

Gaslight Gazette      Chapter XI   Send Her Victorious.

' If the Press aspires to exercise the influence of statesmen , the Press should remember that they are not free from the corresponding responsibility of statesmen ' said Prime Minister Lord Derby in 1852 and a ' Times ' leader replied ' We cannot admit that it is a ( newspaper's ) purpose to share the labours of statesmanship. The first duty of the Press is to obtain the earliest and the most correct intelligence of events of the time and instantly by disclosing them, to make them the common property of the nation '.

The people of England were largely unaware of the vicissitudes of military life at the time of Agincourt, Bosworth Field or even Malplaquet or Waterloo, apart from those who suffered the agonies and survived to tell their battle tales . There were no war correspondents no speedy communication, no photographs . The Crimea was the first war front to receive what is known today as ' media coverage ' within the technical limitations of the time.

Not that life did not go on very much as usual in England while British troops were dying of disease and wounds at Balaclava, Inkerman and Alma . ( in the Spring and Summer of 1855 Queen Victoria and her Consort were exchanging full state visits with Napoleon III in Paris and London, with all attendant junketings ) but at least the newspapers were numerous and easily available and literally brought home the reality of the war in all its ghastliness through the work of reporters such as ' The Times ' William Howard Russell and the photographer James Fenton. ( At one point it was even suggested that Russell's rations should be cut to curb his too frank journalism ! ).

Charles Strutt and his ' Gazette ' could hardly be placed in the same category but in their puny way echoed the opinion of their greater fellows , from the jingoism of the early months of 1854 to the disillusion and despair of the terrible ' Crimean Winter ' .

The war, as has been the case with most wars, was no simple matter of merely territorial claims or aspirations, but the climax of a complex series of international intrigues and clashing interests. To attribute it to a righteous crusade over the ' holy places ' of Palestine and the welfare of Orthodox Christians in the Danubian principalities of the Turkish Empire, is over simplification. The Russians had less than holy interests in their need for access to the Mediterranean through the Black Sea . Louis Napoleon , now Emperor of France, was wooing the French Catholics by his

championship of their rival claims to the holy places. Britain was being wooed as an ally by Russia, France and Turkey to further their interests and had its own trade position to protect. ' Our carpet trade is grievously injured by the war ' wrote John Bright in his diary in 1854 ' raising the price of tow '.

England's ' man in Turkey ' for over three decades ( with a 12 year gap when he sat in the English parliament ) was Stratford Canning ( Viscount Stratford de Redcliffe ) who has been depicted as favouring the Turks, whereas he only understood them with their many failings. In his early days he believed that Turkey was ' rotten at the heart with the seat of corruption in the government and over twenty years later his opinion had little changed, except that he thought reform might postpone the eventual collapse of the Turkish Empire and its seizure by Russia, with disastrous effect on English trade and security .

The prospect of an alliance with an ailing and corrupt Islamic Turkey, ambitious Orthodox Christian Russia or Roman Catholic and equally ambitious France, was a dilemma for British foreign policy, an unhappy choice of bedfellows for Britannia, who would really have preferred to preserve her virginity and sleep alone . Tsar Nicholas was still wooing Britain with promises of a deal which on the demise of Turkey would divide her empire, Russia would undertake to protect the Danubian principalities, occupy Constantinople until it could be declared a free city and give Russia access to the Mediterranean, Britain would get Egypt and Crete.

A Russian alliance was not inviting, Palmerston, who was Home Secretary at the time, considered that Christians would fare no better under the rule of the Tsar than they did under the Turkish Sultan and the Queen and the Prince Consort thought the division of the Turkish empire to be unseemly when the body was not yet dead, let alone cold. And while the cabinet argued and diplomatic wifes hummed ( the invention of the electric telegraph now enabled decisions to be taken in London rather than by our men in Constantinople or Vienna .

' Telegraphic despatches are the very devil ' said Lord Clarendon who had succeeded Lord John Russell as Foreign Secretary in October 1853 and Russell himself regarded them as a ' fatal facility which allowed no time for government deliberation ) fleets began to move and ultimatums were issued . Despite the friendship moves in high places France was not popular among ordinary English folk - after all it was only a couple of generations or so since Waterloo .

