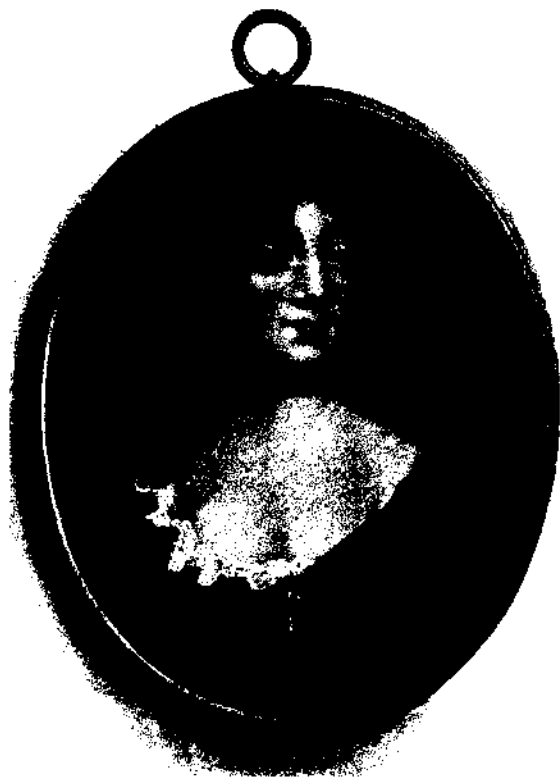


666
Biography

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THE PRIVATE LIFE OF
CHARLES THE SECOND



LUCY WALTER

*From a miniature attributed to N. Dixon, in the possession of
His Grace the Duke of Buccleuch*

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

By
Arthur Irwin Dament
AUTHOR OF "NELL GWYNNE"

*With a Colour Frontispiece
and Nine Illustrations*



CASSELL & COMPANY, LTD
LONDON, TORONTO, MELBOURNE & SYDNEY

First published 1927

Printed in Great Britain

"Who-so shal telle a tale after a man,
He moot reherce, as ny as ever he can,
Everich a word, if it be in his charge,
Al speke he never so rudeliche and large;
Or elles he moot telle his tale untrewe,
Or feyne thing, or finde wordes newe."

—CHAUCER, *Canterbury Tales*, *Prologue*, ii. 731-736.

PREFACE

IT had been my intention to call this book "Chanticleer and His Wives," but as it occurred to me, on reflection, that this particular nickname, by which Charles the Second was known in the innermost circles of Whitehall, might perhaps not be familiar to modern readers, that title might be supposed to refer to a treatise on intensive poultry-raising or egg-laying tests.

In any book dealing with the private life of the merriest monarch who ever sat upon the throne of England it would be impossible to avoid some mention of Nell Gwynne, just as Mr. Dick found himself unable to exclude the Royal Martyr's head from his discourse. I have therefore included in these pages some fresh information about "Mistress Nell" which has come to my knowledge since I wrote an account of her life and times a few years ago.

I desire to acknowledge my indebtedness to Dr. W. A. Shaw's *Calendars of the Treasury Books*, now in progress, and his illuminating introductory chapters thereto.

Whilst these shed a flood of light upon the life of the Court and the political and social history of the nation from 1660 to 1685, they go far to dispel the prevailing impression that Charles was an unpatriotic King, and, in his later years, little more than a vassal of Louis the Fourteenth.

My obligations are due to the Duke of Buccleuch for permission to reproduce the miniature of Lucy Walter, probably the only authentic portrait of her now in exist-

PREFACE

ence, and to Lady de Saumarez, the owner of the interesting portraits of Nell Gwynne and the Duchess of Cleveland included in these pages. I must also thank Lord Dillon for placing at my disposal some unpublished letters from the King to his daughter, Lady Lichfield, which are preserved at Ditchley.

In addition to the authorities cited in the text, I have derived much assistance from Sir H. Imbert Terry's "A Misjudged Monarch," the best apologia for Charles's life with which I am acquainted, whilst the recent biography of the Duchess of Mazarin by Mr. Cyril Hartman has been of material value in connexion with the chapter on "The Foreign Invasion."

I shall be grateful for the loan of any hitherto unpublished letters of Charles the Second which may be in the possession of my readers, with a view to their incorporation in the text in the event of a second edition of this memoir being called for.

August 24, 1927.

CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
FOREWORD	xiii
I EARLY YEARS (1630-1645)	i
II UNE JEUNE DEMOISELLE DE JERSEY: MARGUERITE DE CARTERET	16
III LUCY WALTER (1630-1658)	28
IV BARBARA VILLIERS, COUNTESS OF CASTLEMAINE AND DUCHESS OF CLEVELAND (1640-1709)	74
V STAGE, THRONE—AND PARLIAMENT (NELL GWYNNE AND MOLL DAVIS)	134
VI THE FOREIGN INVASION: LOUISE DE QUEROUAILLE, DUCHESS OF PORTSMOUTH (1649-1734); HORTENSE MANCINI, DUCHESS OF MAZARIN (1646-1699)	173
VII LAST YEARS: THE WRECKAGE OF WHITEHALL	222
INDEX	257

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Lucy Walter. From a Miniature, attributed to N. Dixon, in the possession of His Grace The Duke of Buccleuch (<i>Colour</i>)	
	<i>Frontispiece</i>
Charles II. From the Mezzotint by E. Lutterell, after the Portrait by Sir Peter Lely	64
Don Carlo, Earl of Plymouth. From the Mezzotint by J. Savage	70
Barbara Villiers, Countess of Castlemaine. From a Portrait in the Possession of Lady de Saumarez	96
"La belle Stuart," Duchess of Richmond. From the Portrait by Sir P. Lely at Hampton Court	110
Nell Gwynne (aged about 25). From a Portrait by Sir G. Kneller in the Possession of Lady de Saumarez	140
Moll Davis. From the Portrait by Sir P. Lely in the National Portrait Gallery	164
Louise de Querouaille, Duchess of Portsmouth. From the Portrait by Mignard in the National Portrait Gallery	198
Hortense Mancini, Duchess of Mazarin. From the Engraving by G. Valck, after a Painting by Sir P. Lely	212
	<i>Page</i>
Charles II and his Parliament. (From a Contemporary Engraving)	159

FOREWORD

THE keynote to Charles the Second's private character was never more happily sounded than by Lord Dorset, one of the liveliest and most daring wits at the Court of Whitehall, not even excepting Rochester, "the wicked Earl."

On the anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's birthday,¹ which was long kept as a public holiday in London, and, indeed, throughout England, the King, forgetting the day, asked Dorset, as they were walking together in St. James's Park, "what the bells were ringing for!" And on being reminded whose birthday it was, he remarked that it seemed strange that good Queen Bess should still be held in affectionate remembrance by the English people, whilst the birthdays of his father and grandfather were no more heeded than William the Conqueror's.

"Sire," said Dorset, "she being a woman chose men for her councillors, whereas men when they reign usually choose women." The sarcasm was a just one, and Dorset probably had it in his mind that the warm Gallic blood of Henry IV of France flowed in Charles's veins. But he might not have known, what a casual glance at his portrait reveals, that his sensual mouth and swarthy complexion were inherited from a Moorish strain in the Medicis family. No wonder that with such a pedigree this "black but comely" Prince grew up to be of an exceptionally amorous disposition. By way of extenuation he was wont to remark in after-life that as the majority

¹ September 1.

FOREWORD

of European sovereigns in his time were polygamists, he was no worse than the rest.

"Surely," he said to Burnet, "God will not damn a man for taking a little pleasure out of the way!"

Despite his moral failings, which it would be absurd to minimize, Charles deserves more credit for his conduct of public affairs than has hitherto been accorded him. His character has been so persistently misrepresented by the Whigs that the services which he rendered to his country have been either wholly ignored or, if perceived at all, insufficiently appreciated.

It is no exaggeration to say that the Calendars of Treasury Books now in process of publication under the able direction of Dr. Shaw have done more to re-establish Charles's character on the firmest of all foundations, that of financial facts and figures, than any book hitherto published on his life and times.¹

His knowledge and judgment of men, for, unlike his brother James, he "could see things when he would," was superior to anything of the kind possessed by any of the Stuart kings; so much so that the sagacity which he displayed in the selection of his subordinate officers often compared favourably with the efforts of his ministers in the same sphere.

A good architect, but an indifferent builder, he could lay down the broad lines of policy better than most of his ministers, though often too indolent to fill in the after details.

