

Chapter IIIA Growing Family.

Scarcely had the little Princess attained her second year, when her maternal grandmother, Mary of Medici, a dominating Italian, suggested arranging a match for her with William of Orange. But the King at once vetoed the proposal. (Subsequently, however, her elder sister, the Princess Mary, was betrothed to him.)

N.P. 8 The small Princess was taken back to St. James' Palace in the spring of 1637, and there, on St. Patrick's Day, was born to her a little sister, called Anne, after her aunt, the Queen of France. Later on, the royal children were taken to spend a few days with the Queen at Hampton Court. [Lamenting, as always, her beloved husband's absence, Henrietta sought some solace in music and dancing. The King had banished the large French following she had brought over with her, as "foxmenters of disturbance", leaving her with only a very few French personal attendants. But amongst members of the English courtiers were many ladies and gentlemen who delighted to dance with her in the courante. The Queen was seen to great advantage in this graceful and elegant dance, with its sprightly steps, and many bows and curtsies; but to all her partners she would lament, "Hélas, que je manque mon Roi!" [Not only was her exquisite voice heard amongst the courtiers in the Presence Chamber when she would sing to them some French Sonnet, but in the nursery, she delighted to lull the children to sleep with some softly sung cradle-song. [But taking advantage of the King's absence, and in violation of her undertaking not to attempt any proselytising, Henrietta Maria took them with her to vespers. Not unnaturally, the tiny Elizabeth began to be restive, and to quieten her, the Queen gave her an illustrated Missal to look at. When the child came across a picture of our Lord being scourged in the judgment hall, her mother heard her murmur, "Poor man, poor man!" as she kissed the picture several times. So moved by this token of piety was the Queen, that risking the King's disfavour for her disobedience, she related the incident to him.

"She begins young", remarked Charles, his displeasure at the Queen's broken pledge lost in this evidence of his favourite child's early piety.

After a return to St. James' for a few weeks, Mary and Elizabeth were taken back to Richmond Palace, and with them went, with her own nurse, the new little Princess Anne, to whom Elizabeth was already specially devoted. She would beg of Nan, a poor curate's daughter, to allow her to feed her tiny sister from her silver pap-boat, the predecessor of

the feeding bottle. Then when Nan replaced the babe in her cradle and the rocker would sing "Rock-a-bye, baby, thy cradle is green", Elizabeth's little voice would try to join in the lullaby.

It was at this time that the Countess of Roxburgh heard from the King that he had commissioned his Court painter, Sir Anthony Vandyck to execute a portrait of his children. Then the three little Princesses were, as ever, received with delight by their parents when they were brought to join their brothers for a visit to the painter's studio at Blackfriars.

For this expedition, the royal barge was got ready at Westminster, where the Royal Family with their attendants embarked for the short distance down the Thames. The two youngest children, in the care of their nurses, were with the King and Queen in the shelter of the roomy cabin, and the great barge, richly gilded and carved, made its stately progress down the river.

Prince Charles, from his earliest days, a lover of dogs, had with him this time in the body of the boat, his great boar-hound, Sir Bors, for he had insisted that the dog should be included in the picture beside him. When the barge slowly passed down the river, it was acclaimed by citizens who had gathered on the banks to watch the royal party. As the King gravely doffed his hat in acknowledgment of their loyal salutations, Prince Charles, ever lively, attempted to make the great dog wave his paw to the people. In the vain attempt, he nearly fell overboard, but was saved by the watchful care of his attendant who hauled him back into the barge.

At the special landing-stage which had been built at Blackfriars expressly for the royal landings, a very elegantly-attired and distinguished-looking gentleman was awaiting the disembarking of the Royal Family. Bare-headed, the great painter received the King and Queen on bended knee, and there knelt until Charles extended his hand to raise him. When Sir Anthony had ushered the Royal party into his studio, he took little time in arranging the children as he wished to paint them - in a more or less straight row. First he placed Mary, after her Prince Charles, dressed, unlike his brother, as a boy, having a hand on the head of Sir Bors. Then came James, in dress indistinguishable from his sister, and last of all, the only one to be seated, the little Elizabeth. She is shewn dressed in pale blue silk, with lovely lace-edged collar and cuffs, a lace apron and a close fitting lace cap turned back over her forehead, holding up in her hands,

the chubby infant Anne, crowing happily. The elder little sister wears an ear-ring and a pearl necklace, and at the foot of her chair lies a black-and-white spaniel.**

red Having thus arranged them, Sir Anthony, watched by his pupils, then proceeded to make a black-and-white chalk drawing of them on grey paper. The King had constantly to admonish the boys to keep still, and indeed threaten Charles that if he could not let the dog alone, the dog must be removed. The painter worked quickly, so that his young subjects were not long detained, greatly to the relief of the two Princes, who had become very fidgetty.

