



### THE BRITISH EMPIRE.

ROUND the world, now flashing along the mighty ocean's measureless depths, now traversing with lightning rapidity vast continents, rushed forth the record of a nation's bereavement. Each centre sent it tearing on its tireless way through countless branches and ramifications, till every remote town and hamlet in the Empire within reach of wire knew that Victoria was no more. Back by the same swift agency flashed answering messages of the world's sympathy and condolence. Had any one been bold enough to have prophesied at the commencement of the reign now closed that such a speedy dissemination of news would be possible even at this lapse of time, he would have been put down as a raving lunatic. But this is only one of the mighty conquests of mind over matter that have made the Victorian era unique in the annals of history. The Empire has experienced many powerful emotions during the last two years; it has been flushed with anticipations of speedy victory; it has been shocked with the news of deplorable reverses, entailing disastrous loss of valuable lives; it has rejoiced exceedingly at the relief of besieged garrisons; it has boisterously welcomed home returned warriors; it has prided itself over the noble assistance rendered to the Mother Country by her sons across the seas; and now it is plunged in the deepest grief for the loss of its guiding star, Queen Victoria.

The Coronation of the new King will follow. Edward VII. ascends the throne

under auspicious circumstances. He has all the advantages of his mother's wise rule, and all the experience gained during the many years that he has been by her side. There are those that deplore the change of monarchy, believing that at the present state of affairs in South Africa and China it will be disastrous, but no such fear need assail them. The same principles of Government will actuate the son that did the mother. The man who has performed his duties as Prince of Wales so assiduously and conscientiously, and who, from his boyhood, has been a great favourite of the people, can scarcely fail to make a good and wise king. Born in November, 1841, he is now in his sixtieth year. He has always been regarded more in the light of a shrewd, cautious and tactful man than as an exceptionally brilliant one. But these qualities, added to an immense capacity for work, will stand him in better stead on the throne than mere brilliance. Although as Prince of Wales his duties consisted principally of attendance at social and public functions, yet in anticipation of the position he might one day fill, he has acquired the most intimate knowledge possible of politics. He is an able speaker, a thorough business man, and last, but not least, a genuine sportsman and ardent lover of the "sport of kings." The applause with which his frequent wins on the turf are hailed is a sign of the appreciation in which a prince is held who shares with the people their pet pastimes.

In Queen Alexandra he has a partner than whom it would be impossible to conceive