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Selina A. Bower**

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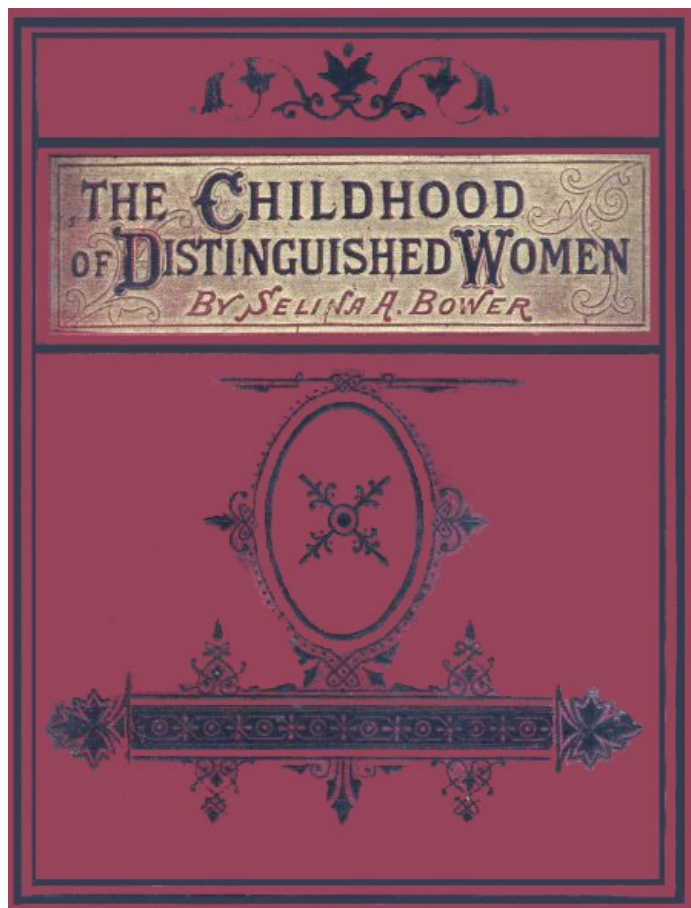
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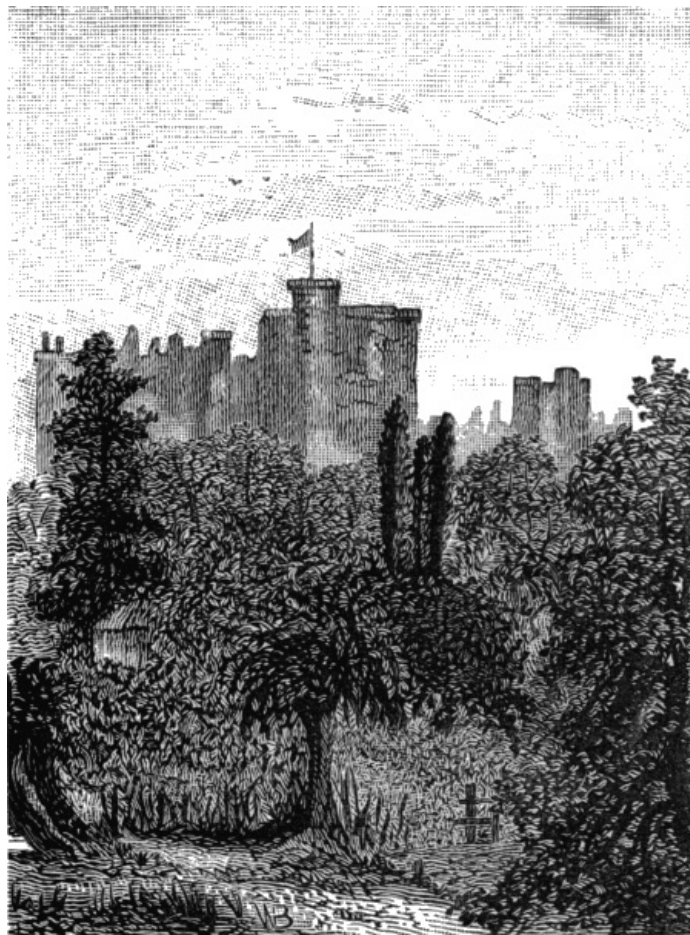
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WOMEN \*\*\*



**THE  
CHILDHOOD OF DISTINGUISHED WOMEN.**



WINDSOR CASTLE.

**THE CHILDHOOD**  
OF  
**Distinguished Women.**

BY  
**SELINA A. BOWER,**  
AUTHOR OF "FROM ADVENT TO ADVENT."

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## The Childhood of Distinguished Women.



### I.

#### THE PRINCESS ALICE.



The Princess Alice was the second daughter and third child of our own beloved Queen Victoria and the late Prince Consort, "Albert the Good."

Our deepest sorrowful interest has recently been excited by the touching and sudden way in which this lovely and gifted woman has been called from her home on earth to her eternal home in heaven.

The Princess was born on April 25th, 1843, and was very gladly welcomed by the warm, true mother's heart of Her Majesty, who has ever shown and expressed the deepest love for her happy circle of girls and boys.

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The first incident in the babyhood of the Princess Alice which attracts attention is the record of her christening. It was a very brilliant one, the Archbishop of Canterbury officiating, on June 2nd. The sponsors were the late King of Hanover, Ernest, the present Duke of Coburg, and the Princesses Sophia, Matilda, and Feodora.

We will give the Queen's own words about the important choice of the royal infant's names; Her Majesty thus writes:—"Our little baby is to be called Alice, an old English name, and the other names are to be Maud (another old English name, and the same as Matilda) and Mary, as she was born on Aunt Gloucester's birthday." Again, in writing to her uncle, the Queen's account of the little Princess's conduct was that "little Alice behaved extremely well."

When quite a young child, the Princess Alice was remarkably quick, and earnestly enjoyed the acquirement of all the knowledge suitable to her years, and soon displayed intellectual talent of a high order.

Peculiarly sweet and amiable in her disposition, and patient and untiring in her love, the young Princess was a favourite in the royal nursery and schoolroom.

Her illustrious father found her when even a child as to age, quite his companion as to comprehension and mental capacities.

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Two very special characteristics place the beloved Princess Alice in the highest range of distinguished women, and call for the deepest regard and respect from all hearts.

From her earliest youth, whatever was learned by her was *thoroughly* acquired, quietly and completely mastered, definitely and decidedly finished. And with her highly-refined, cultivated, and capacious mind, she also combined every domestic and feminine grace and duty, and was the useful, helpful English maiden, as well as singularly intellectual.

"In her teens," the Princess was pronounced to be "one of the most accomplished young ladies in England."

When the Queen visited Scotland in 1844, the Princess was too young to accompany the royal party, and Her Majesty thus writes of the separation. Just when they were ready for the journey, "Alice and the baby (Prince Alfred) were brought in, poor little things, to wish us good-bye."

But in the course of a few years, all the children were able to participate in the Scotch journeys, and the Princess Alice became the constant companion of the Queen, riding with her over the lovely hills on ponies; visiting the poor women in the cottages, calling at the shop to purchase comforts for them; and at various times climbing the ascents to Feithort, or up Morven, Loch-nagar, and Ben Mac Dhui. This latter ascent was made through the dank mountain cloud; but this did not daunt the royal travellers, the Queen recording—"However, I and Alice rode to the very top, which we reached a few minutes past two; and here, at a cairn of stones, we lunched in a piercing cold wind.... Luncheon over, Albert ran off with Alice to the ridge to look at the splendid view, and sent for me to follow."

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In December, 1861, Prince Albert was attacked by the terrible disease which eventually proved fatal. The Princess Alice, although only seventeen, was the constant, unwearied nurse of her well-loved parent, and tended and watched him with the strongest filial love. To the last she kept her post, and when her aid and gentle care were no more needed, for he had passed away, she turned to soothe, comfort, and support her beloved mother with womanly and dutiful affection.

On the 1st of July, 1862, the Princess Alice married Prince Louis of Hesse, and proved a pattern wife and mother. But in 1878, her own little household group was smitten with diphtheria, and in nursing and caressing her darling children, she caught the disease herself. One child preceded her, the Princess Mary, who died November 16th, and on December 14th, the anniversary of her honoured father's death, she, too, was summoned home.

