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INFANCY

King Charles the Second was the son and successor of King Charles the First. These two are the only kings of the name of Charles that have appeared, thus far, in the line of English sovereigns. Nor is it very probable that there will soon be another. The reigns of both these monarchs were stained and tarnished with many vices and crimes, and darkened by national disasters of every kind, and the name is thus connected with so many painful associations in the minds of men, that it seems to have been dropped, by common consent, in all branches of the royal family.

The reign of Charles the First, as will be seen by the history of his life in this series, was characterized by a long and obstinate contest between the king and the people, which brought on, at last, a civil war, in which the king was defeated and taken prisoner, and in the end beheaded on a block, before one of his own palaces. During the last stages of this terrible contest, and before Charles way himself taken prisoner, he was, as it were, a fugitive and an outlaw in his own dominions. His wife and family were scattered in various foreign lands, his cities and castles were in the hands of his enemies, and his oldest son, the prince Charles, was the object of special hostility. The prince incurred, therefore, a great many dangers, and suffered many heavy calamities in his early years. He lived to see these calamities pass away, and, after they were gone, he enjoyed, so far as his own personal safety and welfare were concerned, a tranquil and prosperous life. The storm, however, of trial and suffering which enveloped the evening of his father's days, darkened the morning of his own. The life of Charles the First was a river rising gently, from quiet springs, in a scene of verdure and sunshine, and flowing gradually into rugged and gloomy regions, where at last it falls into a terrific abyss, enveloped in darkness and storms.

That of Charles the Second, on the other hand, rising in the wild and rugged mountains where the parent stream was engulfed, commences its course by leaping frightfully from precipice to precipice, with turbid and foaming waters, but emerges at last into a smooth and smiling land, and flows through it prosperously to the sea.

Prince Charles's mother, the wife of Charles the First, was a French princess. Her name was Henrietta Maria. She was unaccomplished, beautiful, and very spirited woman. She was a Catholic, and the English people, who were very decided in their hostility to the Catholic faith, were extremely jealous of her. They watched all her movements with the utmost suspicion. They were very unwilling that an heir to the crown should arise in her family. The animosity which they felt against her husband the king, which was becoming every day more and more bitter, seemed to be doubly inveterate and intense toward her. They published pamphlets, in which they called her a daughter of Heth, a Canaanite, and an idolatress, and expressed hopes that from such a worse than pagan stock no progeny should ever spring.

Henrietta was at this time—1630—twenty-one years of age, and had been married about four years. She had had one son, who had died a few days after his birth. Of course, she did not lead a very happy life in England. Her husband the king, like the majority of the English people, was a Protestant, and the difference was a far more important circumstance in those days than it would be now; though even now a difference in religious faith, on points which either party deems essential, is, in married life, an obstacle to domestic happiness, which comes to no termination, and admits of no cure. If it were possible for reason and reflection to control the impetuous impulses of youthful hearts, such differences of religious faith would be regarded, where they exist, as an insurmountable objection to a matrimonial union.

The queen, made thus unhappy by religious dissensions with her husband, and by the public odium of which she was the object, lived in considerable retirement and seclusion at St. James's Palace, in Westminster, which is the western part of London. Here her second son, the subject of this history, was born, in May, 1630, which was ten years after the landing of the pilgrims on the Plymouth rock. The babe was very far from being pretty, though he grew up at last to be quite a handsome man. King Charles was very much pleased at the birth of his son. He rode into London the next morning at the head of a long train of guards and noble attendants, to the great cathedral church of St. Paul's, to render thanks publicly to God for the birth of his child and the safety of the queen. While this procession was going through the streets, all London being out to gaze upon it, the attention of the vast crowd was attracted to the appearance of a star glimmering faintly in the sky at midday. This is an occurrence not very uncommon, though it seldom, perhaps, occurs when it has so many observers to witness it. The star was doubtless Venus, which, in certain circumstances, is often bright enough to be seen when the sun is above the horizon. The populace of London, however, who were not in those days very profound astronomers, regarded the shining of the star as a supernatural occurrence altogether, and as portending the future greatness and glory of the prince whose natal day it thus unexpectedly adorned.

