

In Memoriam.

SINCE the last issue of this journal all its readers have been united in one common tie—the tie of sorrow for the loss of our beloved and honoured Queen, and the sounds of public and private joy have been hushed awhile in the tremendous gloom which so suddenly enshrouded our nation. Few of us had not felt the shadow of death in its intensity, but we then saw it in its immensity. From its presence there could be no escape. It overhung the length and breadth of the land; nor indeed were its limits defined by those boundaries which men mark out under the name of nationalities, for those whose duty called them from these shores on the days of sorrow when they landed on some foreign soil emerged not from the canopy of gloom. E'en where the revered lady held no regal sway she had become monarch of men's hearts.

Of the Victorian Era and the great personage whose influence went far to make it one of the most extraordinary epochs in the world's history, many pages have been already written. It is meet that a scientific journal should select some point of view which has a marked bearing on the progress of science generally, and of the particular science of which it is the organ.

That the Victorian Age has been one of extraordinary scientific development is apparent to everyone in the rapid strides which the applications of science have taken, even in the memories of those who may still be called young, while those who can remember the accession of the late Queen in 1837 will indeed bear witness to the contrasts in the mode of life between that year and the opening of the new century. When we proudly celebrated the Jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1887 we were struck by the fact that the Jubilees of nearly all the foremost applications of science were coincident with Her Jubilee. In 1889 we kept the Jubilee of the Electric Telegraph. In the following year we commemorated the Jubilee of the first passage of an Atlantic steamer from the Old World to the New. 1889 brought into Jubilee celebrations that of Photography, which was first developed in 1839; that of the Screw Propeller, and that of Nasmyth's Steam Hammer. We had indeed a galaxy of invention to grace the commencement of a brilliant reign, and a host of prospering

scientific Jubilees to enhance the beneficent fame of the year 1887. It is natural to look for causes to account for the prospering developments of these various inventions, all of which may be said to share in the civilizing tendency of abridging distance and shortening time. Many causes must have united to bring about so prosperous an issue, but one cause stands out prominently in relief. This cause, indirectly, we owe to our Queen. It was the genius, energy, and individuality of the late Prince Consort which first made practical science international. He planned and carried out the great International Exhibition of 1851, which first gave our nation the opportunity of comparing the wealth of the world and made her own industry known and sought after in every clime.

It may be thought by some that Aeronautics has not equally shared in the progress of the Victorian Era, since the great problem of air navigation has yet to be solved.

But this indeed is a fallacy! The balloon, by its power of overcoming gravity, has added vastly to our means of acquiring knowledge of the upper atmosphere, and most of the great truths learnt by its means will be found to grace the Victorian Era. The bond of Cosmopolitanism has ever been peculiarly strong betwixt the aeronauts of every nation, and it is largely through international work and co-operation that aeronautics is rapidly assuming so dignified and important a position. Many are the branches of usefulness opening out for its enterprise. It is on the advance of this science that the future advances of meteorology must depend, and the two sciences are destined to act and re-act on one another for their mutual advantage. The war in South Africa has shown the value of the balloon in warfare, and our national balloon equipments alone tell of modern progress in balloon manufacture and balloon accessories. There is, too, a consoling thought concerning the experiences of the balloon in the South African struggles. Its presence in the campaign most certainly hastened victory, and averted one terrible disaster, so that the balloon actually lessened by at least one the sorrows and griefs which our Queen endured, on account of this campaign, during the last year of her life.