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The changes and sorrows of life, and, perhaps, especially the death, of a darling little one, who fell from a window, in 1873, and was killed by the fall, had been blessed to her by the Holy Spirit of God; and scenes of family sickness and bereavement seem to have led the endeared Princess Alice to that loving and sympathizing Saviour who is ever ready to save the heart that fully trusts in Him.

The whole English nation mourned for her, as for one near and dear to each, and a solemnity pervaded all classes, though Christmas was at hand.

Possibly the anticipation of Christmastide had been bright in her own loving spirit: if so, that anticipation was realized, for the first Christmas in heaven with Jesus Himself must indeed surpass the most joyous and happy one ever spent on earth.

### **In Memoriam.**

#### **THE PRINCESS ALICE, WHO DIED DEC. 14th, 1878.**

She is taken to celebrate Christmastide,  
In Emmanuel's land of light;  
The notes of her carol swell far and wide,  
And her raiment is lustrous white.  
Introduced to the happy, and blood-bought throng,  
For whom Jesus, the Christ, was born,  
How sweetly will echo her triumph song,  
On the Heavenly Christmas morn!

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And the day she was taken was linked in love,  
By fond memory's silver chain,  
With him who had entered the Home above,  
Which knows neither parting nor pain.  
At the dawn of the wintry, and short, dark day,  
The angel of death hovered near,  
To herald the sorrowful mother away,  
From trouble, and trial, and tear.

Let us mingle our prayers, asking God to bless,  
With earnest, affectionate cry,  
Our well-beloved Queen, in her new distress,  
Her comfort our God can supply.  
May she treasure the thought with tremulous praise,  
That those who were lent, and not given,  
Are joining with us in the angels' lays,  
And keeping their Christmas in Heaven!



## II.

### MRS. HANNAH MORE.



Mrs. Hannah More spent her happy childhood at Stapleton, near Bristol; and her early girlhood in Bristol itself, as a pupil in the school of her three elder sisters.

Besides these three sisters, whose names were Mary, Betty, and Sally, there was also one younger than Hannah herself, named Patty.

The five little girls were the children of a Mr. Jacob More, the head master of a foundation school at Stapleton.

Mr. More had married the daughter of a farmer, who had been carefully brought up, and possessed considerable mind and also great judgment.

Hannah was born in 1745, and, together with her four sisters, learned to read at home, the mother herself teaching them.

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It is not difficult to picture that happy home, with all its quiet influence of love, for the five little girls appear to have been good children, very affectionate to each other, and would form a sweet, bright group as they stood with respectful attitude and intelligent faces round the kind mother, and repeated with interest and earnest emulation, the familiar "A, B, C."

Presently, something more than this was needed, but books were scarce. Mr. More had been educated for the Church, but his desire to be a clergyman was frustrated. He removed from Norfolk, his native county, and in his transit to Stapleton, which in those days was a long and difficult journey, he lost the greater part of his library. He therefore endeavoured to supply from memory, information and instruction to his five daughters, and Hannah was always extremely delighted to stand by her father's knees and listen to his stories of Grecian and Roman history, and also to gain thus from him a fair amount of classical learning.

The nurse who assisted the busy mother with her happy charge, had lived for some time in the family of Dryden, and often interested and amused Hannah and her sisters with accounts of the poet.

When Mr. More found that Hannah evinced such a desire for information, he began to teach her Latin and Mathematics; but as she outstripped all his pupils in the foundation school with extreme rapidity, the father, fearing that it might tend to make Hannah unfeminine, ceased these instructions. They seem, however, to have been supplemented by a different mode of education. The parents were poor, too poor to supply all the requirements of so large a family. Very wisely they determined that the children should be trained to support themselves. Miss More was, therefore, sent to a good school in Bristol, as a weekly boarder, and every Saturday, on her return home, she was required to teach her four sisters *all* that she had learned in the week!

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When this sister was twenty years old, she, together with Betty and Sally, opened a school themselves in Bristol; and Hannah, then twelve years of age, and Patty were sent as pupils.

On one occasion Hannah was taken ill, and Dr. Woodward, evidently a literary man of that time, was sent for to attend her. But so great was her conversational power, that the kind doctor forgot the purpose for which he came. After some time, he took his leave, but exclaimed, presently, "Bless me! I forgot to ask the girl how she is to-day!"

This remarkable talent, thus early developed, was one of Mrs. Hannah More's charms through life, and existed to the last lingering days of an intelligent old age.

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Hannah's other great talent, as a writer, was also early and fully indicated. As a mere child, she would scribble poems and prim essays upon every scrap of available paper, and a story is told of

her, that she had one grand ambition constantly before her young life, and that was to be old enough to "possess a whole quire of paper!" As a schoolgirl, Dr. Johnson, the elder Sheridan, and the astronomer Ferguson, seem to have been on terms of some intimacy, and exercised a talented influence upon the strong sense and mental capacity of Hannah More.

England was experiencing change during the younger years of this well-known and justly honoured writer; the upper circles of society were gay and semi-infidel in principle, disposed to laugh at, and ridicule anything of a religious character; the lower were so intensely ignorant that they devoted themselves to indolence and vice. But already Wesley and Whitefield were preaching the simple gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and, through the influence of His Holy Spirit, awakening numbers to study, appreciate, and rise to the full reception of the truth as it is in Him.

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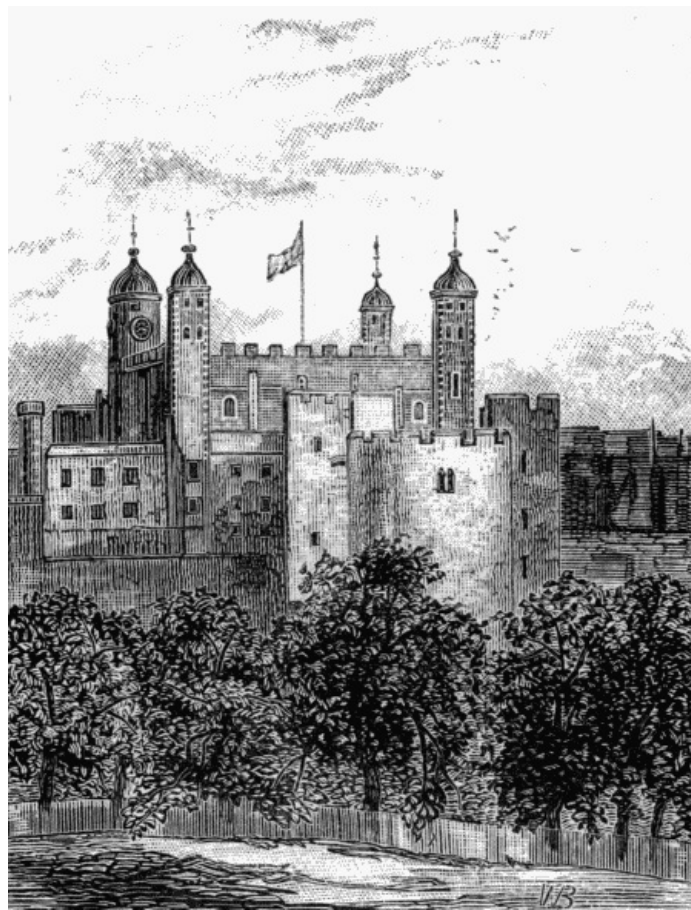
Mrs. Hannah More threw her literary influence and ability into the effort to raise and benefit her fellow-countrymen; though I am not aware that, during her early years, she in any way displayed personal and positive perception of the great love of that Heavenly Father who provided the special salvation and restoration so singularly suited to the wants and capacities of every child of man. But her evident respect for religion is singularly shown in the apparent sorrow that any disregard should be manifested towards God's Word; she once remarked, with emphatic disapproval, "We saw but one Bible in the parish of Cheddar, and that was used to prop a flower-pot!" She died in 1833, at the age of eighty-eight.



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**THE TOWER OF LONDON.**

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### **III.**

#### **LADY JANE GREY.**

**H**enry Grey was the Marquis of Dorset, and married Frances Brandon, the daughter of the Duke of Suffolk and his beautiful wife, Mary, the sister of Henry VIII. This Mary was for three months Queen of France; and when Louis XII. left her a widow, she was again married, almost immediately, to Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk. Their child Frances was the mother of Lady Jane Grey, who was born in 1537. There were two other little girls younger than Lady Jane, Katherine and Mary.

