

VICTORIA (r. 1837-1901)

Queen Victoria maintained a detailed diary, her famous Journal, which is contained in 111 large manuscript volumes. These volumes constitute about a third of the original, as her diaries were edited after her death by her youngest daughter Princess Beatrice, at Queen Victoria's request. The extracts below cover some of the more momentous events of Queen Victoria's reign, from her accession in 1832 to her Diamond Jubilee in 1897.

On William IV's death, and her accession aged 18 years: Tuesday, 20 June 1837 at Kensington Palace

I was awoke at 6 o'clock by Mamma, who told me that the Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord Conyngham were here, and wished to see me. I got out of bed and went into my sitting-room (only in my dressing-gown), and *alone*, and saw them. Lord Conyngham (the Lord Chamberlain) then acquainted me that my poor Uncle, the King, was no more, and had expired at 12 minutes past 2 this morning, and consequently that I am *Queen*. Lord Conyngham knelt down and kissed my hand, at the same time delivering to me the official announcement of the poor King's demise. The Archbishop then told me that the Queen was desirous that he should come and tell me the details of the last moments of my poor, good Uncle; he said that he had directed his mind to religion, and had died in a perfectly happy, quiet state of mind, and was quite prepared for his death. He added that the King's sufferings at the last were not very great but that there was a good deal of uneasiness. Lord Conyngham, whom I charged to express my feelings of condolence and sorrow to the poor Queen, returned directly to Windsor. I then went to my room and dressed.

Since it has pleased Providence to place me in this station, I shall do my utmost to fulfil my duty towards my country; I am very young and perhaps in many, though not in all things, inexperienced, but I am sure, that very few have more real good will and more real desire to do what is fit and right than I have ...

At 9 came Lord Melbourne, whom I saw in my room, and of COURSE *quite ALONE* as I shall *always* do all my Ministers. He kissed my hand and I then acquainted him that it had long been my intention to retain him and the rest of the present Ministry at the head of affairs, and that it could not be in better hands than his ... He then read to me the Declaration which I was to read to the Council, which he wrote himself and which is a very fine one. I then talked with him some little longer time after which he left me ... I like him very much and feel confidence in him. He is a very straightforward, honest, clever and good man. I then wrote a letter to the Queen ...

At about half past 11 I went downstairs and held a Council in the red saloon. I went in of course quite alone, and remained seated the whole time. My two Uncles, the Dukes of Cumberland (who now succeeded William IV as King of Hanover) and Sussex, and Lord Melbourne conducted me. The declaration, the various forms, the swearing in of the Privy Councillors of which there were a great number present, and the reception of some of the Lords of Council, previous to the Council in an adjacent room (likewise alone) I subjoin here. I

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was not at all nervous and had the satisfaction of hearing that people were satisfied with what I had done and how I had done it.

Receiving after this, Audiences of Lord Melbourne, Lord John Russell, Lord Albemarle (Master of the Horse), and the Archbishop of Canterbury, all in my room and alone. Saw Stockmar (friend and counsellor to Queen Victoria and Prince Albert). Saw Clark, whom I named my Physician ... Saw Ernest Hohenlohe who brought me a kind and very feeling letter from the poor Queen. I feel very much for her, and really feel that the poor good King was always so kind personally to me, that I should be ungrateful were I not to recollect it and feel grieved at his death. The poor Queen is wonderfully composed now, I hear.

Wrote my journal. Took my dinner upstairs alone. Went downstairs. Saw Stockmar. At about 20 minutes to 9 came Lord Melbourne and remained till near 10. I had a very important and very *comfortable* conversation with him ... Went down and said good-night to Mamma etc.

Coronation: Thursday, 28 June 1838

I was awake at four o'clock by the guns in the Park, and could not get much sleep afterwards on account of the noise of the people, bands, etc. Got up at 7 feeling strong and well; the Park presented a curious spectacle; crowds of people up to Constitution Hill, soldiers, bands, etc. I dressed, having taken a little breakfast before I dressed, and a little after. At half past 9 I went into the next room dressed exactly in my House of Lords costume ... At 10 I got into the State Coach with the Duchess of Sutherland and Lord Albemarle, and we began our Progress.

