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MARY'S CHILDHOOD

1542-1548

Palace where Mary was born.—Its situation.—Ruins.—The room.—Visitors.—Mary's father in the wars.—His death.—Regency.—Catholic religion.—The Protestants.—England and France.—The Earl of Arran.—The regency.—Arran regent.—New plan.—End of the war.—King Henry VIII.—Janet Sinclair.—King Henry's demands.—Objections to them.—Plans for Mary.—Linlithgow.—Plan of the palace.—Fountain.—The lion's den.—Explanation of the engraving.—The coronation.—Stirling Castle.—Its situation.—Rocky hill.—The coronation scene.—Linlithgow and Stirling.—The Highlands and the Highlanders.—Religious disturbances.—Lake Menteith.—Mary's companions.—The four Maries.—Angry disputes.—Change of plan.—Henry's anger.—Henry's sickness and death.—War renewed.—Danger in Edinburgh.—Aid from France.—New plan.—Going to France.—Dumbarton Castle.—Rock of Dumbarton.—Journey to Dumbarton.—The four Maries.—Departure from Scotland.

TRAVELERS who go into Scotland take a great interest in visiting, among other places, a certain room in the ruins of an old palace, where Queen Mary was born. Queen Mary was very beautiful, but she was very unfortunate and unhappy. Every body takes a strong interest in her story, and this interest attaches, in some degree, to the room where her sad and sorrowful life was begun.

The palace is near a little village called Linlithgow. The village has but one long street, which consists of ancient stone houses. North of it is a little lake, or rather pond: they call it, in Scotland, a loch. The palace is between the village and the loch; it is upon a beautiful swell of land which projects out into the water. There is a very small island in the middle of the loch and the shores are bordered with fertile fields. The palace, when entire, was square, with an

open space or court in the center. There was a beautiful stone fountain in the center of this court, and an arched gateway through which horsemen and carriages could ride in. The doors of entrance into the palace were on the inside of the court.

The palace is now in ruins. A troop of soldiers came to it one day in time of war, after Mary and her mother had left it, and spent the night there: they spread straw over the floors to sleep upon. In the morning, when they went away, they wantonly set the straw on fire, and left it burning, and thus the palace was destroyed. Some of the lower floors were of stone; but all the upper floors and the roof were burned, and all the wood-work of the rooms, and the doors and window-frames. Since then the palace has never been repaired, but remains a melancholy pile of ruins.

The room where Mary was born had a stone floor. The rubbish which has fallen from above has covered it with a sort of soil, and grass and weeds grow up all over it. It is a very melancholy sight to see. The visitors who go into the room walk mournfully about, trying to imagine how Queen Mary looked, as an infant in her mother's arms, and reflecting on the recklessness of the soldiers in wantonly destroying so beautiful a palace. Then they go to the window, or, rather, to the crumbling opening in the wall where the window once was, and look out upon the loch, now so deserted and lonely; over their heads it is all open to the sky.

Mary's father was King of Scotland. At the time that Mary was born, he was away from home engaged in war with the King of England, who had invaded Scotland. In the battles Mary's father was defeated, and he thought that the generals and nobles who commanded his army allowed the English to conquer them on purpose to betray him. This thought overwhelmed him with vexation and anguish. He pined away under the acuteness of his sufferings, and just after the news came to him that his daughter Mary was

born, he died. Thus Mary became an orphan, and her troubles commenced, at the very beginning of her days. She never saw her father, and her father never saw her. Her mother was a French lady; her name was Mary of Guise. Her own name was Mary Stuart, but she is commonly called Mary Queen of Scots.

As Mary was her father's only child, of course, when he died, she became Queen of Scotland, although she was only a few days old. It is customary, in such a case, to appoint some distinguished person to govern the kingdom, in the name of the young queen, until she grows up: such a person is called a regent. Mary's mother wished to be the regent until Mary became of age.

It happened that in those days, as now, the government and people of France were of the Catholic religion. England, on the other hand, was Protestant. There is a great difference between the Catholic and the Protestant systems. The Catholic Church, though it extends nearly all over the world, is banded together, as the reader is aware, under one man—the pope—who is the great head of the Church, and who lives in state at Rome. The Catholics have, in all countries, many large and splendid churches, which are ornamented with paintings and images of the Virgin Mary and of Christ. They perform great ceremonies in these churches, the priests being dressed in magnificent costumes, and walking in processions, with censers of incense burning as they go. The Protestants, on the other hand, do not like these ceremonies; they regard such outward acts of worship as mere useless parade, and the images as idols. They themselves have smaller and plainer churches, and call the people together in them to hear sermons, and to offer up simple prayers.

