

**SOME RECOLLECTIONS
OF THE LAST DAYS OF
HIS LATE MAJESTY KING
WILLIAM THE FOURTH**

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Some Recollections of the Last Days of His Late Majesty King William the Fourth by John Ryle
Wood

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JOHN RYLE WOOD

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*These were placed by order of
the linen boarder outside and
written by the North Chamber wood,*

ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
1894

SOME RECOLLECTIONS

*by some transmitted to many of the
late King's personal Friends.*

OF

Alford,

1837

THE LAST DAYS OF

His Late Majesty

KING WILLIAM THE FOURTH.

John Baynes Esq.

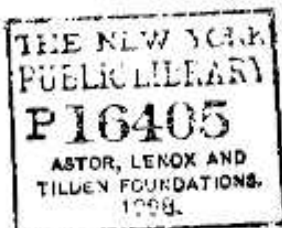
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THOUGH a slight decline of strength had been perceptible to the immediate attendants of our lamented King, at the commencement of the year, yet it was not till the month of May, that the state of His Majesty's health excited any serious apprehensions. On the 17th of that month, His Majesty held a levee, but on his return to Windsor Castle, showed great signs of debility and exhaustion, and oppression of breathing, in consequence of which he had considerable difficulty in ascending the staircase; and when he had reached the corridor, was under the necessity of resting on the nearest sofa.

Though the King had experienced very considerable oppression during the night, yet His Majesty appeared refreshed, and was considered better the next morning, Thursday, May 18, and was not prevented from going to St. James's to hold a drawing-room, which had been appointed for that day. On these occasions, the last on which His Majesty appeared in public, he sat down; but this deviation from his usual practice did not excite so much alarm as the traces of sickness visible in his countenance. His debility, however, notwithstanding the exertions of the day, on reaching Windsor Castle, was not so great on this as on the preceding evening, and a slight improvement the following morning revived the hopes and spirits of His Majesty's anxious friends.

This day, Friday, May 18, was the anniversary of the battle of La Hogue, and by com-

mand of His Majesty several officers of distinction resident in the neighbourhood, together with the field officers of the garrison, had been invited to dinner. In the course of the evening, the King detailed, with great minuteness, the causes, progress, and consequences of the different naval wars in which this country had been engaged, during the last and the preceding century, and gave, perhaps, greater proof on that than on any other occasion of the extraordinary accuracy of his memory, and of his intimate acquaintance with English history. His Majesty's voice, with the exception of one or two moments of oppression of breathing, was very strong and clear, but no one present could fail to entertain apprehensions as to the effects of this exertion.

The next day, Saturday, May 20, His Majesty continued to suffer from the same

distressing symptoms. At breakfast and luncheon, his appetite, which had been gradually declining, altogether failed, and at the latter meal, he fell back in his chair with a sensation of faintness, to which several persons alluded with strong expressions of alarm. His Majesty, on leaving the white drawing-room, sat down in the corridor, evidently feeble and exhausted. He did not leave the castle this afternoon. At dinner, His Majesty was affected by a similar seizure, and to prevent increasing faintness, the Duchess of Gloucester, who was seated next to him, bathed his forehead and temples with eau-de-cologne. His Majesty rallied in the evening, but it was not till ten o'clock that he consented, in compliance with the Queen's request, to abandon his intention of going to St. James's, the following morning, to be

present at the re-opening of the Chapel Royal.

The King retired to bed at his usual hour of eleven, labouring under manifest indisposition. This was the last time His Majesty appeared in the drawing-room. The next morning, increasing indisposition confined him to his private apartments, which he never quitted during the continuance of his fatal malady.

The state of His Majesty's health now excited much and well-founded alarm. Sir H. Halford and Dr. Chambers were sent for; but as the latter had no ostensible situation in the Royal household, it was thought advisable, in order to avoid causing any unnecessary alarm to the King, to introduce him to His Majesty as the medical attendant of the Queen, who had at this time but very imperfectly recovered from a long and dan-