It was a fine day, and the crowds of people exceeded what I have ever seen; many as there were the day I went to the City, it was nothing - nothing to the multitudes, the millions of my loyal subjects who were assembled in *every spot* to witness the Procession. Their good humour and excessive loyalty was beyond everything, and I really cannot say *how* proud I feel to be the Queen of *such a Nation*. I was alarmed at times for fear that the people would be crushed and squeezed on account of the tremendous rush and pressure.

I reached the Abbey (Westminster) amid deafening cheers at a little after half past 11; I first went into a robing-room quite close to the entrance, where I found my eight Train-bearers - all dressed alike and beautifully, in white satin and silver tissue, with wreaths of silver corn-ears in front, and a small one of pink roses round the plait behind, and pink roses in the trimming of the dresses. After putting on my Mantle, and the young ladies having properly got hold of it, and Lord Conyngham holding the end of it, I left the robing-room and the Procession began. The sight was splendid; the bank of Peeresses quite beautiful, all in their robes, and the Peers on the other side. My young Train-bearers were always near me, and helped me whenever I wanted anything. The Bishop of Durham stood on one side near me.

At the beginning of the Anthem ... I retired to St Edward's Chapel, a small dark place immediately behind the Altar, with my Ladies and Train-bearers; took off my crimson robe and kirtle and put on the Supertunica of Cloth of Gold, also

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in the shape of a kirtle, which was put over a singular sort of little gown of linen trimmed with lace; I also took off my circlet of diamonds, and then proceeded bare-headed into the Abbey; I was then seated upon St Edward's chair where the Dalmatic robe was clasped round me by the Lord Great Chamberlain. Then followed all the various things; and last (of those things) the Crown being placed on my head; - which was, I must own, a most beautiful impressive moment; *all* the Peers and Peeresses put on their Coronets at the same instant ... The shouts, which were very great, the drums, the trumpets, the firing of the guns, all at the same instant, rendered the spectacle most imposing.

The Enthronization and the Homage of, first all the Bishops, then my Uncles, and lastly of all the Peers, in their respective order, was very fine. The Duke of Norfolk (holding for me the Sceptre with a Cross) with Lord Melbourne, stood close to me on my right, and the Duke of Richmond with the other Sceptre on my left. All my Train-bearers standing behind the Throne. Poor old Lord Rolle, who is 82 and dreadfully infirm, in attempting to ascend the steps, fell and rolled quite down, but was not the least hurt; when he attempted to reascend them I got up and advanced to the end of the steps, in order to prevent another fall ... When Lord Melbourne's turn to do Homage came, there was loud cheering; they also cheered Lord Grey and the Duke of Wellington; it's a pretty ceremony; they first all touch the Crown, and then kiss my hand. When my good Lord Melbourne knelt down and kissed my hand, he pressed my hand and I grasped his with all my heart, at which he looked up with his eyes filled with tears and seemed much touched, as he was, I observed, throughout the whole ceremony.

After the Homage was concluded I left the Throne, took off my Crown and received the Sacrament; I then put on my Crown again, and re-ascended the Throne, leaning on Lord Melbourne's arm; at the commencement of the Anthem I descended from the Throne, and went into St Edward's Chapel ... where I took off the Dalmatic robe, Supertunica, and put on the Purple Velvet Kirtle and Mantle, and proceeded again to the Throne, which I ascended leaning on Lord Melbourne's hand ... I then again descended from the Throne, and repaired with all the Peers bearing the Regalia, my Ladies and Train-bearers, to St Edward's Chapel, as it is called; but which, as Lord Melbourne said, was more *unlike* a Chapel than anything he had ever seen; for, what was *called* an *Altar* was covered with sandwiches, bottles of wine etc. The Archbishop came in and *ought* to have delivered the Orb to me, but I had already got it. There we waited for some minutes ... the Procession being formed, I replaced my Crown (which I had taken off for a few minutes), took the Orb in my left hand and the Sceptre in my right, and thus *loaded* proceeded through the Abbey, which resounded with cheers, to the first Robing-room ... And here we waited for at least an hour, with *all* my ladies and Train-bearers; the Princesses went away about half an hour before I did; the Archbishop had put the ring on the wrong finger, and the consequence was that I had the greatest difficulty to take it off again, - which I at last did with great pain. At about half past 4 I re-entered my carriage, the Crown on my head and Sceptre and Orb in my hand, and we proceeded the same way as we came - the crowds if possible having increased. The enthusiasm, affection and loyalty was really touching, and I shall ever remember this day

as the proudest of my life. I came home at a little after 6, - really *not* feeling tired.

