

Chapter IV.Trouble Brewing.

When the Princess Elizabeth was five years old she was painted at full length by one Vaughan. He shews her as very fair, her fair falling on either side of her face in long loose curls - a childishly plump little figure dressed as her mother in miniature. She had a rose in one hand and a squirrel is on the table beside her. Beneath the picture* are sixteen laudatory lines on

"Elizabeth the fair, the rare, the great,
In birth and blood in virtues full replete".

As was not uncommon at this period, the little Princess, despite her tender age, was devoted to study. When she was little more than a babe, she had learned the criss-cross row,** and the Our Father from her horn-book, and had learnt to say when she was put in her cradle at night:

"Four corners to my bed
Four angels round my head.
One to watch and one to pray
And two to bear my soul away".

The first great grief of her short, sad life was caused by the death of her little sister, Anne, at Richmond ~~Castle~~ ^{Palace}, on November 5th, 1640. The next day the King came to St. James' to break the news to Elizabeth. As soon as he entered the nursery, the little Princess ran to him, and after picking her up, folding her in his arms, and kissing her, he said, in the hesitating speech which was usual with him :-

"My precious little one, I have sad news for you, but you must bear it bravely. Yesterday the Good Shepherd sent an angel to bear our darling Anne away to Himself".

Elizabeth tried valiantly to subdue her sobs, but the tears coursed down her cheeks as Charles, with many a caress, told her of her beloved little sister's passing.

* Engraved by Hollar in "True Effigies of the Royal Progeny".

** The alphabet, so called, because it was prefaced and ended with a cross. The "book" was an oblong board with a handle, the printing covered with horn to protect it.

"You know, Sweetheart, that our little Anne was always very frail, and that our good doctor, Sir Theodore Mayerne, was never able to subdue her constant cough? Alas, that I could not reach Richmond ~~Castle~~ before she died, but the excellent Mrs. Conant, her rocker, told me of her last moments. Knowing our little lamb was dying of the fever that was consuming her, the good woman bade her call upon God, and she replied :-

"I am not able to say my long prayer (meaning the Lord's Prayer) but I will say my short one, "Lighten mine eyes, O Lord, lest I sleep the sleep of death", and so saying she went to God".

"O Father, I am so sorry for my poor Mother and for you: how you will miss her: she was so very dear".

"All our children are dear to us, Sweetheart, but I know how you will specially miss our little Anne. Yet she is happier where she is now, than she could ever be here, in the dunghill of this world. Think on her happiness, my Bess, and be the best sister ever brother could have to the infant Henry, for we shall soon be losing Mary".

"I will try my hardest, indeed I promise, Father dear", was the child's tearful response.

As, after her Father's departure, she sat at work on her sampler beside one of her ladies, the little Elizabeth's thoughts were full of her loss. She specially called to mind two occasions when sudden attacks of illness had banished her from her sister's nursery. On the first occasion, the babe had been just over a year old, and her nurse had been amusing the infant by playing with her tiny toes, calling each by its traditional name. Gently fingering each, the nurse recited:

"Here comes Harry Whistle, next is Tommy Thistle; then there's Harry Whible, Tommy Thible, and last of all is Little Okerbell".

She was just beginning again with "Harry Whistle" - this little pig went to market", when the infant was seized with convulsions, and Elizabeth's own Nan hastily carried her away out of the nursery.

On the second occasion, lately, Elizabeth was hearing the little Anne repeat by heart the 23rd Psalm. She had just reached the middle of the fourth verse in her repetition when an alarming fit of coughing shook her fragile frame, and

again Elizabeth was hurried out of her nursery. Pondering what her Father had told her of her beloved sister's passing, she felt that her little Anne had indeed realised the truth of that last lesson. And so realising, Elizabeth murmured to herself:

"The Lord is my Shepherd, therefore can I lack nothing. He shall feed me in a green pasture, and lead me forth beside the waters of comfort. He shall convert my soul Yea, though I walk through the Valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil".

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Charles took every opportunity carefully to instruct his little daughter in the faith and claims of the Church of England, as Catholic, to represent the old Church of the land. He was at pains to impress on her that in this one respect of religion, she must give no heed to her Mother should she try to pervert her to the novelties of Popery.