Preparations were made for the baptism of the young prince in July. The baptism of a prince is an important affair, and there was one circumstance which gave a peculiar interest to that of the infant Charles. The Reformation had not been long established in England, and this happened to be the first occasion on which an heir to the English crown had been baptized since the Liturgy of the English Church had been arranged. There is a chapel connected with the palace of St. James, as is usual with royal palaces in Europe,

and even, in fact, with the private castles and mansions of the higher nobility. The baptism took place there. On such occasions it is usual for certain persons to appear as sponsors, as they are called, who undertake to answer for the safe and careful instruction of the child in the principles of the Christian faith. This is, of course, mainly a form, the real function of the sponsors being confined, as it would appear, to making magnificent presents to their young godchild, in acknowledgment of the distinguished honor conferred upon them by their designation to the office which they hold. The sponsors, on this occasion, were certain royal personages in France, the relatives of the queen. They could not appear personally, and so they appointed proxies from among the higher nobility of England, who appeared at the baptism in their stead, and made the presents to the child. One of these proxies was a duchess, whose gift was a jewel valued at a sum in English money equal to thirty thousand dollars.

The oldest son of a king of England receives the title of Prince of Wales; and there was an ancient custom of the realm, that an infant prince of Wales should be under the care, in his earliest years, of a Welsh nurse, so that the first words which he should learn to speak might be the vernacular language of his principality. Such a nurse was provided for Charles. Rockers for his cradle were appointed, and many other officers of his household, all the arrangements being made in a very magnificent and sumptuous manner. It is the custom in England to pay fees to the servants by which a lady or gentleman is attended, even when a guest in private dwellings; and some idea may be formed of the scale on which the pageantry of this occasion was conducted, from the fact that one of the lady sponsors who rode to the palace in the queen's carriage, which was sent for her on this occasion, paid a sum equal to fifty dollars each to six running footmen who attended the carriage, and a hundred dollars to the coachman; while a

number of knights who came on horseback and in armor to attend upon the carriage, as it moved to the palace, received each a gratuity of two hundred and fifty dollars. The state dresses on the occasion of this baptism were very costly and splendid, being of white satin trimmed with crimson.

The little prince was thus an object of great attention at the very commencement of his days, His mother had his portrait painted, and sent it to her mother in France. She did not, however, in the letters which accompanied the picture, though his mother, praise the beauty of her child. She said, in fact, that he was so ugly that she was ashamed of him, though his size and plumpness, she added, atoned for the want of beauty. And then he was so comically serious and grave in the expression of his countenance! the queen said she verily believed that he was wiser than herself.

As the young prince advanced in years, the religious and political difficulties in the English nation increased, and by the time that he had arrived at an age when he could begin to receive impressions from the conversation and intercourse of those around him, the Parliament began to be very jealous of the influence which his mother might exert. They were extremely anxious that he should be educated a Protestant, and were very much afraid that his mother would contrive to initiate him secretly into the ideas and practices of the Catholic faith.

She insisted that she did not attempt to do this, and perhaps she did not; but in those days it was often considered right to make false pretensions and to deceive, so far as this was necessary to promote the cause of true religion. The queen did certainly make some efforts to instill Catholic principles into the minds of some of her children; for she had other children after the birth of Charles. She gave a daughter a crucifix one day, which is a little image of Christ upon the cross, made usually of ivory, or silver, or gold, and also a rosary, which is a string of beads, by means

of which the Catholics are assisted to count their prayers. Henrietta gave these things to her daughter secretly, and told her to hide them in her pocket, and taught her how to use them. The Parliament considered such attempts to influence the minds of the royal children as very heinous sins, and they made such arrangements for secluding the young prince Charles from his mother, and putting the others under the guidance of Protestant teachers and governors, as very much interfered with Henrietta's desires to enjoy the society of her children. Since England was a Protestant realm, a Catholic lady, in marrying an English king, ought not to have expected, perhaps, to have been allowed to bring up her children in her own faith; still, it must have been very hard for a mother to be forbidden to teach her own children what she undoubtedly believed was the only possible means of securing for them the favor and protection of Heaven.

There is in London a vast storehouse of books, manuscripts, relics, curiosities, pictures, and other memorials of by-gone days, called the British Museum. Among the old records here preserved are various letters written by Henrietta, and one or two by Charles, the young prince, during his childhood. Here is one, for instance, written by Henrietta to her child, when the little prince was but eight years of age, chiding him for not being willing to take his medicine. He was at that time under the charge of Lord Newcastle.

CHARLES,—I am sorry that I must begin my first letter with chiding you, because I hear that you will not take phisicke, I hope it was onlie for this day, and that to-morrow you will do it for if you will not, I must come to you, and make you take it, for it is for your health. I have given order to mi Lord of Newcastle to send mi word to-night whether you will or not. Therefore I hope you will not give me the paines to goe; and so I rest, your affectionate mother,

HENRIETTE MARIE.

