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***The media image of Prince Albert based on selected
British press titles and journalism (1840-1861).***

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Table of Contents

Introduction	1
1. A short history of the British press.....	9
2. The leading British newspapers and their role in image creation.....	22
2.1. Introduction	22
2.2. The main London newspapers.....	27
2.2.1. The Times	27
2.2.2. The Spectator.....	29
2.2.3. The London Evening Standard	34
2.2.4. The Sun.....	36
2.2.5. The Morning Post & the Morning Herald	37
2.2.6. The Globe	38
2.2.7. John Bull.....	39
2.2.8. The Illustrated London News	39
2.2.9. Bell's Life in London and Sporting Chronicle	40
2.3. The satirical press.....	40
2.3.1. The Satirist; or the Censor of the Times & the Penny Satirist.....	41
2.3.2. Punch	43
2.5. Summary	50
3. Prince Albert's first steps into royal life	52
3.1. Prince Albert & his marital prospects	52
3.2. Prince Albert & religion	60
3.3. Prince Albert & his annuity.....	65
3.4. Prince Albert & his position within the Royal Court	72
3.5. Prince Albert and the royal marriage.....	77
3.6. Prince Albert and the Regency	83
3.7. Prince Albert: master in his own home?.....	88
3.8. Summary	94
4. The Great Exhibition and other stories as depicted in the press	95
4.1. Prince Albert & his involvement in public life	95
4.2. The Great Exhibition.....	102
4.3. Albert the Farmer: the Windsor and Isle of Wight model farms	116
4.4. Albert 'the fashion trend setter'	125
4.5. The 1854 scandal: political involvement	130
4.6. The political pamphlet in defence of the Prince.....	141
4.7. Albert the Consort	143

4.8. Albert's death and the press.....	146
4.9. Summary	162
5. Conclusion	164
Annex:.....	172
An Act for the Naturalization of His Serene Highness Prince Albert of Saxe Coburg and Gotha. 7th February 1840.....	172
An Act for enabling Her Majesty to grant an Annuity to His Serene Highness Prince Albert of Saxe Coburg and Gotha. 7th February 1840.....	173
An Act to provide for the Administration of the Government in case the Crown should de- scend to any Issue of Her Majesty whilst such Issue shall be under the Age of Eighteen Years, and for the Care and Guardianship of such Issue. 4th August 1840.....	174
The Banquet given by the Right Hon. The Lord Mayor, Thomas Farncombe, to Her Maj- esty's Ministers, Foreign Ambassadors, Royal Commissioners of the Exhibition of 1851, and the Mayors of one hundred and eighty towns, at the Mansion House, 21st March 1850	177
PRINCE ALBERT IN ENGLAND.....	180
Bibliography	183

Introduction

Queen Victoria, the grandmother of Europe, was one of the most influential monarchs of the modern world to make her mark on history. Her image is still used today, appearing not only as a historical figure but also in a wide range of popular culture. Her persona, character, charisma, and undeniable influence not only in terms of politics, but also culture, and social sphere, has been the topic of numerous works, list just Lucy Worsley¹, Helen Rappaport², Margaret Homans³, Christopher Hibbert⁴, Lytton Strachey⁵, Van Der Kiste⁶, as well as those translated from English and written by Polish authors.⁷

¹ L. Worsley, *Queen Victoria. Daughter, wife, mother, widow*, London 2018.

² H. Rappaport, *Magnificent Obsession: Victoria, Albert, and the Death That Changed the British Monarchy*, London 2012.

³ M. Homans, "To the Queen's Private Apartments": Royal Family Portraiture and the Construction of Victoria's Sovereign Obedience, "Victorian Studies" 1993, vol. 37, nr 1, s. 1–41.

⁴ Ch. Hibbert, *Queen Victoria. A personal history*, Harper Collins Publishers, London 2000.

⁵ L. Strachey, *Queen Victoria*, First Harvest/HBJ Book 1978.

⁶ J. Van Der Kiste, *Queen Victoria's children*, Cheltenham 2019.

⁷ G. Bidwell, *Wiktoria żona Alberta*, Katowice 1969; C. Erickson, *Jej Wysokość królowa Wiktoria*, Warszawa 1998; R. Marx, *Królowa Wiktoria. Królowa Wielkiej Brytanii, cesarzowa Indii, symbol epoki*, Warszawa 2006; M. Misztal, *Królowa Wiktoria*, Wrocław 2010; A. Muhlstein, *Królowa Wiktoria*, Kraków 1995; L. Strachey, *Królowa Wiktoria*, Warszawa 1960.

The available Polish publications of Mariusz Misztal, ‘Królowa Wiktorija’⁸, ‘Królowej Wiktorii spojrzanie na macierzyństwo’⁹, ‘Najsłynniejsza pracująca matka na całej planecie. Królowa Wiktorija jako nieświadoma feministka’¹⁰, and other, allow to peek into the everyday life of the Queen, her attitude towards motherhood, family, and the role of women. Whereas Dorota Babilas, in her book ‘Wiktorija znaczy zwycięstwo’¹¹, skilfully presented the various spheres that employ the image of Queen Victoria, allowing the reader to see how the usage of her persona evolved over the years – from strictly being a historical figure to one entering pop-culture, and even science-fiction.

However, when analysing the period, one should not focus solely on Victoria and her vast influence on the era which bears her name. The discerning eye will note that it is not possible to give full justice to her without reflecting upon the person of her husband, Prince Albert. Many dwelled into the private sphere of the most famous royal marriage, allowing themselves to analyse the most unusual arrangement Queen Victoria and Prince Albert enjoyed. Citing Gillian Gill, they were indeed partners, but also rulers, and perhaps, as she claims,

⁸ M. Misztal, *Królowa Wiktorija*, Wrocław 2010.

⁹ M. Misztal, *Królowej Wiktorii spojrzanie na macierzyństwo* [in:] *Człowiek w teatrze świata. Studia o historii i kulturze*, Kraków 2010, s. 53–68.

¹⁰ M. Misztal, *Najsłynniejszą pracującą matka na całej planecie. Królowa Wiktorija jako nieświadoma feministka*, “Studia Historyczne” 2021, vol. 62, nr 1 s. 101-110.

¹¹ D. Babilas, *Wiktorija znaczy zwycięstwo. Kulturowe oblicza brytyjskiej królowej*, Warszawa 2012.

rivals.¹² But, whether they were creating a new world with dominant Britain¹³, or creating a new home for themselves¹⁴ there could never be one without the other.

The German prince played a vital role in creating a modern, British nation, as well as modern monarchy – after all, citing Karina Urbach, Prince Albert was the man behind the Queen¹⁵. His absolute devotion to not only his wife and children but also his new-found home could be seen in his work. His dedication as exhibited throughout twenty-one years of marriage proved that he was more than just a husband to his wife, the Queen. His skills and brilliance allowed Britain to position itself as a modern nation. His ambitions were never selfish, personal, or materialistic, and his immense impact on the life of his adopted country can still be seen to this day.

Even though nowadays Prince Albert presents a positive image, and his involvement in arts, science, industry, education, and other areas of life are highly regarded, it needs to be underlined that such an image crystallised only after his untimely death. It is worth mentioning that even Lord Alfred Tennyson, greatly saddened by the shocking news of Prince Albert's demise, dedicated his 'Idylls of the King' to the memory of the royal.¹⁶ The tribute was sent, along with a letter, to the Queen.

Having heard some time ago . . . that your Royal Highness expressed a strong desire that I should in some way 'idealize' our lamented Prince

¹² G. Gill, *We Two: Victoria and Albert: Rulers, Partners, Rivals*, New York 2009.

¹³ *British Royals at Home With The Empire [in:]* Ch. V. Reed, *Royal tourists, colonial subjects and the making of a British world, 1860–1911*, Manchester 2016.

¹⁴ J. Cannizzo, *Our Highland home : Victoria and Albert in Scotland*, Edinburgh 2005.

¹⁵ K. Urbach, *Prince Albert. The Creative Consort [in:] The Man behind the Queen. Male Consorts in History*, red. Charles Beem, London 2014

¹⁶ A. Tennyson, *Idylls of the King*, Macmillian and Co. 1894.

... it seemed to me that I could do no better than to dedicate to his memory a book which he himself had told me was valued.¹⁷

The image created by Tennyson, helped to establish a well-known and well-loved idea of Prince Albert, this chivalrous modern man, with moral ideas, impeccable taste, and unquestionable devotion to his adopted nation.¹⁸

Through the years of his marriage to Queen Victoria, the Prince managed to find a position for himself that established him as an unofficial permanent Private Secretary and Prime Minister, one who blessed the nation with wisdom and energy.¹⁹ But before he received this posthumous recognition, the Prince struggled to be accepted as one amongst the English.

An avid supporter of progress, innovation, and change, a man of virtuous character and high moral standards, expressing intelligence as well as a will to learn, the Prince met with a mixed reception from the British nation from the beginning of their acquaintance with him. Over the years, the image of him created by the British press changed greatly, which affected how he was perceived by the public.

This work offers an analysis of the newspaper articles and other published materials which can help historians understand how the media image of Prince Albert was created and altered over the years. His engagement in various duties, as the husband of the Queen and as Prince himself, need to be scrutinised to identify and reconstruct various aspects of his public image as well as the reasons for the different approaches to it.

It is important not only to recreate how Prince Albert was perceived but also to determine what aspects affected such perception: whether there were any changes in the way

¹⁷ H. Tennyson, *Alfred Tennyson to Princess Alice, December 1861, Alfred, Lord Tennyson: a memoir by his son*, 2 vols. New York: Macmillan Company 1897.

¹⁸ D. N. Mancoff, "Albert the Good". *Public Image and Private Iconography*, "Biography" 1992, vol. 15, nr 2, s.140–64.

¹⁹ *The London Quarterly Review published in April and July 1887, vol. LXVIII-New Series, vol. VIII*, T. Woolmer 1887, p. 301.

the Prince was perceived, and if so what kind of changes they were. Was the perception influenced in any way by the media? Were there any deliberate actions in the ways the press chose to portray him? Perhaps the articles were purely incidental, and were in no way designed to evoke certain images or opinions about the Prince?

The diverse tapestry of newspapers and journals printed at the time offers an interesting insight into the various ways Prince Albert was depicted. When analysing the press, it is obvious that the Fourth Estate²⁰ did not assume a unified voice to deliver royal information to the public. It appears that the idea of the royal household managing such information seems not to have existed at the time. This ‘freedom of speech’ allowed for different types of information, different ways and different voices to be expressed on the pages of the miscellaneous titles. This presents a deep well of sources, allowing us to make quite an accurate analysis of Prince Albert’s media image, especially when focusing on the main events spanning the chosen criteria.

To answer the questions posed before, it is not possible to simply limit the research to selected titles from the British press. This work supports such research by drawing upon not only primary but also additional sources (for example biographies, articles, parliamentary proceedings) which allow us to understand how his contemporaries perceived him. A holistic approach needs to be undertaken, one which includes other available primary and secondary sources connected with both Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. There are numerous publications that give us a deeper insight and understanding into the process that created the final media image of Prince Albert that now prevails and gives him his posthumous popularity. From the works of Theodore Martin²¹ and Baron Stockmar²², Queen Victoria’s own letters²³ and

²⁰ The exact explanation of the term is provided in the first chapter.

²¹ T. Martin, *The Life of His Royal Highness the Prince Consort*, Smith, Elder & Co. 1878.

²² E. t. A. Baron Stockmar, *Memoirs of Baron Stockmar*, trans. G. A. Müller, ed. M. Müller, Creative Media Partners LLC 2015.

²³ J. Raymond, ed., *Queen Victoria’s Early Letters*, B. T. Batsford Ltd. 1963.

journals²⁴, the Greville memoirs²⁵, ballads, reviews, pamphlets, caricatures, poetry, and Prince Albert's own speeches²⁶, up to later publications by Lytton Strachey, Hermione Hobhouse²⁷, Robert Rhodes James²⁸, Daphne Bennet²⁹, Monica Rico³⁰, Frank Eyck³¹, and A. N. Wilson³² among others, which focus on more biographical representations of the Prince, a fair analysis can be conducted. The above mentioned publications provide a varied insight into the life of the Royal Consort as they span over the period of over a hundred years. This allows a comprehensive examination of the media image of Prince Albert through a prism of diversified primary and secondary sources. A detailed list of the exact resources allowing further expansion of the topic can be found in the bibliography. Additionally, the work is accompanied

²⁴ D. Duff, ed., *Queen Victoria's Highland Journals*, Lomond Books 1986.

²⁵ Ch. Greville, C.F., *Dziennik z czasów panowania króla Jerzego IV, króla Wilhelma IV i królowej Wiktorii*, trans. Michał Ronikier, Czytelnik 1974.

²⁶ A. Help, ed., *The Principal Speeches and Addresses of His Royal Highness the Prince Consort*, Cambridge 2014.

²⁷ H. Hobhouse, *Prince Albert. His life and work*, Hamish Hamilton Ltd. 1983.

²⁸ R. Rhodes James, *Albert, Prince Consort*, Hamish Hamilton Ltd. 1983.

²⁹ D. Bennet, *King without a crown. Albert, King Consort of England 1819-1861*, Heinemann 1977.

³⁰ M. Rico, *The Limits of Memory: Private and public in the remembrance of Prince Albert*, "The Communication Review" 1997, vol. 2, nr 1, s. 19–41.

³¹ F. Eyck, *The Prince Consort; a Political Biography*, Boston 1959.

³² A. N. Wilson, *Prince Albert. The man who saved the monarchy*, Atlantic Books 2019

by caricatures available in the *Punch* magazine, and photographs. These graphic sources help to not only visualise the attitude of the press, but also mark how, in the end, a positive image of the Prince was established and how it continues to this day, by being memorised not only in the press, but also in places that were close to Albert's heart. They stand witness to his genius and devotion helping to pillar the posthumous legend that Albert has become.

All these angles should be examined in order to see the media image of Prince Albert that was created and visibly fluctuated over the years until it abruptly ended with his sudden death. This unforeseen and unexpected event permanently changed the perception of the Royal Consort that was shared by the nation. It seems that with his death and Queen Victoria's grief, and the sea of mourning that spilt onto not only the immediate family but also the nation, his memory was moulded into a specific shape that was not tarnished in any way, or could not be affected by any shortcomings, or any of the criticism or dislike displayed earlier by the numerous press titles.

Furthermore, this work not only presents the optics with which Prince Albert was depicted by the press as well as numerous biographies, but also provides a brief history of the British press – discussed in the first chapter of this work, which allows us to understand the complex characteristics of the broadsheets as they vigorously fought in support of or against the Prince. These twin strands of research will explain how the image of Prince Albert was created and why, over the twenty-one years of his life in Britain, it was so inconsistent, only finally giving him justice after his untimely death. This brief history stands as a background information complementing the chapters introduced above.

For the purpose of this work, it was necessary to select certain key events which seem to have played the biggest part in shaping the media image of Prince Albert. Based not only on the above mentioned primary and secondary sources but also on available newspaper articles, it was possible to determine which events from Albert's life received the most in-depth coverage from the press. These events, which included the arrival of the future Royal Consort in England, his marriage, his religion and education, the annuity that he would receive upon marrying Queen Victoria, his involvement in the Privy Council and matters of state, the Great Exhibition, and many of the reforms and improvements that Prince Albert either introduced himself or supported strongly allowed to create the frame for this work, encompassing the years 1840-1861, around which the chapters were build. Such a division creates a possibility for an in-depth understanding of Prince Albert position, and how he was perceived by the watchful

journalists, who then, often with great liberty, depicted the Consort in more or less favourable way, oftentimes going as far as jesting.

Over time, Prince Albert came to acquire a separate position in the new media, creating an image for himself. The initial years of Albert's time on British soil proved rather demanding for him, as he met with great criticism. However, there were some titles which took on the burden of defending him and openly scolding his attackers. The main battle over Prince Albert took place in the two leading titles of that time, the *Times* and the *Spectator*. Both of these titles are very substantially archived, thus offering a detailed and informed source providing ample examples upon which to draw. The titles consulted in the second chapter of this work are all available on the British Newspapers Archives and cover the time period corresponding to dates mentioned in the title of this work. The specific titles listed in the second chapter, were analysed in terms of the numbers of records connected with Prince Albert and the above mentioned events that occurred during the years 1840-1861 when Prince Albert was married to Queen Victoria and for that reason only chosen issues were included in this work. It needs to be stressed, though, that the scrutinised titles present some discrepancies as some articles can be found reprinted, thus multiplying the number of overall mentions. For that reason, there was no need to repeat them in this work. Nevertheless, they are still good sources of information, allowing a certain image of Albert to emerge from an analysis of them as well as they do give an insight into the everyday aspects of the royal life. In the end, the final decision as to the specific titles and publishing years was made based on the number of occurrences of specific events, importance and popularity of the newspaper.

The third chapter titled *Prince Albert's first steps into royal life* focuses on the growing pains connected with the marriage to Queen Victoria as well Prince Albert's position with the Royal Court, annuity, regency, and the actual functioning of the household. It presents the perplexity of his position with regard to being married to the Queen, issues connected with this, and never seen before problems as the roles naturally assigned by marriage, here were subjected to change.

Next, the fourth chapter titled *The Great Exhibition and other stories as depicted in the press* is devoted mainly to Prince Albert's numerous undertakings – whether big or small, his involvement in public life, his passions, which was farming, as well as some setbacks that were an unavoidable part of the life of the Consort. This chapter finishes with the part devoted to his untimely death and its depiction by the press. It also shows how this sad event changed the way Prince Albert was from then on perceived by the journalists.

Additionally, the annex to this work includes important documents concerning Prince Albert's naturalization, his annuity, regency, as well as his speech given at the banquet intended to raise funds for the 1851 Great Exhibition, and a ballad popularised in Great Britain openly mocking the Royal Consort. These show the perplexity of the situations that Prince Albert faced as the husband of Queen Victoria.

This work is not intended to be a biography of the Prince, but aims at considering his persona through the prism of the British newspapers and journalism in order to understand the complex and fluctuating media image of him which was created until his death. It needs to be stressed, however, that the untimely death of the Royal Consort affected immensely the perception of the Prince, whose death brought great sadness upon the nation. This tragic event helped to immortalise his image in the minds of generations as the one who helped to improve Great Britain, one who became a father to his adopted nation.

The documentation of his twenty-one years in England provides a great insight into his work, and for the purpose of this research it was necessary to collect data that would cover the period encompassing within just before the marriage of Prince Albert to the moment of his funeral. The available resources allow a detailed and scrutinised analysis of some of the most important stages in Prince's life such as his first moments in England, the controversies surrounding his religion, annuity, marriage, regency, his involvement in creating the Great Exhibition – a living monument to his skills and brilliance – the political whirlwinds connected with his unconstitutional involvement in state affairs, as well as the less prominent moments that sometimes resulted in a more humorous or even mocking portrayal of his persona.

It must also be remembered that the nineteenth century was a time of the rapid expansion of newspapers and the printed press: the sudden births and deaths of many titles were nothing unusual. This was the time when editors were finally able to print without external influence. This allowed a varied number of voices to present their opinions and suggestions. The nineteenth-century reader was thus surrounded with a plethora of choices allowing him to pick and choose whichever voices he wanted to follow, which opinions he wanted to read, and how to see and understand what the watchful dog of the Fourth Estate carried in his mouth. For that reason, when analysing the media image of Prince Albert, it is paramount to understand how media depicted him through the various press publications, caricatures, ballads, or even pamphlets.

1. A short history of the British press

[The] newspaper is the chronicle of civilization, the common reservoir into which every stream pours its living waters, and at which every man may come and drink: it is the newspaper which gives liberty its practical life, its constant observation, its perpetual vigilance, its unrelaxing activity. It is a daily and a sleepless watchman, that reports to you every danger which menaces the institutions of your country, and its interest at home and abroad. It informs legislation of public opinion, and it informs the people of the acts of legislation; thus, keeping that constant sympathy, that good understanding between people and legislators, which conduces to the maintenance of order and prevents the stern necessity for revolution.³³

The history of the British press can be traced back to the early sixteenth century when the first publications circulating news reports appear. Initially, these were described as *relations*³⁴, and took the form of pamphlets rather than regular newspapers. The earliest one, dating back to 1513, provided an account of the Battle of Flodden³⁵; another can be traced back to

³³ Ch. Mitchell, *The newspaper directory: containing full particulars relative to each journal published in the United Kingdom and the British Isles; together with a complete guide to the newspaper press of each county. for the year 1847*, Red Lion Court, 1847, p. 314.

³⁴ M. Goff, *Early English Newspapers and the Law*, Burney Newspaper Collection 2007.

³⁵ A battle between the invading Scottish army under James IV and the English, ending in the Scots' defeat and the death of their monarch. For more information, see: N. Barr, *Flodden, 1513: The Scottish Invasion of Henry VIII's England*, The History Press Ltd 2001.

1542, where a description of an earthquake near Florence can be found.³⁶ Such pieces were printed only occasionally, but the late sixteenth century saw them in slowly increasing numbers.

The powers that be were still unfavourably disposed towards newspaper publications: the Star Chamber³⁷ Decree from 1568 forbade publication of any news in England. For that matter, the first semi-regular periodicals published in English, the *corantos*, which were single-paged publications of news³⁸, were actually printed in Amsterdam. The oldest surviving one is dated to 1620, and a year later the first *coranto* was printed in England. Originally these one-page papers contained English translations of news circulating on the European continent, and for over 20 years remained concentrated on foreign news, avoiding domestic affairs. The lack of organised distribution and the slowly subsiding interest in foreign affairs led to their decline in 1630 and they ceased entirely in 1641.³⁹ It is estimated that between the years 1621 and 1640, the printer Nathaniel Butter and his partner Nathaniel Bourne irregularly printed from 250 up to 850 copies, under the title of *Corante, or News from Italy, Germany, Hungarie, Spaine and France*.⁴⁰

As the storm of the Civil War between the King and Parliament brewed in England, the first *newsbooks* containing domestic rather than foreign news, started appearing. However, unlike the *corantos*, these focused on relaying domestic as well as foreign news. And since at the time of the Civil War centralised government broke down, the publication of printed news was

³⁶ M. Goff, *op. cit.*

³⁷ An English court with special powers, established in the late 14th century. It served as a court for criminal and political matters. For more information, see: A. F. Pollard, *Council, Star Chamber, and Privy Council under the Tudors: II. The Star Chamber*; “The English Historical Review, vol. 37, No. 148 (Oct., 1922), pp. 516-539.

³⁸ www.britannica.com/topic/coranto

³⁹ M. H. Beals, L. Lavender, *Newspaper*, ‘Historical Insights: Focus on Research. Newspapers’, History at the HEA 2010, p. 13.

⁴⁰ M. Goff, *op. cit.*

not restricted in any way by top-down legislation. Hence, the first *newsbooks* could freely publish not only accounts of parliamentary debates, which had been previously banned, but they were also used as a means for delivering propaganda for each side rather than objective information. This was the birth of the politically influenced press.⁴¹ This is also the time when the word *mercurius* came into use to describe the first *newsbooks*. The name was derived from the Roman god Mercury⁴², the messenger of the gods, who thus became associated with the news.

These *mercuries* did not resemble the format of a modern newspaper, but rather contained a selection of different stories, reports and other reprints from foreign papers providing information on foreign affairs and foreign life. They more closely resembled the broadsheets published by political parties in seventeenth-century England. Pamphlet-like in their form, they contained assorted squibs and did not shy away from lampoons and satire. Their content was initially often heavily regulated by the government, especially the Star Chamber. When this body was abolished in 1641 there was a brief thaw of freedom in terms of what could be written, although the pages kept away from gossip⁴³ as the government still strongly believed that there was no room for such trash to be published.

The demand for news during the years of the Civil War was great, and resulted in more than 300 *newsbook* titles appearing. Nevertheless, most of them did not survive the test of time.⁴⁴ Initially, these were *miserable sheets of flimsy paper, blotted with coarse letter-press, describing some fabulous event, or retailing some more than doubtful story*⁴⁵, as described by the nineteenth-century author Alexander Andrews. But the role of the newspaper evolved and changed before finally settling into the form known to us at present. The initial aims of the

⁴¹ M. H. Beals, L. Lavender, op. cit., p.14.

⁴² R. Graves, *The Greek Myths*, Penguin Books 1955.

⁴³ A. Andrews, *The History of British Journalism. From the Foundation of the Newspaper Press in England to the Repeal of the Stamp Act in 1855*, v. 1 of 2, R. Clay 1859, p. 50.

⁴⁴ Goff, op. cit.

⁴⁵ A. Andrews, op. cit., p. 1.

flimsy papers were dependent on the current situation regarding public demand, general enlightenment, and suppression or even harassment by the government or the court. At the same time, these papers were considered to be the only instrument capable of introducing the same thought or idea to thousands of minds at once.⁴⁶

The lack of impartiality and the focus on defaming political rivals led the authorities to make numerous efforts to curb the sometimes rowdy world of news publishing. The 1649 *Act against Unlicensed and Scandalous Books and Pamphlets*⁴⁷ was introduced to restrict the *Scandalous, Seditious and Libellous Pamphlets, Papers and Books (...) daily contrived, printed, vended and dispersed, with officious care and industry by the Malignant party at home and abroad, for the better compassing of their wicked ends (...)*.⁴⁸ Within the next six years, Oliver Cromwell – a commander of the Parliamentary forces during the Civil War and Lord Protector of England⁴⁹ banned all newsbooks that were not licensed by him as Lord Protector or the ruling Council.⁵⁰

With the restoration of Charles II to the English throne, and the concomitant return of the freedom of public expression and emotion repressed by Cromwell, some changes were also introduced to the emerging press. An *Act for Preventing Frequent Abuses in Printing, Seditious, Treasonable, and Unlicensed Books and Pamphlets, and for Regulating Printing and Printing Presses*⁵¹ was introduced in 1662, which stressed the importance of licensing all work prior to

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/acts-ordinances-interregnum/pp245-254

⁴⁸ www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/acts-ordinances-interregnum/pp245

⁴⁹ More broadly: M. Bennett, *Oliver Cromwell*, Routledge 2006, or Ch. Hill, *God's Englishman. Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution*, Penguin Books 2019, also available for Polish readers: idem, *Oliver Cromwell i Rewolucja Angielska*, Warszawa 1988.

⁵⁰ Goff, op. cit., p. 1.

⁵¹ www.british-history.ac.uk/statutes-realm/vol5/pp428-435

its printing. This form of restriction aimed at limiting the spread of unwanted and undesired information. The public, tired and distracted by the war and conflict they had endured, accepted the new, restrictive situation without any opposition, together with the restoration of the monarch.

However, the 1662 *Act* was not followed to the letter, and several unlicensed titles appeared. The act was renewed a few times during the Glorious Revolution⁵², but was finally dropped in 1695.⁵³

One of the oldest newspapers in Britain was a governmental newsbook, the *Gazette*. This was founded as *The Oxford Gazette* on 7 November 1665 and was later renamed *The London Gazette* in 1666.⁵⁴ This reported various happenings, mainly concerning the court and its move to Oxford in order to escape the plague that was *wreaking havoc in the capital*.⁵⁵

⁵² The bloodless revolution of 1688, which led to the dethronement of James II Stuart and the handing over of the throne to William of Orange. More broadly: P. Dillon, *The Last Revolution: 1688 and the Creation of the Modern World*, Pimlico 2007.

⁵³ M. Goff, op., cit., p.3

⁵⁴ www.thegazette.co.uk/history/timeline

⁵⁵ www.thegazette.co.uk/history/timeline More broadly: S. Pepys, *The Concise Pepys*, Wordsworth Editions, 1996; L. Moote, *The Great Plague: The Story of London's Most Deadly Year*, JHU Press, 2008.

The Oxford Gazette.

Published by Authority.

Oxon, Nov. 7. This day the Reverend Dr. Walter Blizard, Warden of Wadham College in this University, was elected Lord Bishop of this See; vacant by the death of Dr. Paul, late Bishop here.

Oxon, Nov. 12. This day His Majesty in Council, according to the usual custom, having the Roll of Sheriffs presented to him, pricked these persons following, to be Sheriffs for the succeeding year, in the respective Counties of England and Wales.

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| Berks. | Basil Brent, Esquire. |
| Bedford. | Tho. Snagge, Esq; |
| Buckingham. | Simon Bennett, Esq; |
| Cumberland. | Sir William Dalton, Baronet. |
| Chester. | Sir John Arderne, Knight. |
| Cambridge. | Sir Tho. Willis, Kt. and Baronet. |
| Cornwall. | Tho. Dorrel, Esq; |
| Devon. | John Kelland, Esq; |
| Dorset. | Roger Clavel, Esq; |
| Derby. | Sir Samuel Sleigh, Knight. |
| Yorkshire. | Sir Francis Cobb, Knight. |
| Essex. | Sir Henage Fetherston, Baronet. |
| Gloucester. | Sir Richard Cox, Baronet. |
| Hertford. | Sir Jonathan Keat, Baronet. |
| Hants. | Tho. Rod, Esq; |
| Lincoln. | Sir Humphrey Miller, Baronet. |
| Leicester. | William Spencers, Esq; |
| Leicestershire. | Sir Edward Smith, Baronet. |
| Lincoln. | Sir John Brownlow Kt. and Baronet. |
| Monmouth. | Morgan of Landillo Parholly, Esq; |
| Northampton. | William Middleton, Esq; |
| Northampton. | Joseph Hanbury, Esq; |
| Northampton. | Sir John Hobard Baronet. |
| Northampton. | John White of Corgrave, Esq; |
| Northampton. | Tho. Wheate of Glimston, Esq; |
| Northampton. | Charles Halford, Esq; |
| Northampton. | Sir Humph. Beiggs. |
| Northampton. | Sir Hugh Smith, Baronet. |
| Northampton. | Fran. Leveton alias Fowler, Esq; |
| Northampton. | Sir Edmond Bacon, Baronet. |
| Northampton. | Tho. Neal, Esq; |
| Northampton. | Sir John Evelyn, Baronet. |
| Northampton. | Robert Fowle, Esq; |
| Northampton. | Charles Bentley, Esq; |
| Northampton. | Sir William Cooks of Norgrave, Kt. |
| Northampton. | Sir John Weld, Kt. |
| Northampton. | Rowland Bulkley, Esq; |
| Northampton. | Hugh Powel, Esq; |
| Northampton. | James Stedman, Esq; |
| Northampton. | Tho. Maderne, Esq; |
| Northampton. | Sir Charles Goodman. |
| Northampton. | Sir Roger Mollyn. |
| Northampton. | William Baffer of Brabeskin, Esq; |
| Northampton. | Lewis Lloyd, Esq; |
| Northampton. | Ed. Kynaston, Esq; |
| Northampton. | Sir Herbert Perrot. |
| Northampton. | Nich. Taylor, Esq; |
| Northampton. | William Lloyd, Esq; |

Paris, Nov. 14. Monsieur de Turenne is not yet returned, but expected here every day. Most of the Gentry of *Nivernois* & *Auvergne* are said to have withdrawn themselves, and got into a place of strength: one Mon-

seur de *Canillac* having been put to death by the Commissioners of the *Grands Seigneurs*: It seems they had laid some new Taxes or Impositions on those parts. There are Troops marching against them, and it is thought they will soon be reduced. My Lord *Aubigny* Lord Almoner to her Majesty, having lain sick some time here of an Hydroptic attended with a Flux, is this week dead.

Paris, Nov. 18. The Marshal de *Turenne* arrived here on Sunday last from the Frontiers, whence he brings account that the Success intended against the Prince of *Munster* had passed in small parties, and that they had been received at *Metz* by Monsieur *Beverning* in the name of the States-General.

Guernsey, Oct. 20. Yesterday came into our Road the *Unity* Frigate, Captain *Traford* Commander, who brought in a Prize Captain *John Gillon* of *Flushing*, being a Privateer of 7 Guns, and 45 Men.

Chatham, Nov. 4. Captain *Ellor* Commander of the *Saphire*, has taken 3 Busses, two of them out of 50 at the *Dogger Sands*, under the protection of four of their Men of War. In his passage home, he saw several tops of Ships, Masts, &c. which seemed to be the effects of some Wreck, which God be thanked we cannot hear to have been any of the English Ships.

Oxon, Nov. 11. Not knowing what account the Publick has hitherto received of the progress of the Prince of *Munster's* Arms, we have thought it not improper without further repetition, to give an account of such places as he at present stands possessor of in the enemies Country viz. The Castle and Territory of *Barzio* (belonging of right his own, and for many years unjustly detained from him) the Castle of *Lichtenwerde* and the Towns of *Lochem*, *Dixpenheim*, *Gott*, *Eschede*, *Olfenfeld*, *Orismarschen*, *Wardenburg*, *Ommun*, *Fenz*, *Wildenberg*, *Keppel*, *Almsloe*, *Hengle*, *Stramberg*, and *Vennbrug* and now more lately *Wischow*, with the Fort of *Bruggen* being the Castle of *Wade*, and the Cloister of *Appel*, out of which a party of his had some time before been forced by the *Hollanders*. And it is confirmed to us by several good hands from *Bruffels*, that he has taken the strong Fort of *Beuvraigne*, and held a Sea-port, situate near *Dreame* and *De'p'le*, in divers of which places his Highness has left very considerable Garrisons, besides his Field-Army, which consists of 18000 Foot, and 6000 Horse effective.

Deal, Nov. 8. The wind since my last departure very high, but I hear of no harm done yet. The *Phenix* hath brought in a Prize here.

Norwich, Nov. 8. I lately received from a good hand in *Rochet* dated Oct. 28 a short account of the taking the Island *S. Mache*, which for the manner of the attempt, may not be unworthy the communication. It was brought by a French West-India Ship which came from *S. Christophers* about 2 leagues from it, and was christen'd That on the 12 of *Aug* about 300 of the *French* belonging to *Jamaica* went thither with a resolution of an attack. There is but one landing place in the whole Island, & that of such difficult access, that but 2 at most can go aboard, and situate to an eminent place in the top of which was a strong Fort, which on this occasion had been well furnished with Powder & Gunpowder by *de Ruyter* & command'd with 450 soldiers, who were nevertheless so surpris'd at the boldness of the undertaking, that they delivered themselves up with very little resistance.

Flymouth, Nov. 5. The weather of late hath been

Pic. 1. Page 1 of *The Oxford Gazette's* first issue on 7 November 1665. ⁵⁶

Within only few months, once the court of Charles II was back in London, *The London Gazette* had its first issue on 1 February 1666. ⁵⁷

⁵⁶ www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/1/page/1

⁵⁷ www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/24/page/1

The London Gazette.

Published by Authority.

From Thursday, February 1. to Monday, February 5. 1665.

Harwich, January 30.

The Four Convoy ships from *Hamburgh*, (which were for some time missing) viz. *The Monks*, *The Amity*, *The Breda*, and *The Guise*, were discerned about Sunday noon, going to Anchor at *Osley Bay*, where at present they remaine.

Dublin, Jan. 27. On Tuesday last the Court of *Glimes* sits, heard some motions, appointed daies of hearing several causes, and adjourned the Court till the 31 instant. Two *Galbards* were sunk in this Harbour, and a Ship laden with Canary wines bulged, of which it is feared little can be recovered.

Kingsale, Jan. 23. On Saturday last here arrived 2 great Ships from the *Barbadoes*, the *Daniel* of *London*, Captain *Samuel Randall* Commander, of 12 Guns, and the *Adventure* of *London*, Capt. *Eiberton* Commander, of 14 guns, the latter of which meeting with a *Flushing*, killed and wounded 22 of them, as we are assured by several Vessels, and more particularly by that Ships Company, who (as you were lately told) regained their Vessel, after they had been in the power of this *Flushing*. Five other *Barbadoes* Ships were in fight with a *Flushing* of 36 guns, one of which was taken, and 4 escaped. A Ship of *London* from *Bermudas*, Capt. *Bargrave* Commander, and 1 Ship from the *Maderas* come in this day.

Marsilles, Jan. 19. The *St. Malo* Ships are now at *Toulon*, attending Monsieur de *Beaufort* Order for their departure, whose Fleet being intended to carrene, it is thought they will be disappointed of their Convoy, in regard they cannot be ready in a Moneth, and what course they will then take, most conceive is yet unresolved.

This day came in a Ship of this *Town* from *Alexandria*, in 25 daies, who advieth, that the Grand Signor has stopt several Ships for his service to carry Men and Provisions for *Candia*.

Legorne, Jan. 16. On the 12 instant the *Tunis* Merchant arrived here, coming from *Algier* in 11 daies, who advieth, that an *Algier* Ship had burnt the *Charity* of *Hamburgh*, bound hither from *Archangel*, with 106 packs of *Hides*, &c. He saies farther, that the *Algier* Men had sunk a *Dunkerke* Frigor with 300 Soldiers coming from *Spain* and *Naples*, and several Dutch and French. The Peace which the French have concluded with *Tunis*, is reported here with much dishonour to the French, and the Italians understand it so, the honor of *Tunis* being chiefly to follow Trade, in which they found themselves so much debarred, that they were in consultation to deliver up the French Captives gratis, and indeed they might have been brought to any terms, had the French not been so forward to patch up a Peace with them. Since *Genova* made their Agreement with the Grand Signor for Traffique, they are endeavouring to make all sorts of Cloth to send for *Smyrna* and *Constantinople*. The Grand Duke hath for some time been deteyned by an Imposthume at *Florence*, from whence he is weekly expected, with the Court at *Fisa*.

Cleve, Jan. 26. Monsieur *Beverling* is arrived here, and Monsieur *Colbert* shortly expected, who brings with him a rich Furniture of a Chamber, as a present from the King of *France* to the Electress. *Beverling* has been offered as is reported, to be put into the *States General* for his life, and to be made *Burgomaster* of the *Town* of *Targoe*, but excuseth all upon pretence of his want of health to undergoe these employments; though it is suspected he hath other reasons for not mixing in the present Government.

Hamburgh, Jan. 13. The Swedes are now in earnest upon their march over the *Elbe*, and the Country people

about us, though they have no cause for it, are so jealous of suffering from the Soldiery, that yesterday they sent into this City above 200 Waggones, laden with Householdstuff for security. Some would have it that *Bremen* is not yet fully agreed, but they cannot but see the necessity of falling into the Swedes hands, if they should offer to oppose them. Some further suggest, 'tis certain they have in hand, supposed to besiege *Emden*, and we have received from a very good hand, that the Swedes have sent to the Duke of *Lunenburgh* to consider well how he engages, or disposes of his Forces against the Prince of *Munster*, or in aid of the *Hollanders*. And surely there is something more then ordinary in it, at least, those of *Munster* apprehend it so; for in the Prince of *Munster's* Court, in their general Health, 'tis observed, that next to that of His Majesty of *Great Britain*, they remember the King of *Sweden's*, and then *Gen. H. Wangels*.

Warsaw, Jan. 7. We are now againe at a stand, to judge what will be the end of the Peace with *Lubomirski*, who instead of sending his Plenipotentiaries to the Treaty, according to his promise, on the 13 of *December*, has in his Letter solicited that the High Marshal, the Master of the Horse, and the Referendarius of the Crown, might be sent as Commissioners to the Frontiers of *Silesia* to Treat with him: This Proposition is not accented by His Majesty, but referred to the Lord Bishop of *Cracow*, who has all along treated with *Lubomirski*, to confer farther with him concerning it, according to the Declaration, published in *Kawa* and *Palezin*.

Rome, Jan. 16. In the Consistory held the 11 instant, his Holyness represented to the Cardinals the great apprehensions he had, that *Christendome* would break out againe into Wars, and desired the assistance of their Prayers for preventing them. The Cardinal *Corrado*, the Darary, took the Popes chiding, you heard of, so much to heart, that he is now reduced almost to the last gaspe. Here are come to this *Town* a company of Ordinary Players, who acted a play Entitled *Scaramuccia soldato a Gigiri contro Meri*, which reflecting upon the Frenches late disgrace there, Monsieur de *Burlesoni*, who acts here for the French King, complained to the Popes Neph. w of this designed insolence and National dishonour, as he called it; upon which the poor Players are laid by the heels, which the *Town* takes very ill, as being in this time of Recreation denied the contentment of a peice of mirth, which was acted in *Florence*, and other parts of *Italy*, with great applause. Here is in *Town* the Prince of *Baviera*, Brother to that Elector, the younger Brother of the Duke of *Longueville*, and a son of the Count of *Harcourt*, who came to see the curiosities of this City.

Durham, Jan. 27. Wednesday last was buried here Mr. *Anthony Pearsons* a man particularly noted in these parts, for having passed heretofore through all the degrees of Separation and Phantasticism, in all of which he was ever observed as a principal leader; but having lived to see his Error sometime before his death, he himself, with his children and family, had received Episcopal confirmation, and did now at last upon his Deathbed very solemnly confess his former Errors, and the party that first seduced him into them, declaring that he now dyed a true Son of the Church of *England*.

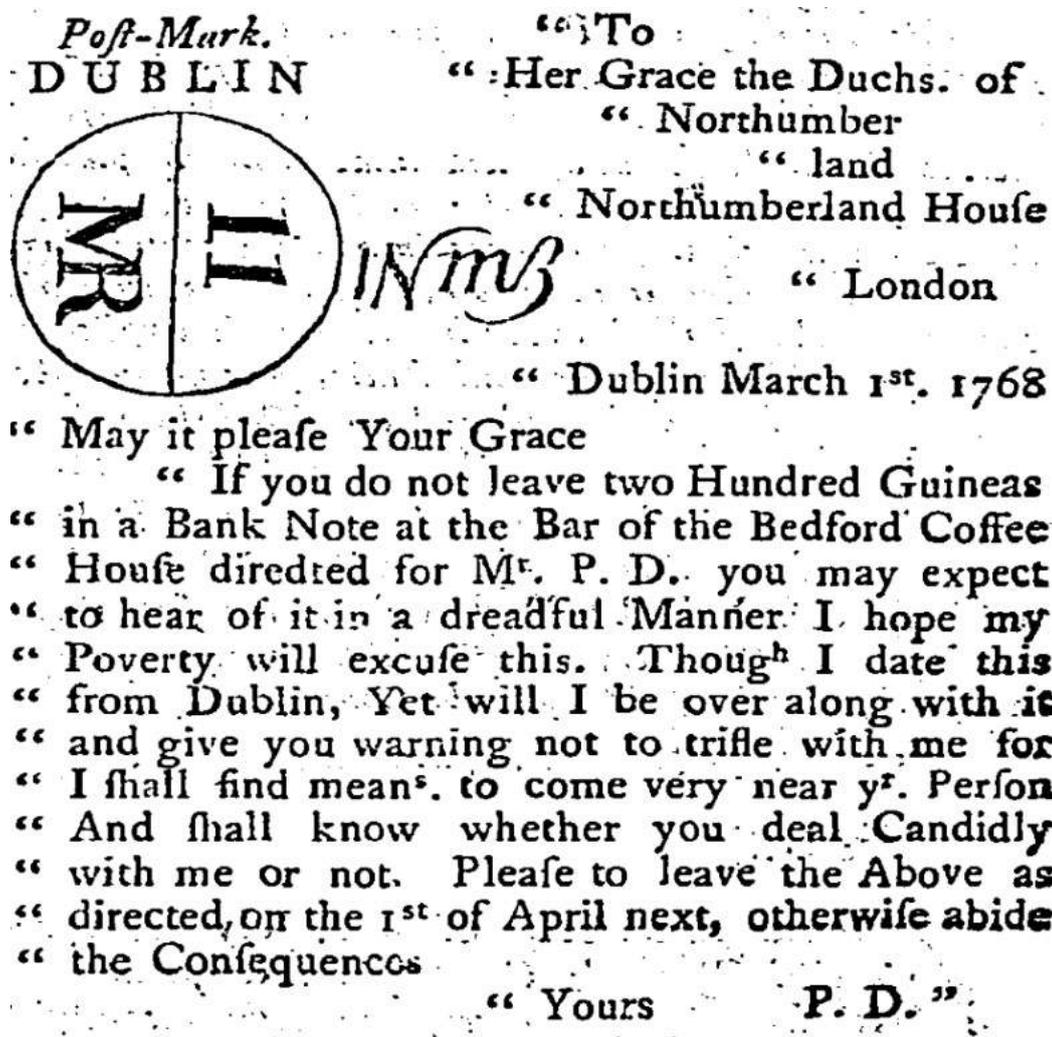
Falmouth, Jan. 27. A Vessel of about 80 Tuns arrived here from *Dublin*, bound with Tallow, *Hides*, and provisions for *Cadix*, which proves so leaky, that she was forced to run ashore here, and appears to be so unable to perform her voyage, that the Master will be obliged to sell Ship and Goods. Several of the Ministers, &c. of this County have made their subscriptions required by the late Act of Parliament.