At 8 we dined. My kind Lord Melbourne was much affected in speaking of the whole ceremony. He asked kindly if I was tired; said the Sword he carried (the first, the Sword of State) was excessively heavy. I said that the Crown hurt me a good deal. He was much amused at Uncle Ernest's being astonished at our still having the Litany; we agreed that the whole thing was a very fine sight. He thought the robes, and particularly the Dalmatic, "looked remarkably well" ... The Archbishop's and the Dean's Copes (which were remarkably handsome) were from James I's time; the very same that were worn at his Coronation, Lord Melbourne told me.

After dinner, before we sat down, we ... spoke of the numbers of Peers at the Coronation, which Lord Melbourne said was unprecedented. I observed that there were very few Viscounts; he said "there are very few Viscounts"; that they were an odd sort of title, and not really English; that they came from Vice-Comités; that Dukes and Barons were the only *real* English titles; that Marquises were likewise not English; and that they made people Marquises when they did not wish to make them Dukes ... I then sat on the sofa for a little while ... Mamma ... remained to see the Illuminations, and only came in later ... I said to Lord Melbourne when I first sat down, I felt a little tired on my feet ... Spoke of the weight of the robes etc..and he turned round to me and said so kindly, "And you did it beautifully, - every part of it, with so much taste; it's a thing that you can't give a person advice upon; it must be left to a person." To hear this from this kind impartial friend, gave me great and real pleasure ... Spoke of my intending to go to bed; he said, "You may depend upon it, you are more tired than you think you are." I said I had slept badly the night before; he said that was my mind, and that nothing kept people more awake than any consciousness of a great event going to take place and being agitated ... Stayed in the drawing-room till 20 minutes past 11, but remained till 12 o'clock on Mamma's balcony looking at the fireworks in Green Park, which were quite beautiful.

Great Exhibition: 1 May 1851

This day is one of the greatest and most glorious days of our lives, with which, to my pride and joy the name of my dearly beloved Albert is forever associated! It is a day which makes my heart swell with thankfulness ... The Park presented a wonderful spectacle, crowds streaming though it - carriages and troops passing, quite like the Coronation Day, and for me, the same anxiety. The day was bright, and all bustle and excitement. At half past 11, the whole procession in 9 state carriages was set in motion. Vicky and Bertie (her two eldest children, the Princess Royal and the Prince of Wales) were in our carriage. Vicky was dressed in lace over white satin, with a small wreath of pink wild roses, in her hair, and looked very nice. Bertie was in full Highland dress. The Green Park and Hyde Park were one mass of densely crowded human beings, in the highest good humour and most enthusiastic. I never saw Hyde Park look as it did, being filled with crowds as far as the eye could reach. A little rain fell, just as we started; but before we neared the Crystal

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Palace, the sun shone and gleamed upon the gigantic edifice, upon which the flags of every nation were flying.

We drove up Rotten Row and got out of our carriages at the entrance on that side. The glimpse through the iron gates of the Transept, the moving palms and flowers, the myriads of people filling the galleries and seats around, together with the flourish of trumpets, as we entered the building, gave a sensation I shall never forget, and I felt much moved ... In a few seconds we proceeded, Albert leading me having Vicky at his hand, and Bertie holding mine. The sight as we came to the centre where the steps and chair (on which I did not sit) was placed, facing the beautiful crystal fountain was magic and impressive. The tremendous cheering, the joy expressed in every face, the vastness of the building, with all its decorations and exhibits, the sound of the organ (with 200 instruments and 600 voices, which seemed nothing), and my beloved Husband the creator of this great 'Peace Festival', uniting the industry and arts of all nations of the earth, all this, was indeed moving, and a day to live forever. God bless my dearest Albert, and my dear Country which has shown itself so great today ... The Nave was full of people, which had not been intended and deafening cheers and waving of handkerchiefs, continued the whole time of our long walk from one end of the building, to the other. Every face was bright, and smiling, and many even had tears in their eyes ... One could of course see nothing, but what was high up in the Nave, and nothing in the Courts. The organs were but little heard, but the Military Band, at one end, had a very fine effect ...

