

A Study of Royalty.

Ouida in June Forum.

(Continued from last issue.)

The chief interest, however, in the study of royalty does not so much lie in its political influences, good or bad, as in its social influences, and these seem never to be considered by those who write upon it. The political influence of all European monarchies, except those of Russia and Germany, is nil; the social influence of them all is immense. Is it beneficial? I think I am justified in saying it is not. The sovereigns and their scions may be all that is good, well-meaning, pains-taking, amiable or what you will in their own characters; but the snobbism which is engendered by their proximity is most injurious to human nature. The fiction which sets them apart as something superior, intangible, exalted, is a degrading and a foolish one for their peoples. The language and attitude of men and women toward royalty is entirely wanting in self-respect. It may certainly be said that no one who respected himself or herself, would prostrate himself with the sycophancy which is to be observed in all those who receive or are received by any royal persons. I know an accomplished, serious, very intellectual, and very agreeable woman who in a throne-room or anywhere else when she is face to face with her queen, becomes a wholly changed being, her face beams with an imbecile radiance, her smile is nervous, her eyes are excited, her whole person is convulsed with an ecstasy of desire to be especially singled out and conversed with by her Sovereign: Is it wholesome, is it even tolerable that one human being should be thus affected by the presence of another? Other acquaintances of mine are in perpetual apparent worship of another sovereign. Where she goes, they go. If she makes a little trip outside her kingdom they trip too. They are always within her call and just outside her gates. Of course their fidelity, which is to them a costly one, gets rewarded by invitations to dinner and luncheon, to weddings and baptisms, and an occasional sipping of tea by royal lips in gracious visits to their own drawing rooms. But this devotion does not prevent them from making great fun of the august person behind her back. Perhaps she equally makes fun of them, and of their eternal pursuit of her, behind their's. Anyhow the comedy is unworthy and the prostration insincere. Going on as it does, season after season, year after year, it

must produce a baneful effect upon both, the idolaters and the idol. If it were sincere its effects would be impoverishing and belittling. Being insincere its results upon character are of necessity execrable.

It will be objected that toadyism, flunkyism, snobbism, are indigeneous to human nature and would always be found in some degree somewhere, and this is no doubt true. But weeds which are recognized as weeds are not as baneful as weeds which are allowed to pass as flowers and as such are cultivated. It will also be argued that an aristocracy is as harmful as a royalty in creation of these vices of servility and subserviency. But it is not so, because an aristocracy commands no obeisance and does not necessitate any formula. If the greatest seignior in the world enter your house, you receive him as you would any other gentleman, and need make no difference for him whatever. To a royal person, custom and etiquette exact a manner of greeting, a manner of speaking, a manner of writing, which are in themselves offensive to the self-respect and good sense of every independent person. You must wait for a royal person to begin the conversation. You must stand till the royal person tells you to sit down; you must say "sir" or "madam" continually, or their equivalents in whatever language you speak; you must receive none of your friends so long as the royal head be beneath your roof, unless he has previously expressed a wish to see them; you must contravene no royal opinion or desire however preposterous; you must let the poor royalty languish in ennui rather than revive it by the galvanic shock of any opposition or innovation. You must always in writing to, or of them, put capital letters to the personal pronouns used to, or of, them as people put a capital letter to "Him" when they mean to indicate God.

To be continued.

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