Pic. 2. Page 1 of *The London Gazette's* first issue 1st February 1666.

From then on, *The London Gazette* published various reports regarding such historical events as the Great Fire of London⁵⁸, the eruption of Mount Etna, the Glorious Revolution, the

⁵⁸ More broadly: W. G. Bell, *The story of London's great fire*, John Lane 1928.

Acts of Union⁵⁹ and many more. However, over time, its pages also started carrying other notices that became popular, such as insolvency notices or even information about threatening letters being sent to prominent and well-known figures.⁶⁰



Pic. 3. Threatening letter sent to the Duchess of Northumberland published in *The London Gazette*, issued 26 July 1768.

⁵⁹ The Acts of Union 1707 united England and Scotland into a single "political state" named Great Britain. See: P. J. W. Riley, *The Union of 1707 as an Episode in English Politics*, "The English Historical Review" 1969, no 332, p. 498-527.

⁶⁰ www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/10854/page/1

It must be mentioned that two other titles claim to hold the proud title of the oldest published newspapers: *Berrow's Worcester Journal*, dating back to 1690⁶¹, and the *Stamford Mercury*, dating back to 1695⁶². However, the former was only published irregularly and ceased to exist in 1709. As for the latter, it was indeed established in 1695, but it only started publishing continuously in 1712.⁶³

Newspapers truly became the Fourth Estate⁶⁴ in the eighteenth century.⁶⁵ And with the accession of William & Mary⁶⁶ to the throne, the number of newspapers started to rise, and they began including a wider array of topics such as literature and history; some were even

⁶¹ www.worcesternews.co.uk/bj/chapter1/

⁶² www.web.archive.org/web/20080420071904/

⁶³ www.stamfordmercury.co.uk/about-us/

⁶⁴ Following the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the Fourth State or Estate refers to newspapers as a political force acting as a watchdog. Mateusz Nieć in his article 'Koncepcja „Czwartego Stanu” Edmunda Burke’a podana przez Thomasa Carlyle’a’ [The concept of the ‘fourth estate’ of Edmund Burke by Thomas Carlyle] explores this idea further, providing an in-depth analysis of the phrase which Burke coined in one of his parliamentary speeches. He said that the parliament has three states but there, in the balcony, was the fourth one, much more important than any other. This was later mentioned in 1828 in the *Edinburgh Review*, which echoed Burke’s words by saying that the balcony where the press is situated is indeed an actual fourth state. From then on, the notion of the press as the Fourth Estate became an accepted concept in British culture.

⁶⁵ G. Boyce, J. Curran, and P. Wingate, eds., *Newspaper history from the 17th century to the present day*, Constable 1978.

⁶⁶ For more information see: J. Van Der Kiste, *William and Mary*, Sutton Publishing 2003.

directed towards women, such as *The Ladies' Mercury*⁶⁷. They also slowly started introducing the first advertisements of different sorts.

The eighteenth century saw many new newspaper titles being born and many journalists rising to fame, with Daniel Defoe⁶⁸ being the star of his times. Apart from his fictional writing, Defoe also established *The Review* (1704-1713), a periodical that focused not only on domestic but also international affairs. Soon this was followed by *The Tatler* (1709-1711), owned by Sir Richard Steele and joined later by Joseph Addison. In 1711 the Steele-Addison duo created *The Spectator*, although it had a rather a short life-span.⁶⁹ The three titles, rather than being regular newspapers, bore more resemblance to magazines; aside from political, domestic and foreign affairs, they offered their readers articles designed, as Addison stated, *to enliven the morality with wit, and to temper the wit with morality (...) till I have recovered them out of that desperate state of vice and folly into which the age has fallen.*⁷⁰

This wave of freedom during William & Mary's reign was brief as the next monarch, Queen Anne⁷¹, slowly brought back the restrictions and introduced new taxes aimed at controlling what was being printed, to the great dissatisfaction of 'Grub-Street'.⁷² *The Stamp Act* of 1712 introduced new taxation that regulated the size and number of pages of each newspaper

⁶⁷ A. Andrews, op. cit., p. 88.

⁶⁸ For more information about this character, see: J. Richetti, *The Life of Daniel Defoe: A Critical Biography*, Wiley-Blackwell 2005.

⁶⁹ britannica.com/topic/publishing/Magazine-publishing#ref398307

⁷⁰ G. W. Greene, ed., *The Works of Joseph Addison*, vol. V, Derby & Jackson 1860, p. 41.

⁷¹ For more information: A. Somerset, *Queen Anne: The Politics of Passion*, Vintage 2014.

⁷² A. Andrews, op. cit., p. 109.

and pamphlet, and established a new tax on advertisements, which were becoming more popular. Many titles did not survive the newly imposed restrictions; some publishers found loopholes, but in the end these were also closed with an updated *Stamp Act* of 1725.⁷³

The continuous restrictions allowed ingenious ideas to emerge, with newspapers' owners, bribed by prominent figures, publishing manipulated information. The late eighteenth century saw a clear moral fall when William Pitt the Younger showed himself unafraid to use various illegal means to withhold the publication of official news. However, thanks to MP and journalist John Wilkes, printers finally won the right to publish parliamentary proceedings.⁷⁴

The constant high taxation imposed by the government surely affected the number of newspapers as well as the quality of their content. Throughout the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth, the government imposed continually rising taxes to find ways to finance its various undertakings. At the same time, rapid changes in technology meant that many new titles emerged. Provincial papers, which were a relatively young creation as they only surfaced in the first half of the eighteenth century,⁷⁵ gained importance among rural communities who were dependent on printed information not only for news from London, but mostly because of demand for information pertaining to local businesses.⁷⁶ With time, these local journals not only contributed a larger percentage to the advertising tax than the London press⁷⁷, but can also be credited with helping to develop *a new world of provincial political*

⁷³ M. Goff, op. cit., p. 4.

⁷⁴ M. H. Beals & L. Lavender, op. cit., p. 18.

⁷⁵ J. Black, 'The development of the provincial newspaper press in the eighteenth century', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* vol. 14, issue 2, 2008, p. 159.

⁷⁶ S. G. Brandtzøeg, 'Mercury as merchant: the advertisement of novels in eighteenth-century provincial English newspapers', *Travelling Chronicles. News and Newspapers from the Early Modern Period to the Eighteenth Century*, 2018, p. 258.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

consciousness and activity.⁷⁸ Radical and liberal papers started appearing alongside conservative and reactionary ones. Political meetings and agitations, readers' correspondence, critiques of numerous political decisions, the newly found voice of the trade unions – all these could finally find their places on the pages of newspapers.⁷⁹

The Victorian era saw a fundamental change in delivering news. Sir Isaac Pitman developed his shorthand method, which was a system based on recording the sounds of words instead of their full spelling.⁸⁰ This revolutionised the transmission of information, and its marriage to the telegraph saw a new dawn in how the news was reported. Foreign correspondence, parliamentary proceedings, long-distance domestic affairs, could now be reported at all times. The years 1833-1861 saw a relaxation of the laws, enabling numerous new titles coming to existence. The introduction of subscription and the rapidly increasing numbers of advertisements appearing in papers not only attracted readers but also created revenue and commercial freedom. Of course, it must be noted that this also resulted in strengthening the positions of newspapers which already existed, such as the *Morning Post*, the *Morning Chronicle*, the *Morning Herald*, and most importantly, the *Times*.⁸¹ Its editor, John Thaddeus Delane, employed all his skills and efforts to ensure that all the news appearing in the newspaper had a unanimous voice, thus creating the air as if it were the voice of 'the times' itself.⁸² The strong voice which the paper arrogated to itself, its power, independence and unstoppable force in monitoring politicians and their various deeds, lifted it to the role of the Fourth Estate on its own.⁸³

⁷⁸ J. Black, op. cit., p. 160.

⁷⁹ M. H. Beals & L. Lavender, op. cit., p. 19.

⁸⁰ www.britannica.com/topic/Pitman-shorthand; I. Pitman, *Stenographic sound-hand*, by (...), Samuel Bagster 1837.

⁸¹ www.gale.com/intl/essays/ed-king-british-newspapers-1800-1860

⁸² M. H. & L. Lavender, op. cit., p. 24.

⁸³ Ibid.

The nineteenth century, with its constant changes in terms of economy, politics and society, affected the shape and character of the newspapers. The once-prominent Chartist press became obsolete as conditions for working people improved. Newspapers started targeting specific social groups, such as the working class, or women⁸⁴, providing them with useful knowledge. For the first time, the growing reading population of England⁸⁵ had the choice from a wide range of titles – from those once dangerously radical and now widely acceptable, to publications situated firmly in the political and social mainstream.⁸⁶

The provincial press also saw an opportunity to gain even more prominence. Local publishers often could obtain news through the telegraph before the city papers could reach their destinations by train. New forms of reporting were introduced as well, and in particular the second half of the nineteenth century could boast flourishing popular journalism, often in the form of the penny press. With no more Stamp Duty or Paper Duty limiting the freedom to print, cheap newspapers became more popular and widely sought after by the common people, who demanded excitement and gossip. Newspapers no longer only reported on parliamentary proceedings or foreign affairs, but also focused on what the newly emerging mass audience was looking for – jokes, horror, stories, court news, football scores, fashion and domestic advice.⁸⁷

From the repressed and strongly monarchically navigated creation focused on projecting a single image, the Fourth Estate materialised in a new form in the nineteenth century. It focused more on the audience and foresaw its expectations by delivering news that fed the

⁸⁴ J. Knelman, *Class and Gender Bias in Victorian Newspapers*, “Victorian Periodicals Review” 1993, vol. 26, nr 1, s. 29–35.

⁸⁵ A. Ellegård, *The Readership of the Periodical Press in Mid-Victorian Britain*, “Victorian Periodicals Newsletter” 1971, nr 13, s. 3–22.

⁸⁶ M. H. Beals & L. Lavender, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

⁸⁷ K. Marchlewicz, *U szczytu potęgi. Wielka Brytania w latach 1815-1914*, Poznań 2019, p. 267.

interests of various social groups. From politics and economy, to gossip and folly, from court circulars to penny dreadfuls, from opinion-sharing to opinion-making, the relationship between the press and the public changed greatly. The shape of the social classes changed, and the press had a significant impact on that. With time, the press became a public space for discussion about not only politics – internal or foreign affairs, but also society, culture, art, making it accessible for everyone.⁸⁸

Today, media image is a part of the news, and it is no longer surprising to the public that it is used to create an image of a person, whether positive or negative. It is used not only by the authors of a given article but also by the people who are often the subjects of that article. This is done in order to manipulate, control and direct what kind of news is being printed, as this affects the way a person is perceived by the public. Media of different sorts – the internet, radio, television – are understood to be means to shape the opinions of the readers or viewers in a significant way. In the past, the aim of the printed word was not only to provide information, but as described above, to intentionally affect the opinions of the readers. The people followed with great curiosity all the setbacks or successes of the prominent, their court cases, personal battles and struggles; and the readers often allowed themselves to comment on the information they read, revealing their preferences, hates and loves. It is interesting to observe how the news can shape the image of a prominent person, not just nowadays but also in the past. And for that reason, it is even more tempting to analyse how the media affected the perception of the Royal Consort, Prince Albert. It is important to determine whether the Victorian press aimed at creating a particular image of Prince Albert in a deliberate manner, or whether they were working in an unintentional, ‘unconscious’ manner with no deeper intentions than to interest and stimulate the attention of their readers on the day of publication. What is an undeniable fact, though, is that, as John Plunkett stated, both Queen Victoria and Prince Albert

⁸⁸ *Encounters in the Victorian Press* ed. L. Brake, J. F. Codell, London 2004, pp. 5-6.

received quite an extensive press attention.⁸⁹ Their mutual and separate activities became coupled with intense media coverage that gave a start to a new style of royalty, which is media royalty.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ J. Plunkett, “Civic Publicness: The Creation of Queen Victoria’s Royal Role 1837–61”, *Encounters in the Victorian Press* ed. L. Brake, J.F. Codell, London 2004, p. 11.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

2. The leading British newspapers and their role in image creation

2.1. Introduction

The birthing process of the British press as we know it today was not easy. The growing pains of this new mean of conveying information, as presented in the previous chapter, included obstacles such as censorship or taxation, and these had to be overcome in order to create a more or less free voice delivering news to an increasingly diverse market of ever hungrier readers.

The nineteenth century saw multiple new titles emerging, all of which were trying to satisfy the wants and needs of people on all rungs of the social ladder. From the dirty and debauched to the glamorous and powerful – all wanted their news, their gossip, or even their horror stories. It is no wonder that the mid-nineteenth century, as shown in Charles Mitchell's *Newspaper directory for the year 1847*⁹¹, was overflowing with numerous press titles. However, amongst some of these short-lived, reader-specific publications, there were some titles that came to take the reins of the kingdom of newspapers, and could boast the proud title of being genuinely influential, informative, or even opinion-forming.

Mitchell argued that the creators of the British press did not have such a well-grounded position within society as, for example, their counterparts in France. However, that very fact enabled them to turn the disdain of the authorities and the leaders of society to its favour and become a challenger to society, a character that had to be respected.⁹²

The dominant press titles, as listed in the 'Brief history of the newspaper' part of this work, were the *Daily News*, the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Globe*, the *Illustrated London News*, *John Bull*, *Lloyds Illustrated Paper*, the *London Evening Standard*, the *Morning Chronicle*, the *Morning Herald*, the *Morning Post*, the *News of the World*, the *Northern Star*, *Punch*, *Reynolds's Newspaper*, the *Satirist*, the *Censor of The Times*, the *Spectator*, the *Sun*, the *Times* and the *Weekly Times*. The various political factions associated with the above, as well as some

⁹¹ Ch. Mitchell, op. cit.

⁹² Ibid, p. 29.

titles which had a more irreverent, ‘cheekier’ way of presenting the news, formed a very rich and diverse resource well for the research here undertaken.

Analysing the British Newspaper Archives, it can be seen that there is an obvious fluctuation in the number of times Prince Albert was mentioned. It is clear that the reporting on German Prince’s first decade at the British court was relatively stable, with the average number of articles oscillating around 35,000–40,000 mentions, the year 1840 seeing a peak of 46,000 mentions.⁹³ His second decade saw a visible surge in that trend with the average mentions numbering above 40,000, hitting a peak of around 50,000 in 1855 and then slowly declining to 26,000–30,000 mentions.⁹⁴ However, it must be stressed that the numbers provided here include reprinted articles, which obviously ‘bumped’ the numbers.

The royal family were mentioned on the pages of not only the capital’s news sheets, but also those of other parts of the kingdom. Scottish, Welsh, and even Irish newspapers kept their readers well informed of the numerous activities undertaken by both the Queen and her Royal Consort. In many cases, however, the information provided was usually reprinted from the forerunners in the capital. Yet still, it is worth mentioning that the leading newspapers of Scotland (such as the *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, the *Edinburgh Evening News* and the *Scotsman*), Ireland (the *Belfast News-Letter*, the *Freeman’s Journal*, the *Northern Whig*), Wales (the *Monmouthshire Beacon*, the *Monmouthshire Merlin*, the *North Wales Chronicle*) kept their readers well informed. Nevertheless, it must be emphasised that there are visible differences in the number of times Prince Albert was mentioned on the pages of the titles above listed. It appears that the people of Ireland and Wales seemed less interested in the Prince’s activities, as the numbers of articles vary between 7000 and 9000 mentions for Ireland, and only 1400 to 1700 for Wales.⁹⁵ Scotland’s situation was different: the numbers are much higher

⁹³www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/search/results/1840-01-01/1849-12-31?basicsearch=prince%20albert&someSearch=prince%20albert&retrieveCountryCounts=false

⁹⁴www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/search/results/1850-01-01/1859-12-31?basicsearch=prince%20albert&someSearch=prince%20albert&retrieveCountryCounts=false

⁹⁵ www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/

there, with the *Scotsman* mentioning the Royal Consort over 40,000 times; the *Aberdeen Press and Journal* over 18,000, and the *Edinburgh Evening News* over 12,000 respectively. Of course, the numbers fluctuate depending on the years; nevertheless, the most traffic was generated during the second decade of Prince Albert's time as Consort.⁹⁶

For the purpose of this work, the above-mentioned newspaper titles have been analysed and scrutinised to find general trends and themes regarding the media image of Prince Albert. According to John Plunkett, the author of *Queen Victoria: First Media Monarch*, and *Of Hype and Type: The Media Making of Queen Victoria 1837-1845*⁹⁷ Queen Victoria and her family were considered the first media royal house. Victoria and Albert's daily activities were given much public attention, which kept them dominant on the pages of the newspapers. Their engagements were no longer kept away from the public eye; on the contrary, they were put on display for everyone to see and judge. They were crucial in building up not only their media image but also the development of the popular press.⁹⁸ At this point, it must be remembered that Prince Albert was still mostly viewed through the prism of Queen Victoria. Plunkett devotes his book solely to the Monarch, and when the Royal Consort is mentioned, it is together with his wife. Only a few paragraphs refer to Prince Albert directly, although these do suggest that the portrayal of the Consort was far from the positive image enjoyed by the Queen.

An analysis of the newspapers' articles shows that even though Prince Albert was frequently reported on, particularly in the first half of the 1840s he was mostly referred to in ways that lacked due respect and were rather mocking, even undermining of his person. The first years of his residency in England were met with hostility: Albert was ridiculed for being just a decoration in Queen Victoria's troupe, and he was seen as a person with no actual purpose or coherent role in the royal household.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/

⁹⁷ J. Plunkett, *Of Hype and Type: The Media Making of Queen Victoria 1837-1845* "Critical Survey" 2001 vol. 13 nr 2, s. 7-25.

⁹⁸ J. Plunkett, *Queen Victoria First Media Queen*, Oxford 2003, p. 14.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 47.

Nevertheless, Plunkett highlights that the perception of Prince Albert's person in the press changed over time, and that its pages came to inform the readers of his devotion to fulfilling his duties through his interest in arts, education and industry, especially during the second decade of his marriage.¹⁰⁰ Albert's dedication to the Great Exhibition met with popular approval, despite initial and quite vocal expressions of disbelief. Even the mocking and satirical *Punch*, the content and style of which will be addressed later in this work, published a poem which was very different in tone to its usual material. The poem underlined the devotion with which Prince Albert had undertaken his duties over the previous years, while at the same time portraying the Royal Consort in a more serious role:

Foundation stone past calculation,
Workmanlike, you have laid, true and square,
And a curiously dinner-rid nation
Has still found you a saint in the chair [...]
All this, my dear Prince, gives me boldness –
Which, *au reste*, our positions allow –
For a hint (which you'll not charge to coldness,
After I have written just now) :
Which is to put down certain flunkies,
Who'd by flatt'ry your favour would earn,
Pelting praise at your head, as at monkeys [...]¹⁰¹

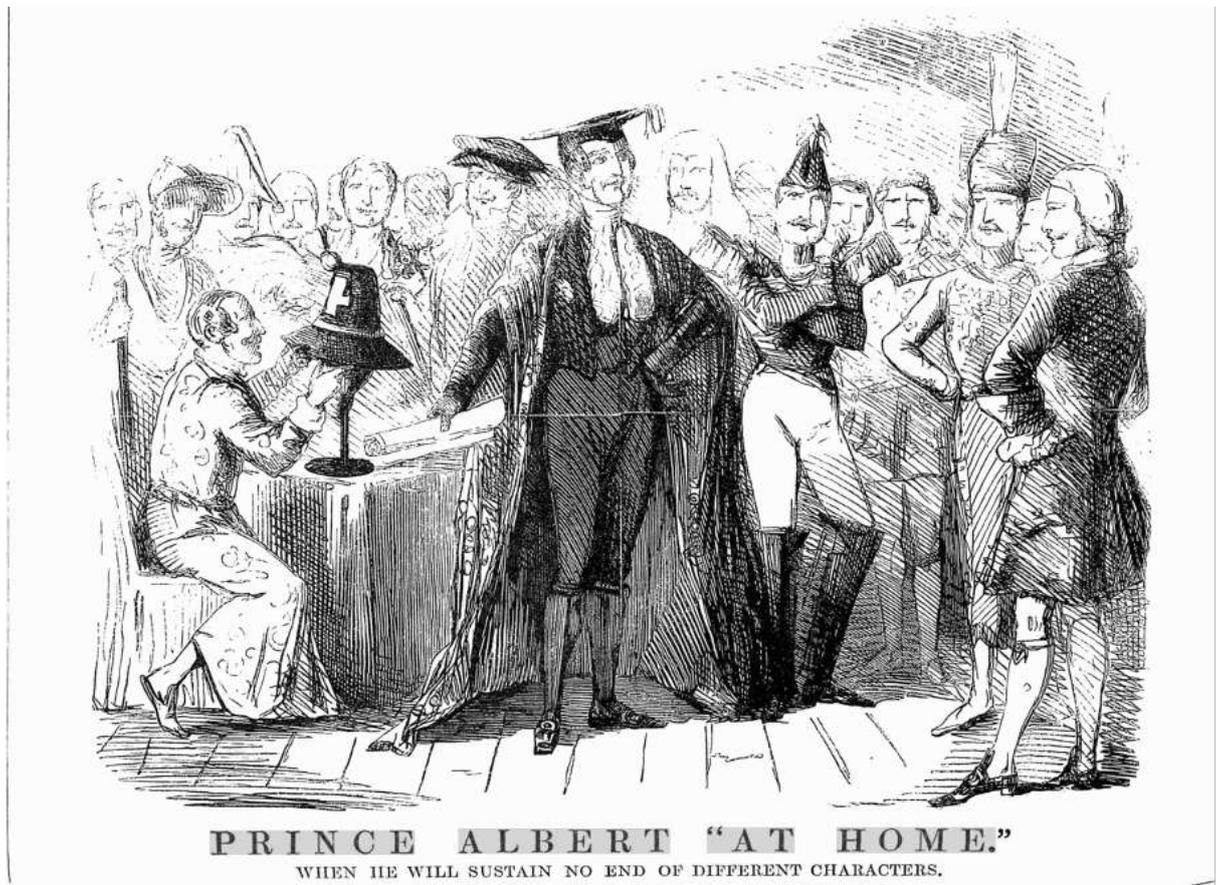
This poem shows a departure from the previous position adopted by the authors of *Punch*, such as the one cited by Plunkett in a form of a cartoon presenting Albert in his many roles. This cartoon, presented below, focused on the fact that as Albert did not have any sound role in the monarchy, he would engage himself in numerous undertakings with no particular meaning.¹⁰² The cartoon itself is a part of an article by Gilbert a' Beckett and Percival Leigh

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, p. 46.

¹⁰¹ 'Prince Punch to Prince Albert, *Punch*, v. 25, 1853.

¹⁰² J. Plunkett, op. cit., p. 47.

titled *Prince Albert at Home*¹⁰³, which mocked his various activities and was crowned with a short song, reinforcing the opinion that especially in his first years of marriage, Albert was only perceived as a husband, an adornment of no significance. As the *Satirist* put it, he was *a Prince distinguished for the elegance of his moustachios, and emptiness of his pocket; whose illustrious line has constantly shown the strongest desire of British adoption, and a particular attachment to British gold.*¹⁰⁴



Pic. 4. John Leech, 'Prince Albert "At Home"', *Punch, or the London Charivari*, 20th March, 1847.

¹⁰³ 'Albert at Home', *Punch*, v. 12, 1847.

¹⁰⁴ 'The Royal Marriage! – The Privy Council Summoned!', *The Satirist, or the Censor of the Times*, v. 397, 1839.

LARGO AL FACTOTUM, (AS IT MIGHT BE SUNG).

WHAT a factotum I am becoming now !
La la la la, la la la la !
All my employments really there 's no summing now !
La la la la, &c.
Oh, what a time of it ! Isn't it glorious
Popular Prince such as I am to be ?
Bravo, Prince Albert ! oh, Bravo, Bravissimo !
Generalissimo soon they 'll make me.
La la la la, &c.

Ready, all hours, at the call of the nation,
From botheration ne'er am I free ;
I am a Prince that 's in full occupation,
As I 'm certain you all will agree.
La la la la, &c.

Pic. 5. Gilbert a' Beckett, Percival Leigh, 'Largo al factotum, (As it might be sung)', *Punch*, v.12, 20 March, 1847.

The printed pages delivered insights to the new model of Royalty, in the form of the first periodicals, graphics, and later photographs. Albert and his image, alongside that of his famous wife, were a part of the ongoing changes to print culture. Newspapers and other types of publications became an everyday element bringing the hitherto alienated monarchy closer to its subjects. The numerous newspapers could either act as a defensive shield, openly supporting the royal court: or they could remorselessly publish hostile, satirical, amusing or even shocking news to the amusement or disgust of their readers.

2.2. The main London newspapers

These two were for many the essential newspaper titles of the nineteenth century.

However, it would not be fair and just only to discuss the background of these two prominent titles without mentioning the other titles that made up the concert of the London press. For that reason, this chapter will focus on other players in the powerful game that the London titles played. The varied insights that these newspapers provide allow us to build a more nuanced image of how Prince Albert was perceived. As the press's approach changed with time, it becomes vital to understand what each title represented, how they delivered 'reality' to their readers, whether it was distorted according to their whims, likes and dislikes, or perhaps whether the editors were focusing on a simple reportage of facts rather than imposing their own opinion.

2.2.1. The *Times*

Nevertheless, there is no doubt that both the *Times* and the *Spectator* were the leaders of the pack as the most prestigious organs of the Fourth Estate.

Mitchell presented *The Times* in the following way:

THE TIMES.

This, the leading journal of Europe, has for the field of its circulation, emphatically, the World, and its influence is coextensive with civilisation (...)

(...)The consciousness that thousands upon thousands read, creates some impression, an idea which may be to some extent the source of influence and of power. But there is in the influence of the Times something more substantial, more potent, than can be accounted for by the mere consciousness of its enormous circulation ; it is "looked up to" all over Europe, and it is the only paper which men of all parties, and all classes, read and speak of. Other papers may be more preferred by particular classes, but all read the Times, who can; just because it is not possible to predicate its course on any question as regulated by the interests of any party or class ; and it is known that it always acts on views of its own.¹⁰⁵

This short excerpt from *The Newspaper Directory* clearly states the aims which the owners of *The Times* had. Was it too bold a statement to claim to be a creator of public opinion, or was it just a ploy to draw more attention to the title? Either way, it seems that ‘The Thunderer’¹⁰⁶, as it was referred to, took pride in maintaining rigorous standards of reporting and meticulous accuracy. However, considering that during the time under discussion here, the editors of this newspaper were Thomas Barnes (ed. 1817-41)¹⁰⁷, and after his death, John Thaddeus Delane (ed. 1841-79)¹⁰⁸, both of whom expressed rather liberal views, it is not

¹⁰⁵ Ch. Mitchell, op. cit.

¹⁰⁶ www.brittanica.com

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

surprising that there was such a vivid division between certain topics and how they were addressed and described. It is thanks to these men that the *Daily Universal Register*, as *The Times* was initially called, became a nationwide recognized institution which paved the way for all newspapers to transfer from the old ways of the eighteenth century to the more modern ways of being an independent organ of public opinion.¹⁰⁹ Additionally, it is worth mentioning that during his time as editor, Barnes used information for his articles obtained from his friend Henry Brougham, 1st Baron Brougham and Vaux¹¹⁰, who reported on the atmosphere of parliamentary proceedings and talks¹¹¹. The obvious disdain for those who opposed Prince Albert seeped through every word when reading articles published in the pages of the newspaper.

Among the numerous short articles and notices referring to the different engagements Prince Albert participated in, we can find multiple brief notes, articles and other published letters which expressed a positive view of the nation towards him. The papers took every opportunity to report on his activities, whether it was a speech he gave, a visit to the docks, or his birthday. Every possible occasion is mentioned: in those times the Court Circulars¹¹² acted as today's gossip pages informing the readers of every move celebrities make. These would be

¹⁰⁹ S. Morison, *The Thunderer In The Making. History of The Times 1785-1841 vol 1*, Cambridge 1972.

¹¹⁰ Henry Brougham, 1st Baron Brougham and Vaux, (1778–1868), was a lord chancellor of England. He was responsible for remodelling the judicial committee. As a parliamentary figure, he gathered great public interest thanks to his charismatic character and audacity. His activities were not limited merely to politics as he was also a skilful writer, though later in his life, his written accounts were mostly inaccurate.

¹¹¹ www.brittanica.com

¹¹² The Court Circular, according to the official website of the British Royal Family, is a daily account of Royal events. The first issues reporting of the Sovereign's engagements can be traced back to King George III in 1803 who expressed frustration at incorrect descriptions of Royal events.

printed in the newspapers on a regular basis, acting as short reports regarding things such as a stroll that Prince Albert would take, a hunting expedition, or perhaps a carriage ride with the Queen.

Most of the information presented on the pages of *The Times* provides rather detailed descriptions of Prince Albert, his character, mannerisms, his everyday engagements big or small, accidents, assassination attempts, hunting outings, and much more. Over the years, this allowed the readers to build up their own images of the Royal Consort; given the way he was presented in the newspapers, this was generally positive, and so posthumously his person was glorified by more people than just the Queen herself.

However, an analysis of the *Times*'s reporting shows that the perception of Prince Albert, the Royal Consort, was not consistently positive. His media image, especially after his death, was positive; nevertheless, during his life as Queen Victoria's husband, it is quite clear that Prince Albert was the subject of heated discussions which did not always address him positively. As a hands-on Royal he was engaged in numerous undertakings which were met with mixed emotions, although such negative opinions were in many cases instantly refuted by the supportive wings of the *Times*.

The Times took the responsibility of cleansing the air surrounding Prince Albert. However, there were titles that were not as keen on doing so and preferred to be more realistic, honest and devoted to delivering pure information to the readers. This was a fundamental principle of the founder of the *Spectator*.

2.2.2. The *Spectator*

After the description provided by Charles Mitchell in his *Newspaper Directory*¹¹³, we learn that this weekly newspaper was liberal in its politics and advocated freedom of trade. The idea was that this title should be utterly independent and indifferent to any class or ruling party. Mitchell maintained that the *Spectator* did indeed manage to remain as such – cold, shrewd, forensic and exposing all fallacies.

This paper perhaps most resembles the leading journal in its utter independence of, and indifference to, any particular class, sect, or party. [...] The spirited proprietor started with the objects of ability and impartiality before him,

¹¹³⁷ Ch. Mitchell, op. cit., p. 125.

and has never sunk in either. There is a stern insensibility to all influence of party or of person in his talented paper, most pointedly distinctive; and in perfect harmony with this, its leading feature and principle, is a certain close, terse, sarcastic way of reasoning, keen at detecting, and merciless in exposing, fallacies; [...] Cold, shrewd, sagacious, searching are its structures on men and manners: never characterised by warmth – yet redeemed from dullness – nay, rendered pointed and piquant by the sharpness of their edge, the acuteness of their satire, and bitterness of the application. No style of writing more eminently unites the terse with the expressive; [...] A reflective, philosophical sort of radicalism, may be termed its political character, dealing fairly with statesmen and with schemes of all schools [...] The impartiality that gives so much originality to its political views, imparts immense value to its literary criticism, which never descends into mere eulogy on the one hand, nor mere abuse on the other.¹¹⁴

From its beginning in 1828, the founder of the *Spectator*, the Scottish reformer Robert Stephen Rintoul, emphasised his wish to edit a perfect newspaper. He tried to execute this by wielding absolute power over the content, at one time even rewriting the whole issue.

Rintoul answered the need for a serious, weekly newspaper that, unlike the *Times*, would remain unchanged in its approach and viewpoint. For thirty years he managed to imprint his personality on the pages of his paper. He infused it with his liberal ideas, remained indifferent to political influence, kept himself impartial and always associated himself with a cause rather than with a man or a party. He intended to spar with the dying days of the Georgian era, a corrupt political system, and the lacklustre literary world of the day.¹¹⁵

As William Beach Thomas wrote in his *The Story of The Spectator 1828-1928*¹¹⁶, the *Spectator* was never a mere newsheet:

its plan is entirely new, comprising (1) the whole news of the week; (2) a full and impartial exhibition of all the leading politics of the day; (3) a separate discussion of interesting topics of a general nature, with a view to instruction and

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ D. Butterfield, *10 000 not out: the history of the Spectator 1828-2020*, Unicorn 2020.

¹¹⁶ W. B. Thomas, *The story of The Spectator 1828-1928*, Methuen & Co. Ltd. 1928.

entertainment at the same time; (4) a department devoted to literature, consisting of independent criticism of the new books (...)¹¹⁷

Further, we read that

we are the organ of no party; we run counter to the prejudices of all parties; and instead of lending our columns to the propagation of delusions, we expose them on fit and proper occasions.¹¹⁸

To support this claim, the newspaper expressed contempt for the Whigs, who at that time were largely favoured by the *Times*. At the same time, it vigorously campaigned against the ‘tyrants’ who were personified as the Tories.

At all times the *Spectator* remained aware of its position as a member of a powerful press, the watchdog of society; and unlike *The Times*, which openly stated its intention to create the nation’s opinion, Rintoul believed that journalism was in fact nothing but the expression of public opinion. For him, any newspaper attempting to *dictate* to the public what they should believe should cease to exist. His main objective was, in fact, to reach the wider public and thus inspire it to draw its own conclusions, rather than imposing its management’s own opinions and beliefs.

When it comes to the depiction of Prince Albert, the *Spectator*’s editor did not adopt the role of (largely) uncritical defender, as the editors of the *Times* did. In fact, W. B. Thomas stated that at times the newspaper became very irreverent towards the future Consort.

The sort and degree of attachment subsiding between our gracious Queen and her bridegroom-elect, are to every young lady and gentleman in these islands naturally very interesting questions. That the Prince sighs for the Queen has already been insisted on. But it is naturally very interesting to know, whether he ‘sighs like a furnace’ or only like ‘an ordinary pair of bellows’.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ W. B. Thomas, op. cit., p. 132.

Despite such a playful description, the paper was mostly interested in the constitutional position of Prince Albert: *politically, he can ostensibly be nothing; though privately he may be almost anything (...) he must remain a gilded puppet.*¹²⁰ This well summarises the *Spectator*'s policy of independence and indifference to any particular class, seat or party.

In the years between 1840 and 1861, the *Spectator*'s archives hold around 1260 articles that focus on Prince Albert. The pages are filled with different types of news, court gossip regarding the everyday life of the Queen and the Prince, celebrations of birthdays, and their participation in various duties. All these were presented with little to no attempt to elevate the readers' emotions. It is obvious that the newspaper was indeed trying to remain impartial and focus solely on reporting the news.

On Saturday, the Royal Agricultural Society of England held its half-annual meeting at the rooms in Cavendish Square ; the Duke of Cambridge presiding. The Duke of Richmond, Earl Spencer, and other eminent farmers were present. The report stated that Prince Albert had become a member of the Society.¹²¹

The Duke of Buckingham has allowed two of his most thickly-stocked preserves at Wootton Underwood to remain unshot over this season, with the view of affording Prince Albert a day's shooting over them.¹²²

It must be stressed, though, that the *Spectator* did not focus only on trivial and everyday news regarding Prince Albert. Matters of great importance were printed in the sheets of this weekly newspaper. However, unlike the *Times*, the *Spectator* refrained from strong and emotionally loaded texts, and focused on factual accounts. Nevertheless, some verbal adornment to the descriptions of Prince Albert is visible on the pages of Rintoul's publication. Was it intended to mock the Royal Consort, or simply to present the editor's more relaxed and less servile attitude, perhaps in a more humorous way, as for example when referring to Albert's blue eyes? Regardless of the editor's intent towards Prince Albert, it is clear that the

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ *The Spectator*, 18 December 1841, p. 2.

¹²² *The Spectator*, 11 January 1845, p. 8.

Spectator did not always portray the Consort in a way reflecting the respect a royal should receive.

However, it is undeniable that the *Spectator* vowed to stand as a sentinel to the provision of just, unbiased, undistorted information. The pages provide clear and well-designed passages which sway neither side. It is clear that Rintoul intended to distance himself and his newspaper from any potential political influence, and this is reflected in how Prince Albert is depicted. During his time in Britain, he received ample amount of criticism and reflection upon his character and involvement in the arts, science, education, and even politics. But it is also fair to state that the *Spectator* tried to remain impartial and abstained from creating a tendentious image of Prince Albert, especially in his later years.

Rintoul believed that the readers themselves should be able to make their own judgements opinions, rather than forcing his vision and understanding of the world upon them.¹²³ However, it is also true that some gentle mockery, amusement, or light-heartedness in how Albert was portrayed does come across. This tone changed over the years, and latterly the newspaper gave the Prince a more respectful depiction.

It is indeed interesting to follow these two newspapers and note how different their objectives were. Both were focused on the idea of educating their readers, yet both tried to achieve this in different and contrasting ways. It is also surprising that when reading the articles, in general their tones are not so different from the kind of opinion columns which can be read in today's press.

Clearly, the media still directs the minds of the readers, be they followers, listeners readers or watchers. It is perhaps an overstatement to assume that this phenomenon appeared together with the first mass press, yet it was already visible in the nineteenth century that certain predetermined steps were taken to achieve this aim. Of course, without the clear press laws that were introduced in later years, and which still require modification in order to keep up with the fast-changing media landscape, the manipulation or creation of news was easier in that initial phase, and for that reason it was simpler for the emerging media of the Victorian era to create a certain imagery and shape public opinion.

¹²³ W. B. Thomas, op. cit., p. 20-21.

These two leading London periodicals undoubtedly played a very important role in creating the media image of Prince Albert. Just by analysing these two, it is clear that just like Queen Victoria, Albert also acquired a well-defined media image. However, it was not as consistent as his wife's, and the fluctuation of the press opinion is quite visible. And the words of these journals were reprinted by other, minor titles, both in the capital and by the regional and provincial press.

Alongside the *Times* and *Spectator*, other titles should be introduced here to give a broader picture of the expanding press market. It is obvious that the many tastes and likes of the general public can be only satisfied when they get a choice. Of course, it is also true that too much of that choice can be overwhelming and could be exploited for malicious purposes. Nevertheless, the mid-nineteenth century saw the births and deaths of many titles which, at times, managed to shine a little more light on the sentiments of the day than others.

Following the data available on the *British Newspaper Archives*, the titles with the most traffic connected with Prince Albert were determined. Those with the biggest number of hits connected with Prince Albert included, as presented here alphabetically, the *Daily News*, the *Globe*, the *London Evening Standard*, the *Morning Chronicle*, the *Morning Herald*, the *Morning Post* and the *Sun*.

2.2.3. The *London Evening Standard*

The one that comes just behind the *Times* and *Spectator* in terms of articles discussing Albert is the *London Evening Standard*.

Initially, this publication bore the title of the *Standard* when it was founded in 1827, but in 1860 it began issuing both morning and evening editions. The newspaper was created as a counterbalance to its main rival the *Times*.¹²⁴ Despite earning the slur of 'a stupid and priggish print'¹²⁵ by the *Times*, its sales soon rose. Soon enough, an evening edition of the newspaper

¹²⁴www.standard.co.uk/news/london/born-1827-and-still-going-strong-a-history-of-the-london-evening-standard-in-pictures-9105149.html

¹²⁵ www.theguardian.com/media/2009/jan/14/history-london-evening-standard

was added, and with time this became the only one available, thus earning the name of the *London Evening Standard*.

From the beginning, the paper focused on reporting accurate foreign news, as well as introducing the world of art to its readers. Its founding father Charles Baldwin, together with the editor Dr. Stanley Lee Giffard, created a title which was rather conservative in its voice.¹²⁶ The *Standard* eloquently supported Sir Robert Peel and his party. Its most remarkable moment came during the Irish Famine, when the newspaper managed to depict the sufferings of the Irish peasants in a way that touched the heart of the English people, gaining their respect and sympathy.¹²⁷

The *London Evening Standard* was no stranger to sharing the opinions of others, as there are numerous reprints from other newspapers such as the *Spectator* or the *Morning Herald*. Indeed, over the years the *London Evening Standard* used the views and opinions of others to create a fair and balanced image of Prince Albert. They did not shy away from reporting more political matters concerning the Royal Consort, although they did not resort to the judgemental disputes that were a feature of the *Times* for example.

One letter to the editor (a reprint from the *Morning Herald*) discussed the position of Prince Albert during his numerous meetings with the Ministers. Albert's presence during these meetings was a common subject for discussion on the pages of various newspapers. Here, the *Standard's* editors focus on reprinting the letter, emphasising that it is their journalistic duty to publish and share it with the wider public. There is no additional judgment, no commentary – just placing the focal point on the letter itself. The letter is stern in its language; its author, an unnamed MP, is upset at Prince Albert's involvement in politics.

[...] Let Prince Albert have full credit for the Exhibition – for his service to art – and for his exertions to benefit the working class; but it is too much that one man, and not an Englishman by birth, should be at once Foreign Secretary, Commander in Chief, and Prime Minister, under all administrations.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/titles/london-evening-standard

¹²⁷ Ch. Mitchell, op. cit., p. 126.

¹²⁸ 'The Prince Albert', *The London Evening Standard*, 3 January 1854.

The reader was expected to draw their own conclusions without being directed towards a particular opinion. Unlike the *Times*, the *London Evening Standard*'s management did not wish to be a creator of public opinion.

The *Standard* informed its readers of almost every move Prince Albert made. What is more, the editors did so (unlike the editors of the *Times* or *Spectator*) while refraining from strong, accusatory language, remaining true to its eloquent ideas, and delivering the news with great literary skill.

2.2.4. The *Sun*

The *Sun*, one of Britain's oldest newspapers, whose foundation dated back to the late eighteenth century, was predominantly a political publication, focusing mainly on parliamentary proceedings. Initially pro-government, it shifted its allegiance and by the mid-1830s it had become more of a liberal organ. Its proprietor, Murdo Young, surprised the public when celebrating Queen Victoria's coronation on 28 June 1838 by printing the front page in a gold typeface. This issue reached a peak of popularity, with 250,000 being sold.¹²⁹

¹²⁹ www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/titles/sun-london



Pic. 5. Gold typeface print of Queen Victoria's coronation published in the *Sun* on 28 June 1838.

Analysing the records of the *British Newspaper Archives*, we see that the number of mentions of Prince Albert is much lower in the *Sun* than for other newspapers. These do not reach more than 3000 mentions, and by the end of the second decade of Albert's marriage they have dropped to just a few hundred.¹³⁰

As other newspaper titles, the year 1840 saw a focus on aspects connected with the royal marriage, Albert's annuity, and his religion. It also focused on his activities connected with his involvement in the arts, industry and education, and published expressions of joy over events like his arrival in Britain, his marriage to the Queen and his birthdays. Discussions of

¹³⁰[www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/search/results/1840-01-01/1849-12-](http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/search/results/1840-01-01/1849-12-31?basicsearch=prince%20albert&exactsearch=true&retrievecountrycounts=false&newspapertitle=sun%2b(london)&sortorder=dayearly)

[31?basicsearch=prince%20albert&exactsearch=true&retrievecountrycounts=false&newspapertitle=sun%2b\(london\)&sortorder=dayearly](http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/search/results/1840-01-01/1849-12-31?basicsearch=prince%20albert&exactsearch=true&retrievecountrycounts=false&newspapertitle=sun%2b(london)&sortorder=dayearly)

his political involvement were either reprinted from the *Times*, the *Moring Herald* or the *Morning Chronicle*, and retained the style of the original texts without excessive elevation of the language or the emotions.

Similar to the *London Evening Standard*, Young's newspaper took pains to provide just and unbiased information regarding the Royal Consort, at times reprinting stories from the *Times*, or adapting work from other titles which were more frivolous in the language they used. Reports from the Court Circulars, or concerning the Prince's hunting trips, outings and visits could all be found on the pages of this and many other newspapers. This news about Prince Albert, major or minor, would play a great part in creating the media representation of the Royal Consort. His numerous engagements, whether social, cultural or academic, built up his image as a 'hands-on' Prince – a Prince, who, since he did not have any actual power, had to occupy himself somehow in order to create a place for himself.

Other morning titles, including the *Morning Post*, the *Morning Herald* and the *Morning Chronicle*, also had strong voices, or at least tried to seem as if they did. All three represented different political factions and contrasting aims, and have descriptions in Mitchell's work.