We returned to our place and Albert told Lord Breadalbane to declare the Exhibition opened, which he did in a loud voice saying "Her Majesty commands me to declare the Exhibition opened", when there was a flourish of trumpets, followed by immense cheering. Everyone was astounded and delighted. The return was equally satisfactory - the crowd most enthusiastic and perfect order kept. We reached the Palace at 20 minutes past 1 and went out on the balcony, being loudly cheered. That we felt happy and thankful, - I need not say - proud of all that had passed and of my beloved one's success. Dearest Albert's name is for ever immortalised and the absurd reports of dangers of every kind and sort, set about by a set of people, - the 'soi-disant' fashionables and the most violent protectionists - are silenced. It is therefore doubly satisfactory that all should have gone off so well, and without the slightest accident or mishap.

Crimean War, ending of the Siege of Sebastopol: 10 September 1855, at Balmoral

Albert said they should go at once and light the bonfire ... In a few minutes, Albert and all the gentlemen, in every species of attire, sallied forth, followed by all the servants, and gradually by all the population of the village - keepers, gillies, workmen - up to the top of the cairn. We waited, and saw them light it; accompanied by general cheering. The bonfire blazed forth brilliantly, and we could see the numerous figures surrounding it - some dancing, all shouting ... About three-quarters of an hour after, Albert came down, and said the scene had been wild and exciting beyond anything. The people had been drinking healths in whisky and were in great ecstasy. The whole house seemed in a wonderful state of excitement. The boys were with difficulty awakened, and when at last this was the case, they begged leave to go up to the top of the cairn.

We remained till a quarter to twelve; and, just as I was undressing, all the people came down under the windows, the pipes playing, the people singing, firing off guns, and cheering - first for me, then for Albert, the Emperor of the French, and the 'downfall of Sebastopol'.

Letter to Miss Florence Nightingale: January 1856

You are, I know, well aware of the high sense I entertain of the Christian devotion which you have displayed during this great and bloody war, and I need hardly repeat to you how warm my admiration is for your services, which are fully equal to those of my dear and brave soldiers, whose sufferings you have had the privilege of alleviating in so merciful a manner. I am, however, anxious of marking my feelings in a manner which I trust will be agreeable to you, and therefore send you with this letter a brooch [a badge bearing St George's Cross in red enamel and the royal cypher surmounted by a crown in diamonds; the inscription 'Blessed are the Merciful' encircled the badge which also bore the word 'Crimea'], the form and emblems of which commemorate your great and blessed work, and which, I hope, you will wear as a mark of the high approbation of your Sovereign!

It will be a very great satisfaction to me, when you return at last to these shores, to make the acquaintance of one who has set so bright an example to our sex.

The death of Queen Victoria's beloved husband, Prince Albert, who died from typhoid on 14 December 1861 at Windsor Castle, at the age of 42. On 20 December, Queen Victoria wrote to her uncle King Leopold of Belgium:

... to be cut off in the prime of life - to see our pure happy, quiet domestic life, which alone enabled me to bear my much disliked position, cut off at forty-two - when I had hoped with such instinctive certainty that God never would part us, and would let us grow old together ... - is too awful, too cruel!

Letter to the recently widowed Earl Canning, Osborne, 10 January 1862

Lord Canning little thought when he wrote his kind and touching letter of the 22nd November, that it would only reach the Queen when she was smitten and bowed down to the earth by an event similar to the one which he describes ... To lose one's partner in life is, as Lord Canning knows, like losing half of one's body and soul, torn forcibly away - and dear Lady Canning was such a dear, worthy, devoted wife! But to the Queen - to a poor helpless woman - it is not that only - it is the stay, support and comfort which is lost! To the Queen it is like death in life! Great and small - nothing was done without his loving advice and help - and she feels alone in the wide world, with many helpless children ... to look to her - and the whole nation to look to her - now when she can barely struggle with her wretched existence! Her misery - her utter despair - she cannot describe! Her only support - the only ray of comfort she gets for a moment, is in the firm conviction and certainty of his nearness, his undying love, and of their eternal reunion!

May God comfort and support Lord Canning, and may he think in his sorrow of his widowed and broken-hearted Sovereign ...

Golden Jubilee: 21 June 1887, at Buckingham Palace

This very eventful day has come and is passed. It will be very difficult to describe it, but all went off admirably. This day, fifty years ago, I had to go with a full Sovereign's escort to St James's Palace, to appear at my proclamation, which was very painful to me, and is no longer to take place.

