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GREAT ENGLISHWOMEN.

GREAT ENGLISHWOMEN

AN HISTORICAL READING BOOK
FOR SCHOOLS

BY

M. B. SYNGE
AUTHOR OF "GREAT ENGLISHMEN," ETC.

LONDON
GEORGE BELL AND SONS
1907

The following collection of short lives has been compiled as a companion volume to the "Great Englishmen," which has already met with approval in schools. It is hoped that this will be found no less useful.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Queen Bertha (died 606)	1

Maude the Good (1080-1118) 8
Eleanor of Aquitaine (1122-1204) 13
Philippa of Hainault (1313-1369) 23
Margaret of Anjou (1429-1480) 31
The Lady Margaret (1441-1509) 38
Margaret Roper (1501?-1544) 46
Lady Jane Grey (1537-1554) 52
Princess Elizabeth (1596-1662) 61
Lady Rachel Russell (1636-1723) 69
Angelica Kaufmann (1741-1807) 78
Hannah More (1745-1833) 85
Elizabeth Fry (1780-1845) 92
Mary Somerville (1780-1872) 100
Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1809-1861) 110
Florence Nightingale (born 1820) 120

GREAT ENGLISHWOMEN.

QUEEN BERTHA (died 606).

BERTHA, our first Christian queen, lived a very quiet, uneventful life; history does not record her sayings, nor does it tell us that she performed any great public acts; she made no special mark on the world at large. But by her good example to others, by her gentle influence on those around her, she stands out as the one bright light shining from out the thick darkness of those heathen days.

She was the only child of the king of Paris, but there is more to say about her grandmother Radigund than about either her father or mother; for Bertha had been taught to love the name of Radigund from a little child.

Radigund was the wife of a king of part of France. This king had taken her prisoner with her little brother in a war, but, finding her very beautiful and of royal blood, he adopted her. As she was a heathen, he had her baptized, and then had her taught till she was old enough to become his wife. Then poor Radigund was very unhappy; the king her husband was stern, rough, and cruel, though he loved her very much, and she escaped unknown to a distant convent. With her own hands she cut off her long and beautiful hair, and leaving her royal dress and jewels, she threw on the cloak of a nun. At last the king discovered her, repented of his harshness toward her, and gave her a large estate, on which she built a convent, and devoted her time to study. It was she who made the convent rules herself, she who gave advice to those who needed it, encouraged the timid, urged on the slothful, and spoke tenderly to those in trouble.

Radigund brought up her son, Bertha’s father, to love the classics and old writings, and he became a wise and good king. So when he had a child of his own, he determined that she should be brought up in a convent, away from the world, as he had been. We do not know where Bertha was taught (it may have been under her grandmother Radigund), and we hear nothing more of her till history tells us that Ethelbert, the king of Kent, married the gentle Bertha, daughter of the king of Paris.

Now Ethelbert was a young Saxon king, who had taken part in governing from the age of sixteen; his friends and servants all looked up to him and were ready to share his dangers and his triumphs. The kings and princes of England at this early time were always trying to increase their domains, and Ethelbert was no exception. The kings were all very jealous of one another, so Ethelbert thought it would be better to look for help outside England. So he visited the king of Paris, to ask his advice on the subject. There he met Bertha, and was greatly attracted by the good and beautiful princess. The king of Paris for his part liked the brave boy-king of Kent, and was pleased with the idea of a marriage between him and his daughter Bertha. But in 567 he died suddenly, and Bertha went to live with her uncle, who now became king of Paris.

Now her uncle would not hear of her proposed marriage with the king of Kent, because Bertha was a Christian and Ethelbert a heathen. But Ethelbert loved Bertha very much, and

he said if he might marry her, he would allow her to keep her Christian religion, and also to bring over a Christian bishop with her. So the uncle consented, and the Princess Bertha was sent over in great state and honour to the unknown land, to become the queen of Kent.

Her new home was a castle in the town of Canterbury, a palace where the kings of Kent always lived. For it was a splendid hall where the king and queen entertained their friends, and where dancing to the pipe and harp often went on. The queen had a bower in the garden, where she could play the lute and ply the shuttle, and she loved to wander in the gardens with the ladies of the court and watch the flowers growing.

Happy years followed Bertha’s marriage; a little son and daughter came to wake up the old castle with their merry voices. They had curious Saxon names, but the little girl was always called “Tata,” which means lively, because she was such a bright little child.

On a hill beyond Canterbury stood the little church of St. Martin, which had been restored for the queen’s use, and there she went daily, while Ethelbert prayed to his idols in a pagan temple near. Bertha longed for him to become a Christian and to convert the heathen men of Kent, but although he was a good king, anxious to improve the laws and the people, he liked [Pg 4] to remain as he was and as his fathers had been before him. At last Bertha’s wish was to be fulfilled.

Now some poor little Saxon children had been stolen away from their homes and taken all the way to Rome as slaves. There they were put out in the market-place to be bought by the people. They were very fair, with blue eyes, light hair, white skins and rosy cheeks, and very different to the Roman children, who were dark.

While the children were there a priest passed by.

“From what country do these slaves come,” he asked.

“They are Angles,” answered the slave-dealer.

“Not Angles, but Angels,” replied the priest, with pity in his voice, “with faces so angel-like.”

Then he asked more about them and their country, and when he heard it was a heathen country, a longing came over him to go and teach the people to be Christians. When the Romans chose him for their bishop, or, as they called him, their Pope or Father, he remembered the little heathen slaves from the heathen land, and he chose a man called Augustine and forty monks to go over to England and teach the people better things.

As Augustine passed through France, he heard that Queen Bertha was already a Christian, and the news made him very hopeful. So he and the monks landed on the Isle of Thanet off Kent, and sent a message to Ethelbert to say they were there and would like to see the king. [Pg 5] And a few days after Ethelbert and Bertha went to the Isle of Thanet to meet Augustine and his men. They wore monks’ dress: loose black gowns, with wide sleeves and hood, and their heads were closely shaven on the top. The king and queen sat on the ground and watched the long array of monks coming nearer, while the words of their litany became more and more distinct. At the king’s command they sat down, while Augustine stood and talked to the king about leaving his idols and letting his subjects become Christians.

“Your words are fair,” answered the king, “but they are new and of doubtful meaning.” Then he went on to say, that though he could not give up his old customs suddenly, yet he would allow Augustine to preach to his people; he would give them a house to dwell in and food to eat, and he hoped their mission might succeed. So the little band marched into the heathen city of Canterbury singing as they went. The people were greatly attracted by their teaching, their simple way of living, their plain food, and gentle manners. Augustine and the monks used to go to Queen Bertha’s little church of St. Martin, and pray, sing, preach, and baptize the people, who soon came promising to give up praying to their idols and to become Christians.

At last, one day the King Ethelbert came to the little church on the hill to be baptized, and you may imagine Bertha’s joy as the king of Kent was led to St. Martin’s Church, never more to enter his little pagan temple. Then many followed his example, and before the end of the year ten thousand Saxons were baptized. The king saw what good work these men were doing, and that St. Martin’s Church was not large enough for all, so he told the people to [Pg 6] build and repair churches all over his land.

Now Augustine could not preach to all these many people, and he wanted to make new priests to help him. But this he could not do till he was made a bishop himself. So he went to an archbishop in the south of France, and was made a bishop with the Pope’s leave. Very soon after he was made Archbishop of Canterbury, and ever since his time there has been an Archbishop of Canterbury, who is not only head of all the clergy, but the highest subject in the queen’s realm. Augustine was allowed to ordain twelve bishops to work under him, and to send to York a very trusty bishop, who might ordain twelve more.

Now the old Britons or Welsh were, many of them, already Christians, and Augustine and Ethelbert thought it would be a good plan to make friends with the Welsh bishops. So they all met under a great oak on the border land, but unhappily the Welsh bishops could not agree with them; for, although they were Christians, they did not do everything as Augustine had been used to do at Rome. So they could not help in preaching to the heathen, and

Augustine went home again. He began to repair an old church in Canterbury, which is the present Canterbury Cathedral.

He died in 605, and the last time we hear of Queen Bertha is at the opening of a great monastery dedicated to St. Augustine. The king and queen and their son took part in the solemn meeting.

About the rest of Queen Bertha's life history is silent. Her death is supposed to have taken place the same year, but we have no record of the event. [Pg 7] She died as quietly as she had lived, leaving us little more to know her by than her influence on the times in which she lived. She was buried in a church named after St. Peter and St. Paul, in a corner called St. Martin's porch, beside St. Augustine, and twelve years later King Ethelbert was laid beside her.

[Pg 8]

MAUDE THE GOOD (1080-1118).

"MAUDE, the good queen;" "Dame Maude, a kind woman and true;" "The good queen Maude;" "Queen Maude, that's right well loved England through." When these are the terms used by the people of her time there is little need to say more about her character.

Born in 1080, she was christened Edith, but as her name was changed to Maude or Matilda, on her marriage, out of compliment to the mother of Henry I., we will call her Maude throughout. Her mother was Margaret, the gentle Queen of Scotland, her father the well-known Malcolm, of whom Shakspere has written, a mighty king, but a man who could neither read nor write.

When Maude was quite a little girl, she was sent with her sister Mary to live with her aunt Christina, the Abbess of Romsey. Now, although she had no intention of making Maude a nun, her aunt compelled her to wear the nun's veil; this made the little girl not only very unhappy, but angry, and, whenever her aunt's back was turned, Maude tore the veil from her head and trampled upon it. One day her father came to the abbey to see his daughters, [Pg 9] and he saw Maude wearing the nun's veil. He was very angry, and, tearing it off her head, he declared that his fair-haired Maude should never be a nun, but that she was to marry Count Alan. It is probable that Malcolm took his two children back to Scotland with him, for the next mention of Maude is beside her mother's death-bed.

Malcolm had invaded England for the fifth time, when he was slain, together with his eldest son Edward. This was heavy news for Prince Edgar to break to his mother.

"How fares it with the king and my Edward?" asked the dying queen, as her son Edgar entered the room. The young prince was silent, but his sad face spoke more than words.

"I know all—I know all," sobbed his mother; "but speak the worst."

"Then your husband and son are both slain!" replied Edgar.

The widowed queen lifted up her hands and eyes to heaven and prayed, and, as the last words were uttered, she died.

Then Maude and Mary were sent back to their aunt Christina to complete their education.

While they were there, the news suddenly burst upon England that William Rufus, the Red King, had been shot by an arrow while hunting in the New Forest, and that his brother Henry intended to be King of England, as Robert the elder brother was away fighting in the Holy Land. Henry said, if the people would only make him king, he would do everything they wished; and, when they at last consented, he pleased them all by marrying Maude, the [Pg 10] daughter of good Queen Margaret, and descended from Alfred the Great, whose memory all England loved.

At first Christina the abbess refused to allow her niece to marry the king, and, knowing what a bad man Henry was, Maude refused too. But at last, commanded by her brother Edgar, urged by the people, entreated by the king, she consented. So they were married on November 11th, in 1100, and Archbishop Anselm preached a very celebrated sermon to the crowds who had come to see the royal wedding. Then Maude was crowned Queen of England, to the joy of the people.

She was very kind to the poor and to all around her; every day in Lent she went barefoot, clothed in haircloth, to wash the feet of the poorest people, after the custom of her mother. She had hospitals built, new roads made, and bridges over the rivers.

One day she was riding on horseback through a ford on the river Lea, with her train of attendants. The river was flooded, and the current sweeping along so fast, that they were in danger of perishing, and out of gratitude for her life, Queen Maude caused the first arched

bridge ever known in England to be built.

In 1102, a little son was born, and named William, after his grandfather William the Conqueror.

Now Robert, the Duke of Normandy, Henry's elder brother, had returned from his wars in the Holy Land, and finding it useless to try and assert his rights in England, he settled in Normandy. But he was very idle; he had spent all his money; it is even said that he had to lie in bed sometimes, for want of clothes to put on, and the Norman people were so unhappy, that they sent for Henry to come and help them. So leaving his wife Maude to govern England, Henry took an army to Normandy, and a battle was fought in which Duke Robert and his little son were taken prisoners. [Pg 11]

It was just forty years after the battle of Hastings; then the Normans came over and conquered the English; now the English went over, and Normandy was conquered. Of course Henry had to spend a good deal of time over there, to reform laws and make peace, but Queen Maude was quite capable of reigning in England, and keeping the people peaceful and happy.

In the summer of 1109 Henry returned to England, and kept court in great splendour at the new palace at Windsor. His little daughter Matilda was just five years old, when the Emperor of Germany, a man of forty-five, begged to be allowed to marry her. The proposal was eagerly accepted by her father, for the union would secure peace between Germany and England, so the little princess was solemnly married. The child could not stand under the weight of jewels with which she was adorned as bride, and had to be carried; she was allowed to live with her mother in England till she was twelve, when she was sent over in great state to her royal husband.

When Prince William was twelve, he was taken over to Normandy, for the Norman barons to swear fealty to him and acknowledge him as their future king. But he was never their king, because he was drowned when he was only eighteen.

A revolt in Normandy to set Robert's little son upon the throne, took Henry and his son away from England again, and the queen was left alone. She was in failing health, and Henry returned to spend Christmas with her, but he could not stay long. He had left Prince William as a pledge that he would return; so he left the queen, and they never met again. Maude lived on in her palace at Westminster, very lonely in heart, although she was surrounded with all the splendour of royalty; her two children were gone, her husband was across the sea. Her only pleasure lay in caring for the poor around her, and making *them* happy. For five months she lived on in her solitude, and in May, 1118, she died, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. She was spared the blow of hearing that her only boy, Prince William, was drowned in the White Ship crossing over to England; spared the misery of knowing that her daughter Matilda, left a widow at twenty-one, was obliged to fight for the crown of England, and spared witnessing the bitter grief of her husband Henry, who, after the loss of his son, never "smiled again." [Pg 12]

ELEANOR OF AQUITAINE (1122-1204). [Pg 13]

ELEANOR of Aquitaine, the wife of Henry II., has been handed down to us by popular tradition, as a tyrannical woman, with a great many bad faults and very few good traits of character. This is not entirely the case. Although her early life was marked by wild and reckless freaks, and though we must blame her for helping her sons against their father, yet we must recognize her, as one whose masterful power in ruling the kingdom kept the country at peace, whose last years were marked by very merciful acts, who never spared herself any trouble for her son, even when bowed down with fourscore years—as a great and illustrious woman.

Her energy from early youth to old age was unrivalled; at the age of twenty-five, she went on a crusade, dressed as a pilgrim, with her husband; at the age of seventy she had the energy to go to Italy with a wife for her son, and to Germany with the ransom she had raised to release him from prison.

Eleanor was born in 1122, in Aquitaine, a dukedom in the south-west corner of France. Count William, her father, was a good prince, and so beloved by his people, that when he died, fighting in the Holy Land, he was remembered as "St. William." He died when Eleanor was ten, and her grandfather undertook to provide for her future welfare. He called together his barons, and made them acknowledge Eleanor as his heiress, and further agree to a proposal that Eleanor should marry the future King of France, Louis, and thus unite the north of France with the south. [Pg 14]

So it came to pass that, when Eleanor was fifteen, she was married with great pomp, for her grandfather had been one of the most powerful princes in Europe. Then her grandfather left

her, laid down his robes, and went off to Spain, where he soon after died. After their marriage, Louis and Eleanor were summoned to the death bed of Louis VI.

“Remember, royalty is a public trust,” were his last words to the future king and queen, and on them the words made a lasting impression.

The new Queen of France was very beautiful; moreover she was musical, and composed songs and poetry; she could read and write, then a rare accomplishment, and was adored by her southern subjects, who always welcomed her with joy, and mourned her absence, when she was obliged to return to her court at Paris.

Now it was at this time that St. Bernard was preaching about the Crusades, and the king and queen with all their court went to hear him. He had to preach in the market-place, as no cathedral would hold the crowds that went to listen. Now the king,—urged by Eleanor,—had already been to war in France, and in course of war he had ruthlessly set fire to a cathedral, in which 1,300 people had taken refuge; all had perished, and the king, stirred by St. [Pg 15] Bernard, resolved to atone for this heartless deed by going to the Holy Land to fight. Eleanor declared that she would go too, so, dressed as a “gay and courtly pilgrim,” and mounted on horseback, she accompanied Louis to the Crusade. But it was not a success. It led to disagreement between Louis and Eleanor, and on their return they obtained a divorce, and Eleanor went back to her own country.

Six weeks after she married Henry, Duke of Normandy, the future King of England. Louis was very angry, because now Aquitaine was united to Normandy; both would soon be joined to England, and Louis foresaw dangerous enemies.

In 1154 Henry became King of England, and he and Eleanor went over to be crowned. Everything looked bright before them; the queen rode by the king’s side into Winchester, and the handsome and brave young Henry with his beautiful wife called forth shouts of joy from the English people.

Soon after her marriage, one day, in the grounds of Woodstock, Eleanor saw the king walking with the end of a ball of silk caught on his spur. Knowing it was not her silk, her suspicions were aroused, and, without letting him see, she took up the ball of silk, and the king walking on, the silk unwound, and the queen traced him to a maze in the park, where he disappeared. Thus runs the story.

Soon after this, the king left Woodstock for a long journey; the queen, remembering the silk, then searched the grounds, and found a low door half hidden by the thicket. She opened it, and went down along a path underground, which at length led out to a lodge in a remote [Pg 16] part of the forest, and here in a bower Eleanor found a very beautiful lady busily engaged in work. This was the fair Rosamond, and she could now account for the silk on her husband’s spur. Eleanor was very angry, and it has been said that she poisoned her rival. Rosamond, however, retired to a convent, where she lived for the rest of her life.

The king was very often obliged to be in France to look after his vast possessions, but he always left Eleanor to rule in his absence, and she governed well and wisely. But the people in her duchy in the south of France did not like her to leave them so much, and at last they broke into open revolt, and would not be pacified till Eleanor went with her third son Richard to govern them for a time.

Now Henry had four sons, Henry, Richard, Geoffrey, and John, who was ten years younger than his brother Geoffrey. The two eldest, Henry and Richard, had, while quite little boys, been married to two daughters of the King of France, by which Henry hoped to keep peace with France.