"I do entreat you, Elizabeth, as your Father and your King, that you never suffer your heart to receive the least disaffection from the true religion established in the Church of England. I have tried it, and after much search and many disputes, have concluded it to be the best in the world, keeping the middle way between the pomp of superstitions, tyranny, and the meanness of fantastic anarchy".

"Indeed, dearest Father, I will endeavour ever to keep constant to our Faith", was the child's earnest response.

The King's allusion to their prospective loss of the Princess Mary had reference to her forthcoming marriage next year to William of Orange, of which ceremony in the Chapel Royal of Whitehall on May 12th, Elizabeth was a most interested spectator. As the Queen's religious principles forbade her taking any public part in any Anglican service, she and Mary of Medici sat in a small gallery from which they could witness the ceremony in private. With them sat the little Elizabeth, awe-stricken at the sight of her sister being the centre of the splendid ceremonial, and greatly impressed by the rich decorations with which the Chapel was hung, and the golden ornaments and plate on the Altar.

She closely followed the service, taken by Dr. Wren, Bishop of Ely, as Dean of the Chapel Royal, and warned by her Father, paid no heed to the sneering comments made on the service by her grandmother. She was also taken to dine soon after 3p.m. at the bridal banquet in the withdrawing room of the Palace, and gazed affectionately upon the little bride, scarce ten years old.

On this very same day, the King's able minister the Earl of Strafford had been executed, and Charles, when he heard of the deed, was filled with a remorse which never left him. For though this faithful servant had expressly released the King from his promise that he should not suffer "in person, honour, or fortune", Charles had, in his extremity, consented to his execution. Both Archbishop Ussher of Armagh, and Bishop Juxon, had urged him to refuse his assent; but faced by a howling mob threatening his wife's life, and urged by her, Charles had at last given way.

The Royal Family all removed to Windsor early in 1642, where they spent their last reunion. Thither, with the King, a distinguished horseman, riding with them, travelled the Queen and the Royal Children, all with their attendants, in a relay of coaches. They rode by easy stages from Whitehall, by the banks of the Thames and through the wide countryside. As towards their journey's end they saw, in the distance, the immense and imposing pile of the royal castle rising in splendid isolation in the open country, even the light-hearted Prince Charles, impressed by its magnificent magnitude, ceased to chatter.

Watching from the Castle, having been kept for the approach of the Royal train, a guard of honour had been stationed at King Henry's gate, and there the waiting Deputy-Constable knelt at the King's approach to surrender to him the keys of the Castle. Passing through the gate into the Lower Ward, the children were awed by the sight presented to them as they drove alongside St. George's Chapel, over the bridge across the moat, and past the Round Tower into the Upper Ward, finally drawing up at the entrance to the Royal apartments. There the party left their coaches, to be severally escorted to the quarters prepared for them.

Whilst the King and Queen were being served with some warming refreshments in the King's Closet, Henrietta addressed her husband:—

"My Charles, have you dismissed that ingrate, Holland, from office in this Castle, even as I have deprived him of the posts he held from me? I was glad to note it was not he who received us at the outer gate".

"That I intend to do, dear Heart, for when I questioned his deputy regarding Holland's non-appearance, he told me that the fellow, despite all the honours we had heaped upon him, had deserted to the Parliament".

That afternoon, in the midst of the family, the Queen, at the King's request, played to them on the spinnet, and then Elizabeth asked her Father to tell them something about the great Castle.

As with the Princess on his knee, the others sat around him listening, the King told them that it was Edward III who had made Windsor a palace out of a fortress. But what interested the children most was to hear of him setting up there the Round Table after the example of King Arthur, and of his founding the Most Noble Order of the Garter. Next morning the King took them into Edward IV's magnificent Chapel of St. George, the chapel of the Order, pointing out to them the crested helms and the banners above the Garter Knights' stalls. Little did they dream, as they passed the eleventh stall on the Sovereign's side, that they were actually treading over the Vault which was to become the burial place of King Charles. Nor at the conclusion of their visit did they know that, as a family, they were never to meet again. For when they left the Castle in February, 1642, Elizabeth, had said farewell to her Mother and sister for the last time. The King and his two elder sons escorted the Queen and Princess Mary to Dover to embark for Holland, whilst Elizabeth, and little Henry of Gloucester returned once more to St. James' Palace.