Sir Anthony's practice was to pass this preliminary small study on to his assistants to be copied to a larger scale. He had the clothes which the children wore, sent to him, and when these with the background and accessories were sufficiently advanced, the master was able in a few sittings of an hour each to complete his work. There were not a few complaints, however, from Prince Charles, when he had to endure these further sittings.

As 1637 drew to a close, Henrietta Maria's mother, Mary of Medici, the Queen-Mother of France, left that country for Holland. Italian-like, she was an incurable intriguer, and the great French minister, Richelieu, had long found her unendurable, so that he was thankful when she left France.

N.P. [As a mere matter of form (so it appears), Mary wrote to King Charles, asking him for an invitation to London. This he firmly refused, haltingly supported by Henrietta, for they both feared that France would take exception to the visit, expecting their Queen-Mother to make trouble in England. But characteristically ignoring the King's refusal, Mary embarked for England, bringing with her a considerable following, all to be entertained at Charles' expense.

When Henrietta heard this news, she sighed and exclaimed:

"Adieu, ma liberté!".

For the poor King, in sore need of money, and at the beginning of the many troubles which were ultimately to overwhelm him, no situation could have been more embarrassing. But it was obviously impossible for him to turn his mother-in-law away, so he had to accept the unwanted visitor who had thus forced herself upon him.

** This picture is in Windsor Castle.

As became a courteous gentleman, Charles gave command that his mother-in-law should be received with all due ceremony, and he had apartments prepared for her in St. James' near to those of the royal children. He himself went to receive her - an ill-dressed, massive woman, heavy-featured, with round staring eyes, and a forbidding air. Charles brought her in the royal coach, to which six horses, with an outrider on one of the leaders, ~~was~~ attached, into the courtyard of St. James' Palace. There her daughter, on her knees, ~~and~~ behind her the four children, also on their knees, received Mary of Medici, who gave her benediction separately to her little grandchildren.

"Alas!" said the Queen-Mother, "that such fair children should be but little heretics outside the fold of the One Church!"

To this the King, incensed but keeping his wonted calm, promptly replied:

"Madam, let me answer you in the words of our Judicious Hooker: 'To reform ourselves is not to sever ourselves from the Church we were of before: in the Church we were, and we are so still'. Or to quote the analogy of His Grace of Canterbury, Dr. Laud, Naaman after he was cleansed from his leprosy, did not become another man, for his identity remained unchanged".

For once, taken completely aback where she had expected to crush, the Italian lady was bereft of any reply. Before she had completely recovered her composure, the King, followed by the Queen and the royal children, led their visitor to her apartments. Here she settled down in the Palace, ~~but~~, a cantankerous and headstrong woman, only to scold, to give bad advice, and to plot against Richelieu and the English parliament.

One day at the end of January 1638, the Queen came upon the King in his closet, seated at a table, his head in his hands. Coming up behind him, she put her arms round his neck, kissing him on the cheek, asked:

"What ails my Charles?"

The King looked up, and returning her kiss, replied:

"Dear Heart, we have a saying in this country: 'When our Lord doth lie in our Lady's lap, then England shall suffer a great mishap'. That refers to Good Friday occurring on Lady Day, and so I see it does this year. We must pray our merciful Lord that all evil may be averted".

Unhappily the King's prognostications were fulfilled, for in that year occurred those troubles in Scotland which were the prelude to the Great Rebellion.