The morning was beautiful and bright with a fresh air. Troops began passing early with bands playing, and one heard constant cheering ... The scene outside was most animated, and reminded me of the opening of the Great Exhibition, which also took place on a very fine day. Received many beautiful nosegays and presents ... Then dressed, wearing a dress and bonnet trimmed with white point d'Alençon, diamond ornaments in my bonnet, and pearls around my neck, with all my orders.

At half-past eleven we left the Palace, I driving in a handsomely gilt landau drawn by six of the Creams, with dear Vicky (her eldest daughter) and Alex (her daughter-in-law, the Princess of Wales), who sat on the back seat. Just in front of my carriage rode the 12 Indian officers, and in front of them my 3 sons, 5 sons-in-law, 9 grandsons and grandsons-in-law. Then came the carriages containing my 3 other daughters ... All the other Royalties went in a separate procession. George Cambridge rode the whole way next to my carriage, and the Master of the Horse, Equerries, etc., behind it with of course a Sovereign's escort. It was a really magnificent sight ...

At the door (of Westminster Abbey) I was received by the clergy, with the Archbishop of Canterbury and Dean at their head, in the copes of rich velvet and gold, which had been worn at the Coronation ... The crowds from the Palace gates up to the Abbey were enormous, and there was such an extraordinary outburst of enthusiasm as I had hardly ever seen in London before; all the people seemed to be in such good humour. The old Chelsea Pensioners were in a stand near the Arch. The decorations along Piccadilly were quite beautiful, and there were most touching inscriptions. Seats and

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platforms were arranged up to the tops of the houses, and such waving of hands ... Many schools out, and many well-known faces were seen.

When all was ready, the procession was formed ... *God Save the Queen* was played ... as I walked slowly up the Nave and Choir, which looked beautiful, all filled with people. The Royalties of highest rank were seated within the altar rails. The House of Commons was below us to the left, and I recognised several persons amongst them, but did not see Mr Gladstone, thought he was there. The Ambassadors and the Household were to the right.

I sat *alone* (oh! without my beloved husband, for whom this would have been such a proud day!) where I sat forty-nine years ago and received the homage of the Princes and Peers, but in the old Coronation Chair of Edward III, with the old stone brought from Scotland, on which the old Kings of Scotland used to be crowned. My robes were beautifully draped on the chair. The service was very well done and arranged. The *Te Deum*, by my darling Albert, sounded beautiful ... When the service was concluded, each of my sons, sons-in-law, grandsons (including little Alfred), and grandsons-in-law, stepped forward, bowed, and in succession kissed my hand, I kissing each; and the same with the daughters, daughters-in-law, grand-daughters, and the granddaughter-in-law. They curtsied as they came up and I embraced them warmly. It was a very moving moment, and tears were in some of their eyes.

The procession then reformed, and we went out as we came in, resting a moment in the waiting-room, whilst the Princes were all getting on their horses. The whole ceremony, particularly the outside procession and progress, took twenty minutes longer than was expected ... There were many stoppages, which is almost unavoidable in long processions ... The heat of the sun was very great, but there was a good deal of wind, which was a great relief ... We only got back at a quarter to three. Went at once to my room to take off my bonnet and put on my cap. Gave Jubilee brooches to all my daughters ... and pins to all my sons ...

Only at four did we sit down to luncheon, to which all came. The King of Saxony led me in, and the King of Denmark with Marie of Belgium sat on my other side. After luncheon, I stood on the small balcony of the Blue Room, which looks out on the garden, and saw the Bluejackets march past. After this we went into the small Ball-room, where the present given me by all my children was placed. It is a very handsome piece of plate. The Queen of Hawaii gave me a present of very rare feathers, but very strangely arranged as a wreath about my monogram, also in feathers on a black ground, framed.

I felt quite exhausted by this time and ready to faint, so I got into my rolling chair and was rolled back to my room. Here I lay down on the sofa and rested, doing nothing but opening telegrams, coming from every part of the country, so that they could no longer be acknowledged, and this will have to be done through the papers.