All the three children were treated with very great severity, which was not unusual at that time. Lady Jane, perhaps because she was the eldest girl, was expected to be quite perfect in her manners, movements, and in all that she said; to use her own striking expression, to do everything "Even so perfectly as God made the world."

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Her parents enforced obedience by threatening and taunting her; and also by literal *pinching* and *nipping*, besides still more severe and revolting bodily punishments, which worried and fretted the gentle, noble child, almost past endurance.

However, probably partly owing to all this torture, Lady Jane derived her pleasures from far higher sources than her years warranted.

Her tutor, Mr. Elmer, unlike her parents, was extremely gentle and kind; and when with him the child became perfectly free and happy, learning her lessons with great patience, care, and interest, and enjoying that true cultivation of mind, which is the result of all study that is rendered attractive.

Mr. Elmer had abundant reward for his toil, in winning and retaining the affection and respect of his young pupil; and also in the rapidity with which she mastered, not only the usual routine of

general knowledge, but the higher forms of classical learning. In Greek especially she was proficient, and Plato was to her more interesting than any story book.

When her father, who was at this time made a Duke, was out with the Duchess and friends, hunting in the park, Lady Jane preferred remaining in her bedroom with her books, and, on being questioned why she did not join the party in their sport in the park, she replied that such amusements were but "shadow."

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The surroundings of her home life were not congenial to the natural gentleness and sweetness of her disposition, and this, with perhaps also her love of the Greek language, led the young girl to study deeply, and to love God's Holy Word, and very shortly before her sorrowful death, she sent her Greek Testament to her sister Katherine, as the most precious gift which she could offer. The truths of that Word fell softly into the heart that yearned for love, and the salvation and sympathy of the Saviour seems to have been accepted by Lady Jane in her earliest years, and evidently proved her support and consolation in the tragedy that closed her young life here, as well as during the six months' previous imprisonment in the Tower.

Born, as she was, in transition times, Lady Jane quickly formed her own judgment, and was thoroughly Protestant in her faith. She was often with her cousin, Edward VI., and her decided opinions upon the Reformation, together with her arguments in its support, and her dislike to the Romish errors which they both condemned, made the boy-monarch respect her highly, and there was a warm attachment between the youthful cousins.

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Her childhood had scarcely faded into early girlhood, when Lady Jane became the bride of Lord Guildford Dudley, fourth son of the Duke of Northumberland. There was a treble marriage; Lady Jane and her two sisters were married at the same time at Durham House, Lady Jane, the eldest, being only fifteen years of age!

The rest of her sad story is quickly told. Owing to the ambition of her own father, and her husband's father, after the death of King Edward, she was, sorely against her own will, induced to claim the English crown. It was long before she yielded to the persuasion of Archbishop Cranmer, and, when she did so, it was with many tears, and these words, "If this right be truly mine, O gracious God, give me strength so to rule as to promote Thy honour, and my country's good!" Queen Mary, the right heir, was duly crowned, and, after ten days, Lady Jane Grey was informed by her own father that she was not, in reality, Queen. She was subsequently sent to the Tower, and after six months' imprisonment, the sentence of death was carried out on February 12th, 1554.

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Three short days were allowed for immediate preparation, during which Lady Jane calmly wrote to her father, and conversed with Dr. Feckenham, who tried to induce her to become a Romanist. This she firmly declined, though she did so with the greatest sweetness.

Her last words are evidence of her hope and trust; as she laid her head upon the block, she said, in trembling tones, "Lord Jesus! receive my spirit!" and the short life of earth was merged in the eternal life of Heaven!



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#### IV.

##### SELINA, COUNTESS OF HUNTINGDON.



Not very far from Ashby-de-la-Zouch, in Leicestershire, there is now a fine Gothic building, where the old mansion of the Hastings family formerly, and for centuries, had stood. The situation is lovely, for Donnington-park, with its large forest trees and magnificent old oaks, forms a more than usually beautiful surrounding to the extensive and immediate grounds. Those, to the north, were precipitous, and the broken craggy ground, with hanging woods, give additional charm to the sweeping valleys and alternating hills.

To this venerable old English home, Lady Selina Shirley came, as the bride of Theophilus Hastings, ninth Earl of Huntingdon, when she was nearly twenty-one, from her own adjacent



The two homes thus near, were singularly similar. For the home of Lady Selina's childhood was also a fine old edifice, very massive, with noble and spacious apartments, standing in the midst of an extensive park, with soft, swelling hills, and still softer green-clad vales. The tasteful grounds, too, were rendered more attractive by a large ornamental lake, which clearly mirrored a handsome stone bridge, as it lay peacefully resting against the sloping lawn. The church, with its pretty tower, adjoined the house, and Sunday after Sunday, the child, as she sat or stood in the old family pew, became familiar with the long inscriptions that were on the monuments of her own ancestors, and which plainly indicated that all, whatever the rank and station, must pass from the present to a future state.

The Shirley family was celebrated for two specialities—the purity of its genealogy, which could be traced up to the time of Edward the Confessor; and the piety of its most distinguished members, which, as it arose from a living faith in an eternal Saviour, must result in a future, which no human calculation can limit to its possessors, and in an infinite and everlasting life through Him alone.

The grandfather of Lady Selina Shirley had twenty-seven children, her father being the second son. She was born at Stanton Harold, on the 24th August, 1707. Two sisters, one older and one younger, shared the nursery with Lady Selina, and participated in the play, the happy strolls in the park, and presently in the early lessons. Elizabeth, the eldest, became the celebrated Lady E. Nightingale, and Mary, the "baby" of the family, was afterwards Viscountess Kilmorey.

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Lady Selina was decidedly talented, very benevolent, unusually grave and serious, and extremely graceful. Though not strictly beautiful, yet the large, bright eyes, the well-formed mouth, and the bold, intellectual brow, when illumined by the animation of the ardent spirit, were far more attractive than those perishing charms which exist only in features and externals.

She was a sensitive child, as well as serious, and often went alone to a small room to pray, and in childish, earnest fervour she would pour out every little trouble into the ear of that Father in heaven who listens to each whisper of distress.

When the Lady Selina was nine years old, a child just her own age died, and the passing funeral attracted her notice. She followed to the grave; listened to the beautiful and solemn service; heard those thrilling words, as the body was slowly lowered, "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust." Her eyes filled with tears, and, awe-struck and frightened, the young girl earnestly asked God to prepare her for her last hour, that she might die happily and without alarm. After this, she would often go to that little grave to think, to weep, to pray, and was much impressed with this first realization of death!

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On December 25th, 1717, her grandfather died, and this deepened those impressions, adding earnestness to her prayers, and strengthening her seriousness, although it was not until nearly ten years after her marriage that she became personally interested in the love of the Saviour, and sought full salvation through His work; and by the power of the Holy Spirit became a decided disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Lady Selina was very highly educated, being trained with extreme care, for her social position, and her naturally high intellect, and evident talent, were developed by sound instruction in all the various branches of interesting study. Her retentive memory and brilliant fancy availed themselves of all the knowledge presented to them; and even when quite young, her sound understanding and clear judgment were beyond her years, as they appeared in the conversation and observations in which she took part.

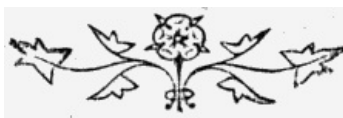
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Probably all this was preparing her for those peculiar efforts in the religious world, with their lasting influences, which have made Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, a truly distinguished woman.

But it was the grace of God alone which influenced her to utilize all this preparation; and that grace; having first filled her heart with a deep sense of sin, and of the utter insufficiency of her own ability to procure salvation, then led her to the most unbounded and simple trust in Jesus. Her love and gratitude made her anxious to work for Him; and her own peace rendered her desirous that others too should possess like peace. Thus the whole of her energy was directed to seek the honour and glory of her Saviour, and the safety of every sinner through Him.

During her last illness the Countess often repeated, "I long to be at home! My work is done! I have nothing to do but to go to my heavenly Father;" and almost her last words were, "I shall go to my Father to-night."