The letter was addressed

"To MI DEARE SONNE the Prince."

The queen must have taken special pains with this her first letter to her son, for, with all its faults of orthography, it is very much more correct than most of the epistles which she attempted to write in English. She was very imperfectly acquainted with the English language, using, as she almost always did, in her domestic intercourse, her own native tongue.

Time passed on, and the difficulties and contests between King Charles and his people and Parliament became more and more exciting and alarming. One after another of the king's most devoted and faithful ministers was arrested, tried, condemned, and beheaded, notwithstanding all the efforts which their sovereign master could make to save them. Parties were formed, and party spirit ran very high. Tumults were continually breaking out about the palaces, which threatened the personal safety of the king and queen. Henrietta herself was a special object of the hatred which these outbreaks expressed. The king himself was half distracted by the overwhelming difficulties of his position. Bad as it was in England, it was still worse in Scotland. There was an actual rebellion there, and the urgency of the danger in that quarter was so great that Charles concluded to go there, leaving the poor queen at home to take care of herself and her little ones as well as she could, with the few remaining means of protection yet left at her disposal.

There was an ancient mansion, called Oatlands, not very far from London, where the queen generally resided during the absence of her husband. It was a lonely place, on low and level ground, and surrounded by moats filled with water, over which those who wished to enter passed by draw bridges. Henrietta chose this place for her residence because she thought she should be safer there from mobs and violence. She kept the children all there except the

Prince of Wales, who was not allowed to be wholly under her care. He, how ever, often visited his mother, and she sometimes visited him.

During the absence of her husband, Queen Henrietta was subjected to many severe and heavy trials. Her communications with him were often interrupted and broken. She felt a very warm interest in the prosperity and success of his expedition, and sometimes the tidings she received from him encouraged her to hope that all might yet be well. Here, for instance, is a note which she addressed one day to an officer who had sent her a letter from the king, that had come enclosed to him. It is written in a broken English, which shows how imperfectly the foreign lady had learned the language of her adopted country. They who understand the French language will be interested in observing that most of the errors which the writer falls into are those which result naturally from the usages of her mother tongue.

Queen Henrietta to Sir Edward Nicholas.

MAISTRE NICHOLAS,—I have reseaved your letter, and that you send me from the king, which writes me word he as been vere well reseaved in Scotland; that both the armi and the people have shewed a creat joy to see the king, and such that theay say was never seen before. Pray God it may continue.

Your friend, HENRIETTE MARIE R.

At one time during the king's absence in Scotland the Parliament threatened to take the queen's children all away from her, for fear, as they said, that she would make papists of them. This danger alarmed and distressed the queen exceedingly. She declared that she did not intend or desire to bring up her children in the Catholic faith. She knew this was contrary to the wish of the king her husband, as well as of the people of England. In order to diminish the danger that the children would be taken away, she left Oatlands herself, and went to reside at other palaces, only going

occasionally to visit her children. Though she was thus absent from them in person, her heart was with them all the time, and she was watching with great solicitude and anxiety for any indications of a design on the part of her enemies to come and take them away.

At last she received intelligence that an armed force was ordered to assemble one night in the vicinity of Oatlands to seize her children, under the pretext that the queen was herself forming plans for removing them out of the country and taking them to France. Henrietta was a lady of great spirit and energy, and this threatened danger to her children aroused all her powers. She sent immediately to all the friends about her on whom she could rely, and asked them to come, armed and equipped, and with as many followers as they could muster, to the park at Oatlands that night. There were also then in and near London a number of officers of the army, absent from their posts on furlough. She sent similar orders to these. All obeyed the summons with eager alacrity. The queen mustered and armed her own household, too, down to the lowest servants of the kitchen. By these means quite a little army was collected in the park at Oatlands, the separate parties coming in, one after another, in the evening and night. This guard patrolled the grounds till morning, the queen herself animating them by her presence and energy. The children, whom the excited mother was thus guarding, like a lioness defending her young, were all the time within the mansion, awaiting in infantile terror some dreadful calamity, they scarcely knew what, which all this excitement seemed to portend.

The names and ages of the queen's children at this time were as follows:

Charles, prince of Wales, the subject of this story, eleven.

Mary, ten. Young as she was, she was already married, having been espoused a short time before to William, prince of Orange, who was one year older than herself.

James, duke of York, seven. He became afterward King James II.

Elizabeth, six.

Henry, an infant only a few months old.

