

**WHEN ALL MEN STARVE: SHOWING
HOW ENGLAND HAZARDED HER
NAVAL SUPREMACY, AND THE
HORRORS WHICH FOLLOWED THE
INTERRUPTION OF HER FOOD SUPPLY**

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When All Men Starve: Showing how England Hazarded Her Naval Supremacy, and the Horrors Which Followed the Interruption of Her Food Supply by Charles Gleig

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CHARLES GLEIG

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By CHARLES GLEIG

"You, you, that have the ordering of her Fleet
If you should only compass her disgrace
When all men starve, the wild mob's million feet
Will kick you from your place,
But then too late, too late."

The Fleet.—LORD TENNYSON.

JOHN LANE, *The Bodley Head*

NEW YORK AND LONDON

1898

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1898

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WHEN ALL MEN STARVE

CHAPTER I

THE YEAR OF LOYALTY

YES, that remarkable outburst of loyalty in the summer of 1897 was doubtless a perfectly genuine indication of the high esteem in which the veteran Queen of England was held by a not inconsiderable minority of her subjects.

Her Majesty Queen Victoria, who completed in 1897 the sixtieth year of her reign, was undoubtedly beloved by the few hundreds of courtiers, nobles, and gentry to whom she was personally known ; whilst her domestic virtues, domestic griefs, her charitable impulses, had earned for her the respect of many thousands of honest workers throughout the kingdom who read their newspapers and were thus assured that a Queen of England existed. In many a humble English and Scottish home portraits of

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the Queen are said to have adorned the white-washed walls ; crude portraits, representing her Majesty surrounded by her perplexingly numerous children and grandchildren, garish prints which usually bore but slight resemblance to the royal personages depicted. In certain parts of the kingdom too, as at Windsor, the Isle of Wight, Balmoral, the august Sovereign had even been seen in the flesh by gaping rustics ; for at these places Queen Victoria was provided with magnificent castles and palaces ; and here she chiefly lived, preferring the bracing air of Balmoral, or the sea breezes of Osborne* to the murky, smoke-stained atmosphere in which some odd millions of her subjects toiled, moiled, sweated, shivered and ran the whole gamut of squalid urban life. Earlier in the reign, London shopkeepers had sullenly resented the closing of Buckingham Palace, the preference shown by the Queen for country air ; but to the working classes this was a matter of no consequence, and in the Year of Loyalty even the tradesmen forgot their old grievance and shouted "God save the Queen" as lustily as the very courtiers.

There is abundant evidence, indeed, that the Queen was popular, as popular as an abstract, constitutional Sovereign could well have become

* *Court Circular.*

THE YEAR OF LOYALTY

during a long and stainless life spent far apart from the life of the teeming millions of workers. In that decade of inartistic production many of the lesser periodicals and magazines contained articles descriptive of the Queen's early, middle, or later life, and from the very frequency of their repetition these would seem to have been appreciated by middle-class readers.* In the press, too, the daily and weekly journals devoted much space to the doings of royalty, and personal paragraphs relating to the Court are said to have been paid for at the high rate of twopence the line. The modest achievements of the numerous Princes and Princesses of the Blood, their social engagements, their journeyings, their marryings, the birth of their many children, how they dressed, shot, gambled or gave alms—all these fascinating details were regularly recorded for the enlightenment of the stolid middle class.

As for the working men, these appear to have concerned themselves but little with the doings of royalty; although already there was a section, the Socialists, which openly preached republican principles and demanded, amidst the jeers of the regularly employed, the suppression of the idle rich and the nationalisation of the land. Enthusiasts, dressed in soft felt

* *Charing Cross Magazine, Balmoral Magazine, &c.*