2.2.5. The *Morning Post* & the *Morning Herald*

Both the *Morning Post* and the *Morning Herald* were inclined towards the Tory party. Their voices come across as lighter and less political than of other newspapers. The former's main focus was on the moral aspect of everyday life, whereas the latter, dealing more with public issues, tried to "distil the essence of public events", maintaining that the final outcome was far from being dull and meaningless.¹³¹ The data from the British Newspaper Archives shows that the numbers of articles concerning Prince Albert in both papers are similar, slowly declining towards the end of the 1850s.

Contrary to their more popular counterparts, both the *Morning Post* and the *Morning Herald* shied away from strong and argumentative language, focusing more on delivering the news and necessary information rather than offering highly opinionated statements or getting involved in arguments in the name of truth as both *The Times* and *Spectator* claimed to be doing.

¹³¹ Ch. Mitchell, op. cit., p. 66-67.

With the *Morning Post* and *Morning Herald* claiming to be supporters of the Tory system, the balance in the newspapers and their political affiliations had to be kept. The *Times* was indeed a liberal newspaper, siding with the Whigs, while the *Spectator* tried to be apolitical but with liberal tendencies as well. One of the more openly liberal titles was the *Globe*.

2.2.6. The *Globe*

This evening newspaper was established in 1803 by Christopher Blackett. Until 1866 it openly shared liberal beliefs, often printing letters to and from leading Whig politicians such as Lord John Russell.¹³²

It had a rather strong and expressive way of delivering the news, putting aside any shyness or carefulness. The editors were not afraid to use stinging satire to maintain the readers' interest. The *Globe* resorted to topics concerning personal matters, and used a sharp tongue and wit to attack its opponents and lure in potential readers who were more inclined towards clever yet still pleasurable print.¹³³ It also delivered more than other newspapers in terms of advertising and ministerial news. It is no wonder that Prince Albert and any news concerning his activities do not predominate but rather, as the British Newspaper Archives show, remain steady over the years. However, when he is mentioned, as with the *Times* the editors had to address certain rumours, inaccuracies or even false accusations with strong language. However, unlike the *Times*, the authors resorted more to wit, avoiding the sometimes brutal or vulgar wording used by the 'Thunderer'.

2.2.7. *John Bull*

This paper, established in 1820, fell into the camp of the more conservative and 'High-Church' papers. According to Mitchell, the editor of this newspaper preferred to be antagonistic rather than argumentative, and so its content was quite loaded with emotions, animated and ardent, trying vigorously to reach those who shared their feelings. Its publisher John Cooper

¹³² www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/titles/globe

¹³³ Ch. Mitchell, op. cit., p. 71.

Bunney avoided common sarcasm and employed the political discourse common for the country gentlemen, an honest, enthusiastic ‘old English style’.¹³⁴

2.2.8. The *Illustrated London News*

This title, that first appeared in 1842, was a liberal, eclectic and rich collection not only of local news also world news that encompassed various topics such as science, art and culture, political events, and of course the royal family.¹³⁵ This weekly newspaper distinguished itself from other popular titles by being the first fully illustrated paper.¹³⁶ The use of visuals caused a revolution in journalism and the way news was reported.¹³⁷ The combination of pictures and text made it exceptionally engaging and well-suited to act as a ‘family paper’¹³⁸, and also made it interesting for the younger generation. The title prided itself for its vivid depiction not only of British news, but also world news – accounts of war, reports depicting disasters or ceremonies, descriptions of the arts and science, all were now possible. Moreover, this newspaper provided interesting insights into the life of the Royal Family, as its summary of the week’s news was usually accompanied by an interesting illustration. This formed a kind of bridge between the royals and the common people.

¹³⁴ Ch. Mitchell, op. cit., pp. 99-100. The title refers to the fictional character of John Bull – a stereotypical Englishman – the equivalent of the Polish Jan Kowalski, which reveals the ambition of the magazine's editors to reach a wide audience and represent its views.

¹³⁵ www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/titles/illustrated-london-news

¹³⁶ P. Sinnema, *Dynamics of the Pictured Page Representing the Nation in the "Illustrated London News"*, London 2020 p.18.

¹³⁷ M. Cappock, “Pageantry or Propaganda? The Illustrated London News and Royal Visitors in Ireland”, *Irish Arts Review Yearbook*, 2000, vol. 16 s. 86–93.

¹³⁸ Ch. Mitchell, op. cit., p. 98.

2.2.9. *Bell's Life in London and Sporting Chronicle*

Bell's Life in London and Sporting Chronicle was a liberal title that, as its name suggested, focused on life in London and on sport. The various sports and games described in this paper, from cricketing to boating, sailing to horseracing, met the demand of a varied audience. The editors did not focus solely on presenting sporting news; they responded to the interests of many people, delivering accounts of crimes, coverage of executions, jokes, comics and political news.¹³⁹ The political section was less prominent, but still bore importance for the consistent tone in which the less entertaining information was written. According to Mitchell, the newspaper's proprietor, a Mr. Clement, had a keen eye for spotting talent, which was surely the result of his business-like character.¹⁴⁰ The broad range and engaging tone of the articles in *Bell's Life in London and Sporting Chronicle* gave this weekly title high popularity.

2.3. The satirical press

Of course, we must bear in mind that while the regular press, be it objectively or subjectively, presented specific information regarding the above listed aspects, the satirical press was a separate body that did not fall into the same category as regular newspapers. The editors of these latter newspapers allowed themselves much more frivolity in the articles they printed. Quite often, these were not intended to be truthful but rather aimed at amusing the readers by exploiting and mocking the person of the Royal Consort him. As society's reading habits became more diverse, and its tastes and needs diverged more visibly, demand for satire, mockery and irreverence also grew and had to be reflected.

For that reason, the British newspaper scene in the nineteenth century was filled with numerous titles that met the needs of this newly diverse society. Political, cultural, medical, female-centred newspapers and many more were widely available to feed the hunger, not only for daily news but also for entertainment, advice, and even gossip. It is no wonder that the fast-paced nineteenth century welcomed titles that expressed approaches that were more amusing, playful and satirical. According to Richard D. Altick, men of the industrial era often expressed

¹³⁹ www.victorianperiodicals.com/series3/single_sample.asp?id=99192

¹⁴⁰ Ch. Mitchell, op. cit., p. 79.

the notion that they lived in an age of periodicals.¹⁴¹ This bold statement is supported by the plethora of titles published and the changing character of Victorian society. The periodicals provided intellectual sustenance in many forms: religious, intellectual, cultural. They were the answer to the demand of society's growing literacy, they were cheap and (usually) respectable, and were convenient for the family's reading rituals of gathering together to listen to the man of the house reading aloud about theatre, leisure, and other types of recreation. Periodicals exceeded novels in popularity due to their cheapness and their many & varied channels of distribution. Their popularity grew rapidly as they reflected the vigorously changing trends in society, especially in the Victorian period.¹⁴²

Amongst the many more or less notable titles such as *Judy*, *Bell's Life in London*, *Figaro* and *Fun*, others became true sentinels of satire: *Punch* and *The Satirist: or the censor of the Times*. Charles Mitchell in his *Newspaper Directory* does not devote much space to the latter, offering just a short note regarding the liberal tone of the published title: *The character of this paper is so well known, that it speaks for itself.*¹⁴³ It is nothing more but pure 'pasquinade', with the main intent of being pleasurable to its readers.

2.3.1. *The Satirist; or the Censor of the Times & the Penny Satirist*

The available historiography gives little information as to the person or people behind the desks of the *Satirist*. According to Mitchell, this Saturday newspaper was published by Alexander Carroll¹⁴⁴, although the British Newspaper Archive states that the publisher was unknown.¹⁴⁵ Yet, the University of Illinois' Rare Book and Manuscript Library is in a

¹⁴¹ R. D. Altick, *The Newberry Library Bulletin*, "British Periodicals, 19th century", May 1952, pp. 255-264.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ch. Mitchell, op. cit., p. 124.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/titles/satirist-or-the-censor-of-the-times

possession of a collection of correspondence that belonged to one Barnard Gregory (1796-1852), a London-based actor and journalist. According to the information provided on the library's website, Gregory not only owned but also edited *The Satirist; or Censor of the Times* as well as the *Penny Satirist*, a publication similar in tone and manner. Despite this clue, it is difficult to clearly pin down a specific person as being fully responsible for the sometimes unbridled way in which Prince Albert (or any other person mentioned in its pages) was dealt with.

This short-lived title exercised the usage of wit and satire as a weapon which was designed to highlight certain aspects, qualities or events that normally would have been simply mentioned on the pages of everyday newspapers without any additional tempering or spice. This scandalous title ceased to exist in 1849. Gregory himself was entangled in several libels due to the character of his publications.¹⁴⁶

The short-lived *Satirist* and *Penny Satirist* expressed an open dislike of Prince Albert. It seems that the authors of the scandalous articles took a perverse pleasure in addressing his person in a grotesque manner, with disdain and even open hatred. Open mockery was a regular guest.

Between late 1839 to 1849 that Prince Albert was a regular topic in this newspaper, with mentions running at around 200-250, peaking in late 1839 and early 1840 where the numbers pass 300.¹⁴⁷ The *Satirist* tried to follow every topic connected with Prince Albert, such as his arrival, annuity, religion, origin, and many others. Instead of giving a simple commentary, as was the case with regular newspapers, it adopted a very heavy mocking attitude, ridiculing Albert at every opportunity. It is obvious that the editors of this title had no intention of being just or objective. The lengthy passages, poems and lampoons it contained display vivid and brutal negativity towards Prince Albert. A short passage from the issue dated

¹⁴⁶ www.library.illinois.edu/rbx/2010/06/28/a-collection-of-letters-to-barnard-gregory/

¹⁴⁷ www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/search/results/1840-01-01/1849-12-31?basicsearch=prince%20albert&somebasicsearch=prince%20albert&retrievecountrycounts=false&newspapertitle=satirist%253b%2bor%252c%2bthe%2bcensor%2bof%2bthe%2btimes&sortorder=dayearly

13th October 1839 mentions the death of Queen Victoria's pet monkey, yet, as the author exclaims, she does not care since Albert is still alive:

A MONKEY'S SUBSTITUTE

VIC's monkey's dead! This news loud rumour gives.

What need she care, since princely Albert lives!¹⁴⁸

The author of this couplet was surely quite bold since he allowed himself to place the person of Albert on the same level as a pet. He knew perfectly well that no condemnation would befall him for his creation. It would be rather daring, to say the least, to mock the future husband of the Monarch in such a demeaning way. This short passage shows that there were indeed people among Victoria's subjects who were openly opposed to the German Prince and who did not deem it as inappropriate to present their views in such a polarising way, far from what the leading voices presented in previous chapters. More surprising, it seems there were no comments elsewhere condemning such daring and offensive behaviour.

It would be difficult to base any analysis solely on particular aspects that were also present in other titles, and correlate them. even, and thus, it is necessary not to extract and analyse the core events mentioned already, but to take a more holistic approach and scrutinise all. Only then will it be possible to justly determine what the image of Albert was on the pages of this, undoubtedly, unconventional paper.

The Satirist presents a unique approach, raw and undignified. Its mocking, amusing and even at times offensive language is used on every possible occasion to attack Prince Albert. The monkey mentioned above is resorted to quite often when referencing Albert. An article from the same day as the above verse says that 'the little Queen' is fond of monkeys, and since one of her favourite pets is dead there is a vacancy for Prince Albert now. It is as if Prince Albert meant very little to the author or authors of the short stories posted in *The Satirist*. They made it clear that his position at court, as husband of the Queen and as a naturalised Englishman, meant nothing to them and was only a reason for further attacks.

2.3.2 *Punch*

¹⁴⁸ *The Satirist, or the Censor of the Times*, 13 October 1839, p. 5.

As for *Punch*, its fame and reputation mean that there is more information available. Ebenezer Landells and Henry Mayhew were inspired to create their paper by a French title, *Le Charivari*. It is worth mentioning that they followed the original to the extent of naming the first issue *The London Charivari*. The word *charivari* itself originates from the Latin *caribaria*, which means ‘headache’, and became associated with a discordant mock serenade for newlyweds.¹⁴⁹ Later, the name was changed to the one by which it is known today. The origin of this was also quite unusual, as it was remarked that *the magazine should be like a good Punch mixture*.¹⁵⁰

Henry Mayhew and Ebenezer Landells cooperated only for a short period of time, and its successive editors include other names such as Joseph Stirling Coyne, William Makepeace Thackeray, Thomas Hood, and the magnificent illustrator-cartoonists John Leech and Sir John Tenniel. It is thanks to these names that *Punch* never stood still, and gave its readers a remarkable picture of the Victorian era.¹⁵¹

According to Mitchell, this title presented itself as the leader of the English satirical press. Liberal in tone but expressing ‘guarded admiration for the right wing of politics’¹⁵², it focused on satire and ridicule to occupy its readers during their leisure times. *Punch* became the go-to paper when waiting for a train or during journeys, providing merriness and enjoyment. It needs to be emphasised, though, that despite its jesting manner this satirical title did also include facts and news. These were simply entwined with the humour to bolster their significance, was as the journal’s aim, in the end, was to educate the readership’s minds. *Punch* was not merely a vulgar title to satisfy the lower class’s hunger for merriment and gossip. It was refined in its tone to meet the more complex tastes of better-educated readers.¹⁵³ With time,

¹⁴⁹ www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/charivari

¹⁵⁰ www.magazine.punch.co.uk/p/a-brief-history

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² F. Morris, *Artist of Wonderland: the Life, Political Cartoons, and Illustrations of Tenniel*, University of Virginia Press 2005, pp. 248-251.

¹⁵³ Ch. Mitchell, op. cit., p. 118.

it became associated with the well-to-do middle class¹⁵⁴ and as a result, became part of the establishment.¹⁵⁵

From the very beginning, this ‘cheap literary newcomer’¹⁵⁶ proved to be more than just a mere humorous creation. It strived to be morally superior to its competitors like the *Satirist*. *Punch*’s prime goal was to deliver news, stories and gossip but not solely by the means of mockery, but also with wit – a perfect marriage that helped this magazine to stand out and, in the long run, to outlive other periodicals of this kind. To this day, *Punch* remains one of the greatest sources for British and imperial history.¹⁵⁷

Perhaps what helped *Punch* to secure its title as the leading satirical paper for so many decades is the fact that aside from the humorous caricatures and witty commentaries that the readers enjoyed, the editors also included topics that were far less entertaining but were rather informative, concerning science, medicine, engineering, philosophy, and even touching upon feminine aspects, such as the end of crinoline or those connected to women’s suffrage.¹⁵⁸ The aim was not only to provide momentary entertainment but also to provide intellectual stimuli.

What is also outstanding about *Punch* is that unlike many other papers of its sort, it used cartoons and caricatures as a mean of aiding the written text to enhance the comprehension

¹⁵⁴ F. E. Hugget, *Victorian England as seen by Punch*, Sidgwick and Jackson 1978, p. 37.

¹⁵⁵ H. Miller, “The problem with Punch”, *Historical Research*, Oxford 2009, pp. 285-302.

¹⁵⁶ R. Noaks, op. cit., p. 91.

¹⁵⁷ R. Scully, “A Comic Empire. The Global Expansion of Punch as a Model Publication, 1841-1936”, *International Journal of Comic Art*, 2013, p. 7

¹⁵⁸ J. Thomas, *Pictorial Victorians: The Inscription of Values in Word and Image*, Ohio State UP 2004, pp. 77-104.

of the information conveyed. Noaks, quoting James Secord and his *Victorian Sensation*¹⁵⁹, argues that the dissemination of much scientific information is due to being discussed in *Punch*.

This new way of presenting information was born in the 1840s when the first graphic press titles started emerging. This visual style perfectly suited the middle as well as the working class, as it could be made to link popular language, graphics and science, or any other serious issue for that matter.¹⁶⁰ *Punch* thus remained associated with a liberal and middle-class audience, ‘multi-vocal mouthpiece for respectable politics’¹⁶¹, and focused on amplifying pretentious and snobbish behaviours. And for that reason, it was not surprising that it dealt with a broad mixture of topics, including sham charities, brainless newspapers, and even the starvation of the Irish.¹⁶² With the backing of successful printers such as William Bradbury and Frederick Evans, *Punch* was able to adjust quickly to what the readers demanded and found interesting at a given moment – from botany, to railway technologies, from fashion to medicine, gossip to art – all accompanied by wit and humour of the readers, wittingly or unwitting laughing at themselves.¹⁶³

The pages of *Punch* are filled with various shorter or longer extracts, caricatures, or even poems reflecting on Prince Albert. Yet rather than focusing on the actual duties and responsibilities and tasks, big or small, which were part of his royal activities, the paper decided upon a more trivial approach to depicting his persona. The readers could thus learn about things

¹⁵⁹ R. Noaks, op. cit., p. 93.

¹⁶⁰ J. A. Secord, *Victorian sensation: The extraordinary publication, reception, and secret authorship of ‘Vestiges of the natural history of creation’*, UCP 2000, p. 415.

¹⁶¹ P. Leary, *The Punch Brotherhood: Table Talk and Print Culture in Mid Victorian London*, The British Library 2010, pp. 39-44.

¹⁶² R. Noaks, op. cit., p. 426.

¹⁶³ R. Noaks, op. cit., p. 103.

that were utterly unimportant, and which, as intended, created a distorted image of Prince Albert.

Initially, *Punch* printed articles, notes and commentaries from various writers who would hide their identity behind the same nickname – Mr Punch. For that reason, it was often impossible to directly associate a given work with a person. And perhaps this anonymity allowed the authors to venture further with their imagination than was usual, and to create passages that openly mocked not only Prince Albert but the whole Royal Family and the Household. The trivialising approach that the editors chose as their weapon during Albert's lifetime yielded an image of the Royal Consort as a man who himself did not stand for much, a man who was only the husband of the Queen and who would occupy himself with matters so shallow and unimportant that they would normally be regarded as ones performed by women. The regular press did report in detail on Albert's real life and achievements: he was husband to the Queen, the Royal Consort, the chairman of many illustrious organisations, the driving force for many technological advancements, and the person who would always provide not only support but also guidance to the Queen, his wife. His deep involvement in numerous undertakings was indeed appreciated by many classes in the nation, and was described and referred to in the regular press. However, the satirical press, where both *Punch* and the *Satirist* were the leading voices, gave a very different impression.

The difference in the approaches adopted by these two satirical titles is quite noticeable. There is no doubt that the *Satirist* aimed purely at mocking and undermining the subjects of its articles. The heavy language, the imagination of the authors who did not refrain from writing false yet still amusingly brutal passages, created quite an effective picture. Whereas *Punch* addressed the topics of the day in a rather more amusing and refined way, without the openly directed sting. Its attacks would usually be accompanied by a double meaning lurking somewhere between the lines of the text or within the sharp edges of the expertly designed caricatures.

For a more precise and well-shaped understanding of the way the media image of Prince Albert was created, it is thus necessary to scrutinise not only the leading voices of the Fourth Estate and their following minor front-liners, but also to investigate the archives of the available satirical press. It is they, after all, who did not shy away from openly discussing and magnifying the faults and shortcomings of the subjects of their articles. They were not afraid to write about matters that many people thought of, wondered about or questioned, but were too afraid to

speak about openly. Therefore, the satirical press served as a reflection, if crooked by design and purpose, but one which yet quite well magnified certain issues in the court or within the royal circle. Given that the nineteenth-century press was not subject to any laws regulating what could be published, the editors of satirical titles often allowed themselves to be quite creative, producing articles or just passages mocking their targeted subject. These creations, so free in the way they presented the news (or rather their commentary on the news), allowed the readers a much wider perspective of the current events. It did not matter that the perspective might have been distorted; what mattered is that the audience enjoyed it and were willing to come back for more.

Unlike regular press titles, an analysis of satirical press cannot focus on specific moments from Prince Albert's life as presented on the pages. Both titles seemed to create worlds of their own. As already mentioned, *Punch*, unlike its counterparts, preferred a more refined approach to its satire. For that reason, the passages published on the pages of this magazine are laced with swift and witty descriptions of Prince Albert and his numerous activities or undertakings. Seemingly innocent paragraphs are in fact designed to convey a mocking undertone. There is no direct or impudent attack on the person of the Royal Consort. Nor are any of the imaginative creations designed to undermine his Royal character in any way. This stands in stark contrast to the out-and-out aggression and hostility in the *Satirist's* approach to the Prince.

2.4. Provincial and regional newspapers

The key London newspaper titles were, for obvious reasons, the unquestionable leaders and trend setters concerning the delivery of news, shaping and expressing opinions. Readers could choose from a plethora of titles representing different political options, religious or traditional, addressed towards the upper, middle or working classes. All these would strive to deliver what the readers wanted or expected. The provincial press, meanwhile, could be considered to be governed by its own set of rules. Instead of focusing on delivering fresh news regarding foreign affairs, Parliamentary proceedings, gossip or cultural issues, the provincial press understandably emphasised matters concerning the regional inhabitants, such as local businesses, crops, the weather, or even local gossip. Royal news could appear on the pages of these newspapers, but did so rather less often, and only if it were a matter of grand importance, such as a wedding or the birth of royal children. Nevertheless, these reports were reprinted

from London newspapers rather than exclusively written about by local editors. For that reason, it is no wonder that the persona of Prince Albert in search records appears much less often in the local titles than in the leading titles of London. Perhaps this is simply because people who lived further away from the hub of the great city were less directly concerned and affected by what was happening in London, and were mainly focused on matters touching them in a more direct and relevant way.

Whether the focus is placed on the regions or the nations constituting the United Kingdom, the data available from the newspaper archives clearly suggests that the interest of provincial readers in Royal affairs was not as intense as in London. Since the rapid development of the telegram and the railway system, access to London news increased rapidly, but at the same time, the editors of regional papers started devoting larger portions to local news, court proceedings, council meetings, and diaries of social and cultural interest. Thus, these newspapers became more relevant to their local communities.¹⁶⁴

However, these newspapers did not fail to mention Royal news of high importance when such occurred. After all, both the Queen and Prince Albert travelled often to different parts of the United Kingdom and such visits were mentioned on the sheets of the local and regional papers, even if not in great detail.

August 1842 saw the Royal couple paying a short visit to Scotland after Parliament had been prorogued by the Queen herself. Despite violent demonstrations by Chartists, there were also outbursts of pure loyalty and devotion to the Queen and Prince Albert. What is more, despite wanting to shy away from public ceremonies, Prince Albert was actually sought after, as he was in London; people looked up to him, saw a great patron of arts and sciences in him, and truly believed in his expert opinions. The visit turned out to be exceptionally successful, which was quite refreshing for the royal couple. It received detailed coverage in some of the more prominent Scottish newspapers, with the *Caledonian Mercury* providing a lengthy article on page 2 of its issue.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁴ M. H. Beals & L. Lavender, op. cit., p. 25.

¹⁶⁵ *The Caledonian Mercury*, 2 August 1841, p. 2.

This extensive piece provided its readers with a detailed description of the daily activities that the Royal couple undertook, even when they were strolling around the Scottish villages incognito. This article well expressed the feelings the people shared towards not only the Queen but Prince Albert as well:

A more ardent demonstration of loyalty and attachment to the person of the Sovereign was never evinced than that which greeted her Majesty the Queen throughout the route, a remark which is equally applicable to the reception given to his Royal Highness Prince Albert.¹⁶⁶

Similarly, when the royal couple visited the Isle of Wight, they received a warm welcome from the local residents. Their visits there would usually take place over the summer month of August, when Prince Albert celebrated his birthday. The *Isle of Wight Observer* in its issue of 4 September 1852 gave a detailed description of the annual celebration given in Albert's honour. It was noted that all the employees at the royal estate at Osborne¹⁶⁷ were present during the celebrations. Amongst those assembled there were labourers and workmen, together with their families, as well as seamen and fishermen. The article provided a description of the fete itself, various sporting activities, dancing and all the other competitions. It reports the general enjoyment the local people expressed over the celebrations of Albert's birthday.¹⁶⁸

Rachel Matthews in her chapter from *The Routledge Companion to British Media History*, 'The provincial press in England: an overview', argues that the provincial press was an amalgamation formed from public information sources, community information and profit – all of which were the ingredients of journalism.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁶ *The Caledonian Mercury*, 2 August 1841, p. 2.

¹⁶⁷ For more information about the royal residence in Osborne, see: S. Ferguson, *Victoria and Albert: Life at Osborne House*, London 1991.

¹⁶⁸ *The Isle of Wight Observer*, 4 September 1852.

¹⁶⁹ R. Matthews, *The Provincial Press in England*, Bloomsbury Publishing 2017.

With the removal of Stamp Duty in 1855¹⁷⁰, there was a sudden surge in the number of press titles created, not only in London but also in other parts of the Kingdom. What is more, the absence of the tax shifted the papers more towards commercialisation, which created a new form of journalism. The change brought in a lighter tone of language, more sensational topics and strategies to sell more papers. More pictures and interviews were included, and changes to the overall design and layout were made. The trends that were first seen in London were soon incorporated by the provincial and regional titles. Additionally, improved connections between the capital and other parts of the country meant that the London titles were more and more available in even the most distant households. That meant that the local papers needed to diversify more to compete with the bigger titles. Significantly, they adapted not only the reprinted news from the capital, but to stay ahead of the competition, they included local sports news, advertisements, gossip and business information that was of importance to the people. Matters which were of greater importance to the inhabitants of the bigger cities were of lesser interest to the country folk, and for that reason Royal news generally appears as reprints rather than original articles. Thus, when researching texts referring to Prince Albert in the provincial press, we find the reprinted articles that initially appeared in the *Times*, the *Morning Chronicle*, the *Globe* or any of the other leading London titles.

Nevertheless, Royal news, whether in abundance or not, reached the different parts of the British Isles and kept the subjects informed, even though only the more important press reports received provincial or regional coverage, as the local residents were understandably more preoccupied with what was happening in their area. Of course, with the advancement of industrial development, it was eventually possible to read the press avant-garde from London even further away from the capital.

2.5. Summary

This introduction to the main players as well as the less-known ones gives us a fairer picture of the newspaper theatre of the nineteenth century and the role they played in image creation. The leaders of the press scene certainly contributed to the way Prince Albert was

¹⁷⁰ For more information about the Stamp Duty see: Bob Clarke, *From Grub Street to Fleet Street: an illustrated history of English newspapers to 1899*, Ashgate 2004.

perceived by the readers. The articles, often reprinted by the lesser titles or the provincial and regional press, had a great impact on the people and their opinion of the Prince.

The role of the press cannot be underestimated at any point, as the strong voice that it used to establish its opinion resonated greatly among the British nation. The press, like a colourful peacock, represented various angles and points of view, sometimes influenced by their owners' and editors' personal likes and dislikes. The image thus created was never constant, it was always changing depending on the current situation, political game, or personal attitude. And it is perhaps this variety of approaches, affected by so many variables, that makes this research even more interesting as it cross-cuts and dissects society and their preferences through the eyes of the Fourth Estate.

3. Prince Albert's first steps into royal life

When analysing the life of Prince Albert, it is necessary to understand the background he came from and the world he was entering. Being a second son, he had no promise of any lucrative prospects for a better future. The fact that Prince Albert came from a relatively unknown European principality was another demerit. Despite his stern character, excellent education and devotion to work and self-development, the first steps into royal life that Prince Albert took were definitely not easy. After all, he was a foreigner who was to marry a beloved Queen. It is no wonder that his initial years were met with many doubts from members of his newly adopted country. But were these doubts justified? Or were they perhaps acts of pure jealousy or misunderstanding? Maybe they stemmed from the distrust that the English people had for foreigners? Regardless of the reason, his was not an easy start. It was overlaid with various obstacles that affected the British people's perceptions and understanding of Prince Albert and his persona.

3.1. Prince Albert & his marital prospects

With Victoria's accession to the throne in 1837, it became clear that securing the succession would soon need to be addressed. Roger Fulford remarks that the issue of marriage gave room to gossip regarding the potential husband: *a queen without a husband had been unknown to English history since the days of Queen Elizabeth and it was not forgotten that the suitors and projected marriages of that illustrious Tudor kept all Europe on tenterhooks.*¹⁷¹ The perils of Victoria's spinsterhood were all too well understood, and a decision had to be made and the whole nation, not just Melbourne, believed that the Queen was in need of a husband.¹⁷²

The preparations for this were overseen by Victoria's uncle, King Leopold of Belgium¹⁷³ – the same Leopold who years before would himself have become a Royal Consort,

¹⁷¹ R. Fulford, *Queen Victoria*, Collins Clear-Type Press 1951, p. 35.

¹⁷² L. Worsley, op. cit., p. 123.

¹⁷³ The relationship between Victoria and her uncle was the subject of a monograph by J. Richardson, *My Dearest Uncle: A Life of Leopold First King of the Belgians.*, London 1961.

had it not been for Princess Charlotte's untimely death. Leopold was well acquainted with the British situation; wanting to assist the young Queen with her new royal duties, he suggested Baron Stockmar as an aid and counsel. Stockmar was believed to be a person of pure motives, just and skilled judgment, whose knowledge of both the English constitution and the English people would allow him to serve the Queen in the capacity required by such an important position.

The question as to who the young Queen should marry in the end was the main focus of senior statesmen such as the Prime Minister Lord Melbourne and Victoria's uncle King Leopold – but astonishingly, not herself. In fact, in the words of Elizabeth Longford, Victoria had no inclination to marriage, deeming herself too young for such a change.¹⁷⁴

Of course, such a blunt announcement on Victoria's side did not stop Leopold or Lord Melbourne¹⁷⁵ from skilfully orchestrating the potential nuptials. Fulford states that the possibility of entering such a relationship with an Englishman was not discussed, as the only person who could have been taken into consideration, Prince George of Cambridge, Victoria's cousin on her father's side, was not only uninterested in such a possibility, but even expressed great rejoicing once he was no longer considered, stating that he was 'happy to be clear of me.'¹⁷⁶

There had already been rumours that the young Queen ought to marry her cousin, Prince Albert. These were stoked by the fact that Albert himself congratulated Victoria on becoming the Queen of the most powerful nation in the world.

¹⁷⁴ E. Longford, *Victoria R.I.*, Pan Books Ltd. 1966, p. 155.

¹⁷⁵ For more on the close relationship between Queen Victoria and Lord Melbourne at the beginning of her reign, see P. Ziegler, *Melbourne: A Biography of William Lamb and Viscount Melbourne*, Collins London 1976, pp. 256-273; On Lord Melbourne's position on the planned marriage between Victoria and Albert, see *ibid.*, pp. 310-314.

¹⁷⁶ R. Fulford, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

And so, in the end, the only potential suitor was Prince Albert, who was Victoria's cousin on her mother's side. However, since she had 'great repugnance' to changing her civil state¹⁷⁷ she wished for any arrangements concluded by her Uncle Leopold to be cancelled, as she stated "I might like him as a friend, and as a cousin, and as a brother, but not more..."¹⁷⁸

It seemed that the idea of marriage to the Queen of such a great nation had to be put on hold for some time. Yet the only thing that remained unchanged was the one who was destined to marry the young and stubborn Queen. Hermione Hobhouse remarks that Albert was indeed concerned with Victoria's decision regarding the idea of marriage. He was afraid that postponing it and perhaps being rejected later would affect his potential marital prospects. After all, the Prince *had been groomed from his early years for the role of Queen Victoria's husband.*¹⁷⁹

However, aware that Victoria was unwilling to commit herself at the time, Lytton Strachey made it clear to his readers that Albert was adamant about removing himself utterly from the affair of the royal marriage. But however a man draws up his plans, life and fortune have the tendency to alter them in a most unpredictable way. And so, with his mind set upon breaking the affair all for once, Albert visited Windsor as a part of his Grand Tour. However, to his grand surprise, both life and fortune played a trick on the young Prince, and he found himself in the arms of his fate, Victoria.¹⁸⁰ By all means, he was not in love with her, but he became besotted with Victoria and she with him.

This turn of events had been gently but precisely navigated by King Leopold, who was after all uncle to both Victoria and Albert. This orchestrated plan was initially scheduled for 1839, as certain obstacles such as the young age of both parties and Albert's imperfect knowledge of English had to be overcome. This delay was accepted by the young Queen

¹⁷⁷ E. Longford, op. cit., p. 155.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ H. Hobhouse, *Prince Albert. His life and work*, Hamish Hamilton Ltd. 1983, pp. 18-20.

¹⁸⁰ L. Strachey, *Queen Victoria*, First Harvest/HBJ Book 1978, p. 144.

without any hesitation, and there were some sound and justified objections on the part of the young Prince. Indeed, he definitely had an air of a young man aware of the responsibility bestowed upon him:

If I am not very much mistaken, he possesses all the qualities required to fit him for the position which he will occupy in England. His understanding is sound, his apprehension clear and rapid, and his heart is in the right place. He has great powers of observation, and possesses singular prudence, without anything about him that can be called cold or morose.¹⁸¹

Perhaps because of his rather cautious nature, Albert expressed a certain apprehension at the idea that the Queen might choose to annul the nuptials after a period of waiting. Such a turn of events would expose the young Prince to public ridicule and mockery, which in turn would affect any marriage options in the future. This shows that Prince Albert was fully aware of the status and position he would find himself in and how that could affect the perception of his person. However, Victoria's feelings were clear and unshaken, as could be seen in the numerous letters these two exchanged between themselves over the coming months, and this left the young Prince assured of the path chosen.¹⁸²

The marriage of the beloved Queen Victoria was bound to be a pivotal moment in the history of the British nation. That made the persona of the potential husband even more important. For that reason, the moment the public was informed of Victoria's choice, the newspapers started publishing numerous articles, letters and notes focusing on Prince Albert, his character, religious background, education, and even his looks. Over the years, the papers would familiarise the public with heated discussions concerning Albert's annuity or his involvement in state matters, or would just simply report the news regarding the many issues he was involved in. Of course, the satirical titles took a much different approach to portraying Prince Albert. They delivered much varied and even fabricated news for the amusement of their fascinated readership.

¹⁸¹ Th. Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

The end of 1839 came, and with it the time for Prince Albert to leave his country and his people for this new, relatively unknown place. The future consort shared a great deal of the joy expressed by his own people of Coburg, but at the same time he could see that this joy was entwined with sadness over losing their beloved Prince. What lay ahead of him was uncertainty whether the same feelings that were expressed across the duchy would be shared in the British Isles.

Theodore Martin perfectly depicts this quite emotional moment:

The departure from Gotha was an affecting scene, and everything showed the genuine love of all classes for their young Prince. The streets were densely crowded; every window was crammed with heads, every housetop covered with people, waving handkerchiefs, and vying with each other in demonstration of affection that could not be mistaken. The carriage stopped in passing the Dowager Duchess's, and Prince Albert got out with his father and brother to bid her last adieu. It was a terrible trial to the poor Duchess, who was inconsolable for the loss of her beloved grandson. She came to the window as the carriages drove off, and threw her arms out, calling out "Albert, Albert!" in tones that went to every one's heart, when she was carried away, almost in a fainting state, by her attendants.¹⁸³

Albert's departure was met with great sadness expressed, as the above quote pictures, by crowds demonstrating their affection towards the Prince. Hobhouse compared this act to *a thorn and an exile from his beloved Coburg and Gotha, and from the closely knot, though far-flung, family circle with whom he had grown up.*¹⁸⁴

And perhaps because the young Prince had only encountered true feelings of love and appreciation from the people residing in his patrimony, he could have not anticipated any other welcome in his new country.

Upon his arrival in England, though, the newspapers simply reported that the future consort had arrived. *The Times* of 16th November 1839, printed a brief note on page 5 informing of the arrival, a surprisingly laconic expression of the arrival of the future husband of the

¹⁸³ Th. Martin, op. cit., p. 52

¹⁸⁴ H. Hobhouse, op. cit., p. 20.

Queen. Other London newspapers either provided even skimpier information, or none at all. This was even more surprising given the fact that upon announcing the royal marriage a few months prior, the newspapers had provided ample spreads describing Prince Albert and familiarising the readers with him. All the leading voices of the London press either procured the columns themselves or reprinted them from other prominent titles, as the *Spectator* had done, for example.

The *Morning Post* only presented the readers with a short report about the coming marriage upon the announcement by the government, but later it received a lengthier piece focusing more on introducing the Prince to the public where they could learn about his background and family, and expressing hope that the coming marriage be happy. The tone of the column is quite positive, without any undertone hiding between the lines:

It is gratifying to be enabled to state that the youthful Prince who is about to acquire so strong a claim to the respect and affection of the British people is acknowledged by all to whom he is personally known to possess the graces of person and manner, as well as the more valuable and lasting qualities of intellect and disposition, which are calculated to render the respect and affection of a virtuous and intelligent people an easy and natural tribute.¹⁸⁵

This passage together with the whole column it was taken from was reprinted by many other journals, including the *Spectator*, although in a manner typical of it, it used the reprinted article with certain level of, if not disdain, then a certain coldness and rigidity that would reflect its distant attitude towards the Prince. It looks as if *Spectator* did not care much to provide its readers with a more detailed depiction of the character of the future royal spouse, nor did it wish to express its own opinion and for that reason it simply limited itself to reprinting other articles with a dash of its usual, reserved tone.¹⁸⁶ The same article was reprinted in the *Times*, yet here the editors simply limited themselves to including the column without any additional side commentary.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁵ *The Morning Post*, 22 August 1839, p. 2.

¹⁸⁶ *The Spectator*, 24 August 1839, p. 8.

¹⁸⁷ *The Times*, 23 August 1839, p. 5.

Despite the positive reception of the royal marriage, there were undoubtedly some bitter commentaries that circulated among the wider audience. Hobhouse quotes a passage from *A New Comic Song*¹⁸⁸ that provided a valuable insight into the perception of Queen Victoria's choice of her future spouse:

[...] One her German Cousin brought, I mean a plain gold ring,
Our pretty Queen's accepted it, and that without a frown,
And just by way of recompense, she gave him half a crown.¹⁸⁹

Indeed, as Rhodes James commented, George of Cambridge or a Prince of Orange would have made a better choice than a German Prince¹⁹⁰, an opinion which could be seen in newspapers and other printings as well. Among the many sources available in the National Library of Scotland, numerous copies of ballads give an interesting insight into the perception of Queen Victoria's future husband. One ballad¹⁹¹ is written as if Albert himself was singing it. The lengthy piece well summarises the way the young Prince was perceived by many people in the United Kingdom.

I am a German just arriv'd.
With you for to be mingling,
My passage it was paid,
From Germany to England;
To wed your blooming Queen,
For better or worse I take her,
My father is a duke,

¹⁸⁸ H. Hobhouse, op. cit., p. 21.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ R. Rhodes James, *Albert, Prince Consort*, Hamish Hamilton Ltd. 1983, p. 87.

¹⁹¹ See the appendix for the complete text.

And I am a sausage maker.¹⁹²

The piece clearly shows that Albert is believed to be in possession of nothing but his noble birth – ‘I am a sausage maker.’ This connection, which is later confirmed in Rhodes

The Queen's Lover.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "PENNY SATIRIST."

I feel disturbed and cheerless yet. I did not expect to be in this state after I had so truly painted a pure but unfortunate hopeless passion. I have lost my habits of industry. I cannot read my own letters sent to you and others upon the subject. In short I am ruined in heart for ever. I cannot form another love—my attachment is eternal, though it is clear as day that it is vain and hopeless. I have talked with you sometimes lately, but I have no strength to ask my portrait—you will be pleased to keep it till I have courage to converse with you upon my misfortunes. I was delighted with last week's remark upon big-headed men; I always thought men with large heads had little wit, and less sound judgment than others, but since you mention so many great men who have over-sized heads, you may in future place me amongst them, for I have the largest well-formed head in the world, that is, for a young man of my stature. I never can find a hat to fit me in any hat-shop, all are too small; yet the people say it looks small upon my shoulders; you make me think I am more wise than fool since I read about big heads. I cannot correct my letters at present, because I cannot read them without tears. I loved so truly, and I became a child to the same feeling as when I wrote them. I long to unbosom my thoughts, without letters, to some true friend, and there may be none more worthy than Mr. Crew. I have many troubles to contend with, but I thank God they are trials not of my own creating—a certainty of doing right has its own reward in secret.—May God comfort you all, is the sincere prayer of him who is wretched. Amen.—J. T. P.

[Since receiving the above, we have received other two letters from our indefatigable and hopeful Correspondent, in which he informs us that he wrote lately to Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Kent, declaring his firm belief that Victoria was destined for him, and that Albert must prepare his mind for a disappointment. The Astrologer's letter, which he read in our 140th number, revived his faith by adding the testimony of the man of science to his own. A short time now will determine his fate. Only five weeks, and then he will be delivered from his anxiety. If the maiden really be married to the Goth, then we advise our Correspondent to court another lady, one who will receive his addresses with devoted love and reciprocal attachment.]

James's work but with a less vibrant association, could have been made by *the Satirist*, whose editor wrote: *it is generally believed that her Majesty prefers the German sausage to the Cambridge sausage.*¹⁹³

The editor of the *Penny Satirist* decided to go even further and printed a presumed letter from the Queen's lover. This lengthy, comedically pretended confession of love humorously shows the desperation of the letter's purported author once he realises that the Queen is to marry Prince Albert.

¹⁹² www.deriv.nls.uk/dcn9/7489/74893782.9.htm

¹⁹³ *The Satirist, or the Censor of the Times*, 27 October 1839, p. 6.

Pic. 6. *The Queen's Lover*, *The Penny Satirist*, vol. III, no. 142, 4 January 1840, p. 2. ¹⁹⁴

Undoubtedly, the many voices that could be heard across the United Kingdom, whether expressing joy, dislike, or even mockery at the Queen's impending nuptials, reflected the general feelings of the nation. The short-lived 'Crim. Con. Gazette'¹⁹⁵ upon the announcement of the royal marriage issued a lengthy and quite sharp article titled 'Sketches of character, no. 59'¹⁹⁶ in which the anonymous author presents Prince Albert in a particularly malicious way. Among the many metaphors and descriptions, the lines are filled with allusions to Albert's poor financial situation, calling him nothing but

a miserable German adventurer [...] raised only by the caprice of the Princess Charlotte [...] a mealy-faced young mud-lurk, who having had his stockings darned by his mother, and his trousers patched by his sisters, is coming over here to be King, and will of course, want a dollop of money to right him out.¹⁹⁷

The overall tone of the article cast a pall of discontent over Queen Victoria's choice, leaving no room for positive commentary:

The people of England do not ask it – they do not wish it – they cry out against it. They are crying already, We will not have these Germans to reign over us.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁴ 'The Queen's Lover', *The Penny Satirist*, vol. 3, no. 142, 4 January 1840, p. 2. Nineteenth Century UK Periodicals, www.link.gale.com/apps/doc/DX1901077712/NCUK?u=tasc&sid=bookmark-NCUK. Accessed 21 February 2025.

¹⁹⁵ As found on the www.britishnewspaperarchives.com, this title was published between 25 August 1838 and 11 January 1840 by an unknown London publisher. Only 72 issues in total were printed.

¹⁹⁶ *Crim. Con. Gazette*, 5 October 1839, p. 1.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

Despite this rather spiteful voice, short-lived perhaps because of its own venom, there were many positive voices welcoming the German prince and listing his many qualities despite coming from a less than illustrious background. The *Times* published a very informative and positive article on 31 December 1839 which addressed the many attributes of the young Prince, his amiable nature and virtues, his brilliant accomplishments and other qualities that, according to the author, would surely secure the happiness of the Queen.¹⁹⁹ Such voices were in a majority as the felicity of the Sovereign was after all of national interest.

3.2. Prince Albert & religion

As time to the ceremony ticked down, new rumours and unkind objections began to circulate around the British Isles and found their way into the newspapers' pages. The scrutiny given towards many aspects of Albert's upbringing increased, creating a whirl of sudden interest.

Following Martin's *The Life of the Royal Highness... vol. I* as well as the numerous articles published in various newspapers, it seems that with the imminent marriage the people of Britain started taking more interest in matters directly connected to Prince Albert, such as his religion and education. Rumours started spreading that the young husband-to-be was in fact a Catholic rather than a Protestant, and this issue dominated the majority of the months of January and February of 1840. It seems that the spark that fuelled the rumours was started by the Queen herself, and her declaration of the marriage in which she did not openly declare the Prince to be Protestant. This declaration was reprinted in many newspaper titles, allowing the matter of his faith to be questioned by many.²⁰⁰

This unfortunate omission was mentioned by Baron Stockmar in his *Memoirs, vol. II*.²⁰¹ He recollects the opening of Parliament on 16 January 1840, when the Queen officially

¹⁹⁹ *The Times*, 31 December 1839, p. 5.