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The Russians by now had decided to force Turkey's hand by invading the Danubian principalities if their demands were not met and in June 1853 the British sent a fleet to Beskia Bay outside the Dardenelles with Napoleon III lending the support of a French squadron. Stratford Canning was still desperately working to preserve peace . Lord Aberdeen Prime Minister of a Coalition government spoke of his strong feeling that under present circumstances war would not only be an act of insanity but disgrace all of us concerned and suggested that the great powers, Russia, Austria, France and Britain should not be drawn into a policy inconsistent with the peace of Europe as well as the interests of Turkey . But in October, tired of waiting for action , the Turks took matters in their own hands and attacked Russia in the principalities and a month later , in retaliation, a flotilla of Turkish ships was destroyed at Sinope. The steps between war and peace had now become increasingly slippery and before Christmas Aberdeen had agreed to join the French in blockading the Russian fleet at Sebastopol and to protect Turkey from any further aggression .

Aberdeen was still the Chamberlain of his time, even when early in February 1854 the Russians withdrew their ambassadors from London and Paris he was declaring ' I still say war is not inevitable, unless we are determined to have it ,for which all I know may be the case '.

Perhaps England was determined to have war Certainly the country was being swept over by a wave of Jingoism ( a word still yet to be coined ) in which Charles Strutt and the ' Gazette ' readily played their part . Tennyson was soon to write of the ' blood red blossom of war with a heart of fire ..... ' as a purifier rather than a pestilence , and in ' Maud '

' And many a darkness in the light shall leap  
And shine in the sudden making of splendid names  
And noble thought be free under the sun  
And the heart of the people beat with one desire  
For the peace that is deemed no peace is over and done...'

Thomas Carlyle, however, said he had ' hardly seen a madder business blaming the war fervour on the press and 'idle editors' Gladstone , now Chancellor of the Exchequer , thought Russia should be checked but had no time for Turkey .

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'The Times' paid lip service to the war cause, although its Editor, John Thadeus Delane, expressed personal doubts. The paper was said to have published the text of the ultimatum to the Tsar in February before he had received it. 'The people wanted it' it was said but they might not have done so had they realised the terrible state of unpreparedness of the country's military resources.

England declared war on "March 28 1854, now formally allied to France and Turkey. In February the first contingents of the Guards had already left, cheering the Queen. Later, a few, very few, of them might meet her again the following year when she privately wept over their mutilated survivors. The 'Gazette' was very ready to add its editorial cheers to the general tumult in which Turkey, never before a very popular foreigner since the struggle for Greek independence, suddenly became a heroic martyr with exhibitions and lectures extolling its cultural and other virtues.

The Crimea too, in common with all wars, had now become a battle not merely for national interests but 'for the freedom of the civilised world'. Strutt did add that the Mediterranean Sea was 'de facto an English lake' and the navigation of the Black Sea a central European lever of the utmost importance to our oriental interests.' Among all the wars in European states, and perhaps in the world, not one has possibly the importance of that which is now waged between the Allied Powers and Russia'.

Strutt also appeared to have an extraordinary knowledge( probably gleaned from some contemporary journal) that the days of the Russian capital St Petersburgh ( later Petrograd and now Leningrad ) were geographically if not militarily, numbered. Every Emperor of Russia, he said, had known that the destruction of St Petersburgh was inevitable. 'To the stranger's eye, while roving in that magnificent capital, nothing could present a more enduring appearance, the enormous quays extending for miles are of granite, the residences of a size which we have no conception of in England, some of them realising incomes of £15,000 a year. The palaces and public offices are vast and apparently interminable, the churches, statues and public monuments on the same extensive scale ... but alas, the palaces are of plaster, these mighty quays and edifices are erected on a swampy rotten marsh, already the timber piles on which the city is built are giving evidence of decay, wharfs are sinking from the level, the monoliths, perhaps

the largest in the world, being 80 feet in length...a single block of granite... are cracked near the top from the yielding beneath and a recently erected church of St Catherine is exhibiting unmistakeable evidence of giving way. Added to this St Petersburgh is liable every year to destruction from the Neva which flows through its streets and which at the breaking of the winter comes down with a giant's power, crowded with masses of ice crushing over each other and dealing havoc on everything in its way . At these times the bridges of boats ( for none of stone could stand against the pressure ) are hastily removed and all this metropolis is in danger and deep peril . Several narrow escapes have already occurred. When the strong south west wind blows off the gulf of Finland that will probably be the last of St Petersburgh..... how important then for Russia to possess a southern capital... and there is only one spot...Constantinople. '

Russia undoubtedly wanted Constantinople , even if the reason was not the imminent demise of St Petersburgh , but the British ability to prevent them gaining their objective was another matter. After forty years of comparative peace , apart from troubles in India, the Army had very little experience of active service , manouvres were practically unheard of and training at a minimum , reforms had only half-heartedly begun to improve the lot of the ordinary soldier who was ill fed, ill clothed and ill housed. Death from disease was more likely than death from wounds , that from tuberculosis being five times that of civilians . Punishment for the most minor offences was severe and brutal, although in 1850 flogging had been reduced from 300 to 50 lashes ( until 1812 it could be unlimited at the court's discretion ).