Geoffrey was to marry the heiress of Brittany, so by this means the King of England possessed more of France than King Louis himself.

Henry and his little wife Margaret had been sent to Thomas à Becket, the Chancellor, to be educated and brought up in a way befitting the future king and queen of England. The children loved Becket, and when in after years Henry and Margaret were summoned to be crowned—in the lifetime of the king—by the Archbishop of York, Margaret refused to [Pg 17] appear, because the guardian of her youth, Becket, was not to perform the coronation.

In 1172, after the murder of Becket, Henry and Margaret were again crowned, and soon after went to the French court to Louis. Now, though they had been crowned, Henry and Margaret could take no share in the government till the king’s death, but Louis stirred up his young son-in-law to rebel against this rule.

At his father’s death Henry was to have England, Normandy, Anjou, Maine, and Touraine; Richard, Aquitaine and Poitou; and Geoffrey, Brittany. Eleanor encouraged Henry to rebel against his father. “I advise you, king, beware of your wife and sons,” were words addressed to Henry, with a warning to look after Aquitaine.

One night the king and his son stopped to sleep a night at Chimon; in the night Henry escaped and fled to the French king, where a few days after he was joined by Richard and Geoffrey. Queen Eleanor attempted to join them, but she was seized—dressed in men’s clothes—escaping to the French court, and soon after Henry came over to fetch her and take her back to England, where he kept her as a sort of prisoner, safely guarded in her palace at

Winchester, for many years.

Then there was peace for a time. Richard, the darling of his imprisoned mother, was the first to renew the war. On being told to do homage to young Henry for Aquitaine, he refused; whereupon Henry and Geoffrey marched against him. But peace was made. Nevertheless, the people of Aquitaine were more enraged than ever. In their eyes Eleanor was their chief, and Henry had no power over them, except through her and by affectionate treatment of her. Now she was in prison,—Eleanor, the princess of their old stock,—the princess born among them, brought up in their midst. [Pg 18]

“Daughter of Aquitaine,” sang the troubadours, “thou hast been torn from thy country and led into a strange land. Return, poor prisoner, return to thy faithful cities, if thou canst; if thou canst not, weep and cry, ‘Alas, how long is my exile!’ Raise thy voice like a trumpet, that thy sons may hear thee; for the day is at hand when thy sons shall deliver thee, and then thou shalt see thy native land again!”

In 1183 young Henry the heir died. When he found he could not live much longer, he sent for his father to implore forgiveness for his wrongdoings. Henry, who had always loved his son, forgave him readily, and the prince—almost passionate in his sorrow—died on sackcloth and ashes as an atonement for his sins.

The following year there was a solemn peace-making between Henry and his three sons. Eleanor was released from her prison to be present, and “peace and final concord” was established. Soon after Geoffrey was killed, and the King of France at once invited Richard to his court. The oft-repeated risings and rebellions of Henry’s sons were making his last days very unhappy. He longed to make peace with Richard, but he could not. The people of the South were against him, his vassals were even forsaking him for Richard. A list was brought of those who had left him; he ordered the names to be read. The first name on the list was John. The king leapt from his bed in agony. [Pg 19]

“Is it true,” he cried, “that John, the child of my heart, the best beloved of all my sons, has forsaken me?”

He looked at the name, as if to make sure there was no mistake; then, turning his face to the wall, he groaned: “Now let everything go as it will; I care no more for myself, nor for the world.”

Richard’s first act as King of England was to release his mother from her captivity, and make her Queen Regent of England. She made a royal progress through England, releasing prisoners throughout the country to pray “for the soul of Henry II.,” pardoning offences against the crown, making the forest laws easier, and restoring to their families those who had been put in prison for disobeying them.

Her long captivity and sorrow for her two dead sons had softened her character, and the latter part of her life was kinder, more merciful, and, therefore, more powerful than the former. When Richard had settled a dower on her, she went back to France. Soon after Richard joined the King of France to go to the crusade, leaving a regent to govern England, and that regent was not his brother John. John felt the slight, but waited till Richard had gone before he put in his claims.

Eleanor’s next step was to go to Spain to fetch Berengaria, the beautiful daughter of the King of Navarre, and take her to Richard, who had fallen in love with her some years before. The royal ladies set off from the court of Navarre together, crossed the Pyrenees, and went to Naples, where they found ships, and crossed to Messina, where Richard met them. [Pg 20]

Now Eleanor had several reasons for taking this long journey to Messina. There was a question who should succeed Richard as King of England, and it was therefore important he should have an heir. Geoffrey’s son Arthur was the rightful heir, as matters stood, but Eleanor hated Arthur and Arthur’s mother, and was anxious to prevent his ever being king. Again, England was not in a happy state, and Eleanor wanted to talk to Richard about it.

Richard left matters entirely in his mother’s hands, and Eleanor returned to England. It required all her efforts to keep the country at peace; it was she who conferred with the barons, she who at last prevailed over her youngest unruly son to remain quiet. After a time came the joyful news that Richard had started for home, but it was followed by the tidings that he had been taken prisoner. Then came a letter from Richard:

“Richard, King of England, to his esteemed lady and dearest mother Eleanor, by the same grace Queen of England, health and all happiness, which a devoted son can wish for his mother. In the first place to God, and afterward to your serene highness, sweetest mother, we send our utmost thanks, although we cannot render enough for the faithfulness which you keep for us, and the faithful care and diligence which you spend so devotedly for the peace and defence of our countries.” [Pg 21]

Then he tells her that if a ransom can be raised, he will receive his freedom. Eleanor at once held a meeting of the barons, and ordered a tax to be made, and the ransom raised. Then she herself set out for Germany with the ransom, and received back her son Richard.

When John heard through the King of France that Richard was returning, he fled. Then Eleanor and Richard held a council, and decreed that if John did not appear in forty days all

his English estates should be forfeited. Then John threw himself at his brother's feet, and implored forgiveness. Richard was loth to forgive, but Eleanor begged him not to refuse, and he always obeyed her.

"I forgive him," he cried, "and I hope I shall as easily forget his injuries as he will forget my pardon."

In 1199 Richard died, leaving the kingdom to John. It was due mostly to Eleanor's influence that Arthur was set aside, and John appointed to reign. But many of the French people hated John, and wanted Arthur to reign over them, and Arthur and his friends marched against a French town where his grandmother Eleanor was staying. On hearing of his mother's danger, John, with unwonted energy, marched to the rescue, and Arthur was taken as prisoner to the castle of Rouen. From this time he disappeared. Some say his uncle drowned him; tradition gives a tragic history of how his eyes were burnt out by Hubert. Our poet Shakspere represents him as throwing himself from a high wall and being killed, but we do not know what the truth really is. Then Eleanor retired to Fonteraux, where she died at the age of eighty-two. [Pg 22]

With his mother's death John lost all fear and shame, and relapsed into depths of wickedness. Sorrow and adversity had taught Eleanor many a stern lesson, and few women have lived to a more honourable old age than "Eleanor, beloved of God and man," as the monks of Canterbury used to address her.

PHILIPPA OF HAINAULT (1313-1369). [Pg 23]

PHILIPPA, afterwards Queen of Edward III. of England, was born in the province of Hainault in Belgium, in 1313. Her mother, the Countess of Hainault, was a wise and good woman, devoted to her husband and her four little daughters, of whom Philippa was the second. Her uncle, Sir John, was a very powerful man, and fought for England when Edward was king. Now, on one of their many visits abroad, the young Prince Edward and his mother came to Hainault, and stayed at Count William's house.

The story runs, that the future King of England took a great fancy to Count William's daughter Philippa, who was about his own age. They had long talks together, and spent a very happy fortnight, and the pretty little Philippa missed her companion very much when he and his mother were obliged to return to England.

On the death of Edward II., his son Edward was crowned king, and it was thought advisable for him to marry. Now it so happened that it would be to the benefit of England to have the Flemings as allies; for the people there were ready to help Edward against the French, and to trade with England; so "a daughter of William of Hainault" was to be selected for the young king. A bishop was accordingly sent over to choose which daughter should be queen. [Pg 24]

Happily for both parties, he chose the tall and pretty Philippa, who started joyfully for England to marry the young king. She received a hearty welcome, and, with her uncle and numerous attendants, went up to York, where Edward and she were married in the winter of 1328, at the ages of fifteen and sixteen. Then they went for the summer to the beautiful palace of Woodstock, while Edward's mother, and Mortimer, a bad and tyrannical man, governed the kingdom.

It was at Woodstock, in 1330, that Philippa's first son was born, the future hero, the Black Prince. To celebrate his birth, a grand tournament was held in London, and a tower was erected and filled with seats, so that the queen and all her ladies might see it. But they had scarcely taken their seats, when, with a crash, the boarding gave way, and all fell to the ground. No one was hurt, but all were very much frightened. When the young king saw the peril of his wife, he flew into a violent passion, and vowed that all the careless carpenters should be put to death. But the gentle Philippa, still trembling from the effects of her fall, threw herself on her knees before him, and pleaded for pardon so hard, that Edward forgave the men.

When Edward was seventeen, he determined to govern the kingdom for himself, and throw off the restraints of his mother and Mortimer, so he shut his mother up in a castle, and Mortimer was sent to the Tower, and sentenced to die, as he deserved. Then Edward began to reform many abuses; many good laws were made, and trade was encouraged with other nations. Philippa, too, knew how well the people in her own country wove wool, so she sent for some of them to come and teach the English. First she made a little colony of weavers at Norwich, and had them taught, often going herself to look after them, and encourage their work. [Pg 25]

During all the early part of his reign Edward was fighting in Scotland, and Philippa went with him whenever she could. Once Edward had been up in Scotland, and had arranged that Philippa should meet him at Durham. Having welcomed him and supped at the priory, she

retired to bed. Scarcely had she undressed, when the monks came to her door in a great state of excitement, to say that it was against rules for any lady—even a queen—to sleep at their priory. Queen Philippa was very much distressed, and, not waiting to dress, fled in her nightgown to the castle close by, where she was allowed to pass the night in peace.

Up to this time Philippa's father had supplied Edward with money to carry on war with Scotland; on his death Edward became so poor that he had to pawn the queen's crown in Germany. Soon after the English people sent their woollen manufactures to Germany, and, instead of receiving money, so the story says, they redeemed their queen's crown.

In 1340, a fourth son was born to Philippa at Ghent, and called John of Gaunt—Gaunt being the old English way of saying Ghent.

Now Edward had entered on a war with France, which had made him poorer than ever. Again the queen's crowns and jewels were pawned, and Edward was getting into so much trouble, that one night he took his wife and baby, and with a few trusty servants crossed to England secretly. The ship was small, the weather cold, the wind was high, and at times their lives were in great danger. However, about midnight they arrived at the Tower in London, to find it unguarded and only occupied by the three royal children and nurses. Edward was in a fury, and had it not been for the gentle Philippa at his side, the guards on their return would have come off very badly. Not only was Queen Philippa a faithful wife, always ready to calm Edward's fits of passion and to encourage the industry of the country, but now we find her ruling his kingdom for him and leading his army to battle.

In 1346, Philippa said farewell to her husband and to the Black Prince, the darling of her heart, who at sixteen was off to the French war with his father. She and Lionel, a child of eight, were left to govern England.

But no sooner had Edward gone, than the King of Scotland invaded England. Philippa did not spend long in wondering what was to be done—she went quickly to Newcastle, where she awaited the English army. When the King of Scotland heard she was there, he sent to say that he was ready to fight! Philippa sent back word, that she was ready too; adding, "My barons will risk their lives for the realm of my lord the king!"

The queen's army drew up at Neville's Cross, and Philippa, on a white charger, so runs the story, was among them. She begged them to do their duty, and to defend the honour of the king; then leaving them to the protection of God, she rode away. She would not stop to fight; her nature was too womanly to stay and see the carnage which was going to take place; she had done all a great queen could do by cheering and encouraging her men; now she would go and pray for victory while the battle raged.

When she heard it was over, she mounted her white horse and rode again to the battle-field, where she heard that not only had a victory been won, but the King of Scotland had been taken prisoner. He was taken on a tall black war-horse through the streets of London, and put in the Tower. The next day Philippa sailed for Calais, and her royal husband held a grand court to welcome his victorious queen. The terrible siege of Calais was going on; the French had defended it bravely, till at last they were so much reduced by famine that they were obliged to surrender. Everything was eaten, even the cats, dogs, and horses; there was no corn, no wine, and the unhappy people were fast dying.

So the governor of Calais came to ask Edward on what terms they could surrender. Edward was very angry at having been kept waiting so long, and refused to spare the people unless the six chief men of Calais would come out bareheaded and bare-footed, with ropes round their necks and the keys of Calais in their hands, ready to die for the rest of the people. The governor returned sad and sick at heart, and calling the people together he gave them the king's message. There was silence for a moment among the feeble few. Then the hero Eustace de St. Pierre cried:

"Oh! never be it said,
That the loyal hearts of Calais
To die could be afraid!

I will be the first, I will willingly give myself up to the mercy of the King of England." Then five others followed his brave example, and the willing captives came before the angry king. They knelt and pleaded for mercy. But in vain. In vain the lords around him begged him to restrain his anger,—he only thundered:

"Strike off their heads, each man of them shall die; I will have it so!"

Then gentle Philippa stepped forth and knelt at the feet of her royal husband:

"My loving lord and husband," she cried, "I have crossed the stormy sea with great peril to come to you—I have been faithful to you all our wedded life—do not deny my request, but, as a proof of your love to me, grant me the lives of these six men!"

The king looked at her in silence, "Lady, I would you had not been here," he cried at last, "I cannot refuse you, do as you please with them."

Then Philippa joyously arose, took the men, fed them, clothed them, and sent them back to their wives, friends, and children.

Soon after Philippa and Edward returned to England. The same year a terrible disease called the Black Death broke out in England, and Philippa's second daughter, a girl of fifteen, died of it. She was just going to marry the Infant Pedro of Spain, and had crossed to France, where he was to meet her, when she was taken very ill with the plague, and died in a few hours. And on the very day appointed for her wedding the little princess was buried.

In 1357, the Black Prince returned to England after his victories of Crecy and Poitiers, and proudly presented his royal prisoner King John to his mother, as well as John's little son, a boy of fourteen, who had fought to the end by his father's side, and had been at last captured terribly wounded. The first day, when at dinner with the king and queen and his captive father, the boy started up, and boxed the servant's ears for serving Edward, King of England, before his father John, King of France.

Philippa, instead of being angry, only smiled at the boy's spirit, and she treated him as one of her own sons as long as he remained with her.

The following year Philippa, her husband, and four sons went to France, leaving Thomas, a child of five, guardian of the kingdom. There she saw her eldest son married.

She did not live to see the sad change which made the last years of her son's life so unhappy; she did not live to see her husband, with a mind once so mighty, sink into helpless old age, but she died in 1369, at Windsor.

When she was dying, she called the king: “We have, my husband, enjoyed our long union in peace and happiness, but before we are for ever parted in this world, I entreat you will grant me three requests.”

“Lady, name them,” answered Edward, “they shall be granted.”

“My lord,” she whispered, “I beg you will pay all the merchants I have engaged for their wares; I beseech you to fulfil any gifts or legacies I have made to churches and my servants; and when it shall please God to call you hence, that you will lie by my side in the cloisters of Westminster Abbey.”

She ceased speaking. The king was in tears. “Lady,” he said, “all this shall be done.” And Philippa the queen died.

MARGARET OF ANJOU (1429-1480).

MARGARET had a difficult part to play in the history of England; married to a weak king, who preferred founding colleges to governing a kingdom, she had to take the reins of government into her own hands. With the interest of her only son at heart, she refused to stand by and see the kingdom snatched from her husband and son; wrath roused her to energy. So far she may have been right, but she was led on to hard-hearted cruelty; love for her son made her bloodthirsty; and when both her husband and son were slain, the woman, once beautiful and strong, was left to go back friendless to her native land, ruined, miserable.

Margaret of Anjou was born in one of the grandest castles in Lorraine in 1429. Her father, René of Anjou, was taken prisoner fighting for his country, when Margaret, the youngest of his four little children, was but a baby.

“Alas!” cried the mother, clasping her little golden-haired Margaret to her bosom, “Where is René, my lord? He is taken—he is slain!”

The four children of the captive prince were very beautiful, and the bards loved to sing of them, and follow them in crowds, and scatter flowers in their path.

When Margaret was but six, it was arranged that she should marry Henry VI., the young King of England, in order to make peace between the two countries.

When her father, René, was released, Margaret went to live in Italy with her father and mother; she inherited her father's taste for learning and love of art. “There was no princess in Christendom more accomplished than my lady Margaret of Anjou,” said a writer of these times.

The news of her charms, beauty, talent and courage reached Henry's ears in England, and he sent for a portrait of the princess. The picture delighted him, and it ended in a truce being signed between the two countries, and Margaret starting for England to marry King Henry. The parting with her uncle, Charles VII. of France, was very affecting; sobs stifled his voice; the young queen could only reply by a torrent of tears, as they parted, never to meet again. It was harder still to part with her father, for “never was a princess more deeply loved in the bosom of her own family.” Neither father nor daughter could speak, but each turned

their different ways, with full hearts.

The people pressed in crowds to look at Margaret when she was married, for "England had never seen a queen more worthy of a throne than Margaret of Anjou."

Now King Henry shrank from the toils and cares of governing the kingdom; he gave himself up to the learning of the country, and all branches of study; so that Margaret found the government of England left almost entirely in her hands. She tried to make the people turn their attention to manufactures and trade, but England was not in a state for peace; the men who had fought at Agincourt thirty years before, and the future soldiers of St. Albans, were not willing to till the soil or weave their clothes. A rebellion led by Jack Cade excited them more, and in 1455 all were ready to take up arms and fight.

Now the cause of war was this: Margaret had no children, and the question was, who should succeed when Henry died. The Earl of Somerset said he was the heir, but the Duke of York thought he had a better right to the throne. This was the beginning of the "Wars of the Roses," as they were called, for the friends of York wore a white rose, the friends of Somerset a red rose.

