Queen Victoria.

LAEKEN, 3rd May 1844.

MY DEAREST VICTORIA,—Whenever you wish to make me *truly* happy, you will have the power of doing

¹ This anomalous privilege was exercised by the Directors in consequence chiefly of what they considered Lord Ellenborough's overbearing demeanour in communication with them, his too aggressive policy, and his theatrical love of display.

so by repeating expressions as kind and affectionate as those contained in your dear little letter of the 30th. I have ever had the care and affection of a *real father* for you, and it has perhaps even been freer from many drawbacks which occasionally will exist betwixt parents and children, be they ever so well and affectionately together. With me, even from the moment in January 1820, when I was called by a messenger to Sidmouth, my care for you has been unremitting, and never has there been a cloud between us. . . . A thing which often strikes me, in a very satisfactory manner, is that we never had any bitter words, a thing which happens even with people who are very lovingly together; and the little row which we had in 1838 you remember well, and do not now think that *I* was wrong.¹ *De pareilles relations sont rares; may they ever continue!*

I cannot leave this more serious topic without adding that though you were always warm-hearted and right-minded, it must strike yourself how matured every kind and good feeling is in your generous heart. *The heart, and not the head, is the safest guide in positions like yours*, and this not only for this earthly and very short life, but for that which we must hope for hereafter. When a life draws nearer its close, how many earthly concerns are there that appear *still in the same light?* and how clearly the mind is struck that nothing has been and is still of *real* value, than the nobler and better feelings of the heart; the only good we can hope to keep as a precious store for the future. What do we keep of youth, beauty, richness, power, and even the greatest extent of earthly possessions? NOTHING! . . . Your truly devoted Uncle, LEOPOLD R.

Sir Robert Peel to Queen Victoria.

WHITEHALL, 5th May 1844.

Sir Robert Peel, with his humble duty to your Majesty, and believing that he is acting in accordance with your Majesty's own opinion, begs leave to submit

¹ See Letters of Queen Victoria and the King of the Belgians, *ante*, vol. i. pp. 148-153.

to your Majesty that it may be advisable that he should by the present mail inform Lord Ellenborough that it is your Majesty's intention to confer on him, at a very early period, as a mark of your Majesty's approval of Lord Ellenborough's conduct and services in India, the rank of an Earl and the Grand Cross of the Bath.

Lord Ellenborough may be at liberty (should your Majesty approve) to notify this publicly in India—and thus make it known that the general line of policy recently pursued has had the full sanction of your Majesty, and will not be departed from.

These were the honours conferred upon Lord Auckland.

If they were conferred *on the instant*, it might rather seem a rebuke to the East India Company than a deliberate approval of the conduct of Lord Ellenborough, but these honours might shortly follow the conclusion of the affair respecting the selection of Lord Ellenborough's successor, and any discussion that may arise in Parliament.

Queen Victoria to the King of the Belgians.

CLAREMONT, 24th May 1844.

DEAREST UNCLE,—Though *not* my day I must write you a line to say *how vexed* we are at this *most unfortunate* and *most imprudent brochure* of Joinville's;¹ it has made a *very bad* effect here, and will rouse all the envy and hatred between the *two Navies* again, which it was our great effort to subdue—and this *all for nothing!* I can't tell you how angry people are, and how poor Hadjy will get abused. And this *all* after our having been on such intimate terms with him and having *sailed* with him! If he comes here, *what* shall we do? Receive with open arms one who has talked

¹ The brochure was entitled, *Notes sur les forces navales de la France*. The Prince de Joinville wrote as follows to the Queen: "Le malheureux éclat de ma brochure, le tracas que cela donne au Père et à la Reine, me font regretter vivement de l'avoir faite. Comme je l'écris à ton Roi, je ne renvoie que mépris à toutes les interprétations qu'on y donne; ce que peuvent dire ministre et journaux ne me touche en rien, mais il n'y a pas de sacrifices que je ne suis disposé à faire pour l'intérieur de la Famille."

of ravaging our coasts and burning our towns? Indeed it is most lamentable; you know how we like him, and that therefore it must be very annoying to us to see him get himself into such a scrape. *We* shall overlook it, but the people *here* won't! It *will* blow over, but it will do immense harm. We who wish to become more and more closely united with the French family are, of course, much put out by this return. We shall forgive and forget, and feel it was *not* intended to be published—but the public *here* will *not* so easily, and will put the worst construction on it all.

Pray, dearest Uncle, tell me what *could* possess Joinville to write it, and still more to have it printed? Won't it annoy the King and Nemours very much? *Enfin c'est malheureux, c'est indiscret au plus haut degré*—and it provokes and vexes us sadly. Tell me *all* you *know* and think about it; for you *can* do so with perfect safety by our courier.

I have written dearest Louise an account of my *old* birthday, which will please you, I think. The weather is very fine. Ever your *truly* devoted Niece and Child,

VICTORIA R.

Queen Victoria to the Earl of Aberdeen.

29th May 1844.

If Lord Aberdeen should not have read the Prince de Joinville's pamphlet, the Queen recommends him to do so, as one cannot judge fairly by the extracts in the newspapers. Though it does not lessen the extreme imprudence of the Prince's publishing what must do harm to the various French Governments, it certainly is *not* intentionally written to offend England, and on the contrary frankly proves *us* to be immensely superior to the French Navy in every way.

Queen Victoria to the King of the Belgians.

WINDSOR CASTLE, 4th June 1844.

MY BELOVED UNCLE,—I gave Louise a long and detailed description of the Emperor,¹ etc. The papers

¹ The Emperor Nicholas of Russia had just arrived on a visit to England.

are full of the details. A great event and a great compliment *his* visit certainly is, and the people *here* are extremely flattered at it. He is certainly a *very striking* man; still very handsome; his profile is *beautiful*, and his manners *most* dignified and graceful; extremely civil—quite alarmingly so, as he is so full of attentions and *politesses*. But the expression of the *eyes* is *formidable*, and unlike anything I ever saw before. He gives me and Albert the impression of a man who is *not* happy, and on whom the weight of his immense power and position weighs heavily and painfully; he seldom smiles, and when he does the expression is *not* a happy one. He is very easy to get on with. Really, it seems like a dream when I think that we breakfast and walk out with *this* greatest of all earthly Potentates as quietly as if we walked, etc., with Charles or any one. We took him, with the dear good King of Saxony,¹ who is a great contrast to the *Czar* (and with whom I am *quite* at my ease), to Adelaide Cottage after breakfast. The grass here is just as if it had been burned with fire. *How* many different Princes have we not gone the same round with!! The children are much admired by the *Sovereigns*—(how *grand* this sounds!)—and Alice allowed the Emperor to take her in his arms, and kissed him *de son propre accord*. We are always so thankful that they are *not* shy. Both the Emperor and the King are *quite* enchanted with Windsor. The Emperor said very *poliment*: “C’est digne de vous, Madame.” I must say the Waterloo Room lit up with that entire service of gold looks splendid; and the Reception Room, beautiful to sit in afterwards. The Emperor praised *my* Angel very much, saying: “C’est impossible de voir un plus joli garçon; il a l’air si noble et si bon”; which I must say *is very* true. The Emperor amused the King and me by saying he was so *embarrassé* when people were presented to him, and that he felt so “*gauche*” *en frac*, which certainly he is quite un-

¹ Frederick Augustus II.