By instinct he could, and often did, select the man best qualified to fill any particular office which happened to be vacant. Yet he is reported to have said that whenever

¹ These admirable records are still in progress, the last volume issued extending to the year 1689.

FOREWORD

he bestowed a place he was sure of making several enemies and one man ungrateful for the term of his natural life.

Though the following pages are concerned more with his fugitive amours than with his political achievements, the prevailing impression that his whole life was passed in the pursuit of pleasure and profligacy is altogether erroneous.

The large sums of money which from time to time he received from his brother of France, though often stigmatized by his detractors as bribes, were not so misappropriated as prejudiced Whig historians would have us believe. So far from spending the whole of this money upon his pleasures, a large portion of it was applied to national services which a parsimonious Parliament habitually neglected.

It would be idle to deny that a great deal of money was wasted upon a few worthless women, bent only upon enriching themselves at the public expense, and of these the Duchesses of Cleveland and Portsmouth were by far the greatest offenders. At the same time I shall endeavour to show that their misdeeds and insatiable avarice have prevented Charles's better qualities from receiving the recognition which is their due.

His personal bravery in the field is unquestionable. He made an offer to Cromwell to lay down his life in order to save his father's, whilst his stimulating example at the Fire of London should never be forgotten. After that calamity his activity in the matter of rebuilding the City transcended even that of Sir Christopher Wren, whom he personally selected as the fittest architect to undertake that great and enduring work.

A recent writer, who is alike a descendant of his and a distinguished public servant,¹ has well said of him:

¹ "Henry, Duke of Grafton," by Sir Almeric Fitzroy, 1921.

FOREWORD

"He stood for three things, scientific investigation, religious toleration and Colonial expansion. In each he was in advance of his time. It was given to the succeeding centuries to make good his aims and vitalize his dreams."

Horried at the humiliation of de Ruyter's raid upon Sheerness and Chatham, when the thunder of the Dutch guns was plainly audible in London, Charles steadily applied himself to strengthening the Navy. After the loss of the *Royal Charles*, the pride and pattern of the English fleet, which de Ruyter had carried off to Amsterdam,¹ he built the *Britannia*, the largest war-ship launched up to that date, mounting 100 guns, with a crew of 780 men. But as her tonnage was well under two thousand, she would appear a mere cockle-shell compared with the vast floating forts of steel which comprise the modern Navy.

Between 1670 and 1685 no fewer than thirty new ships were laid down, of which nine were first-rates, most of which were designed by Peter Pett, the King's Master Shipwright. A good idea of what a first-rate ship of the line looked like in Charles the First's reign may be obtained from Pett's portrait in the National Portrait Gallery, in which there is represented the latest addition to the fleet.

In the latter years of his reign Charles did more than any of his predecessors on the throne had ever attempted to enable England to compete with her greatest trade rival on the high seas with, at least, a reasonable prospect of success. For it must be remembered that in the seventeenth century the Dutch had not only sea

¹ I remember to have seen a portion of her stern gallery displayed at Amsterdam as a trophy some years ago, and, for aught I know to the contrary, it may be still.

FOREWORD

power (their men-of-war and their mercantile marine combined far outnumbering the English), but boundless wealth, and a higher degree of culture and intelligence than any other European nation possessed.

An instance of Charles's regard for British interests and his concern for the maintenance of the strong arm of the Navy will be found in the speech which he addressed to his Parliament in 1671: "There is not so lawful and commendable a jealousy in the world as an Englishman's of the growing greatness of any Prince at sea." This patriotic utterance might well be addressed to His Majesty's Government in this present year of grace, when the sceptre of the sea appears to be in danger of slipping from England's grasp.

Lord Halifax, "the Trimmer," who analysed Charles's character perhaps more correctly than any of his contemporaries, tersely expressed the same sentiment when he wrote: "What shall we do to be saved in this world? There is no other answer but this: 'Look to your moat.' The first article of an Englishman's creed must be that he believes in the sea."¹

The third war between England and Holland which began in 1672, unlike the former one which ended so disastrously after the Chatham raid, was not at its outbreak unpopular at home. When Parliament met, for once in a way it rose to the occasion by unanimously voting £1,250,000 towards its prosecution, and although the Dutch, owing to superior seamanship, had on the whole rather the best of the naval engagements, they were eventually glad to make peace rather than fight England and France combined.

¹ In the opening sentence of his "Rough Draft of a New Model at Sea," published in 1694.

FOREWORD

It must have been a bitter humiliation to that nation of seamen when Holland was forced not only to concede the salute of the English flag at sea, wherever met with (a claim which Charles had consistently put forward for years), but was compelled to pay in addition an indemnity to England.

Again, although it has been supposed that, so long as his amusements were not interfered with, Charles was indifferent to the orderly conduct of public affairs, it was owing rather to the niggardliness of his Parliaments, and their reluctance to impose adequate and reasonable taxation upon the community, than through any fault of his own that he did not accomplish even more for England than he actually did.

In the delightfully frank and affectionate letters which he wrote to his sister, the Duchesse d'Orleans, there are frequent allusions to the importance which Charles attached to the commercial prosperity of England. The care with which he scrutinized every clause in the trade agreements which he entered into with foreign powers show a genuine desire on his part to secure the pre-eminence of English trade.

In September, 1668, for instance, he wrote to "Madame":

There is a great application at this time in France to establish trade, and to be very considerable at sea, which is so jealous a point to us who can only be considerable by our trade and power by sea, as any steps that France takes that way must continue a jealousy between the two nations. . . . It must be dangerous to me at home to make an entire league till first the great and principal interest of this nation be secured, which is trade.

A fortnight later he added:

You know that the thing which is nearest the heart of the nation is trade and all that belongs to it.

FOREWORD

As Lord Palmerston sagaciously remarked two centuries later, the source of England's greatness is derived from the fact that she is, and must always be, pre-eminently a nation of shopkeepers.

So far from intriguing against his own country, Charles was at heart a patriot, and it will, perhaps, be news to some of my readers to learn that the existing system of Treasury control over the national finances dates from the early years of his reign, when it was inaugurated with his concurrence and support.

In October, 1665, when the plague was raging in London, Lord Clarendon, Lord High Chancellor of England and virtually the first Minister of the Crown, was confined to his bed at Worcester House in the Strand with a sharp attack of gout, whereon Charles, with his usual courtesy and consideration, ordered that a Cabinet Council, for such in effect it was, should be held in the Chancellor's sick-room instead of, as was customary, at Whitehall.¹

There were present at this memorable meeting the King in person, James, Duke of York, Lord Clarendon, Sir William Coventry (perhaps the ablest and certainly the most upright man in Charles's service), the Attorney-General and the Solicitor-General. And, lastly, one of the most efficient public servants of the time, although by no means an attractive personality, attended to expound his views on the suggested reform of the Exchequer. Sir George Downing, for such was his name, was a scowling, sinister-visaged man, little more than forty years of age. His manners were uncouth

¹ The events of which I speak took place before Clarendon's removal to the great house in Piccadilly which the mob subsequently re-christened Dunkirk House.

FOREWORD

and, to his subordinates, consistently brutal, so much so that Pepys (who had been both his clerk and his landlord when he lived in Axe Yard), though he never understood or liked him, pilloried Downing in his diary for all time as: "A perfidious rogue."

This "fearful gentleman," as one of the Cavaliers dubbed him in Holland, had been knighted at Breda on the eve of Charles's return to England. Beginning life as a Puritan preacher in Sir Thomas Fairfax's army, and having attracted Cromwell's notice, he soon abandoned the pulpit for a military career and was appointed Scout-master-General.

His next employment was a diplomatic one. Cromwell sent him as his Ambassador to the United Provinces in 1657, and in Holland he remained until 1660, keeping a watchful eye, meantime, upon Charles's brothers, the Dukes of York and Gloucester, who were staying with their sister, the Princess of Orange, at The Hague.

At this time Charles was living in the Spanish Netherlands, an arrangement having been come to between De Witte and Cromwell by which he was debarred from entering Holland.

If Downing's abilities were abnormal, his capacity for work and his grasp of detail was nothing short of stupendous, and it is yet another tribute to Charles's perspicacity that, notwithstanding the suspicion with which Downing was regarded by the bulk of the Cavaliers, he did not decline his overtures when the time came for utilizing his talents. As Cromwell had been before him, Charles was quick to perceive that this "perfidious rogue" possessed extraordinary faculties which might be of great service to him, as indeed was proved to the hilt when the Restoration became an accomplished fact.