In the time of Mary, England was Protestant and France was Catholic, while Scotland was divided, though most of the people were Protestants. The two parties were very much excited against each other, and often persecuted

each other with extreme cruelty. Sometimes the Protestants would break into the Catholic churches, and tear down and destroy the paintings and the images, and the other symbols of worship, all which the Catholics regarded with extreme veneration; this exasperated the Catholics, and when they became powerful in their turn, they would seize the Protestants and imprison them, and sometimes burn them to death, by tying them to a stake and piling fagots of wood about them, and then setting the heap on fire.

Queen Mary's mother was a Catholic, and for that reason the people of Scotland were not willing that she should be regent. There were one or two other persons, moreover, who claimed the office. One was a certain nobleman called the Earl of Arran. He was a Protestant. The Earl of Arran was the next heir to the crown, so that if Mary had died in her infancy, he would have been king. He thought that this was a reason why he should be regent, and govern the kingdom until Mary became old enough to govern it herself. Many other persons, however, considered this rather a reason why he should not be regent; for they thought he would be naturally interested in wishing that Mary should not live, since if she died he would himself become king, and that therefore he would not be a safe protector for her. However, as the Earl of Arran was a Protestant, and as Mary's mother was a Catholic, and as the Protestant interest was the strongest, it was at length decided that Arran should be the regent, and govern the country until Mary should be of age.

It is a curious circumstance that Mary's birth put an end to the war between England and Scotland, and that in a very singular way. The King of England had been fighting against Mary's father, James, for a long time, in order to conquer the country and annex it to England; and now that James was dead, and Mary had become queen, with Arran for the regent, it devolved on Arran to carry on the war. But the King of England and his government, now that the young queen was born, conceived of a new plan. The king

had a little son, named Edward, about four years old, who, of course, would become King of England in his place when he should himself die. Now he thought it would be best for him to conclude a peace with Scotland, and agree with the Scottish government that, as soon as Mary was old enough, she should become Edward's wife, and the two kingdoms be united in that way.

The name of this King of England was Henry the Eighth. He was a very headstrong and determined man. This, his plan, might have been a very good one; it was certainly much better than an attempt to get possession of Scotland by fighting for it; but he was very far from being as moderate and just as he should have been in the execution of his design. The first thing was to ascertain whether Mary was a strong and healthy child; for if he should make a treaty of peace, and give up all his plans of conquest, and then if Mary, after living feebly a few years, should die, all his plans would fail. To satisfy him on this point, they actually had some of the infant's clothes removed in the presence of his embassador, in order that the embassador might see that her form was perfect, and her limbs vigorous and strong. The nurse did this with great pride and pleasure, Mary's mother standing by. The nurse's name was Janet Sinclair. The embassador wrote back to Henry, the King of England, that little Mary was "as goodly a child as he ever saw." So King Henry VIII. was confirmed in his design of having her for the wife of his son.

King Henry VIII. accordingly changed all his plans. He made a peace with the Earl of Arran. He dismissed the prisoners that he had taken, and sent them home kindly. If he had been contented with kind and gentle measures like these, he might have succeeded in them, although there was, of course, a strong party in Scotland opposed to them. Mary's mother was opposed to them, for she was a Catholic and a French lady, and she wished to have her daughter become a Catholic as she grew up, and marry a French

prince. All the Catholics in Scotland took her side. Still Henry's plans might have been accomplished, perhaps, if he had been moderate and conciliating in the efforts which he made to carry them into effect.

But Henry VIII. was headstrong and obstinate. He demanded that Mary, since she was to be his son's wife, should be given up to him to be taken into England, and educated there, under the care of persons whom he should appoint. He also demanded that the Parliament of Scotland should let him have a large share in the government of Scotland, because he was going to be the father-in-law of the young queen. The Parliament would not agree to either of these plans; they were entirely unwilling to allow their little queen to be carried off to another country, and put under the charge of so rough and rude a man. Then they were unwilling, too, to give him any share of the government during Mary's minority. Both these measures were entirely inadmissible; they would, if adopted, have put both the infant Queen of Scotland and the kingdom itself completely in the power of one who had always been their greatest enemy.

Henry, finding that he could not induce the Scotch government to accede to these plans, gave them up at last, and made a treaty of marriage between his son and Mary, with the agreement that she might remain in Scotland until she was ten years old, and that then she should come to England and be under his care.