Tennyson's ' sudden making of splendid names ' had little material to draw on Among the best undoubtedly was Lord Raglan ( Lord Fitzroy James Henry Somerset, son of the Duke of Beaufort ) who had served with Wellington at Waterloo, where he lost an arm . Brave and able in his youth he had been a staff officer for forty years and was now well over 60 when he was appointed Commander-in-Chief of an Army which had only the vaguest strategy as to where it was to fight, other than to keep Russia out of Constantinople and force them to leave the Danubian principalities.

Lord Cardigan ( James Thomas Brudenell ) who was to lead the disastrous Charge of the Light Brigade was ~~xx~~ hated not only by his men but also by his fellow officers . He had become an MP at the age of twenty after he left Oxford and when he entered the Army attained swift promotion by purchase . His temperament was quarrelsome

and self centred , earned him few friends and his esteem sank even further when he took his own private yacht to the Crimea and slept on board, thus separating himself from the privations of his men. His divisional commander was his brother-in-law, George Charles Bingham, Earl of Lucan, who was equally unpopular with the troops. Both men were in their fifties, and another even more elderly warrior was Admiral Sir Charles Napier, in command of the naval expedition , whose attitude was hardly modern even by 1854 standards , as shown by his instructions to his men ' sharpen your cutlasses and the day's your own... ' .

The first plan , to tackle the Russians in the invaded principalities ( included in the present Bulgaria ) came to naught as the enemy had withdrawn before the British arrived already short of rations and equipment and suffering from fever and cholera which had attacked them on the voyage.

A public squabble developed on the next move , both within the Cabinet, which was still bitterly divided on the war, and in the columns of the newspapers , particularly 'The Times' , but it was eventually decided that Sebastopol was to be the next target. Accordingly, in the early autumn of 1854, 60,000 French and 40,000 British troops were landed on the Crimean coast a few miles north of the city. Within days the allies had won an initial victory at the crossing of the River Alma , about 25 miles north of Sebastopol, but the initiative was soon lost through lack of numbers to surround the city and the presence of a Russian contingent which in its turn put the allied camp into its own state of siege.

However, on October 2 1854, Charles "trutt, in common with the rest of the country, had launched into a confident paean of praise for the mistaken news that the Crimean war was over almost before it had begun . ' The trumpet and the proclamation have just told the panting millions of Britain that the valour of arms under Providence has achieved a signal victory over the barbarism of the Czar... and this morning the quick boom of the gun has repeated the tidings at daybreak. "enceforth September 20 ( the day of the battle at Alma ) will stand in the annals of England as a time to be remembered. Our citizens will go this morning with a lighter step to the counter and the mart, carrying with them the feeling of warm congratulations and beating hearts throbbing with thankfulness at the blessed return of peace and that the severe but temporary restrictions on commerce will soon be removed '.

It was a very different story to that told twelve months later

after the calamities of Balaklava and the decimation of the Army by disease and mismanagement as well as the assaults of the enemy.

' The past twelve months has been a waste of life, time and money and ammunition ' says the ' Gazette. ' Sebastopol is as strong as ever but if it is taken...what next ? It will be a bloody, tedious and uneventful war . In the open fields the brave troops of England and France may defy the world but sending them to a foreign and inhospitable soil to fight against earth and stone and subject to the cowardly and murderous sorties of the enemy is a mockery of war ! (The "arquess of Queensberry's rules were obviously being broken !)