She entered that Father's heavenly presence on June 17th, 1791, in the eighty-fourth year of her age.





**GREENWICH HOSPITAL.**



## V.

### QUEEN ELIZABETH.



Queen Elizabeth, who was the second daughter of King Henry VIII., was born at Greenwich on the 7th of September, 1533, in a tapestry-covered chamber in the palace. This tapestry represented the parable of the Ten Virgins, and the half-unconscious eyes of the royal infant often rested upon the hazy blue dresses of the quaint maidens with their odd little lamps, as the days of early babyhood went softly by.

The King had his young daughter very magnificently christened by Archbishop Cranmer. It was Archbishop Cranmer who drew up the Church Catechism, and who was some years afterwards a Christian martyr, in the reign of Queen Mary, Elizabeth's eldest sister.

Besides the Princesses Mary and Elizabeth, Henry VIII. had one son, Edward, who succeeded his father as King of England.

When Elizabeth was between two and three years old, her mother, whose maiden name was Anne Boleyn, the daughter of Sir Thomas Boleyn, and niece of the Duke of Norfolk, was put to death by the King's wish, in a most unjust and wicked way. The poor little child probably knew nothing of this, for she was sent to reside, under the care of Lady Margaret Bryan, in the manor of Hunsdon. She appears to have been greatly neglected, as presently a petition went from Lady Margaret to Court requesting that suitable dresses and apparel for Elizabeth might be sent at once; for, wrote Lady Margaret, "She had neither gown nor kirtle, nor no manner of linen, nor foresmocks, nor

kerchiefs, nor sleeves, nor veils, nor mufflers, nor biggins;" a funny list of juvenile attire for a young Princess! However, the little girl was well cared for by Lady Margaret, and soon learned to read, to write, and to sew beautifully, and could play "indifferent well" upon some musical instruments.

In 1537, Elizabeth's brother Edward was born, King Henry having married again, and at the christening of this Prince, Elizabeth seems to have appeared at Court for the first time. The tiny Princess was allowed to hold the chrism on the occasion, and afterwards presented her baby brother with a "shirt of cambric," which her own small fingers had industriously embroidered.

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In the course of a few years, Elizabeth had acquired a fair knowledge of astronomy and geography, besides mathematics and architecture; and could speak five languages fluently, as well as her own native English.

For some time the Princess Mary also resided at Hunsdon, and was evidently kind to her younger sister. The two girls, whose lives were to be so distinguished, but so different, probably spent together the happiest portion of those lives in the comparative seclusion of Lady Margaret's home, busy, and occupied also with domestic employments, as they stored their minds with the literature of the period.

At that time, Elizabeth's vanity, which was a sad trait in her latter years, was not perceptible, for in a sketch of her when about twelve, she is spoken of as dressing with peculiarly "simple elegance," and almost despising personal adornment.

Being tall, she was commanding in person, and she was impetuous in her bearing. Her complexion was pale, her hair rather light, her face long and narrow, with an aquiline nose; and though her temper was hasty, she was usually so bright and cheerful that her companions scarcely heeded her fits of passion. She was also sensible and shrewd, and when very young, showed a disposition to rule and govern.

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The grave faults of her latter days, her vanity, her strong epithets of abuse, her caprice, and her increasing warmth of temper, were probably the results of the personal disappointments of her strange life. And perhaps her dread of death, points us to the real source of these faults, for it seems to indicate that Queen Elizabeth had not been so earnest in seeking God's grace, and the influence of His Holy Spirit, as she ought to have been, to preserve her from evil in this life, as well as to prepare her for the future life where there will be no evil, in the kingdom of the "King of kings and Lord of lords," the happy realm of Jesus.

Elizabeth was fourteen when her father died, and then she wrote a celebrated letter in choice Latin to her young half-brother Edward, with whom she was always on excellent terms.

The two children were Protestants, Mary alone remaining attached to the Papal power, which Henry VIII. had so unflinchingly put down during the latter part of his reign. Elizabeth's cherished and noble Protestantism remained firm through all the changes of her eventful life; and when, after the reigns of her brother Edward VI., and her elder sister Mary, she herself was placed upon the throne of England, she finally established the Protestant religion in the country; and to her, under God, we owe a deep debt of gratitude, for the long and happy years which have intervened until the present time, and during which God's most Holy Word has been left to us, a free and open book, in which we may each read and learn for ourselves His will, and about that spiritual service which He requires, and which alone can fit us for His presence, when He calls us from His world below to His world above.

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Queen Elizabeth died on March 24th, 1603, before the morning dawned, after a reign of nearly forty-five years, at the age of sixty-nine.



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Let us sketch a scene in the west of our island home. Long, rolling, soft, beautiful blue waves are dashing lightly upon a clear beach of wide sparkling sand, leaving behind, as the tide gradually ebbs, a ribbed and rippled surface. A rather narrow coast-line presents a somewhat scanty amount of cultivation; cottage and mansion lying here and there, as convenience or fancy may have suggested to the possessor.

Now and then a tiny clean Welsh village, or small town, claims a space of country which may be rather broader than usual. This coast-line is immediately hemmed in by high, wild, stern mountains sloping quickly upwards towards the sky, with soft grey clouds sometimes poised midway up the steep sides, or resting in filmy folds upon the top. Snowdon, rather to the south of the locality that we are sketching, and a little inland, often raising its high summit above the rest like a silver-haired veteran surrounded by companions, who vie with each other in emulation of their leader. [Pg 43]

A large house, Grwych (pronounced Griech), stood some years ago where this coast is rather narrow, the mountains towering up in front, and the sea softly laving the sandy shore behind. A set of six young children with their parents occupied this house. They had happy playhours in the old garden, or on the smooth sand; and Felicia, the fourth child, not always disposed for the gay romp of the cheerful group, took constant possession of a large apple tree, into which she could climb; its leafy boughs well hid the little girl and her book, which she then enjoyed in unmolested quiet. Until she was five years old Felicia Dorothea Browne had lived in Liverpool. She was born there in Duke-street, on the 25th September, 1794. Her father's ancestry was Irish, that of her mother was Venetian, and probably the Italian origin of the gentle poetess gave rise to the beauty and extent of her imagination, as perhaps also from her father she might derive the quick bright flow of language from which her pen sped on in an easy graceful stream. [Pg 44]

She was an extremely beautiful child, with long curling golden hair, which became dark brown as she grew older; her complexion was clear and bright, the colour coming and going with every varying impulse and impression. Her mother, herself talented and clever, cultivated her young daughter's tastes, and at the early age of seven years the little Felicia produced some attempts at composition. She had an extremely retentive memory, read well, and evinced great love of reading. Shakespeare was one of her favourite books at this time, and she took delight in juvenile attempts at personifying the characters. Happily, this was but a temporary freak.

Her studies do not appear to have been at all conducted with regularity. French, the English Grammar, and the rudiments of Latin comprised the only systematic training which she received. Highly imaginative as she was, and surrounded by the wild beauty of the Welsh hills, the varying sights and sounds of the wide deep sea, with her love of books and capacity to retain, as well as enjoy, her cultivation progressed, and knowledge increased rapidly without effort on her part, or on the part of others.

There is a story told of a constant childish raid. When the mother thought the little one safe for the night, she would slip quickly and quietly down to the bright laving sea, and bathe alone in the clear water, softly creeping back to bed undiscovered; and perhaps throughout her life the same wrong tendency towards insincerity and love of hidden mischief is discernible. [Pg 45]

A visionary belief in spirits and apparitions also appears to have influenced her at times, when mystery, rather than truth, assumed possession of her mind. Even little children in the present day need scarcely be told that there are no ghosts; but, being highly sensitive and nervous, she was peculiarly open to every passing fancy.

Early in life, Felicia visited London, but cared little for its gaiety; and with true childlike impatience longed to be at home again in the dear old house by the sea, though she enjoyed the works of art to which this visit afforded access.

Felicia Browne's first book of poems was published in 1808, when she was only fourteen, and this, together with another volume published in 1812, met with severe criticism. The poor child felt this so acutely that she became ill, and had to keep her bed for several days.