Now while they were still debating who should be the future king, a little son was born to Margaret. King Henry had been very ill with a sort of madness, and did not know about the birth of his son, till one day Queen Margaret came to him, bringing the baby with her. The king was delighted.

"What is his name?" he cried.

"Edward," answered the queen. Then Henry "lifted up his hands and thanked God."

Still the Duke of York was not satisfied; for he was very jealous of Somerset, who ruled the kingdom when the king was ill. In 1455 Somerset was killed at the battle of St. Albans, and York became very powerful, and still went on fighting, because he wanted to be king.

At last the poor king himself was taken prisoner, and led bareheaded into London, while Queen Margaret and her infant boy fled to a Welsh castle. The next news the queen heard was, that it had been decided, when Henry died, his little son Edward should not succeed him, but the Duke of York should reign.

When Margaret the queen heard this, she was roused to energy. Why should not her son reign when his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather had reigned before him? Among the rocky wilds of Wales she wandered, trying to collect trusty followers, and rouse the nation to fight for her husband and son.

Her youth, beauty, courage, and love for her little child touched the people; they not only gave themselves, but got some of the Scotch people to help too, and Margaret was able to unfurl the banner of the Red Rose at Wakefield, almost before the Yorkists knew she was there. Then a terrible battle was fought, and the Duke of York was slain. His head was cut off, crowned with a paper crown, and taken on a pole to Margaret.

"Madame, your war is done; here is your king's ransom," cried one of her nobles.

At the ghastly sight Margaret shuddered and turned pale; then a revengeful look of pleasure passed over her face, as she laughed long and strangely, and commanded the head of her foe to be placed over the gates of York, ordered another earl to be beheaded, and pushed on to London.

But the people of London would not admit her, and very soon after Edward, son of the Duke of York, was proclaimed king. Seeing the south was against her, Margaret, with her husband and son, fled north to gain help. Many of Somerset's friends joined her, and things were looking brighter, when a large body of Yorkists defeated her array at Hexham. Seized with terror for the safety of her boy, Margaret fled on foot to a forest near, alone and unprotected. There she wandered about with the young prince in unbeaten tracks, weary and anxious. It was growing dark, when, by the light of the moon, Margaret observed a robber of gigantic size coming towards her, sword in hand. The child Edward clung to his mother in terror—but Margaret showed no fear; she took Edward, and thrusting him forward, said, "Behold the son of Henry your king, and save him!"

Struck with the loveliness of the child, the loneliness and courage of the mother, the robber of Hexham knelt down, and dropping his sword, promised to help them, for he was on the king's side. Then taking the little prince in his arms, he led them to a cave in the forest where he lived, and took care of them till it was safe for them to escape to Scotland, and from thence to France.

There tidings reached her of Henry's fate; he had been betrayed into the enemy's hands, and shut up in the Tower of London.

For many years Margaret and her son lived in France, until the tide once more turned in their favour. The Earl of Warwick, who had fought against Henry and Margaret, now turned round, and offered to help the exiled queen and her son to win back the kingdom. It was some time before the haughty queen could make up her mind to forgive him, but the future of her son was very dear to her, and at last she sent him pardoned to England, where he

raised an army and surprised the king, who had to flee for his life.

Meanwhile Margaret and her son were trying to cross to England, but time after time they were driven back by wind and storm, and when they did arrive, it was only to learn that King Edward had returned, gained a victory, that Warwick was slain, and the king again put into prison.

When Margaret heard this crushing news, she fell to the ground in a stupor of despair, for all hope seemed gone. At last her son roused her, he told her that he himself would go and fight, and they started again for Wales, collecting supporters as they went. But King Edward's army met them at Tewkesbury, and a terrible battle took place. Margaret watched it; she saw the battle was going against them; she saw her only son in the thick of it, and it was with difficulty she was kept from rushing into it herself. At last she was carried away insensible, and the next thing she heard was that the battle was lost, her son Edward slain!

Love for her boy seemed the only tender part of Margaret's nature, and she was overwhelmed with motherly grief. A few days after, she was taken captive to the Tower, and at midnight on that same day King Henry, her husband, was put to death.

King René's love for his daughter never failed; he had sympathized with her in all her troubles, shed bitter tears when her son was killed and the kingdom wrenched away, and now he gave up half his own kingdom to ransom the daughter he loved so well.

So Margaret returned to her native land, to her father's home—no longer the beautiful, powerful Queen of England, with spirit to do and to dare, with courage to face any foe; but a desolate, unhappy woman, with all spirit crushed out of her, with no courage left ever to face the world again. Hardened by oft-repeated failure and stormy conflicts, she wandered listlessly about the gardens and galleries of her father's castle, going over and over the sorrows of her past life, her eyes dim and red from continual weeping, caring for nothing. Her father died in 1480, and Margaret did not live long after. She seldom left her retreat to see anyone, and at last, worn out with trouble and sorrow, she died on August 25th, at the age of fifty-one.

THE LADY MARGARET (1441-1509).

MARGARET BEAUFORT, or the Lady Margaret, was the mother of Henry VII., and an ancestor of Queen Victoria. She was by far the greatest woman of her day. "It would fill a volume to recount her good deeds," says a writer of the times. Full of pity and love for the poor, she devoted herself as well to help on the learning of the richer classes; she was a mother to the young students of the Colleges, always ready to forgive injuries done her, ready to work when there was work to be done, and "All England at her death had cause of weeping," writes a bishop who knew her very well.

She was born on the last day of May, 1441, at a large manor in Bedfordshire. Her father was of royal blood, being grandson to John of Gaunt, a son of Edward III. and Philippa of Hainault, about whom you have heard. The child Margaret was named after her mother. At an early age she learnt to read, and, what was considered a rare accomplishment in those days, to write; she was fond of French, and knew a little Latin, but not much, and she often complained in later life because she had not learnt more. Her needlework was beautiful, and it is said that James I., whenever he passed, stopped to see the work done by the fingers of his great-grandmother. There is still a carpet to be seen worked entirely by her. When she grew a little older, she learnt about medicine and sickness, and in later life we find her devoting a part of each day to dressing the wounds of poor people and helping to ease their suffering.

When she was only nine, the Duke of Suffolk, a great man in England, wished her to marry his son John, for he knew she would some day be very rich; but the King of England, Henry VI., wanted the little heiress to marry his brother Edmund Tudor, Earl of Richmond. The little girl did not know what to do. The night before her fate was to be decided, she lay awake, thinking and praying, when suddenly, at about four in the morning, "one appeared unto her arrayed like a bishop, and naming Edmund, told her to marry him," and not the other. The child told her vision to her mother, and soon after she was betrothed to the Earl of Richmond, and when she was fifteen they were married. They went to live in a Welsh castle, but only for a short time. They had not been married two years, when the Earl of Richmond died, leaving Margaret a widow at sixteen. She mourned for him very deeply, but the birth of a little son, the future Henry VII. of England, occupied all her time and thoughts; for he was so delicate and fragile a baby, that it was a question whether he would live or die.

Now the Wars of the Roses were raging in England. Margaret's uncle, the Duke of Somerset, had been killed at the battle of St. Albans, and she thought it safest to stay quietly in Wales, taking no part in the war. Still, it was a trying time for the young mother, closely related to

the fighting parties, listening breathlessly from day to day for news of the victories and losses, watching over the interests of her infant son, the young Earl of Richmond. When he was but a few years old, his mother presented him to the king, Henry VI., his great uncle. Henry solemnly blessed the child, and placing his hands on the young earl's head, said: "This pretty boy will wear the garland in peace, for which we so sinfully contend,"—words treasured by the young mother and remembered in after years.

In 1459 the Lady Margaret married the Earl of Stafford, great-great-grandson of Edward III. and Philippa, and she still lived on in Wales.

Margaret taught her son Henry a good deal herself; the boy was growing up sad and serious and thoughtful, fond of his books, fond of rugged Wales, and as was but natural devoted to his young mother.

The battle of Tewkesbury and accession of Edward IV. made it unsafe for him to remain in England; so with his uncle he went to France, where he stayed for some time.

Separation from her son was a great trial to the Lady Margaret, and her thoughts were constantly with her exiled child.

It was her habit to get up at five in the morning, and pass five hours in prayer. Ten o'clock was the dinner hour in those days, and the rest of the day she devoted to helping the poor around her and to translating French into English, so that those who did not know French might be able to read the English translation. Printing was hardly known in England, so she had to copy out all her writings herself.

In 1482 her second husband died, and not long after she married Lord Stanley, a great friend of the king, Edward V., by which means she hoped to forward her son's cause in England. At the coronation of Richard, the Lady Margaret and her husband were present; for we hear that the Lady Margaret was sent "ten yards of scarlet for her livery, a long gown made of crimson velvet with cloth of gold and another of blue velvet;" she walked just behind the queen and held up her train, a fact which showed she was in royal favour then. But not for long. Besides being a usurper and murderer, Richard III. was a bad king, and the people wanted to depose him, and set on the throne Margaret Beaufort's son, Henry Tudor.

It was proposed that he should marry Elizabeth, daughter of the late king; then all the friends of the Red Rose and the White Rose would join together, and overthrow Richard. Richard heard of the plot, the Lady Margaret was accused of high treason, and it was only by reason of her husband's favour with the king that her life was spared. At last, in 1485, Henry came over from France, went to Wales, collected an army, defeated and slew Richard at Bosworth. Now Lord Stanley had come to the battle with Richard, but just as the battle was going to begin, he took all his men, and went over to Henry's side.

The battle began. Richard fought like a lion, determined to conquer; he knew that Richmond was but a youth, who had never fought before, not even "trained up in arms." To kill the young Henry was his own aim and object.

> "I think there be six Richmonds in the field;
> Five have I slain to-day instead of him!"

are the words which Shakspere puts into his mouth, as the king is again unhorsed. But his enemies were too strong for him. When the battle was over, Richard III. was found dead upon the field of Bosworth, and Lord Stanley, taking the crown which the king had worn in battle, placed it upon the head of Henry, now King of England.

Then came the meeting with his mother. "Tell me," he had said before the battle, when Lord Stanley had come to fight for him and was wishing him victory and fortune, "tell me, how fares our loving mother?" and Stanley had answered, "I bless thee from thy mother, who prays continually for Richmond's good." Now mother and son met again; they had not seen one another for fourteen long years, years of the deepest anxiety to both. Margaret had parted from him as a serious and thoughtful boy—"a little peevish boy," Shakspere calls him; she met him again as a hero, the King of England. One of Henry's first acts as king was to restore to his mother the lands and titles which Richard had taken away from her.

Then Henry married the rightful heiress of the throne—Elizabeth, daughter of Edward IV., and England was once more at peace. A grand coronation took place, and this is what we hear of Margaret. "When the king her son was crowned, in all that great triumph and glory she wept marvellously."

The Lady Margaret loved her daughter-in-law very tenderly, and Elizabeth the queen was always pleased to have her at court. But she did not give herself up to the pleasures and comforts of court life; her work lay in another direction. At one of her large country houses she made a plan to keep twelve poor people, giving them lodging, meat, drink, and clothing, visiting them when she could, and waiting on them herself.

She was the highest lady in England after the queen, but she never thought any service too menial for her, any duty too humble for her to perform. One of her manor-houses she had already given up to a poor clergyman in Devonshire, who had many weary miles to walk from his own house to his church, and was thankful to have a home nearer to his work.

Now while the Wars of the Roses had been going on, William Caxton, having learnt the art of printing, had set up a press in London. Margaret Beaufort was one of his first zealous supporters, and to her he dedicated one of his first printed books. But the name of the Lady Margaret is perhaps best known at Cambridge; for it was there, in 1505, that she founded two colleges, which still exist. One, under the name of “God’s house,” had been founded by Henry VI., but it never flourished, and when the Lady Margaret heard what a state it was in, she refounded it with the title of “Christ’s College.” The college was to hold a master, twelve fellows, and forty-seven scholars, and the countess framed all the rules for them herself. The scholars were to have a certain small sum of money a year for their clothes, which were to be bought at a neighbouring fair; they were not to keep any dogs or birds, and were only to be allowed cards at Christmas time. The Lady Margaret took great interest in the college; one day, when it was but partly built, she went to see it. Looking out of a window, she saw the dean punishing a “faulty scholar.” Her heart was moved to pity, and she cried out, “gently, gently,” thinking it better rather to lessen his punishment than to ask pardon for him altogether. [Pg 44]

In 1506, the king and his mother both visited Cambridge to see the beautiful chapel of King’s College, which was nearly finished.

She did not live to see St. John’s Hospital completely founded (though she obtained consent to have it made into a college), or King’s College finished, but her arms are over the gates of the college, her crest and coronet in the window of the hall; still her name is mentioned every year with the other founders of colleges, and her name is given to buildings and societies and clubs.

In 1509, Henry VII. died, leaving Margaret, “our dearest and most entirely beloved mother,” as he calls her, to choose councillors for her grandson Henry, a boy of eighteen.

At last her strong health began to fail; she had survived parents, husbands, and her only son, but when those around her saw she could not live “it pierced their hearts like a spear.”

“And specially when they saw she must needs depart from them, and they should forgo so gentle a mistress, so tender a lady, then wept they all marvellously, wept her ladies and kinswomen, to whom she was full kind, wept her poor gentlewomen whom she had loved so tenderly before, wept her chaplains and priests, wept her other true and faithful servants.”

She died on June 29th, 1509.

She was buried in Westminster Abbey, in a part called Henry VII.’s Chapel, and a tomb of black marble was erected to her memory. On the top lies a figure of the Lady Margaret in her coronet and robes of state; her head rests on cushions, her feet are supported by a fawn. It is one of the most beautiful monuments in the Abbey, and if you ever go there, look at it and remember the Lady Margaret’s life and work. [Pg 45]

MARGARET ROPER (1501?-1544). [Pg 46]

MARGARET ROPER, daughter of Sir Thomas More, was born on July 10th, in London. She was the eldest of four children, and she was her father’s favourite. She was like him in face and figure; her memory was very good, her sense of humour keen, her love for her father intense and brave.

When Margaret, or Meg, as her father loved to call her, was only six, her mother died, and very soon after her father married a widow, not for the sake of her youth or beauty, but to look after his four little children and manage his household. Such a household, too. Before he went to his work every morning Thomas More set each their appointed task, his wife included; no one was ever idle, no wrangling went on, no angry words were ever heard about the house; the most menial offices were regarded as honourable work, the humblest duties were labours of love. This was the atmosphere in which Margaret’s childhood was spent; no wonder she was loved for her gentle ways and sweet disposition; with the long quiet mornings and fixed studies, no wonder she became a learned and clever woman.

Each member of the family had a pet, and Thomas More said: “No child or servant of mine hath liberty to adopt a pet, which he is too lazy to attend to himself. To neglect giving them food at proper times entails a disgrace, of which every one of them would be ashamed.” [Pg 47]

There is a story told about Margaret Roper, which will show what rigid discipline she was taught as a child, though the story rests on very slight foundation.

One night her stepmother had been churning for a long time, but the butter would not come; so she sent for Meg and her two sisters, and told them to churn till the butter came, even if they sat up all night, as she had no more time, and she could not have so much good cream wasted. They churned, but the butter would not come; they said “Chevy Chase” from

beginning to end to pass the time; they chanted the 119th Psalm through. At last they began to repeat Latin; then they heard the buttermilk separating and splashing in earnest, and at midnight, when poor little Daisy, one of the sisters, had fallen asleep on the dresser, Meg succeeded in making the butter come.

Meg's father—now raised to the rank of Sir Thomas More for his valued services to the king, Henry VIII.—was often away from home for many months together, and Meg used to miss him dreadfully. He had risen to be Speaker in the House of Commons, and his wit and learning were most popular at court. The king would often come to Chelsea and walk round the garden, his arm round the neck of Sir Thomas More, discussing some important matter, to which he wished his favourite's consent. But Sir Thomas did not agree with the king in many things, and he refused to act against his conscience even to win the royal favour. Thus a coolness sprang up between them, which afterwards led to the execution of Sir Thomas More. [Pg 48]

At the age of twenty-four Margaret married Will Roper, more to please her father than herself. He was a good fellow, and had studied hard to please Margaret, and helped her father in much of his work. Margaret would have preferred to study and write, rather than marry, but her father convinced her that "one may spend a life in dreaming over Plato, and yet go out of it without leaving the world a whit better for having made part of it," and her father's word was law with Margaret. Her father's departure to Woodstock, the king's court, was a source of grief to Margaret. Two nights after he left, the household was aroused by shouts of "Fire! fire!" Everybody got up, and it was found that part of the Chelsea house was burnt, though all its inmates escaped uninjured.

In 1530 Sir Thomas More was made Lord Chancellor, but this high post he only held for two years; he refused to sanction Henry's marriage with Ann Boleyn, together with several other things, and resigned the Great Seal in August, 1532.

A great load was taken off his mind, and his spirits returned, but not for long. The storm was about to burst. Threatening visits and letters alarmed the family, and at last the blow came.

Sir Thomas More had refused to take the oath of Supremacy, that is to say, he refused to acknowledge Henry VIII. as Head of the Church, and he was summoned to Lambeth to give his reasons. [Pg 49] It was with a heavy heart that he took the boat to Lambeth, for he was leaving home for the last time, and he seemed to know it. The days when he was gone seemed long and lonely to his daughter Margaret. He refused to take the oath against his conscience, and was sent to the Tower. There Meg used to visit him, and he told her not to fret for him at home; he explained to her his innocence, his reasons for refusing to take the oath, and told her he was happy.

In 1535 he was called to trial at Westminster, and crowds collected to see him pass from the Tower; even his children found it difficult to catch a glimpse of him. Margaret, we hear, climbed on a bench, and gazed her "very heart away," as he went by, so thin and worn, wrapt in a coarse woollen gown, and leaning on a staff, for he was weak from long confinement; his face was calm and grave.

The trial lasted many hours, and Margaret waited on through that long day by the Tower wharf till he passed back. The moment she saw him, she knew the terrible sentence was "Guilty!" She pressed her way through the dense crowd, and, regardless of the men who surrounded him with axes and halberds, she flung her arms round his neck, crying, "My father! Oh, my father!"