FOREWORD

But to return to the Cabinet meeting in Clarendon's bedroom. Downing attended to formulate proposals for the re-organization of the entire system of national finance. He proposed to make the Treasury in effect what it is to-day, the first Department in the State, and, further, to establish the principle of the appropriation of the Supplies already granted by Parliament for the public service.

In these far-reaching alterations in our fiscal system he was supported by Sir William Coventry, in the face of strong opposition on the part of Clarendon and Shaftesbury.

But the King cut the discussion short by saying that not only did he approve of the scheme, but that he had already assured himself of a considerable measure of support for it in his Parliament.¹

Downing has his reward to-day in the fact that the street called after him has become the hub and centre of the governance of England in modern times.

I shall return to Downing Street at a later page, but to quote Mr. Beresford once more: "It is easier and more

¹ Downing at the same time foreshadowed the establishment of a National Exchequer Bank on the Dutch model, thus anticipating by twenty years the creation of the Bank of England. This project was not, however, persisted in, as it was felt that, whereas in a country like Holland the security of banks was the Republic itself, the idea would not be likely to commend itself to a people living under an absolute Monarchy. For Downing's subsequent career I must refer my readers to Mr. John Beresford's "The Godfather of Downing Street," 1925, to which I hereby desire to acknowledge my frequent indebtedness. This valuable biography gives a masterly account of Downing's public services and the influence which he exercised throughout the remainder of his life upon the control and co-ordination of the national finances as Secretary of the Treasury and Commissioner of the Customs.

FOREWORD

delightful to chat about mistresses than to write about money." It is more alluring to gaze from afar at the opulent beauty of Barbara Villiers, "La belle Stuart," or Nell Gwynne, than to pore over the yellow parchments of a Public Department, invaluable though such records must always be to the conscientious historian.

This may well be the general opinion, for money and the making of it are dull and unsatisfactory subjects to write about, and apt to become positively repugnant to read of by those who have none of their own.

Therefore I have devoted the greater portion of the following pages to "Chanticleer"¹—to give Charles the name by which he was known in the innermost circles of Whitehall—his "wives," and their numerous offspring.

I have touched but lightly upon affairs of State and matters of public policy except where they happen to coincide with outstanding events in the lives of one or other of these numerous daughters of joy who helped to mitigate the hardships of their lord and master in exile, and to throng the gorgeous antechambers of Whitehall, when, at long last, Charles came into his Kingdom.

Having recently written the life of Nell Gwynne at considerable length, I have been compelled to exclude from these pages any detailed account of the most attractive of all Chanticleer's "wives" and to confine myself to the lurid careers of the other inmates of the Royal hen-roost. But of all the number Nell stands alone as being frail without being vicious, neither self-seeking, nor a political schemer, content to be a sleeping partner

¹ "Charlemagne" was another nickname for the King amongst his most intimate associates, as, of course, was "Old Rowley," the origin of which pseudonym I shall allude to later on.

FOREWORD

in the ship of State, with a kind word for all, a merry heart, a witty tongue and a truly lovable nature.

Though I have been able to add a few facts which have come to my knowledge since I wrote my account of her life, I still await the discovery of a single scrap of her handwriting, her autograph on a letter, a lawyer's deed or a banker's draft, though some such original documents must surely exist.

I have recently had brought to my notice a number of portraits of this celebrated beauty, most of which have proved, on investigation, to be spurious, but the one included in these pages is undoubtedly genuine. An early work of Sir Godfrey Kneller, painted soon after his arrival in England,¹ it came into the possession of its present owner, with a pedigree direct from Baptist May, a hanger-on at the Court of Whitehall. "Bab" May, as he was called by his intimate friends, was, like the elder Chiffinch, something of a connoisseur of art, and is known to have collected the portraits of the belles of Whitehall, who sat to Lely, Kneller and other contemporary artists.

Kneller's portrait, which represents Nell as she was at about twenty-five years of age, bears a considerable facial resemblance to Lely's even more charming likeness, which is one of the chief ornaments of the Stuart room, in the National Portrait Gallery.

The portrait of Barbara Villiers,² reproduced opposite page 96, is interesting as representing her in the prime of youth and beauty, whereas most of her portraits which I have had an opportunity of examining show her at a somewhat maturer age.

¹ About 1675.

² Countess of Castlemaine and Duchess of Cleveland.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

CHAPTER I

Early Years (1630—1645)

HAD you or I, my readers, been living in the seventeenth century, the astronomers and astrologers of that day would have had us believe, if we were sufficiently credulous to listen to them, that, on May 29, 1630, a star of the first magnitude suddenly appeared in the heavens and was seen by thousands to rest over St. James's Palace soon after midday, that being, according to contemporary evidence, the hour at which the subject of this memoir was born.

It is said that his mother, Queen Henrietta Maria, was quite alone at the time, without even a doctor or a nurse in attendance. That same afternoon the King rode through the City to old St. Paul's to offer thanks to God for the Queen's safe deliverance and the birth of an heir to the throne.

The pious belief in the miraculous appearance of a guiding star at birth is as old as the Star of Bethlehem itself, and I could, were it necessary, have adduced other instances of the persistence of this beautiful legend in connexion with the births of kings, princes, and rulers of Christian countries.

Though it is not possible positively to identify the room in the Palace in which the infant Charles drew his

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

first breath, it was, I have little doubt, in one or other of the Tudor apartments to the south of the Colour Court and fronting St. James's Park.

It will be remembered that Henry the Eighth had built (as it is said, to please Anne Boleyn, whose star was then in the ascendant) a "goodly manor house," for it was not dignified at first by the name of Palace, on the site of an ancient hospital for leprous maidens founded in Norman times.¹

This former abode of hopeless misery was dedicated in an age of piety to St. James the Less, and placed deliberately at the foot of that "celebrated eminence"² which we know to-day as St. James's Street, on account of its remoteness from the busy world of Westminster which, in mediæval times, was the accustomed residence of the Sovereign and, as it still is, the seat of the legislature. Though Queen Mary the First and Henry, Prince of Wales, were borne from St. James's Palace to their last resting-place in the Abbey, I cannot find any record, prior to 1630, of a member of the Royal Family having been born or christened there, although by that date the Palace was a century old.

Therefore, when an heir to the throne was ushered into the world within its walls, every form of pomp and circumstance was employed to mark the occasion suitably.

It will be recollected that James the First was born at Edinburgh and Charles the First at Dunfermline, so that, in Waller's felicitous phrase, the second Charles was quite accurately described by the poet as having been

¹ Leper hospitals were usually placed not in central situations but on the outskirts of towns, from the dread of contagion inspired by the ravages of that foul disease.

² To quote the picturesque language of Benjamin Disraeli.

EARLY YEARS

"the first English born that hath the crown of these three Kingdoms worn."

When our narrative begins the Palace was still, virtually, a country house.¹ There were then no adjoining houses to mar its sylvan solitude, its windows commanding on every side delightful views over wooded park and fragrant meadow, and redolent of the country-side.

Its flower gardens were not so extensive as they became in after-years, for as yet there was no Mall between them and the deer park to the south, through which flowed one of several tributaries of the Tybourne on its way to the Thames. Wood and water, branching oaks, spangled thorns and silvern gleams of running water made up an enchanting scene, and I can well understand how, in the earlier years of the reign, Charles the First and his Consort preferred St. James's to Whitehall (where there was scarcely any garden ground and little privacy) as an occasional place of residence. For all these reasons Henry the Eighth's goodly manor house must have been an ideal nursery and playground for their children, most of whom were born there and not in Whitehall.

To this day, although His Majesty's Ministers manage, or mismanage, as the case may be, the affairs of the nation from Whitehall (of which Downing Street is, and always has been, a component part), the Court of St. James's remains the titular authority and symbol of the Royal power in Great (and Greater) Britain; and long may it continue so to be!

In after-years Charles the Second seems to have retained agreeable recollections of his birthplace. In addition to laying out a new Mall in the park he greatly enlarged the

¹ A single farm-house stood immediately opposite the gate tower of the Palace, the only relic of Tudor date in the West End of London.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

Palace gardens, spending large sums upon their maintenance and improvement.

Therein on a summer's afternoon would be found, after the Restoration of the Monarchy, fashion and frailty, the gallant and the gay, sauntering and simpering amongst roses and lilies on the site of the mediæval plague-spot where, for centuries, poor leprous maidens dragged out a wretched existence, shunned by their fellow-creatures, until by the grace of God death should release them from their misery.

I will not however anticipate my narrative, but return for a moment to the astrologers and the year 1630.