All this time, while these grand negotiations were pending between two mighty nations about her marriage, little Mary was unconscious of it all, sometimes reposing quietly in Janet Sinclair's arms, sometimes looking out of the windows of the Castle of Linlithgow to see the swans swim upon the lake, and sometimes, perhaps, creeping about upon the palace floor, where the earls and barons who came to visit her mother, clad in armor of steel, looked upon her with pride and pleasure. The palace where she lived was

beautifully situated, as has been before remarked, on the borders of a lake. It was arranged somewhat in the following manner:

a. Room where Mary was born.

b. Entrance through great gates.

c. Bow-window projecting toward the water.

d. Den where they kept a lion.

There was a beautiful fountain in the center of the court-yard, where water spouted out from the mouths of carved images, and fell into marble basins below. The ruins of this fountain and of the images remain there still. The den at d was a round pit, like a well, which you could look down into from above: it was about ten feet deep. They used to keep lions in such dens near the palaces and castles in those days. A lion in a den was a sort of plaything in former times, as a parrot or a pet lamb is now: this was in keeping with the fierce and warlike spirit of the age. If they had a lion there in Mary's time, Janet often, doubtless, took her little charge out to see it, and let her throw down food to it from above. The den is there now. You approach it upon the top of a broad embankment, which is as high as the depth of the den, so that the bottom of the den is level with the surface of the ground, which makes it always dry. There is a hole, too, at the bottom, through the wall, where they used to put the lion in.

The foregoing plan of the buildings and grounds of Linlithgow is drawn as maps and plans usually are, the upper part toward the north. Of course the room a, where Mary was born, is on the western side. The adjoining engraving represents a view of the palace on this western side. The church is seen at the right; and the lawn, where Janet used to take Mary out to breathe the air, is in the fore-ground. The shore of the lake is very near, and winds beautifully around the margin of the promontory on which the palace stands. Of course the lion's den, and the ancient avenue of approach to the palace, are round upon the other

side, and out of sight in this view. The approach to the palace, at the present day, is on the southern side, between the church and the trees on the right of the picture.

Mary remained here at Linlithgow for a year or two; but when she was about nine months old, they concluded to have the great ceremony of the coronation performed, as she was by that time old enough to bear the journey to Stirling Castle, where the Scottish kings and queens were generally crowned. The coronation of a queen is an event which always excites a very deep and universal interest among all persons in the realm; and there is a peculiar interest felt when, as was the case in this instance, the queen to be crowned is an infant just old enough to bear the journey. There was a very great interest felt in Mary's coronation. The different courts and monarchs of Europe sent embassadors to be present at the ceremony, and to pay their respects to the infant queen; and Stirling became, for the time being, the center of universal attraction.

Stirling is in the very heart of Scotland. It is a castle, built upon a rock, or, rather, upon a rocky hill, which rises like an island out of the midst of a vast region of beautiful and fertile country, rich and verdant beyond description. Beyond the confines of this region of beauty, dark mountains rise on all sides; and wherever you are, whether riding along the roads in the plain, or climbing the declivities of the mountains, you see Stirling Castle, from every point, capping its rocky hill, the center and ornament of the broad expanse of beauty which surrounds it.

Stirling Castle is north of Linlithgow, and is distant about fifteen or twenty miles from it. The road to it lies not far from the shores of the Frith of Forth, a broad and beautiful sheet of water. The castle, as has been before remarked, was on the summit of a rocky hill. There are precipitous crags on three sides of the hill, and a gradual approach by a long ascent on the fourth side. At the top of this ascent you enter the great gates of the castle, crossing a broad and

deep ditch by means of a draw-bridge. You enter then a series of paved courts, with towers and walls around them, and finally come to the more interior edifices, where the private apartments are situated, and where the little queen was crowned.

It was an occasion of great pomp and ceremony, though Mary, of course, was unconscious of the meaning of it all. She was surrounded by barons and earls, by embassadors and princes from foreign courts, and by the principal lords and ladies of the Scottish nobility, all dressed in magnificent costumes. They held little Mary up, and a cardinal, that is, a great dignitary of the Roman Catholic Church, placed the crown upon her head. Half pleased with the glittering show, and half frightened at the strange faces which she saw every where around her, she gazed unconsciously upon the scene, while her mother, who could better understand its import, was elated with pride and joy.

Linlithgow and Stirling are in the open and cultivated part of Scotland. All the northern and western part of the country consists of vast masses of mountains, with dark and somber glens among them, which are occupied solely by shepherds and herdsmen with their flocks and herds. This mountainous region was called the Highlands, and the inhabitants of it were the Highlanders. They were a wild and warlike class of men, and their country was seldom visited by either friend or foe. At the present time there are beautiful roads all through the Highlands, and stage-coaches and private carriages roll over them every summer, to take tourists to see and admire the picturesque and beautiful scenery; but in the days of Mary the whole region was gloomy and desolate, and almost inaccessible.