"My Meg!" sobbed More.

He could bear the outward disgrace of the king and nation, he could stand without shrinking to hear the sentence of death passed upon him, but this passionate, tender love utterly broke his brave spirit and shook his firm courage.

"Enough, enough, my child! what, mean ye to weep, and break my heart?" [Pg 50]

Even the guards were touched by this overwhelming scene, and many turned away to hide a falling tear. She tore herself away, but only to go a few steps; she *could* not lose sight of that dear face for ever; she must hear him speak once more to her. Again, with choking sobs and blinding tears, she laid her head on his shoulder. This time tears were standing in her father's eyes as he whispered:—"Meg, for Christ's sake! don't unman me." Then he kissed her, and with a last bitter cry of "Oh, father! father!" she parted from him for ever, and the crowd moved on.

With a piece of coal Sir Thomas More wrote a few loving words to his daughter, and on July 5 he was executed, and his head put upon a pole on London Bridge as an example to others who disobeyed the king's orders. Then Margaret's love showed itself in all its most courageous strength.

Soon after midnight she arose, dressed herself, and walked quickly down to the river, where she found boatmen to row her to London Bridge.

> "The faithful daughter cannot brook the summer sun should rise
> Upon the poor defenceless head, grey hair, and lifeless eyes.
> A boat shoots up beneath the bridge at dead of night, and there,

When all the world arose next day, the useless pole was bare."

The head of Sir Thomas More was gone, no longer open to the ridicule of crowds, to the triumph of the king's party, to bear witness to his friends a monarch's infidelity—but safe in the keeping of Margaret Roper.

After the death of Sir Thomas More, his family were driven from their Chelsea home, and Margaret was for a time imprisoned. She died nine years after her father, and the dear and honoured head that the faithful daughter had dared her life to save was buried with her in the Roper vault at Canterbury. [Pg 51]

LADY JANE GREY (1537-1554). [Pg 52]

LADY JANE GREY was born in a beautiful palace half hidden by masses of old trees, called Bradgate Hall, in Leicestershire, in the year 1537. Most of the old hall is now a ruin, but a tower still stands in which the villagers still declare that Lady Jane was born. Her father, Henry Grey, Marquis of Dorset, was one of the king's most powerful noblemen; her mother, Lady Frances Brandon, was a niece of the king, Henry VIII. Jane was the eldest of three daughters; Katharine, her next sister, was two years younger, and therefore her companion in lessons and play. Mary was much younger. The grounds about Bradgate Hall, and the winding trout-stream about which the children played, may still be seen around the ruined palace; but much as little Jane loved the open air and the flowers that grew around, yet she was still fonder of her books.

While quite young her father engaged a master to come and teach his children, and Jane learnt very quickly. Greek, Latin, and French were her great delight; she could sing, play, sew, and write very clearly. With all this she was very sweet in temper, truthful, and beautiful to look at. The queen, Katharine Parr, Henry VIII.'s sixth and last wife, took a great [Pg 53] fancy to the little girl. She was a clever and learned woman herself, and begged Lady Frances Brandon to allow Jane to live with her at court, promising to see that her lessons were still carried on. So at the early age of nine we find Jane attending on the queen, and carrying her candles before her. This was by no means an easy feat to perform, as the little candle-bearer had to walk backwards with the lighted candles. The child did not know, and happy for her that she did not, that she was looked upon by the court as the heiress to the throne of England, and that the queen was trying to fit her for the difficult post she was destined to fill.

When Jane was but ten years old, the king, Henry VIII., died, and his son Edward, a poor sickly boy, the same age as the Lady Jane, was made king.

Soon after, Katharine Parr died, and the little girl walked as chief mourner at her funeral, her long black train being held up by a young nobleman.

After this, the most natural thing would have been for Jane to go home to her mother at Bradgate; but her father and mother thought more of worldly advance than of their child's happiness. They agreed to let her go to Lord Seymour, a scheming and plotting man, who wished to bring about a marriage between the poor little Lady Jane and the young king, Edward VI., who was her cousin. At first Jane's parents pretended—for it was but pretence—that they wished to keep her at home, but when Lord Seymour gave them £500 they consented, for the sake of this contemptible sum of money, to let him take away their pretty little girl to teach her first, and then to marry her to a king. But this never came to pass, for [Pg 54] the following year Seymour was taken to the Tower and beheaded in a horrible way, and his little ward was sent home. Her parents were bitterly disappointed; they treated her coldly, even cruelly, and her only happiness was in her lessons.

One day Roger Ascham, Princess Elizabeth's clever master, came to stay at Bradgate. Passing through the park he saw that the members of the household were hunting, but where was the Lady Jane? She was in her own room, he was told. Thither he went, and found her busily reading a Greek book by Plato. "Why was she not hunting in the park?" he asked, with some surprise.

"I wis," answered the child of fourteen, looking up with a bright smile, "all their sport in the park is but a shadow to that pleasure I find in Plato; they do not know, alas! what true pleasure means!"

Then they had a long talk, and the Lady Jane told Roger Ascham how she loved her books and lessons, and how thankful she was for her kind master. For she was never happy with her father and mother; they were sharp and severe with her, and whether she talked or kept silent, sat or stood, sewed or played, it was sure to be wrong. They laughed at her, scolded her, often even pinched and nipped her, till she longed for her lesson hour, when she could go back to her gentle teacher. There the time passed so quickly, and he was so good to her, and when lessons were over she would often cry, because everything else was "so full of

great trouble and fear."

[Pg 55]

The gentle and clever girl was greatly beloved; her master was duly proud of his young pupil, whose knowledge of languages was quite wonderful, and surprised many an older scholar than himself. Greek was her favourite study, and the last letter she ever wrote was written to her sister Katharine on a blank leaf in her Greek Testament.

Lady Jane Grey spent the Christmas of 1551 with the Princess Mary, with whom the family were on very friendly terms. But the cold weather and the long winter walks she had to take injured her health, and she became very ill. Her slow recovery gave her plenty of time for work, and long letters still exist in Greek and Latin that she wrote to Roger Ascham, and also to many foreign students, who thought very highly of the noble Lady Jane.

Up to this time friendship had existed between Princess Mary, who was a Roman Catholic, and Lady Jane. One day Mary gave her a rich dress. Lady Jane did not care to wear bright colours, as she always dressed in the Puritan style.

"What shall I do with it?" she asked.

"Marry, wear it, to be sure," replied Mary.

But this Lady Jane refused to do, even to win favour with the princess.

This offended Mary. She had heard rumours, too, that Lady Jane, being a Protestant, was likely to succeed Edward VI., instead of herself, and thus the Lady Jane slowly dropped out of favour at court.

Lady Jane's father now occupied a high post; he had become Duke of Suffolk by the death of two elder brothers, and helped the Duke of Northumberland to govern England till the young king, Edward, should be old enough to govern for himself. [Pg 56] But Edward instead of growing better grew worse; always delicate, an attack of measles left him worse, and he could not get rid of a bad cough. When the dukes found he was not likely to live long, they began to scheme for his successor. Of course Suffolk wanted his daughter to be queen; of course Northumberland wanted his son to be king; so they agreed that Suffolk's daughter, Lady Jane, should marry Northumberland's son, Guildford Dudley, and reign as king and queen of England.

The poor young king, Edward, was weak and ill, and his strong Protectors could easily make him say that his Protestant cousin, Lady Jane, and her husband, Guildford Dudley, should succeed him, instead of his sisters Elizabeth or Mary.

Guildford was tall and very handsome; he was his father's pride and darling; but when Lady Jane was told that he was to be her husband, she was very angry, and refused to marry him. In vain her father urged her, and told her the king himself had ordered the marriage.

"And do you mean to disobey the king as well as your father?" he asked harshly.

We are told that he had recourse to blows at last; anyhow, the poor Lady Jane was too unhappy to hold out any longer; her life could not be much more miserable than it was, and she gave her consent at last.

On a summer day, Whitsunday, 1553, when Edward the king was lying at the point of death, Lady Jane Grey was married to Guildford Dudley, [Pg 57] and very soon after she was told by her mother-in-law suddenly off-hand, that she must hold herself in readiness at any moment to be crowned Queen of England! For a moment Lady Jane was stunned, almost stupefied, till the utter misery of her position slowly dawned upon her. She was to take the throne from the Princess Mary, who was the rightful queen, and reign over a people who would look on her as a usurper instead of pitying her as a helpless woman. The future weighed heavily on her mind; she became very ill, and was taken to Chelsea, to the house of her father-in-law, for change of air, there to await the king's death.

Late on one summer afternoon, the summons came for her to go at once to Sion House, whether well or ill. A barge was at the door to convey her up the river. What a long two hours it seemed to Lady Jane till the barge arrived at Sion House! She found the hall empty, but no sooner had she arrived than the two Protectors, her father and Northumberland, her mother and mother-in-law, and many dukes and earls entered, all bending low before her. Her cheeks grew hot, her heart beat fast. She understood everything. The young king was dead. She was Queen of England. A long speech was made, and all present swore to protect and serve her as queen, but it was all too much for the Lady Jane, already ill and unhappy. She tottered and fell to the ground, weeping bitterly; there she lay as one dead, her face white as marble, her eyes closed. When she came to herself she raised herself on to her knees, [Pg 58] and prayed that, if to succeed to the throne were her duty and right, she might govern the realm of England well and justly.

Very early next morning, still weary from the excitement of the former night, the queen and her attendants came down the Thames in barges, and landed near the Great Hall of the Tower. Then a long procession was formed. Guildford Dudley walked beside his royal wife, cap in hand, bowing to the ground whenever she spoke. Crowds lined the way, and knelt as she passed to be crowned their queen; little did they know how gladly she would have changed her lot with any of her poorer subjects if she could. Her life grew more unhappy;

she could not sleep; she fainted often while talking to her council.

One day she heard that her father, the Duke of Suffolk, was going to march against the Princess Mary, who had been proclaimed queen in many parts of England; but she was so alarmed at being left alone with the Dudleys, and wept so bitterly, that he consented to stay with her, and let Northumberland go instead. But he met with no success. There were no shouts of "God save Queen Jane!" no one cried "God speed ye!" He found that Mary's party was growing rapidly in strength, and that she had been proclaimed queen everywhere but in London itself.

The news fell heavily on the queen; sleep forsook her entirely; the long nights were "full of great trouble and fear," though she knew the Tower was barred and locked. At last the blow came. One day the queen had promised to stand godmother to a child; not being well enough to go she sent her attendant. The attendant was not gone long, but on her return she found officers in possession of the room, the royal canopy down, and was told that "Jane Grey was a prisoner for high treason." Thus from the state apartments she followed her to the prison rooms of the Tower.

She was still in the Tower, no longer a queen, but a prisoner; her nobles had deserted her, her subjects had risen up against her, her father and mother were gone, and her husband was separated from her.

On October 1st, 1553, Mary was crowned queen amid the cheers of the people; and the Duke of Suffolk, father of the late queen, was one of the first to acknowledge Mary as Queen of England.

The following month Lady Jane and her husband were accused of high treason; they pleaded guilty to the charge, and sentence of death was passed upon them. Husband and wife looked on one another for the last time, and Lady Jane was taken back to the Tower, there to await her death. A dismal Christmas passed, and the new year of 1554, which was to see so many bloody deeds, opened.

Queen Mary was forced somewhat against her will to sign the death warrant, and "Guildford Dudley and his wife" were informed that February 12th was the day fixed for their execution. Still, if Lady Jane would change her religion, become a Roman Catholic, and obey Mary, she might have her liberty and her life; but this she refused to do—rather death than that.

Guildford Dudley was the first to die; he had begged for a last interview, a last kiss from his wife, and it had been granted by the queen, but Lady Jane refused, saying it would be too much for them, and unnerve her completely. So she stood at the Tower window, and waved him a silent farewell, sobbing, "Oh, Guildford, Guildford!" An hour afterwards she was led forth for execution; she walked with a firm and steady step, and addressed to the crowd a few touching words, which drew forth heartfelt sympathy for the courageous and noble woman who was going to die. She said a psalm, her eyes were bound, she forgave willingly the man who was about to cut off her head, and in a few moments her unhappy life was ended.

PRINCESS ELIZABETH (1596-1662).

ELIZABETH, eldest daughter of James I., was one of the most heroic women of her time; first an English princess, then a foreign queen, and lastly almost a beggar in a strange land, she always managed to be bright, and to cheer those around her, when she could.

She was born in August, 1596, in a Scotch palace, and as she was the first daughter of the Scotch king, a regular establishment of nurses, rockers, and attendants was provided for her; she was given everything that could make her happy, supplied with costly dolls, and dressed in velvet or plush.

When Elizabeth was only seven, her godmother, the Queen of England, died, and James I., her father, went to England to be crowned king, thus uniting the two countries of Scotland and England. Elizabeth and her elder brother Henry went with their father and mother, and all were received with great joy in England. The children only stayed at court three weeks, when they were sent to an old abbey in the country with tutors and governesses. Here they were very happy; they played about the lovely grounds round the abbey, rode and hunted, breathed the free country air, and learnt their lessons in large spacious rooms. Elizabeth could write very well even at seven, and whenever her brother was away, she wrote him charming little letters between lines ruled in red ink. When she was nine Gunpowder Plot was discovered.

"I can easily enter by the gate yonder, and with the aid of a dozen men carry off the princess, while the rest catch her attendants," were words heard by the children one day

while playing near the high road. It was clear she must be taken away at once.

"No, I can never leave my dear Henry," cried the child, when told they must part, and so tightly did she cling to him, that it was with difficulty her arms were unclasped.

Soon after this a suite of rooms were fitted up for her at court, and there for a short time she enjoyed the splendours of court life. But when only fourteen, little more than a child, a husband was chosen for her from a foreign country. Frederick, the future Elector Palatine, was only sixteen himself, when he was sent for to come over to England and marry the Princess Elizabeth.

The whole family were assembled to welcome him when he arrived.

Elizabeth stood by her brother Henry on a raised platform, her eyes fixed on the ground, while Frederick with a firm step and beaming face walked up the long hall. When he reached the king and queen, Elizabeth looked up to see a dark handsome boy with a pleasant face and manly figure. He bowed very low and kissed her hand, and apologized in broken English for appearing in his travelling clothes and not in court dress.

The month before her marriage her brother Henry was seized with a severe fever, and it soon became evident that he could not live. Elizabeth was in despair, she refused to obey the order not to enter the sick room of her beloved brother, and one evening she stole away from the festivities of the court, disguised herself, and hurried eagerly to him, but only to be sent back by the watchful attendants, who were more anxious for her safety than pitiful of her sisterly love. "Do not be so cruel. Take me to him, if only for a minute." There was a hungry, yearning look in her brown eyes, the tears rolled down her cheeks, and it was hard to refuse such a request. But the guards were firm.

"Oh, where is my dear sister?" were Henry's last words. This was the first great sorrow in Elizabeth's life, and the beginning of the darker days in store for her, which were to bring out all the courage of her womanly nature.

On St. Valentine's Day, 1613, the wedding took place. Prince Frederick was dressed in cloth of silver embroidered with diamonds; his bride wore cloth of silver too, shining with pearls and diamonds, and her long and beautiful hair hung over her shoulders to her waist.

After a few months of English festivities the young couple made their way to their new home at Heidelberg, where they were received with great joy.

Now Frederick was, by his father's death, Elector Palatine, that is, he ruled over part of Germany under the Emperor. The Emperor had made a cousin of his King of Bohemia, but that cousin was a Roman Catholic, and the people of Bohemia did not like him, so they dethroned him, and sent to Frederick to ask him to come to help them and be their king. It was a critical position for Frederick; he saw it might, and probably would, lead to war; his mother begged him to refuse, but his wife Elizabeth would not hear of such a thing. The sparkle of a crown glittered before her eyes; she trusted Frederick to keep peace and reign well over the people who had chosen him as king. "I had rather feed on a dry crust at a king's table than feed on dainties at that of an elector!" cried Elizabeth. Thirty years later she knew what it was to eat a dry crust, but not at a king's table.

So Frederick consented to become King of Bohemia, and he, Elizabeth, and their three little children left their beautiful Heidelberg home to be crowned king and queen. Great were the rejoicings; bells rang, bonfires were lit, cheers of "Long live King Frederick!" echoed through the air, while those who were near enough kissed the hem of the new queen's robes, for Elizabeth had already won their hearts; she ordered bread and wine to be given to all who came to the castle, and by her goodness and generosity won the name of "Queen of Hearts." But their position of King and Queen of Bohemia was not secure; jealousy began to show itself in the princes round them, and Frederick felt that at any moment the threatened storm might burst. He had been growing more and more unpopular, and at last war was declared.

The more critical Frederick's position, the firmer grew Elizabeth.

"I persuaded you to be crowned king, I was with you in those happy and joyous days, I will stand by you in trouble," she said, and not only said, but did. She sent away her children, only keeping Prince Rupert, a baby of but a year old. The first battle was lost, and in anguish Frederick hastened to his wife, begging her to escape at once. But she would not leave him. If he would come, she would go; if not, they would stay together. His subjects begged their king to stand firm; they reminded him of his oath to guard his kingdom to the last; a raid on the enemy might yet turn the scale. But where his wife's life was in danger, Frederick refused to stay, and together they escaped from their kingdom. Still relying on help from England, they hoped on, and Frederick again joined the army. Leaving behind her a baby of a month old and her other children, Elizabeth again followed her husband, knowing that she alone could cheer him and keep up his spirits. Once more she travelled through parts of the country where, only six years ago, she had been welcomed as a happy bride; now she wandered an outcast and an exile, with but the empty title of queen to make up for the loss of a home, country, friends. When Heidelberg, their lovely home, fell into the hands of the enemy, Elizabeth cried piteously, "My poor Heidelberg taken! Oh! God visits us very severely; the misery of these poor people distresses me sadly!"

Still the war, known as the Thirty Years' War, went on, and Frederick was often away for many months together.