Dinner was again in the Supper-room. I wore a dress with rose, thistle, and shamrock embroidered in silver on it, and my large diamonds. The King of Denmark led me in, and I sat between him and Leopold of Belgium. The King of Denmark, who is so kind and amiable, gave out my health at dessert

saying, "I beg to propose the health of Her Majesty - God bless her". And after *God Save the Queen* had been played, Bertie (the Prince of Wales) proposed the healths of the Sovereigns and Royal guests now assembled here, doing so in my name ... The pipers walked round the table. We went into the Ball-room, where I spoke to the Indian Princes and received all the Corps Diplomatique, Foreign Envoys and suites, the latter being each presented by their Princes. I was half dead with fatigue, and after sitting down a moment with Marie of Belgium, slipped away and was rolled back to my room, and to the Chinese room to try and see something of the very general illuminations, but could not see much. The noise of the crowd, which began yesterday, went on till late. Felt truly grateful that all had passed off so admirably, and this never-to-be-forgotten day will always leave the most gratifying and heart-stirring memories behind.

Golden Jubilee: 22 June 1887, at Windsor Castle

Very fine and hazy. Breakfasted in the Chinese room (at Buckingham Palace), but such a change from yesterday. No crowd or noise. The illuminations last night are said to have been splendid. Thousands thronged the streets, but there was no disorder. They shouted and sang till quite late, and passed the Palace singing *God Save the Queen* and *Rule Britannia*. Went into the garden for a little while, and on coming home rested. Quantities of telegrams still continued coming in ...

Again a big luncheon in the Dining-room ... Gave Jubilee medals to the Kings and most of the Princes. I then went with Beatrice (her youngest daughter), preceded by the Lord Chamberlain, to the Ball-room, where were assembled all my Household, and a great number of those who had served me from the beginning of my reign. Lord Mt Edgcumbe, as Lord Steward, presented their gift, a magnificent piece of plate, splendidly worked and executed, representing music and painting. I went round and spoke to as many as I could ... (The Queen then received a jewelled pendant from the Prince of Wales's Household, a portrait of himself from the Prime Minister, a watercolour from the other royal Households.)

This over, I went though the Blue Drawing Room and Bow Room, full of ladies, to the White Drawing-room, equally full. This was a Deputation from the 'Women of England', who brought me the signatures of the millions who have subscribed to a gift, contained in a splendid gold coffer ... and Lady Londonderry presented me with that of another very fine coffer, containing the signatures of the Women of Ireland ... From her I passed into the Picture Gallery, where were assembled all the people who came with other presents, which extended down the whole length of the Gallery. Was really touched and gratified.

Rested on the sofa for some time, and took a cup of tea before leaving Buckingham Palace at half-past five. Bertie and Alex could not leave London on account of looking after the guests. Had an escort and an Indian escort. Enormous and enthusiastic crowds on Constitution Hill and in Hyde Park ... We drove right on to the grass in the middle of the park, where 30,000 poor children with their schoolmasters and mistresses, were assembled. Tents had been pitched for them to dine in, and all sorts of amusements had been

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provided for them. Each received an earthenware pot with my portrait on it ... We stopped in the middle ... and a little girl gave me a beautiful bouquet, on the ribbons of which were embroidered: "God bless our Queen, not Queen alone, but Mother, Queen and Friend" ... The children sang *God Save the Queen* somewhat out of tune, and then we drove on to Paddington station. The train stopped at Slough, and we got out there ... Different ladies and gentlemen were presented and bouquets were given. Then drove off with an escort to Windsor. All along the road there were decorations and crowds of people. Before coming to Eton, there was a beautiful triumphal arch, made to look exactly like part of the old College, and boys dressed like old Templars stood on the top of it, playing a regular fanfare. The whole effect was beautiful, lit up by the sun of a bright summer's evening ... The town was one mass of flags and decorations. We went under the Castle walls up the hill, slowly, amidst great cheering, and stopped at the bottom of Castle Hill, where there was a stand crowded with people and every window and balcony were full of people, Chinese lanterns and preparations for illuminations making a very pretty effect. Those of the family who had not come with me were in the front row of the stand ... An Address was read, to which I read an Answer ... After this my statue was unveiled ... Amidst cheering, the ringing of bells, and bands playing, we drove up to the Castle. This completed the pretty and gratifying welcome to good old Windsor.