²⁰⁰ *The Times*, 17 January 1840, p. 2.

²⁰¹ E. A. Stockmar, op. cit., p. 33.

announced her intention to marry Prince Albert.²⁰² However, perhaps purposefully, the address omitted to mention that the Prince was Protestant. The Prime Minister Lord Melbourne had taken this cautious step with the Catholics of Ireland in mind, as well as having made the assumption that the fact of the Prince being a Protestant was rather obvious and for that reason did not need to be mentioned. Nonetheless, this innocent omission resulted in plenty of doubts being raised regarding Albert's religion.

The spark was further fuelled by John Henry Newman, then Vicar of St. Mary's Church in Oxford, , who published He pointed out in 'Tract Number 90'²⁰³, part of 'Tracts for the Times'²⁰⁴, as Robert Rhodes James mentioned in his book, that it was indeed possible for an individual to hold on to the teachings of the Church of England while, at the same time, following doctrines of the Church of Rome.²⁰⁵ As a consequence, Prince Albert became an unwitting victim of the fears shared by the Protestant Establishment.

Whether this resulted from malice or simple ignorance, the deed was done, and it needed to be rectified. Thus, a note was issued to Baron Stockmar by Lord Palmerston inquiring, or rather requesting, assurance that Prince Albert was in fact a Protestant and that the rites he followed agree with those followed by the Anglican Church. This was duly received, although by the time the issue was resolved the newspapers had managed to sniff out

²⁰² *Hansard Parliamentary Debates. Third Series*, Deb. 16 January 1840 vol. 51 cc1-4
<https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/lords/1840/jan/16/opening-of-parliament>

²⁰³ www.anglicanhistory.org/tracts/tract90/ J. H. Newman, then one of the leaders of the Oxford Movement, initially critical of Catholicism, eventually converted to Catholicism in 1845. For more information, see: I. Ker, *John Henry Newman*, Oxford 2010.

²⁰⁴ Written by the so-called 'Oxford Movement' (1833-41), these tracts discussed matters connected with Anglo-Catholic doctrine as well as other theological aspects. For more, see: S. Hall, *A Short History of the Oxford Movement*, Longmans, Green and Co. 1906.

²⁰⁵ R. Rhodes James, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

the commotion regarding Albert's religion, and had engaged themselves in heated discussion creating even more of a disturbance.²⁰⁶

At the same time, the *Morning Post* published a letter from a *constant reader and frequent visitor of the Rhine* which informed the editors of the newspaper that there was some sort of misunderstanding regarding the character of the university which Prince Albert had attended. The *constant reader* felt it to be necessary to inform that Bonn University was not, as many believed, a Protestant but a Catholic establishment. This revelation added fuel to the already circulating rumours suggesting that Albert was in fact a Catholic. Then the author of the letter implied that the nation had actually been left in the dark by their Queen without this important question of religion being answered.²⁰⁷

Such doubts were also shared by the government's ministers, as can be read on the pages of the *Spectator*, which recollected the discussions that took place in the House of Commons. Sir Robert Inglis²⁰⁸ openly expressed his dissatisfaction that it had not clearly been stated whether the Prince was in fact a Protestant. The dispute was answered by Lord Palmerston, concluding that such announcements were simply unnecessary.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁶ E. A. Stockmar, *Memoirs of Baron Stockmar*, trans. G. Ad. Müller, ed. M. Müller, Creative Media Partners LLC 2015, p. 24-25.

²⁰⁷ *The Morning Post*, 11 January 1840, p. 2.

²⁰⁸ Sir Robert Inglis, 2nd Baronet (1786-1855), was a prominent MP and a strong opponent of Catholicism. He was interested in the established church, matters concerning slaves, and factory acts. For more information, see: <https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1820-1832/member/inglis-sir-robert-1786-1855>.

²⁰⁹ *The Spectator*, 18 January 1840, p. 5. On Palmerston's generally positive attitude towards Victoria's marriage to Albert, although politically motivated, see more broadly: D. Brown, *Palmerston. A Biography*, Yale UP, New Haven and London 2012, p. 198. Lord Holland also devoted a large paragraph in his memoirs to the dispute over Prince Albert's religion – see: *The Holland House Diaries 1831-1840. The diary of Henry Richard Vassal Fox, third Lord*

However, the knowledge that the branch of the Saxe family Prince Albert belonged to was in fact quite antagonistic to Rome, and had even lost some possessions for being Protestant, was not readily apparent. Martin made it clear that there should have been no room for any misunderstandings when it comes to the Sovereign's marriage. Even King Leopold strongly advised mentioning the aspect of the Prince's religion, as it would have done no harm to make this information public, and omitting it would in fact raise some concerns, as in fact it did.²¹⁰

In fact, Theodore Martin cited a letter that Prince Albert sent to the Queen on that matter, and sheds a strong light on this important matter:

In accordance with your wish, we have set about the preparation of an historical sketch of the progenitors of our House, so as to show at once their position towards Reformation and Protestantism. It is not yet complete, but it shall be sent with my next letter; and demonstrate, that the House of Saxony Protestantism, in a measure, owes its existence, for this House and of the Landgrave of Hesse stood quite alone against Europe, and upheld Luther and his cause triumphantly. This shows the folly of constantly assailing our House as Papistical. So little is this the case, that there has not been a single Catholic Princess introduced into the Coburg family since the appearance of Luther in 1521. Moreover, the Elector, Frederick the Wise of Saxony, was the first Protestant that ever lived. That you may know and judge for yourself, dear Victoria, what my creed and religious principles are, I send you a confession of faith which I worked out for myself in 1835, and which I then publicly avowed and swore to in our High Church. I enclose an English copy, and the original as I then wrote it. You will see my hand is somewhat changed since then.²¹¹

This letter to Queen Victoria seems somewhat forced as an explanation, but it is intended to serve as an assurance that Albert was indeed a Protestant, and that any malignant rumours to the contrary should cease. In addition, the Duke of Wellington put the nation at

Holland, with extracts from the diary of Dr John Allen, Edited with introductory essay and notes by A. D. Kriegel, London 1977, pp. 414-415.

²¹⁰ Th. Martin, op. cit., p. 57.

²¹¹ Ibid.

peace and insisted that the Prince was indeed a Protestant. An article published in the *Globe* bluntly states that *the nation has to thank, however, not her Majesty's ministers, but the Duke of Wellington, for having it officially declared that Prince Albert is a Protestant.*²¹² What is more, it was also the Duke of Wellington who introduced a motion in the House of Lords calling for the insertion of the word 'Protestant' when congratulating the Queen in an official address. This simple addition was important for Victoria's subjects as it put an end to any misunderstandings or misinterpretations, and assured the nation that the union between Victoria and Albert was a Protestant union aligned with the laws regulating marriages within the royal family.

The article then concluded that this was in fact a Tory ruse to create a sort of distrust from the nation towards the Prince as a sort of payback for the Queen, who had refused to *become an instrument to their exclusive policy.*²¹³ Whether the reasoning behind the spread of these rumours was true or not, it is a fact that doubts were raised and these doubts affected the way Prince Albert was perceived.

It needs to be underlined, however, that there were instances of strong opposition towards this undignified treatment of Prince Albert. A very good example of this can be located in an issue of the *Times* from 10 February 1840, wherein a lengthy but quite informative column can be found. Apart from expressing great admiration for the many qualities that Prince Albert possessed in terms of his character, education, and general behaviour, the editors took upon themselves the task of defending the young Prince, who at that time was only 21 years of age. It discusses a certain pamphlet by an unknown author, entitled *A Letter to the People of Great Britain*. The main subject of this pamphlet, as it seems, was Prince Albert and his pedigree as traced back as far as the year 807. This arduous task was undertaken to ascertain that Prince Albert was indeed Protestant, a piece of information that had not been mentioned by the Queen's Ministers, giving rise to many rumours as a result. Aside from the aforementioned topic of religion, the pamphlet also touched upon other aspects connected with the said pedigree of the Prince and the fact that he came from a less known royal house, which by many could be perceived as an insult towards the British royal family. However, here a satisfactory

²¹² *The Globe*, 10 February 1840, p. 3.

²¹³ *Ibid.*

explanation was provided by explaining that a marriage to a member of a first-rate European power would be less secure; for that reason, marriage to someone not so prominent or distinguished would actually result in greater security.

The same pamphlet's slights included another issue, connected with the name of Saxe-Coburg, stating that such an affiliation with a name unknown in Great Britain obviously could raise questions. With a sharp sword of rebuke, the editor of the *Times* article criticised not only the author of the pamphlet but also the many nobles that surrounded the young Queen and form her court. It was stated, albeit indirectly, that this artificial cage the Queen found herself in was nothing but a petty and undignified creation that was incapable of suggesting anything to the Queen outside the narrow field of their existence. And it was simply for that reason, aside from any others, that the Queen was in need of a Royal Consort who would support her and counteract the evil influence of the court; would steer her in the 'proper' direction; and who would keep her away from treacherous ministers. Such a person would of course be Prince Albert, who, by the Act of Naturalisation²¹⁴, became one of the Queen's subjects, an Englishman, and who should thus receive respect, affection and support rather than being the object of malicious accusations. In the end, it would be him that the Queen would rely on, since her happiness, the happiness of the British Queen, so loved by her people, was in fact in his hands – the hands of the most virtuous, loyal, and enlightened of her subjects.²¹⁵

3.3. Prince Albert & his annuity²¹⁶

Just as the situation with Albert's religion was resolved another issue arose, this time regarding the annuity or pension that the Prince would receive. This caused heated arguments, not only in Parliament but also in lengthy articles in the newspapers and letters from the readers expressing their opinions. What is more, these constant attacks on the person of Prince Albert could not go without any comment from the Prince himself.

²¹⁴ See the appendix for the complete text.

²¹⁵ *The Times*, 10 February 1840, p. 4.

²¹⁶ See the appendix for the complete text.

Upon the announcement of the Royal Marriage, the *Crim. Con. Gazette*, the above-mentioned sharp albeit short-lived voice of London, delivered an article without withholding any spite in which the anonymous author expresses his strong opinion regarding any money that Prince Albert could potentially obtain. According to this author,

[...] we think it quite out of the question that there should be a single sixpence settled on him at the expence of England. Let him be content with his innocent, fair, and virtuous young wife, whom, of course he marries out of sheer love; and if he wants pocket money, let him draw it from the well-replenished coffers of his high-minded and full-pocketed house. As to giving him a pension in case of her decease, that is almost treason, for it is giving him an interest in the death of the Queen [...]²¹⁷

This opinion seemed to be in line with what many English people thought, yet did not dare to express openly. The question of the annuity needed to be dealt with in a delicate manner, as it had drawn the interest of many (and not only in Parliament), following the previous cases of royal consorts such as Queen Caroline, the wife of George II; Queen Charlotte, wife of George III; Queen Adelaide, wife of William IV; or even Prince Leopold, husband to the late Princess Charlotte and now King of the Belgians. All of the above-mentioned had received annuities of £50 000 a year, and so unsurprisingly the Cabinet proposed the same sum be granted to Prince Albert once his marriage to Queen Victoria was solemnised.

This proposal by Lord Melbourne did not go as smoothly as he had expected. With the carelessness common for him, he was sure that there would be no difficulty in obtaining the desired amount, and he himself delivered that reassurance to the Queen.²¹⁸ The delicate matter of the annuity proved to be a sore point for the opposition as they were not consulted on it. The fact that the issue concerned not only the Prince but was also close to Victoria's heart was simply disregarded. As a result, a simple vote that was expected to follow precedent turned into more of a political matter regarding political feelings being hurt. Martin says that this

²¹⁷ *Crim. Con. Gazette*, 7 September 1839, p. 2.

²¹⁸ E. A. Stockmar, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

situation could have been avoided if the Opposition had been consulted on the matter prior to voting.²¹⁹

Stockmar provides an even more detailed description of the situation concerning the annuity. It was reported by Lord John Russel that the complete expenses of Prince Albert's household would amount to only £8000 – an amount that would be far below the bare minimum. However, this gave the Opposition the actual power to question the initial amount of £50,000. According to Baron Stockmar, the debate ceased to proceed on rational terms and, as a result of the heated argument, revealed *an insulting distrust towards the Prince and an unfriendly feeling towards the Queen*.²²⁰

It was obvious that at this point the debate no longer concerned the feelings or wishes of the Queen, but more the potential alliances among the political parties, in this case the Tories and the Radicals. As Stockmar suspected, this behaviour by the Tories, which was obviously unthinkable and offensive towards the Queen, was nothing but a folly after their loss at the most recent elections. And for that reason, the Baron expected this conduct not to have any direct impact at the time, but that it would rather have a greater resonance in the future.²²¹

The very heated debate that ensued received a great deal of coverage in numerous newspapers, many of which informed their readers of the coming reading of the bill in Parliament on an almost daily basis. The *Times*, which seemed to sympathise with the Crown, made sure that the information it provided gave a broad understanding of the situation. The newspaper did not limit itself to simple and short notes, but reprinted the full parliamentary proceedings to show how heated the argument was at times. It seemed that the Opposition was set on lowering the annuity paid to the Prince as much as possible. Both sides seriously criticised The amount proposed, providing detailed explanations to why this amount was either too little or too much.

²¹⁹ Th. Martin, op. cit., p. 61.

²²⁰ E. A. Stockmar, op. cit., p. 28.

²²¹ Ibid., p. 30.

The Whigs, represented by Lord John Russel,²²² resorted to the depths of their institutional memory and provided ample examples from the past when the wives or husbands of monarchs had been supplied with their annuities. The reader could learn about the extravagant annuity allotted to the husband of Queen Anne after her death, an astonishing amount of £100,000 a year. However, it should be underlined that during her life, her husband Prince George, Duke of Cumberland, who was in fact rather feeble of disposition, did not receive any money; what is more, he died six years before the Queen, in 1708, and thus the allocated annuity was never paid out. Soon after, the reader learned about Prince Leopold, who when married to Princess Charlotte had been allotted the sum of £50,000 and an additional £10,000 from the Princess's private purse. However, this sum was expected to keep not only his town establishment but also his country household.

Regarding the sums proposed by the House of Commons, the Lords were very insistent to that Prince Albert should be given a sum that lower than those granted to consorts in the past, as he did not have similar expenses to Prince Leopold. The example of the Duchess of Kent was cited, stating that before her daughter acceded to the throne, she had received a mere £22,000 (with an additional £8000), so in total the Duchess had £30,000 a year to support not only herself but also the future Queen.²²³

These examples were intended to convey that the amount of £50,000 that the Whigs had been asking for Prince Albert was quite extravagant as in fact he would be maintained by the Queen as well as receiving a state annuity. The editors of the article stressed that the Whigs' request was quite impudent in nature. The following quote from the *Times* shows clear outrage:

Really, the impudence of these Whig-Radical Ministers astonishes us more and more the oftener we contemplate it! Fifty thousand pounds a year, £40 000 of which is, as Lord John Russel in effect admitted, unnecessary, and must, therefore, be given only for the Prince to make ducks and drakes of – to squander, – it may be, foolishly – it may be, viciously – it may be, innocently – it may be – but still to

²²² Lord John Russel was a British Whig and liberal politician who served as Prime Minister from 1846 to 1852, and again from 1865 to 1866. For more, see: R. Clark, *The Life of Bertrand Russel*, Bloomsbury 2011.

²²³ *The Times*, 27 January 1840, p. 4.

squander – surely, surely, a majority even of the present House of Commons can never be brought to consent to such a grant!²²⁴

The atmosphere surrounding Prince Albert was quite heated, and only cautious actions should be taken in order not to aggravate it further. As a result of the dispute carried out in the House of Lords, the annuity was in the end cut down to £30,000 a year: a sum that represented a middle ground between what was suggested by Lord Melbourne and the £21,000 suggested by Hume²²⁵. As Lord Melbourne remarked later in a conversation with Baron Stockmar, “it is not the Tories only whom the Prince has to thank for cutting down his allowance. It is rather the Tories, the Radicals, and a great proportion of our own people.”²²⁶

The above-mentioned February issue of *The Times* that focused on the undignified pamphlet in addition touched upon the topic of the annuity. However, the editors put the sole blame for the situation on the royal ministers who wanted under cover of Prince Albert’s name to make an extravagant financial demand that would have reached *deep down into the pockets of every Englishman*.²²⁷

The annuity situation was also commented on in the *Spectator*, although this publication adopted a less emotional tone in conveying the information. It summarised the proceedings and gave the same examples of former spouses to previous queens and kings; however, the tone in which the debate was presented was quite different to that adopted by other papers. It insisted on having the word *establishment* used in the proposal explained thoroughly, as it was commonly believed that a gentleman would only keep a separate *establishment* if he had a mistress or lived apart from his wife. Since that was not the case here, there were some questions as to what exactly was meant by the word *establishment* and what it was exactly that

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Joseph Hume (1777- 1855) was a Scottish Radical MP. For more, see: Ronald K. Huch, Paul R. Ziegler, *Joseph Hume: The People’s MP*, Science Press 1985.

²²⁶ Martin, op. cit., p. 60.

²²⁷ *The Times*, 10 February 1840, p. 4.

Prince Albert would be keeping. Furthermore, the *Spectator*'s editor continued to focus on whether Prince Albert would need any annuity, since he would be marrying the Queen who herself received an astonishing sum of £395,000 a year. It was commented that while a Royal Duke would *de facto* need money for maintenance, the husband of the Queen would not be in need of any additional money since he required no more maintenance in addition to what the Queen already provided. For the editors of this newspaper, it was clear that the Queen and the Prince saw the nation as a *milch-cow* focusing only on the needs of the Prince, while not taking into consideration the opinion of the nation.²²⁸

It looks as if the *Spectator* stayed true to its original remit of highlighting what the newspaper did not agree with, resorting to sneering and condemnatory commentary. Such was the case when the newspaper continued with the topic of the annuity. And it shows that the editor would not hesitate to use language that was rather antagonistic, aiming at creating a certain negative image about the Prince. Rintoul was quite adamant regarding issues connected with the royal, and did not shy away from colourful examples, as he had done when confronting the annuity issue. The 11 January edition of the newspaper did not refrain from reducing Prince Albert to a person of no actual meaning and position: *the husband of the Queen is a political nobody, without any British entity whatever.*²²⁹ The author then allowed himself to go even further, stating that the German nation had a rather loose approach to marriage and sexual morality, which was a well-known fact, and thus the annuity bestowed upon Prince Albert should not be too excessive; in fact, the less the better.

The lengthy article drew its readers' attention to the many reasons why in fact it was the House of Gotha which seemed to be getting a better end of the deal, as there was not much that this family had to offer to the Kingdom: no army, nor any other safety apart from the elevation the Saxe Coburg members of the family would gain.²³⁰

²²⁸ *The Spectator*, 25 January 1840, pp. 25-26.

²²⁹ *The Spectator*, 11 January 1840, p. 10.

²³⁰ *The Spectator*, 11 January 1840, pp. 10-11.

Indeed, reading this article, one might get the impression that Prince Albert was not liked, or even not welcomed in Great Britain. The open disdain expressed by the author of this piece leaves nothing to the imagination. It pictured Prince Albert almost as a savage, a Continental prince who, with his libertinism, was unaccustomed to the more civilised ways that were English customs. What is more, the writer asked whether requesting such a high allowance was wise, since Prince Albert was *a man whom the masses will not regard with favour as a foreigner, and whom demagogues can hold up as a German adventurer and fortune-hunter*.²³¹ The author compared the disaster of Prince Albert and the annuity to Wat Tyler's revolt in the fourteenth century, when the serfs freed themselves from the oppressive land owners; here the masses were, according to the author, enraged at the current state of things and with Parliament potentially voting on a rather high annuity that would only add to the already existing dissatisfaction.

Such was the attitude of the *Spectator's* editor towards Prince Albert. And keeping in mind that Rintoul and his newspaper aimed not at shaping public opinion but rather at being its outlet, it can be deduced that the article did in fact represent what some people thought of Albert. This image of a German invader, a Prince who had managed to elevate not only himself but also his family through such a fortunate marriage, persisted in the minds of many for a long time, and periodicals like the *Spectator* only fuelled that negative approach.

In addition to the heated Parliamentary debates described in the newspapers, there were also the letters sent to the editors by anyone interested in the matter. The pages of the 27 January 1840 edition of the *Times* gave readers more than just its own insights into the doubts expressed regarding the annuity. On that occasion a letter was published from a Tory politician, Frederick Polhill, who inquired about the income brought in by the Prince. Polhill had himself requested a full return of the money given to now-King Leopold for the two years after Prince's Charlotte's untimely death.²³²

Another letter expressing obvious dissatisfaction over the amount of the annuity bestowed upon Prince Albert was printed on the sheets of the rather conservative *John Bull*. Here the anonymous reader, 'a plain person' as the author called himself, expressed his concern

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Ibid.

that the proposed sum of the yearly pension was too much. He refers to Prince Leopold's award of £50,000 of annuity upon his marriage to Princess Charlotte, claiming that was because he had *a household and an establishment, and things were dearer*.²³³ In the next sentence, the author of the letter argues that offering Prince Albert the exact same sum of £50,000 was an extravagance since upon his marriage to the Queen he would be living with her, in her palaces, and therefore had no need to keep a household, or indeed any establishment whatsoever.²³⁴

Albert's biographer Robert Rhodes James²³⁵ mentioned a short and quite unkind poem:

He comes the bridegroom of Victoria's choice,
The nominee of Lehzen's vulgar voice;
He comes to take 'for better or for worse'
England's fat Queen and England's fatter purse.

Rhodes James further recalls that the Press comments, together with the opposing Tories and the Radicals, upset the Queen greatly. Lord Melbourne expressed a similar opinion when discussing the matter with Baron Stockmar²³⁶, allowing himself the opinion that it would certainly affect the way Prince Albert felt, even though this view was shared not only by the Opposition but by many English people alike.

It is clear that while not even having yet set foot in England, Prince Albert was faced with little but obstacles, and it seemed that they had been raised to create a certain air about the fact that the Queen had chosen a German Prince as her future husband. The bad press that the Prince had received so far shows that he was not liked or even welcome in England. His religion, the annuity and other aspects of Albert's life at the Royal Court were constantly commented upon and discussed with greater or lesser degrees of malice and ill-will.

²³³ *John Bull*, 5 April 1840, p. 9.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*

²³⁵ R. Rhodes James, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

²³⁶ E. A. Stockmar, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

The whole issue of the annuity had a definite effect on Prince Albert himself, who at that time was in Brussels. He was continually kept informed by his closest confidante Baron Stockmar of the proceedings regarding the annuity. It must be stressed here that the reaction that Prince Albert expressed as a result of the conflict was strongly rooted in his good nature, light-heartedness, and a lack of poisonous, materialistic character, as Albert's only concern after receiving the news of such a small annuity, was that he would not be able to fully do good or help others in need. This shows that in fact the Prince did not care that much about the whole argument itself; he cared mostly about the effect it would have upon the many good ventures he hoped to undertake.²³⁷

3.4. Prince Albert & his position within the Royal Court

Just when the debates about the Prince's religion and annuity was over and the Bill of Naturalisation was accepted, another unpleasant situation arose, one which sparked an even greater outrage than any of the previous issues that Queen Victoria and Prince Albert had to face. The new commotion concerned Prince Albert's position with the Royal Household and his precedence over other British royals.

While the position of a wife to the king is regulated by law, providing the said wife with rank and dignity right after the king, the same was never regulated for the husband of a queen. It seems that the lack of any such regulation stemmed rather from oversight than a deliberate action taken against a husband of a queen. Regardless of the cause of such a situation, it did indeed create a rather uncomfortable position for Prince Albert, as upon his marriage to Queen Victoria his status was simply undefined. This in turn, could result in unpleasant situations with other members of the family, be they future children or even more distant relatives. It was obvious that privately, in the peace and quiet of their home, the Queen could place Prince Albert next to her person; however, this could not be the case with other members of the royal family. For this to be sanctioned, there a special bill would have to be proposed and then ratified. This could have been done whilst the Act of Naturalisation was introduced, but it was never done. In fact, the Ministry did not even suggest introducing such a motion, thus creating some confusion. It seemed as if the motion regarding the precedence was deliberately removed from the title of the Bill so that it could be passed more easily.

²³⁷ Ibid., p. 32.

Nevertheless, the omission was noticed by the Duke of Wellington²³⁸, who requested further discussions on the subject. At this point the objections raised appeared rather grave, and required the Ministers to discuss them and agree on a satisfying solution.²³⁹

The issue of the *Morning Herald* from 1 February 1840 printed the records of the parliamentary proceedings where the discussion took place. One of the many members who asked questions regarding the precedence was the Marquis of Londonderry²⁴⁰. For him, the fact of precedence itself was not to be questioned; however, what needed to be specified was over whom specifically Prince Albert would take precedence. Indeed, there was a great difference in the precedence among the peers, but should that also be the case with other royals? Should the other children of George III be positioned lower than a German Prince? Londonderry remarked in the end that such a stance would definitely not be satisfactory for the people of England.²⁴¹

This matter was referred to by other newspapers, albeit paying more or less attention to the exact details of the proceedings. The London press focused on the fact that the matter of precedence was somehow being smuggled in with the Bill of Naturalisation for Prince Albert. To be honest, if it were not for Lord Wellington's vigilance, the matter of precedence would not have been discussed and would not have caused as much of a commotion as it did. In fact,

²³⁸ Outraged by Wellington's attitude, the Queen even considered omitting him from the wedding invitation, but Melbourne advised her against it. On Wellington's actions in clarifying the issue of Albert's religion, his pension, naturalization and position at court - see more in: N. Thompson, *Wellington after Waterloo*, London and New York 1986, pp. 189-191.

²³⁹ Th. Martin, op. cit., p. 63

²⁴⁰ Frederick John Robinson, Marquis of Londonderry (1782-1859), British politician, PM from 1827 to 1828; he belonged to a moderate Tory group led by the Duke of Wellington and Robert Peel. On Peel's position on Prince Albert's pension, see: N. Gash, *Sir Robert Peel. The Life of Sir Robert Peel after 1830*, London – New York 1986, p. 261-262.

²⁴¹ *Morning Herald*, 1 February 1840, p. 2.

the clause connected with precedence had to be removed from the Bill of Naturalisation for the document to be passed.²⁴²

Despite many distinguished persons addressing the matter, it seems that the reservations amongst the ministers were also expressed by Lord Brougham, who went as far as proposing to position Prince Albert after the Heir Apparent, but only during Queen Victoria's lifetime.²⁴³ The fact that the issue of precedence seemed to be smuggled within the text of the bill and not mentioned within the title itself was treated as a deliberate oversight: an action designed to, if not manipulate, then at least to some extent deceive the government in order to get the act passed. Apart from Brougham, doubts were expressed by the Dukes of Sussex and Cambridge, as well as the King of Hanover. Various solutions were proposed, but all of them were dismissed by the Opposition. In the end, even though this part was dropped, the Queen herself awarded precedence to Prince Albert by a patent, according to which her future husband had precedence next to her on all occasions at all times.²⁴⁴ Thus the whole situation, uneasy and uncomfortable as it may have been, was resolved not by the Government but the Queen herself. By introducing such a solution, Victoria boldly showed that she was willing to act herself on matters close to her heart if the Government was not willing to satisfy her.

This commotion that suddenly became part of Prince Albert's new life in England caused disquiet, not only for Albert himself, but also for the Queen. The disputes had not been directly aimed at him in order to disrespect him personally, but were rather expressions of political feelings on a greater scale. Nevertheless, it must be noted that the arguments did in fact have an obvious unpleasant effect upon the Prince, and could have affected the way he believed he was perceived by his future homeland.

It may seem that there was open disdain towards Prince Albert, on the part not only of the British government but also by some leading newspaper titles. This interest in matters

²⁴² E. A. Stockmar, op. cit., p. 35.

²⁴³ Th. Martin, op. cit., p. 63. For more on Victorian politics, see: A. Hawkins, *Victorian Political Culture*, Oxford 2005.

²⁴⁴ E. A. Stockmar, op. cit., p. 35.

concerning Prince Albert, whether personal or public, and the effect it might have had remained rooted in the mind of the young Prince. Even the Queen herself, in a letter to Prince Albert of 27 November 1839, stated that *the English are very jealous of any foreigner interfering in the government of this country*.²⁴⁵ This remark suggests that there was a pre-rooted negativity towards the young Prince, and that this animosity did in fact affect the way Albert was perceived in England. It created an adverse, even hostile image of the future consort, which was inflamed even further by the numerous pre-marital decisions concerning his annuity, religion and education that were to be taken in connection with his position in court.

Just like the matters discussed above, his arrival in Britain received wide coverage in the newspapers. It was a matter of great importance for the leading voices to have their own correspondents present rather than reprint the news as the minor titles would do.

Contrary to the impression one might have received, upon Albert's arrival in England, the Prince received quite an enthusiastic public welcome. Cheering crowds awaited his arrival in Dover and followed him along the route to Canterbury.²⁴⁶

Some newspapers provided their readers not only with a depiction of Albert's arrival in England, but even the whole trip from the moment Prince Albert left Coburg. From the issue of *The Times* dated 10 January 1840, the readers could learn of the rather emotional departure from Albert's fatherland: *he frequently turned towards it, and, with tears in his eyes, bade an eternal adieu*. Later in the despatch it was described how joyous people were whenever Albert appeared, giving him flowers, singing songs, and bestowing other expressions of their joy over the upcoming union.²⁴⁷

The *Morning Chronicle* printed their article in the 7 February 1840 issue on the fourth page, although it was underlined that the report came from their own correspondent. Their

²⁴⁵ Queen Victoria's Early Letters, 'Queen Victoria to the Prince Albert', 27 November 1839, Windsor Castle.

²⁴⁶ Th. Martin, op. cit., p. 64.

²⁴⁷ *The Times*, 10 January 1840, p. 4.

readers got a very detailed report on the journey, albeit starting from the Prince's arrival at Calais and then his arrival in England:

The piers were thronged with people, and as the Ariel entered the harbour there was much enthusiastic cheering, with loud cries of "God save the Queen!"- "Huzza for the Prince". On landing, the party was received by a guards of honour from the 90th Regiment, and a salute from the Western Heights. [...] and the prince and his party proceeded in an open carriage and four to Payn's York Hotel, where the Mayor of Dover and a large assembly of the inhabitants were in waiting to give him a hearty reception.²⁴⁸

The same descriptions could be found in the *Times* and a few other of the more respectable leading newspaper titles, although unsurprisingly there was no mention of Albert's arrival in the *Spectator*. The newspapers which did not reprint the *Morning Chronicle's* article and published their own pieces, such as the *Sun*, did not write lengthy texts, but simply printed short notes regarding the arrival of the Prince. This decision may demonstrate that even though the common people were expressed their joy and happiness, this was not of most interest to the Fourth Estate, who seemed to have been hoping for something of greater piquancy, more gripping for the reader.

Martin provides somewhat a more detailed description of the arrival than that which was presented in the newspapers. According to Martin, crowds accompanied the Prince from the moment he set foot on English soil all the way to the Buckingham Palace. This joy, so vivaciously displayed, was an expression not so much of euphoria over Prince Albert but more that this Prince was in fact the one who would bring happiness to their beloved young Queen, thus assuring *the prosperity of her reign*²⁴⁹ which was after all what the nation needed:

[...] all this is never strongly felt than by a multitude, especially if predisposed to yield to the charm, as in the present case it was sure to be, by the knowledge that this marriage was not of political convenience, but of pure affection. 'It is this', as Lord Melbourne afterwards said to the Queen, 'which makes your Majesty's marriage so popular;' and it was this which, kindling a response in every

²⁴⁸ *Morning Chronicle*, 7 February 1840, p. 4.

²⁴⁹ Th. Martin, op. cit., p. 65.

heart, gave the warmth of a direct personal interest to the feeling with which the Prince was everywhere regarded.²⁵⁰

It seemed that the Prince was genuinely liked by the crowds, who seemed not in the least to have been affected by all the commotion around Albert's religion, annuity, or his position in the court. And even if they were, then at this particular moment any feelings of discontent were gone. *The Prince is liked.*²⁵¹

It appears that there were two images of Prince Albert. One, as could be concluded based on the articles printed by the London newspapers which, especially in the beginning, had a relatively unwelcoming air, creating an idea that Albert was not welcome in England. And then there is the other picture, where the common people were genuinely rejoicing over the young Prince's arrival. It is as if the love and admiration they had for their young Queen was suddenly bestowed on Albert as well: *those who are not carried away by party feelings like him greatly.*²⁵² Baron Stockmar remarks in his memoirs that *the impartial are well pleased with him; he has been better received than was to be expected. He behaves in his difficult position very well.*²⁵³

All the newspapers' previous animosities appeared to be reduced by the upcoming marriage of the Queen and Prince Albert. Newspapers need something new to report on each day, something eye-catching which will hold the attention of their readers. And with the coming days, it seemed that the marriage ceremony was the hot topic that would overshadow all the previous news about Prince Albert. The serious matters that the newspapers also addressed remained of great importance, but they could not challenge the romantic event of the marital bond shared by these two young royals. Their happy and blissful moment was widely commented on by all the voices of Fourth Estate.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ E. A. Stockmar, op. cit., p. 37.

3.5. Prince Albert and the royal marriage

The wedding took place on 10 February 1840. The day started with bells tolling throughout the city of London to signal to everyone the greatness of the upcoming nuptials. The *Supplement of Essex, Herts, and Kent Mercury* provided a detailed description of that exceptional day together with an etching of the young couple. The reader was informed of who the members of the royal party were, where royal procession stopped, and what events lay ahead of the Queen and Prince Albert.

J. W. A. Army

SUPPLEMENT
TO THE
Essex, Herts, and Kent Mercury.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 1840.

MARRIAGE
OF
Queen Victoria

Her Most Excellent Majesty QUEEN VICTORIA was united in Marriage to His Royal Highness PRINCE ALBERT ALEXANDER (Cousin German, Grand Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, Knight of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, on Monday the 10th of February, 1840. The morning was adorned by many peals of bells from all the Churches of the Metropolis; and flags were displayed from the temples. At an early hour people were flocking to St. James's Park, in which, and in the vicinity of Buckingham Palace, immense crowds were soon collected, anxious to get a sight of the Royal Couple, and to witness the Procession to and from the Chapel.

On reaching the Palace, Her Majesty was immediately conducted to her Chamber behind the Throne-room, where she remained, attended by her Maids of Honour and Train Brides, all surrounded by the Earl Chamberlain, to take her place in the Procession. The illustrious individuals, and others composing the Procession, except those who went to Buckingham Palace, assembled in the Throne-room at St. James's Palace, at half-past eleven o'clock.

The Procession of the Bridgemen moved to the Chapel first, consisting of several Officers of Her Majesty's Household, the Bishop, the Father, the Mother, and the Officers of their sashes. On leaving the Chapel His Royal Highness was conducted to a seat on the left of the Altar. His supporters, the Duke of Saxo-Coburg and Gotha, and the Hereditary Prince, with the Officers of their sashes, occupied seats near him. The Procession of Her Majesty then followed, consisting of the principal Members of her Household, the Officers of State, the Members of the Royal Family, who immediately preceded Her Majesty. She was followed by her Ladies, and was followed by twelve unmarried Ladies, the Daughters of Peers, who bore Her Majesty's Train (the Ladies of the Bedchamber, Maids of Honour, and Women of the Bedchamber). The respective Persons who composed the Procession were conducted

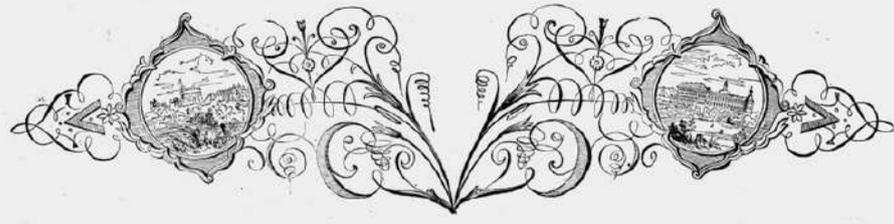


to the Places provided for them—the Princess and Princesses of the Blood Royal to the seats on the Right-Hand, and the several Ladies attended upon the Queen, in the seats near Her Majesty's person. Her Majesty on reaching the Chapel, took her seat in the Chair of State, on the right of the Altar. The Service, which was performed by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London, then proceeded, and its conclusion was announced by the firing of the Park and Tower-guns; and her Majesty and the Prince, seated in Chairs of State on each side of the Altar, received the congratulations of the illustrious assembly. The Procession was

then re-formed, and returned in the same order, except that Her Majesty was conducted by His Royal Highness. On reaching the Throne-room, the Prince of Anhalt took place, when Her Majesty and Prince Albert signed the Marriage Register, which was attested by certain Members of the Royal Family and Officers of State present. All being concluded within the Palace of St. James's, the Procession to Buckingham Palace was re-formed. Prince Albert taking his place in the same Carriage with Her Majesty; the Duchess of Sutherland taking her place with the Earl of Albemarle, who on this occasion drove

second his official right to be in the same Carriage with Her Majesty. Her Majesty occupied the back seat alone, and Prince Albert and the Duchess of Kent sat opposite. At Buckingham Palace there was a splendid Wedding Breakfast, at which the illustrious participants in the previous Ceremony, and the Officers of the Household and Ministers of State, were present. At the conclusion of the Breakfast, Her Majesty retired to prepare for her journey to Windsor, and departed thence with His Royal Highness at twenty minutes past four o'clock.

LONG MAY THEY LIVE.



Pic. 7. 'Marriage of Queen Victoria', *The Supplement of Essex, Herts, and Kent Mercury*, 18 February 1840, p. 1. 254

The readers of the daily papers were hungry for happy news regarding their beloved Queen, and wanted her to enter a union that would be based on love and respect rather than the political scheming of shadowy parties.

God will not take it amiss, if in that serious act, even at the altar, I think of you, for I will pray to Him for you, and for your soul's health, and He will not refuse us his blessing.²⁵⁵

The above lines are an extract from Prince Albert's letter to the Queen. They perfectly summarise the faithful character of the young Prince, showing his unshaken devotion to God but also his devotion to the Queen herself – after all, he put her right after or if not next to God in his thoughts and prayers. This, and the many other letters that Prince Albert wrote to Victoria over the course of their marriage, are a true statement of their strong love. As that love was visible for the Queen's subjects, they were so eager to see her happy in her marriage. Thus, it is no wonder that the newspapers focused closely on informing their readers of each step related to the preparations for the marriage ceremony.

Regardless of the initial rainy weather, the day of 10 February turned out pleasant, with what was from now on called 'the Queen's weather'. The rain and fog cleared, and sun shone to rejuvenate the assembled crowds. Thousands of people flocked to see their sovereign and her newlywed husband.

The Queen is fortunate enough to wed the Prince of her own voluntary choice – the man of her unprompted affections, and one well qualified, if report be just, to win and retain the heart of an amiable woman.²⁵⁶

This quote from the *Times* of 10 February 1840 well expresses the fortunate position the Queen was in, marrying for love and not for political reasons. The article mentions nothing but positive aspects of Albert's character, claiming to

²⁵⁴ *Essex & Herts Mercury*, 18 February 1840, p. 1.

²⁵⁵ Th. Martin, op. cit., p. 66.

²⁵⁶ *The Times*, 10 February 1840, p. 4.

[...] have never heard a syllable from any quarter which was not favourable to the disposition or character of his Royal Highness. And this, under his actual relations to the country, is a fact of inestimable worth. If the thing were not finally settled indeed, one might, without being unreasonable, express a wish that the consort selected for a Princess so educated, and hitherto so unfairly guided, as Queen Victoria, should have been a person of riper years, and likely to form more sound and circumspect opinion than this youth, however promising, of 21. Were Prince Albert eight or ten years older, we should augur more confidently of the moral and political fruits to be anticipated from this alliance. [...] But the youth and inexperience of the Prince, and the consequent snares which may be laid for him, and the inevitable disqualifications under which he must labour for his own release and that of his Royal consort from the embarrassments which have already accumulated round them, are our only grounds of regret or of alarm in connexion with the great forthcoming event of this important day.²⁵⁷

The *Times*'s editors had undergone an obvious shift in addressing Prince Albert. The author of the article praised the character of the young Prince, his tender age being mentioned not to undermine him but rather to highlight his well-balanced disposition, and expresses guilt over the way Albert had been treated before.

This marked something of a turning point from the *Times*, which had hitherto been relatively neutral but now entered a rather defensive phase when discussing Prince Albert. It is quite noticeable that the editors of this title became protectors of his good name, pointing fingers at those who dared to slander the good name of the Consort.

The following day's issue (11 February 1840) gave a lengthy, two-column report on all the wedding proceedings. This royal marriage was the first of such grandeur since that of the late Princess Charlotte in 1816. What is more, the wedding itself received a rather non-traditional update: it was moved from the evening hours to noon, which enabled thousands upon thousands of viewers to see the Queen and her chosen one on the way to and from St. James's.²⁵⁸ The following quote from the article emphasises the joy expressed by the people, to a degree that had not been seen before:

²⁵⁷ *The Times*, 10 February 1840, p. 4.

²⁵⁸ *The Times*, 11 February 1840, p. 4.

Never did St. James's park present such an extraordinary display – never was such an immense multitude assembled there [...] As the day wore on to noon, the assemblage between the back of Carlton-terrace and the foot of Constitution-hill had increased to a dense mass of very many thousands, through which it was difficult to keep open the carriage-way for that portion of the company who had the privilege of the entrée.²⁵⁹

It can be concluded that at that point, Prince Albert's image as presented in the newspapers was relatively positive, and gave hope that he would be accepted by the other members of British society. The *Times* expressed joy over the nuptials: *We wish him the full reward of public and private virtue in a nation's approval and his own.*²⁶⁰

The felicitations to be found in numerous newspapers, whether original articles or reprints, were not shared by the nominally more subjective *Spectator*. This title did not participate in the expressions of happiness and joy that were so vividly expressed by the nation and other members of the Fourth Estate. The editor kept the usual reserved tone in informing its readers of the nuptials, limiting the reporting to a relatively short note regarding the ceremony. While the article was in fact placed on the first page, the author refrained from elaborate and descriptive passages regarding the crowds or the members of the party, simply reporting on the weather and the ceremony. It did, however, take the liberty of mentioning that apart from the Duke of Wellington, no other member of a political party was present at the ceremony. This fact was met with a disapproving tone from *Spectator*, suggesting that it was a mistake to imply that the Queen was sovereign not of the whole, diverse nation but only a certain fraction of it, although the author did mention that the decision had been taken by the Queen, who wished to have present at the ceremony only members of the Royal Family or those who held offices within the Household.²⁶¹

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ *The Times*, 10 February 1840, p. 4.

²⁶¹ *The Spectator*, 15 February 1840, p. 1.

Based on the image of the nuptials and the joy expressed by the common people, it could be concluded that there was in fact a rather positive image of Prince Albert, and that this was fairly represented across the many newspaper titles, albeit of course with some exceptions. However, taking into the account other issues that the Prince himself had to face upon the start of his journey as a new citizen of England and then as husband to the Queen, it is clear that this image was not a constant one. It never ceased to fluctuate throughout the years of his life in Britain. This was simply the obvious price, the burden that came with the position.

Over time, murmurs of jealousy and distrust could be heard. Some expressed feelings simply of pure selfishness, unwelcoming of the fact that their Queen had married someone other than an Englishman. Others, in years to come, were simply afraid of the vast influence a foreign Prince might have not only on their beloved Queen but also on the state of the nation's affairs –although that was unthinkable, the mere idea was enough to permit open disdain towards the Prince. These public attitudes seem like the price that had to be paid by the Consort for his new, elevated position. It was clear that Albert had to endure such treatment until, if not all, then at least most of the malice was silenced by the proof of his hard work, and any false accusations could be put aside thanks to the factual evidence of his indisputable conduct.

As a man with a purpose, with a nature dedicated to striving for achievement, and a character filled with originality, Prince Albert could not allow himself not to be master of his state. He needed to be recognised both in private as well as in public. Nevertheless, as only the second son, while at the same time having come to occupy the most prominent position in another kingdom, this resulted in rather unusual confusions of precedence. This was highly disputed by some members of the royal family. What is more, Albert had no actual authority by right within the household; this often created uncomfortable situations which could easily embarrass his position. He wished for that situation to be changed, especially regarding his power within the household, although initially that lay within the hands of Baroness Lehzen. Albert himself concluded that he is *only the husband and not the master in his house*.²⁶²

Regardless of any conflicts within the household or the negative commentaries that would surface every now and then, Albert remained faithful and honest to his principles according to which he wished to devote his life to serve the sovereign, his Queen. He

²⁶² Th. Martin, op. cit., p. 71

understood the delicacy of his position and of the situation he found himself in, and did not wish for any imputations of any sort to cast a shade on the state or the monarchy. However, he strongly believed he had to support the Sovereign with his advice, and thus he decided to devote his attention to every subject concerning domestic and foreign issues. It needs to be underlined that despite his young age, Prince Albert was extremely well educated in matters of science, history, nature, art, as well as physical and mental matters. He was also quite well prepared to dwell within the world of politics and diplomacy. For that reason, he believed he would much better spend his time being of service to the Queen rather than idling away his skills and wisdom.