In 1629, a terrible grief befell Elizabeth in the death of her eldest son Henry. He was in a yacht with his father one day, when a large vessel bore down upon them, and struck them; the yacht filled with water, and in a moment sank. All on board perished save King Frederick. [Pg 66]

"Save me, father, save me!" was the drowning cry of the boy, but all efforts to save him were in vain, and the distracted father had but to go back, and break the news to his wife. The mother's grief was so violent, that she became very ill, but when she found how heartbroken Frederick was with the thought that he was saved and his boy drowned, she roused herself to comfort him.

Things were looking brighter; a new hero had come to the aid of the unhappy king, when his troubled life was suddenly ended. A bad fever set in, and as he was weak and anxious it took deadly hold on him. His last effort was a letter to his wife. "Can I but live to see you once again, I shall die content," he wrote—but they did not meet.

The blow fell heavily on Elizabeth; for three days she neither ate, drank, slept, nor shed a single tear. She could hardly realize that all hope of regaining the kingdom was gone, and that he whom she had loved so devotedly through the twenty years of her married life was dead. Her comfort was in her children; her second son Rupert was specially dear to her. While still a boy, the future hero of Edgehill and Marston Moor distinguished himself by fighting to get back his father's rights; a wild, reckless youth, he was taken prisoner fighting for his father's cause rather than give up, or flee, as his elder brother had done. When in prison he managed to scribble a few words of comfort to his mother, assuring her he was well, and would come back to her as soon as he was released. [Pg 67]

When the sudden news arrived that Elizabeth's brother Charles had been executed, and Cromwell made Protector of the kingdom, Prince Rupert, the daring royalist, was one of the first to offer himself to the future Charles II. to help to regain the kingdom.

Meanwhile, Elizabeth was almost penniless. "Next week I shall have no meat to eat, and this week, if there be no money found, I shall have neither meat, nor bread, nor candles," she wrote piteously to her son Charles. Rupert would have given her his last crust, but Charles, Elector Palatine, refused to supply her wants.

At last the exiled queen made up her mind to return to England, and end her days in the land of her childhood.

Sophia, her youngest child, was married, and lived with her husband, the Prince of Hanover, in his own country. She was a beautiful and clever woman, and constantly went back to see her mother, and cheer her solitude. Sophia's son was George I. of England, from whom is descended Queen Victoria. She and Prince Rupert came to bid farewell to their mother before she left their land for ever.

What a different return to England; no crowds lined the coast, no shouts resounded from the citizens as on her departure, forty years before, as a happy young bride. When the widowed queen stepped on English soil, her heart revived. She had lived to see Charles II., her nephew, restored to the throne of England—her son restored to the Palatinate. Craven, her faithful friend, took her to his home, but she did not live long. The passionate love of her son Rupert, the wild and daring royalist, comforted her to the end, and "Prince Rupert of the Rhine" was the only one of her many children who followed her to the grave. She was buried by night at Westminster. While the long torchlight procession moved up the Abbey, a fierce gale raged; some thought it was a foreboding of future troubles to England; some thought it was like the troubled life of the Bohemian Queen; the faithful Craven bowed his head, and thanked God that his lady was beyond the wild storms of the world. [Pg 68]

LADY RACHEL RUSSELL (1636-1723). [Pg 69]

ENGLAND was in a troubled state when Lady Rachel Russell was born.

Charles I. was king, but the people were not happy under his rule. England became divided into two parties—some for him, and some against him. Among the king's firmest and most staunch supporters was the Earl of Southampton, Rachel Russell's father. He was a loyal Englishman, and when affairs came to a crisis, and civil war broke out—though he saw what must be the result—he stuck to his king, and fought manfully for him. He married a French lady of noble birth, and had two daughters, Elizabeth and Rachel.

When Rachel was yet a baby, her mother died. She never had much education, perhaps because her father was a great deal away, and she had no mother to watch over it; perhaps

because the country was in too disturbed a state for any progress in learning; and the result is, that her letters are full of mistakes in spelling. She must have heard a great deal about politics as a child; for her father took his seat in the Long Parliament when his little daughter was only six; she must have heard him talk of the battle of Edgehill and the bravery of Prince Rupert; she must have heard about Oliver Cromwell; and when she was [Pg 70] thirteen, all England rang with the news that Charles the king was beheaded. Her father was one of those faithful four, who, on that snowy winter day, bore the coffin of the king to the royal tomb at Windsor. Then he took his family away into Hampshire, while Oliver Cromwell was at the head of the English government.

When she was seventeen, her father chose her a husband in Lord Vaughan.

“It was acceptance rather than choosing on either side,” she said in after life. However, the young couple went to live in Wales, and were very happy, and everyone loved her and respected her.

“All that know you are forced to honour you,” wrote a friend to her one day, “neither are you to thank them for it, because they cannot do otherwise.”

Fourteen happy years passed away, and then Lady Vaughan was left a widow. She went to live with her elder sister Elizabeth, now Elizabeth Noel, whom she loved very dearly. Her father was dead, and Elizabeth had inherited his seat in Hampshire; so, in the home where they had played as children, the two sisters now lived together.

In 1669 she married William Russell, a young nobleman. Having travelled abroad, he had returned to England in time to become a member of the House of Commons which restored Charles II. to the throne, and from this time he took a prominent part in the politics of the day. He consulted his wife about everything; he was guided by her advice in moments of extreme difficulty; he depended on her judgment, and he found it just and good. On the other hand, she watched every event in which her husband’s interest was concerned, with [Pg 71] unwearying love; his happiness and success were hers, his sorrows and defeats were shared by her too. They were not often parted during the fourteen years of their married life, but when they were separated their letters show how long the time seemed, and how drearily the days passed.

“The few hours we have been parted seem too many to me to let this first post-night pass without giving my dear man a little talk,” she wrote to him, when he had been obliged to be present at the parliament, just called together again. She tells him about their little child named after her mother, Rachel, how she “fetched but one sleep last night,” and how “very good she was this morning;” how she is writing in the nursery with “little Fubs,” as they generally called her, and how she knew the father would be rejoiced to hear that Fubs “was breeding her teeth so well,” and beginning to talk.

The letters are badly written, bad grammar is used, and the spelling neglected, but they are so homely and happy, they are written with such ease and enjoyment, that we forget that the writer was never really educated, though an earl’s daughter.

In 1679 Elizabeth Noel died. This was no common loss to Lady Rachel Russell; it was her only sister, her beloved, the person whom, next to her husband, she loved most dearly in all the world. Though she writes to her husband of her loss, she does not fill her letters with her own feelings; she tries to rouse herself to public affairs, which will interest him more, and chats about the three little children and their doings and sayings. She taught the children herself, and their happiness and welfare was her great object in life; she liked “Fubs” to [Pg 72] write to her father whenever he went away, and the conscientious little girl used to bring a tiny letter to be enclosed, though sometimes tears were shed when the spelling and writing would not come right.

Nevertheless, very anxious times were hovering over England, and Lady Rachel Russell was not blind to her husband’s danger.

Lord Russell had been in the parliament that called Charles II. to the throne; but slowly he and many others awoke to the fact that they had blundered. Charles was weak, selfish, unfit to rule England, unsettled as she was then, and a few years after the Restoration Lord Russell, together with others, joined the country party against the court. He was a generous, kind-hearted man, “raised by birth and fortune high above his fellows,” and he soon became one of the most powerful opponents of the court, one of the most influential leaders of the country party. By the Whigs he was honoured as a chief; he was one of those who wished to exclude the Duke of York, brother to Charles II., from the throne on account of his religion.

In 1678 Lord Russell was supporting a bitter measure against the court party. Lady Russell was very much alarmed; she wrote to him in the House, and begged him not to support it.

“If you do, I am most assured you will repent it; if I have any interest, I use it to beg you to be silent in this case, at least to-day.”

[Pg 73] In 1681 a crisis arrived. The king and parliament could no longer act together, and when parliament was dissolved, two men were at the head of the struggle. One of these was Lord Russell. Meetings were held; some proposed to overthrow the king and set up a new ruler; others wished to rise and murder Charles II. But they were discovered, and Lord Russell was

arrested. The messenger waited about the door for many hours, so that Lord Russell might have escaped, for the back door was open, but he would not; “he had done nothing,” he said, “which caused him to dread the justice of the country.” Lady Russell consulted his friends, and they agreed he ought not to fly.

Then he was sent to the Tower. It was the 26th of June. During the fortnight that elapsed between his arrest and trial, Lady Russell spared neither pains nor energy in finding supporters to defend her husband. She was constantly with him, she wrote for him, she encouraged his timid friends, she strengthened his firm ones, she left not a stone unturned to provide against the charges which would be brought forward to crush him whom she loved so dearly.

At last the trial came. The night before, Lady Russell wrote a few lines to her husband; she told him that she was going to be present, for friends thought she might be of use; she begged him to keep up heart for *her* sake as well as his own. The court was densely filled; as Lady Russell entered, her pale face calm and brave, a thrill of anguish ran through the crowd.

“We have no room to sit down,” said the counsel. Lord Russell asked for pen, ink, paper, and the use of any papers he had, adding, “May I have somebody to write for me?”

“Any of your servants shall assist you in writing anything you please,” said the Chief Justice.

“My wife,” said Lord Russell, “is here to do it.” And Lady Russell stood up in the midst of that crowded court to show that she was willing, more than willing, to fulfil this almost sacred office for her husband.

“If my lady will give herself that trouble,” said the judge, carelessly.

Trouble! It was no trouble to her. The resolute wife took her seat beside her husband, took up the pen, and during the whole long trial sat there, his only secretary and adviser.

Even when the sentence of death was pronounced, Lady Russell did not give way. She tried later to move the heart of the king, but in vain; though she was the daughter of one of his oldest and most faithful servants, he refused pardon, unless Lord Russell would change his opinions.

“It is all true,” said the king when Russell’s innocence was pleaded; “but it is true that, if I do not take his life, he will take mine.”

Slowly all hope disappeared, and the fatal day approached. Lord Russell wrote to the king, “I hope your majesty’s displeasure against me will end with my life, and that no part of it shall fall on my wife and children.”

His last thoughts were for his wife; he dreaded the blow for her more than for himself. The parting with her was the hardest thing he had to do, for he was afraid she would hardly be able to bear it, he said to Burnet, the bishop who was allowed to be with him the last few days.

Tears came into his eyes when he spoke of her. The last day came, and Lady Russell brought the three little children to say good-bye for ever to their father. “Little Fubs” was only nine, her sister Catherine seven, and the baby three years old, too young to realize his loss. He kissed them all calmly, and sent them away.

“Stay and sup with me,” he said to his wife. She stayed, and they ate their last meal together. Then they kissed in silence, and silently she left him. When she had gone, Lord Russell broke down completely.

“Oh, what a blessing she has been to me!” he cried. “It is a great comfort to me to leave my children in such a mother’s care; she has promised me to take care of herself for their sakes; she will do it,” he added resolutely.

Lady Russell returned heavy-hearted to the sad home to which she would never welcome him again, there to count the wretched hours till the fatal stroke was given.

On July 21st, 1683, she was a widow, and her children fatherless. They left their dreary London house, and went to an old abbey in the country, where Lady Russell gave herself up to the education of her children. She never neglected this duty she had taken upon herself, and her daughters never had any other teacher but their mother. She tried to dismiss her sorrow for their sakes, and interest herself in their pleasures. Politics still interested her, and it was with troubled feelings she saw James II. mount the throne of England.

In 1688 her eldest daughter Rachel was married. The same year the Great Revolution began.

In 1689, William and Mary were crowned; one of their first acts was to annul the sentence against Lord Russell. When the parchment which effected this was laid on the table of that assembly in which, eight years before, his face and his voice had been so well known, the excitement was great. One old Whig member tried to speak, but could not. “I cannot,” he faltered, “name my Lord Russell without disorder. It is enough to name him. I am not able to say more.”

Lady Russell's health was broken, and she was threatened with blindness. It has been said that she wept herself blind, but this is hardly true. It was discovered she had cataract, and must give up writing by candlelight and reading.

Soon after her son, Lord Tavistock, was married at fifteen to a rich heiress, and her daughter Catherine to a nobleman.

An amusing account is given of Catherine and her husband, which shows what favour the family was in at this time.

When they drew near Belvoir, where they were going to stay, verses were presented them on the occasion of their happy marriage; at the gate stood "four-and-twenty fiddlers all in a row; four-and-twenty trumpeters with their tan-tara-ra-ra's; four-and-twenty ladies, and as many parsons."

Her son was only just married when Lady Russell was requested to let him stand to be elected to the House of Commons. He was just going to Cambridge to study, a mere boy, and his mother, feeling it would ruin his future, and turn his head, to enter parliament so young, refused, though the offer was a tempting one.

In 1701 she was called to the deathbed of that son, who had caught small pox, which was raging at that time. His wife and little children had been obliged to flee from it, and his mother was left to comfort his last hours.

"I did not know the greatness of my love to him, till I could see him no more," she cried, when he had gone. She was confused and stunned by the suddenness of his death, but she had need of all her strength, for another blow was close at hand.

Six months after, her second daughter Catherine died. Rachel, Duchess of Devonshire, was very ill at the time, but, knowing of her sister's illness, she constantly enquired for her. It was all the poor mother could do to keep up herself, and conceal from Rachel the death of her sister for a time.

The last years of Lady Russell's life were calm, but very sad;—her husband, her son and daughter, were all gone, and she longed to follow them.

At last, on a September day in 1723, she died in the arms of her daughter Rachel, the little "Fubs" of bygone days, and she was buried beside the husband whom she had loved and served so devotedly during the few happy years of their married life.

ANGELICA KAUFMANN (1741-1807).

ANGELICA KAUFMANN, though the name is foreign, though she was born on the banks of the German Rhine, may still be called an Englishwoman, for her work lay chiefly in England, and the greater part of her life was spent in this country. Although no mighty heroine, she was on the one hand a lover of art, a painter, a musician, in the eyes of the public beautiful and popular; on the other, a genuine, true-hearted woman, often deceived, but never deceiving, true to the world, and true to herself. She was born in 1741, at a town on the Rhine, in a wild and picturesque district.

Her father, John Kaufmann, had been a sort of travelling painter, mending a picture here, copying one there, and painting signs for the public houses in the neighbourhood. In the course of his travels he had met a German girl, married her, and their only child they called Marie Anne Angelica Catherine; so, though born to poverty, she was rich in names. John Kaufmann then took to painting as a means of livelihood. The first toys that little Angelica had were his paint-brushes, his unstrained canvas, his bladders of colour, which she would play with till her little fingers were discoloured, and her pinafore daubed all over.

It was not many years before it became evident that the little girl would surpass her father in the love—if not in the art—of painting. When he gave her copy-books to learn her letters, she left the words unwritten, and copied the pictures only. Instead of playing with childish toys, she would get scraps of paper and copy the pictures and models in her father's studio, or sketch the trees and houses in the country round.

Then her father began to teach her drawing; he showed her how to mix the colours, and lay them on; he explained to her about light and shade, and gave her models to copy. When they went out for walks, he would take the child's hand and make her look well at the faces of the people they passed, then draw their features when she got home. So little Angelica, or Angela, as her father loved to call her, learnt to love drawing and painting more and more. When she was eleven, her father moved to Como in Italy; here people heard of Angelica and her wonderful power of painting, and the Bishop of Como offered to sit for the little girl to paint him. He was an old man with a long flowing beard, a difficult subject for such a young artist, but Angelica did it, and the portrait was such a success that the Archbishop of Milan

and many other great Italians sat to be painted by the eleven-year-old child, until she had more work than she could well do. Still she went on, learning, copying the Old Masters' pictures, and teaching herself the old Italian art.

When she was sixteen her mother died. Poor little Angelica took it terribly to heart, and her father thought it best to leave Italy and go to Switzerland, so that change of scene might divert her mind. Her father's love for her was unbounded; he petted her, he loved to sing her praises, to call her his Angel, his Angelina, his little artist daughter, and she returned it with all the warmth of her lonely little heart.

Once Angelica was entrusted to paint alone an altar-piece on the wall of a village church. Day after day father and daughter went to the church, and Angelica would sit on the top of a high scaffolding, her dark hair falling over her shoulders, her eyes eagerly fixed on the fresco before her, on which angels, lambs, doves, grew under her clever fingers. Below stood the honest John Kaufmann watching the form he loved so well, his arms folded, his head thrown back, and feelings of pride and joy kindling in his heart.

Besides her love for painting, Angelica was intensely fond of music, her voice was pure and sweet, and she could play wonderfully well. She learnt to conquer the most difficult of the grand old Italian pieces, and would sing from memory the old ballads to amuse her father when he was melancholy and troubled. And this was often the case. He had little money, he had nearly starved himself to give his daughter the education he knew she deserved; the roof was humble, the beds were hard, the sheets coarse, the bread dark and sour. Angelica had to mend her own scanty and often thread-bare clothes. But the time was coming when she would have money enough to dress in silk and satin had she wished.

On their return to Milan, John Kaufmann was urged strongly to have Angelica educated for the stage; her beauty and her voice would soon win her renown, they said; managers made her tempting offers, and her father was ready to give his consent. But Angelica was true to her art. The stage had its attractions for her; the offer was a tempting one; she drew a picture of herself standing between music on one side and painting on the other, turning towards painting, and bidding a tender farewell to music. Then bravely, though not without a sigh, she took up her brushes, and with fresh energy set her whole mind to painting.

In 1763 she took up her abode in Venice to study and paint pictures; six years of travelling among Italian art had widened her experience and given a firmer grasp both to mind and hand. Countesses, duchesses, ladies, came to see her, and sit for their portraits, and when, in 1766, a rich lady offered to take her to England to make her fortune, Angelica consented.

The first few days in London were rather lonely for the poor girl, but she soon learnt the English language, and her bright, pleasant manners won her many friends. Among these was Sir Joshua Reynolds, the greatest artist in England.