Here, a short time after, the King came to see his younger children. First he solaced himself by playing his favourite game of chess with Elizabeth, an apt pupil, and when it was finished, he took her on his knee, sighing:-

"Sweetheart", I have somewhat to say to you. You wondered at the guard set about you at Whitehall, and I must now tell you it was to protect you from the tumult of the mob. This, largely made up of unruly apprentices, hath been inflamed by the contumacy of Parliament and the malice of the Calvinistic preachers, both in alliance to govern in place of me, their King. Many a concession have I made to them, but now nothing will content the Parliament short of putting the militia in their power, but [^]this I will not consent. They think, too, they cannot do God and the Church a greater service than utterly to destroy that primitive, apostolical, and ancient universal government of the Church by bishops. To this I will never agree, and I fear me it will come to war between us, so I must leave this rebellious city, and with your brothers Charles and James, hie me to York. Farewell then, for a time, dear little daughter, and God have you in His keeping".

Too overcome for speech, the little Princess could only cling convulsively to her Father, till with a last lingering caress, the King gently put her down and left her, with her little brother prattling on the floor beside her.

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had/ The King, accompanied by his two elder sons, now beyond nursery surveillance, ~~now~~ established his court at York. He was thankful they were old enough to be removed from the pale of parliamentary influence, as, unhappily, the younger pair were not, for at their age, they could not encounter hardships. The King was greatly distressed that thus he had to desert his little Elizabeth and Henry, but he could do no other. In June, 1642, at York, the demands of Parliament, embodied in the Nineteen Propositions, were presented to him. These, under a pretence of deference, sought to deprive the King of all real power, for his appointments, in every sphere and in all cases, were to be subject to Parliament's approval. All his own personal guards and forces were "to be put away", and Parliament was to have a free hand in the "reformation" both of the Church and its Liturgy. He was even to be deprived of having any say in the education of his two youngest children, now outside his protection. Here is the relevant proposition regarding them :-

"That he or they unto whom the government and education of the king's children shall be committed, shall be approved of by both Houses of Parliament - and, in the intervals of parliament, by the assent of the major part of the Council, in such manner as is before expressed in the choice of councillors; and that, all such servants as are now about them against whom both Houses shall have any just exception, shall be removed".

As might have been anticipated, the King unhesitatingly rejected the Propositions. He replied contemptuously:

"These being passed, we may be waited upon bare-headed, have our hand kissed, please ourselves with the sight of a crown and sceptre; but as to true and real power, we should remain but the outside, but the picture of a king".

The Commons' answer was openly to announce Parliament's assumption of sovereign power, thus practically declaring War against the King, and usurping custody over the defenceless little Princess and her younger brother. As might be imagined,

great was the dismay and distress of Elizabeth when she heard that Parliament was in arms against her Father.

In October of this year, the dreaded Plague again broke out in London, and the Commons now having assumed oversight of the two children, decreed that they should be removed to a healthier locality. Fearful lest if they were taken into the country, they would be seized by some fervent Royalist, the house of Lord Cottington in Broad Street was chosen for them. He was Lord Treasurer, and his commodious house was pleasantly set amongst many gardens, so that it had a country air about it. Parliament by now had appointed the Earl of Pembroke as custodian of the Royal children, and it was then in his charge that they and their attendants were removed by coach to Broad Street. On the way there, Elizabeth was greatly moved to note the red cross, indicating a plague-stricken house, painted on so many doors, and beneath it the prayer, "Lord have mercy upon us".

Always in a feeble state of health, the change of place soon proved unsuited to her, and she became very languid and poorly. Hence her devoted governors communicated with the House of Lords, informing the Peers how unwell was the Lady Elizabeth, and stated that, unless some more suitable residence could be found, she should be taken back to St. James' Palace. To this, the Commons, to whom the matter had been referred, agreed, with many a proviso, and after the change the little Princess did seem to revive, but in her heart she was fretting sorely on account of what her Father had told her.

During the winter, the King, unable himself to visit the children, sent equerries to report to him, but the parliamentary conditions permitting this inspection, absolutely forbade either speech with, or the delivery of any letter to, the Royal children.