Early in 1639, Queen Henrietta Maria had moved into the Palace (or Castle) of Whitehall, for the birth of her sixth child.** This great palace was an unsymmetrical mass of buildings - an irregular series of squares and courtyards of halls and galleries and gardens, with its back on the banks of the Thames. Like St. James', with the grounds of which it was connected by a long gallery, it was completely in the country. It was fronted by a great courtyard entered by an imposing gateway of impressive dimensions, said to have been designed by Holbein, and closely resembling one of the present frontages of Hampton Court. [James I had commissioned Inigo Jones to re-design a magnificent palace for him, but all that had been built under his auspices had been the Banqueting House, the only part of the whole palace still remaining. King Charles had the ceilings painted from designs by Rubens, and had had silken tapestries specially woven to hang on the walls. Crystal chandeliers depended from the ceiling, and silver sconces for torches were fixed on both sides of the tapestries. Throughout the palace, many paintings, including one of the King himself in armour and on horseback, adorned the walls. Near the Queen's closet, Inigo had contrived a private chapel for Her Majesty where Roman Catholic services were held, thereby giving great offence to the Puritans.

It was in this palace that, on January 29th, 1639, the Princess Catherine was born, only to survive half-an-hour after her baptism. This, of course, was a great grief to her Father and Mother, and when shortly afterwards, Charles had to betake himself to Scotland, he thought it wise that Mary of Medici, as well as the royal children, should join Henrietta Maria at the magnificent Palace of Whitehall. This they accordingly did on May 5th, and the presence of her beloved children, if not of her mother, did much to soothe the anxiety the Queen felt for the King, increasingly afflicted by rebellious subjects in all the Kingdoms.

After settling his family in Whitehall Palace, and before he left for Scotland, hearing there were numbers of people clamouring to be touched for the King's Evil,** the King commanded that due arrangements should be made for holding this ceremony. This was a very fatiguing one, as

** Her first child, a son, died at birth.

*** Scrofula, a tubercular complaint affecting the glands of the neck.

NP. there were rarely fewer than a hundred people who came at the one time, and often there were very many more. [The ceremony took place in the Banqueting House, where the King, in his royal robes, and attended by his chaplains, entered in stately procession to take his seat on the Throne on the dais under a canopy. Before him stood a motley, expectant company, of both sexes, and of all ages and conditions, having in their swollen necks, but one thing in common. This throng was accompanied by several surgeons, and by one of these each sufferer was led up singly to the foot of the throne, and there knelt before Charles. After a chaplain had read the appointed prayer, the King leant forward and gently stroked the faces of each on the cheeks, with both hands at once. Then the victim of the evil arose, to be successively replaced by another, till all had been touched. Each one came up again, in the same order as before, to receive the special angel** at the hands of the King. Beside the King knelt another chaplain, having over his arm the necessary number of angels strung on white ribbons. These he delivered one by one to the King, who placed them over the necks of each person as they passed in front of him. The ceremony then ended with a prayer and the benediction.

Bereft of the King's company, the liveliness of the three elder children did much to divert both Queens. Charles, as became the eldest, and already showing promise of wit, was the natural leader in all their simple games, Mary and little James, then only six, joining him in cat-after-mouse, puss-in-the-corner, and hoodman's blind.

"All our games, however, will be much more fun", declared Charles, "when her dolls are old enough for Bess to be able to leave them alone, and she can join us".

Soon the gaiety of the nursery was disturbed by the great distress of the children's beloved governess, the Countess of Roxburgh. She, coming from the consistently and staunchly loyal Drummond family, was overwhelmed by the news, first of her husband's, and later of her only son's, defection from the King. For she heard with a shock that both had signed the Scottish Covenant, which despite its profession of attachment to the King, actually led its signatories into rebellion against him.

** These angels, having a figure of St. Michael on one side and ship in full sail on the other, were worth 10s.0d.

The little Elizabeth did all her warmly loving heart could suggest to comfort her dear Roxy and to dry her tears, but she herself with Mary and her brothers, were soon themselves troubled by the ominous tramping of the sentinels about the Palace. Nor could they understand why now none of them were allowed out without an armed escort. But the children were all delighted when, on July 8th in that same year, another brother was born to them, Henry, Duke of Gloucester. Little did the small Elizabeth dream that this Prince, alone of her brothers and sisters, was to remain her constant companion and solace till the day of her untimely death.