"Mr. Reynolds is the first of painters here," she wrote to her father in Germany. She admired his colouring so much that she became his pupil, and the great artist was delighted with her, not only as a clever painter, but as a woman. He painted her portrait, she painted his. On the establishment of the Royal Academy, Angelica Kaufmann was made a member. It is said that Sir Joshua Reynolds wanted her to be his wife; be that as it may, we soon after find Angelica living in Golden Square, some way from her old home. She was very popular; no large evening party was complete without her; the world of fashion, the world of art, all sought her society, and her praises were sung throughout the country. She painted the young Prince of Wales, afterwards George IV., and other members of the royal family, which made her trebly popular.

Before beginning a portrait Angelica would scan the features before her closely, she would wait till the sitters had arranged themselves in natural positions, and then, as truthfully as she could, she would paint them. She was making her fortune rapidly; her father had come over to live with her, and life seemed to go on very happily for her till she was twenty-six. Then she married a man calling himself Count Horn, handsome, clever, amusing; but three weeks after it was discovered that the *real* Count Horn had arrived in England, and that the man who had married Angelica was only the Count's footman, who had taken his master's name. This was a terrible blow to Angelica and her father; for a long time she seemed bordering on despair, and could not even go on painting. Her husband went abroad, Angelica never saw him again, and he died some years after. At last her friends roused her, and persuaded her to take up her brushes again, and she threw herself into her work once more.

As time wore on, John Kaufmann grew old and infirm, and the doctors said he must go abroad. Angelica was tired of London society, weary of London fogs and mists, and she had long been yearning for her beloved Italy. So they left England, and though it cost Angelica many pangs to leave the friends who had been so kind to her, she was very thankful to be in a sunny climate once more, under the blue Italian skies.

In Venice she painted several well-known pictures on historical subjects; they were eagerly bought at high prices, and are now to be seen in different parts of Europe.

After the death of her father, Angelica took up her abode in Rome; she would get up early, take up her palette and brush, and paint on till sunset in winter, till nearly six in the summer. In the evening, when she could no longer see to paint, she would go out and see

her friends, and several nights in the week she would open her rooms to receive visitors. A hall, filled with statues and busts, led to her studio and other rooms, where hung her pictures by the great masters, heads by Vandyke and Rembrandt, her own portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds, and many other pictures.

Not only by the rich was she known and loved, but also by the poor. Her charity and kindness were boundless; she did not simply give her money to the many beggars who abound in Italy, but she tried to improve their condition, and help them to work for themselves.

Having obtained news of the death of her husband, Angelica Kaufmann married a Venetian artist; together they painted, together they enjoyed the grand Italian art, and when, in 1795, he died, Angelica seemed overwhelmed. This was the beginning of a series of troubles. She lost a great deal of the money she had saved owing to the failure of a bank and the unsettled state of England, which often prevented her money from arriving. “But I have two hands still left,” she would say, “and I can still work.” In 1802 her health failed. She went to Switzerland for change, but on her return her cough came back. Her strength grew less, her hand lost its cunning, and at last her busy fingers could no longer hold the brush.

In the summer of 1807 she died. People of all ranks gathered together at her funeral in Rome; artists, nobility, poor, and rich came alike to do her honour. Her coffin was borne by girls in white, and like the great master Raphael, her two last pictures were carried behind the coffin, on which was placed a model of her right hand in plaster, with a paint-brush between its fingers.

Compared to the great and powerful artists before her, she was no mighty genius; her figures are more full of grace than force or energy; there is a sameness of design, which has called forth the saying, “To see one is to see all,” but what she has painted she has painted truly. “Her pencil was faithful to art and womanhood,” and we are proud to think that Angelica Kaufmann was one of the greatest artist-women the world has ever seen.

HANNAH MORE (1745-1833).

HANNAH MORE was one of the first women who devoted her life to the poor. She had been in London society; she knew most of the leading men of the day; she could have lived a comfortable life in the midst of great people; but she chose rather to build herself a little house in the country, and there to work with her sister Patty among the rough miners of Somersetshire.

She was one of the younger daughters of Jacob More, a schoolmaster, near Gloucester. Her grandmother was a vigorous old woman, who even at the age of eighty used to get up at four in the morning with great energy.

Hannah learnt to read at the age of three. While still small enough to sit on her father’s knee, she learnt Greek and Roman history; he used to repeat the speeches of the great men of old in the Greek or Latin tongue, which delighted the child, and then translate them till the eager little eyes sparkled “like diamonds.” Her nurse had lived in the family of Dryden, and little Hannah heard many a story of the poet from her nurse’s lips.

When quite small, it was her delight to get a scrap of paper, scribble a little poem or essay, and hide it in a dark corner, where the servant kept her brush or duster. Sometimes the little sister who slept with her, probably Patty, would creep downstairs in the dark to get her a piece of paper and a candle to write by. To possess a whole quire of paper was the child’s greatest ambition.

One of her elder sisters went to a school in Bristol from Mondays till Saturdays, and from Saturday to Monday little Hannah set herself diligently to learn French from her sister. When she was sixteen, she also went to Bristol, and there she met many clever people, who were charmed with her, and looked on her bright conversation and manner as proofs of dawning genius.

Once, when she was ill, a well-known doctor was called in to attend her. He had paid her many visits, when one day she began to talk to him on many interesting subjects. At last he went; but when he was half-way downstairs, he cried out, “Bless me! I quite forgot to ask the girl how she was!” and returning to the room he inquired tenderly, “And how are you to-day my poor child?”

The following year she wrote a drama called “The Search after Happiness.” “The public have taken ten thousand copies,” she says, “but *I* have not the patience to read it!”

When she went to London she was introduced to Garrick the actor, Sir Joshua Reynolds the artist, and many other clever people. Sir Joshua Reynolds one day took her to see Dr.

Johnson, or “Dictionary Johnson,” as she called him. She was very nervous, as no one knew how the great doctor would receive her, or what temper he would be in. But it was all right. [Pg 87] He came to meet her “with good humour on his countenance,” and with royal grace greeted her with a verse out of her own “Morning Hymn.”

When she went to see him one day alone, he was out. So Hannah More went into his parlour, and seated herself in his great chair, hoping to feel inspired by so doing. When Dr. Johnson entered, she explained to him why she was sitting there; at which he went into fits of laughing, and cried out that it was a chair he *never* sat in.

After this he became a frequent visitor at the house of the five sisters—

“I have spent a happy evening,” he cried one night. “I love you all five; I am glad I came. I will come and see you again.”

In 1777, Hannah More wrote a play called “Percy.” Hidden in the corner of a box at the theatre, she anxiously watched the performance of her play; she heard her hero speak through the voice of her friend Garrick; she saw her audience—even the men—shedding tears, and she knew it was a success. So much did her writings apply to the feelings of her audience, that after the performance of one of her plays called the “Fatal Falsehood,” when a lady said to her servant girl, who had been to the play, that her eyes looked red, as if she had been crying, the girl answered:

“Well, ma’am, if I did, it was no harm; a great many respectable people cried too!”

The death of David Garrick affected Hannah More deeply. Mrs. Garrick sent for her at once in her trouble, and, though ill in bed at the time, Hannah More came to comfort her friend. [Pg 88] After this she spent much time with Mrs. Garrick, often in the depths of the country giving up her time to reading and writing, and taking long walks to the pretty villages round.

Then she built herself a little house near Bristol, where she went to live with her sister Patty. They made long expeditions together to villages round, and they soon discovered what a bad state the country people were in.

In a village near, she set to work to establish a school for the little children, and was soon rewarded by finding that three hundred were ready and longing to be taught. Difficulties lay at every turn; the rich farmers objected to the children being taught, and religion brought into the country.

“It makes the people so lazy and useless,” they said.

“It will make the people better and more industrious,” urged Hannah More; “they will work from higher and nobler motives, instead of merely for money and drink!”

At last they consented to have a school, and the children came by hundreds to be taught.

Then she went on to two mining villages high up on the Mendip Hills. In these villages the people were even more ignorant than those at Cheddar; they thought the ladies came to carry off their children as slaves. For at this time the selling of little children as slaves had reached a terrible height, and many great men, Pitt, Fox, and others, were doing what they [Pg 89] could to have it abolished by an Act of Parliament.

It was into districts where no policemen dared to go that Hannah More and her sister ventured. There was no clergyman for miles round; one village had a curate living twelve miles away; another village had a clergyman who himself drank to excess, and was never sober enough to preach. There was one Bible in the village, but that was used to prop up a flower-pot. Such was the state of affairs when Hannah More first went among them.

Soon a school was established, and again the children were ready and willing to be taught. Before long they had six schools and as many as twelve hundred children were being taught. Very soon their work bore fruit.

“Several day-labourers coming home late from harvest, so tired that they could hardly stand, will not go to rest till they have been into the school for a chapter and a prayer,” wrote Hannah More.

In 1792 she wrote “Village Politics,” at the request of friends, to try and give a more healthy turn to politics in England. She did not put her own name to it, but called herself “Will Chip.” One of her friends discovered who had written it, and sitting down he began a letter, “My dear Mrs. Chip,” thanking her for giving to the world such a popular and wholesome tract.

Hannah More still kept up with the world outside; she watched with the keenest interest the struggle against slavery; her heart ached for the victims of the French Revolution across the Channel, and she wrote pamphlets on both subjects. Then came an attack on her writings; [Pg 90] people said she wished for the success of France; some said she was an enemy to liberty, and many other false things.

This made Hannah More very unhappy. She liked to be loved, she could not bear to be hated; she who was ready to see good in all, could not bear to be forced to see evil. Then her poor people upheld her, and school-teachers and church-workers came forward to bear

witness to the world-wide good her writings had done. Sympathy flowed in from all sides, and she found heart to go on again.

At last the happy home was broken up—the bright home where the poor people had never failed to find warmth and shelter and a welcome from the five sisters.

The three eldest died first. Still, through all the sad partings, Hannah More bravely worked on, while she had strength for it, writing when she could, and keeping bright those who still remained around her.

A few years later Patty died; she was the nearest of all to Hannah's heart, and the "aching void" she felt after her sister's death affected her health. Long and dangerous illnesses constantly left her unable to work for many months. Her work had been taken up by others now, and the "tide she had helped to turn had already swept past her."

"I learns geography and the harts and senses," boasted a little girl in a county parish, meaning the arts and sciences.

"I am learning syntax," a little servant said to Hannah More when questioned about her school.

Hannah More died at the age of eighty-eight, after years of intense suffering. She had lived to see how education was helping the poorer classes, and stamping out crime; how a little love and kindness had helped even the rough miners in their work, and how the children, taught in the village schools, were already growing up better and happier men and women, and it pleased her, long after her health and memory had failed, to hear that they still remembered the name of Hannah More.

ELIZABETH FRY (1780-1845).

ELIZABETH FRY was one of those rare women whose "life was work." Once having recognized the path of duty, she never left it; through illness and suffering, trouble and sorrow, she held fast to it, and the result was grand. For she was our first great prison reformer, the first to open the eyes of the nation to the alarming state of the prisons, the first to take active steps for their improvement.

She was born in Norwich on May 21, 1780. Her father, John Gurney, belonged to the Society of Friends; he was a popular, warm-hearted man, fond of his children, devoted to his wife. Elizabeth was the third of eleven children; when she was two years old, her father and mother moved to Earlham Hall, an old house standing in a well-wooded park, about two miles from Norwich. She was a nervous, delicate little child; every night, on going to bed, she would quake with fear at the prospect of being left alone in the dark, when the moment should come for the candle to be blown out. Sea-bathing, too, had its horrors for her. She was forced to bathe when they went to the sea-side, but at the sight of the sea she would begin to cry and tremble till she turned her back on it again. The child's devotion to her mother was intense; she would often lie awake at night and cry at the thought that her mother might some day die and leave her, and her childish wish was that two big walls might fall and crush them both together. But the two big walls never *did* fall; when Elizabeth was but twelve, her mother died, leaving eleven children, the eldest barely seventeen, the youngest only two. Elizabeth was tall and thin; she had quantities of soft flaxen hair and a sweet face, but she was so reserved and quiet, that people thought her quite stupid. She was very fond of dancing and riding and any kind of amusement, and when she was a little older we hear of her as a "beautiful lady on horseback in a scarlet riding-habit."

When she was eighteen a great Quaker preacher came to Norwich, and Elizabeth went with her six sisters to hear him. Hitherto she had cared little for Quaker meetings, but this time, as soon as the preacher began, her attention was fixed. Tears rolled down her cheeks, and "Betsy wept most of the way home," says one of her sisters. From that day all love of amusement and pleasure seemed gone. New feelings had been stirred within her; she felt there was something more to live for than mere pleasure; a nobler spirit was moving within her, that showed her there lay work around her to be done, and work specially for her to do. And she soon found the work; an old man, who was dying, wanted comfort and care; a little boy called Billy from the village needed teaching. Slowly other little boys came to be taught, and in a few months she had a school of seventy. She taught them in an empty laundry, no other room being large enough.

Life went on thus till she was twenty. The more she saw of Quakers, the more firmly she believed they were right; she now wore their dress,—a plain slate-coloured skirt with a close handkerchief and cap, with no ornaments of any kind. In the summer of this year she married Joseph Fry, also a Quaker, engaged in business in London, where they accordingly went to live. Leaving her old home was a great trial to her, for the "very stones of the Norwich streets seemed dear to her."

A new sphere of work now opened before her; she was surrounded by the poor, workhouses claimed her attention, the sick and dying begged for a sight of the simple Quaker woman, whom "to see was to love," and whose gentle words always comforted them.

In 1809, Mr. and Mrs. Fry and their five children moved into the country for a time, for rest after the smoke and din of the crowded city life. Here Elizabeth Fry was very happy; she loved to live out of doors with her little children, to explain to them the growth of a flower, the structure of a bee's wing or caterpillar; they would all go long rambles together with baskets and trowels to get ferns and wild flowers to plant in their garden at home. Then, refreshed and strengthened, she was again ready to take up her London work.

It was in 1813 that she first entered the prison at Newgate, and the special work of her life began. She found the prison and prisoners in a disgraceful state, and her womanly heart was touched with pity for the poor creatures who were compelled to live in these unhealthy wards and cells. Many had not sufficient clothing, but lived in rags, sleeping on the floor with raised boards for pillows. Little children cried for food and clothes, which their unhappy mothers could not give them. In the same room they slept, ate, cooked, and washed; in the bad air they fell ill, and no one came to nurse them or comfort them, no one came to show them how to live an honest, upright life, when their prison-life was over. Sick at heart, Elizabeth Fry went home, determined to help these miserable people in some way or other. Then trouble came to her. Her little Betsy, a lovely child of five, died, and long and bitter was her grief.

"Mama," said the child, soon before her death, "I love everybody better than myself, and I love thee better than everybody, and I love Almighty better than thee."

Sorrow was making Elizabeth Fry more and more sympathetic and able to enter into the sufferings of those around her.

At last she was able to work again, and with her whole heart she set herself to improve the prisons.

She got the prison authorities to let the poor women have mats to sleep on, especially those who were ill, and she begged to be alone with the convicts for a few hours. The idleness, ignorance, and dirt of these women shocked her. How could the poor little children, pining for food and fresh air, ever grow up to be good women in the world, into which they might be turned out any time? How could those wretched women ever learn to be better and happier by being thrown into those unhealthy cells with others as bad or worse than themselves, if no one ever tried to teach them how to live better lives, and start afresh in the world? She proposed to start a school for the children, and the prisoners thanked her with tears of joy. They had not known such kindness before; they had never been spoken to so gently; the noise and fighting ceased, and they listened to the simple Quaker's words.

So an empty cell was made into a school-room, and one of the prisoners was made school-mistress. Mrs. Fry and a few other ladies helped to teach, and the children soon got on, and learnt to like their lessons. Still the terrible sounds of swearing, fighting, and screaming went on; Mrs. Fry met with failure and discouragement on every side; the utter misery and suffering sickened her, and she would sometimes wonder if she should have strength to go on. But she found she had.

Soon others came forward to help, and not long after we find a very different scene. Instead of the inhuman noises that reached the ear before, comparative stillness reigned; most of the women wore clean blue aprons, and were sitting round a long table engaged in different kinds of work, while a lady at the head of the table read aloud to them.

The news of this reformation soon spread. Newspapers were full of it; pamphlets were sent round; the public awoke to the evils of prison-life, and the voice of the people made itself heard; and Queen Charlotte herself sought an interview with Elizabeth Fry, the leader of this important work.

 To improve the state of convict ships was the next work for Mrs. Fry. Up to this time the vessels were terribly over-crowded; the women had nothing to do all day during the voyage; their children were separated from them, and all were marked with hot irons, so that if by any chance they escaped, they might be found again. Part of the vessel was made into a school for the children; pieces of print were collected for the women to make into patchwork, and a matron was chosen to nurse those who were ill.

Mrs. Fry herself went to bid the emigrants farewell. She stood in her plain Quaker dress at the door of the cabin with the captain; the women stood facing her, while sailors climbed up to the rigging to hear her speak. The silence was profound for a few moments. Then she spoke to them a few hopeful, encouraging words, and prayed for them; many of the convict women wept bitterly, and when she left, every eye followed her till she was out of sight. From this time she visited every convict ship with women on board leaving England till 1841, when she was prevented by illness.

Elizabeth Fry had a wonderful power of winning hearts by her gentle and earnest way of speaking. One day she went over a large Home for young women; as she was going away the matron pointed out two as being very troublesome and hard to manage. Mrs. Fry went up to them, and holding out a hand to each, she said, looking at them with one of her beautiful

smiles: “I trust I shall hear better things of thee.”

The girls had been proof against words of reproach and command, but at these few heartfelt words of hope and kindness, they both burst into tears of sorrow and shame. [Pg 98]

In 1839 Elizabeth Fry went to Paris, in order to visit the workhouses, prisons, and homes on the continent, and to stir up the people to enquire into their arrangements.

A few days after her arrival she went to a little children’s hospital. As she entered the long ward, the only sound audible was a faint and pitiful bleating like a flock of little lambs. A long row of clean white cots was placed all round the room; on a sloping mattress before the fire a row of babies were lying waiting their turn to be fed by the nurse with a spoon. The poor little things were swathed up, according to the foreign custom, so tightly that they could not move their limbs. For some time Mrs. Fry pleaded with the Sister of the ward to undo their swathings, and let their arms free, and, as she did so at last, one of the babies, who had been crying piteously, ceased, and stretched out its arms to its deliverer.

