

## Confusing Queen Victoria

I can't really pick one of these letters over the other for surprise value. Each one had moments that bent my earlier notions of Queen Victoria's personality. At first I just figured her to be the person who happened to rule England during this transitory period (as industrialization was occurring and the population exploded). However, after reading these letters I'm beginning to understand that she very much reflected the events that were unfolding around her. It's almost as if she represented the best and worst of what was then transpiring, what England was becoming.

That said, I can definitely pick the sentence from each letter that stood out the most:

"Since it has pleased Providence to place me in this station, I shall do my utmost to fulfil my duty towards my country; I am very young and perhaps in many, though not in all things, inexperienced, but I am sure, that very few have more real good will and more real desire to do what is fit and right than I have" (1548).

"And therefore—I think our sex a most unenviable one" (1548).

"The more so as I feel certain almost it will all end in nothing" (1548).

"I think much more of our being like a cow or a dog at such moments; when our poor nature becomes so very animal and unecstatic...." (1548).

"It really makes me shudder when I look around at all your sweet, happy, unconscious sisters—and think that I must give them up too—one by one!" (1550).

"An ugly baby is a very nasty object—and the prettiest is frightful when undressed—till about four months" (1550).

"I positively think those ladies who are always [pregnant with child] quite disgusting; its is more like a rabbit or guinea-pig than anything else and really it is not very nice" (1550).

"When I think of a merry, happy, free young girl—and look at the ailing, aching state a young wife generally is doomed to—which you can't deny is the penalty of marriage" (1550).

"Happy 20<sup>th</sup> Birthday, daughter!!!" (or something to that effect)

These are a lot of strange and confusing ideas for any kid or young adult to figure out, especially while bearing children with a new husband! There are apparently 4000 more of these letters, too.

### Re:

*Also intriguing is the fact that some of her letters are written in third person. She refers to herself as "The Queen" quite often. Is this because she dictated her letters and someone else wrote them for her? Or was this common practice?*

You bring up a good point. It could also be that she hasn't totally bought into the idea of being Queen of England. It was mentioned in our readings that "she felt uncomfortably thrust into greatness and often deplored the contradictions of her position" (1547). Maybe

she quietly distanced herself from her royal title during private communications with confidants?

**Re:**

*I also love that Victoria didn't filter herself, especially in her letters, which she must have known would be saved.*

Did she also know that they would survive two World Wars?

I'm not so sure that while writing them she was aware of or very much concerned with her letters being saved. After all, a piece of paper is a very easy thing to misplace, crumple, burn, spill water on, etc., even the personal letters of royalty written in the 19th century.

**Re: Queen Victoria reveals her true identity**

*She must have suffered quite a bit in her marriage and rearing 9 children.*

I don't think that Queen Victoria would appreciate your using of the word "rearing" in reference to her almostlymighty. After all, "rearing" is a term used for horses and such, as in "coming out your rear."