3.6. Prince Albert and the Regency²⁶³

It is true that Prince Albert's character, upbringing and education shaped him as an adult and created a man with vision, a man who decided to devote all his skills and passions to serving not only his Queen, but also his new country. The negativity that can be found in some of the press articles is sure to affect the image Prince Albert had, but it cannot be denied that he managed to involve himself in matters related to both the private and public aspects of his life. Until his death, the Royal Consort spent his years actively, holding many positions – which often led to mockery from certain periodicals. Nevertheless, it must be highlighted that during his time as the Royal Consort Prince Albert must be recognised for many things that he did for the nation. He not only presided over many organisations and chaired many meetings, but he also undertook the arduous endeavour of improving the lives of his new British subjects, especially since he entered his new role at times full of complexity and trouble for his new nation. Bad harvests, stagnation in trade, high prices and low wages – all this and many more were parts of the everyday reality of the Britain he came into.²⁶⁴

Shortly after all the marriage festivities, ceremonials and presentations, Prince Albert had to be introduced to public life in Court, and made acquainted with various matters that

²⁶³ See the appendix for the complete text.

²⁶⁴ Th. Martin, op. cit., p. 79. For more on the social and economic situation of Great Britain in this period, see: G. M. Trevelyan, *English Social History. A Survey of Six Centuries, Chaucer to Queen Victoria*, London 1967, pp. 522-563.

would require his attention soon enough. It is no wonder that the young Prince, who had not been accustomed to such a variety of duties and responsibilities, quickly felt overwhelmed with the challenges of his new life. The small principality that he was familiar with had mostly been characterised by peace and quiet, and not the roaring hum of a great and complex nation and its problems. Nevertheless, despite all these initial difficulties, and despite Baron Stockmar's initial doubts and fears, in the end Prince Albert was well received and liked. This was seen in the change of attitude towards the Tories, who for the greater part had not been keen on the German Prince. Such an 'olive branch' was particularly necessary as, not long after the marriage, the question of a potential heir emerged. The tragedy of Princess Charlotte and the untimely deaths of her and her child, followed by the disastrous suicide of the practitioner assisting the childbirth, were still very present in the minds of the people.²⁶⁵ According to Sir Eardley Holland²⁶⁶, the nation's *state of grief and consternation was indescribable. For many days the nation presented the picture of one united family in deep mourning.*²⁶⁷ Lord Brougham noted the following in his memoirs:

This most melancholy event produced throughout the kingdom feelings of the deepest sorrow and most bitter disappointment. It is scarcely possible to exaggerate, and it is difficult for persons not living at the time to believe, how universal and genuine those feelings were. It really was as if every household throughout Great Britain had lost a favourite child.²⁶⁸

This bitter event seemed to touch the hearts of every single person in the nation in a unified expression of national grief, and no one ever wished to have to succumb to these feelings again. For that reason, the matter of regency soon became an issue of great importance, as the well-being of the young Queen, who was deeply beloved and cherished by the whole

²⁶⁵ H. Pakula, *An Uncommon Woman*, Touchstone 1995, p. 28

²⁶⁶ <https://obgyn.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1471-0528.1951.tb04074.x>

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ H. Brougham, *The Life and Times of Henry Lord Brougham*, volumes I-III, Harper & Brothers Publishers 1871, v. 2, p. 332.

nation, was not only considered to be a state matter but felt close to every household in Great Britain. Therefore, Parliament had to take measures in case of the unfortunate event of the Queen's death during childbirth. The only sound and reasonable solution to that was to appoint a Regent. This required actions to be taken that would secure Prince Albert in that undoubtedly uncomfortable position.

As during the situation during the votes on the Act of Naturalization²⁶⁹ and the annuity for Prince Albert, certain doubts over the passage of this bill arose. To achieve peace and tranquillity over the delicate matter of the regency, the whole issue was kept a secret for some time, to give time for a Regency Bill that would provide solutions in case of the Queen's death to be prepared. Queen Victoria wished for the same pattern as in case of Princess Charlotte to be followed, meaning that her husband would become Regent. However, there was some opposition to her Majesty's wish; the Duke of Sussex expressed a negative attitude towards Prince Albert becoming Regent, opting rather for a Council of Regency – with the Duke himself being its prime member. For that reason, Baron Stockmar decided to step in and discuss this matter with Sir Robert Peel and the Duke of Wellington. All options had to be examined thoroughly, but in the end it was concluded that naturally Prince Albert, as the father of the putative heir, ought to be the Regent. A bill that confirmed that decision was in the end proposed and passed in both Houses.²⁷⁰

Initially, the newspapers were kept away from the discussions over the regency, and even the *Globe* did not inform its readers of the matter in any detail. There was only a short note dated 10 July 1840 informing that, since the temporary suspension of regal duties was imminent, such a bill was discussed, and a decision was reached to position Prince Albert as Regent.²⁷¹

The *Morning Post* expressed its understandable surprise, since the matter of regency was not a trivial issue but rather one that concerned not only the politicians but the common

²⁶⁹ See the appendix for the complete text.

²⁷⁰ Th. Martin, op. cit., p. 89.

²⁷¹ *The Globe*, 10 July 1840, p. 3.

people as well. The author of the article expressed shock over the actions of the *Globe* which, according to him, had just published a note aimed at misleading the public.²⁷²

Once the said Bill was passed, the remaining leading London newspapers started printing articles, notices and even the full text of the Bill itself. Of course, there were other journals who remained impartial and were focused solely on reporting the news, just as there were those who could not help but add their own commentaries which were expressions of their sometimes unfavourable opinions of the Prince. The *Spectator*, in its usual manner, informed its readers of the Regency Bill in a single sentence, together with the information about the Canada Bill being passed as well. Later in the article we can read about the reasons why the bill was introduced; the author actually admits that they had not seen the actual document; basing the report solely on the speech of the Chancellor, it was assumed that the speaker alluded to Prince Albert being appointed as the Regent. This was all presented in a rather emotionless manner, concise and informative.²⁷³

Other representatives of the Fourth Estate, apart from simply informing of the Bill itself, added more news that would create a slightly different impression of the matter. The *London Evening Standard* openly reported the disagreements arising amongst the members of the Parliament. There was a clear division between a more ‘respectable’ faction (this part consisted of Lord Melbourne, Lord Cottenham, Lord John Russel, and alike) who called for the Prince to be the sole, natural Regent, whereas the less ‘respectable’, more radical side wanted Prince Albert to be supported by a group of people.²⁷⁴

Bell's New Weekly Messenger focused on the figure of the Duke of Sussex, who openly opposed to the idea of Prince Albert being the Regent and saw himself as best placed to serve as the head of a Regency council. This weekly journal allowed itself a more personal statement on the Regency Bill. The editor fervently supported the Duke of Sussex, who apparently represented the ‘true spirit of the English nation’ which seemed to favour someone of their own

²⁷² *The Morning Post*, 11 July 1840, p. 4.

²⁷³ *The Spectator*, 18 July 1840, p. 1.

²⁷⁴ *The London Evening Standard*, 8 July 1840, p. 4.

blood rather than a young foreigner who in the sad event of the Queen's demise might fall into the hands of those who wished to act in ill faith. While the editor expressed negative feelings towards the Tories, at the same time he did not fully support Prince Albert as the ideal candidate for this difficult task. He even went so far as to recall the corruption and disintegration of the nation during the last time a foreign Prince, George I, was in charge, as he apparently became a tool of foreign interests.²⁷⁵ Such a state of affairs should never happen again, which was why the election of Prince Albert as Regent posed a similar threat in the eyes of the authors of the *Bell's* article.²⁷⁶ This rather short article raised the question of whether they should have expressed their doubts in such a manner when the Queen herself, as well as some of her leading ministers, had placed their faith and trust in Prince Albert as the perfect, natural and obvious choice.

In contrast, the *London Evening Standard* adopted a less negative, less argumentative tone, defending Prince Albert's natural right to be sole Regent if one were needed. The writer of the article deems such a bill unnecessary, although if there must be one, then no other people should be even discussed as possible candidates to share the burden of the regency. The editor called upon the Duke of Sussex to provide reasons that would justify his intrusion into the family's matters. As none could be found, it is stated that this position could be filled in by the father of the child alone, and there should be no allusions to doing anything else.²⁷⁷

It appears that the issue of the regency created a great deal of heat and needed to be treated with extreme caution. The Duke of Sussex would not easily renounce his demand to be the person of interest in this matter. According to Stockmar, the Duke's intentions were not based on any care for the people who were at the heart of the bill; he was instead focused on his own interests and benefits.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁵ For more on George I, see: J. Black, *Politics and Foreign Policy at the Age of George I, 1714-1727*, Ashgate 2014.

²⁷⁶ *Bell's New Weekly Messenger*, 26 July 1840, p. 4.

²⁷⁷ *The London Evening Standard*, 10 July 1840, p. 2.

²⁷⁸ E. A. Stockmar, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

In the end, the Regency Bill was passed according to the wish of the Queen, Prince Albert being the sole Regent, with only the Duke of Sussex continuously expressing his opposition. The bill itself regulated the actual role and powers that the Regent could exercise, but most importantly it confirmed the status of Albert which not long ago had seemed barred to him. This seemed to show that the initial distrust and discomfort about him entering the realm had lessened, and even the Tories appeared to have accepted Albert and the new role he had been granted:

That not a single voice was raised in opposition in either House, or in any one of the newspapers. [...] This was entirely due, Lord Melbourne told the Queen, to the Prince's own character: 'Three months ago they would not have done it for him.'²⁷⁹

The attitude towards the Royal Consort was changing, as was seen not only in how he was treated by Parliament but also in the way newspapers (if not all than at least some) wrote about him. The perception of the Prince as a member of the Royal Family, as the Consort, was never constant; it fluctuated and changed. And the Prince himself felt that there was an actual change in the way he was approached by the general public and the political classes.

After the initial mixed press that Prince Albert received came the years of relative peace and calmness, with only quotidian reports of his numerous activities. In his memoirs, Stockmar recalls that *the Prince improves morally and politically*.²⁸⁰ The Royal Consort focused himself on the tasks he set for himself: supporting the Queen and improving whatever there was to be improved and whatever he could improve. And so he continued with numerous undertakings, great and small: giving speeches, paying visits, writing letters. Yet it seems that the greatest test was yet to come, with Queen Victoria's temporary retreat from her regal duties when she had to focus on her post-birth convalescence – a test which he passed flawlessly.

3.7. Prince Albert: master in his own home?

²⁷⁹ Th. Martin, op. cit., p. 89.

²⁸⁰ E. A. Stockmar, op. cit., p. 75.

Upon marrying Queen Victoria, there was a debate as to what in fact Prince Albert was to occupy himself with. Lytton Strachey wrote that *in State affairs there seemed to be no place for him*.²⁸¹ Victoria herself informed the Prince that

the English are very jealous of any foreigner interfering in the government of this country [...] He would, she hoped, make a perfect husband; but, as for governing the country, he would see that she and Lord M. between them could manage very well, without his help.²⁸²

The young Prince hoped that at least within the walls of his home he would be able to be the leading voice: *I am very happy and content; but the difficulty in filling my place with the proper dignity is that I am only the husband, not the master in the house*.²⁸³

The fact that Albert was marginalised not only in state matters but also those connected with his own home was difficult for him to accept and only added to his sense of frustration. From the first moments of married life, Albert found himself in opposition to perhaps the only other person who loved the Queen as much as he did– Baroness Lehzen. This, however, was someone who had known the Queen far better than him. As former governess to the Queen, she was now one of the most influential figures in the Royal Household. Given the fact that the Baroness had been with Victoria her whole life, not only raising her but also assisting her through such difficult and demanding moments as the accession, she had become virtually indispensable. She now occupied a position which allowed her to control much of what was happening at both Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle. Through the years, she had become *much beloved by the women and much liked and esteemed by all who frequent the Court*.²⁸⁴

With the arrival of Prince Albert, Baroness Lehzen found it extremely difficult to understand that she was no longer in charge of the Royal Household and that authority now lay

²⁸¹ L. Strachey, op. cit., p. 152.

²⁸² Ibid., p. 153.

²⁸³ H. Hobhouse, op. cit., p. 26.

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

elsewhere. Hobhouse remarks that *he had slighted her in the most marked manner and that she was too proud not to resent it.*²⁸⁵

According to Strachey, it was Baron Stockmar,²⁸⁶ who made Albert aware of the fact that his duty was to be the man of the house and not allow his family, his children and his whole life be governed by the Baroness. And as for the marriage itself – *was he the wife and she the husband?*²⁸⁷ The intrusive involvement of this long-time confidante was not missed by the newspapers, especially by titles like the *Satirist*, which was not afraid to use its sharp language to hold the readers' attention. In one of its regular sections, the parodic 'Chit-Chat', the authors of the fictional dialogues mock the German-born prince and the German-born counsellor:

'Albert is so very boyish,' said the Queen to her German confidante. 'I wish he were more manly.' 'Dat he sall pe very soon,' rejoined the Baroness, 'as I sal take him in hand, and den, I show him how to pe de man directly de next minute.' With such an instructor, there can be no doubt the Prince will improve rapidly.²⁸⁸

In another issue the 'Chit-Chat' section lewdly suggested that the Queen's maids of honour had discovered that the young Prince proved to be a worthy student of Lehzen's 'teachings', thus creating a commotion amongst the unmarried women of the court.²⁸⁹ It seemed that, according to the Chit-Chat revelations, that *he vas get on mouch petter dan ven he vas first put to tit.*²⁹⁰ Such information was welcomed with immense satisfaction by the interested parties.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

²⁸⁶ L. Strachey, op. cit., p. 157.

²⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 158.

²⁸⁸ *The Satirist, or the Censor of the Times*, 3 November 1839, p. 5.

²⁸⁹ *The Satirist, or the Censor of the Times*, 17 November 1839, p. 5.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

Another satirical barb at how seemingly limited in his freedoms and powers the young Prince was in his own household could be found in the less venomous but still daring *Punch*. In its 2 October 1841 edition there is a relatively short piece touching upon the subject of Prince Albert enjoying a swim in the Thames. In this passage, entitled *A royal duck*, the reader not only learnt about the Royal's new passion, but also about the concern expressed by the Monarch who would not allow her husband to venture swimming all on his own, but instead required 'a companion of the bath'. This piece is accompanied by a cartoon showing the Prince being held by two sturdy women, himself being actually of feebler build in comparison to his female companions, who were, after all, just making sure (per Her Majesty's wish) that no harm befalls her beloved husband.



Pic.8. Multiple Essay Items, *Punch, or the London Charivari*, 2 October 1841

This does constitute an amusing commentary, certainly aiming at making the reader smile. Yet it suggests that the German Prince did not have much say in the Royal House, and it did not refer to him as Consort, but as mere husband to his wife, who was not the Queen of a mighty nation.

The free and uninhibited manner in which the editors of the *Satirist* and *Punch* allowed themselves to express their opinions, whether they were based on truth or falsehood, is surprising, and must have had a detrimental effect on the way Prince Albert was perceived by

their readerships. Another example of this image as created by the satirical press can be found on the pages of *Crim. Con. Gazette*:

It has been suggested that the Baroness Lolizen should, as nothing at Court can be done, it seems, without her, take Prince Albert in training so as to qualify him for the duties he will have to perform, should the match be brought about between him and the Queen. The royal stud would no doubt be much benefited by the assistance of such a trainer.²⁹¹

The passage shows, in a way typical of the *Crim. Con. Gazette*, that even before the marriage, the position of the future husband within his own house would be dictated in every aspect by the omnipresent Baroness Lehzen. The fact that she was involved in literally every aspect of Queen's life both before and after the marriage only added to the Prince's growing frustration, as he felt excluded not only from Victoria's life as the Monarch but also from the affairs concerning the Household. However, Albert could not have the beloved Governess removed so openly, and sought assistance from Lord Melbourne on how to deal with the matter.²⁹²

In the end, Prince Albert succeeded in cementing his role, not only by managing to remove the Baroness from the Court two years into the Royal marriage, but even earlier with the arrival of the first Royal child. The Queen made a rapid recovery from the birth, being nursed and cared for by none other but Prince Albert himself.²⁹³ As for the Baroness, with the arrival of the second Royal child, some illnesses during the early years of each child and the assistance of Baron Stockmar, the Queen was finally forced to make the decision to let her beloved Governess go and make room in her domestic life for her husband, the father of her

²⁹¹ *Crim. Con. Gazette*, 19 October 1839, p. 3.

²⁹² E. Longford, *op. cit.*, p. 198. Initially, however, Melbourne refused to help Prince Albert in his conflict with Baroness Lehzen, but over time he changed his mind - see: P. Ziegler, *op. cit.*, s. 316.

²⁹³ H. Hobhouse, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

children. After a series of quite cruel and wounding notes of the kind that the Queen and Albert were accustomed to send to one another, Victoria concluded:

Our position is tho' very different to any other married couples. A. is in my house and not I in his. – But I am ready to submit to his wishes as I love him so dearly.²⁹⁴

It is their roles as parents which reveal more of the royal couple's more private life. From the letters of Lady Lyttelton, the governess to the Royal children, we learn of Prince Albert's kindness and patience with the children and his equal treatment of them all in a loving, fatherly manner. He tried to ensure not only that the Royal children received proper education, but he wanted them to have the sense of what him and his brother Ernest had shared as children at the family castle in Rosenau. And for that reason, he made sure that his children were given gardens, forts, and even a 'Swiss Cottage' at Osborne House, where they could not only play but also grow their own food and even learn the basics of housekeeping.²⁹⁵

²⁹⁴ R. Rhodes James, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

²⁹⁵ H. Hobhouse, *op. cit.*, p. 29



Pic. 9. Children's gardens, Osborne House, Isle of Wight. ²⁹⁶

²⁹⁶ Author's resources.



Pic.10. Swiss Cottage, Osborne House, Isle of Wight. ²⁹⁷

²⁹⁷ Author's resources.

3.8. Summary

The initial doubts that many expressed upon learning that Queen Victoria had decided to marry her German cousin Prince Albert occupied the minds of many for some time. The questions raised regarding the Prince himself, his religion, annuity and position in the household would recur on the pages of many newspaper titles across the country, as many were interested not only in the Prince and his character but also their apprehension at possible German interference in the country. The papers devoted space to acquainting their readers with the Prince and to answering (or at least trying to answer) the questions that so many had. At the same time, the press created a certain image of the Prince by means of the printed words; their readers would then naturally share their opinions and would have a certain media image imprinted in their minds. Initially, this image was not sympathetic. The difficulties of finding his own place with the Royal Court and his own Household did not help to ease the pains of becoming one of the most prominent figures in England.

However, as the years passed and the Prince proved to the English that he was not only a devoted husband and a doting father, but also a responsible statesman who put the best interest of his newly adopted nation first, the initial doubts and negativity gave place to certain feelings of trust, comfort, and perhaps even admiration and gratitude. With that shift in attitude, not only among the common people but also the press itself, the media image of Prince Albert started to alter as well. He was no longer the German whom people so feared, his religion was no longer questioned, and no one accused him any more of wanting to usurp the power or the crown.

4. The Great Exhibition and other stories as depicted in the press

Prince Albert found himself in the role of a man with many duties and undertakings, one who had no place in State affairs, who was only a husband but never a King, and scrutinised by the ever-present eye of the press. His response was to devote himself to the tasks of engaging in matters connected with, among other things, the arts, industry and education. This was where he felt at ease, a world where he felt his knowledge and skills could be of help.

With the many talents he possessed, Prince Albert directed his time and strength not only towards ensuring his own children received a proper education and a sound understanding of the surrounding world, but also to improving the lives of regular people, from his model farms to changes in the army uniforms, from improvements in education to the Great Exhibition. The taxing task of serving not only his wife the Queen but also his newly found nation was implemented with a diligence that sadly cost him his life.

The path he took was never an easy one. To understand the scope of his involvement in the development of the English nation, as well as his other undertakings that contributed to his final demise, one should analyse the various obstacles that the Prince encountered during his years in Britain. Not all his work led to situations that affected him adversely, yet there are some moments that seem more pronounced than others. For that reason, one should dwell on the demanding life the Prince led once the dust from the initial perturbations concerning his marriage had settled; only then it is possible to grasp the complete picture of the multiple, intertwining engagements that affected the Prince and the course of his life in various ways. Albert managed to imprint his memory on the British nation in a definitive way, ultimately leading to Great Britain becoming the greatest country in nineteenth-century Europe. Because of the great scope of his ambitions and achievements, it is understandable that he would evoke various emotions – from distrust, disrespect, and even contempt to admiration, respect, and even love.

4.1. Prince Albert & his involvement in public life

In the months after his marriage, Prince Albert proved ready to pull together sides that until then had stood in opposition. His aptitude at doing so added to his positive image. When

he embarked on his cooperation with Sir Robert Peel²⁹⁸ on the Royal Art Commission²⁹⁹, even though Peel was a prominent figure in the Conservatives, it appears that these two managed to put aside their political differences and focus on matters that were close to them both. One of the first initiatives that Peel launched after becoming Prime Minister was to propose the Royal Consort as the head of the Royal Commission, as he was very well informed of Prince Albert's vast knowledge of arts and sciences. This led to a very cordial relationship between them; Peel even remarked in a letter to the Prince that *I can only rejoice that the party distinctions should have been excluded from this national undertaking.*³⁰⁰

A commentary like this from someone who could have been a strong advocate against the German Prince was an excellent testimony to Albert's character as he entered English public life with such support. It helped that the commission created by Peel and Albert consisted completely of men focused on arts and literature, and not on politics. For the Royal Consort it was even more important as he not only managed to gain insights into the characters of the most influential men in England, how they thought and did business, but he also had a chance to display his own knowledge in a field where it could truly be appreciated. This made it possible for him to establish himself as someone with qualities which were worthy of respect.

Over time, with the support of Peel and Lord Aberdeen,³⁰¹ Prince Albert became more and more engaged in the matters of politics. He served Her Royal Majesty as an adviser, offering her his strong and practical judgement. Both ministers seemed glad to see that the Queen was able to trust her husband and rely on his opinion, and even share some of her duties.

²⁹⁸ Sir Robert Peel (1788-1850) was a British Conservative statesman, twice Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. For more, see: R. A. Gaunt, *Sir Robert Peel: Life and Legacy*, IB Tauris 2010.

²⁹⁹ For more, see: N. Gash, op. cit., p. 290-294.

³⁰⁰ Th. Martin, op. cit., p. 121.

³⁰¹ George Hamilton Gordon, Lord Aberdeen (1784-1860) was a British Conservative politician. He served twice as Foreign Secretary under the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel. For more, see: F. Balfour, *The life of George, fourth earl of Aberdeen*, Hodder 1922.

It was also observed that Prince Albert never pressed his opinions, and would never exercise his authority without previous consultations with the Queen. Peel and Aberdeen found that involvement most desirable and did not express any objections whatsoever.

Now that his qualities had been publicly revealed, any doubts held by the government were allayed. Still, the public understandably expressed certain reservations towards the foreign Prince. In Scotland, a ballad was published mocking Prince Albert and his great involvement in the people's everyday lives:

Albert's Fashions,

AND

Description of England.

TUNE,— " Unhappy Jeremiah."

WE daily meet with something,
We never need be undone,
Now search old England through & through
And all the streets in London.
Victoria's name is going by,
That once caus'd such a bother,
And now it's Albert every thing,
From one end to the other

CHORUS.

From John-o-Groats to the Land's-end,
From thence right up to Dover,
You will meet with Albert every thing,
The country all over.

There is Albert pokers Albert tongs,
Prince Albert chairs and tables,
Albert fenders, Albert songs,
And Albert's German cradles,
Albert's peas, and Albert's sprats,
And Albert's summer cabbages,
Prince Albert's four and ninepenny hats,
And Albert's German sausages.

Albert's coats, and Albert's shoes,
Albert's Congreve matches,
Albert's matchless ginger pop,
And Albert's buckskin breeches,
Albert's Yarmouth bloaters fine,
Albert's pickles and capers,
Albert's blacking and hot pea-soup,
And Albert's baked potatoes.

Prince Albert's oranges, Albert's mice,
And Albert's dancing monkeys,
Albert's cakes, penny a slice,
And Albert's pigs and donkeys.
Albert's crabs, and perry-winks,
Albert's clocks, and muscles,
Albert's tags, and Albert's boot,
And Albert's dandy bustles.

Albert's shipping, Albert's carts.
And Albert's prigs and tailors,
Albert's soldier's ladies' joy,
And Albert's flashing sailors,
Albert's horses, Albert's cakes,
Albert's dustmen, wives, and cronies,
Prince Albert's coffee, Albert's tea,
And Albert's little polonies.

Albert's mustard, Albert's salt,
Albert's mackintosh and mantles,
Albert's codfish. Albert's trout,
And Albert's half-penny candles.
Albert's doors and frying-pans,
And thousands at the least then.
Of Albert's wooden rolling-pins,
And Albert's gay policemen.

There is Albert's greens & Albert's pork,
And if I am not mistaken,
There is Albert's geese and bullock's heads,
And Albert's Wiltshire bacon.
There is Albert's snuff, and Albert's gin,
Prince Albert's rum and brandy,
There is Albert's wine in Petticoal,
And Albert's sugar candy.

There is Albert's stockings, Albert's boots
And Albert's floors to plank it,
Albert's sheets, and bugs and fleas,
And Albert's Witney blankets.
Albert's soap and Albert's starch,
Albert Jews and Quakers,
Albert Costermongers arch,
And Albert undertakers.

Albert snobs and Albert snips,
And Albert sausage-makers,
Albert dishes, smoking hot,
Albert dusty bakers,
Some Albert things are very nice,
They are, depend upon it,
Albert husbands the ladies want,
And Albert dandy bonnets.

We have got an Albert parliament,
Who will soon keep John Bull still,

If they don't send a-cross the seas,
The cursed Albert corn bill
From John-o-Groats to the Lands-end,
From thence right up to Dover,
You will meet with Albert every thing,
The country all over.

T. BIRT, 39, Great St. Andrew Street,
Seven Dials.

*Every description of Printing done Cheap*³⁰²

Although lengthy, the ballad perfectly depicts how much Prince Albert's acts affected the daily lives of the common people. There was not a single thing that could not bear an Albert emblem.³⁰³ A man of many qualities, of many undertakings – such was the perception of the Royal Consort.

However, with time, the people became more careful about displaying their distrust of him. This attitude amongst Englishmen was fully obvious to the Prince, who himself even remarked on it in a conversation with his private secretary, Mr. Anson³⁰⁴:

I admitted that it was quite true that a very laudable and natural jealousy and dislike prevailed in the minds of Englishmen against foreigners, though perhaps they would not be willing to allow it; but with regard to him personally I did not think this feeling was at all prevalent. The Prince replied that he did not think Englishmen in general would pretend to any concealment of this national prejudice; but he must say with regards to himself, that he did not feel he was *regarded* in this spirit. On the contrary, every effort had been made to show him the kindest feeling, and to prove to him that, as the Queen's husband, he was looked upon as a thoroughbred Englishman.³⁰⁵

³⁰² www.deriv.nls.uk/dcn9/7489/74896701.9.htm

³⁰³ Ibid.

³⁰⁴ George Edward Anson (1812-1849), courtier and politician. He was private secretary to Prince Albert and held other posts in Queen Victoria's household.

³⁰⁵ Th. Martin, op. cit., p. 151.

Of course, to achieve such esteem Prince Albert did not give in to any malice or ill gossip, and instead he continued to serve with his calm and clear judgement from the moment he married the Queen. Despite being placed in an extremely difficult position, he never gave any grounds for one negative word to be uttered against him. It could be noticed, though, that this effort did result in a certain change in the Prince. Martin remarked in his *Memoirs* that following Mr. Anson's observations, Albert acquired a rather reserved manner that was mistaken for coldness by some, but this mistake was made only by those who had no opportunity for a closer, more intimate relationship with His Highness.³⁰⁶

Further, it was remarked that from the moment Prince Albert assumed his new role he set some strict rules for himself to follow. He observed himself to assess his behaviour, denied himself any pleasures and focused instead on visiting museums, science institutes or other institutions designed for beneficial purposes. He focused on being present where there was real benefit for people, and kept himself far from any scandalous situations or even the inklings of such. He made sure to show himself in every part of London, especially in working class districts. Such a strenuous and demanding routine was bound to affect Prince Albert's health, as remarked upon by the Queen herself, saying that there must be measures taken to *prevent his being besieged when in London by so many unnecessary people. His health is so invaluable.*³⁰⁷ It was obvious that the Prince was trying to demonstrate this importance to the English nation and to the Queen, and that would take a toll on his health.

The following years saw the Prince engaging himself in many more enterprises connected with numerous societies and well-being initiatives, the reorganisation of the Royal Household, and even stepping in for the Queen during her frequent confinements. In such moments of need the Queen and the Prince did create a unified front; in moments like that, she could only be represented by him.

The newspapers no longer dwelt on the fact that Prince Albert was included in so many matters of state. The initial fright at the 'foreigner' unaccustomed to English ways was long

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

³⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 153.

gone, and his devotion and dedication, his solid and sound character, were all met with public admiration. What is more, those who were initially in opposition to His Royal Highness, such as Wellington or Peel, were no longer so open in their distrust of Prince Albert and his foreign origin, and found instead that he in fact had a great deal to offer in terms of his knowledge, character and dedication. He became a partner in numerous undertakings and engagements, a convenient figure who was beyond any party divisions and was solely focused on the possible benefits of mutual cooperation.

As the years went by, the newspapers delivered regular updates on the life of the Royal Family. This coverage was not only limited to Court Circulars, but often included lengthy reporting of Prince Albert's engagements at numerous institutions, initiatives he was involved in, meetings he presided over, and speeches he gave. Hobhouse mentions that the Prince was involved in matters concerning sewage disposal, public health, education, pensions for domestic servants, and the temperance movement.³⁰⁸ He would use such opportunities to introduce an idea or project he found to be of great importance. Hobhouse mentioned one such event on the occasion of the National Education Conference in 1857 when the Prince addressed those present regarding the great number of uneducated children.³⁰⁹ He proposed reforms in universities and the way they were governed as well as the curricula they offered. He supported the establishment of a new Irish university and granting scholarships in the Irish language.³¹⁰

His involvement in numerous activities came to be reported by the press in a more positive light, even his 'unofficial' activities. The *Sun* reported another splendid run *with his beautiful pack of harriers*³¹¹, while the *Evening Star* would report on a shooting outing.³¹² *Bell's Weekly Messenger* mentioned that Prince Albert had donated funds for the restoration of

³⁰⁸ H. Hobhouse, op. cit., p. 56.

³⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 65.

³¹⁰ Ibid., p. 67.

³¹¹ *The Sun*, 4 January 1843, p. 3.

³¹² *The Evening Star*, 4 January 1843, p. 4.

an ancient relic,³¹³ or presided over a meeting regarding civilisations in Africa.³¹⁴ Apart from these short reports, there was plenty of in-depth news regarding his presidency of various commissions:

a numerous and most respectable meeting was held in the Town Hall of Reading on Wednesday last, for the purpose of forming an auxiliary society to the Society for the Extinction of the Slavery Trade [...] under the presidency of his Royal Highness Prince Albert.³¹⁵

proposed functions ‘the office of Lord High Steward of Plymouth, vacant by demise of the Duke of Sussex [...] members of the Town Council, in whom the power of appointment is vested, suggest the appointment of Prince Albert.’³¹⁶

The first decade of the marriage, then, was filled with numerous activities and engagements. However, the most exhausting, but perhaps most rewarding undertaking was still ahead of the Royal Consort, and he stepped into the second decade of his marriage and royal duties with a project that some thought to be a failure, but which proved to be a tremendous success – the Great Exhibition.

4.2. The Great Exhibition

It was quite early into the royal marriage that the young Prince joined the Society of Arts (1843), which sadly at that time was what Hobhouse calls a *declining institution*.³¹⁷ Nevertheless, Prince Albert did not intend to remain a mere figurehead President when he took

³¹³ *Bell's Weekly Messenger*, 1 January 1844, p. 4.

³¹⁴ *The Sun*, 24 January 1843, p. 3.

³¹⁵ *Morning Herald*, 17 November 1840, p. 5.

³¹⁶ *Bell's Life in London and Sporting Chronicle*, 14 May 1843, p. 2.

³¹⁷ H. Hobhouse, op. cit., p. 91.

on that post in 1847. On the contrary, from the very beginning he set himself to apply the sciences and arts to industrial use.

The Society attracted many excellent men such as the inventor Henry Cole, the artist Richard Redgrave and the engineer Robert Stephenson, to mention only a few. It was no wonder that being surrounded by such talented men, Prince Albert was eventually inspired to undertake one of the greatest tasks of his lifetime. Henry Cole was smitten with the Paris Exposition after visiting it in June 1849³¹⁸, and after he became one of Prince Albert's most important colleagues, it is no surprise that the idea to express the glory and ideals of the British Nation in a similarly publicly visible way soon materialised, in the form of the Great Exhibition of 1851.³¹⁹ In the words of Lytton Strachey:

It should not be merely useful and ornamental; it should teach a high moral lesson. It should be an international monument to those supreme blessings of civilisation – peace, progress, and prosperity.³²⁰

Prince Albert felt strongly about the idea of organising an exhibition that would show the grandeur of the British nation, with which he identified himself wholeheartedly. Patrick Beaver's book *Crystal Palace* recalls that, despite the fact that the British people could not forget that Albert was a foreigner, and his German accent had not faded away over the years (which not even the Court circles could overlook), the Prince did not cease to work for the benefit of his adopted country. He was well fitted to introducing the numerous reforms that England was in need of at that time. According to Beaver, he was *much absorbed in the problem of improving the application of art to the manufacturing industries. Tastefulness, to Albert, was next to Godliness.*³²¹

³¹⁸ R. Rhodes James, op. cit., p. 194.

³¹⁹ See the extensive monograph on this topic: J. A. Auerbach, *The Great Exhibition of 1851: A Nation on Display*, Yale UP 1999.

³²⁰ L. Strachey, op. cit., p. 196.

³²¹ P. Beaver, *The Crystal Palace*, Phillimore & Co., 2001, p. 11.

The Prince, together with Henry Cole, Joseph Paxton, Owen Jones, and Matthew Digby Wyatt decided to have the immense undertaking ready within just eighteen months. It required not only visionary insight and inspiration, but it also incorporated the strength, knowledge and skills of every manufacturer in the country.³²²

Martin mentions that this arduous task took a great toll on the Prince's health as *he appears to be almost the only person who has considered the subject both as a whole and in its details. The whole thing would fall to pieces, if he left it to itself.*³²³

However, regardless of the potential difficulties, Albert was blessed with support from those whom he valued greatly, as the idea of the Great Exhibition was simply proof of Albert's sagacity and guarantee of the country's prosperity.³²⁴

The first days of 1850 saw a Commission being established that would orchestrate all the proceedings connected with the Exhibition. Even though the Commission and the adjacent committees seem to have worked effectively, in the end it was Prince Albert who devoted his utmost attention to every detail concerning the grand undertaking. Rhodes James remarks that Albert's involvement in the project, despite being completely voluntary, was exhausting and for the first time in their marriage, Queen Victoria became worried about his health.³²⁵

Such worry was more than justified. It stemmed not only from the love that the Queen had for her husband, but also due to the fact that at the same time the Prince was involving himself in other tasks of official and political concerns.³²⁶ On top of these, which were of course quite vital, Prince Albert did not set aside family matters; he was also absorbed in various aspects concerning the building of Balmoral as well as administering the Royal estates. All that

³²² Ibid., p. 13.

³²³ Th. Martin, op. cit., v. II, p. 244.

³²⁴ Ibid., p. 244.

³²⁵ R. Rhodes James, op. cit., p. 196.

³²⁶ Ibid.

was done simultaneously to creating the *festival of internationalism and peace, and on which everything depended, in Albert's words, upon peace, love, and ready assistance, not only between individuals, but between the nations of the earth.*³²⁷

A. N. Wilson in his book *Prince Albert: The Man Who Saved The Monarchy*, perfectly encapsulated the visionary ideal of the exhibition: *there was one figure in public life who appeared to embody that momentous change, one incarnation of optimism: Prince Albert.*³²⁸ These words show how much depended upon Prince Albert's involvement, and it is safe to say that it was not an easy task, but given the Prince's character, devotion and duty to his work and his adopted nation, it was clear that this task would be carried out to the highest possible standard.

His complete and unshaken devotion to the project could be seen in a speech he gave in October 1850, the full text of which can be found in the annex to this work. It opened with the following words:

The Exhibition of 1851 is to give us a true test and a living picture of the point of development at which the whole of mankind has arrived in this grand task, and a new starting point from which all nations will be able to direct their further exertions.³²⁹

Albert's words show how strongly he believed in the success of this unprecedented undertaking. The idea he created together with Cole, Paxton, Owen Jones and the others, was in his view only the realisation of the blessings bestowed upon them by the Almighty.³³⁰ The

³²⁷ Ibid., p. 197.

³²⁸ A. N. Wilson, *Prince Albert. The man who saved the monarchy*, Atlantic Books 2019, p. 220.

³²⁹ *Prince Albert's golden precepts: or the opinions and maxims of His Royal Highness the Prince Consort selected from his addresses, etc. some now for the first time collected, and carefully arranged*, Sampson Low, Son, and Co. 1862, p. 57.

³³⁰ Ibid., p. 58.

speech was a testimony to his humility and complete devotion to the British people, in whose name he wished to create this grand project. The Prince did not seek any recognition of his involvement or hope to curry particular favours with any given party. He strongly believed that this undertaking should be beyond any political differences or political opinions in the country or the representatives of the British nations. It should bring all people together, highlighting the best qualities in the country that the Prince was so sure of. In his opinion, it should be nothing more than an expression of the people's honour and genius.

One of the first and the most important issues to be resolved was the funding. The estimates varied from £30,000 to £75,000, and the money had to be secured somehow to guarantee the success of the Exhibition. Albert as Chairman of the Commission decided to engage London's most influential merchants, bankers, politicians, and many other influential chairmen of various institutions in providing financial support. He also had industrial towns and cities give support, with their foremost manufacturers encouraged to submit their works. He had his people go to Leeds, Manchester, Sheffield, Glasgow, Dublin and Belfast. It was obvious that this was an undertaking involving engagement of hundreds of individuals³³¹, all of whom were invited by Prince Albert.

On 21 March 1850, the Prince gave a memorable speech at a banquet held at Mansion House.³³² Among the many distinguished guests were chief officers of the State, foreign ambassadors, Royal Commissioners for the Exhibition and the chief magistrates of over two hundred towns, all who were essential to the success of the exhibition to one degree or another. In front of such an important and influential audience, Prince Albert delivered a speech which was more than just an expression of appreciation but was also a fervent encouragement to support and become involved in a project that would surely leave an everlasting mark in history:

Gentlemen – the Exhibition of 1851 is to give us a true test and a living picture of the point of development at which the whole of mankind has arrived in

³³¹ A. N. Wilson, *op. cit.* p. 231.

³³² See the annex for the complete text.

this great task, and a new starting point from which all nations will be able to direct their future exertions.

I confidently hope that the first impression which the view of this vast collection will produce upon the spectator will be that of deep thankfulness to the Almighty for the blessings which He has bestowed upon us already here below; and the second, the conviction that they can only be realized in portion to the help which we are prepared to render each other; [...]

[...] On your courage, perseverance, and liberality, the undertaking now entirely depends. I feel the strongest confidence in these qualities of the British people, and I am sure that they will repose confidence in themselves [...]³³³

According to Martin, the speech was welcomed with great enthusiasm³³⁴ and received extensive coverage in the newspapers, although the Fourth Estate responded with a wide range of opinions. From words of support and admiration to words full of utter disdain and mockery, the press continued to deliver news of the industrial spectacle in the making to their curious readers.

In an article published on 1 January 1850, the *Morning Chronicle* presented a rather cautious, even dubious attitude towards the enterprise. The passage quoted below shows that their uncertainty could not easily be assuaged:

Manufacturers and all who are disposed to promote the Exhibition have now the assurance unmistakeably before them that some exhibition will take place; and it remains with them, and them only, to determine whether it shall be large or small, worthy of the magnificence of British industry, and as attractive as possible to all foreign competitors, or, on the contrary, a small, stingy, and insignificant business. It must be shown shortly whether all the heartily promised co-operation

³³³ A. Helps, *The Principal Speeches and Addresses of His Royal Highness the Prince Consort*, Cambridge 2014, p. 112.

³³⁴ Th. Martin, op. cit., v. II, p. 249.

with Prince Albert is to be forthcoming, or whether all that has hitherto been said is mere talk.³³⁵

The article speculates as to the financing, progress, and members of the committees responsible for the Exhibition. The doubts seeping through the lines of this text were designed to plant questions regarding the success of this whole undertaking in the minds of the readers.

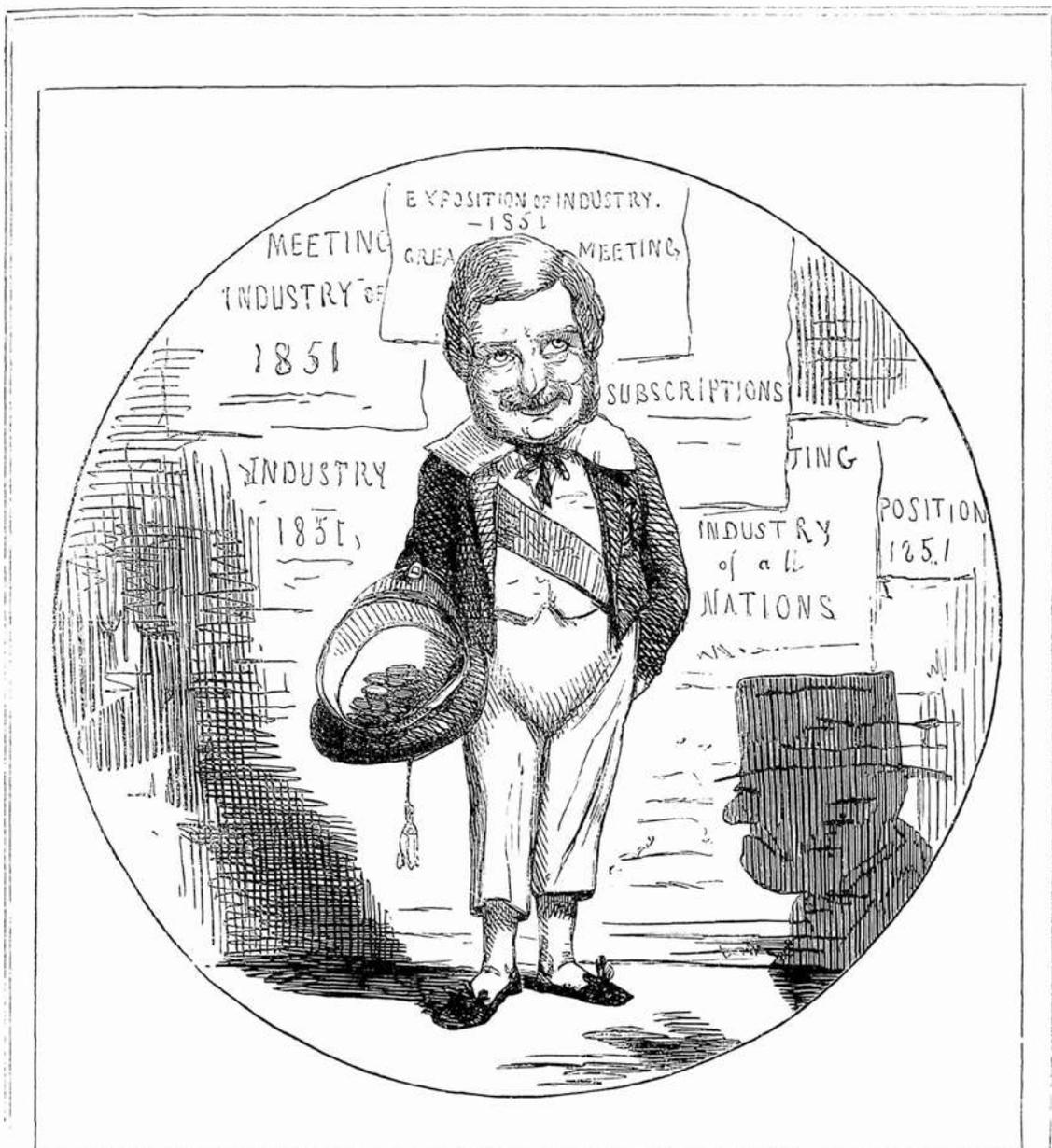
This attitude was not an isolated example. As ever, *Punch* did not hesitate to throw a witty punch or two from the very beginning. Prince Albert's speech was interpreted in their piece 'Knife-and-fork exhibition at the Mansion-house' as being solely about food and work, mocking not only the idea of the Exhibition but also Albert himself:

His Royal Highness Prince Albert showed, too, a full-blown pink of Princes. Nothing could be better than his speech. Simply given, and strong with good Saxon sense. There was no filagree, no snip-snip about it; no muslin matter, worked with gold and silver-thread; but a man's speech, uttered for the ears and hearts of men brought together upon two vital, national occasions; - dinner and work.³³⁶

On the occasion of the Mansion State Dinner a few months later, where Albert intended to ask the attendees to provide financial support, issued *Punch* printed the cartoon below showing him as a little boy on the street begging for money. The mocking cartoon was accompanied by a short poem that simply added more zest to the artwork's already quite acute commentary.