William Lilly and his satellites (casters of horoscopes and framers of almanacs, whose stock-in-trade was the signs and portents they affected to perceive in the heavens) professed to regard the appearance of the miraculous star—and it must indeed have been of exceptional brilliance to be visible to the naked eye in broad daylight—as of happy augury for the new-born child.¹

But whatever conclusions the astronomers may have arrived at, I have no doubt whatever that it can only have been the planet Venus, temporarily diverted from its heavenly course, which shed its guiding light over the birthplace of the most attractive and engaging

¹ Lilly, who published his first almanac in 1644, is believed to have cast, amongst others, the horoscope of Nell Gwynne which is still to be seen in the Bodleian Library. He also cast Charles the Second's, but I am unaware of its present whereabouts. Writing after the Restoration, Dr. Edward Chamberlayne, in his valuable work of reference *Angliæ Notitia*, of which the first edition was issued in 1669, adds the interesting fact that the appearance of this wondrous star was followed two days later by an eclipse of the sun, thus presaging the interruption of the Monarchy in after-years. See also Fuller's "Worthies," Volume II, page 415.

EARLY YEARS

member of the House of Stuart who ever sat upon the throne of England.

In after-years Charles admitted that from his youth up he had endeavoured to keep the goddess of love in the ascendant. How far he succeeded in fulfilling what he apparently regarded as his destiny my readers will be able to judge for themselves. His boast was certainly no idle one, for this self-styled votary of Venus left at his death a baker's dozen of illegitimate children, all of them born hot from the oven of illicit love, and by various mothers.

Probably he had many other children of whom no record has survived, for, so far from being ashamed of his lack of continency, he seems to have prided himself upon being the father of so many of his loyal subjects.

Tom Killigrew, who, as King's Jester, was privileged to say whatever he chose, however impudent, to his Royal master, must have been aware of the King's moral lapses when he told him that "Carolus, Protector" would be as appropriate a designation for him as "Carolus, Rex!" There is many a true word uttered in jest, and although the Killigrew family had the reputation of being inveterate liars, on this occasion Tom was speaking the absolute truth.

Returning to the merry month of May, 1630, the Bishop of London¹ was permitted to see the Prince, who was a fine healthy child, within an hour of his birth, and on him, in the unavoidable absence of the Primate, devolved the duty of christening the heir to the throne. Preparations were at once set on foot to mark the occasion as it deserved. Crowned heads were invited

¹ William Laud, born 1573; beheaded 1645, the son of a clothier at Reading, who rose to be Archbishop of Canterbury.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

to stand as his sponsors, invitations being promptly issued to Louis XIII of France, and his mother, Marie de Medicis, and to the King of Bohemia.¹

As none of these Royalties attended the christening in person, they were represented by proxy. Marie de Medicis, however, visited England a few years later and was housed in great state in St. James's Palace, but, as she stayed on in London much longer than had been expected, Parliament voted her a sum of £10,000 as an inducement to return to France!

At this truly Royal christening, which was celebrated on the afternoon of Sunday, June 27 (old style), the Prince's cradle was, so to speak, decked with gold, silver, and precious stones, the like of which had never been seen in England before on a similar occasion. A single jewel given by the widowed Duchess of Richmond, who acted as proxy for the Queen Mother of France, was valued at between seven and eight thousand pounds.

The Duchess gave the baby's wet nurse a chain of rubies, to the midwife and dry nurse a store of massy plate, and to the six rockers of the cradle a fair silver cup, a salt-cellar, and a dozen spoons apiece. It was well worth while to be a nurse, or even a "rocker," in the Royal household at this epoch. A daughter of Thomas, Viscount Howard of Bindon (who married no fewer than four wives), the Duchess of Richmond was the widow of one Henry Prannell, a rich City wine-merchant. She could, therefore, well afford to be generous, especially on such an auspicious occasion as the birth of an heir to the throne.

In 1601 she married Edward Seymour, ninth Earl

¹ Frederick V, Duke of Bavaria, Elector Palatine of the Rhine and King of Bohemia, was brother-in-law to Charles the First.

EARLY YEARS

of Hertford, a Westminster man in the fullest sense of the word, for he lived in Canon Row and married the vintner's widow there. Dying in 1621, he lies buried in Salisbury Cathedral.

Her third husband came from north of the Tweed. He was Ludovic Stuart, second Duke of Lennox in the peerage of Scotland and Duke of Richmond (of the later creation) in England. The Duchess, who died in 1639, at Exeter House in the Strand, on the site of the Strand Palace Hotel, was buried beside her last husband in Westminster Abbey. In her youth she had many admirers, one of whom, Sir George Rodney, was so infatuated with her, that he wrote a love ditty in her honour and signed it with his blood, killing himself immediately afterwards by falling deliberately upon his sword!

On the day of the christening the Queen sent her own coach and six to fetch the Duchess from Exeter House. To the Royal coachman she gave twenty pieces of gold and to each of the six Royal footmen, ten.

Amongst the invited guests were Sir James Campbell, the Lord Mayor of London, attired in his best velvet gown, accompanied by the Recorder in a brilliant scarlet robe. The Mayor presented the Prince with a cup of beaten gold, worth a thousand pounds of the then current value of money. Another "rich cup of assay" and a pair of silver basins with covers were borne before him by the Earl of Bedford.

I should like to think that some at least of the costly gifts showered upon the infant Charles were still in the Royal plate rooms at Windsor Castle, but I fear that they shared a common fate with so many more of the King's treasures, being either melted down or sold for what they would fetch during the Civil Wars.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

In the Heralds' College there is preserved to this day the full order of the ceremonial to be observed at the christening, every detail of it having been settled some time before the Prince's birth.

June 27 must have been a fatiguing day for all concerned, as the christening service began about four o'clock on a hot summer's afternoon and lasted for several hours. First there walked in procession the great officers of State, in gorgeous attire, followed by the young Duke of Lennox—he was only eighteen at the time—and the Marquis of Hamilton,¹ Master of the Horse, the proxies respectively of the Kings of France and Bohemia. It will be noticed that the nobility of the North were singled out for especial honour in order to emphasize the descent of the Royal line from the Kings of Scotland.

Next came the principal figure in the long cortège, the infant Prince, clad in a sumptuous white mantle with an ermine train held up by four Earls. He was brought down from his nursery, and conducted to the entrance of the Chapel in the Colour Court, under a canopy of State held over him by six Barons.

Musicians as well as guards were posted at the foot of the stairs leading from the Royal apartments, and to the noisy accompaniment of the blare of trumpets, the roll of drums, and the pealing of a pair of organs, the long procession entered the Chapel wherein the King was already seated. The Duchess of Richmond, whose train was carried by the Lady Mary Villiers, "Steenie" Buckingham's daughter, held the child at the font until the Bishop

¹The Marquis of Hamilton, who commanded the army raised in Scotland for the relief of Charles the First in 1648, was arraigned before the same Court which tried and condemned the King, and beheaded in Palace Yard, Westminster, on March 9, 1649.

EARLY YEARS

took him in his arms and sprinkled him with holy water brought from the River Jordan.

Not until the shades of evening fell did the long ceremony conclude. Several anthems were sung by the choir, which also intoned the Lord's Prayer, after Garter King-of-Arms had proclaimed the Prince's style and title. The Bishop then recited Evening Prayer and a thanksgiving for the safe deliverance of the Queen's Majesty, offering a special prayer of his own composition for the future welfare of the Prince (who seems to have behaved admirably throughout the ceremony), in the course of which he said, "Double his father's graces upon him, O Lord, if it be possible." ¹

When at last the infant Charles was carried back to his nursery and the company had dispersed, the guns at the Tower fired a deafening Royal salute, the church bells rang out merry peals, and bonfires were lit in the principal streets.

The Prince was strong and healthy from the moment of his birth, but, had he not thriven, it would have been through no fault of his parents, for never could any baby, Royal, noble or simple, have been more carefully and lovingly tended than he was. He was placed under the care of a "lady governess," ² a wet nurse and a dry nurse, in addition to the six "rockers" assigned to his cradle.

Besides these indispensable attendants there were a number of minor members of his infantile household; "Officers of the Mouth" as they were termed, acting under the orders of the Lord Chamberlain. The wet

¹ The King gave the Bishop of London £100 to distribute amongst the poor, which served to increase the loyal enthusiasm displayed throughout the City.

² The Countess of Denbigh, mother of the Marchioness of Hamilton.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

nurse's food and drink were "assayed" by a physician, who attended at every meal to see that everything which she ate and drank was seasonable and wholesome.¹

What, it may be asked, was the state of public affairs when the heir to the throne lay in his gorgeous cradle? Since Buckingham's tragic death at Portsmouth by the hand of an assassin (in 1628) two desultory and inconclusive wars with France and Spain had been brought to an inglorious conclusion.