That twelve months had included some of the bloodiest fighting in the most terrible conditions with almost unequalled heroism, even if some of it was brought about by the blundering incompetence of those in command, most notable of course being that of the Light Brigade at Balaclava. The mistaken, or misinterpreted order ' to prevent the enemy from carrying away the guns ' has passed into history, the blame was never finally attributed. Was it Raglan who gave the ambiguous order ? Captain Logan who conveyed it to Lord Lucan and later tried in vain to avert the disaster ? Whatever happened , the Brigade, led by Lord Cardigan, whose courage on this occasion was undoubted , rode through the Valley of Death and worse still , those who survived, back again. The official losses were 113 killed and 134 wounded with the loss of nearly 500 horses. The poor horses ! Perhaps one should not mourn them when so many human lives were lost but those splendid animals were the same cavalry mounts which had been bred for state occasions, not war , many of them would have taken part in events such as Wellington's funeral or other great ceremonial occasions , illsuited for their present ghastly business and as ill-fed and ill-housed as their riders.

What can compensate for the loss of our brave soldiers ? asked Strutt, ' Out Cavalry, even under the command of mistaken discipline, charged on close to the gaping mouths of the cannon and 500 of them were slain ( statistics were notoriously confused at the time ) . What can compensate for the blunders and neglects of men whom the British people have confided the management of this war ? Listen to the lament of the sorrowing parents , the bereaved widows and the destitute orphans and say what patriotic fund or state pension can soothe the afflicted, heal the wounds of the bleeding hearts ? A curse upon the war ! What is its object ? To preserve

the balance of power.' This balance of power recognises no right for the people but all power for the few who lord it over the many. ' ' Much later he was to ask ' Was Lord Cardigan a hero at Balaclava ? ' commenting on a pamphlet bearing this inscription. ' In our humble opinion ' says the ' Gazette ', ' Lord Cardigan is a brave man and in the Balaclavan charge acquitted himself a hero. This is an answer to , a categorical question. We do not think it generous that his lordships early career should be brought forward in order to obscure the glory which the present and all future ages will assign to the wild charge of the Light Brigade, nor do we think it wise or polite that the present period of time should be selected for the disparagement of the commander of a Brigade of our Light Cavalry whose conduct in the East will probably contrast with any now there ! '

' A straw suspended near the eye  
Has breadth enough to blot the sky ,  
But hung at distance from the view  
Lies buried in the boundless blue. '

A Patriotic Appeal went out to the people of Britain for funds to aid the widows and dependents of the Crimean casualties ' It is certain that the issue will need little eloquence to stir the soul of our neighbours ' said Strutt's editorial. ' To touch the sympathies it is only necessary to pronounce the names of Alma, Balaclava and Inkerman. The mere mention of these names sends a thrill though every breast, making an Englishman glory in his land. But while the heart swells at the deeds of valour done by our brave countrymen in the Crimea, the eye drops on the broad pit and the long trenches filling with the mangled dead. There lie the stark forms of men who once moved among us , whose feet were familiar with our thoroughfares . Fancy leads us to the bereaved ones of those fallen warriors , the shriek of the widow and the sob of the little ones asking for their sires. Every coin cast in this national offering will carry comfort to the combatants in the territory of the Czar, every surviving soldier will feel doubly armed, conscious that his loved ones are cared for at home . The land knows no rest, its great soul goes round Sebastopol by day and moves round it in dreams at night, ' . On November 25 the inmates of the London Reformatory for adult males met and passed a resolution that having no money they agreed to abstain from food on Monday November 27 (' being one of the best days food ') ' and our noble friend the Rt Hon Earl of Saftesbury requested to forward the proceeds of the days provisions to the Patriotic Fund.'

' On the evening of the same day we should unite in fervent prayer for the restoration of peace. " The resolution was signed by the whole of the inmates, one hundred in number and counted out, the value of the day's provisions amounted to £ 3.15 $\frac{3}{4}$  ( an indication of how little was spent on the reformatory food... even on one of the best days...about sevenpence a head ! ).

The 'Gazette' commented . 'The loss of those farthings were of value since they were earned for the national cause and for the comfort of those who suffer by the hunger of the contributors.'

On March 21 1855 a Day of General Humiliation and Prayer was held at St Mary Abbots Church, Kensington , with four services at 9 and 11 a.m and 3 and 7 p.m. at each of which a long sermon was preached with collections for parochial charities.

'Prince Albert, for all his interest in military ceremonial and presence , ( he was responsible for the redesign of a number of military uniforms ) never went to the war front. The Queen's cousin, Prince George of Cambridge, did go and wept at the sights he saw there , which one feels was to his credit . ' Why does he not come himself and have a try ' he is reported to have commented on the Consort.' He wouldn't stay 24 hours I know ! '. The Queen did not approve of her kinsman pleading sickness to avoid returning to the bloody scenes which so affected him but she did feel for the wounded of all ranks when their suffering was brought home to her by an inspection of a party of the Grenadiers who visited her at Buckingham Palace .