³³⁵ *Morning Chronicle*, 1 January 1850, p. 3.

³³⁶ 'Knife and fork exhibition at the Mansion House'. *Punch, or the London Charivari*, vol. XVIII, 30 Mar. 1850, p. 123.



THE INDUSTRIOUS BOY.

"Please to Remember the Exposition."

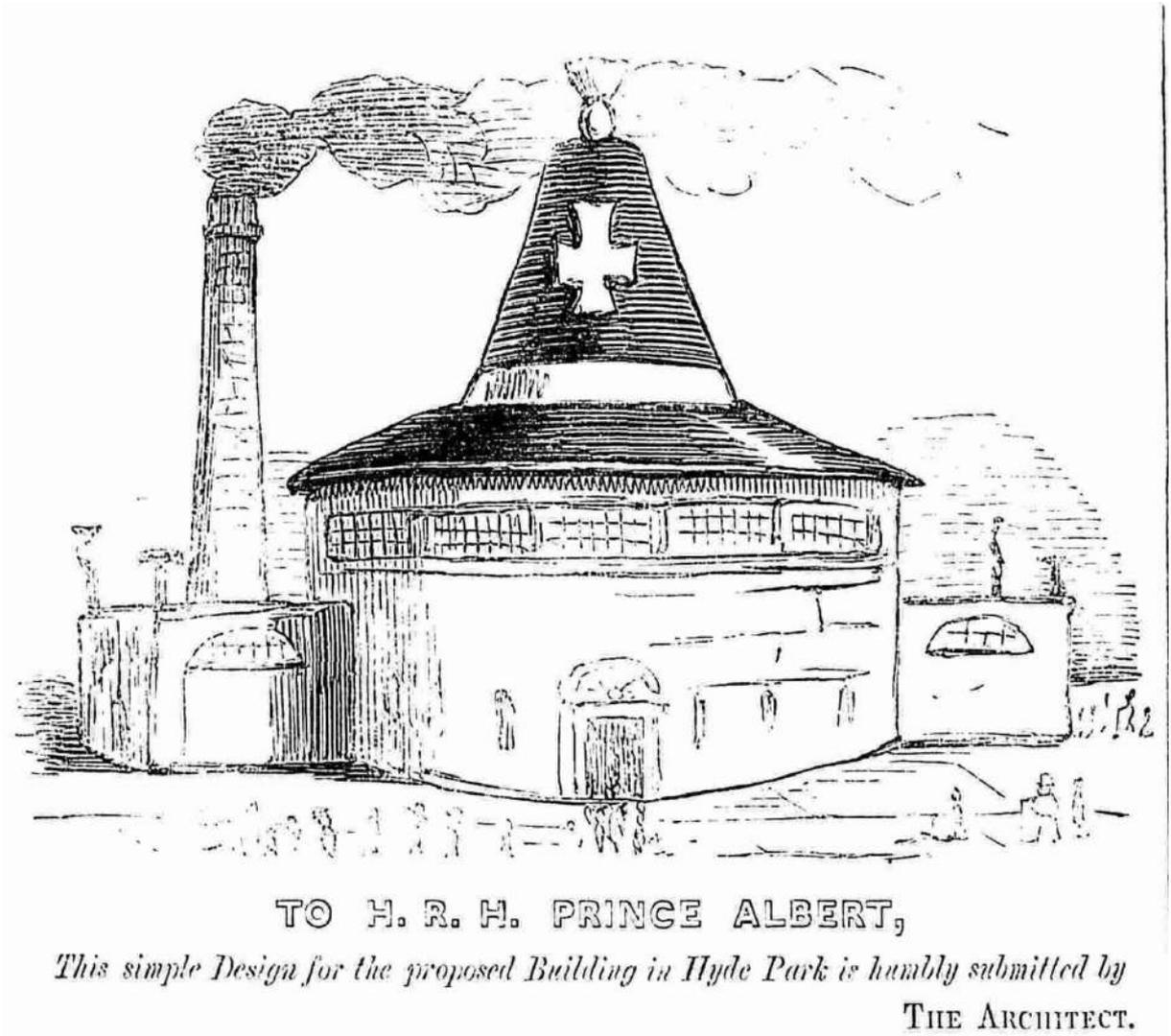
Pity the troubles of a poor young Prince,
Whose costly scheme has borne him to your door,
Who's in a fix—the matter not to mince—
Oh, help him out, and Commerce swell your store!

This empty hat my awkward case bespeaks,
These blank subscription-lists explain my fear;
Days follow days, and weeks succeed to weeks,
But very few contributors appear.

Station brings duties: why should we repine?
Station has brought me to the state you see;
And your condition might have been like mine,
The child of Banter and of Raillery.

Pic. 11. 'The industrious boy', *Punch, or the London Charivari*, 8 June 1850. ³³⁷

And only a month later, another, even more biting one was published. This time, *Punch* not only mocked the design for the Crystal Palace, but also alluded to the years-long mockery of Prince Albert's hat.



Pic. 12. 'TO H. R. H. PRINCE ALBERT, This simple Design for the proposed Building in Hyde Park humbly submitted by THE ARCHITECT', *Punch, or the London Charivari*, 13 July 1850, p. 22.

The many similar articles published by *Punch* only added to the image of Prince Albert of a man with a boyish dream; one might assume, a Prince who had nothing better to do than

³³⁷ *THE INDUSTRIOUS BOY*, "Punch, or the London Charivari", vol. XVIII, 8 June 1850.

to chop down trees for his glass house. Indeed, the amusing yet somewhat venomous articles and cartoons did not add anything positive to the image of the Royal Consort.

If it had been only *Punch* levelling its satire at the Great Exhibition, one might conclude that there was no need to make a fuss over some negativity displayed here and there. However, there were more negative and doubting voices . The National Library of Scotland is in possession of yet another ballad that was published on the occasion of the Exhibition; it refers to the Mansion House State Dinner from 21 March 1850, and the number of grand guests present, dressed and fed luxuriously. The lines of this ballad suggest that the Great Exhibition is just a dream, nothing more than a reason for ‘ducks and drakes’ to quack as they await their feed:

PRINCE ALBERT’S

VISIT TO THE CITY,

On Thursday, the 21st of March, 1850.

ON the twenty first day of March,
The blind, the lame the lazy and thrifty
The thirteenth of Her Majesty's reign,
And the year eighteen hundred and fifty ;
All toddled away in a drove,
To see numerous fine deputations,
To visit Farebrother the Mayor,
From every part of the nation.
Old women get out of the way.

The Mayors of most every town,
And Nobles of every condition,
Are come for to settle the plan,
Of the forthcoming great exhibition ;
That is to take place in Hyde Park,
It matters not which way the wind is,
All the Kings in the world will be there,
And the Queen of the Northern Indies.
Such a wonder was ne'er seen before.

To behold this most wonderful sight,
Tens of thousands go out for a frolick,
The Queen can't come says Prince A,
Because she's confined with the chollic ;
To dine with the noble Lord Mayor,
They are tumbling one over another,
Old Nosey and Bob will be there,
And so will Jack Ketch and his mother
The world will be soon at an end.

There is Rothschild, Dick Cobden, and
Grey,

Billy Bright, Joey Hume, and Jack
Russell ;
Young lady you're devilish gay,
And you've knocked out my eye with
your bustle ;
There's Prince Albert so jovial and free,
And hundreds in glory and riches,
Bishops and Parsons we see,
And Mayors in their velveteen breeches
From every part of the world.
Away then to dinner they go,
What dainties are laid on the table,

The Deputation sits all of a row,
Stuffing as fast as their able,
Cod, lobster, red herrings, and geese,
Pickled salmon, roast mutton, and beef,
And turtle, as I unto you state,
And coveys with new fashioned teeth
As long as the front door of Newgate.

There is ladies in grandeur I ken,
With whiskers as big as a fiddle,
Who no doubt will be stuffed at both ends
And then scaramouch'd in the middle
Blowed out like an old Billy goat,
In a queer and a funny position,
Wrapped up in an old soldiers coat
To be shown at the great exhibition,
At a penny a head, in Hyde Park.

Here's success to the Prince and the
Queen,
And their health is the theme of my ditty
What a lot on a visit there's been
To the Lord Mayor of great London
City;
What numbers by steam does arrive,
The ducks and the drakes are a
quacking,
Like fleas they are jumping alive,
Hurra ! for the cabbage and bacon,
This day we can never forget.

Mr. Bannister joyful did jump,
And in Bond Street he whittled Dan
Tucker,
He sent down a large ballock's rump,
And a baron of beef for their supper :
And when they have had a blow out
They will be in a right good position,
To lay down in Hyde Park for a week,
And dream of the grand exhibition.
Old England shall weather the storm.

It is the right of every newspaper to print what they desire: the stage of a nation's press does indeed need a variety of voices. There should be room for those who, sometimes with a slight smirk, poke fun at the serious when they become too self-important. The British press theatre of the nineteenth century seemed to accommodate all who wished to shape, create or even dictate to the readers what to think or how to think.

The editor of the *Spectator* stated that he wished to remain impartial and above any political games. However, one can get the impression when reading his journal's articles that, especially when touching upon topics connected with Prince Albert, they do express opinions that could be construed as if not hateful than at least harsh. This is apparent when reading its articles published in connection with the Great Exhibition. They could not be treated as impartial, yet they are not as provocative as what could be found in *Punch*.

The *Spectator's* articles concerning the Great Exhibition seemed focused on delivering accurate reportage without any additional overtones. For example, the lengthy piece dated 6 July 1850 focuses on the dilemma connected with securing the place for the future Crystal Palace. However, what is mostly interesting is not the lengthy debate upon the final location, but the final lines which address the idea itself directly: *the most eligible site for the Exhibition has been conclusively and satisfactorily determined upon, and a structure may be expected to rise worthy of the occasion and of the opulence and greatness of the British community.*³³⁹

Another piece, printed on 23 November 1850, again follows the same pattern of being purely informative and not leaning towards any side, whether supportive or derogative. It seems that for the *Spectator* the great undertaking that the Exhibition was not as controversial as it was with other newspaper titles. During the months before the opening and while the exhibition was open to visitors, the newspaper avoided highly elevated phrasing.³⁴⁰ Upon the opening of

³³⁸ www.deriv.nls.uk/dcn9/7489/74895381.9.htm

³³⁹ www.archive.spectator.co.uk/article/6th-july-1850/11/the-great-exhibition

³⁴⁰ www.archive.spectator.co.uk/article/23rd-november-1850/11/ascendancy-of-money-at-the-exhibition-for-all-nations

the Exhibition a piece by Rintoul was printed on the first page, but it avoided tendentious adjectives and restricted itself to a short article depicting the opening of the Exhibition, the full streets and the joyful people flocking to see the great creation.³⁴¹ It is quite interesting that a short article was published by the *Spectator* in 1947 suggesting a commemoration of the centenary of the Great Exhibition. The short note informs the readers of plans for such celebrations, only pointing out that it might be difficult to meet the scale of the original Exhibition presided over by Prince Albert.³⁴²

According to Henry Rhodes James, the uproar was so serious and loud that the Prince was thinking of abandoning the whole project. Luckily, it received the needed support from both the House of Commons and a new member on the Committee, Joseph Paxton, an architect who revolutionised the design and construction of what came to be the known as the Crystal Palace. Paxton's final design turned out to be what Prince Albert had dreamt of – 'truly a piece of marvellous art.'³⁴³

A different approach to the perception of the Great Exhibition and the preparations for it could be found on the pages of the *Times*. From the very beginning, this newspaper took a completely different tone when informing its readers regarding the Exhibition; the editors decided to adopt a more supportive angle and did not resort to wording that would have expressed doubt or disbelief in the project's success. On the contrary, the image created radiates positivity, support and respect towards not only the idea but towards Prince Albert himself. The *Times* reports on the small meetings being held, the donations being made and the successful agreements being signed. And when the famous State Dinner was held, the newspaper provided a lengthy article quite unlike the ones printed in *Spectator* or *Punch*. From its very first lines, it is clear that the piece does not aim to mock anyone:

His Royal Highness Prince Albert honoured the Lord Mayor with his company at dinner last night, to meet a very large and distinguished party of the

³⁴¹ www.archive.spectator.co.uk/article/3rd-may-1851/1/news-of-the-week

³⁴² www.archive.spectator.co.uk/article/12th-december-1947/3/1851-1951

³⁴³ Rhodes James, op. cit., p. 199.

friends and promoters of the great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations to be held in 1851.³⁴⁴

Unlike the other titles mentioned here, this lengthy article did not trivialise the reason for the meeting. It provided a detailed list of all the prominent people attending the dinner and gave an accurate description of the banquet as well, even providing the exact menu for the occasion. The speech that Prince Albert gave was also cited for the benefit of the readers. The other speeches that followed were also printed, and they show the admiring and respectful tone with which Prince Albert was greeted. Lord Stanley, who was a member of the Committee, gave a fervent statement which contained the following appreciation for the prince:

More especially are we bound to cherish such feelings, and to act upon such principles, when, as in the commission, we are presided over by our Royal President, - by one who, from the moment of his appearance in this country, down to the present hour, among his many claims upon the gratitude and affection of the country, has had none more high or more worthy than this – that in his high station he has always abstained from interfering with the political contents of the day. At the same time he has never shrunk from putting himself forward, as befits his high station, his distinguished character, and his eminent abilities, whenever objects were to be accomplished which were for the benefit, the advantage, and the improvement of his adopted country.³⁴⁵

³⁴⁴ www.thetimes.com/tto/archive/article/1850-03-22/5/1.html#start%3D1850-01-01%26end%3D1852-12-31%26terms%3Dprince%20albert%20great%20exhibition%26back%3D/tto/archive/find/prince+albert+great+exhibition/w:1850-01-01%7E1852-12-31/o:date/3%26prev%3D/tto/archive/frame/goto/prince+albert+great+exhibition/w:1850-01-01%7E1852-12-31/o:date/24%26next%3D/tto/archive/frame/goto/prince+albert+great+exhibition/w:1850-01-01%7E1852-12-31/o:date/26

³⁴⁵ www.thetimes.com/tto/archive/article/1850-03-22/5/1.html#start%3D1850-01-01%26end%3D1852-12-31%26terms%3Dprince%20albert%20great%20exhibition%26back%3D/tto/archive/find/prince+albert+great+exhibition/w:1850-01-01%7E1852-12-31/o:date/3%26prev%3D/tto/archive/frame/goto/prince+albert+great+exhibition/w:1850-01-01%7E1852-12-31/o:date/24%26next%3D/tto/archive/frame/goto/prince+albert+great+exhibition/w:1850-01-01%7E1852-12-31/o:date/26

The speech continued with more words of gratitude and admiration for Prince Albert which highlighted his considerable involvement not only in the Exhibition itself, but also in his various other undertakings since coming to England. This article shows how differently the *Times* stood out amongst other newspaper titles. The following months were filled with different articles keeping the readers up to date with the preparations and then with the Exhibition itself.

But it is from the many books available that we learn what a great toll this Exhibition had on Albert's health. Hobhouse mentions Prince Albert complaining to his grandmother that he was in fact *more dead than alive from overwork*.³⁴⁶ The Queen commented that *my poor Albert is terribly fagged. All day some question or other or some difficulty, all of which my beloved one takes with the greatest quiet and good temper*.³⁴⁷

A.N. Wilson, in his book about the extent of the work which the preparations for the Exhibition took and the army of people that was associated with it, speaks about how astounding it was to see how quickly Prince Albert and all who were associated with the Commission adjusted when it became necessary. Wilson calls the speech given at Mansion House *Prince Albert's manifesto not just for the Exhibition, but for the entire raison d'être of his public life*.³⁴⁸

In the end, the Great Exhibition was a resounding success. Strachey quotes Victoria as saying:

[the first of May] was the greatest day in our history, the most beautiful and imposing and touching spectacle ever seen, and the triumph of my beloved Albert... It was the happiest, proudest day in my life, and I can think of nothing else. Albert's

³⁴⁶ H. Hobhouse, op. cit., p. 100.

³⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 102

³⁴⁸ A. N. Wilson, op. cit., p. 231.

dearest name is immortalised with this great conception, his own, and my own dear country showed she was worthy of it. The triumph was immense.³⁴⁹

It was indeed a triumph, an exquisite accomplishment that silenced even the loudest opponents. Congratulations poured in from everywhere. Fêtes to celebrate the grand success were given. Over six million people visited the Crystal Palace over a period of six months. The total profit came to £165,000. There were no more mocking voices, and even *Punch* was restrained, contenting itself with a rather amusing poem on the closing of the Exhibition:

The opening and closing of the Crystal Palace

(a contrast)

It opened on a smiling morn in May;

It closed upon a thorough soaking day.

‘Twas opened grandly by our gracious QUEEN;

It finished with a ceremony mean.

It opened when the air was brisk and dry;

It closed beneath a damp and dismal sky.

But of the contrast would you seek the cause,

You’ll find it clear enough in Nature’s laws.

‘Twas natural enough that tears should fall

On losing what has been endeared to all.

‘Twas natural to find a rainy sky

So sympathetic with the public eye.

But, oh! – most natural the heavens should frown,

To hear it said, ‘the building will come down.’³⁵⁰

4.3. Albert the Farmer: the Windsor and Isle of Wight model farms

³⁴⁹ L. Strachey, op. cit., p. 202.

³⁵⁰ ‘The opening and closing of the Crystal Palace’, *Punch, or the London Charivari*, vol. XXI, 25 Oct. 1851.

The success of the Great Exhibition was undeniably the success of Prince Albert, and of the others who shared his dream and had helped to bring it to reality. The Exhibition is the main reason why the Prince is associated mostly with industrial advancement, the marriage of art and industry. However, his heart could be found not only amongst the delicate strokes of brushes or the creations of heavy steel, but also closer to nature.

A volume entitled ‘Prince Albert’s golden precepts: or the opinions and maxims of His Royal Highness the Prince Consort’ includes an interesting passage demonstrating that the Prince saw the future of farming as being combined with the steam power delivered by the Industrial Revolution. He was an avid supporter of changes that would improve the lives of ordinary people, and his work can be observed as a testament to his ideology:

Science and mechanical improvement have in these days changed the mere practice of cultivating the soil into an industrial pursuit, requiring capital, machinery, industry, and skill, and perseverance in the struggle of competition. This is another great change, but we must consider it a great progress, as it demands higher efforts and a higher intelligence.³⁵¹

Closeness to nature seemed to bring Albert great joy. Hobhouse cites Lady Lyttelton’s words when she spoke of Prince Albert’s fondness for country life:

[...] he is, if possible more ingenuous and sensible and gracious than ever: and he is as happy and cheerful now as he looked dull and sleepy in London. It is only that the poor man likes nothing but *das Landleben*, and she is so complying towards him that it may lead her to like it too at last...³⁵²

In 1840 Prince Albert was appointed Ranger of Windsor Great Park, a post which gave him one of the greatest opportunities of his life. The park itself was divided into parkland and farmland; the latter was partially operated by the farmers and partially by the Crown, and this presented Albert with a chance to dwell into creation of a working estate. Within the Park,

³⁵¹ *Prince Albert’s golden precepts: or the opinions and maxims of His Royal Highness the Prince Consort selected from his addresses, etc. some now for the first time collected, and carefully arranged*, Sampson Low, Son, and Co. 1862, p. 19.

³⁵² H. Hobhouse, op. cit., p. 119.

Prince Albert focused on a style of farming which was designed to bring positive results and serve as a model which others could follow.³⁵³

Through the course of his life, Prince Albert obtained several farms: the Norfolk, Flemish, Home and Shaw farms, as well as Barton Farm on the Isle of Wight. He aimed at introducing improvements on these farms which could later be shared with other farmers. He focused on designing a model farmstead, designing accommodation for his ‘Windsor’ pigs, turning the interior of the dairy building into an elaborate and intricately designed space with Minton tiles³⁵⁴, Wedgwood creations and water flowing from fountains, all enclosed with portraits of the Royal family and animal motifs.³⁵⁵

When he joined the Smithfield Club, a rather aristocratic agricultural organisation, he introduced ways of improving cattle and sheep farming. Later, Albert started exhibiting cattle: first ones he had bought, but then those which were the fruits of his own breeding programmes. The Prince was an avid farmer, joining numerous associations such as the Royal Agricultural Improvement Society of Ireland in Dublin³⁵⁶ and the Royal Agricultural Society of England³⁵⁷. He participated in many shows, including the Paris Show where his home-bred Devon heifer Bessy won first prize, and his Windsor pigs second prize.³⁵⁸

³⁵³ Ibid., p. 121.

³⁵⁴ Thomas Minton founded his company in 1793. Initially it was associated with blue and white transfer wares, but slowly emerged as a producer of fine-bone china and later tiles. For more, see: Sydney B. Williams, *Antique Blue and White Spodes*, Omega Books 1987.

³⁵⁵ H. Hobhouse, op. cit., p. 122.

³⁵⁶ For more on Irish Royal Societies, see: T. De Vere White, *The Story of the Royal Dublin Society*, Kerryman 1955.

³⁵⁷ For more, see: N. Goddard, *Harvest of Change: The Royal Agricultural Society of England 1838-1988*, Quiller Press 1988, pp. 31-77.

³⁵⁸ H. Hobhouse, op. cit., p. 125.

The newspapers followed Prince Albert's achievements in the agricultural sphere, reporting when the Royal visited one of his farms, or on a state dinner during which a baron of beef from one of Albert's livestock was served. Other articles focused on more detailed aspects connected with the farms. For example, the *Times* in its 21 October 1843 issue wrote about Albert's farms, the annual livestock sales that were held, and how much money would be made; the article mentions that Prince Albert *is a very good practical farmer himself*.³⁵⁹



³⁵⁹ www.thetimes.com/tto/archive/article/1843-10-21/3/15.html#start%3D1840-01-01%26end%3D1861-01-01%26terms%3Dprince%20albert%20farm%26back%3D/tto/archive/find/prince+albert+farm/w:1840-01-01%7E1861-01-01/1%26prev%3D/tto/archive/frame/goto/prince+albert+farm/w:1840-01-01%7E1861-01-01/7%26next%3D/tto/archive/frame/goto/prince+albert+farm/w:1840-01-01%7E1861-01-01/9

Pic. 13. 'Prince Albert the British Farmer', *Punch, or the London Charivari*, 25 November 1843.

The above cartoon published in *Punch* mocked Prince Albert as a British farmer, with his children happily adapting to the farm-styled life and the Queen milking the cow. Albert himself was depicted as a combination of a farm-dressed gentleman wearing an impractical top hat which only added to the mocking character of the caricature. *Punch* was again mocking Albert for glorifying the fruits of labour, yet that labour was not his own.

In another cartoon, the magazine mentioned Albert's beehives and its exclusive access to them as granted by the prince. The accompanying text informatively described the process of removing the honey in a way that would not disturb the bees. Of course, it would not have been *Punch* if there were not some punchy words adding extra flavour to that topic³⁶⁰, as the same issue printed a full-page caricature of Albert and Victoria gazing at his beehives; inside were not bees but exhausted human workers, the farmers and other labourers who (like the bees) must give away their produce, yet do not receive ample reimbursement for their hardship. This suggested that for Albert, farming was nothing but a game, and it was the people employed on his farms that bore the load of the work and strain. On the outside, it was Prince Albert who got all the honey.

³⁶⁰ 'Prince Albert's Bees', *Punch, or the London Charivari* 24 August 1844, p. 90. *Nineteenth Century UK Periodicals*, link.gale.com/apps/doc/DX1901544125/NCUK?u=tasc&sid=book-mark-NCUK. Accessed 1 Dec. 2024.



Pic. 14. *Prince Albert's bees*, *Punch*, or the *London Charivari*, 24th August 1844, p. 90

Numerous other articles printed in both the *Times* and other mainstream newspapers reported on Albert's farms being rated and the taxes paid, or that the Prince himself had declined to pay such taxes as he believed his farms were not for beneficial purposes and were situated on grounds belonging to the Queen.³⁶¹ Further, the readers learnt from an article published by the *Times* on 13 December 1845 that a resolution had been passed requiring the Prince to pay such rates on the farms, and that the said rates were in the end paid by Mr Anson, the Prince's secretary.³⁶²

³⁶¹ *Evening Mail*, 22 September 1845, p. 4

³⁶² *The Times*, 13 December 1845, p. 4

Surprisingly, when other titles provided well-sourced information regarding the rates Prince Albert was to pay, the *Spectator* devoted a single sentence to that matter: *Prince Albert is to refer the question of his liability to pay poor-rates for the Flemish farm to the Law-officers of the Crown and abide by their opinion.*²⁹⁸ There was no additional commentary provided, just two lines amongst other pieces of information that could easily be passed over. Perhaps this policy of omission was a subtle departure from the *Spectator*'s nominal impartiality. Yet the same topic received much greater coverage from *Punch*, in a mocking note which suggests Prince Albert might be destined to go to prison or have Windsor Castle repossessed.²⁹⁹

Another *Punch* article, accompanied by a cartoon, dwells on what might happen if the Prince's possessions were appraised by the tax collectors. This simply highlights that the Prince had declined to pay what for him would not have been a lot of money, and emphasises Albert being *most economical in all his arrangement.*³⁶³

Pic. 15. 'The Royal Defaulter', *Punch, or the London Charivari*, 6 December 1845, p. 250.



²⁹⁸ *The Spectator*, 27 December 1845

The cartoon that accompanied the article shows a rather unhappy Prince with one of his children clenching his leg while the tax surveyors are assessing Prince's possessions for the due payments. Another lengthy piece that found a place in the pages of *Punch* focused on the famous ox that belonged to Prince Albert, and which was spared from being butchered to be placed on the Windsor farm idling away his days.³⁶⁴ *Punch* was not the only satirical title poking fun at Albert's hobby or side occupation: the *Satirist* and the *Penny Satirist* (another of Barnard Gregory's short-lived newspapers) also examined the prince not paying the appropriate poor-rates to the parish, openly calling the Prince *the royal defaulter*.³⁶⁵

The newspaper scene of Prince Albert's time provided a plethora of information regarding his love for nature and his involvement in agricultural life. Some are serious texts, others simply informative, and of course there are those which are quite obviously satirical. The Fourth Estate seemed to answer the tastes of every sort of audience, and it is from these that readers could learn about an epidemic that reached Albert's cattle in 1846,³⁶⁶ the Prince shooting the hares that were on one of his farms,³⁶⁷ or his visit to the Smithfield Club Cattle Show.³⁶⁸ Of course, such information was quite important for the provincial or regional press, and when one might not find such mentions in the London papers, the local ones would inform the inhabitants of such important events.

But it is not only the farm animals and cultivation of the soil that Prince Albert was concerned with. It was important to him to ensure that his own labourers had proper conditions in terms of housing, place of work, and even additional facilities such as schools for the

³⁶⁴ 'Biography of Prince Albert's ox', *Punch, or the London Charivari*, 11 January 1845, p. 14.

³⁶⁵ 'The Royal Defaulter Again', *The Satirist; or Censor of the Times*, 28 December 1845, p. 411.

³⁶⁶ *Coventry Herald*, 21 August 1846, p. 2.

³⁶⁷ *Kentish Mercury*, 28 January 1843, p. 2.

³⁶⁸ *Berkshire Chronicle*, 21 December 1844, p. 4.

children. It seems that such an opportunity to become a model landlord presented itself when the Royal Couple purchased Osborne House.



Pic. 16. Back view of Osborne House, Isle of Wight.³⁶⁹

Prince Albert spent a great deal of time creating the landscape and gardens at Osborne House on the Isle of Wight; he himself orchestrated the planting of every tree, an arrangement that is still there to this day. This skilful work was detailed in ‘A summary of the various works proposed and executed at The Osborne Estate from 1845 to 1861 including by direction of H. R. H. The Prince Consort’, published in 1880; this book shows in an extremely detailed way the extent of the work carried out on the estate of Osborne House and its surroundings. Year by year, month by month, it draws an involving picture of all the changes applied to the royal residence, from laying down the Terrace Steps to planting the Evergreen Oak, from discussions about decorations to discussions about introducing new technologies to his model farm, Barton

³⁶⁹ Author’s own resources.

Farm.³⁷⁰ It is there that the Prince could completely surrender himself to making something new, without the constant supervision of the Department of Woods and Forests as was the case at Windsor.³⁷¹ Prince Albert, writing to the Dowager Duchess of Cambridge remarked: *We shall go on the 27th to the Isle of Wight and I, partly forester, partly builder, partly farmer, and partly gardener, expect to be a good deal upon my legs and in the open air.*³⁷² That quote shows how positively the Royal saw the work he did at the Estate.



Pic. 17. Roof view of the park planned by Prince Albert, Osborne House, Isle of Wight.³⁷³

³⁷⁰ ‘A summary of the various works proposed and executed an The Osborne Estate from 1845 to 1861 including by direction of H. R. H. The Prince Consort’, 8 volumes, pub. 1880.

³⁷¹ H. Hobhouse, op. cit., p. 127.

³⁷² Th. Martin, op. cit., p. 323.

³⁷³ Author’s own resources.

Rhodes James claims that Osborne House and the adjacent estate was psychologically important to the Prince as this is where he could fulfil his ambitions, where everything was his; he was not dependent on Parliamentary money, and his careful management of the Queen's estates could be done without interference. To this day, Osborne House stands as proof of Prince Albert's ingenuity and cleverness. He showed great skills at improving the grounds, planting trees, shrubs, making plans for sewage disposal, and renovating the nearby Barton Farm.³⁷⁴

4.4. Albert 'the fashion trend setter'

Farming was not the only passion of the Prince's life. The Great Exhibition married his love for art with the practical sense stemming from understanding the evolving world of industry, and the Exhibition was a culmination of his fascination for it. Yet, his eye was caught not only by the strength of steel but also with other minor improvements that Prince Albert wished to introduce. The Royal wanted to devote his life as the husband of the Queen to serving his adopted nation, which for him that meant every possible area where he could be useful. At times, that raised a surprised eyebrow or two among his people, and was commented on with some hauteur by some of the more daring press titles.

So, when in 1843 a new helmet design for the army emerged it created an understandable commotion. The newspapers expressed mixed opinions about the new design, which was introduced to replace the traditional bearskin caps with helmets made of German silver.³⁷⁵ The notes available on the design itself are brief and not descriptive. Even the *Spectator* in its usual manner devoted less than a line to that information.³⁷⁶ The coverage of the topic of the caps seemed limited mainly to expressions of discontent. One of the few lengthier pieces on the matter could be read in an article in the *Royal Cornwall Gazette* of 15

³⁷⁴ H. Hobhouse, op. cit., p. 131.

³⁷⁵ *Kentish Gazette*, 12 April 1842, p. 1.

³⁷⁶ *The Spectator*, 21 May 1842, p. 2.

December 1843³⁷⁷, in which a rather positive description states that there was no better substitute for the Albert shako³⁷⁸, and that it indeed possesses visible advantages over the cap presently worn. However, such opinions are rare, and perhaps the tone of an article in the *Illustrated London News* gives a better picture of public opinion on the matter.

A short note regarding the so-called ‘Albert hat’ can be found in the *Journal of Society for Army Historical Research*, patronised by the Duke of Wellington and signed by John Macdonald.³⁷⁹ The note describes in a detailed way the novelty which the ‘Albert hat’ represented. Albert introduced the new update to modernise the shako as used by the British after Waterloo; he suggested some changes in the general look of the uniform and a completely new head covering. A further description of the design states at the end that inside there was a small spring and flap which were to be used as ventilation when the climate was hot. This new look was later approved by Her Majesty, and designs, patterns and colour schemes for the respective regiments were provided.

The *Journal of Society for Army Historical Research* quotes the reaction of the public as reported in the *Illustrated London News* on 21 October 1843. According to the author of the article, public opinion was unequivocally against it. It states further that the cap itself is ‘neither soldier-like nor appropriate’³⁸⁰, resembling the old Hessian caps. The topic also met with great interest on the pages of *Punch*, which published a short article introducing the new hat. The reader learns about the ingenious way in which Prince Albert, ‘with a spirit of pure

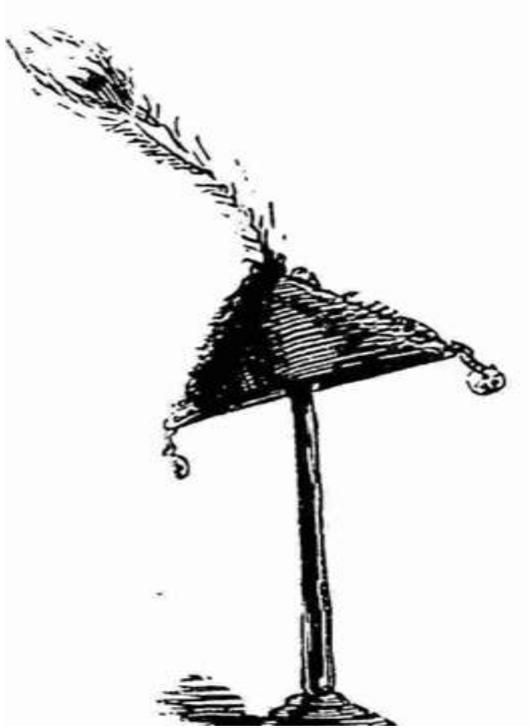
³⁷⁷ *The Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 15 December 1843, p. 1.

³⁷⁸ A shako is a tall, cylindrical military cap, usually with a visor, and sometimes tapered at the top. It is usually adorned with an ornamental plate or badge on the front, metallic or otherwise; and often has a feather, hackle, or pompom attached at the top. For more, see: Major R. M. Barnes, *Military uniforms of Britain and the Empire*, Seeley Service 1960, p.90.

³⁷⁹ www.jstor.org/stable/44229397?read-now=1&seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

³⁸⁰ *Illustrated London News*, 21 October 1843, p. 6.

philanthropy', devised a hat that was supposed to protect the heads of British soldiers in a much better and efficient way than the headgear currently in use.



Pic. 18. 'The new regulation hat', *Punch, or the London Charivari*, 14 October 1843, p. 163

The author of the article mentioned that the provided picture of the hat had to be flattered by the magazine's artist to provide some taste to it. The hat itself was referred to as a monstrosity that would make enemies flee instantly at the first sight of it. Indeed, *Punch's* approach highlights a mocking and jesting attitude towards Albert, creating a media image of the Royal that one could not describe as favourable.

The topic of the new design of the hat seemed to be quite popular with *Punch* as they published another such article a few days later.³⁸¹ The author, as always anonymous, referred to the unusual taste that Prince Albert had, saying he was *bedizening the legs of the unfortunate Eleventh with scarlet cloth and gold door-leather*.³⁸² The text sternly objected to Albert

³⁸¹ 'Prince Albert's studio', *Punch, or the London Charivari*, 28 October 1843, p. 178.

³⁸² *Ibid.*

interfering with the design of the hat as it already existed, describing Albert's proposal as *a cross between a muff, a coalscuttle, and a slop-pail*³⁸³ and seeing it as *Punch's* duty to intervene and have any production of it ceased.

The magazine addressed another hat design by Prince Albert, making them the prime member of the 'hat fashion police' of the times, in the April and July 1844 editions of the magazine. The new 'Police hat' presented below is a perfect example of the mockery delivered by *Punch*, here in a more pointed, perhaps mean-spirited commentary than before. The caricature shows a police officer wearing a hat equipped not only with a ventilator but also with a windmill and a weathercock. This is all done to highlight the Prince's supposedly absurd ideas as to how to make the headgear airier:

It is also evident that the hat, as altered by his Royal Highness, must keep the police constantly alive to any breeze that may be springing up; and the points of the compass being indicated on the weathercock, will enable them to steer their course in the right direction.³⁸⁴

³⁸³ Ibid.

³⁸⁴ 'The new Police hat', *Punch, or the London Charivari*, 20th April 1844, p. 176.

THE NEW POLICE HAT.



Pic. 19. *The new police hat, Punch, or the London Charivari*, 20th April 1844, p. 176.

Further on, the topic of the hat continued to resurface on several other occasions, and was even mentioned in a poetical creation titled ‘The Little Frenchman’s Second Lesson’ where the following verse can be found:

Seize Prince Albert next (You’ll know him by his hat);
Ask him on what pretext He wears a thing like that.³⁸⁵

The ‘hat issue’ did not disappear from *Punch*’s pages with the poetic creation as it resurfaced again in March 1845. This time, ‘Mr Punch’ engaged his own astronomical correspondent in helping to solve the troubling matter. According to the said correspondent, while he was observing the planets he noticed an unusual object located on Mars. Closer inspection with a stronger glass allowed him with certainty to conclude that the surprising object was not a combination of other stars and planets but Albert’s hat! This observation resolved the mystery of why the hat had not been mentioned or seen for some time.³⁸⁶

³⁸⁵ ‘The little Frenchman’s second lesson’, *Punch, or the London Charivari*, 6 July 1844, p. 1.

³⁸⁶ ‘Astronomical phenomenon’, *Punch, or the London Charivari*, 1 March 1845, p. 99.

The issue of the hat would resurface on the pages of *Punch* every now and then. When the Great Exhibition was being planned, the magazine published its own design of the site with a grand hat on top of it, as already discussed in this work.

The poor ‘Albert hat’ was a delicious morsel for the satirical press, and the *Satirist* joined *Punch* in mocking the proceedings, providing the readers with short, humorous passages such as the ones below:

The reason, it is said, why the Duke *cap-sized* the project of the introduction of the new hat for the infantry was that it *fitted* all heads, no matter how thin or how thick!³⁸⁷

The reason assigned by the Duke for the non-adoption of the new infantry hat suggested by Royalty, was that it was likely to *in-cap-acitate* the wearers from a free use of their heads!³⁸⁸

This shows that for some newspapers Prince Albert was not only a topic of everyday gossip, but in fact was a person to be mocked and laughed at, creating an image of him that seemed to prevail in the nation until his untimely death. Even though Albert’s undertakings were serious in intent, and he truly believed he could be of great use for his adopted nation, aside from the words of support and admiration there were always voices that did not cease to trivialise the works of the Royal Consort, and mocked his German background or his various ideas. His every step was watched, sometimes quite carefully, and his actions were scrutinised by a Fourth Estate that was more than ready to open a window into royal life, and if there were something to reprimand or criticise the Prince for then their unseen hand would lift a finger to do so. It is no wonder than Prince Albert was often watched closely when it came to his involvement in matters of state.

4.5. The 1854 scandal: political involvement

From the very moment Prince Albert set foot on British soil his position at the Royal Court, his treatment, and his general existence within the orbit of Queen Victoria was

³⁸⁷ *The Satirist; or the Censor of the Times*, 21st January 1844, p. 5.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

discussed. This never ceased, no matter the situation. The newspapers were particularly focused on Prince Albert's involvement in politics.

The question first arose when Queen Victoria became pregnant. Even before the pregnancy, Prince Albert started being more interested in politics and, as Strachey states, *he was occasionally present when the Queen interviewed her Ministers; and at Lord Melbourne's suggestion he was shown all the despatches relating to Foreign Affairs.*³⁸⁹ And just before the birth of the Princess Royal, he became Regent in case of Victoria's death.

Albert discovered very quickly that unless he carved out a place for himself, he would never amount to anything. This was because the concept of a Consort did not yet exist within the British constitutional frame. This found its outlet years later in a letter Prince Albert wrote to his dear friend Baron Stockmar, as quoted by Martin:

A very considerable section of the nation had never given itself the trouble to consider what really is the position of the husband of a Queen Regnant. When I first came over here, I was met by this want of knowledge and unwillingness to give a thought to the position of this luckless personage. Peel cut down my income, Wellington refused me my rank, the Royal Family cried out against the foreign interloper, the Whigs in office were only inclined to concede to me just as much space as I could stand on. The Constitution is silent as to the Consort of the Queen.³⁹⁰

With time, Prince Albert managed somehow to carve out a place for himself consolidating his position as a sort of Secretary to the Queen. Of course, this role was not official, yet it became useful especially in the times of the Queen's confinements around childbirth. Lord Melbourne understood that his own role at court was not permanent, and saw Victoria's husband as a perfect solution to the need to have someone by her side who would assist her, regardless of the political composition of the government. After the birth of the Royal Princes, Albert's position as Secretary grew stronger every year. Nor did the Queen herself

³⁸⁹ L. Strachey, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

³⁹⁰ Th. Martin, *The Life of His Royal Highness the Prince Consort*, Smith, Elder & Co. 1878, v. II, p. 559-560.

ever resent such a turn of events, as she came to realise how difficult it would have been for her to carry out her duties without her husband by her side.

Hobhouse quotes a letter from Albert to the Duke of Wellington from 6 April 1850,³⁹¹ which comes across as quite an extraordinary job description, explaining the extensive involvement of the Prince in the life not only of his Sovereign but also his wife and the whole family.

[...] this requires that the husband should entirely sink his own individual existence in that of his wife – that he should aim at no power by himself or for himself – should shun all contention – assume no separate responsibility before the public, but make his position entirely a part of hers – continually... watch every part of the public business, in order to be able to advise and assist her at any moment in any of the multifarious questions or duties brought before her, sometimes international, sometimes political, or social or personal. As the natural head of her family, superintendent of her household, manager of her private affairs, sole confidential advisor in politics, only assistant in her communications with officers of Government, he is besides, the husband of the Queen, the tutor of the royal children, the private secretary of the sovereign, and her permanent minister.³⁹²

All of that comprehensively describes the arduous duties of the Prince that he carried out besides his own. Albert's service to the Crown was his greatest achievement, even though it did not always come with the appreciation he deserved.

By the end of December 1853 Lord Palmerston had resigned and left the Ministry, the blame for which was placed on Prince Albert.³⁹³ There was an obvious dislike between them

³⁹¹ H. Hobhouse, op. cit., p. 37-38.

³⁹² Ibid.

³⁹³ For more on the growing animosity between Palmerston and Prince Albert, dispute over Schleswig-Holstein, and the blaming of Prince Albert for Palmerston's dismissal, see: J. Ridley, *Lord Palmerston*, E. P. Dutton & Co. 1970, pp. 356-358, 399 and 421. For more on the growing political role of Prince Albert and his relations with Palmerston, see also: D. Brown, *Palmerston and the Politics of Foreign Policy 1846-55*, Manchester 2002, pp. 20-24.

which went back in time to 1848 and the Schleswig-Holstein question, when Prince Albert and Lord Palmerston had adopted opposing points: the former wished for the Duchies to be incorporated into a unified Germany, and the latter desired them to remain impartial.³⁹⁴ The disagreement between the two gradually intensified and became a source of friction affecting almost every other issue, big or small. In 1848, the year of the ‘Springtime of Nations’, the difference in their attitudes was especially visible. The Prince, otherwise quite liberal in his approach, was horrified by the vision of European revolution, while Lord Palmerston perceived it as an opportunity for Britain to strengthen its position and interests. Over time, Lord Palmerston became immensely enthralled with the power he was accumulating and the frisson his name caused among the European powers. He seemed to be growing in power, and was not inclined at any point to have his authority curbed by the young Prince, who in his opinion was in had little political and international experience.³⁹⁵ The conflict between the two seemed to be growing, and when in 1853 rumours started spreading that the dismissal of Lord Palmerston had been orchestrated by the Court, specifically by Albert, the popular Foreign Secretary could count on the support of those who leaned towards him. His wife added fuel to the already burning flame by saying she could neither eat nor sleep, and that both the Queen and the Prince wished for her husband to be removed from his post and someone different to take the position – someone who would be more willing to follow the suggestions of Prince Albert in matters concerning foreign affairs.³⁹⁶ This turn of events suddenly caused an outpouring of extremely negative press. Charles Greville made a lengthy entry in his ‘Journals’ on 15 January 1854,

³⁹⁴ www.era.ed.ac.uk/handle/1842/33944

³⁹⁵ R. Rhodes James, *op. cit.*, p. 212.