Yet England was at peace in 1630, and for some years after no foreign complications or rumours of war disturbed the serenity of the political horizon. Still there were not wanting indications of the storm which, before many years elapsed, was to convulse the country and temporarily eclipse the sovereignty of the realm.

No loyal addresses seem to have been voted by the legislature, as was the immemorial custom on the occasion of a Prince of Wales's birth, probably because there was no Parliament in existence at Westminster at the time.

¹ One of Charles's nurses was a Welsh woman, this choice being, no doubt, intended as a compliment to the Principality from which, whilst still a minor, he selected one of the earliest (not, I think, *the* earliest, but certainly the most unfortunate) of his mistresses, Lucy Walter, whom I shall notice at length in Chapter III.

In later years Charles took from the stage another of the fairest daughters of Wales, who though of humble birth and undoubted frailty is yet held in affectionate remembrance by English men and women. The remarkable popularity enjoyed by Nell Gwynne, from her first appearance on the stage until the day of her death, was due, in great measure, to the hatred and distrust with which the French mistress, Louise de Querouaille, was regarded by the English people. Bred in the unsavoury surroundings of Drury Lane, Nell attained to a status at Whitehall which she came as near as possible to making one of honour, her qualities of head and heart combining to raise her to a pedestal amongst the daughters of joy from which she can never be dethroned.

EARLY YEARS

After the dissolution of Charles the First's third Parliament,¹ which sat for less than a year and was mainly occupied by ecclesiastical controversies of no great moment, the King determined to rely solely upon personal government, and to arrogate to himself the right of collecting the Customs duties without obtaining the sanction of the legislature.

Though as yet there was little or no evidence of marked hostility to the Crown on the part of the general body of members, only a week before their summary dismissal a grossly disorderly scene occurred in the House of Commons which should have opened the King's eyes to the danger of his unconstitutional methods. The primary cause of the disturbance was Sir John Eliot (one of the members for Cornwall, a county pre-eminent through the ages for the number of rotten boroughs within its limits), who uttered a vigorous protest against the levying of Tonnage and Poundage without the consent of Parliament.

A strong speaker, such as was Sir Edward Seymour in the next reign, might have quelled the revolt against the authority of the Chair, but Sir John Finch, although a consistent supporter of the King's prerogative, was one of the feeblest and most timorous in the long catalogue of presiding officers of the Mother of Parliaments. On more than one occasion he had been known to burst into tears at moments of exceptional difficulty, and, in announcing from the Chair that he had it in command from His Majesty to adjourn the House forthwith, he refused to allow Eliot to proceed with his speech. Thereupon Denzil Holles, another hot-headed patriot, with a few other members, forcibly held him down in the Chair;

¹ On March 10, 1629.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

Holles shouting at the top of his voice that, "by God's wounds he should sit there until it pleased the House to rise."

Oliver Cromwell, who had entered the House for the first time in the previous year, though a silent witness of the events of the day, sided with the malcontents in refusing to adjourn at the King's command unless Eliot's resolution was agreed to. To add to the unseemly confusion and disorder, Sir Miles Hobart (M.P. for Great Marlow) took it upon himself to lock the door of the House and to put the key in his pocket, and not until an informal motion for the adjournment had been declared to be carried was the unfortunate Speaker released from his humiliating position.

Charles now contrived to dispense with the services of a House of Commons for eleven whole years, a parliamentary hiatus without parallel since the days of Henry the Eighth. Even in Tudor times the longest interval between the dissolution of one Parliament and the calling of another did not exceed six years.

During those eleven years Charles's popularity in the country steadily declined. The "Short Parliament" which assembled in April, 1640, was dissolved after a session of only three weeks, mainly on account of Pym's opposition to the granting of any further supplies to the Crown. When the Long Parliament—the fifth and most momentous of the reign—met in November of the same year, the attitude of the Commons became even more hostile to the Monarchy. One of its first acts was to impeach Finch for his conduct in the Chair on the day that Sir John Eliot (who had died in prison meanwhile) made his remonstrance against arbitrary taxation of the people. This, assuredly, was the only occasion in the

EARLY YEARS

long history of Parliament when an ex-Speaker stood at the bar of the House he had formerly presided over to speak in his own defence.¹ But though, on this occasion, he spoke bravely and well he bowed before the storm, and fled the country before the conclusion of the indictment.²

Returning after this digression to the young Prince of Wales, we find that his youth was spent mostly at Richmond, Hampton Court or Windsor, when his father and mother were not in residence at Whitehall.

But few anecdotes of his sayings and doings in boyhood have been preserved, but fortunately one highly characteristic note, entirely in his own handwriting, has been preserved amongst the Harleian Manuscripts.³

This, probably the earliest of Charles's letters now in existence, he addressed, at the tender age of eight, to his Governor, the Duke of Newcastle.⁴

His mother had written to him to say that, having heard that he had been naughty in refusing to take a dose of medicine, prescribed for some childish ailment, she would have to compel him to take it if this obstinacy on his part were persisted in.⁵

It is not known what reply, if any, the young Prince

¹ In 1635 he had been appointed Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, in which capacity he delivered judgment in favour of the levying of ship-money by the Crown.

² As a consolation Charles created him a peer of the realm as Baron Finch of Fordwich, but he died shortly after the Restoration of the Monarchy of which he had been such a consistent supporter.

³ British Museum No. 6988, Art. 54.

⁴ William Cavendish, 1st Duke of Newcastle, was succeeded as Governor to the Prince by the Marquis of Hertford and, subsequently, by the Earl of Berkshire.

⁵ This letter, one of the few which Henrietta Maria is known to have written in English, is also in the British Museum.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

made to his mother, but the brief note which he sent to Newcastle shows that even thus early he possessed something of that precious sense of humour for which he became so famous when he grew to man's estate. The concluding sentence runs as follows: "I would not have you take too much Physick: for it doth allwaies make me worse, *and I think it will doe the like with you!*"

Charles the First left London on January 10, 1642, and never returned to Whitehall until, on the 30th day of the same month seven years later, he walked through St. James's Park to the scaffold set up in front of his Palace in Whitehall.

The Prince of Wales received his baptism of fire at the first battle fought in the great Civil War at Edgehill on October 23, 1642. He and his brother James watched the fighting from a neighbouring hill under the care of Dr. Harvey, the famous physician who discovered the circulation of the blood.

The boy's enthusiasm was excited by witnessing a brilliant cavalry charge by Prince Rupert, but, although his onslaught drove the Parliamentary horse into headlong flight, it proved to be ineffectual in determining the fortunes of the day. Both Charles and his brother narrowly escaped being taken prisoner, and, in addition, a cannon-ball fell close to them during the progress of the battle, whereon Dr. Harvey removed his young charges to a safer distance.

After taking affectionate leave of his father at Oxford (on March 4, 1645) the Prince was sent for safety to the West of England, where he remained for some months at Bristol and Bridgwater, proceeding thence to Devon and Cornwall.¹

¹ Bristol had surrendered to the Parliament in September.

EARLY YEARS

At Barnstaple he learnt of the disaster to the Royal cause at Naseby, where, as the historian of the Civil War (Dr. R. S. Gardiner) truly observes, "The stake played for was the Crown of England and Charles lost it."

At Naseby, as at Edgehill, Prince Rupert drove the left wing of the Parliamentary forces, commanded by Ireton, before him, but all to no avail, the supreme issue of the day being decided when Cromwell at the head of a large body of cavalry, picked troops trained under his personal supervision, fell upon the Royalist infantry and compelled it to surrender.

As Fairfax was by this time practically master of the whole of the West of England, it was deemed prudent to remove the Prince first to the Scilly Isles and thence, on the activities of the Parliamentary fleet rendering his position there extremely precarious, to the Channel Islands.

In the next chapter I shall show how his impetuosity and exuberant animal spirits involved him in an entanglement, obscure in its origin and mysterious in its resulting consequences, of which the full import has never hitherto been disclosed.

For in the sunny isle of Jersey, where Charles landed when still only fifteen, he became attached to a young lady of irreproachable birth who was some years his senior. In a letter which is still extant he naïvely explains that, more from extreme youthfulness than from malice aforethought, he made the first false step upon the tortuous path of dalliance which, in after-life, he never entirely forsook.

CHAPTER II

Une jeune demoiselle de Jersey, Marguerite de Carteret

Men out of wisdom, women out of pride,
The pleasant thefts of love do hide.