' It made one's heart bleed to see such tall noble-looking men so mutilated ' she wrote in her journal . ' One had lost a leg, others their arms, some had been shot in the body. I had meant to make some sort of general speech but I was so agitated it all stuck in my throat and all I could say was that I hoped they would all soon get their medals which they well deserved '. After meeting another group of the survivors from the Alma Heights and Inkerman , which affected her equally, she vowed to try and be of use to them and to find them employment, as those discharged would receive very small pensions which they would not be able to live on.

Back in Kensington, in between vacillating editorials on the success or failure of the war, ( mostly the latter ) Charles Strutt has discovered a 'Crimean snowdrop ' growing in the garden of the Duke of Argyll's house on Campden Hill and wrote a poem on it.

The plant had apparently been uprooted by a visitor to the Crimean peninsular shortly before the outbreak of the war.

' Perhaps some babe, that seasons gone  
Beside this 'rimean snowdrop played  
Hath learned to hate that haunt as where  
His father fell by ball or blade.

From wandering Cossack's careless tread  
The stranger stooped that gem to save  
Removed it gently from the mould  
To cross the Euxine's changeful wave.

On British soil the gathered plant  
At kiss of Spring began to smile  
And yet as Mercy's monument  
Adorns the "den of Argyll.....'

In January 1855 a Motion had been put to Parliament to enquire into the condition of the Army in the Crimea. Florence Nightingale and her gallant band of nurses had arrived at Scutari in October 1854 but even their efforts had been unable to save thousands dying. There were no drugs or antiseptics, no clean linen and the conditions in the hospitals killed as many as those wounded in battle. During January and February 1855 there were not less than 13,000 sick. A Commission went out to the battle scene and were as severely critical of the administration as they were loud in praise of the bravery and endurance of the troops. Popular indignation rose against Lord Aberdeen and after his defeat on a motion calling for an inquiry into the conduct of the war, the Coalition government collapsed and Palmerston was called back to form what was virtually a Whig ministry, although the Queen did not find it at all to her liking to lose 'her dear kind excellent friend' Lord Aberdeen.

Those at home could only hope and pray. One cannot help suspecting some financially ulterior motive in the 'Gazette' advertisement under the heading of 'Our Wounded Soldiers in the Crimea' in which Morey and Emmanuel announced that 'having been applied to to supply the above requisites which are greatly needed at the present time, confidently appeal to the patriotic and spirited ladies of Kensington to aid them in so doing. A fair price is given for white rags of all kinds as they can be made useful in the present emergency....'.

A less commercial attitude was taken by Mr Swain, the auctioneer, of The Lodge, Notting Hill, ' that gentleman having disinterestingly undertaken to forward such contributions ( lint or linen ) to the vessels appointed for that purpose.'

In April 1855, Napoleon III and his Empress Eugenie paid a visit to England. ( A Spanish commoner, Eugenie de Montijo who was to have a great influence on the Second Empire, not only in fashion ). The Queen welcomed her ' dear cousin ' at the gates of Windsor Castle with an embrace and dinner was served in St Georges Hall followed by a Ball in the Picture Gallery ( the former name of the Waterloo Gallery having been tactfully changed ) ' It was like a wonderful dream ' said Victoria and the Emperor was invested with the Order of the Garter. The Queen was much impressed with this ' extraordinary man with great courage , unflinching firmness of purpose, self-reliance and perseverance , easy quiet and dignified as if he had been born a King's son. ( which of course he was not, having set himself up as Emperor following the 1848 Revolution. )

His predecessor. Louis Philippe had been a Citizen King, although of Royal Blood , the eldest son of the Duke of Orleans, known as Philippe Egalite, who voted for the execution of Louis XVI but was himself also executed in the same year of the Terror . Louis Philippe served in the revolutionary army before fleeing to America but returning to France in 1814 after Napoleon had retired to Elba, and eventually being made democratic king with no claim to divine rights in 1830 .

He was forced to flee again in 1848 after the Revolution which was eventually to install Napoleon's nephew, Louis Napoleon Bonaparte as the first President of France in 1849, by an enormous majority and then as Emperor in a coup d'etat in 1852 , approved by Lord Palmerston but hardly anyone else .