Everywhere, abroad and at home, among old and young, she was welcomed as a friend; from the head of the land to the poorest prisoner, she was loved, for “it was an honour to know her in this world.” Through illness and intense suffering she struggled on with duty and work, until she was no longer able to walk. She was still wheeled to the meetings in a chair, but the work of her life was ended. Then sorrow upon sorrow came to her; her son, sister, and a little grandchild all died within a short time of one another.

“Can our mother hear this and live?” cried her children. A long year of intense pain and suffering followed, and then, one autumn evening, Elizabeth Fry died. Universal was the mourning for her; vast crowds assembled in the Friend’s burying ground, near her old country home at Plashet, silently and reverently to attend the simple Quaker funeral, and to do honour to Elizabeth Fry, now laid at rest beside her little child. [Pg 99]

MARY SOMERVILLE (1780-1872). [Pg 100]

MARY SOMERVILLE, whose parents’ name was Fairfax, was born in Scotland on the day after Christmas in the year 1780. Her father was away at sea; he had begun life early as a midshipman, and had been present at the taking of Quebec in 1759. He had left his wife in a little seaport town on the Scotch coast just opposite Edinburgh, in a house whose garden sloped down to the sea and was always full of bright flowers. The Scotch in this part lived a primitive kind of life; we are told that all the old men and women smoked tobacco in short pipes, and the curious way in which a cripple or infirm man got his livelihood. One of his relations would put him into a wheelbarrow, wheel him to the next neighbour’s door, and there leave him. The neighbour would then come out, feed the cripple with a little oatcake or anything she could spare, and wheel him onto the next door. The next neighbour would do the same, and so on, and thus the beggar got his livelihood.

Here it was that Mary lived with her mother, her brother Sam, and sometimes her father.

Now Mrs. Fairfax was very much afraid of thunder and lightning, and when she thought a storm was coming on, she used to prepare by taking out the steel pins which fastened on her cap, in case they might attract the lightning. Then she sat on a sofa at some distance from the fireplace, and read aloud descriptions of storms in the Bible, which frightened her little daughter Mary more than the storm itself. The large dog Hero, too, seems to have shared in the general fear of thunder, for, at the first clap, he would rush howling indoors and place his head on Mary’s knee. Thus, with shutters closed, they awaited the utter destruction they expected, but which never came. [Pg 101]

When Mary was seven, her mother made her useful at shelling peas and beans, feeding the cocks and hens, and looking after the dairy. Once she had put some green gooseberries into some bottles, and taken them to the kitchen, telling the cook to boil the bottles uncorked, and when the fruit was enough cooked, to cork and tie them up. In a short time the whole house was alarmed by loud screams from the kitchen. It was found they proceeded from the cook, who had disobeyed orders, and corked the bottles before boiling, so of course they exploded. This accident interested Mary very much, and in after years she turned it to account in her reading of science.

She was devoted to birds, and would watch the swallows collecting in hundreds on the house roofs to prepare for their winter flight. She always fed the robins on snowy mornings, and taught them to hop in and pick up the crumbs on the table. All through her life this love of birds continued; and, when she was quite old, and her little mountain sparrow died, having been her constant companion for eight years, she felt its death very much.

When she was between eight and nine, her father came back from sea, and was quite shocked to find his little daughter still a wild, untrained child, unable to write, and only [Pg 102]

reading very badly, with a strong Scotch accent. So, after breakfast every morning, he made her read a chapter from the Bible and a paper from the "Spectator." But she was always glad when this penance was over, and she could run off with her father into the garden, and take a lesson in laying carnations and pruning fruit trees.

At last one day her father said: "This kind of life will never do; Mary must at least know how to write and keep accounts."

So Mary was sent to a boarding school kept by a Miss Primrose, where she was very unhappy. Fancy the wild, strong Scotch child, used to roaming about the lanes, wandering by the sea at her own will, caring for no lessons but those of Nature, suddenly enclosed in a stiff steel support round her body, a band drawing her shoulders back till the shoulder-blades met, a steel rod with a semicircle passing under her chin to keep her head up, and thus bound up having to learn by heart pages of Johnson's dictionary; not only to spell the words and give their parts of speech and meaning, but to remember the order in which they came! Such was the strict discipline through which Mary Fairfax passed for one long year. Once home again, she was like a wild animal escaped from a cage, but still unable so much as to write and compose a letter.

When the tide went out, she would spend hours and hours on the sands, watching closely the habits of the starfish and sea-urchins, collecting shells, and wondering at curious marks of fern leaves and shells on blocks of stone. She had no one to tell her they were fossils, or to explain to her their curious forms.

Still her people at home were not satisfied with the way she "wasted her time," and she was sent to the village school to learn plain needlework. The village schoolmaster also came on the winter evenings to teach her the use of the globes, and at night she would sit up at her own little window trying to learn about the stars and moon. And yet, fond as she was of stars, the dark nights had their terrors for her.

One night, the house being full, she had to sleep in a room apart from the rest of the house, under a garret filled with cheeses, slung by ropes to the rafters. She had put out her candle and fallen asleep, when she was awakened by a tremendous crash and a loud rolling noise over head. She was very frightened; there were no matches in those days, so she could not get a light; but she seized a huge club shod with iron, which lay in the room, and thundered on the bedroom door till her father, followed by the whole household, came to her aid. It was found that some rats had gnawed the ropes on which the cheeses hung, and all the cheeses rolled down. However, Mary got no comfort, but only a good scolding for making such an uproar and disturbing the household in the night.

When she was thirteen, her mother took a small house in Edinburgh, and Mary was sent to a writing-school, and also taught music and arithmetic.

One day, when she was getting up, she suddenly saw a flash in the air. "There is lightning!" she cried to her mother.

"No," answered Mrs. Fairfax, "it is fire;" and on opening the shutters they found the next house but one was burning fiercely. They dressed quickly, and sent for some men to help pack the family papers and silver.

"Now let us breakfast; it is time enough to move our things when the next house takes fire," said her mother, calmly showing the presence of mind one would not have expected from a woman so afraid of a thunder-storm.

At last Mary obtained what she had so long wished for, a Euclid, and she worked at it by day and night. "It is no wonder the stock of candles is soon exhausted," said the servants, "for Miss Mary sits up till a very late hour;" and accordingly an order was given that the candle should be put out as soon as she was in bed. So she had to content herself by repeating the problems at night by heart, till she knew well the first six books.

She had learnt to paint, too, in Edinburgh, and her landscapes at this time were thought a great deal of by various people.

In 1797 her father was in a naval battle against the Dutch, and for his brave action he was knighted.

"You ask for the promotion of your officers, but you never ask a reward for yourself," were words addressed to him on his return.

"I leave that to my country," answered Fairfax. And his daughter tells us that his country did little for him, and his wife had nothing to live on but £75 a year at his death in 1813.

In 1804 Mary Fairfax married a cousin, a Mr. Greig, and went to live in London. She was very poor, her mother could afford her but a small outfit, and gave her £20 to buy a warm wrap for the winter. Mrs. Greig lived a lonely life, for her husband was out all day for three years, at the end of which time she returned to her old home, a widow, with two little boys, one of whom died soon after.

Then she threw her whole self into the study of mathematics and astronomy. At last she succeeded in solving a prize problem, and was awarded a silver medal with her name upon

it, which greatly delighted and encouraged her. When she had money enough she bought a little library of books on her favourite subjects, which have since been presented to the College for Women at Cambridge.

Her family and those around her thought her very foolish to read so hard at subjects they thought so useless. When, some years later, she was going to marry Dr. Somerville, his sister wrote to say she did hope the "foolish manner of life and studies" might be given up, so that she might make a "respectable and useful wife to her brother."

Her husband, however, encouraged her in her study of science; he saw nothing "foolish" in it at all, and he helped her to collect minerals and curious stones.

They travelled abroad a good deal, and then settled in London, where Mary Somerville gave up a good deal of her time to teaching her little children. Here she published a book on Physical Geography, which is very well known and used still. It was a great undertaking for a woman, and made a stir in the world of science.

But she was not entirely given up to science. We find her making with her own hands a quantity of orange marmalade for a friend, who had brought her back minerals from a foreign land, to take on his next voyage, and she enjoyed an evening at the play as much as anyone.

The long illness and death of their eldest child fell very heavily on Mrs. Somerville, and for a time she could not even work. Then they moved to Chelsea. Here she was asked to write an account of a French book which she had read on astronomy, a book which only some twenty people in England knew, and *she* was chosen above all the learned men to write on this difficult subject. It was a vast undertaking; the more so as she still saw and entertained friends, not wishing to drop society altogether.

Moreover, it was not known what she was writing, as, if it turned out a failure, it was not to be printed. In the middle of some difficult problem a friend would call and say, "I have come to spend a few hours with you, Mrs. Somerville," and papers and problems had to be hidden as quickly as possible.

When it was finished, the manuscript was sent to the great astronomer Herschel, who was delighted with it.

"Go on thus," he wrote, "and you will leave a memorial of no common kind to posterity."

Mrs. Somerville never wrote for fame, but it was very pleasant to have such praise from one of the greatest men of science living. The success of her book proved its value, and astonished her. Seven hundred and fifty copies were sold at once, and her name and her work were talked of everywhere. Her bust was placed in the Great Hall of the Royal Society; she was elected a member of the Royal Academy in Dublin, and of the Natural History Society at Geneva. A bust of her was made the figurehead of a large vessel in the Royal Navy, which was called "Mary Somerville," and lastly, she received a letter from Sir Robert Peel, saying he had asked the king, George IV., to grant her a pension of £200 a year, so that she might work with less anxiety.

Here was success for the self-taught woman, raised by her own efforts higher than any woman before her in any branch of science, and it is pleasant to find her the same modest character after it as she was before.

Her health being broken, she went to Paris. Here she still went on writing; but being very weak and ill, she was obliged to write in bed till one o'clock. The afternoons she gave up to going about Paris and seeing her friends.

Some years after, her husband being ill, they went abroad to Rome, where they made many friends. One friend is mentioned as having won Mrs. Somerville's heart by his love for birds. The Italians eat nightingales, robins, and other singing birds, and when the friend heard this, he cried:

"What! robins! our household birds! I would as soon eat a child!"

In 1860 her husband died in Florence. To occupy her mind, Mrs. Somerville began to write another book. She was now over eighty, and her hand was not so steady as it used to be, but she had her eyesight and all her faculties, and with her pet mountain-sparrow sitting on her arm, she wrote daily from eight in the morning till twelve.

Five years later she had the energy to go all over an ironclad ship, which she was very curious to see.

"I was not even hoisted on board," she wrote to her son, but mounted the ladder bravely, and examined everything in detail "except the stoke-hole!"

At the age of ninety she still studied in bed all the morning, but "I am left solitary," she says, with pathos, "for I have lost my little bird, who was my constant companion for eight years."

One morning her daughter came into the room, and being surprised that the little bird did not fly to greet her as usual, she searched for it, and found the poor little creature drowned in the jug!

In 1870 an eclipse of the sun interested Mrs. Somerville very much; it came after a huge thunder-storm, and was only visible now and then between dense masses of clouds. The following year there was a brilliant Aurora lighting up the whole sky; many ignorant people were very frightened, because it had been said the world was coming to an end, and they thought that a bright piece of the Aurora was a slice of the moon that had "already tumbled down!"

Though at the age of ninety-two her memory for names and people failed, she could still read mathematics, solve problems, and enjoy reading about new discoveries and theories in the world of science.

Some months before her death, she was awakened one night at Naples to behold Mount Vesuvius in splendid eruption. It was a wonderful sight.

A fiery stream of lava was flowing down in all directions; a column of dense black smoke rose to more than four times the height of the mountain, while bursts of fiery matter shot high up into the smoke, and the roaring and thundering never ceased for one single moment.

Three days later extreme darkness surprised everyone; Mrs. Somerville saw men walking along the streets with umbrellas up, and found that Vesuvius was sending out an immense quantity of ashes like fine sand, and neither land, sea, nor sky were visible.

In the summer Mrs. Somerville and her daughters went out of Naples, and took a pleasant little house near the sea.

She still took a keen interest in passing events; she knew she could not live much longer, and she worked on to the actual day of her death, which took place in the autumn of 1872.

Mrs. Somerville stands alone as the greatest woman in the world of science; she was entirely self-taught, and it was by her own efforts she rose to be what she was—a woman of untiring energy, with wonderful power of thought and clearness of mind, a woman in advance of her times.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING (1809-1861).

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING is the greatest "woman poet" England has ever had. Though some of her poetry is difficult to understand, owing to her depth of thought and great reading, yet many of her prettiest and most touching poems have been written about little children; she with her pitiful heart felt for the sorrows they could not express, and has told us about them; she has told us about little Lily, who died when she was "no taller than the flowers," of the little factory children, who only cried in their playtime, and only cared for the fields and meadows just to "drop down in them and sleep," of little Ellie sitting alone by the stream dipping her feet into the clear cool water and dreaming the hours away.

Elizabeth Barrett always looked on Malvern as her native place, though she was not actually born there, but in Durham, in 1809.

The early years of her life seem to have been very happy; we hear of her as a little girl with clusters of golden curls, large tender eyes, and a sweet smile. She herself has not told us much about her early years, but the glimpses she has given us are very bright. Her father had a country house near Malvern, and over the Malvern Hills the child loved to roam. She liked to be out all day with the flowers and the bees and the sun.

"If the rain fell, there was sorrow," she says, and she laid her curly head against the window, while her little finger followed the "long, trailing drops" down the pane, and, like other children, she would gently sing, "Rain, rain, come to-morrow," to try and drive it away. When she went out, it was not along the sheep paths over the hills that she cared to go, but to wander into the little woods, where the sheep could not stray. Now and then, she tells us, one of them would venture in, but its wool caught in the thickets, and with a "silly thorn-pricked nose" it would bleat back into the sun, while the little poet-girl went on, tearing aside the prickly branches with her struggling fingers, and tripping up over the brambles which lay across her way.

At eight years old and earlier she began to write little verses, and at eleven she wrote a long "epic" poem in four books called the "Battle of Marathon," of which fifty copies were printed, because, she tells us, her father was bent on spoiling her. She spent most of her time reading Greek, either alone or with her brother; she so loved the old Greek heroes, and would dream about them at night; she loved the old Greek stories, she "ate and drank Greek," and her poetry is mixed with Greek ideas and thoughts and names, even from a child.

She had one favourite brother; with him she read, with him she talked; they understood one

another, and entered into one another's thoughts and fancies. He called her by a pet name, when they were little children together, because the name Elizabeth seemed so "hard to utter," and "he calls me by it still," she adds pathetically in later life, when that life was no longer all sunshine and laughter, and when the brother had been taken from her. But these were happy days, these days of childhood, never forgotten by Elizabeth Barrett, who looked back to them afterwards, and remembered how she sat at her father's knee, and how lovingly he would look down at the little poet and reward her with kisses.

When she was older the family moved to London, and there Elizabeth Barrett became very ill. She had always been fragile and delicate, and now she was obliged to lie all day in one room in the London house. When she grew a little stronger, and the cold weather was coming on, the doctor ordered a milder climate, and she was moved to Torquay, her favourite brother going with her. She had been there a year, and the mild sea-breezes of Devonshire had done her good, when fresh trouble came to her.

One fine summer morning her brother with a few friends started in a little sailing-vessel for a few hours' trip. They were all good sailors, and knowing the coast well, they sent back the boatmen, and undertook the management of the boat themselves. The idea of danger never seems to have occurred to them. They had not got far out, when suddenly, just as they were crossing the bar, in sight of the very windows, the boat went down, and the little crew perished—among them Elizabeth Barrett's favourite brother. He was drowned before her very eyes, and, already ill and weak, she nearly sank under the weight of the blow.

 The house she lived in at Torquay was at the bottom of the cliffs close to the sea, but now the sound of the waves no longer soothed her; they sounded like moanings from the sea. She struggled back to life, but all was changed for her. Still she clung to Greek and literature, and she would pore over her books till the doctor would remonstrate, and urge some lighter reading. He did not know that her books were no hard study to her; reading was no exertion, but a delight and comfort to her, changing the current of her thoughts from the sad past, and helping her to wile away the long hours of sickness. However, to make others happy about her, she had her little edition of Plato bound so that it looked like a novel, and then she could read it without being disturbed or interfered with at all.

She tried to forget her ill health and weariness, and some of her letters at this time were so bright and amusing, that we see how well she succeeded in throwing herself into the lives of those around her. At last she was well enough to be moved in an invalid carriage with "a thousand springs" to London, in short journeys of twenty miles a day. There for seven long years she lived in one large, but partly darkened room, seeing only her own family and a few special friends.

Her poems were sad, beautiful, and very tender; never once does she allude in words to the terrible blow which had swept so much sunshine and happiness from her young life, but her writings are full now of wild utterances and passionate cries, now calming down into sleepy lullabies for the little children she had such sympathy with. She did not put her name to many of her works, but readers were startled from time to time by the wonderful new poems, until at last they were traced to the sick room of Elizabeth Barrett. In her sick room lived "Flush," a little dog given her by a friend; he was dark brown with long silken ears and hazel eyes, but, better than these, such a faithful heart, and

"... of *thee* it shall be said,
This dog watched beside a bed
  Day and night unweary;
Watched within a curtained room,
Where no sunbeam brake the gloom
  Round the sick and dreary."

He would push his nose into her pale, thin hand, and lie content for hours, till the quick tears of his mistress would sometimes drop on to his glossy head, and he would spring up eagerly, as if to share the trouble if he only could.

Here is a story about Flush which shows his devotion. The little terrier was stolen, and his mistress shed many tears for her lost favourite. She was accused of being "childish," but she could not help it.

"Flushie is my friend, my companion, and loves me better than he loves the sunshine without," she cried.

At last the thief was found, and he gave up the dog for some money, saying, "You had better give your dog something to eat, for he has tasted nothing for three days!"

But Flush was too happy to eat; he shrank away from the plate of food which was given him, and laid down his head on his mistress's shoulder.

