

Her Majesty led her people in Great Britain's reception of an old and tried friend, President de Gaulle. As the train from Gatwick Airport drew into Victoria the Royal Family, Cabinet Ministers and other notables waited to bid most hearty welcome to the Head of the French State, Charles de Gaulle. Almost twenty years ago he came to London, his beloved France defeated, to raise the standard of resistance. He came now as President of a resurgent nation, upon which he has conferred political stability, a blessing denied to it for more than forty years. That he should have done so, mainly by force of character and an integrity unique in French governing circles, is the political miracle of our time.

When the President had greeted all the members of the Royal Family present, Her Majesty presented the Prime Minister, his colleagues and others of distinction assembled in De Gaulle's honour. Some of the Ministers have been to France to meet him, but since June 1944 he has not been to England. It is said he once vowed not to come back here except as French Head of State.

Watchers in the front row saw that the visitor was deeply moved. He was renewing acquaintance with the city of his four-year exile; the London where he bargained for recognition when he had no asset except burning faith.

Into Buckingham Palace, drove President de Gaulle. It was the Queen's first appearance in public since the birth of Prince Andrew.

And what an auspicious reappearance it was, as with the President Her Majesty came on to the balcony of the Palace.

The great man with his gracious wife stood with the Royal family to acknowledge the heartfelt cheers. The outlines in fire the Cross oforraine, symbol of the Free French during the World war, heralded the spectacular Fireworks Display.

Londoners could not remember a spectacle to rival this. On this day De Gaulle seemed to lift his mask of austerity, and we shed our normal reserve. From the heart, Britain said, Vive La France, Vive De Gaulle.