These books were the only two which she wrote before her married life commenced, so that her fame as a poetess was acquired as Mrs. Hemans, and not as Felicia Browne. [Pg 46]

There is no evidence to prove that in youth she gave her heart to the Saviour of sinners; but some of her poems in after life are deeply and touchingly full of yearnings for "The Better Land," or they sketch in soft melodious metre the swift decay of earthly beauty and joy, which is indeed always "Passing Away." As years and sorrows gathered, she also studied God's Word with earnestness and zeal, and the sixteenth of St. John was her favourite chapter; it was also the last which she read before her death. We may certainly hope that "The Comforter," who is promised in that chapter, guided her safely into "all truth," and led her simply to trust in Jesus, that in Him alone she "might have peace." For only Jesus can prepare any child of man, through the influences of His Spirit, for the purity, beauty, and happiness of His Heavenly Home, in that "better country," of which Mrs. Hemans once wrote—

"Eye hath not seen it, my gentle boy;  
Ear hath not heard its sweet sounds of joy;  
Dreams cannot picture a world so fair,  
Sorrow and death may not enter there;

Time may not breathe on its faultless bloom,  
For beyond the grave, and beyond the tomb,  
It is there, it is there, my child."

Mrs. Hemans passed away in the evening twilight, on the 16th of May, 1835, at the age of forty-one.

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**INCHMAHOME,  
The Child-Queen's child garden, with her little  
walk and its boxwood, left to itself for three  
hundred years. Yes, without doubt, 'Here is the  
first garden of her simpleness.'**

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## VII.

### MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS.



James V., of Scotland, was dangerously ill owing to severe disappointments and defeats experienced in his border war with Henry VIII., of England, and dying at Falkland, when, on the 8th of December, 1542, a message came to him from Linlithgow Palace, stating that his Queen, Mary of Guise, had a baby daughter. The king, rendered sorrowful by his trials and his sickness, replied, in his own expressive language, "Ay, it cam' (meaning the kingdom of Scotland) wi' a lass, and it will gang wi' a lass," and this prediction seem fulfilled in Mary's fate.

The king, her father, only lingered five more days, and on his death the tiny infant became Queen of Scotland and the Isles.

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When about nine months old, Mary was solemnly crowned, on the 9th of September, 1543, at Stirling Castle, having been carefully taken there from Linlithgow for the coronation by Cardinal Beaton, who performed the ceremony. Her mother was presently appointed regent.

After a few months, Mary went to reside on a small island in the Lake of Monteith, called Inchmahome.

Four other noble children were her companions, and all these four children bore also the name of Mary; Mary Beaton, Mary Fleming, Mary Seaton, and Mary Livingstone, and all were of the same age.

Mary remained on this island until she was nearly six years old. The five young girls, so isolated and lonely as regards the rest of the world, must have amused themselves with the usual routine of baby pastimes, but a great change now took place. The Queen of Scots was removed to France, and the four companions of her baby days also accompanied her to the gay scenes of the French Court.

Henry II., King of France, received Mary with great enthusiasm and respect, and a triumphal procession was arranged to convey her to the palace of St. Germain-en-Laye.

Her extreme beauty drew much attention. She had bright auburn hair, dark hazel eyes, a fair complexion, and a "dimpled chin."

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When the king saw her, his surprise at her loveliness made him enquire, with truly characteristic French politeness and love of compliment, "Are you not an angel?"

Mary was shortly afterwards placed in a French convent to receive a royal education, and appears to have been much attached to those who instructed and tended her. She said adieu to them all very reluctantly, when she returned to the gay Court life at a still early age.

The description of her at this time is that she was very accomplished, having acquired some skill in music, singing, dancing, and even in poetic effusions. She also had pursued more serious studies, both historical and classical, and was altogether so bright and intelligent that Brantôme remarked, "Ah! kingdom of Scotland! I cannot but think your days must be shorter, your nights longer, now you have lost the Princess by whom you were illumined!"

Her dress appears to have been a subject of much whim and caprice: sometimes she would wear a Highland costume, then again the fashionable French or Italian mode of those days, and her time was spent completely in gaiety and amusements.

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Mary, Queen of Scots, was born and educated in the Romish religion, and was, in after life, a rigid Papist. Lord Shrewsbury, who had charge of her by Queen Elizabeth's orders, intimates in his letters, which are still extant, that he thought of her rather "as a mischievous, cunning Papist, than as an injured Queen."

Owing to various conspiracies and plots, Mary was sentenced to die, eventually, by Queen Elizabeth, and her execution took place on February 7th, 1587.

There is a touching little story about her favourite dog. The tiny animal hid itself in her dress when she was taken to the scaffold, and, after her death, he refused to leave her body, and had to be forcibly taken away.

Mary, Queen of Scots, led a gay, dissipated life, and her death was sad and solemn. Having been trained a Romanist, the Holy Word of God was not placed in her hands and made the guide of her life, and her sins brought much sorrow and difficulty which seemed to draw her on from sin to sin, instead of leading her to humble repentance and simple faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Bible alone is the guide which God has given both for this present life, and for the future life; and God has given this book to each and all, to read and to study with earnest prayer for His Holy Spirit's teaching, that each and all may understand it, and may act upon its *teaching*.

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Perhaps if Mary had read God's Word herself, and seen the beauty and purity of its commands, and learned from it all the great love of God, and His way of salvation for sinners through the "One Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus," she would have escaped the temptations of her own great beauty and of her royal position, and not have perished as she did. We ought, indeed, to value our Bibles, and to seek grace to study them, so that, although there are snares and temptations around us, we may always know what God's will is, and also know how to resist those temptations through His mighty help. And we should also thank God that He has given us His Holy Word to lead us safely through all earth's changes to the unchanging Heaven, and that He has promised to give those who trust in Jesus and love Him now, far more than an uncertain crown of gold, even a "Crown of glory that fadeth not away."





## VIII.

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### POCAHONTAS, THE ROSEBUD.



Long ago, and far away, this Indian Princess was born, in 1594.

Pocahontas was a distinguished woman for two reasons, which render her short life one of singular interest.

One of these reasons was the effectual aid she rendered when quite a young girl to the early English settlers in the United States.

The other reason, and a far higher one, was that Pocahontas was the first heathen amongst the Red Indians who was converted to Christianity in Virginia. The readers of "The Rosebud" will be interested to know that a young girl bearing the name of Pocahontas, which means "The Rosebud," was thus the earliest native of those dark lands who was led from the sad shadows of heathen superstition, ignorance, and idolatry, to that Jesus who is truly "the Light of the world."

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The father of Pocahontas was a Red Indian chief in the state of Virginia, and the dark little baby grew and played under the shade of the sugar-maple, or the long-leaved India-rubber tree, probably gathering with her tiny fingers the large blossoms from the trailing passion-flower, or the snowy white magnolia, and grouping them with the crimson rhododendron, or gorgeous drooping fuschias, which grew wild in the tangled forests near to her father's wigwam.

When very young, she boldly induced her father, who was the great chief Powhattan, to spare the life of an English captain, one of the first settlers in North America, who had been taken prisoner by a native tribe. This captain, James Smith, had been sentenced to a very cruel death, and Pocahontas, then only thirteen years old, interceded so bravely and eloquently that Captain Smith was spared. He was allowed to live in Powhattan's wigwam, and, after a short time, was set completely free.

Rather more than two years after this, the Indian tribes became alarmed as to the movements of the English residents, and again endeavoured to take the Captain prisoner. Pocahontas, with the brave resolute strength of both mind and body which characterised many of those swarthy natives, started on a lonely journey of nine miles, through the wild, overgrown forests, threading her way amongst uncultivated cotton trees, or trampling down the smaller tobacco plants; alike heedless of the lovely beauty of the gay flowers along her path, and fearless of the grisly bear, the treacherous boa constrictor, or the powerful vulture called the condor, as she pursued her mission of mercy. Having found Captain Smith, and apprised him of his peril, Pocahontas sped home again, lest her father should miss her and enquire about her absence.

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The persevering Princess continued pleading well and earnestly for some time in behalf of the English settlers, but at last her father, perhaps weary of her entreaties, sent her away to the chief of another tribe. Instead of protecting the girl thus placed under his care, the treacherous chief sold her to an English Captain, named Argill, who intended to make good use of his bargain in transactions with her father, Powhattan. These transactions failed, and poor Pocahontas, the Rosebud, remained a captive. The English treated her with extreme courtesy and kindness; and amongst the number of officers was a Mr. Thomas Rolfe, who offered to teach the native girl the English language.