We had a large family dinner ... Just as we were beginning dessert, we heard that the torchlight procession of Eton boys was coming into the Quadrangle, and off we hurried, as fast as we could, to the Corridor, from whence we could see it beautifully. They performed all sorts of figures, the band playing marches etc, and they sang an Eton Boat song, a Jubilee song specially composed for the occasion ... They did it so well and it had a most charming effect. The Head Master came up, and I thanked him, and sent for the Captain of the school. They cheered tremendously. Then we all went down to the Quadrangle, and I said, in as loud a voice as I could, "I thank you very much", which elicited more cheering, after which they all marched past and out at the gate. The Round Tower was illuminated with electric light, and so were parts of the Castle. The town was also illuminated, but I was too tired to go and see it, and went to my room.

These two days will ever remain indelibly impressed in my mind, with great gratitude to that all-merciful Providence, Who has protected me so long, and to my devoted and loyal people. But how painfully do I miss the dear ones I have lost!

Diamond Jubilee: 21 June 1897, at Buckingham Palace

The 10th anniversary of the celebration of my fifty years Jubilee. Breakfasted with my three daughters at the Cottage at Frogmore (Windsor Park). A fine warm morning.

At quarter to twelve we drove to the station to start for London. The town was very prettily decorated, and there were great crowds, who cheered very much. At Paddington I was received by Lord Cork and other Directors of GWR (Great Western Railway). Drove, going at a fast pace to the Paddington

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Vestry platform, where an address was presented by the Vicar of Paddington. Then we proceeded at a slow trot, with a Sovereign's escort of the 1st Life Guards. Passed through dense crowds, who gave me a most enthusiastic reception. It was like a triumphal entry. We passed down Cambridge Terrace, under a lovely arch, bearing the motto, "Our hearts thy Throne". The streets were beautifully decorated, also the balconies of the houses with flowers, flags, and draperies of every hue ... The streets, the windows, the roofs of the houses, were one mass of beaming faces, and the cheers never ceased. On entering the park, through the Marble Arch, the crowd was even greater, carriages were drawn up amongst the people on foot, even on the pretty little lodges well-dressed people were perched. Hyde Park Corner and Constitution Hill were densely crowded. All vied with one another to give me a heartfelt, loyal and affectionate welcome. I was deeply touched and gratified. The day had become very fine and very hot.

Reaching the Palace shortly after 1, and Vicky [her eldest daughter] at once brought me her three daughters ... [Queen Victoria is then given a diamond pendant with sapphires, a 'very handsome' book cover and a 'beautiful diamond brooch' as Jubilee presents by her family] ... Then I was taken round in my wheeled chair to the Bow Room, where all my family awaited me ... Seated in my chair, as I cannot stand long, I received all the foreign Princes in succession, beginning with Archduke Franz Ferdinand [whose assassination in 1914 at Sarajevo marked the beginning of the First World War] ... after which Lord Salisbury presented all the special Ambassadors and Envoys ... I got back to my room a little before four, quite exhausted. Telegrams kept pouring in. It was quite impossible even to open them ... Had tea in the garden ...

Dressed for dinner. I wore a dress of which the whole front was embroidered in gold, which had been specially worked in India, diamonds in my cap, and a diamond necklace, etc. The dinner was in the Supper-room at little tables of twelve each. All the family, foreign royalties, special Ambassadors and Envoys were invited. I sat between the Archduke Franz Ferdinand and the Prince of Naples. After dinner went into Ball-room, where my private band played and the following were presented to me: the Colonial Premiers with their wives, the Special Envoys, the three Indian Princes, and all the officers of the two Indian escorts, who, as usual, held out their swords to be touched by me, and the different foreign suites. The Ball-room was very full and dreadfully hot, and the light very inefficient. It was only a little after eleven, when I got back to my room, feeling very tired. There was a deal of noise in the streets, and we were told that many were sleeping out in the parks.

22 June 1897, at Buckingham Palace

A never-to-be-forgotten day ... The night had been very hot, and I was rather restless. There was such a noise going on the whole time, but it did not keep me from getting some sleep. Dull early and close. Breakfasted ... in the Chinese luncheon room. The head of the procession, including the Colonial troops, had unfortunately already passed the Palace before I got to breakfast, but there were still a great many, chiefly British, passing. I watched them for a little while.

HISTORIC ROYAL SPEECHES AND WRITINGS

At quarter-past eleven, the others being seated in their carriages long before, and having preceded me a short distance, I started from the State entrance in an open State landau, drawn by eight creams, dear Alix (Princess of Wales), looking very pretty in lilac ... sitting opposite me. I felt a good deal agitated, and had been so all these days, for fear anything might be forgotten or go wrong ... My escort was formed from the 2nd Life Guards and officers of the native Indian regiments, these latter riding immediately in front of my carriage. Guard of Honour of Bluejackets, the Guards and the 2nd West Surrey Regiment (Queen's) were mounted in the Quadrangle and outside the Palace.