The Queen's attitude towards the new French Emperor had been that it was necessary to be watchful, extremely sensible and sensitive , but she had no personal hostility towards him and had to accept him anyway . Louis Napoleon had been brought up in a German school and spoke French with a German accent but he did not impress Albert when he visited him to inspect the French troops .

In August 1855 it was the Queen's turn to journey to France, accompanied by Albert and the two eldest children, the Princess Royal, aged 14 and the Prince of Wales , 13. On Friday August 24 she visited the tomb of Napoleon escorted by his descendant.

Monarchs mute for centuries spoke in their tombs eulogised Strutt, Victoria in Invalides ! The Great Corpse under the dome of the Pantheon moved his shroud...the bones of the battalions buried near Brussels quickened in sympathy, the calm verdant plain of Waterloo quivered with joy. ... the union of two great ancient empires ..the triumph of right over wrong , peace over bate, and the coming of the time when nations shall learn war no more.....

On the war front such a time seemed as far away as ever . The initiative had now passed into the hands of the French and the new attack on Sebastopol came in the same month as the Queen's visit to France. Lord Raglan died at the height of the final campaign and Tsar Nicholas of Russia had died in March, the main characters in the dreadful drama were fading away and Louis Napoleon was tiring of the battle . In September 1855, almost exactly a year since the false news of the previous year, the announcement could really be made that that Sebastopol had fallen. It was a time for celebration, congratulation justification and recrimination and Charles Strutt was in on all of them.

If only Wellington had still been alive it would all have been so different, he felt, ( forgetting that the splendid old gentleman would now be 86 ! ) . How we feel the need of only one single statesman ! Where is the man who has not deplored over and over again during the past twelve months the loss of that great statesman! What great weight his counsels would have had with all Europe. It was the death of this great man which determined Russia to draw the sword. Lord Brougham and Lord Lyndhurst are both gifted men but they are aged. We have clever men as plentiful as mushrooms this season, but they are selfish and ambitious. Louis Napoleon was the man of the age, said Strutt ( amazing how politics makes friends of old enemies ! ) having satisfied the conditions of greatness , all honour to him ! He has exhibited a magnificent spectacle of self-reliance sagacity and determination compared with him our British statesmen seem pygmies ! ?

The success of the Queen's summer visit to France had obviously rubbed off on Strutt as well as on everyone else, to turn the unpopular Louis Napoleon into a national hero pretty well overnight. His opportunism had precipitated the war in which Britain had born a great weight of the early campaigns when France had been no better prepared for such an onslaught and whose troops had been

by a sick general , but they had, with a greater number of re-inforcements at their disposal , borne the brunt of Sebastopol and when the peace calls went out they had the last word.

Louis Napoleon had also just become a father , Lord Clarendon reporting that he was delighted with his son, was dying for a peace and did not care sixpence for the terms !

Sebastopol was indeed the beginning of the end , although the Treaty of Paris was not signed until the spring of 1856.

Lossing Russia the control of the mouth of the Danube and the Black Sea was closed to warships . But it was an uneasy truce which as the 'eastern question ' was to nag on until late in the century.

Kensington could now forget its appeals for rags for bandages, and Charles Strutt resume his editorials on the need for better street lighting, the removal of putrid pools, less drunkenness and the happy domestic trivia of urban life. After his brief patriotic outbursts on the Queen's diplomatic visit to France there is little more said about the royal family other than a report of the celebration of the birthday of the Queen's mother HRH the Duchess of Kent .<sup>4</sup> August 22 1855 : Friday last being the birthday of HRH the Duchess of Kent a merry peal was rung on the church bells of this parish early in the morning and the Royal Standard raised. Her Royal Highness's town tradesmen dined together at the British Hotel, Cockspur Street. An excellent dessert was sent for the occasion by her Majesty's command . The Royal Duchess also directed a fat buck be supplied . Mr Edward Snell, junior, filled the chair . In the evening the houses of Her Royal Highness's tradesmen in London were illuminated.

Strutt's was not one of them, but he could always hope for the future and his muse was never silent

' In our own unmatched Victoria  
Every virtue shrined we trace,  
Flinging forth a rainbow glory  
Spanning o'er her empire's space.

Rouse the belfries ! Let their music  
Upward waft the nation's prayer  
That long years through peace and plenty  
God our gracious Queen may spare .'

.....O.....