Mary remained in Linlithgow and Stirling for about two years, and then, as the country was becoming more and more disturbed by the struggles of the great contending parties—those who were in favor of the Catholic religion and alliance with France on the one hand, and of those in favor

of the Protestant religion and alliance with England on the other hand—they concluded to send her into the Highlands for safety.

It was not far into the country of the Highlands that they concluded to send her, but only into the borders of it. There was a small lake on the southern margin of the wild and mountainous country, called the Lake of Menteith. In this lake was an island named Inchmahome, the word inchbeing the name for island in the language spoken by the Highlanders. This island, which was situated in a very secluded and solitary region, was selected as Mary's place of residence. She was about four years old when they sent her to this place. Several persons went with her to take care of her, and to teach her. In fact, every thing was provided for her which could secure her improvement and happiness. Her mother did not forget that she would need playmates, and so she selected four little girls of about the same age with the little queen herself, and invited them to accompany her. They were daughters of the noblemen and high officers about the court. It is very singular that these girls were all named Mary. Their names in full were as follows:

Mary Beaton,
Mary Fleming,
Mary Livingstone,
Mary Seaton.

These, with Mary Stuart, which was Queen Mary's name, made five girls of four or five years of age, all named Mary.

Mary lived two years in this solitary island. She had, however, all the comforts and conveniences of life, and enjoyed herself with her four Maries very much. Of course she knew nothing, and thought nothing of the schemes and plans of the great governments for having her married, when she grew up, to the young English prince, who was then a little boy of about her own age, nor of the angry disputes in Scotland to which this subject gave rise. It did give rise to very serious disputes. Mary's mother did not like

the plan at all. As she was herself a French lady and a Catholic, she did not wish to have her daughter marry a prince who was of the English royal family, and a Protestant. All the Catholics in Scotland took her side. At length the Earl of Arran, who was the regent, changed to that side; and finally the government, being thus brought over, gave notice to King Henry VIII. that the plan must be given up, as they had concluded, on the whole, that Mary should not marry his son.

King Henry was very much incensed. He declared that Mary should marry his son, and he raised an army and sent it into Scotland to make war upon the Scotch again, and compel them to consent to the execution of the plan. He was at this time beginning to be sick, but his sickness, instead of softening his temper, only made him the more ferocious and cruel. He turned against his best friends. He grew worse, and was evidently about to die; but he was so irritable and angry that for a long time no one dared to tell him of his approaching dissolution, and he lay restless, and wretched, and agitated with political animosities upon his dying bed. At length some one ventured to tell him that his end was near. When he found that he must die, he resigned himself to his fate. He sent for an archbishop to come and see him, but he was speechless when the prelate came, and soon afterward expired.

The English government, however, after his death, adhered to his plan of compelling the Scotch to make Mary the wife of his son. They sent an army into Scotland. A great battle was fought, and the Scotch were defeated. The battle was fought at a place not far from Edinburgh, and near the sea. It was so near the sea that the English fired upon the Scotch army from their ships, and thus assisted their troops upon the shore. The armies had remained several days near each other before coming to battle, and during all this time the city of Edinburgh was in a state of great anxiety and suspense, as they expected that their city would be

attacked by the English if they should conquer in the battle. The English army did, in fact, advance toward Edinburgh after the battle was over, and would have got possession of it had it not been for the castle. There is a very strong castle in the very heart of Edinburgh, upon the summit of a rocky hill.

These attempts of the English to force the Scotch government to consent to Mary's marriage only made them the more determined to prevent it. A great many who were not opposed to it before, became opposed to it now when they saw foreign armies in the country destroying the towns and murdering the people. They said they had no great objection to the match, but that they did not like the mode of wooing. They sent to France to ask the French king to send over an army to aid them, and promised him that if he would do so they would agree that Mary should marry his son. His son's name was Francis.

The French king was very much pleased with this plan. He sent an army of six thousand men into Scotland to assist the Scotch against their English enemies. It was arranged, also, as little Mary was now hardly safe among all these commotions, even in her retreat in the island of Inchmahome, to send her to France to be educated there, and to live there until she was old enough to be married. The same ships which brought the army from France to Scotland, were to carry Mary and her retinue from Scotland to France. The four Maries went with her.

They bade their lonely island farewell, and traveled south till they came to a strong castle on a high, rocky hill, on the banks of the River Clyde. The name of this fortress is Dumbarton Castle. Almost all the castles of those times were built upon precipitous hills, to increase the difficulties of the enemies in approaching them. The Rock of Dumbarton is a very remarkable one. It stands close to the bank of the river. There are a great many ships and steam-boats continually passing up and down the Clyde, to and