The night passed away without any attack, though a considerable force assembled in the vicinity, which was, however, soon after disbanded. The queen's fears were, nevertheless, not allayed. She began to make arrangements for escaping from the kingdom in ease it should become necessary to do so. She sent a certain faithful friend and servant to Portsmouth with orders to get some vessels ready, so that she could fly there with her children and embark at a moment's notice, if these dangers and alarms should continue.

She did not, however, have occasion to avail herself of these preparations. Affairs seemed to take a more favorable turn. The king came back from Scotland. He was received by his people, on his arrival, with apparent cordiality and good will. The queen was, of course, rejoiced to welcome him home, and she felt relieved and protected by his presence. The city of London, which had been the main seat of disaffection and hostility to the royal family, began to show symptoms of returning loyalty and friendly regard. In reciprocation for this, the king determined on making a grand entry into the city, to pay a sort of visit to the authorities. He rode, on this occasion, in a splendid chariot of state, with the little prince by his side. Queen Henrietta came next, in an open carriage of her own, and the other children, with other carriages, followed in the train. A long cortege of guards and attendants, richly dressed and magnificently mounted, preceded and followed the royal family, while the streets were lined with thousands of spectators, who waved handkerchiefs and banners, and shouted God save the king! In the midst of this scene of excitement and triumph, Henrietta rode quietly along, her anxieties relieved, her sorrows and trials ended, and her

heart bounding with happiness and hope. She was once more, as she conceived, reunited to her husband and her children, and reconciled to the people of her realm. She thought her troubles were over Alas! they had, on the contrary, scarcely begun.

PRINCE CHARLES'S MOTHER

The indications and promises of returning peace and happiness which gave Prince Charles's mother so much animation and hope after the return of her husband from Scotland were all very superficial and fallacious. The real grounds of the quarrel between the king and his Parliament, and of the feelings of alienation and ill will cherished toward the queen, were all, unfortunately, as deep and extensive as ever; and the storm, which lulled treacherously for a little time, broke forth soon afterward anew, with a frightful violence which it was evident that nothing could withstand. This new onset of disaster and calamity was produced in such a way that Henrietta had to reproach herself with being the cause of its coming.

She had often represented to the king that, in her opinion, one main cause of the difficulties he had suffered was that he did not act efficiently and decidedly, and like a man, in putting down the opposition manifested against him on the part of his subjects; and now, soon after his return from Scotland, on some new spirit of disaffection showing itself in Parliament, she urged him to act at once energetically and promptly against it. She proposed to him to take an armed force with him, and proceed boldly to the halls where the Parliament was assembled, and arrest the leaders of the party who were opposed to him. There were five of them who were specially prominent. The queen believed that if these five men were seized and imprisoned in the Tower, the rest would be intimidated and overawed, and the monarch's lost authority and power would be restored again.

The king was persuaded, partly by the dictates of his own judgment, and partly by the urgency of the queen, to make the attempt. The circumstances of this case, so far as the action of the king was concerned in them, are fully related

in the history of Charles the First. Here we have only to speak of the queen, who was left in a state of great suspense and anxiety in her palace at Whitehall while her husband was gone on his dangerous mission.

The plan of the king to make this irruption into the great legislative assembly of the nation had been kept, so they supposed, a very profound secret, lest the members whom he was going to arrest should receive warning of their danger and fly. When the time arrived, the king bade Henrietta farewell, saying that she might wait there an hour, and if she received no ill news from him during that time, she might be sure that he had been successful, and that he was once more master of his kingdom. The queen remained in the apartment where the king had left her, looking continually at the watch which she held before her, and counting the minutes impatiently as the hands moved slowly on. She had with her one confidential friend, the Lady Carlisle, who sat with her and seemed to share her solicitude, though she had not been entrusted with the secret. The time passed on. No ill tidings came; and at length the hour fully expired, and Henrietta, able to contain herself no longer, exclaimed with exultation, "Rejoice with me; the hour is gone. From this time my husband is master of his realm. His enemies in Parliament are all arrested before this time, and his kingdom is henceforth his own."

It certainly is possible for kings and queens to have faithful friends, but there are so many motives and inducements to falsehood and treachery in court, that it is not possible, generally, for them to distinguish false friends from true. The Lady Carlisle was a confederate with some of the very men whom Charles had gone to arrest. On receiving this intimation of their danger, she sent immediately to the houses of Parliament, which were very near at hand, and the obnoxious members received warning in time to fly. The hour had indeed elapsed, but the king had met with several unexpected delays, both in his