Before leaving I touched an electric button, by which I started a message which was telegraphed throughout the whole Empire. It was the following: "From my heart I thank my beloved people, May God bless them!" At this time the sun burst out ...

We went up Constitution Hill and Piccadilly, and there were seats right along the former, where my own servants and personal attendants, and members of the other Royal Households, the Chelsea Pensioners, and the children of the Duke of York's and Greenwich schools had seats. St James's Street was beautifully decorated with festoons of flowers across the road and many loyal inscriptions. Trafalgar Square was very striking, and outside the National Gallery stands were erected for the House of Lords. The denseness of the crowds was immense, but the order maintained wonderful. The streets in the Strand are now quite wide ... Here the Lord Mayor received me and presented the sword, which I touched. He then immediately mounted his horse in his robes, and galloped past bare-headed, carrying the sword, preceding my carriage, accompanied by his Sheriffs. As we neared St Paul's the procession was often stopped, and the crowds broke out into singing *God Save the Queen*. In one house were assembled the survivors of the Charge of Balaclava [a Crimean War campaign].

In front of the Cathedral the scene was most impressive. All the Colonial troops, on foot, were drawn up round the Square. My carriage, surrounded by all the Royal Princes, was drawn up close to the steps, where the Clergy were assembled, the Bishops in rich copes, with their croziers, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London each holding a very fine one. A *Te Deum* was sung; the Lord's Prayer, most beautifully chanted, a special Jubilee prayer, and the benediction concluded the short service, preceded by the singing of the *old 100th*, in which everyone joined. *God Save the Queen* was also sung. I then spoke to the Archbishop and the Bishop of London. As I drove off, the former gave out, "Three cheers for the Queen".

I stopped in front of the Mansion House, where the Lady Mayoress presented me with a beautiful silver basket full of orchids. Here I took leave of the Lord Mayor. Both he and the Lady Mayoress were quite *émus*. We proceeded over London Bridge, where no spectators were allowed, only troops, and then along the Borough Road, where there is a very poor population, but just as enthusiastic and orderly as elsewhere. The decorations there were very pretty, consisting chiefly of festoons of flowers on either side of the street. Crossed the river again over Westminster Bridge, past the Houses of

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HISTORIC ROYAL SPEECHES AND WRITINGS

Parliament, through Whitehall, Parliament Street, which has been much enlarged, through the Horse Guards and down the Mall. The heat during the last hour was very great, and poor Lord Howe, who was riding as Gold Stick, fainted and had a bad fall, but was not seriously hurt.

Got home at a quarter to two. All the carriages that had preceded mine were drawn up in the courtyard as I drove in. Had a quiet luncheon with Vicky, Beatrice [her youngest daughter], and her three children. Troops continually passing by. Then rested and later had tea in the garden ...

There was a large dinner in the supper-room, the same as yesterday. Bertie [the Prince of Wales], who sat at my table, gave out the health of the Empress Frederick [the Queen's eldest daughter] and my distinguished guests. I walked into the Ball-room afterwards, and sat down in front of the dais. Felt very tired, but tried to speak to most of the Princes and Princesses; the suites also came in, but no one else. I wore a black and silver dress with my Jubilee necklace and the beautiful brooch given me by my Household. In the morning I wore a dress of black silk, trimmed with panels of grey satin veiled with black net and steel embroideries, and some black lace, my lovely diamond chain, given me by my younger children, round my neck. My bonnet was trimmed with creamy white flowers, and white aigrette and some black lace. I left the Ball-room at eleven. There were illuminations, which we did not see, but could hear a great deal of cheering and singing. Gave souvenirs to my children and grandchildren.

Final published extracts:

4 January 1901 at Osborne House, Isle of Wight

From not having been well, I see so badly, which is very tiresome.

12 January 1901 at Osborne House, Isle of Wight

Had a good night and could take some breakfast better. Took an hour's drive at half-past two ... It was very foggy, but the air was pleasant.

The Queen died at half past six in the evening on 22 January 1901 at Osborne House, surrounded by her children and grandchildren.