ONE of the most pleasing traits in the complex character of "Chanticleer" is his fondness for his children. Even if he did provide for the majority of them at the public expense, the care which he bestowed upon their education and upbringing and his constant solicitude for their welfare should be remembered by his detractors.

How many of these love children he had in all it is difficult to state positively. For he acknowledged some, whose paternity was, to say the least, extremely doubtful, disowning others, of whom, in greater likelihood, he was the actual father.

Some years ago, when I first began to investigate the subject, I estimated the number of his offspring at a dozen or thirteen, of whom eight were sons and five were daughters. Six of the former were created dukes and were provided with ample means at the public cost, whilst their sisters married well, with the exception of one or two who appear to have taken the veil in France.

But in the light of more recent research I find that my original estimate was too low and that Charles's semi-marital activities extended over a period of nearly thirty years.

UNE JEUNE DEMOISELLE DE JERSEY

After the failure of the Royal forces in the West of England the young Prince proceeded, as we have seen, to the Channel Islands, which were thought by his father and his advisers to be the safest place in the King's dominions for the heir to the throne.

The Prince landed in Jersey on April 17, 1646, from the *Proud Black Eagle*, which cast anchor before Elizabeth Castle, where he was enthusiastically received by the loyal inhabitants of the island.

In his suite were Ned Hyde (afterwards the great Earl of Clarendon) and Sir Richard Fanshawe, his secretary. His nominal governor up to this time had been the first Earl of Berkshire, a man singularly unfitted for the post. After being imprisoned in the Tower by the Parliament, he was released by Cromwell on the ground that he was "a man that could do no harm anywhere."

At fifteen, Charles was a bright, impressionable boy, tall for his age, full of spirit and courage, with mental abilities above the average, though somewhat lacking in strength of character and liable, therefore, to be easily led into temptation, a condition which became more pronounced as he grew to man's estate. His unaffected manners, his bonhomie and simplicity, at once endeared him to the islanders: "*C'était un Prince grandement bénin*," wrote Jean Chevalier, a vingtenier of St. Helier and the author of a voluminous history of Jersey from 1640 to 1650.

Young as the Prince was, he seems already to have exercised something of that fatal fascination for the opposite sex which appears to have been the especial attribute of the House of Stuart.

Charles left Jersey to join his mother in France at the

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

end of June and, in the springtime of the following year, a young lady named Marguerite de Carteret, the beautiful daughter of Amias de Carteret, Seigneur of Trinity Manor, is believed to have given birth to a son of whom Charles was the father, and who alone of all his natural children was privileged to bear, for a time, the Royal name of Stuart.

The subsequent career of this love child, if only a tithe of what it has been possible to recover be true, must rank as one of the most extraordinary romances to be found in English history.

Marguerite de Carteret was by some four years her lover's senior. On April 23, 1656, she married at Trinity Church one Jean de la Cloche, son of the rector of St. Ouen, and hereby hangs a mystery, for it was by this, her lawful husband's surname, that the first of Charles's illegitimate offspring became known (as I shall show directly) when he arrived at maturity.

Marguerite survived her Jean, and dying at the ripe age of eighty-seven was buried in St. Helier parish church on April 28, 1713.

The fact that after the Restoration Charles heaped honours and rewards upon the Carteret family is presumptive evidence of an anxiety on his part to make such reparation as lay in his power for the wrong he had done the Seigneur of Trinity's daughter during his stay in Jersey.

In the archives of the Jesuits in Rome there are several letters purporting to have been written by Charles to Oliva, the general of the Jesuits, and though doubts have been cast upon the authenticity of these documents as a whole there is one which, if genuine—and I see no reason why it should not be—seems to establish the fact that

UNE JEUNE DEMOISELLE DE JERSEY

Charles was the actual father of a young man, who, when aged about twenty-one, was admitted a novitiate of the Jesuit Order in Rome.¹

The plausible manner in which Charles endeavoured to explain away the circumstances of his son's birth is highly characteristic of its writer.

The letter reads as follows:

Il nous est né, lorsque nous n'avions guères plus de seize ou dix-sept ans, d'une jeune dame des plus qualifiées de nos royaumes, plustot par fragilité de notre première jeunesse que par malice.

The concluding words of this naïve confession would appear to indicate a genuine regard on Charles's part for the lady who had been the object of his earliest attachment and the care which he took to preserve unsullied the reputation of her family and her good name.

The Carteret family, for reasons of their own, were no less anxious to hide all traces of this "pleasant theft of love," to quote once more Cowley's elegant phrase which I have placed at the head of this chapter. The baptismal registers of Trinity parish have been tampered with at some date subsequent to the child's birth, many of the entries of christenings having been torn out. This deliberate mutilation of original records seems to indicate a desire on the part of Marguerite de Carteret's family to conceal the evidence of the birth of her son by the Prince of Wales, if he was baptized in the island.

It may also account in some degree for Charles's having compelled his first-born to live abroad for many years under an assumed name.

¹ The entry in the register at Rome merely states: "Jacobus de la Cloche ingressus 11 April 1668."

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

James de la Cloche has found a niche in both the "Dictionary of National Biography" and the "Encyclopædia Britannica" (the account of his life in the latter book of reference being from the facile pen of the late Mr. Andrew Lang), but more than sixty years earlier public attention had been drawn to his extraordinary career by the first Lord Acton, one of the most learned and painstaking historians in Europe.¹

A long and carefully reasoned account of this man of many mysteries—for it has even been sought to prove that he was identical with the Man in the Iron Mask—appeared in the *Home and Foreign Review* in 1862. It is also to be found in the collected edition of Lord Acton's "Essays and Reviews," published in 1907, under the alluring title: "The Secret History of Charles the Second."

Lord Acton, in his account of James de la Cloche and the circumstances attaching to his father's conversion to the Catholic faith, based his conclusions upon information supplied to him by Father Giuseppe Boero, Keeper of the Archives and Librarian of the Jesu, who had published in 1860 a short pamphlet of seventy-nine pages entitled *Istoria della Conversione Alle Chiesa Cattolica di Carlo II, Re d'Inghilterra*.

I think, however, for reasons which will appear here-

¹ Mr. Gordon Goodwin, who was responsible for the short account of James de la Cloche in the "Dictionary of National Biography," did not quote Lord Acton or hazard a guess at the date of his birth, merely stating that he "flourished about 1668," which is scarcely an accurate description. Mr. Lang tentatively placed it at 1644, but this must obviously be wrong as Charles did not set foot in Jersey until 1646. In the following pages I have endeavoured to supplement, wherever possible, the conclusions at which Lord Acton arrived, by the light of later information.

JEUNE DEMOISELLE DE JERSEY

after, that Lord Acton either cannot have seen the originals of the letters said to have been written in August, 1668, by Charles to Oliva, or those to his son, and it may be that he was only permitted to use an abbreviated transcript of these jealously guarded documents.

Lord Acton surmised that James was allowed by his father to remain abroad for many years, unnoticed, and under not one but several assumed names.

Brought up on the Continent, the place or places where his earlier years were passed cannot now be ascertained, nothing being definitely known of his mode of life until the summer of 1665, when Charles suddenly sent for him to come to England.

On his arrival in London where the plague was then raging, the Court had removed to Oxford for fear of infection, yet Charles must have returned to Whitehall for the express purpose of seeing the son he had practically ignored for nearly twenty years.

James was now not only supplied with money by his father, but had a certificate given to him in which Charles recognized him as his son; this important document being, it is said, signed and sealed with the King's own private seal.

According to Lord Acton, he was forbidden to show it to anyone so long as his father lived, whilst, for greater security, he was ordered to drop the name of Stuart and to be known henceforth as James de la Cloche "du Bourg de Jersey."

Lord Acton assumed that James was unwilling to remain in England. It was not his country, he could not speak its language, and, as he had no definite career before him nor any recognized station in society, the

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

position in which he found himself was not to his taste. Having made great proficiency in his studies abroad, it was his wish to continue them at one or other of the Dutch universities, of which Leyden was at once the oldest and the most celebrated. His father, not knowing what to do with him in England, therefore allowed him to return to the Continent.

Eighteen months later Charles sent him another document, dated February 7, 1667, again recognizing his parentage and directing his successor on the throne to give him a pension of £500 a year, subject to the claimant's residing in London and adhering to the Anglican community.