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She proved a very gentle, amiable scholar; and Mr. Rolfe, being himself an earnest Christian man, also taught that dark mind the bright and lustrous truths of God's most Holy Word. The Spirit of God blessed that teaching, and the light thus introduced by His influence, alone became the means of revealing to the warm heart of Pocahontas, the love of that living Saviour of sinners, who died for all, that all may live for Him. His blood can purify the Red Indian girl just as effectually as the fair English maiden, and both equally require that blood to take away the sad stains of sin in heart and life, which are as dark, as deep, and as deadly in the one as in the other.

Powhattan seems to have been permitted some intercourse with his daughter, for with his consent she eventually married Mr. Rolfe, and subsequently Pocahontas came over to England, and was presented at Court in 1616. Queen Anne appears to have been very friendly with the Indian Princess. Her intelligence was great, and her modesty and unaffected manners interested all who knew her.

She did not live to carry out her intention of returning to her own native land, Virginia, but died

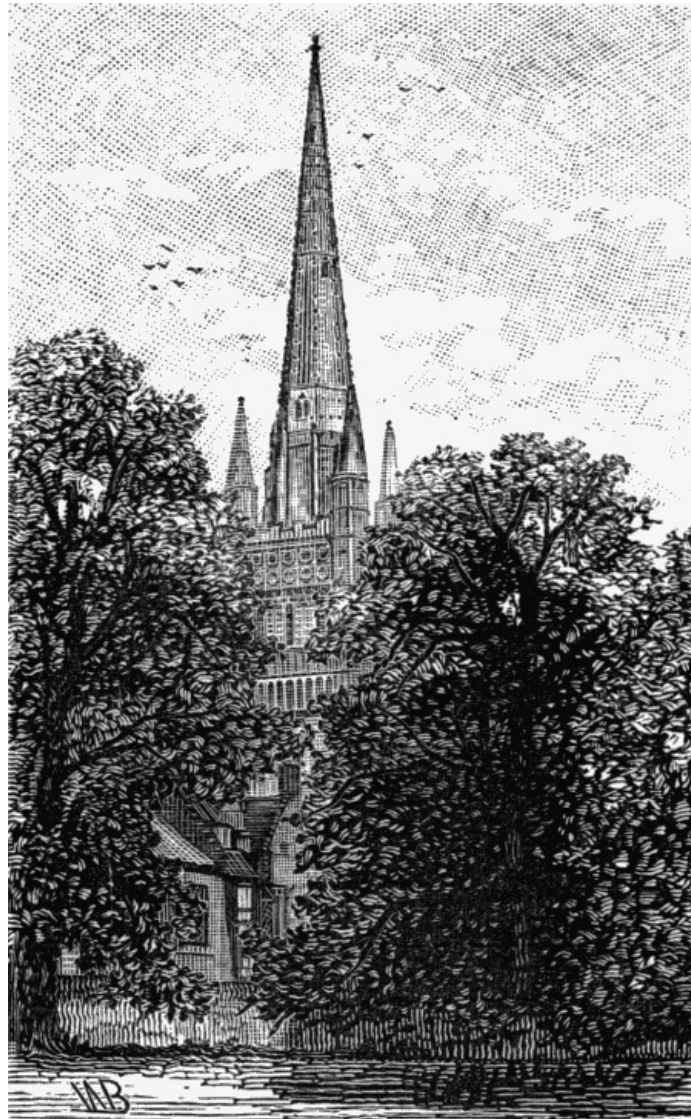
at Gravesend in 1617. Her little son remained in England for some years, and was educated as an English boy. He then sought his mother's country, and from him many of the well-known families of the State of Virginia claim descent.

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Pocahontas, or the Rosebud, has been the heroine of many stories and songs, but the most beautiful thought connected with her memory is that those to whom her generous help and interest opened a fair land on earth, should be the means, through the power of the Holy Spirit of God, of opening to her that "land of pure delight, where saints immortal reign;" and that from our own dear native country she should have passed away, to enjoy for ever that "infinite day" which "excludes the night," through Him who is "The Way," for the dark daughter of another soil, as well as for the favoured children of our own.



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**NORWICH CATHEDRAL.**  
**(Copied from a Photograph, by permission)**

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## IX.

### MRS. OPIE.



Norwich has been called "The City of Gardens;" for behind the large houses belonging to professional men, and business men, which front the narrow irregular streets, there are sweet lawns and well-cared-for flower borders, with trees and shrubs planted so thickly round the walls, or the walls themselves so covered with the trailing tendrils of fresh creepers, that imagination might fancy the scene one of pure country loveliness.

The beautiful taper spire of the rather small, but very elegant Cathedral, appears above the verdure-covered walls, its stone notches resting softly in attractive clearness upon the cloudless blue sky; or, perhaps the battlements of the square, massive block of the Castle, rise quietly above the grave old buildings of the city, the slopes of the castle moat, gaily draped with innumerable lilacs in the spring, resting in drowsy dignity below.

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Another feature of the fine old city of Norwich is the quaint churchyard, with blackish stone walls around and sometimes intersected diagonally with a narrow paved walk, or perhaps surrounded by a roughly-paved street, with posts to guard each entrance, and with the dignified name of "Church Alley."

In a house which stood in one of these churchyards—St. Clement's—a physician, named Dr. Alderson, lived rather more than a hundred years ago. He had only one child, who was born on the 12th of November, 1769. This little girl was christened Amelia, after her mother, who taught and trained her both wisely and well.

To this, probably, the success of Amelia Alderson, afterwards Mrs. Opie, as a writer, was mainly due, although the great care of the parent did not altogether enable the daughter to conquer all faults, for Sydney Smith once plainly told her that "Tenderness is your *forte*, and carelessness your *fault*."

Amelia was a bright, cheerful, golden-haired girl, with lively fancy and strong imaginative powers, decidedly talented and capable of high cultivation.

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When a very tiny thing, she would lie quietly in bed to listen to the church bells which had awakened her, and, looking up to the sapphire sky at early dawn, she gazed and listened, as her mistaken ideas suggested that the chaste chime was the music of the angels hidden in the depths of the blue!

But her thoughts were not always thus happy, for the child invested other objects with attributes of terror, and black beetles were a source of inconceivable dread and horror.

She was also extremely timid about deranged people, perhaps the more so because the large "Bethel" in Norwich is a conspicuous building, and forms a home for poor lunatics, and possibly her father was interested in the restless patients who were located there.

Negroes also appear to have produced the same amount of fear in the little girl as the black beetles.

Mrs. Alderson was too wise and sensible to allow these nervous fancies uncontrolled play, and most earnestly applied herself to teaching and helping Amelia to overcome them.

Both teacher and taught were indeed successful; for before long the child would shake hands with an imbecile whom she sometimes met, speak kindly to her, and at last even begged to be taken over the "Bethel" itself, where the sorrowful sights and sounds moved the warm heart to a deep and sincere pity for trials which no human love can mitigate.

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This judicious mother died when Amelia Alderson was about fifteen years old, and from that time until she was eight-and-twenty, household cares and superintendence occupied her largely, for she entirely managed her father's home and presided at his table.

The literary and poetical career of this reputedly pleasant woman commenced after her marriage with Mr. Opie, the celebrated portrait painter, which marriage took place at Marylebone Church in London, on the 8th of May, 1798.

Much later still in life, and after even the earlier years of widowhood had passed, her far higher career as a Christian character was ushered in by Mrs. Opie becoming a member of the Society of Friends, and for more than twenty-five years, consistency, peace, and quiet, marked her calm course. Ere joining the "Friends," she had been induced to give up, not only writing fiction, but reading it also.

Mrs. Opie died on the 2nd of December, 1853. Just as the day passed away, the dawning of her eternal day began—a day that we cannot measure with our present ideas, it is so long, so bright, so cloudless. The day of grace closed, and the day of glory opened, for Mrs. Opie loved and served Jesus on earth, so that she was taken to serve Him in Heaven.