 "He is worth loving, is he not?" asked Elizabeth Barrett, when she had told this story to a friend.

One of her best-known poems is "The Cry of the Children." For the little overworked children in the large factories her human heart was stirred. She knew what a life they led from early morning till late at night, amid the rushing of the great iron wheels, or working

underground in the damp and dark, and she could not be silent.

> "Do ye hear the children weeping, O my brothers,
> Ere the sorrow comes with years?
> They are leaning their young heads against their mothers,
> And *that* cannot stop their tears.
> The young lambs are bleating in the meadows,
> The young birds are chirping in the nest,
> The young fawns are playing with the shadows,
> The young flowers are blowing towards the west—
> But the young, young children, O my brothers,
> They are weeping bitterly!
> They are weeping in the playtime of the others,
> In the country of the free."

They seem to look up with their "pale and sunken faces," and to cry that the world is *very* dreary; they take but a few steps, and get so tired, that they long for rest. It is true, they say, sometimes they die very young. There was one—little Alice—died lately; they go and listen by her grave and *she* never cries; no one calls *her* up early, saying, "Get up, little Alice; it is day!" time to go off to the droning, droning wheels in the factories, and—"It is good when it happens," say the children, "that we die before our time." It is no good to call them to the fields to play, to gather big bunches of cowslips, to sing out, as the little thrushes do:— [Pg 116]

> "For oh!" say the children, "we are weary,
> And we cannot run and leap;
> If we cared for any meadows, it were merely
> To drop down in them and sleep."

For the great wheels never stop; the little heads may burn, the little hearts may ache, till the children long to moan out:—

> "O ye wheels—stop—be silent for to-day!"

Here were the children in their misery, life-like, only too true and real; and then the poet pleads for them, pleads that they may be taught there *is* something in life as well as the great grinding wheels; pleads that the lives of the little factory children may be made happier and brighter.

And England heard the cry of the children. The following year fresh laws were made about the employment of children in factories; they were not to be allowed to work under the age of eight, and not then unless they were strong and healthy; they were not to work more than six hours and a half a day, and to attend school for three hours.

Three years after this poem was written Elizabeth Barrett married Robert Browning, the poet, and together they went off to Italy, where the softer air and mild climate brought back her health for a time.

"She is getting better every day," wrote her husband; "stronger, better wonderfully, and beyond all our hopes."

One of Mrs. Browning's happiest poems is the story of little Ellie and the swan's nest. [Pg 117]

"Little Ellie sits alone," she begins, "'mid the beeches of a meadow." Then she goes on to tell us of her shining hair and face; how she has thrown aside her bonnet, and is dipping her feet into the shallow stream by which she sits. As she rocks herself to and fro she thinks about a swan's nest she has found among the reeds, with two precious eggs in it; then the vision of a knight, who is to be her lover, rises before her. He is to be a noble man, riding on a red-roan steed shod with silver; he is to kneel at her feet, and she will tell him to rise and go, "put away all wrong," so that the world may love and fear him. Off he goes; three times he is to send a little foot page to Ellie for words of comfort; the first time she will send him a white rosebud, the second time a glove, and the third time leave to come and claim her love. Then she will show him and him only the swan's nest among the reeds. Little Ellie gets up, ties on her bonnet, puts on her shoes, and goes home round by the swan's nest, as she does every day, just to see if there are any more eggs; on she goes, "pushing through the elm-tree copse, winding up the stream, light-hearted." Then, when she reaches the place, she stops, stoops down, and what does she find? The wild swan had deserted her nest, a rat had gnawed the reeds, and "Ellie went home sad and slow." If she ever found the lover on the "red-roan steed"—

> "Sooth I know not: but I know
> She could never show him—never
> That swan's nest among the reeds!"

It was at Florence that Mrs. Browning's little son was born, "her little Florentine" as she loves to call him; she has drawn us many a picture of him with his blue eyes and amber curls, lit up to golden by the Italian sun. [Pg 118]

> "My little son, my Florentine,
> Sit down beside my knee,"

she begins in one poem, and then she tells him in verse a tale about Florence, and the war in Italy, and when it was over the child had grown very grave. For Mrs. Browning loved Italy with all her heart, and she watched the great struggle for Italian unity, which was going on, very anxiously. From time to time she wrote patriotic poems to encourage the oppressed, and to express her delight at their victories.

At the same time England was not forgotten.

"I am listening here in Rome," she wrote, when pleading for the ragged schools of London. Still, though under the clear Italian skies, she can see the ragged, bare-footed, hungry-eyed children begging in the London streets. It is a disgrace to England, she cries; she knows they cannot all be fed and clothed, but—

> "Put a thought beneath the rags
> To ennoble the heart's struggle,"

so that by gentle words the children may learn "just the uses of their sorrow." And again Mrs. Browning's appeal was not in vain.

One of her last poems was a very sad one, called "Little Mattie."

Mrs. Browning had, even in Italy, suffered very much from bad health, and in 1861 she died. She was buried beside a grassy wall in the English burial-ground just outside Florence, the city she loved so well, in Italy, "my Italy" as she has called it, the land where Keats and Shelley lie.

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE (born 1820).

OF the early and private life of Florence Nightingale there is no need to speak, but you should know what good work she has done for her country, how she left her English home to go and nurse the poor soldiers who were wounded in battle in the Crimea, and how well she did the work that she undertook to do. Not only did she work out of England, but in England she has improved some of our hospitals, taught some of our English nurses how to work better, and has made nursing into the happier labour it is now, instead of the drudgery it was too often before.

She was born in Florence in 1820, and therefore named after that town, but her home was always in Derbyshire. She was always fond of nursing, and her early ambition was to improve the system of nursing, and to get many things done that she saw would make pain and suffering more bearable in our English hospitals.

Now in Germany, in a little village[1] on the great Rhine, is a large building where women are trained as nurses for sick people. They all wear full black skirts and very white aprons, deep white collars and caps, and all the sick people come from the village and villages round to be nursed by them. There was no training-school for women in England, so it was to this kind of hospital home that Florence Nightingale went in 1851, and there she worked for three months. They were three happy months, and she learnt the best German rules of nursing, and saw how a large hospital ought to be managed; and so she got some of the training which fitted her for the great work which she undertook some years later. On her return to England, she became head of a London hospital for women.

But before you hear about her work, and how she nursed our soldiers, you must know about the war in the Crimea, how our soldiers were wounded, and why they wanted good nursing.

For several years a dispute had been going on between Russia and Turkey, and at last Russia pushed her troops into Turkey, and Turkey declared war. England and France had promised some time before to help Turkey if she needed help, and now they found themselves at war. English and French steamers kept hurrying backwards and forwards from the Black Sea to try and make peace;—but it was impossible; so armies were sent, and Lord Raglan, who had lost one arm at Waterloo, fighting under the great Duke of Wellington, was given the command of the English army. Now at the south of Russia is a peninsula called the Crimea, and the allied armies of England, France, and Turkey knew that if they could take a large town in the Crimea called Sebastopol, the Russian fleet in the Black Sea would be rendered powerless for a long time. So they chose this town for their attack. But they were divided from it by the river Alma, and here the Russian army was posted in great strength on a line of steep rocky hills on the other side of the river. They thought that the English and French would never dare to cross the river in the face of their fire. But the allied armies were very brave. The order was given to cross the river; the men waded the stream, and, under a deadly fire from the Russians, they scaled the heights bravely. The Russians were brave, but badly commanded, and before long they fled, leaving the allied armies victorious. The English had fought their first battle, gained their first victory in the Crimea, and a loud British cheer rose from the troops as they stood on the

well-won heights, and struck terror into the hearts of the retreating Russians. Our soldiers had fought nobly, but three thousand lay dead or wounded on the field of battle.

Great were the rejoicings in England when news of the victory arrived, but the joy was mixed with sorrow at the terrible accounts of the English soldiers who were wounded so badly on the field. All night the doctors worked, trying to dress their wounds, and relieve their pain, and have them carried to hospitals and tents. But the work was enormous, and there were not enough doctors to perform it, and no proper nurses to take charge of the hospitals. The cry for doctors and nurses reached England, and England responded readily to the call. Many Englishwomen offered themselves to go out and nurse the sick soldiers, and their offer was accepted by the Government.

One of the first to volunteer was Miss Nightingale, and owing to her great experience she was entrusted with choice of nurses, and the leadership of them. It was a difficult matter to choose the fittest nurses out of the many who offered themselves, but at last the work was done, and one October day Miss Nightingale and thirty-seven nurses left Folkestone by steamer for the East. They were received by a crowd at Boulogne to wish them “God speed” on their mission, and then some of the chief citizens entertained them at dinner. The fisherwomen of Boulogne in their plain bright skirts and coloured shawls, carried all the luggage themselves up from the steamer, amid the cheers of the people.

All through France the nurses were received with sympathy and respect; for France and England were joined in a common cause, and France had already sent out nurses for their sick soldiers.

Then Miss Nightingale and her little band sailed from Marseilles to Constantinople. They had a very stormy passage, but arrived at Constantinople on November 4th, 1854, on the eve of another great battle.

The battle of Balaclava—made famous by the Charge of the Light Brigade, in which so many brave lives were lost through a mistaken order—was over, but November 5th, the day after Miss Nightingale arrived, was to be made famous by another splendid victory over the Russians.

It was a misty winter morning, and the day had hardly dawned, when the Russians advanced, sure of victory, to the plateau of Inkermann, where a scanty British force was collected. So thick was the fog that the English knew nothing till, in overwhelming numbers, the Russians appeared pressing up the hill. At once the fighting began, and the soldiers bravely kept their post, driving back the Russians time after time as they mounted the slopes. All day the battle lasted, and the English were getting exhausted when a French army arrived, and the Russians were soon in full retreat, having been beaten by an army taken unawares and only a fourth part of their own number. This battle is famous because the soldiers, not the generals, won the day.

The wounded soldiers were taken to the hospital at Scutari, where Miss Nightingale had only just arrived.

The hospital was already full; two miles of space were occupied by beds, and there were over two thousand sick and wounded soldiers. Then the wounded from Inkermann were brought across the water, and landed at the pier; those who could, walked to the great barrack hospital; those who were too badly hurt to walk were carried on stretchers up the steep hill leading to the hospital. It was a large square building outside, and inside were large bare wards with rows and rows of closely packed beds. There seemed no room for the heroes of Inkermann, but beds were made up all along the passages as close as possible, and the wounded men were laid in them.

It was a cheering sight to the sick soldiers to see Miss Nightingale and the nurses moving about the wards. They all wore aprons, and bands with “Scutari Hospital” marked on them, plain skirts and white caps. The men had never been nursed by women before, only by men, some of them very rough, some knowing nothing of sickness and unable to dress their wounds. But these nurses moved about from bed to bed, quickly and quietly, attending to each sufferer in turn, and working for hours and hours with no rest. Some of the soldiers were too ill even to know where they were, until they slowly returned to life, and found themselves no longer lying on the battle-field, but in the hospital, being cared for and looked after by Miss Nightingale or one of her band. The nurses had a hard time of it; the Turkish bread was so sour they could hardly eat it; what butter they had was bad, and the meat, one of them said, “was more like moist leather than food.”

But they worked on through the day, often through the night as well, carrying out the doctor’s orders, giving medicine, supplying lint and bandages, and giving lemonade to the thirsty soldiers. There was barely room to pass between the beds,—so closely were they packed. Here and there a little group of doctors would stand over a bed talking over a bad case, while those soldiers who could walk would go to the bed of a comrade, to help pass some of the long hours away.

The winter was bitterly cold. The men on the bleak heights before Sebastopol were only half fed, their clothes were in rags, they had to sleep on the damp ground, and toil for many hours every day in the trenches ankle deep in water and mud. Many hundreds died, many more sickened, and were taken to the hospital. Besides the large kitchen which supplied all

the general food, the nurses had another, where jelly, arrowroot, soup, broth, and chickens were cooked for those who were too ill to eat the usual hospital fare. Here Miss Nightingale would cook herself, if there were some urgent case, and with her own hands feed the sick and dying men. She had a great power of command over the soldiers; many a time *her* [Pg 126] influence helped a wounded man through the dreaded operations. He would sooner die than meet the knife of the surgeon. Then Miss Nightingale would encourage him to be brave, and, while she stood beside him, he, with lips closely set and hands folded, set himself for *her* sake to endure the necessary pain. And the soldiers would watch her gliding down the wards, and long for their turn to come, when she would stand by their special bed and perhaps speak some special word to them.

Then the men under her, the orderlies who had to obey her in everything, did it without a murmur.

“During all that dreadful period” not one of them failed her in devotion, obedience, ready attention; for her sake they toiled and endured, as they would not have toiled and endured for anyone else.

“Never,” she said, “never came from any one of them a word or look which a gentleman would not have used,” and the tears would come into her eyes as she thought how amid those terrible scenes of suffering, disease, and death, these men, accustomed to use bad language, perhaps to swear, never once used a bad expression which might have distressed her—their “Lady in Chief.” But Miss Nightingale had very uphill work; among other things, when she first went to the hospital, she found there was no laundry, and only seven shirts had been washed belonging to the soldiers; so she had a laundry formed as soon as possible, and there was a grand improvement in the cleanliness of the hospital.

[Pg 127] One December day great excitement ran through the wards of the great Scutari hospital, when it became known that a letter from the Queen had arrived.

“I wish,” wrote the Queen, “Miss Nightingale and the ladies to tell these poor noble wounded and sick men, that no one takes a warmer interest, or feels more for their sufferings, or admires their courage and heroism more than their Queen. Day and night she thinks of her beloved troops.” Copies of this letter were made, and read aloud in each ward, and as the last words, followed by “God save the Queen,” were uttered, a vigorous “Amen” rose from the sick and dying men. They liked the Queen’s sympathy, and they loved to think, in that far-off land, that England was thinking of them.

The rejoicings in the wards over an English newspaper were great; small groups of soldiers would collect round the stove, while one would stand in the middle, perhaps with only one arm, or his head bound up, and read to his eager listeners the news of England and the news of the war, which was still being waged around them, and in which they were keenly interested. For the long siege of Sebastopol, in which many of them had taken part, was still going on. In the spring came the unexpected news of the death of Nicholas, Emperor of Russia. “Nicholas is dead—Nicholas is dead!” was murmured through the wards, and the news travelled quickly from bed to bed.

“How did he die?” cried some. “Well,” exclaimed one soldier, “I’d rather have that news than a month’s pay!” One man burst into tears, and slowly raising his hands, he clasped them together, and sobbed out “Thank God!”

[Pg 128] In the summer Miss Nightingale went to visit the camp hospitals near Balaclava and to take some nurses there. She rode up the heights on a pony, while some men followed with baggage for the hospitals, and she was warmly greeted by the sick soldiers. A little later she was seized with fever, and carried on a litter to one of the hut hospitals, where she lay for some time in high fever. When at last she was well enough to be moved, she was carried down and placed on board a vessel bound for England. But she felt there was more work to be done, and though still weak and ill she returned to her post at the Barrack Hospital.

In the autumn of 1855 the interest among the soldiers became intense, as it was known that Sebastopol could not hold out much longer.

At last in September it was announced that Sebastopol was a heap of ruins. The effect in the wards was electric. “Sebastopol has fallen,” was the one absorbing thought. Dying men sat up in their beds, and clasped their hands, unable to utter more than the one word “Sebastopol.” “Would that I had been in at the last,” murmured one, wounded while the siege was yet going on.

With the fall of Sebastopol the war was at an end, and peace was signed the following spring. But Miss Nightingale still remained at Scutari, till the English had finally left Turkey in the summer of 1856. England had resolved to give her a public welcome, but she shrank from it, and quietly arrived at her home in Derbyshire unrecognized. But England wanted to show her gratitude to her in some way for the good work she had done, and the soldiers wanted to share. So a fund was started, called the “Nightingale Fund.” And very heartily did [Pg 129] all join in the home movement. The soldiers, both those who were wounded and those who were not, gave all they could, so universal was the feeling of thankfulness and gratitude to Miss Nightingale, who had given up so much for their sakes, and risked her life to ease their sufferings and cheer their long hours of pain.

At Miss Nightingale's special wish the Fund was devoted to the formation of a training-school for nurses at St. Thomas's Hospital in London. For up to this time no woman could be properly trained in England, and there were not many who could afford to go to the training home on the Rhine in Germany.

The Queen presented Miss Nightingale with a beautiful jewel; it was designed by the Prince Consort; the word "Crimea" was engraved on it, and on the back were the words, "To Florence Nightingale, as a mark of esteem and gratitude for her devotion towards the Queen's brave soldiers. From Victoria R., 1855."

In 1858 she wrote a book called "Notes on Nursing," and it soon became very popular; in it she tries to show how much harm is done by *bad* nursing.

"Every woman," she says, "or at least almost every woman in England has at one time or another of her life charge of the personal health of somebody, in other words every woman is a nurse." And then she tells the women of England, what a good nurse ought to be, how quiet and clean, how obedient to the doctor's orders, how careful about food and air. "Windows are made to open, doors are made to shut," she remarks, and if nurses remembered this oftener, it would be better and happier for their patients.

But her life was chiefly lived in those two years at the Scutari hospital; the many difficulties she met with at first, the struggle against dirt and bad food, the enormous amount of extra work to be got through in the day because others would not do their full share, the terribly anxious cases she had to nurse,—all these told on her health.

"I have been a prisoner to my room from illness for years," she tells us, but she did more good, brave, noble work in those two years than many a woman has done in a lifetime.

One of our poets has written about Miss Nightingale. He was reading one night of the "great army of the dead" on the battle-fields of the Crimea,

"The wounded from the battle plain
In dreary hospitals of pain,
  The cheerless corridors,
  The cold and stony floors,"

and as he pictured this desolate scene, he seemed to see a lady with a little lamp moving through the "glimmering gloom," softly going from bed to bed; he saw the "speechless sufferer" turn to kiss her shadow, as it fell upon the darkened walls. And then he adds:

"A Lady with a Lamp shall stand
In the great history of the land,
  A noble type of good,
  Heroic Womanhood."

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