Six months after receiving this letter, however, James de la Cloche seems to have espoused the Catholic faith at Hamburg, where he had become acquainted with that very masterful woman, Queen Christina of Sweden. She too signed papers for him certifying that he had been received into the ancient faith at that particular time and place, in order that he might be enabled in case of necessity to satisfy his confessor of the identity of the convert of Hamburg with the youth whom the King of England had already acknowledged as his son.

This course was rendered necessary because James made up his mind, immediately after his conversion, to enter the novitiate of the Jesuits at Rome.

At this juncture Charles would appear to have resented Christina being taken into his son's confidence. "She is prudent and wise," he wrote, "but she is a woman, and that is enough to make us doubt whether she is able to keep a secret."

Hardly had James settled in Rome when his father changed his attitude altogether, for he now made up his

UNE JEUNE DEMOISELLE DE JERSEY

mind to have his son with him at the Court of Whitehall. He accordingly wrote again to Oliva to send him once more to England, declaring that he now needed his presence for the good of his own soul.

In this letter to the General of the Jesuits he said:

Plusieurs raisons considerables concernant la paix de nos royaumes nous ont empeché jusques à present de la reconnaitre publiquement pour notre fils; mais ce sera pour peu de temps, parceque nous sommes maintenant à dessein de faire à sorte de la reconnaitre publiquement devant peu d'années.

The reader will not fail to note the vagueness of this declaration for, although Charles may thus early have been a Catholic at heart, so far as he had any religion at all, he could never arrive at the psychological moment when it would be expedient for him to announce his conversion, and not until he lay upon his death-bed did his religious convictions become public property.

Lord Acton was of opinion that Charles was received into the Catholic faith about the year 1668, which coincided with James de la Cloche attaining his majority. It was, of course, the religion professed by his mother, and his favourite sister, the relation he loved best in the world.

When his brother James openly declared himself a convert, no one was better aware than the King of the difficulties which a public declaration of his own religious views would entail. But, as he had not the slightest intention of being sent on his travels a second time, he deemed it expedient to defer any public profession of his change of views, contenting himself with telling the French Ambassador¹ that no other creed agreed so well with the absolute authority and the divine right of kings as Catholicism.

¹ Colbert de Croissy, whom we shall meet with later on.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

Lord Acton was of opinion that Charles had long been seeking for someone with whom he could confer freely on spiritual matters without arousing suspicion. The Catholic priests who lived in London and formed part of Queen Catherine's household were so well known at Whitehall that no disguise could conceal them, but the recent conversion of James de la Cloche and his entrance into Holy Orders would have provided him with an excellent opportunity of receiving the sacraments of the Church, without alarming the Protestant zeal of the majority of his subjects. But I cannot feel certain, after carefully weighing all the evidence bearing on the subject, that Charles followed his brother's lead, although he had pronounced leanings towards Catholicism.

In case James de la Cloche was not already a priest and could not be ordained before leaving Rome, Charles now directed him to proceed in the first instance to Paris and to address himself either to the King of France or to his beloved sister the Duchess of Orleans, who knew of his designs and would be able to arrange for his being privately ordained without disclosing his rank and identity.

The novice, for such he still was, was now compelled to call himself Henri de Rohan, a name well known in Huguenot circles, so as to avoid suspicion.

Therefore in mid-October, 1668, disguised as a French Cavalier, the young ecclesiastic is believed to have set out on his last journey to England. It behoved him, his father wrote, to reflect maturely on his altered prospects before entering irrevocably into sacred orders. He was now told for the first time that his title was better than that of the Duke of Monmouth and that he had a right

UNE JEUNE DEMOISELLE DE JERSEY

of precedence over him "*par toutes raisons, et à cause de la qualité de votre Mère.*"

Queen Catherine was childless and likely to remain so, the Duke of York's children were delicate, and if the Catholic religion were to be restored in England in after-years he would have an excellent claim to the throne, in the event of his outliving his uncle, James, Duke of York.

But in making this statement Charles conveniently forgot to add that he had never been married to Marguerite de Carteret. Moreover, he did not tell his son that his mother had, some ten years earlier, become the wife of a Jersey man who bore the surname by which her illegitimate son had for so long been known.

But when "Prince" James Stuart, as the King now condescended to call him in private, arrived in England, he stayed in London barely a fortnight. What was the immediate cause of his sudden departure has never transpired, but on November 18 he appears to have been sent back to Rome on a secret mission with directions to return as soon as he had obtained what the King desired.

Before leaving England for the last time, James must, I think, have assured his father that his resolution was fixed and that he would live and die a priest, for from that day forward he disappears from history, and after his second return to Rome the name of de la Cloche figures no more in the archives of the Jesuit fathers.

It has been supposed that he died at Naples in August, 1669, but it is highly probable that the man who passed himself off there as King Charles's elder son was an impostor. He may conceivably have been a servant in James de la Cloche's employ who had, in that capacity, learnt something of his master's antecedents.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

The impostor, who is believed to have married, in February, 1669, the daughter of an innkeeper at Naples, described himself in his will, said to have been made on August 24, 1669, as the son of a Lady Mary Stuart, of the house of the Barons of St. Mars, or Marzo as the name was written in Italian. This title, it is hardly necessary to add, never had any existence in fact, whilst the will itself reads like the composition of a lunatic or a charlatan.

Some particulars of his brief career may be gleaned from the letters of Kent, who was the English agent to Williamson at Naples. On March 30, Kent wrote: "Whether it will end in Prince or cheat I shall endeavour to inform you hereafter." In June, Charles wrote to the Spanish Viceroy at Naples categorically denying his pretensions to be recognized as his son.

In his will the impostor appointed Louis the Fourteenth his executor, and in this extraordinary document he demanded of Charles for his as yet unborn child the Principality of Wales or Monmouth and a dukedom with an annual income of 100,000 crowns, besides his mother's fortune, which he estimated at £16,000 a year. In addition he left mythical legacies of enormous value to his wife's relations and to the Church.

Lord Acton professed himself unable to solve the riddle of this mystery within a mystery, and I fear that he may have been deceived in other important respects as to the credibility of the real James de la Cloche.

Mr. Andrew Lang was of opinion that most, if not all, of the letters made use of by Lord Acton (and it is certainly singular that he did not give, so far as I am aware, the full text of any one of them) were forgeries, and that Marguerite de Carteret's son was an impostor from the

UNE JEUNE DEMOISELLE DE JERSEY

first, who hoaxed not only the Jesuit Fathers of the seventeenth century but Lord Acton as well.

Without going so far as to agree with Mr. Lang or discredit the whole of the story so ingeniously pieced together by Lord Acton, I should prefer to see the original letters before definitely pronouncing an opinion as to their genuineness. Being tolerably familiar with Charles's handwriting, I could then detect which of the documents are genuine and which are spurious.

In one or more of Charles's letters to Oliva, said to have been written in 1668, he appears to speak of the Queen Mother as being still in London and of his being in constant communication with her. Henrietta Maria had, however, left England in 1665, never afterwards to return. It therefore seems incredible that so accurate an historian as Lord Acton should not have detected the imposture, if imposture it be. What is in itself even more suspicious is that, in recent years, no one desirous of testing the truth has been allowed to see the documents in dispute and to form an independent judgment as to their authenticity.

The fullest English text of these letters which I have seen hitherto will be found in *The Gentleman's Magazine* for 1866, Part I, pp. 22-29, 226-227, 531-534, and Part II, pp. 65-68, but it is singular that they do not contain the suspicious reference to Henrietta Maria being in London at a time when she is known to have left England to return to France. Within my own knowledge Monsignor Barnes, the eminent Catholic historian, has been refused the opportunity of perusing the entire correspondence, despite repeated applications to the proper authorities, during his recent visits to Rome.

Lucy Walter (1630-1658)

ON leaving Jersey, Prince Charles passed all but two years at Paris with his mother. It has often been stated that during his stay there he was initiated into all the dissipations of the French capital by, amongst others, the Duke of Buckingham and Lord Percy of Alnwick, but, as a matter of fact, little or nothing is known to his discredit at this period. On the contrary he seems to have desired, though in rather a half-hearted spirit, to make an honourable marriage at the first convenient opportunity.

The Memoirs of Madame de Motteville, a lady-in-waiting to Anne of Austria,¹ supply us with a pen portrait of the Prince as he appeared at this time.

She describes him as being: "Well-made, with a swarthy complexion agreeing well with his fine black eyes, a large ugly mouth, a graceful and dignified carriage, and a fine figure."

His coarse and sensuous mouth seems to have impressed itself upon all beholders, not only in his youth but throughout his life, for in every portrait of him which I have seen, whether by an English or a foreign artist, it is a conspicuous feature.