³⁹⁶ R. Rhodes James, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

reporting about an angry mob targeting the Prince.³⁹⁷ This came just after the defeat of Sinope³⁹⁸ had happened, which

[...] made the people quite furious, treachery is the cry, and, guided by a friendly hand, the whole press has for the last week made 'a dead set at the Prince'. My unconstitutional position, correspondence with Foreign Courts, dislike to Palmerston, relationship to the Orleans family, interference with the army, &c., are depicted as the causes of the decline of the State, the Constitution, and indeed the stupidest trash is babbled to the public, so stupid, that (as they say in Coburg) you would not give it to the pigs to litter in.³⁹⁹

Greville continued to mention that this whole situation had been created by the newspapers, which continued to print or reprint articles, sometimes several per day, which aimed only to smear the name of the Prince. In general, as the diarist claims, the newspapers' editors strongly believed that the Prince had a tendency to meddle with state matters, which ought not to be permitted. What is more, he was believed to be using his influence to the benefits of his own family with disastrous effect for England. Further, as Greville mentioned, he was accused of being too German in his beliefs and not English enough, and of conducting correspondence with foreign politicians and royals in ways which interfered greatly with British actions. The slanderous comments persisted on the pages of various titles and, even if neither the Prince nor the Queen paid much attention to them in the beginning, with time they became so persistent that they could no longer pretend that nothing was happening.

The scandalous accusations of interference ran throughout the country, from the leading voices of the Fourth Estate in London to the regional and provincial press. Every day there was

³⁹⁷ Ch. Greville, *Dziennik z czasów panowania króla Jerzego IV, króla Wilhelma IV i królowej Wiktorii*, trans. M. Ronikier, Czytelnik 1974, p. 289.

³⁹⁸ The Battle of Sinope was a defeat for the Turkish fleet, revealing Turkey's weakness against Russian power. It was a strong argument for Britain's involvement in the Crimean War in defence of Turkey. For more information, see: A. D. Lambert, *The Crimean War. British grand strategy against Russia, 1853-56*, Manchester 1991, pp. 63-66.

³⁹⁹ Th. Martin, op. cit., v. II, p. 534.

a new article loudly addressing the issue of Albert's involvement in foreign affairs, whether just or unjust. Martin reported that the newspapers accused the Prince of being *a chief agent of Austro-Belgian-Coburg-Orleans clique, the avowed enemies of England, and the subservient tools of Russian ambition*.⁴⁰⁰ Greville himself stated that the Prince, who not so long ago had enjoyed public love and admiration, was now receiving so much hate and disdain that it would be quite dangerous for him to appear anywhere in public.⁴⁰¹

For some, it was a great crime that the Prince was sometimes present when the Queen was meeting with her Ministers. Strachey writes that some believed that Prince Albert was a traitor, a tool of Russian politics. These accusations flooded the pages of the newspapers. Palmerston himself felt triumphant over the storm which was smothering the Prince.

On 3 January 1854 the *Morning Herald* published a letter by an unknown MP who took the liberty of explaining at length the involvement of Prince Albert in matters of state, and shed some light on the nature of his presence during the Queen's meetings with her Ministers. According to the said MP, the Prince was not a silent listener, often taking an active role in the discussions. Further on, it is mentioned that the Prince also corresponded with foreign ministers, and interfered with the work of Lord Palmerston, whose resignation is attributed to the Prince. The letter ends with words that perfectly reflect the opinions of those who opposed the Royal:

The interests of the Crown must be defended, even, if need be, against those who stand nearest to it. Let Prince Albert have full credit for the Exhibition – for his services to art – and for his exertion to benefit the working class; but it is too much that one man, and he not an Englishman by birth, should be at once Foreign Secretary, Commander in Chief, and Prime Minister, under all administrations.⁴⁰²

⁴⁰⁰ Th. Martin, *op. cit.*, v. II, p. 538.

⁴⁰¹ Ch. Greville, *op. cit.*, p. 291.

⁴⁰² *Morning Herald*, 3 January 1854, p. 4.

The *Spectator* published an article on 14 January 1854 claiming that the people were willing to sacrifice the Prince *at the shrine of Rumour*.⁴⁰³ The paper took the unusual step of defending Albert, expressing that what started as a rumour, a whisper for partisan use, had grown to such a monstrous, fictitious size that it was simply quite unbelievable. After all, the fact that Prince Albert was at the Queen's side had met with national support earlier, and his presence was nothing unusual for the Ministers. But then voices appeared that his presence was unwanted, his interference unwelcomed and his involvement unlicensed, and he should be charged with treason and thrown into Tower. The whisper started to spread and soon enough was repeated all over England – and even believed to be true.⁴⁰⁴

Stockmar's *Memoirs* provide a lengthy explanation as to how all the malignant voices started to circulate. He often reported the phrase 'unconstitutional actions', which he believed was too vague and could mean anything, and any sort of reasoning could be associated with it.⁴⁰⁵

What seems to be quite surprising is that this so-called 'unconstitutional interference in public affairs' had not been a concern of the public for the past fourteen years. Quite the opposite; the public was in fact rather pleased with the assistance provided by Prince Albert and never expressed any objections. Over the years, the Queen herself started to depend on her husband more and more. The successive Prime Ministers, Melbourne and Peel, had shown no objections to solidifying Albert's position. Even though the Prince did indeed take part in all affairs regarding the Crown and was present during meetings with Ministers, and his influence did indeed grow over the years, he would at all times remain modestly in the background.

However, it never occurred to the people of the Kingdom that the role the Prince assumed, one that was quite important within the functioning of the state, was in fact never constitutionally sanctioned in any way. It is a fact that Prince Albert was a member of the Privy Council, and on that sole basis his interference was in accordance with the constitution, but the

⁴⁰³ *The Spectator*, 14 January 1854, p. 13.

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁵ E. A. Stockmar, *op. cit.*, p. 490.

same advice could have been given to the Queen by any responsible Minister. Yet who could prevent the Queen from seeking advice from her own husband? Who could stop her from discussing matters of the state with her closest confidant, the man she had willingly chosen to be her husband? None of this had ever been questioned in the minds of the people. And had it not been for Palmerston's interference, it would almost certainly have remained so. His unjust insinuations resonated with some, among both public and press, and at one point thousands of Londoners flocked to the Tower to see if the Prince was in fact imprisoned there.⁴⁰⁶

The situation was of great importance to both the Queen and the Prince, who felt deeply wounded by the situation given all he had done for his adopted country. This sadness is quite visible in one of the letters that the Prince sent to Baron Stockmar, as quoted by Martin:

The attacks upon me continue with uninterrupted violence, only with the difference, that the Radical press has given them up, and the Protectionist papers now vie with each other in the unscrupulous falsehood and vehemence with which they persevere in them. There is no kind of treason to the country of which I have not been guilty. All this must be borne tranquilly until the meeting of Parliament in the 31st, when Aberdeen and John Russell are prepared to undertake my defence.⁴⁰⁷

The extract shows perfectly that indeed the brutal attacks on the Prince were taking a certain toll; yet the Prince showed remarkable strength of character, stating that there was not much to be done other than to remain calm. For the Queen, however, it was impossible to remain so collected in the face of the great injustice being done to her beloved Albert. In a letter to Lord Aberdeen, Victoria remarked that any attack on Prince Albert was in fact an attack on her and the throne as well.⁴⁰⁸

In response to that, Lord Aberdeen issued a lengthy reply in which he promised, together with Lord Russell, to silence any further criticism in the House of Commons. The Lord also expressed what seemed to be the opinion of many:

⁴⁰⁶ E. A. Stockmar, *op. cit.*, p. 499.

⁴⁰⁷ Th. Martin, *op. cit.*, v. II, p. 540.

⁴⁰⁸ Th. Martin, *op. cit.*, v. II, p. 541.

The Prince has now been so long before the eyes of the whole country, his conduct so invariably devoted to the public good, and his life so perfectly inattackable, that Lord Aberdeen has not the slightest apprehension of any serious consequences arising from these contemptible exhibitions of malevolence and faction.⁴⁰⁹

Of course, among all this talk of treason and Tower, in the end there was a national outpouring of support for Prince Albert. Soon enough all the leading voices of the Fourth Estate adopted a defensive tone and started printing letters of support as well as articles providing explanations and commentaries of the situation. Fervent words of support suddenly started to appear in their pages.

The *Times* published a lengthy article bluntly stated that it is simply impossible to find a more humiliating moment for the British press in history. The author states bluntly:

Each paper, with the exception of three daily papers, has become the echo of its neighbour, and, without one single tangible fact to rest upon, affects to be exceedingly indignant with his Royal Highness Prince Albert for some alleged interference in public affairs.⁴¹⁰

The author stated that the subject of Prince Albert's alleged intrusion into matters concerning foreign relations was the talk of every club, coffee room, Royal Exchange, private parties, any place where people crowd – yet there was no substantial evidence to support the gossip. The only thing proven by such slanderous conversations was that all of them were circumstantial allegations, without any factual proof and that in fact they served only to benefit Lord Palmerston. To sum up the disgraceful attacks, the author finished his text with the opinion that it was time to cease these *malicious calls and 'villainous work of pulling down a reputation which had been erected by its owner on a noble basis of justice, intelligence, benevolence, and prudence.*⁴¹¹

⁴⁰⁹ J. Raymond, ed., *Queen Victoria Early Letters*, B. T. Batsford Ltd. 1963, p. 195-196.

⁴¹⁰ *The Times*, 14 January 1854, p. 8.

⁴¹¹ *Ibid.*

The supportive voices now started to flood the newspapers in the same way that the fangs of attack had previously been shown. The *Spectator* shared its opinion on the front page of its 21 January 1864 issue, referring to a commentary made Greville, who at that time was Clerk of the Privy Council. The language used by the *Spectator* was as always less emotional than other titles, yet its message, despite being more concise, conveyed a strong opinion and was backed with facts. If indeed such interference by the Prince had taken place, then it would not have been unjustified since the Prince was a Privy Councillor, was competent to advise the Sovereign, and was in fact responsible for the advice he provided. Further, to support the claim and push away any other accusations, the author provided examples of members of the Royal Family who had held responsible positions that required supporting the Monarch with their advice. Indeed, the accusers had only succeeded in raising public interest on the matter, which required Parliament to address it at a meeting of both Houses.⁴¹²

The *Times* contributed by publishing hostile responses such as this:

Sir, - However disgraceful, weak, and spiteful may be the attacks on Prince Albert, they are only so much additional proof of the real value of great popularity. Toadied, be-stated one day, pelted with all manner of moral filth the next, what is this but the ordinary course of things in the case of any to whom birth, wealth, power, - any combination of circumstance, may have given a high position above their fellow men?⁴¹³

The *Morning Post* followed on from the *Times* in spreading support and admiration. In its 12 January 1854 issue, the editors published a letter from Thomas Mullock, residing in Killiney near Dublin, who bluntly stated that His Royal Highness was entirely entitled to provide advice to his royal wife. After all, it was the Queen herself who had voluntarily chosen Prince Albert to be her husband, and by that he *became her head by the sacred right of marriage*⁴¹⁴; furthermore, as a husband, he had every right to provide his wife with assistance and advice even in her royal duties. For according to Mr Mullock, , following her husband's

⁴¹² *The Spectator*, 21 January 1854, p. 1.

⁴¹³ *The Times*, 26 January 1854, p. 7.

⁴¹⁴ *The Morning Post*, 12 January 1854, p. 6.

advice would be equal to depriving herself of the best and most impartial advisor she could have.

This level of engagement, not only by politicians and newspaper editors but also regular people such as Mullock, shows that this scandalous event was close to heart to everyone and everywhere. What is more, it proved beyond any doubt that the Prince had found his place not only within the Royal Household, but also in the hearts of the common people, who showed more understanding to his actions than some politicians did.

Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper provided its readers with an article on 5 February 1854 on Albert accompanying the Queen to Parliament. This visit was met with nothing but positive reactions: *the Prince was very cordially huzzaed as the bone of bone and flesh of flesh of Queen Victoria.*⁴¹⁵ And even if there were a few voices of disapproval, they were outnumbered by the multitude of love and loyalty which prevailed amongst the crowd. The article published by *Lloyd's* is an excellent testimony to the affection that the people had towards not only their Queen but also her husband: *Suffice it to say of Prince Albert, he has passed through the ordeal with complete triumph.*⁴¹⁶

Throughout this storm, Prince Albert remained in close correspondence with Stockmar. One specifically stands out as a testimony to the latter's political skill; in response to the accusations by some MPs, he explained simply that the Prince was indeed acting as Queen's secretary, as it was the Queen's right to appoint whomever she wishes as her Private Secretary, and who would or should be better than her own husband, father to the heir to the throne, and the Regent as rightfully appointed by the law? What is more, Baron Stockmar decided to use reasoning that the common people would best understand: *Nature existed before the Constitution*⁴¹⁷, and according to the laws of nature a woman who takes her duties as a wife and a mother lightly, who would depose her husband of the position he is entitled to, could not be in any way a good Queen.

⁴¹⁵ *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*, 5 February 1854, p. 6.

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁷ Th. Martin, *op. cit.*, v. II, p. 557.

These words were warmly welcomed by the Prince, who had felt as if he were *living in a madhouse*.⁴¹⁸ Albert seemed to well understand the game being played by the party of old Tories and Protectionists. They may have felt endangered by his rising popularity and successes (principally to the Exhibition), and the wish to erect a statue to commemorate him. For the Prince himself it was clear that those who years ago had been playing against Lord Melbourne were now playing against him, as if the game could never come to an end. Albert knew perfectly well that even though the accusations had no substance, the effect on a considerable part of the nation was the one Lord Palmerston had expected – doubt. The people had never questioned the position of Prince Albert, as long as he continued doing what he was doing, caused no scandal, and kept quiet, no one questioned what his actual position was. However, the very moment the slanderous accusations saw daylight, suddenly talk of treason, intrigues, secret correspondences and Coburg conspiracies were brought to the surface.

The Prince seemed to understand that the calumnies and hurtful accusations, albeit painful, were part of his life and his service to the nation, and that this process was the only way to cleanse his reputation of any impurities.

All the gossip and idle talk of the last fourteen years have been swept away by what has occurred. Every one who has been able to say or surmise any ill of me has conscientiously contributed his faggot to the burning of the heretic, and I may say with pride, that not the verist tittle of a reproach can be brought against me with truth. I have myself sometimes felt uneasy, under arracks prompted by fiendish wickedness, that I might here or there have unconsciously made mistakes. But nothing has been brought against me, which is not absolutely untrue.⁴¹⁹

In the end, as Martin recounts, Palmerston announced that he had not procured any documents nor pamphlets that would in any way constituted proof of any guilt on Prince Albert's part. Once the Parliament managed to resolve the situation the Prince had time to ponder upon the whole issue. On 31 January 1854, Lord Aberdeen in the Upper House and Lord Russell in the Lower, established three crucial points that said the following:

⁴¹⁸ Th. Martin, op. cit., v. II, p. 558.

⁴¹⁹ Th. Martin, op. cit., v. II, p. 561.

1. That whatever advice the Prince might have given the Queen, the Ministers were responsible for every State transaction of Her Majesty; and if they had not wished to undertake the responsibility, they must have resigned.
2. But, that no change of Ministry had taken place, except in consequence of a Parliamentary defeat.
3. That the strictly constitutional manner of acting of the Queen was generally acknowledged; and that, therefore, it was not easy to see how the Prince could have had an unconstitutional influence on her.⁴²⁰

Ultimately, it was accepted that the Queen ought to have the assistance of her Consort, and all the calumnious accusations were deemed groundless.

What is quite astonishing is that within this whole political hurricane the satirical press decided to be impartial and kept quiet. By 1854 the *Satirist* was no longer in existence, but *Punch* did not produce any of its usual lampoons or caricatures. Perhaps this matter was too serious for the gossip-hungry to meddle with, and they deemed it better to leave the Prince to the hungry wolves of the serious titles.

4.6. The political pamphlet in defence of the Prince

What was written by the watchdogs seemed to be enough to calm the waves. Yet within the midst of the storm, a pamphlet was published which aimed at defending the person of the Prince. The 15-page long publication, printed by T. Brettell in London, focused solely on

⁴²⁰ E. A. Stockmar, op. cit., p. 501. See also: *Hansard Parliamentary Debates. Third Series*, Deb. 31 January 1854 vol. 130 cc. 93-99

<https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/lords/1854/jan/31/address-in-answer-to-tee-speech>

Hansard Parliamentary Debates. Third Series, Deb. 31 January 1854 vol. 130 cc. 182-191

<https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1854/jan/31/address-in-answer-to-the-speech>

bringing justice to the wronged Prince. The pamphlet focuses on the great injustice done him by some members of the Fourth Estate and part of the public:

There are few things more painful than the sight of injustice; nor is the pain lessened when we find ingratitude superadded. The treatment which the Prince has lately received from a portion of the press, and a very small part of the public, whether originating in factious feelings, or ignorance and want of reflection, must bear the name of unjust and ungrateful with all those who have attended to His Royal Highness's conduct ever since he came amongst us.⁴²¹

The author listed the great accomplishments of Prince Albert, his patronage of the arts, his work in the best interests of the working class, and his abstinence from political intrigues. Further, the author explained the core of the scandal and the unjustified accusations that the Prince had been subjected to. He proved well prepared in his defence, providing examples from the past to justify certain actions taken by both the Queen and Prince Albert. This clear and precise information was designed to demystify all the accusations that had been presented by those who wished to shake perceptions of the Prince among the general public. Point by point, all the allegations are dissected and proven to be false.

The final statement questioned whether anyone could truly believe that Prince Albert might take any actions that could in any way threaten the British nation. On the contrary: the Prince, as it is explained, had become an Englishman and it was in every interest of his to act in a way that would be beneficial and of service to his adopted nation. The final paragraph of the pamphlet perfectly summarised the intentions of the author:

To defend him from charges that never have been really made, is no part of the design of these pages; their purpose has been to expose the ignorance, or want of reflection, in which the alarm, real or affected, for the principle of the Constitution must have had its origin.⁴²²

It seems that the sole purpose of all the accusations was to benefit Palmerston. Yet he did not foresee is that there was no longer any place for such political games when his

⁴²¹ 'Prince Albert, a political pamphlet', James Ridgeway 1864.

⁴²² Ibid.

opponent's actions in fact spoke for themselves. Palmerston did not anticipate that the commotion he had created would benefit the Prince himself as he emerged victorious from the controversy. The support and love which the nation showered upon him was tremendous. There were no more vicious rumours spread among the corridors, parties and clubs of the ruling classes, and only appreciation for the Prince and his various activities was shown. But at the time, almost no-one knew that despite the positive outcome, the whole situation had had taken a damaging toll on the Prince and his health.

Victoria has taken the whole affair greatly to heart, and was excessively indignant at the attacks. Finally, if our courage and cheerfulness have not suffered, our stomachs and digestion have, as they commonly do, where the feelings ate kept long upon the stretch. Since yesterday I have been quite miserable.⁴²³

During a session of Parliament on 31 January, both Lords Russell and Aberdeen acted immediately to refute the malicious gossip against the Prince. The testimonies of Prince Albert's undeniable loyalty to the Crown proved to be sufficient to silence the doubters once and for all. This was all to the great satisfaction of the Queen, who wrote the following words to Baron Stockmar:

I write to you in the fulness of joy at the triumphant refutation of all the calumnies in the two Houses of Parliament last night. The position of my beloved lord and master has been defined for one and all and his merits have been acknowledged on all sides most duly. There was an immense concourse of people assembled when we went to the House of Lords, and the people were very friendly.⁴²⁴

Martin later related that it must have been mortifying for Palmerston to realise that all the slander and calumny had in fact done the Prince good. His great services to the country were once again highlighted, and his position as the most loyal counsellor to the Queen was clarified and confirmed. If matters had gone in a different direction, it is safe to assume that both the Queen and the Prince would have been mortified, and the strain upon them would be

⁴²³ Th. Martin, *op. cit.*, v. II, p. 562.

⁴²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 564.

intolerable. More worthy of acknowledgement is that this political scandal had revealed the character of the Prince as he withstood the malicious attacks.⁴²⁵

4.7. Albert the Consort

After the 1854 political scandal the remaining years of Prince Albert's life were spent in complete devotion to his service to the Crown. His days were filled with various undertakings connected with matters of lesser or greater importance: war, speeches at different meetings, visits abroad, openings of exhibitions, presiding over various institutions. The Prince never seemed to stop working. Whether in Windsor, Osborne or Balmoral, he was never idle.

He had kept himself occupied since the moment of his marriage to Queen Victoria, and over time this brought about a visible change in public opinion as well as the attitude of the press. The comments became more favourable, noting his involvement not only in public life but also the skilful way he managed the Royal Household. Daphne Bennet, in her book *King without a crown*, referred to a speech by Lord Spencer from November 1844 where he denoted that *the new look would sweep the country into more prosperous times; the Queen and her husband were pointing the way, let others follow*.⁴²⁶ As this recognition of Albert's role expanded, Victoria became adamant that the Prince should receive a title befitting the influence that he held. And the Queen was quite right to feel this way. After all, Albert's power and prestige had risen in all spheres over the first decade of the marriage. The Prince worked long hours supporting his wife, which even most opposition politicians accepted. The prestige of the Monarchy had grown immensely due to Prince Albert's tireless devotion, but it still took years before this was finally officially recognised.

⁴²⁵ Th. Martin, *The Life of His Royal Highness The Prince Consort*, Smith, Elder & Co., 1878. v. III, p. 1.

⁴²⁶ D. Bennet, *King without a crown. Albert, King Consort of England 1819-1861*, Heinemann 1977, p. 126.



Pic. 20. Prince Albert's private desk at Osborne House, Isle of White.⁴²⁷

The year 1857 marked a substantial change in the life of the Royal Family. In this year the last child of Victoria and Albert was born, Princess Beatrice. This ninth pregnancy had left the Queen depressed, as had all her previous pregnancies. Yet this time the doctors were more concerned at her low spirits. During these delicate moments for Victoria, she depended on the Prince more than ever. The ninth child pleased Albert, as A. N. Wilson stated, and made him *indeed a patriarch*.⁴²⁸ The Queen still seemed to be utterly reliant on her husband, whom she addressed as 'my Master'.

Despite her emotional and political dependency on Albert, he remained nothing but a husband. This situation was a political anomaly, one which suited the politicians who continued to deny him the title of Prince Consort. It could be argued that their denial was actually because he was too able for the role, and acknowledging that would definitely affect the power

⁴²⁷ Author's own resources.

⁴²⁸ A. N. Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 296.

dynamics of government, irrespective of whether it was Lord Palmerston or Lord Derby who wished to hold the reins.⁴²⁹ At this point, Prince Albert was in a quite embarrassing and belittling situation, as formally he was still no more than a husband, and his position within the Court was technically below that of his own son, the Prince of Wales. And since the question had been discussed so many times already and agreed upon by numerous Prime Ministers and Chancellors, the Queen believed that it could not be postponed any longer. In mid-1856 she Queen issued a memorandum (which of course was carefully dictated by the Prince himself), stating:

The present position is this: that while every British subject down to the Knight Bachelor, Doctor and Esquire has a rank and position by Law, the Queen's husband alone has one by favour – and by his wife's favour, who may grant it or not!... The only legal position in Europe according to International Law which the Husband of the Queen of England enjoys is that of a younger brother of the Duke of Saxe Coburg.⁴³⁰

Indeed, the memorandum clearly shows how uncomfortable the current position of Prince Albert was. However, Lord Palmerston was afraid that if given the title, the Prince would possess executive power together with the right to sit, and even to vote in Parliament, and that was something that Palmerston could not agree to. But in 1857 a compromise was finally reached, and the title was finally bestowed on Albert in June. Newspapers across the whole Kingdom, from the *Oxford Journal* to the *Belfast Mercury*, the *Leeds Intelligencer* and the *North West Chronicle*, all informed that a Patent had been granted giving the Prince the title of Prince Consort.

The *Times* expressed a certain surprise over the title finally being given to the Prince after 17 years of marriage; after all, he was in possession of a lengthy list of titles which were solid proof of the respect of the nation and the Crown. The newspaper then continued stressing

⁴²⁹ A. N. Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 297,

⁴³⁰ *Ibid.*

that *His Royal Highness the PRINCE CONSORT of the United Kingdom will be to us pretty much the same as His Royal Highness the Prince Albert of SAXE-COBURG-GOTHA*.⁴³¹

The *Spectator* was as laconic as ever; amongst other news from the Court, it simply informed its readers that *certain orders in the Council relating to Prince Albert were adopted. [...] conferring upon His Royal Highness Prince Albert the title and dignity of Prince Consort*.⁴³² It seems that this issue was minimised by the press and perhaps by many ministers. Even the sharp-witted *Punch* did not provide much zesty commentary, simply mentioning in its note that

It has been the subject of agreeable comment that the week which witnessed the promotion of PRINCE ALBERT was remarkable for two events of an equally harmonious nature. As it is a pity this coincidence should be lost, we may as well state, if not too late, that the two events, which, singularly enough, occurred during the same week, were: - THE PRINCE CONSORT, and BENEDICT'S CONCERT.⁴³³

Finally, Prince Albert was no longer only a husband, but had received the title which established his legal status in the English hierarchy. Additionally, as the Prince remarked in his letter to the Dowager Duchess of Coburg, *it was also a source of weakness for the Crown, that the Queen always appeared before the people with her foreign husband*.⁴³⁴ Now this was no longer the case.

Yet, this profound moment in Prince Albert's life, the recognition he had waited for such a long time, passed through the pages of the newspapers relatively quietly. Although the reports reached the furthest parts of the Kingdom, they were in most cases simply reprints of

⁴³¹ *The Times*, 26 July 1857, p. 9.

⁴³² *The Spectator*, 27 July 1857, p. 5.

⁴³³ 'Multiple Essay Items', *Punch, or the London Charivari*, vol. XXXIII, 18 July 1857, p. 21.

⁴³⁴ Th. Martin, *The Life of His Royal Highness The Prince Consort*, Smith, Elder & Co. 1878, v. IV, p. 66

what could be found in the capital's leading titles. Even the satirical press remained relatively silent on the matter.

4.8. Albert's death and the press

When analysing the works of Theodore Martin and Baron Stockmar, or the later analyses of A.N. Wilson, Hermione Hobhouse, Robert Rhodes James or Lytton Strachey, remarks concerning the Prince's health are made, as did he himself. He worked excessively hard, which generally had a detrimental effect on his health.

According to Rhodes James, Prince Albert's constitution was never robust. From his childhood years he had been rather poor health and was often unwell. Later, in his adult life, his obsessive devotion to work affected him greatly. He was very meticulous and detailed, to the point he would be upset and frustrated with any trouble he encountered on the way. He did not take criticism lightly, but rather personally. This resulted in stomach disorders and sleepless nights. It is no surprise that all the worries and vexations he had would affect his physical health to such an extent. The Queen was aware of the sufferings her husband was going through, although being of fairly robust health herself, she often grew impatient with Albert's weak constitution. In one of her letters to her daughter, Vicky, she remarked,

Dear Papa never allows he is any better or will try to get over it, but makes such a miserable face that people always think he's very ill. It's quite the contrary with me always... His nervous system is easily excited and irritated, and he's so completely overpowered by everything.⁴³⁵

His constitution was also deeply affected by the death of his devoted valet; on top of that, he was engulfed by the turmoil of international political theatre, as well as his involvement with the upcoming 1862 Great Exhibition. From 1860 he seemed more prone to falling ill, vomiting and other physical attacks, which gave serious concerns to his doctors. Rhodes James suggests that it might have resulted from a mild attack of cholera.⁴³⁶

⁴³⁵ R. Rhodes James, *op. cit.*, p. 265.

⁴³⁶ *Ibid.*

Moreover, with time the Prince became more and more susceptible to melancholy despite all he had achieved in his life. He found solace in work, he took relish in labouring for days and night over the challenges he faced, but that was not enough for him. He seemed as if he was trying to achieve something else, something more, which was an enigma to all, perhaps even him. He was lonely, modest and gentle, while at the same time being severe and scornful. Albert felt that he was never fully understood, and that his devotion to England was not fully appreciated; instead, he was always met with *a frigid force of doubt*.⁴³⁷

He questioned things, and did not find one that would answer to his mind;
and all the world appeared unkind.⁴³⁸

Strachey's words summarise the complexity of Albert's nature, especially in the later years of his life. Fulford mentions that the Prince once said to the Queen: 'you cling to life; I do not.'⁴³⁹ These words seem to summarise him the best. He was never preoccupied with life, and often devoted himself to contemplation of his eventual death. This does not mean that Albert was in any way indifferent to life. He was satisfied with his family and his work, but it was never enough. For Albert, death was but the continuation of life, simply in a different format, without the weaknesses of the body or mind, without the sins and worries of the world.⁴⁴⁰

The final months of Albert's life were no exception to his previous engagement in his work, matters of state or the support he gave to the Queen. Today, if we visit Osborne House and the private rooms belonging to the Queen and Prince Albert, we can gain some insights into how busy the Royal Couple were. Prince Albert shared the space of Queen Victoria's sitting room, where their desks stood side by side to make their work together easier. This is where Prince Albert would write his memoranda before submitting them to Victoria, and where

⁴³⁷ L. Strachey, op. cit., p. 285.

⁴³⁸ L. Strachey, p. 286.

⁴³⁹ R. Fulford, *Queen Victoria*, Collins Clear-Type Press 1951, p. 71.

⁴⁴⁰ Th. Martin, op. cit., p. 415.

he carried out any other duties relating to his function of Private Secretary. It was also the place where the Queen would stop time after her beloved husband died. Her chaplain Randall Davidson would later remark that the Queen would often receive him in Prince Albert's dressing room, adjacent to his bathroom, where he noticed that even long after his death the Queen had everything kept the same way, even running hot water for a bath forty years after Albert's death.⁴⁴¹



Pic. 21. Queen Victoria's and Prince Albert's desks at Osborne House, Isle of Wight.⁴⁴²

Rhodes James reports that the winter of 1860-61, a year prior to Prince Albert's death, was quite severe, with temperatures reaching their lowest in fifty years. The Prince fell victim to the weather and ultimately succumbed to an illness⁴⁴³ that had had hold of him for some time. His recovery was slowed down by the death of Queen Victoria's mother the Duchess of Kent, in March. The sad event deepened the melancholy the Prince was so prone to; the two had shared a close relationship, and Albert was extremely happy that he had managed to

⁴⁴¹ M. Turner, MVO, *Osborne*, English Heritage, p. 15.

⁴⁴² Author's own resources.

⁴⁴³ T. Whittle, *Victoria and Albert at home*, Routledge & Kegan Paul 1980, p. 109.

reconcile his wife with her mother. The Queen was now subject to intense grief, which meant that Prince Albert had to focus even more on public affairs. He was also preoccupied with their eighth child Prince Leopold, who suffered from haemophilia. In June, when opening the Royal Horticultural Show in London, Albert looked ill and exhausted, despite which he continued to work to the fullest. Even the usual autumn holidays in Balmoral were marked by the Prince's weak disposition. He is said to have arrived tired and pale, although the Scottish air helped him to recover. However, that did not last long, and soon it was reported that the Prince would tire quickly and did not look too well.⁴⁴⁴

The usual concerns that preoccupied the Prince were enhanced by his worries regarding his eldest son, Albert Edward, nicknamed 'Bertie'. It became apparent that the heir to the throne was engaged in activities of an immoral nature, which mortified Prince Albert greatly once they reached him. Strachey contented himself with the observation that this behaviour required a parental visit⁴⁴⁵, and Elizabeth Longford also dressed the issue in delicate words.⁴⁴⁶ It is Rhodes James who actually sheds more light on the reason for Albert's parental visit in late November; this was Nellie Clifden, who openly admitted to having a relationship with the Prince of Wales.⁴⁴⁷ Christopher Hibbert also provides a somewhat more detailed and less veiled account as to the exact nature of the relationship between Bertie and Nellie.⁴⁴⁸

This unfortunate situation is said by many to have caused Prince Albert's health to deteriorate. It was simply morally disastrous for the Prince to come to terms with the fact that his son had had sexual relations with a common hall dancer. Albert was very distressed as for him extra-marital sexual relations were equal to eternal damnation. Such an approach was probably caused by his childhood experience of his mother's indiscretions and his father's

⁴⁴⁴ R. Rhodes James, *op. cit.*, p. 266.

⁴⁴⁵ L. Strachey, *op. cit.*, p. 292.

⁴⁴⁶ E. Longford, *op. cit.*, p. 367.

⁴⁴⁷ R. Rhodes James, *op. cit.*, p. 267.

⁴⁴⁸ Ch. Hibbert, *Queen Victoria. A personal history*, Harper Collins Publishers 2000, p. 274.

scandalous acts.⁴⁴⁹ He saw the potentially horrible implications of his son's immoral behaviour. He realised that the plan he had carefully laid out for his son for almost twenty years, leading him into a new era far away from his ancestors' paths, had crumbled to the touch. What is worse, he had to break the news to the Queen (while sparing her the most shocking details).⁴⁵⁰

Initially, the distraught Prince could not bear to see his son, but eventually he felt that this delicate matter should not be dealt with through letters, and so he requested a personal attendance. Martin writes about his visit to Cambridge, on a day the Prince of Wales described as *cold and stormy*.⁴⁵¹ And despite the fact that Prince Albert already felt ill, suffering from sleepless nights and aching all over, he was adamant that the serious talk with his son must take place without any delay.⁴⁵² Upon his return to Windsor, the Prince was extremely tired and did not even join the Queen on their usual walk. Lucy Worsley quoted the Queen writing that 'Albert has such nights since the great worry it makes him weak and tired'⁴⁵³ which, according to the author, made him more prone to illness.⁴⁵⁴ The Prince continued to complain about pains in his legs, and generally felt poorly for the next few days. Dulcie M. Ashdown writes that the Prince remained sleepless, which he attributed to his rheumatism, but in fact we now know that the situation was far worse – it was the initial stage of typhoid fever.⁴⁵⁵

⁴⁴⁹ D. Ashdown, *Queen Victoria's Family*, Robert Hale 1975, p. 99.

⁴⁵⁰ Ch. Hibbert, *op. cit.*, p. 274.

⁴⁵¹ Th. Martin, *op. cit.*, v. V, p. 417.

⁴⁵² D. Bennet, *King without a crown. Albert, King Consort of England 1819-1861*, Heinemann 1977, p. 368.

⁴⁵³ L. Worsley, *op. cit.*, p.229.

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁵ D. Ashdown, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

It was clear to all that the Prince was at peace with the fact that his life was about to come to an end. As mentioned above, Prince Albert never clung to life the same way Queen Victoria would. He felt that he had lived all his life according to a duty that he imposed on himself. And it was that duty to his wife, his children and his adopted nation that in the end led him to his death bed.

The newspapers initially remained relatively silent on the topic of Albert's illness as well as the reason for the unexpected visit the Prince had to pay to his son in Cambridge. It was only when the situation became more serious that the newspapers provided some information, although their reporting was limited to relaying what had been received from Buckingham Palace. Nevertheless, it is possible to examine these final moments through their lens in order to grasp the horrific aftermath of the illness that overtook Prince Albert.

'Sketches and anecdotes of Her Majesty the Queen, the late Prince Consort and other members of the Royal Family', a collection edited by J. George Hodgins, provides an private insight into that poignant moment. From its pages we see that it was Princess Alice, the second daughter of Albert and Victoria, who nursed her father over the subsequent days, and it is thanks to her recollections that this period can be reconstructed in such detail. Alice remained level-headed and without much alarm sent for Bertie. Yet, her very lack of alarm meant that the Prince of Wales did not hasten to return to Windsor; he arrived preoccupied with his own personal affairs, only to sober up quickly upon learning the gravity of the situation.⁴⁵⁶

Albert spent his last Sunday very weak and ill; his sofa was placed close to the window so he could observe the sky while Princess Alice played a few of his favourite hymns, during when he would appear to be praying.⁴⁵⁷ The days to follow were spent with the Prince being restless, at times wandering from room to room in his dressing gown *with a strange wild look*.⁴⁵⁸ The Queen seemed reluctant to realise the gravity of the situation simply perhaps

⁴⁵⁶ D. Ashdown, op. cit., p. 101.

⁴⁵⁷ G. J. Hodgins, *Sketches and anecdotes of Her Majesty the Queen, the late Prince Consort and other members of the Royal Family*, Sampson Low, Son, & Marston 1868, p. 162.

⁴⁵⁸ Ch. Hibbert, op. cit., p. 278.

because she did not want to. She could not accept the idea that her beloved husband was dying, and associated his present condition with the stress caused by his worry over Prince Albert and being of a weak disposition in general.⁴⁵⁹

In her correspondence with her uncle Leopold, King of the Belgians, she expresses much hope for the recovery of the Prince. Her short note from 9 December 1861 shows great belief in the imminent end of Albert's illness:

My Beloved Uncle – I enclose you Clark's report, which I think you may like to hear. Our beloved invalid goes on well - but it *must* be tedious, and I need tell you *what* a trial it is to me. Every day, however, is bringing us nearer the end of this tiresome illness, which is much what I had at Ramsgate, only that I was much worse, and not at first well attended to. You shall hear daily.

You will, I know, feel for me! The night was excellent; the first good one he had. Ever your devoted Niece, Victoria R.⁴⁶⁰

It was the Princess who kept strong as the Queen could not bear the fact that her loving husband, 'Her Master', was fading away. And so, Alice kept her father company, listening to him, repeatedly playing the hymns, and if she could not hold back her tears any more, she would leave the room so Prince Albert could not see her face. She played a vital role over this period, as well as after her father's death, by providing comfort and solace.

What is quite astonishing is the almost total lack of professional nursing care that would have made sure the Prince remained in bed and did not wander around the cold palace. Instead, Albert would be seen *padding about in a silk dressing-gown for hours at a time, irritable beyond belief, heavy-eyed, with parched mouth, brown tongue and pallid sweating skin.*⁴⁶¹ It was in fact not until Dr Jenner stepped in and informed the Queen that together with Dr Clark he suspected typhoid fever, although this diagnosis did not seem right to Princess Alice. She may have been right, as there were no typical symptoms of typhoid – no temperature, no

⁴⁵⁹ D. Bennet, op. cit., p. 369.

⁴⁶⁰ J. Raymond (ed.), *Queen Victoria's Early Letters*, B. T. Batsford Ltd. 1963, p. 289.

⁴⁶¹ D. Bennet, op. cit., p. 370.

debilitating headache, with the Prince being able to move rather freely, which was not common for this illness. Indeed, Dr Jenner was later reluctant to confirm that it was typhoid that cut Albert's life so short. Not only had Prince Albert not come into contact with anyone suffering from typhoid, but he had also suffered from these debilitating attacks for two years prior. Cancer was suspected, but in those days it was difficult, if not impossible, to diagnose any cancer that was not visually apparent. Jenner, in contrast to regular general practitioners, believed that with the current state of medical knowledge there was nothing that could have been done to save the Prince and decided to remain silent on the matter.⁴⁶²

Daphne Bennet in *King without a crown* argues that the diagnosis accepted as the cause of Prince Albert's death is quite unconvincing. It is indeed rather difficult to reassess the diagnosis years after his death and based solely on written evidence, but she has provided her own observations, according to which Albert did not display any of the typical signs of typhoid fever. What is more, there was no evidence of the illness outbreak anywhere near him at that time, hence it was not possible for the Prince to contract it. According to Bennet, the available documents suggest that the Prince suffered from a fatal disease like cancer, or hepatic or renal failure.⁴⁶³

Doctor Howard Markel, a professor of the history of medicine, claims in an article that there is still an ongoing argument as to the final cause of death of Prince Albert. Nowadays, physicians draw a different conclusion. Given that the Prince had a history of abdominal cramps, diarrhoea, intestinal obstruction, fatigue, and even anorexia, it could be argued that he suffered either from Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis, which was accompanied by perforation of the bowel and sepsis, and ultimately led to his death.⁴⁶⁴

⁴⁶² D. Bennet, op. cit., p. 372.

⁴⁶³ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁴ www.pbs.org/newshour/health/156-years-after-prince-alberts-death-we-still-dont-know-exactly-why-he-died

The sudden death of the Prince was met with great shock by the whole nation. He died quietly on Saturday, 14 December 1861, at 10:50pm.⁴⁶⁵ An hour later, the bells of St. Paul's informed the citizens of the irreparable loss that their beloved Queen had suffered. It is said that Albert's face was surprisingly calm and peaceful, as if he had *finally found eternal solace*.⁴⁶⁶

The morning of 15 December 1861 was disturbed by 'a terrible tolling of bells across England.'⁴⁶⁷ There was not a man in the country who did not know what that dreadful sound meant, sounding sadness and sending slow lament across cold, December streets. In London, hundreds of citizens emerged from their homes, assembling outside St Paul's Cathedral with their faces covered with shock the moment they had heard the news.⁴⁶⁸

Helen Rappaport quotes a diarist, Arthur Munby⁴⁶⁹, who described that day in the following way:

This morning came the astounding news of Prince Albert's death: so unexpected and sad and ominous, that people are struck dumb with amaze and sorrow. The news-office in the Strand were open and besieged by anxious fold; a strange gloom was upon the town; in church, the preacher

⁴⁶⁵ A. R. Woomer, *The Art of Grieving. The Beauty Behind Victorian Mourning Customs*, Spook-Eats Publishing 2023, p. 51

⁴⁶⁶ G. J. Hodgins, op. cit., p. 165.

⁴⁶⁷ H. Rappaport, *Magnificent Obsession*, Windmill Books 2013, p. 86.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁹ Arthur Munby (1828-1910) was a British diarist, biographer, poet, and solicitor. For more, see: L. Davidoff, 'Class and Gender in Victorian England: The Diaries of Arthur J. Munby and Hannah Cullwick', *Feminist Studies*, 1979.

spoke of it, and an awful silence there was, with something too very like sobbing, when his name was left out from the prayers.⁴⁷⁰

The *Times* published a lengthy article on 16 December 1861 informing the nation of the great loss it had sustained:

The nation has just sustained the greatest loss that could possibly have fallen upon it. Prince Albert, who a week ago gave every promise that his valuable life would be lengthened to a period long enough to enable him to enjoy, even in this world, the fruit of a virtuous youth and a well-spent manhood, the affection of a devoted wife and of family of which any father might well be proud, - this man, the very centre of our social system, the pillar of our State, is suddenly snatched from us, without even warning sufficient to prepare us for a blow so abrupt and so terrible. We shall need time to fully appreciate the magnitude of the loss we have sustained.⁴⁷¹

The article then reminded the readers of what a magnificent person the Consort was. There were no ill words, no negativity – only pure admiration, listing all his accomplishments, focusing on his character, and emphasising that *in the Prince [...] we have had as true an Englishman as the most patriotic native of these islands.*⁴⁷²

The *Spectator*'s testimony of loyalty was typically less emotional than that of the *Times*, and bridges the reality of Albert's accomplishments with his veiled shortcomings, although at this point these no longer mattered:

It was an inestimable advantage to England that he should be there, that some man with English interests, but not with English ideas, should have a voice to be heard in the centre of our political system. There is a tendency in all English polities to selfishness, to consider nothing but the apparent and immediate interests

⁴⁷⁰ H. Rappaport, op. cit., p. 87.

⁴⁷¹ *The Times*, 16 December 1861, p. 8.

⁴⁷² *Ibid.*

of England, which requires just such a corrective as an adviser, a political Remembrancer, in the position of the Prince.⁴⁷³

The *Spectator*'s words were indeed simpler and less evocative than those of the *Times*, yet despite that the article showed nothing but respect for the late Consort and offered consolation to the widowed Queen.