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The early teaching of the mother appears to have been blessed to the child in later life, even as its influence also preserved her amidst some difficulties during younger days, for Mrs. Opie writes very sweetly of her mother's care thus:—

"Oh! how I mourn'd my heedless youth,  
Thy watchful care, repaid so ill:  
Yet joy'd to think some words of truth  
Sunk in my soul, and teach me still.  
Like lamps along life's fearful way,  
To me, at times, those truths have shone,  
And oft when snares around me lay,  
That light has made the danger known."

The truths of God's most Holy Word will always brighten each day of this life, not only cheering, but sufficiently lighting it for the safety of those who seek also the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit. The long, long day with Jesus, by-and-bye will have no snares, no dangers, no regrets to cast their sorrowful shadows across its pure, sweet sky, for His presence will be everlasting light, and He has taken away all the sins of His people who believe in Him, and as there is no sin in Heaven, there is no suffering, and no shade of pain.

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## X.

### GRACE DARLING.



One of the most dangerous and rugged coasts of England is that of Northumberland. This is partly owing to the proximity of the group of tiny islands called the Farne Islands; which number about twenty. When the sea is at all rough, and the wind high in this vicinity, the wild waves rush with violence between the somewhat narrow island channels, and lash themselves into fretted fury, as they curl over in frothy foam. Many years ago, on one of the Farne Islands named the Longstone, a

lighthouse was built, that vessels might be duly warned of the danger and difficulty of the rocks and shore.

In 1815, a tiny, gentle baby girl was born in the little lighthouse home, who presently received the name of Grace Horsley.

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Her father was William Darling; a most suitable man for his post as keeper of the lighthouse, being vigilant, steady, attentive, and careful, not only in the special duties to which he was appointed, but also in training a numerous family with diligence and discretion.

So little Grace was not a lonely child in a quiet home; but one of a merry, active, happy troupe of northern children; sometimes playing in the clean, white-washed rooms and staircases of the lighthouse, or at other times clambering about the rough rocks, and watching the eddying waters all around.

Still the life of the young girl was not all play, with the dear brothers and sisters whom she loved.

Lessons had to be learned, and they were well learned too; copies had to be written, and in these little Grace soon excelled, for she "wrote a beautiful hand."

The kind, homely parents, too, taught her to think, and as she read nicely, and was bright and quick in acquiring the information within her rather limited grasp, she became very intelligent.

A fair share of household duties also fell to her lot, and these were discharged in a quiet, orderly, and unobtrusive way.

Though very neat in her dress, she was never smart; the only trace of feminine vanity was this:— After her brave conduct in the shipwreck of the "Forfarshire," the Duke and Duchess of Northumberland sent for Grace Darling to Alnwick Castle, and presented her with a gold watch, which she always wore when visitors came to the lighthouse; taking care that the watch-seal

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should be slightly conspicuous on the plain, simple striped cotton gown!

Thus the childhood and girlhood passed gently on in almost unvarying home love, duty, and quiet happiness, until the 5th of September, 1838, Grace being then in her twenty-third year.

On that night an awful storm rose in tempestuous fury and swept up to the Farne Islands, raging and swelling around, and tossing the black billows into surging foam amongst the cliffy little isles that chafed it into such majestic madness. A steamer had left Hull a day or two before, and as her boilers were not in good repair, she was soon rendered helpless in the wide ocean, and presently drifted on towards the perilous Longstone Lighthouse. She struck on one of the dreaded islands, and the cries of the few survivors who could cling to that portion of the wreck which was forcibly driven between the rocks, reached the ears of Grace Darling, who immediately awakened her father. Utter darkness prevented them from seeing where the wreck lay, and both father and daughter watched till the dawn. An attempt to rescue the moving forms which they could faintly discern in the misty daylight was almost hopeless, but for all that it was made, and the two stepped without hesitation into the frail, small boat, which they then rowed towards the wreck. Here the difficulty increased, as the tempestuous sea threatened to dash the boat and its occupants on the rocks where the "Forfarshire" was stranded. But the father succeeded in landing, Grace pushing off with the boat to avoid its being engulfed, and with her oars balancing it amongst the rolling billows until the nine survivors and her father were safely with her in the tiny craft. Then both rowing back to the lighthouse, they carefully nursed, cheered, and tended those rescued men, Grace especially devoting herself to them with unremitting care.

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This event gave Grace Darling the notoriety which her noble conduct so well merited.

It was on the 20th of October, 1842, when the wild equinoctial gales had not long swept over the surrounding seas, that she died gently in the midst of her own loving family circle, at the early age of twenty-seven.

It is easy to imagine the gratitude and joy of the nine perishing men who were rescued from an awful death!

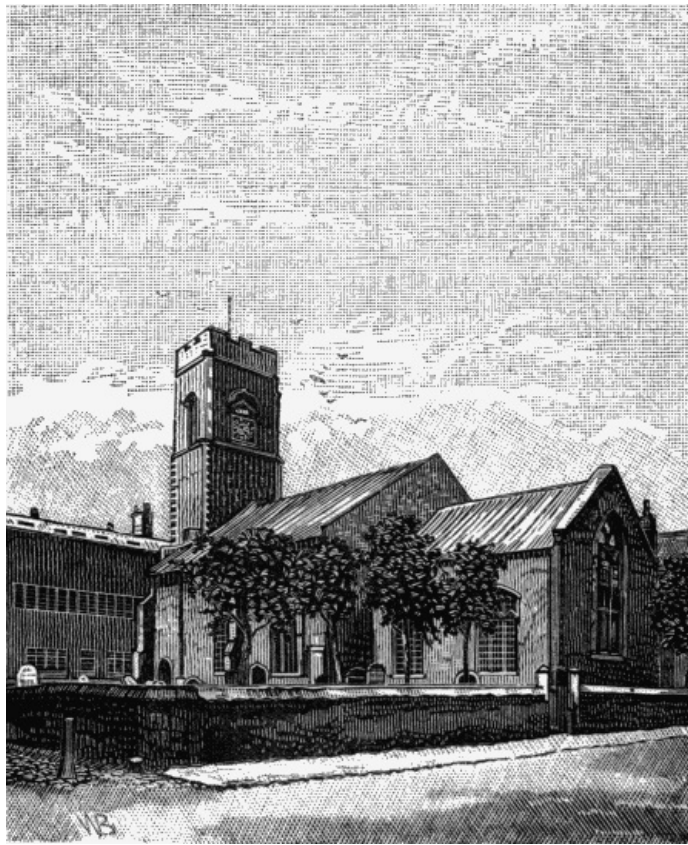
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May you, dear young readers, value far more highly that eternal salvation from darker death than the one which threatened them, that salvation of those who trust themselves fully to the loving Saviour's power and willingness to save! To save *from* both the guilt of past sin, and the power of present sin of heart and life, through the influence of the Holy Spirit of God, and to save *for* the calm, unshaken rest of a bright Home of Light, when the last wave of this stormy sea of life is left outside, and exchanged for the unbroken beauty of heaven's crystal "sea of glass!"



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**ST. CLEMENT'S CHURCH, NORWICH.**

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## **XI.**

### **MRS. FRY.**



Elizabeth Fry, subsequently so well known as the kind visitor and instructress of the females in Newgate, was born on the 21st of May, 1780, in St. Clement's parish in the old city of Norwich.

Her father's name was John Gurney; her mother, whose maiden name was Bell, was a lineal descendant of Robert Barclay, the Apologist of the Quakers.

The Gurneys of Norwich trace their family back to the days of William Rufus, if not to the times of William the Conqueror.

Elizabeth was one of twelve children, and the third daughter in this large family of Quakers.

When she was four years old, her parents removed from the city to the beautiful estate of Earlham, where her childhood passed away in much worldliness and gaiety, for the Quakers of this period were extremely lax in carrying out their peculiarities.

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Earlham Hall is scarcely two miles from Norwich, and is a stately mansion surrounded by a lovely park, the river Wensum adding its charms to the scenery by its graceful windings in the vicinity. It was here, surrounded by luxury, beauty, and profusion, that the child played; and the old Hall was her bright, glad home.

Her mother seems to have been very fond of Elizabeth, and in writing about her, remarks:—"My dear little Betsey never offends, and is, in every sense of the word, truly engaging."