The newspapers across the country, regardless of whether they were leading titles or just small providers of regional news, all joined to express their immense sadness over the loss of Prince Albert. The *Dublin Builder* wrote:

That man – ‘the paragon of animals’ – be he prince or peasant, must one day make communication with the dust, has been strikingly illustrated by the sad and comparatively unexpected demise of the Prince who for the last twenty-two years has reigned supreme in conjunction with his royal wife.⁴⁷⁴

A day later, the *Dublin Evening Mail* published a long article reporting the sudden death of Prince Albert, in which the author quoted other newspaper titles, and paid remarkable honour to the late Consort, as could be seen through the printed lines.⁴⁷⁵

The *Caledonian Mercury* wrote that

calamity comes swiftly, caring little whether the nation or the family upon whom the stroke falls, are premonished or not. With more than proverbial swiftness, with a suddenness which to the nation at large, must appear appalling, the Queen and the country have been smitten with a great affliction. The Prince Consort is no more.⁴⁷⁶

⁴⁷³ *The Spectator*, 21 December 1861, p. 7.

⁴⁷⁴ *The Dublin Builder*, 15 December 1861, p. 13.

⁴⁷⁵ *The Dublin Evening Mail*, 16 December 1861, p. 2.

⁴⁷⁶ *The Caledonian Mercury*, 16 December 1861, p. 2.

The words of sorrow, feelings of sadness, abandonment, expressions of support and undermined love poured in from every corner of Great Britain. Even sharp *Punch* showed gallantry and respect, publishing a lengthy poem simply entitled ‘Albert’, which finished with these words:

When with a kind relief
Those eyes rain tears, O might this thought employ!
Him whom she loved we loved. We shared her joy,
And will not be denied to share her grief.⁴⁷⁷

The words of the poem could not have been chosen better, and could not have depicted the many virtues of the Prince in a more honourable manner.

On 20 December 1861, the Queen wrote a letter to her beloved uncle Leopold which shows a woman filled with pain, grief, love and admiration for her late husband, the father of an *unhappy country*:⁴⁷⁸

My Own Dearest, Kindest Father – For as such have I ever loved you! The poor fatherless baby of eight months is now the utterly broken-hearted and crushed widow of forty-two! My life as a happy one is ended! The world is gone for me! If I must live on [...] it is henceforth for our poor fatherless children – for my unhappy country, which has lost all in losing him – and in only doing what I know and feel he would wish, for he is near me – his spirit will guide and inspire me!⁴⁷⁹

The funeral was held privately as the Queen was in a state of a shock, and her nerves would not allow any more distress. Hobhouse quoted a newspaper as follows:

⁴⁷⁷ ‘Albert’, *Punch, or the London Charivari* vol. XLI, 21 Dec. 1861, p. 245. *Nineteenth Century UK Periodicals*, www.link.gale.com/apps/doc/DX1901555773/NCUK?u=tasc&sid=bookmark-NCUK. Accessed 2 March 2025.

⁴⁷⁸ J. Raymond, op. cit., p. 291.

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid.

the honours were of a private character, yet they could not be divested of that melancholy grandeur which attends the obsequies of Princes...⁴⁸⁰

The Queen herself did not attend the funeral, as her nerves were too weak. She did wish to stay close to her husband's body as long as possible, but the doctors advised otherwise, and Alice suggested Victoria departed for Osborne.⁴⁸¹

The whole event remained fully private, with only the male members of the family and the Household following the coffin, as was the accepted custom. The procession that accompanied the hearse, drawn by six horses, consisted of *nine mourning coaches and a royal carriage* that preceded it and four empty carriages following on.⁴⁸² The company present in the Chapel consisted mostly of the Prince's household and members of his family, with only a few members of the government and the Diplomatic Corps also in attendance; however, they were not involved in the ceremony itself.

The body of the late Prince was never to be intended to be laid to its final rest at St. George's Chapel, and within a week of his death the Queen ordered a separate mausoleum to be built on a site that had been previously chosen by the Queen and the Prince themselves. However, for the moment, the Order of the Funeral Procession stated:

On the Morning of Monday, December 23rd, 1861, the Remains of Field-Marshal His Late Royal Highness The Prince Consort, Husband of Her Most Excellent Majesty, Duke of Saxony, and Prince of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, Knight of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, will be removed from Windsor Castle for Interment in the Royal Vault in St. George's Chapel...⁴⁸³

In the end the Prince, later joined by the Queen, was laid to his final rest in the mausoleum built on the grounds at Frogmore, where another one had already been placed for

⁴⁸⁰ H. Hobhouse, op. cit., p. 158.

⁴⁸¹ J. Van Der Kiste, *Queen Victoria's Children*, The History Press, 2019, p. 48.

⁴⁸² Ibid.

⁴⁸³ Ibid., p. 159.

the late Duchess of Kent. The designs of the mausoleum were all made by a team of architects who had previously worked with the prince, and all of whom had taken inspiration from the Prince when working for him for the last time.

When analysing Queen Victoria's words, it is no wonder that they express full admiration, unshakable love and complete devotion for her husband whom she cherished so deeply. She was utterly heartbroken when Prince Albert died and remained so for the next forty years. Notably, however, almost all the members of the Fourth Estate assumed a unified front and focused on delivering the news with dignity. Even those titles that had not shied away from using sometimes vile language in their depictions of Prince Albert refrained from their usual spite, and produced pieces that recalled the virtuous characteristics of the late Consort. All of them listed his numerous undertakings, his input into the arts and sciences, working standards, and his exceptional creation in the shape of the Great Exhibition of 1851. The press duly reflected how great the grief of the whole nation was. The public was immensely shocked on learning the news as they had not been prepared for this sudden departure; none would have anticipated that the Royal Consort might pass away at such a young age. The heartache was felt in every part of the Kingdom, and the mourning would be led by the sorrowful Queen.

It is not surprising then to find that the flow of mourning continued in the press for some time after the announcement of his death. The *Irish Times* printed a heartfelt article the day after the funeral that showed how unified the emotions of the nation were:

Although in London the outward signs of mourning may, perhaps, have been more general and on a larger scale than in Dublin, yet it may be safely affirmed that in no part of the United Kingdom was the sorrow for the unexpected demise of the illustrious Consort of our Sovereign more heartfelt or sincere than in our city.⁴⁸⁴

The words printed by the *Morning Herald* were even more emotionally evocative, beginning in the following way:

Christmas this year comes upon us under dismal auspices. We were freshly reminded yesterday of a great national calamity; any hour may bring us the news of a great trial to come. The aspect of yesterday in London was altogether so gloomy that it might have been the last day in the world's history. The sky was leaden and

⁴⁸⁴ 'General mourning in the city', *The Irish Times*, 24 December 1861, p. 3.

sombre, the shops were closed; in every house there seemed to be one dead, and the whole population went about in mourning weeds.⁴⁸⁵

The remaining lines did not differ in tone from the beginning. It could even be said that the depth of the sorrow expressed was even greater, and the outpouring of love and utmost devotion deepened with every line.

The *Sun*, rather than provide a statement of its own, reprinted an extremely long article that had originally appeared in *The Times*. Such a practice was of course not uncommon, and only underlines the significance of the reprinted text. The article itself, in a very extensive and detailed way, gave a full description of the funeral, employing very pictorial language which sets the sorrowful tone from the very first line:

The cold, bleak, wintry aspect of the day at Windsor was mournful and cheerless enough, but even its empty streets and rows of muffled windows had an air almost of light and life compared with the appearance of St. George's Chapel.

[...] The silence of the grave itself was in and round the sacred building – a silence never broken, save by the deep, slow, muffled tolling of the funeral knell, which every minute seemed to sweep down with the wind and rush with the stealthy noise upon the gloom within. There was a dumb, cadaverous air about the Chapel, swathed in its ghastly trapping of black and white.⁴⁸⁶

The lines bleed sadness and grief, setting the readers in the mournful mood of not only that particular day, but the days that followed the death of Prince Albert. The author continued with the depiction of the parties present, drawing a gloomy, painful, and heart-wrenching picture of all those affected by the sad cause for their meeting.

The *Times* itself, apart from producing the article quoted above which was later frequently reprinted by others, published other expressions of national mourning, various longer or shorter texts that provided an outlet for the grief-stricken nation. The editors of the paper reflected in great detail the state the population was in, sympathising with every person. After all, the nation had lost its father figure, someone who, with his exemplary life and

⁴⁸⁵ *Morning Herald*, 24 December 1861, p. 4.

⁴⁸⁶ 'Funeral of the Prince Consort', *The Sun*, 24 December 1861, p. 5.

devotion, proved to be as worthy and Englishman as any other true born citizen of the Kingdom. This national mirror shaped not only the final media image of the late Prince, but also played a vital role in creating a powerful memory that would remain with the people for many years to come.

The overbearing state of national grief, which was obviously understandable, was nothing unusual at that time. What was surprising is the fact that despite the national calamity, there were nevertheless those who openly expressed completely different feelings and opinions to those that governed the nation at that moment. The *Evening News*, a title that, according to the British Newspaper Archives, was published in Dublin by an unknown publisher⁴⁸⁷, delivered a strongly worded and spiteful article which boldly stands out amongst all the sorrowful reports delivered by other members of the press. Their lead article, simply entitled ‘Prince Albert’, notes in very its first lines that

For a week public hypocrisy has run riot in artificial howling around his coffin; and amidst the disgusting exaggerations of courtiers and their mimics, it has been difficult or impossible to catch one glimpse of that unfeigned and sacred grief [which], no doubt, surrounded his bier, as it surrounds all – exacting the homage of respect and sympathy which sorrow never claims in vain from Irishmen. [...] For our own part, we have defied all attempts to bully us into participation in the false and heartless “game” of “mourning” for the Prince - now no more. We thought as much of him when dead as when living; as little of him while living when dead. [...] We took little interest, however, in those minor incidents connected with the event and its consequences, with which the columns of some of our contemporaries were crowded. There was little in Prince Albert, as a man, a Prince, or a Prince Consort, which should make us lament his loss more than of any other father of a family.⁴⁸⁸

The article accuses the late Prince of a desire to establish Coburg influence not only in England, but across the whole European continent, and does not shy away from a cynical approach to everything that the late Royal had accomplished. Even the last paragraph, which seems to be paying a sort of tribute to Albert’s input into certain areas connected with art or

⁴⁸⁷ www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/titles/evening-news-dublin

⁴⁸⁸ *The Evening News*, 24 December 1861, p. 2.

industry, provides a tangled expression of recognition of his intelligence, skills and dedication, with those dismissing his actual achievements comparing him to a sinking ship. However, in the light of all that had been written before, the text's final words, stating that *his life, though too short, was not spent in vain*⁴⁸⁹, seem more of a mockery than a genuine appreciation of the life's work.

In the light of the national grief and mourning, attitudes such as presented by the *Dublin Evening News* could have caused a certain discomfort, or even anger that someone would dare to express such disrespect. However, there were almost no more such voices which levelled slanderous accusations and diminished the role of Prince Albert and his vast influence upon the English nation and its development. There had never been such a Consort before who with such great dedication had such a tremendous impact on politics, art, science, architecture and industry.

Not only did the sudden death of Prince Albert have a tremendous impact on the British nation, but it also greatly affected the whole of Europe. Strachey said that if the Prince had lived longer, his impact on the development of England and beyond would have been greater. At the time of his death, Albert had finally asserted a unique place for himself. He managed to find common ground with the politicians, who finally accepted him, and he became a vital part of the mechanism of the State. He was not only an example of *intellectual and moral qualities*⁴⁹⁰, but also he was *perpetually installed*⁴⁹¹ at the centre of the country's affairs, a permanent presence as politicians came and went. This assured constant and valuable insight in not only politics but also other aspects of life.

Rhodes James provides a beautifully composed reflection on the character of the late Consort and the relationship, though difficult at times, that he shared with the English nation.

No assessment of this remarkable individual, perhaps the most astute and ambitious politician of his age, can ignore the simple but vital facts that he was a

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁰ L. Strachey, op. cit., p. 298.

⁴⁹¹ L. Strachey, p. 299.

highly intelligent and acutely sensitive man whose fate was that he had to deal with men of power whose knowledge, experience, and intelligence were often inferior to his, and who were, moreover, aliens. [...] This amiable, brave, emotional, selfish, easy-going, and lackadaisical people, with their contempt and distrust for brains and their insularity, grated deeply upon a man of such width of comprehension and knowledge, vision, sensitivity, internationalism, and self-destructive capacity for work.⁴⁹²

Similar assessments of the late Prince's dutiful character can be found in other works. Each one, expressing complete respect and devotion to him as a person, adorn his character in a memorable way, asserting that his memory would never cease, and that his vast involvement in many areas of English life would not go unnoticed. They would bear his name as a commemoration, as a living exemplar reminding everyone of his name.

4.9. Summary

Once the initial ruckus over Prince Albert and his religion, his position at the Court, his annuity and the other questions raised by interested parties had settled down, the Prince tried to find a place for himself, to prove useful not only to his wife, but also to his Queen and the nation. He could not remain idle as this was not part of his character. Always strong-willed, with an inner need to improve what he deemed as needing improvement, he tried to make use of his knowledge and skills wherever he could.

The years to come saw the Prince involved in areas connected with art, sciences, industry, and improving the lives of working people. The pinnacle of his skills was the organisation of the Great Exhibition in 1851 which, despite the initial doubts of many, proved to be a success that was difficult to repeat in later years. It should also be emphasised that the Prince did get recognition for his outstanding involvement in improving the lives of so many people in England. The press printed articles acknowledging his involvement in these many undertakings, but there were also those who preferred to show a less deferential, more mocking attitude to what the Prince was doing.

The truth is that over the years, the perception of the Prince fluctuated, and the obstacles that arose during these times contributed to that fact. Despite all his efforts, the image created

⁴⁹² R. Rhodes James, *op. cit.*, p. 274.

by the press never remained consistent; the hostilities and accusations were entwined with gratitude and appreciation. Prince Albert was always aware of the fact and, as the 1854 political scandal showed, he did not remain untouched by public opinion. He was always moved by unfavourable depictions and harsh words. Yet despite all that was written, he remained on duty, never stopping his work for his adopted nation, whether by introducing farming improvements, changes to the army uniforms, or organising an unprecedented exhibition that elevated Britain's global position.

5. Conclusion

The relationship between Prince Albert and the press was never an easy one. The members of the Fourth Estate shadowed the Royal like a watchdog. He was, after all, a novelty of some sorts. Strachey remarked that a queen's husband was an entity unknown to the British constitution.

The place that was created for Prince Albert not only at the Royal Court and in his private home, but also in his new country England, initially seemed to be artificial, just so he would feel occupied and needed. The man of many faces and talents was not content with being categorised and judged by either the press or the people, who depended on the information provided by the watchful eye of journalism, without even being allowed to prove his worth.

During the almost twenty-one years of his marriage to the Queen, Prince Albert was at the centre of interest for numerous reasons. In his enormous involvement in public life, through the organisation of the Great Exhibition, political scandals, and his greater or smaller undertakings, Prince Albert had his share of good and bad press. The relationship between Prince Albert and the press was a natural result of the position he took at court. The marriage to Queen Victoria instantly elevated him from being a lesser-known Prince to being husband to a powerful Queen. It should also be remembered that the nineteenth century saw great changes wrought by the Industrial Revolution. The Prince himself was an avid supporter of these advancements, which were also connected to the monarchy coming to terms with the new sphere of public media. They were no longer enclosed within the walls of their palaces, but became objects of interest to the common people. An invisible bond between the monarchy and the press thus arose. The public became fascinated with the royal couple; they followed the court circulars and other articles published in various newspapers. What is more, Queen Victoria and Prince Albert were the first royals to undertake a large number of public regional tours and foreign visits, setting a model for subsequent generations of monarchs to follow.⁴⁹³

As Plunkett argues, the coverage that the Royal couple received due to their many undertakings, together or solo, ensured that their names would dominate the public sphere thanks to the press coverage they would receive. Never before did the common people feel so close to their Royalty as during the Victorian era. The press managed to bridge the gap that had existed between the monarchy and its people for many centuries. This made them more accessible, and so the need to provide information was even greater. All that constituted to the development of popular weekly newspapers and periodicals that would feed the people's ever-expanding demand for news about them.⁴⁹⁴

⁴⁹³ J. Plunkett, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

Additionally, the advancements that was brought about by the Industrial Revolution allowed not only for new press titles to emerge but also changed the way in which the information was delivered, with a more graphic tone being adopted – both literally and figuratively. Prince Albert became a regular topic in the news-sheets, also because the reportage about him was not always positive. Such attacks and hostile commentaries contributed to his public image, and made the media image of Prince Albert created over the years more complex and nuanced than had hitherto been the case for royal personages.

Prince Albert's first years in his new home country saw the biggest surge of interest in his person. The press played a key role in creating a sense of participation: the readers were not only given information but also, through imagery like sketches, cartoons and caricatures, they were allowed to participate visually in the royal visits, to see the designs that some newspapers mocked, admired the grandeur of the Crystal Palace, and much more.

The newly politicised public expressed their sympathies with one or the other political faction. The newspapers met the intellectual and political demands of every reader, addressing even the most radical sections of the population. The role of the press became more important than ever: it was there no longer to please the monarchy, its voice was no longer limited as it had been in the past, but it was able to provide information in a just and honest way, to hold those with power to account, and to alert the readership if there was any malfeasance. This made the relationship with the press more charged in the nineteenth century than it had been hitherto. Through the rise of the press, the Royal Family, Queen Victoria and Prince Albert *enjoyed an exceptional degree of publicity*.⁴⁹⁵ The press became crucial tool involved in creating the media image of the Royals, something which is still apparent even today, even though the form has changed as new media have emerged.

The press made it possible for the individual reader to feel closer to the Queen and her husband. This experience of almost intimate insight into Royal life was something that brought the Monarchy closer to its people. It was also thanks to that closer para-relationship that the readers were able to shape their own opinions regarding the Prince. At times such opinions were dictated by the editors of the newspapers, but they did not have total control over public

⁴⁹⁵14 J. Plunkett, op. cit., p. 2.

opinion. Reading about the monarchy and examining the printed images (and later the early photographs), became important for the readers in creating a sense of collective identification.⁴⁹⁶ Never before had the press been so present in the lives of the Monarchy and never before had it been responsible to such an extent for creating this interest among the nation, an interest that only expanded with time.

When analysing Prince Albert and his media image as created by the Fourth Estate, it is clear that he had a fair share of good and bad press. The perception of him was never constant. Depending on the situation, the reports fluctuated with its opinion-shaping voice. Some titles, such as the *Times*, sympathised more consistently with him and were more tendentious in depicting his persona. The editors did include words of criticism at times, but these were rare: more often, they stood as sentinels to Albert's name and corrected any egregious errors or slanders. Such an approach was not shared by all the press. As this research has shown, the voices varied: some were more vocal in their criticism than others, and some remained impartial, delivering only what they deemed to be necessary. Regardless of which voice one decided to follow, they all contributed to the media image of Prince Albert.

Plunkett argues that due to the developments in industry connected with the introduction of lithography and photography, the generally wider availability of press, and the fact that (unlike previous monarchs) the Queen undertook numerous visits during which she met her subjects, she was in fact the first media monarch. While this statement is true, one might say that it was not only the Queen who exploited her image as a public figure. Prince Albert also partook in many activities that put him in the limelight. This meant that over almost 21 years of marriage his public image was greatly affected not only by the personal likes and dislikes of the editors that ran the newspapers, but the simple fact that the Prince was German.

In fact, at the very beginning of his journey, Albert's German roots played a major role in the rather negative media image created by the press. It overshadowed everything as it made the press, and therefore their readers, question his integrity and honesty. The initial coverage scrutinised the Prince and his character to such an extent that many developed a negative image of the Prince. This was further fuelled by the questions regarding his religion, annuity, regency.

⁴⁹⁶ J. Plunkett, op. cit., p. 38.

There was a fear that a German prince would, in case of an unfortunate turn of events, assume control over the country.

Yet, as the years passed and it became apparent that the initial suspicions were not grounded in any facts but were just based on fears and rumours, the general attitude changed. The press provided reports of the everyday activities that the Prince would undertake, big or small: shooting parties, meetings, strolls, opening institutions and organising events. Prince Albert became a regular on the pages of newspapers. This new approach towards the monarchy assisted greatly in creating a media image of Prince Albert not only as husband to the Queen, but as someone who used his position and influence to do good. It is not surprising that some did not share these positive views, but towards the end of Albert's life, he was perceived in a positive way.

The sudden death of Prince Albert greatly affected the way he was seen. It led to near-total unanimity in singing his praises, and the national mourning brought the grieving public closer together in their posthumous admiration of him. What is more, the sorrowful Queen, who remained in lifelong mourning after the death of beloved husband, contributed to the public idea of the late Prince.

The image of him after his death was nothing but positive. Apart from some of the minor expressions of discontent which have been presented in this work, the media of that time provided a positive image that continued in later years. His immense involvement in the arts and sciences, industry, welfare, education and many more fields, proved to be an outstanding monument to his greatness. The man who, through the course of his life, wished for nothing more than to be useful to his adopted nation, suffered greatly at times as the slander affected him personally. Yet despite these sometimes cruel words, he did not cease to prove his worth; he did not stop to overcome these obstacles and rumours, but tirelessly continued his work day and night. To this day, Prince Albert remains a figure of admiration amongst the British nation.

If, as Plunkett states, Queen Victoria was the first media Queen, then surely Prince Albert was the first media Consort: a king without a crown, a father to his British nation, an innovator with unshakable moral grounds, so unlike his fellow foreign-born royals who had previously set foot on British soil. As Strachey says, if Prince Albert had lived longer, it is easy

to imagine the possible transformation of England into a state with perfect organisation and training, efficient and powerful.⁴⁹⁷

In his book *St. Petersburg and London in the years 1852-1864*, Count Charles Frederick Vitzthum von Eckstaedt⁴⁹⁸ recorded that upon his return from Lisbon, he found the people of England still in great shock after the death of their beloved Prince Albert. Even the newspapers which had cast aspersions on the Prince now printed lengthy eulogies. The Count recollected the state of shock displayed not only by the common people but also many politicians, who had not been fully aware of the extent of Prince Albert's service not only to the Queen, but also to the nation as a whole.⁴⁹⁹

The *London Quarterly Review* published in April and July 1887⁵⁰⁰ recounts a conversation between the above-mentioned Count Eckstaedt and Benjamin Disraeli upon the occasion of Prince Albert's death. In it, the Prime Minister gave an impressive account of the Prince's character. His words, as quoted by Strachey, Hobhouse and many more, masterfully captured the essence of Prince Albert's service, and give perfect closure in their summary of Albert's magnificence and unfulfilled potential.

With Prince Albert we have buried our sovereign. This German Prince has governed England for twenty-one years with a wisdom and energy such as none of our kings have ever shown. He was the permanent Private Secretary, the permanent Prime Minister of the Queen. If he had outlived some of our "old stagers" he would have given us, while retaining all constitutional guarantees, the blessing of absolute

⁴⁹⁷ L. Strachey, op. cit., p. 299.

⁴⁹⁸ Count Charles Frederick Vitzthum von Eckstaedt was a Saxon Minister at the court of St James.

⁴⁹⁹ Ch.F. Vitzthum Eckstaedt, *St. Petersburg and London in the years 1852-1864*, trans. Edward Fairfax Taylor, Longmans 1887, p. 165.

⁵⁰⁰ The *London Quarterly Review* was a British literature and political periodical that was first published in 1809 and continued until 1967.

government. Of us younger men who are qualified to enter the Cabinet, there is not one who would not willingly have bowed to his experience.⁵⁰¹



Pic. 22. *Funeral of Prince Albert*, Royal Collection Trust

The above words, printed a full twenty-six years after Prince Albert's death, show that he was more than just a husband to Queen Victoria and that justly, albeit too late, his media image had finally become unambiguously positive. It would be plausible to declare that the moment Prince Albert died, he finally became a true Englishman. No one remembered his German origin, the initial disregard for his person, or the doubts that were raised concerning his religion, annuity or education. Now what mattered the most was that the father of the nation had passed away and left his orphaned children mourning their great, and untimely loss. It was the moment that Prince Albert involuntarily became a legend. His memory would be hailed for years and decades to come. Almost every corner of Great Britain would become a living monument to the brilliance and ingenuity of this German Prince, who came from a relatively unknown principality to marry his cousin.

⁵⁰¹ *The London Quarterly Review, New Series, v. VIII, T. Woolmer 1887, p. 301.*

The media image created by the press during his lifetime, after his untimely death solidified, and remained positive for the next generations. It is safe to state that the relationship that the Royal Consort had with the newspapers was not always a happy marriage. The obvious rocky start brought a lot of mixed feelings of love and malice, happiness and prejudice. Yet, with time, he proved to be more than just a husband to the great Queen. His memory and the appreciation for his work is still visible, even in the 21st century. Both Osborne House and Balmoral Castle, two so loved homes of the royal couple, bear witness to his genius and remind the visitors of the immense input Prince Albert had into bringing Great Britain forward. The visitors can admire the extraordinary designs that were skilfully outlined by the Prince himself. Additionally, both places became a testament to the Royal Consort by the many sculptures and monuments erected by Queen Victoria so as her beloved husband, Albert the Great and Good, was always remembered by posterity.



Pic. 23. Prince Albert Cairn, Balmoral, Scotland.⁵⁰²

Nowadays, when the newspapers write about Prince Albert, it is only with respect and admiration for his work and character. The many film adaptations available to the wider public reproduce that notion and thus the all positive, almost god-like image continues to live.

⁵⁰² Author's own resources.

Nearly 166 years after Prince Albert's death it is safe to state that his legend prevails. Always ready, always on duty, always striving to improve.

Annex:

An Act for the Naturalization of His Serene Highness Prince Albert of Saxe Coburg and Gotha. 7th February 1840

Whereas it hath pleased Her Majesty most graciously to declare Her Intention to ally Herself in Marriage with the Prince Albert of Saxe Coburg and Gotha: And whereas a more grateful Proof of Esteem and Affection of the Kingdom cannot be given to His Serene Highness that by an Act of Naturalization to make Him capable of enjoying the Rights and Liberties which are enjoyed in the Realm: We Your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal Subjects do most humbly beseech Your Majesty that it may be enacted; and be it enacted by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the Authority of the same, That Prince Albert of Saxe Coburg and Gotha, when and so soon as He shall have taken the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy before the Lord High Chancellor, which Oaths the Lord High Chancellor is hereby authorized to administer, shall be to all Intents and Purposes whatsoever deemed, taken, and esteemed to be a natural-born Subject of this Kingdom, as if His Highness had been born within this Realm; any Law, Statue, Matter, or Thing to the contrary notwithstanding.

II. And be it enacted That the Lord High Chancellor shall, immediately after such Oaths shall have been taken before him, certify the same, and cause such Certificate to be recorded in the High Court of Chancery.

An Act for enabling Her Majesty to grant an Annuity to His Serene Highness Prince Albert of Saxe Coburg and Gotha. 7th February 1840.

Most Gracious Sovereign,

I. We, Your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal Subjects, the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, having taken into consideration that Part of Your Majesty's most gracious Speech from the Throne, in which Your Majesty was pleased to announce Your Intention of allying Yourself in Marriage with His Serene Highness the Prince Albert of Saxe Coburg and Gotha, do most humbly and cheerfully beseech Your Majesty that it may be enacted; and be it enacted by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the Authority of the same, That it shall be lawful for the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, in order to provide for the Establishment of His Serene Highness the Prince Albert of Saxe Coburg and Gotha, upon such Marriage, by any Letters Patent under the Great Seal of the United Kingdom, to give and grant to His said Serene Highness, or to such other Person or Persons as Her Majesty shall think fit to be named in such Letters Patent, and his and his and their heirs to or to the Use of or in Trust for His said Serene Highness, One Annuity of Thirty thousand Pounds of lawful Money of Great Britain; which Annuity of Thirty thousand pounds shall commence and take effect from the Day of the Marriage of Her Majesty and His said Serene Highness, and continue from thenceforth for and during the Life of His said Serene Highness; and the said Annuity shall be free and clear from all Taxes, Rates, and Assessments, and all other Charges whatsoever, and shall be paid and payable at the Four most usual Days of Payment in the Year; that is to say, the Fifth Day of January, the Fifth Day of April, the Fifth Day of July, and the Tenth Day of October in every Year, by even and equal Portions; with a proportionable Part of such Annuity from the last Quarter Day to the Day of the Decease of His said Serene Highness; the first Payment thereof to be made, on the first quarterly Day of Marriage and such Quarter Day; and that the said Annuity of Thirty thousand Pounds shall and may by such Letters Patent be directed to be issuing and payable out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland during the Life of His said Serene Highness, after paying or reserving sufficient to pay all such Sums as shall have been directed to be paid out of the same by any Act or Acts of Parliament made previous to the Time of passing this Act, but with a Preference to all other Payments which shall or may at any Time after the passing of this Act be charged upon and payable out of the said Fund.

II. And be it enacted, That His said Serene Highness shall not, by virtue of such Marriage, acquire or become entitled to any Estate or Interest in any Property, Real or Personal, to which Her Majesty may be or may become entitled to in any Right or Manner whatsoever;

but that all such Property shall be held and enjoyed by Her said Majesty, Her Heirs and Successors, as if such Marriage had never taken place.

An Act to provide for the Administration of the Government in case the Crown should descend to any Issue of Her Majesty whilst such Issue shall be under the Age of Eighteen Years, and for the Care and Guardianship of such Issue. 4th August 1840.

Whereas Your Majesty, by Your Majesty's Royal Message to both Houses of Parliament, has been pleased to state that the Uncertainty of Human Life, and the deep Sense bent upon Your Majesty to recommend to both Houses of Parliament to consider Contingencies which may hereafter take place, and to make such Provisions as will, in any Event, secure the Exercise of the Royal Authority; and that Your Majesty would be prepared to concur with the Two Houses of Parliament in those Measure which may appear best calculated to maintain unimpaired the Power and Dignity of the Crown, and thereby to strengthen the Securities which protect the Rights and Liberties of Your People: And whereas, with the most cordial Sense of Duty and Gratitude to Your Majesty for the tender Concern and Regard so uniformly and now more especially demonstrated for the Happiness of Your People and the Security of the Rights and Liberties, we have taken this most important Business into our Consideration, and being thoroughly convinced of the Wisdom and Expediency of what Your Majesty has thought fit to recommend, we are firmly and zealously determined to contribute every thing in our Power to maintain unimpaired the Power and Dignity of the Crown, and to strengthen the Securities which protect the Rights and Liberties of the People; We therefore, Your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal Subjects, the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in Parliament assembled, do most humbly beseech Your Majesty that it may be enacted; and be it enacted by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the Authority of the same, That if at the Demise of Her present Majesty (whom God long preserve) there shall be Issue of Her said Majesty who shall become and be King or Queen of this Realm whilst under the Age of Eighteen Years, His Royal Highness Prince Albert, the Consort of Her said Majesty, shall be the Guardian, and shall have the Care, Tuition, and Education of such Issue, until such Issue shall attain the Age of Eighteen Years, and shall till such Age have the Disposition, ordering, and Management of all Matters and Things relating thereto; and His said Royal Highness

Prince Albert shall, until such Issue of Her said Majesty shall attain the Age of Eighteen Years, and no longer, have full Power and Authority, in the Name of such Issue, and in His or Her Stead, and under the Style and Title of Regent of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, to exercise and administer, according to the Laws and Constitution thereof, the Royal Power and Government of this Realm, and all the Dominions, Countries, and territories to the Crown thereof belonging, and use and exercise and perform all Prerogatives, Authorities, and Acts of Government and Administration of Government which belong to the King or Queen of this Realm to use, execute, and perform, according to the Laws thereof, but in such Manner and subject to such Conditions, Restrictions, Limitations, and Regulations as are herein-after for the Purpose specified, mentioned, and contained.

II. And be it further enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That all Acts of Royal Power, Prerogative, Government, and Administration of Government, of what Nature or Kind soever, which shall be done or executed during the Regency established by this Act otherwise than by and with the Consent and Authority of the said Regent, in the Manner and according to the Direction of this Act set forth and prescribed, shall be absolutely null and void to all Intents and Purposes.

III. And be it further enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That the Regent, before He shall act or enter upon his said Office of Regent, shall take the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy in the Form prescribed and required by an Act passed in the First Year of the Reign of King William and Queen Mary, intituled *An Act for abrogating the Oaths of Supremacy and Allegiance, and appointing other Oaths*; and shall also take the Oath of Abjuration in such Manner and Form as is set down and prescribed in an Act passed in the Sixth Year of the Reign of King George the Thid, intituled *An Act for altering the Oath of Abjuration and the Assurance, and for amending so much of an Act of the Seventh Year of Her late Majesty Queen Anne, intituled 'An Act for the Improvement of the Union of the Two Kingdoms,' as after the Time therein limited requires the Delivery of Certain Lists and Copies therein mentioned to Persons indicted of High Treason or Misprision of Treason*; as also the following Oath; that is to say, I do solemnly promise and swear, That I will truly and faithfully execute the Office of Regent of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, according to an Act of Parliament made in the Fourth Year of Her Majesty Queen Victoria, intituled *An Act to provide for the Administration of the Government in case the Crown should descend to any Issue shall be under the Age of Eighteen Years, and for the Care and Guardianship of such Issue*; and that I will administer the Government of this Realm, and of all Dominions thereunto belonging, according to the

Laws, Customs, and Statues thereof, and will in all Things, to the utmost of My Power and Ability, consult and maintain the Safety, Honour, and Dignity of His or Her [*as the Case shall require*] Majesty, and the Welfare of His or Her [*as the Case shall require*] People.

So help me God.

I do faithfully promise and swear, That I will inviolably maintain and preserve the Settlement of the true Protestant Religion, with the Government, Discipline, Rights, and Privileges of the Church of Scotland, as established by Law.

So help me God.

Which Oaths shall be taken before the Privy Council then in being, who are hereby empowered and required to administer the same, and to enter the same in the Council Books.

IV. And be it further enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That it shall not be lawful for the King or the Queen of this Realm, for whom a Regent is hereby appointed, to intermarry before His or Her Age of Eighteen years, with any Person whomsoever, without the Consent, in Writing, of the Regent, and the Assent of both Houses of Parliament, previously obtained; and every Marriage without such Consent, and such Assent of the Two Houses of Parliament shall be null and void to all Intents and Purposes; and every Person who shall be acting, aiding, abetting, or concerned in obtaining, procuring, or bringing about any such Marriage, and the Person who shall be so married to such King or Queen under the Age of Eighteen Years, shall be guilty of High Treason, and suffer and forfeit as in Case of High Treason.

V. Provided always, and be it further enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That the Regent shall not give or have Power to give Royal Assent to any Bill or Bills in Parliament for repealing, changing, or in any respect varying from the Order and Course of Succession to the Crown of this Realm as the same stands now established by the Act of the Twelfth Year of the Reign of King William the Third, intituled *An Act for the further Limitation of the Crown, and better securing the Rights and Liberties of the Subject*, or to any Act for repealing or altering the Act made in the Thirteenth Year of the Reign of King Charles the Second, intituled *An Act for the Uniformity of Public Prayers and Administration of Sacraments, and other Rites and Ceremonies and for establishing the Form of making, ordaining and consecrating Bishops, Priests, and Deacons in the Church of England* or an Act of the Fifth Year of the Reign of Queen Anne made in Scotland, intituled *An Act for securing the Protestant Religion and Presbyterian Government*.

VI. Provided always, and be it further enacted, That if His said Royal Highness Prince Albert shall, at any Time after becoming such Guardian and Regent, be reconciled to or shall hold Communion with the See or Church of Rome, or shall profess the Papist Religion, or shall marry a Person professing the Roman Catholic religion, or shall cease to reside in or absent Himself from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, then and in any such Cases His said Royal Highness shall no longer be Guardian and Regent, and all the Powers and Authorities which he may have derived under and by virtue of this Act shall thenceforth cease and determine.

The Banquet given by the Right Hon. The Lord Mayor, Thomas Farncombe, to Her Majesty's Ministers, Foreign Ambassadors, Royal Commissioners of the Exhibition of 1851, and the Mayors of one hundred and eighty towns, at the Mansion House, 21st March 1850

My Lord Mayor,—

I am sincerely grateful for the kindness with which you have proposed my health, and to you, gentlemen, for the cordiality with which you have received this proposal.

It must indeed be most gratifying to me to find that a suggestion which I had thrown out, as appearing to me of importance at this time, should have met with such universal concurrence and approbation; for this has proved to me that the view I took of the peculiar character and claims of the time we live in was in accordance with the feelings and opinions of the country.

Gentlemen—I conceive it to be the duty of every educated person closely to watch and study the time in which he lives, and, as far as in him lies, to add his humble mite of individual exertion to further the accomplishment of what he believes Providence to have ordained.

Nobody, however, who has paid any attention to the peculiar features of our present era, will doubt for a moment that we are living at a period of most wonderful transition, which tends rapidly to accomplish that great end, to which, indeed, all history points—*the realization of the unity of mankind*. Not a unity which breaks down the limits and levels the peculiar characteristics of the different nations of the earth, but rather a unity, the *result and product* of those very national varieties and antagonistic qualities.

The distances which separated the different nations and parts of the globe are rapidly vanishing before the achievements of modern invention, and we can traverse them with incredible ease;

the languages of all nations are known, and their acquirement placed within the reach of everybody; thought is communicated with the rapidity, and even by the power, of lightning. On the other hand, the *great principle of division of labour*, which may be called the moving power of civilization, is being extended to all branches of science, industry, and art.

Whilst formerly the greatest mental energies strove at universal knowledge, and that knowledge was confined to the few, now they are directed on specialities, and in these, again, even to the minutest points; but the knowledge acquired becomes at once the property of the community at large; for, whilst formerly discovery was wrapped in secrecy, the publicity of the present day causes that no sooner is a discovery or invention made than it is already improved upon and surpassed by competing efforts. The products of all quarters of the globe are placed at our disposal, and we have only to choose which is the best and the cheapest for our purposes, and the powers of production are intrusted to the stimulus of *competition and capital*.

So man is approaching a more complete fulfilment of that great and sacred mission which he has to perform in this world. His reason being created after the image of God, he has to use it to discover the laws by which the Almighty governs His creation, and, by making these laws his standard of action, to conquer nature to his use; himself a divine instrument.

Science discovers these laws of power, motion, and transformation; industry applies them to the raw matter, which the earth yields us in abundance, but which becomes valuable only by knowledge. Art teaches us the immutable laws of beauty and symmetry, and gives to our productions forms in accordance to them.

Gentlemen—the Exhibition of 1851 is to give us a true test and a living picture of the point of development at which the whole of mankind has arrived in this great task, and a new starting-point from which all nations will be able to direct their further exertions.

I confidently hope that the first impression which the view of this vast collection will produce upon the spectator will be that of deep thankfulness to the Almighty for the blessings which He has bestowed upon us already here below; and the second, the conviction that they can only be realized in proportion to the help which we are prepared to render each other; therefore, only by peace, love, and ready assistance, not only between individuals, but between the nations of the earth.

This being *my* conviction, I must be highly gratified to see here assembled the magistrates of all the important towns of this realm, sinking all their local and possibly political differences,

the representatives of the different political opinions of the country, and the representatives of the different Foreign Nations—to-day representing only *one interest!*

Gentlemen—my original plan had been to carry out this undertaking with the help of the Society of Arts of London, which had long and usefully laboured in this direction, and by the means of private capital and enterprise. You have wished it otherwise, and declared that it was a work which the British people as a whole ought to undertake. I at once yielded to your wishes, feeling that it proceeded from a patriotic, noble, and generous spirit. On *your* courage, perseverance, and liberality, the undertaking now entirely depends. I feel the strongest confidence in these qualities of the British people, and I am sure that they will repose confidence in themselves—confidence that they will honourably sustain the contest of emulation, and that they will nobly carry out their proffered hospitality to their foreign competitors.

We, Her Majesty's Commissioners, are quite alive to the innumerable difficulties which we shall have to overcome in carrying out the scheme; but, having confidence in you and in our own zeal and perseverance, at least, we require only *your confidence in us* to make us contemplate the result without any apprehension.

PRINCE ALBERT IN ENGLAND.

I am a German just arriv'd.

With you for to be mingling,

My passage it was paid,

From Germany to England ;

To wed your blooming Queen,

For better or worse I take her,

My father is a duke,

And I am a sausage maker.

CHORUS.

Here I am in rags and jags,

Come from the land of all dirt,

To marry England's Queen,
My name it is young Albert,
I am a cousin to the Queen,
And our mothers they are cronies,
My father lives at home,
And deals in nice polonies;
Lots of sour crout and brooms,
For money he'll be giving,
And by working very hard,
He gets a tidy living.
He said to me one day,
We poor long time have tarried,
And I will shut up shop,
My son when you get married ;
He gave me eighteen-pence,
And twenty pounds of sausages,
Saying off to England go,
And that will pay your passage.
That was not quite enough,
And father had no riches,
So mother pawn'd her gown,
And father sold his breeches ;
My brother sold his boots,
Cause he on me was doating,
So from Germany I came,
To England a courting
You Englishmen are rich,
Or I am much mistaken,
You have good breads and beer,
With mutton, beef, and bacon
While father's folks at home,
Live all the week on cabbage,

And on Sunday they will dine,
On sour crout and sausage.
Your Queen loves me right well,
And says too long she has tarried,
She is going to buy me a pair
Of boots when we get married ;
A handsome coat and shirt,
For she's got lots of riches,
A one-and-ninepenny hat,
And a slashing pair of breeches.
She's going to buy me a sword.
'Cause she said, her mother told her,
She is going to give me a horse,
And make me a Waterloo soldier ;
She'll give me lots of money to spend.
But save it up I'd rather,
And send a crown a week,
To Germany, to father.
She says, when we are wed,
I must not dare to tease her,
But strive both day and night,
All e'er I can to please her.
I told her I would do
For her all I was able,
And when he had a son,
I would sit and rock the cradle.

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Images

Pic. 1. Page 1 of *The Oxford Gazette's* first issue, 7 November 1665.

Pic. 2. Page 1 of *The London Gazette's* first issue, 1 February 1666.

Pic. 3. Threatening letter sent to the Duchess of Northumberland published in *The London Gazette*, issued 26 July 1768.

Pic. 4. John Leech, 'Prince Albert "At Home"', *Punch, or the London Charivari*, 20 March, 1847.

Pic. 5. Gold typeface print of Queen Victoria's coronation published in the *Sun*, 28 June 1838.

Pic. 6. 'The Queen's Lover', *The Penny Satirist*, vol. III, no. 142, 4 January 1840, p.2.

Pic. 7. 'Marriage of Queen Victoria', *The Supplement of Essex, Herts, and Kent Mercury*, 18 February 1840, p. 1.

Pic.8. 'Multiple Essay Items', *Punch, or the London Charivari*, 2 October 1841

Pic. 9. Children's gardens, Osborne House, Isle of Wight. Author: Iwona Lilly

Pic.10. Swiss Cottage, Osborne House, Isle of Wight. Author: Iwona Lilly

Pic. 11. 'The industrious boy', *Punch, or the London Charivari*, 8 June 1850.

Pic. 12. 'TO H. R. H. PRINCE ALBERT, This simple Design for the proposed Building in Hyde Park humbly submitted by THE ARCHITECT', *Punch, or the London Charivari*, 13 July 1850, p. 22.

Pic. 13. 'Prince Albert the British Farmer', *Punch, or the London Charivari*, 25 November 1843.

Pic. 14. 'Prince Albert's bees', *Punch, or the London Charivari*, 24 August 1844, p. 90

Pic. 15. 'The Royal Defaulter', *Punch, or the London Charivari*, 6 December 1845, p. 250.

Pic. 16. Back view of Osborne House, Isle of Wight. Author: Iwona Lilly

Pic. 17. Roof view of the park planned by Prince Albert, Osborne House, Isle of Wight. Author: Iwona Lilly

Pic. 18. 'The new regulation hat', *Punch, or the London Charivari*, 14 October 1843, p. 163

Pic. 19. 'The new police hat', *Punch, or the London Charivari*, 20 April 1844, p. 176.

Pic. 20. Prince Albert's private desk at Osborne House, Isle of White. Author: Iwona Lilly

Pic. 21. Queen Victoria's and Prince Albert's desks at Osborne House, Isle of Wight Author: Iwona Lilly

Pic. 22. 'Funeral of Prince Albert', Royal Collection Trust

Pic. 23. Prince Albert Cairn, Balmoral, Scotland. Author: Iwona Lilly

299