This may have been maternal partiality, for whilst a mere child, she was somewhat obstinate in disposition, and averse to study. It is even stated that she was thought a very dull child as to lessons, but this was probably because she had a great dislike to routine; and preferred a ride on horseback, a merry dance—for she was particularly fond of dancing—or a song with her sister

Rachel, with whom she sang duets well.

However, Elizabeth evidently made progress in accomplishments, and was taught drawing, as well as music and dancing.

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The young girl was naturally extremely nervous and sensitive; when only seven years old, she would quietly watch her mother when asleep, with a terrible dread that that beloved mother should not wake again. Or at times the wish would come into her heart, that the walls might close upon herself, and her dear parents, brothers, and sisters, and bury them in one grave together, rather than that she should ever have to suffer separation from them.

When her mother died, Elizabeth was a fair-haired, sweet-looking child of twelve, with soft blue eyes, and a silvery attractive voice, which in later life told the beautiful story of the love and life of Jesus, with wonderful influence, to the poor degraded outcasts in prison. One poor woman, on hearing her read, said, "Hush! the angels have lent her their voices!"

After the mother's death, the father and friends remained as gay as before, and an almost sceptical tendency crept over the family. With Elizabeth's nervous disposition, a dread of death was inevitable; she frequently alluded to it, calling it "This wonderful death," and in her diary she complains of dark restlessness of mind, and some disbelief in the truths of the Bible.

Happily this was arrested, for before Elizabeth was eighteen, an American "Friend" came to Norwich and his addresses given in the chapel roused the attention, and led the unsatisfied spirit to deep sorrow and mental anxiety. Elizabeth, who appeared as one of the listeners, in such gay clothing that her boots—purple laced with scarlet—were the especial envy of a younger sister, left the "Meeting" humble and weeping; and at night she remarked that she had for the first time *felt* that there was a God, and added, "May that belief never leave me, or, if it does, may I at least always remember that I *have* felt there is a God and immortality."

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She had a long struggle with herself, being fond of notice and flattery, and possessed of considerable pride.

When "His Royal Highness of Gloucester" was in Norwich, she wished him to visit Earlham, but confessed, after she had seen the Prince, that her wish was the result of pride.

Soon after this she went to London, and was introduced to London life, but immediately after her return to her home, she gave up the gaiety which she had proved to be utterly unsatisfactory, and commenced a life of devotion to God, that resulted in loving obedience to His will.

Elizabeth's first efforts to teach to others the way of life, which the Holy Spirit had revealed to her through Christ, was attention to a dying servant. This was followed by instruction to an increasing class of boys whom she had in the laundry at Earlham Hall, and on her marriage with Joseph Fry, these lads numbered eighty-seven. Shortly after this marriage, which had removed her to London, she began her work of love in Newgate, where for many years she taught the poor women of the sympathy and care of Jesus. She passed away at the age of sixty-seven, with a beautiful, lingering smile, and the simple words of trust and faith, "It is a strife, but I am safe."

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## XII.

### AGNES STRICKLAND.



Let us turn to an old Westmoreland family, residing between three and four hundred years ago, in the style of the period, at Sizergh Castle. Sir Thomas Strickland, the head of that family, manifested loyal attachment to the house of Stuart, and some of the lands and hereditary possessions, both in Westmoreland and Lancashire, were eventually lost through the steady adherence of Sir Thomas and his relatives to this cause.

We read of one daughter of the house in the time of Henry VIII., whose name, like that of the

character we are sketching, was Agnes Strickland, marrying Sir Henry Curwen, of Workington Castle. And their son received Mary Queen of Scots, when she landed upon his estate. Camden, the historian, is also descended from the same branch of the family of Strickland.

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A second Agnes Strickland married the eldest son of the Archbishop of York, Francis Sandys, and the family of the Stricklands appear to owe their conversion from Romanism to the Protestant faith to the influence of another son of the Archbishop, named George, who was a poet about two hundred years ago. They then became as staunch in the principles of the Reformation as they had previously been firm in papal policy.

One branch of the Strickland family settled at Raydon Hall, in Suffolk, and here the third Agnes Strickland was born, who has been so justly celebrated as the Historian of "The Queens of England from the Norman Conquest." Raydon Hall is a very lonely place on the sea coast, quite a mile from the nearest village, and there is no dwelling at all near to it, except one farm-house upon the estate.

The seclusion being thus extremely great during the long, bleak winter on the eastern coast, the family residing there would have passed many dreary months but for the intellectual tastes of its talented members.

There were eight children. Agnes was the third daughter, and the girls were very amicable and sociable in their simple life, varying the sterner work of severe study with delightful games, or in the care of pet animals, or by strolls in the gardens and grounds around the Hall. A governess had the partial training of Agnes and her sisters, but their father, himself a literary man, and intensely fond of history, topography and genealogy, principally conducted their education; compelling the girls to master subjects far beyond the usual attainments of young ladies, and requiring some knowledge of algebra and mathematics from the not always compliant and obedient daughters.

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Mr. Strickland suffered from gout, and was frequently confined to his chair or bed.

He then supplied abundant work for Elizabeth, Agnes, and the other sisters in reading to him. This they were delighted to do, and took almost as much interest in history as the father. But Mr. Strickland also endeavoured to carry out his wish that the girls should be proficient in mathematical studies, and in this Elizabeth alone seemed to be docile, for she would patiently pore over the figures on her slate, whilst Agnes and the others bestowed very sisterly pity upon her.

Agnes had a more classical turn, preferring the history, and also poetry, making sundry attempts at versification herself; but this taste Mr. Strickland rigorously checked, considering the effort as a waste of time. At last the child obtained her father's consent to let Latin take the place of problems, and she then set to work upon an old book in that language, learning to repeat a number of dialogues:—a mode of studying language extremely irregular, and by no means commended by the anxious parent.

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Still Agnes also managed to write verses which presently came under Mr. Strickland's notice, and when twelve years old she composed a poem called "The Red Rose." This was intended as a sketch of the fortunes of the House of Lancaster, but was so severely criticised by her father, that she tore up the manuscript by his advice, and promised not to try poetry again. But three years afterwards she made another venture in that line under the title of "Worcester Field," which was published, although, however, it is not well known.

Her fame arose gradually soon after this period, when, through the death of the father, reverses of fortune induced Agnes and her sisters to make literature a profession. She then assumed her true taste, and evinced marvellous talent as a writer of history, making the lives of England's Queens no longer dull, dry, and uninteresting, but beautiful sketches of true character, and of real, though bygone times; painting, too, in vivid colours, the social positions of our royal matrons with wonderful skill and ability.

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Agnes Strickland died on the 13th of July, 1874, leaving us a powerful proof of the importance of early and attentive education.

The young girl, living in such seclusion on the Suffolk coast, little imagined in her childhood that her future fame was depending upon the interesting and valuable information which she was beginning to accumulate, and which she was learning to love as she read in dutiful diligence the books indicated by her careful father.

And yet that quiet commencement led to high honour, and England has well acknowledged her debt of gratitude to Agnes Strickland for her splendid additions to historic lore. Large labour, constant care, and stern study enabled her to use the talents which God had given, talents, of which she was unconscious as a child.

May not this thought induce a spirit of earnest effort in each young heart now? God has given talent in some degree, and of some description, to all, and He requires the improvement of that talent, whatever it may be.

In conclusion, Agnes Strickland wrote with womanly and wonderful beauty the history of England's Queens. There was once a history written, of far greater beauty, and by far higher power, of Him who is the "King of kings and Lord of lords;" a history traced by His own hand alone, as He guided "Holy men" of old by the power of the Holy Ghost. One portion of this History

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is traced in blood—the "blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, which cleanseth from all sin" those who receive in penitence, faith, and love, the "record that God gave of His Son." May the same Holy Spirit, which dictated the Holy Word of God, write the History of His character and love so deeply within our hearts, that we may receive His full salvation now, and the "eternal life" which He so freely gives hereafter!



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[Pg 84]

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[Pg 85]

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## Transcriber's Notes:

Punctuation has been normalized.  
Page 14: "caresssing" replaced with "caressing".  
Page 50: "Inchmahone" replaced with "Inchmahome".  
Page 67: "troup" replaced with "troupe".  
Page 69: "engulphed" retained as printed.  
Page 81: "latin" replaced with "Latin".

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