Charles first visited Paris in June, 1646, a month after his sixteenth birthday. Even before his arrival rumours had reached his mother's ears that he had been married in Jersey, Clarendon even going so far as to state that he

¹ The Queen Mother of France.

was far from being convinced that the story was untrue. His mother, on being reassured by her son that he was still free, from that moment set her heart upon arranging a match between him and the great heiress, Mademoiselle de Montpensier,¹ the daughter of Louis the Thirteenth's brother, Gaston, Duc d'Orleans.

In conversation with "La grande Mademoiselle" Henrietta Maria expatiated by the hour upon her son's good qualities, the gaiety of the Court of Whitehall as she had known it, and as it might well be again when her son should come into his kingdom, laying emphasis upon the happiness of her own married life as Queen Consort of England.

But great heiresses usually prefer to decide such weighty issues as marriage for themselves, and Mademoiselle, well aware that she was about the most desirable *partie* in Europe, was no exception to the rule, and in no hurry to enter into the married state.

She was tall and fair. She carried herself gracefully, whilst her hands and feet, of which she was inordinately proud, were small and well-shaped. Her face was a perfect oval, her eyes large and blue, her luxuriant tresses flaxen. Her nose was of the aquiline type characteristic of the House of Bourbon, and she had a lovely mouth.

Assuredly she was no unattractive heiress. But she was also vain and ambitious, and I doubt, if at any time, her feelings towards Charles were anything more than those of compassion, rather than deep-seated affection.

¹ In her Memoirs Mademoiselle summed up Charles's character very correctly by remarking: "*Ce n'est pas que je n'eusse par là du connaître mon sang, car les Bourbons sont gens fort appliqués aux bagatelles et peu aux solides.*"

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

Nevertheless, the cousins at once became friends, despite the fact that Charles could speak but little French, and she no English.

Mademoiselle would have dearly liked to marry the Emperor Ferdinand III, who had recently been left a widower, or, failing him, his brother, the Archduke Leopold. But in discussing her ambitions with her father he told her plainly that she would never be happy in Vienna, where the Court lived after the Spanish fashion, and that she would be better off in England, if Charles should, haply, recover his kingdom.

Dazzled though the Prince undoubtedly was at the possibility of sharing Mademoiselle's immense prospective fortune, estimated at twenty million francs, in addition to the ancient Bourbon Seigneurie of Dombes, four entire Duchies and the Palace of the Luxembourg in Paris, Charles (after showing her considerable attention, thereby raising his mother's hopes of a successful issue) destroyed whatever chance he had of securing the prize by sighing after the flashing black eyes of Isabelle Angélique Montmorency, Duchesse de Châtillon, the only woman who is said to have ever touched the heart of the great Condé. But marriage with her being out of the question, as that beautiful young woman had given her heart as well as her hand to her husband, Charles, in addition to numerous other admirers, was condemned to sigh in vain. Later on, when she had become a widow,¹ the Duchess is said to have aroused Mademoiselle's jealousy by hinting that she might, if she liked, still one day be Queen of England.

The fair Isabelle is frequently referred to as "Báblon" in Charles's letters to his sister "Madame," and when,

¹ Her first husband had perished in the wars of the Fronde in 1649.

LUCY WALTER

in 1663, she took for her second husband the Duke of Mecklenburgh, Charles wrote pitying his former flame for having to adapt herself to the habits of a dull German Court: "If she knew the country, that is to say the way of living there and the people, so well as I do, she would suffer much in France before she would change countries." Mademoiselle, after her failure to become an Empress, next conceived the idea of marrying her own cousin Louis the Fourteenth, although he was her junior by some eleven years. This scheme also failing to mature, she did not marry until well past middle age.

When about forty she corresponded with Madame de Motteville with a view to establishing a ladies' society "*sans mariage et sans amour*." But she pronounced too soon in favour of perpetual celibacy, as about that time she met and was immediately attracted by a young Gascon, the Marquis de Puyguilhen, better known as the Comte de Lauzun.

In spite of his being one of the ugliest men in all France, this did not prevent her from falling in love with him at first sight. It will be remembered that John Wilkes, in a later age, discovered that ugliness, and even physical deformity, sometimes possess an extraordinary fascination for the weaker sex. Louis the Fourteenth at first gave his consent and then forbade the match between his cousin and Lauzun, as being unsuitable in every respect.¹ Nevertheless, they married in secret—only to

¹ On another occasion she incurred Louis's displeasure by refusing to marry the King of Portugal, and was ordered in consequence to leave the Court and retire to her estates, when she declared that one of the things she missed most during her temporary banishment from Paris was the *foire de St. Germain*, held annually in Lent, which Charles was also accustomed to attend.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

separate soon after, for the Gascon Count proved a most unsatisfactory husband.

La grande Mademoiselle, whose projects of matrimony had been so uniformly disastrous, did not die until 1693. Two years later Lauzun, then in his sixty-fourth year, married a girl of fourteen, another victim, presumably, to that strange temperamental law which ensures that ugliness in man is no insuperable obstacle to the winning of a woman's heart. Yet it is one of Nature's strangest paradoxes that no man ever really desires to marry an ugly woman, at least not for love!

In June, 1648, Charles hurriedly left Paris to assume command of a section of the English fleet which had deserted from the Parliamentary cause and was then on its way to Holland. It was joined at Helvoetsluis by the Duke of York, but the sailors would hear of no other leader but the young Prince of Wales.

On arriving at The Hague Charles received offers of support from his brother-in-law, the Prince of Orange, who generously provided sufficient money to victual the ships for three months. Charles, whose active participation in the adventure was hailed with delight by both officers and crew, sailed from Helvoetsluis to the English coast, where he was fortunate enough to capture some valuable prizes at the mouth of the Thames.

Of these the most important was a ship belonging to the Merchant Adventurers laden with cloth of the estimated value of £20,000, but owing to divided counsels no great material advantage was gained, and as Charles was powerless to effect a landing without the support of a land force he soon steered for Holland again.

An engagement with the Earl of Warwick, who commanded the Parliamentary fleet and had anchored off

Helvoetsluis, now appeared to be imminent. Both sides having cleared for action, Charles, who was on board the *Constant Reformation*, won the hearts of the sailors by his spirited conduct and total disregard of danger. When entreated to go below and place himself in safety he indignantly refused, declaring that he would take his fortune with his men "by the main mast on the deck," and that "honour was dearer to him than life." A sudden storm unfortunately sprang up which swept the opposing fleets asunder, without a shot having been fired.

Charles had now no option but to return to harbour at Helvoetsluis and, proceeding thence to The Hague, he rejoined his brother-in-law, the Prince of Orange, and remained his guest for several months.

Prince Rupert now took over the command of the small Royalist fleet, and by his personal bravery inspired the crews with some of his own enthusiasm. Sailing for Ireland in January, 1649, history relates that he accomplished "valuable work along the coast," which, being interpreted, probably meant that he pillaged such maritime towns as afforded an easy capture, without achieving any notable success in his filibustering adventure in Irish waters.

The older portion of The Hague, that pleasantest of European Court capitals, presents to-day the same picturesque appearance as it did in 1648, and if Charles were to come to life again and revisit his old haunts he would find the Dutch Court capital less changed than any town he lived at during his weary years of exile, with the possible exception of Bruges, whither we will follow him later on.

Externally the stately Hof, inhabited from mediæval times by successive Counts of Holland, Stadtholders,

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

and Princes of the House of Orange, is but little altered. The big pond known as the Vyver, whose waters lap its ancient walls, is still alive with swans and ducks floating upon its placid surface, just as they did in the middle of the seventeenth century. At one corner of the pond—it is scarcely important enough to be called a lake—stands the frowning Gevangenpoort, in which the brothers de Witte were foully done to death in 1672. At another angle is the Mauritzhuis—that treasure house of Dutch pictorial art—which was only just completed when Charles arrived at his brother-in-law's hospitable Court.

The broad Mall fringed with tall linden trees, rustling agreeably in the summer breeze, divides two rows of stately houses on either side of the Lange Vorhout, still the most desirable place of residence in the centre of the town, just as it was two centuries and a half ago.

Here Charles and his Cavalier followers disported themselves at the game of Paille Maille, the popularity of which is instanced by the number of Malls which still remain in France and Holland, although the game itself has long fallen into desuetude.

The House in the Wood, a delightful summer residence of the Court, whose principal features is its well-proportioned octagonal central hall, was rising from its foundations about the time of Charles's arrival in the "pleasantest village in Europe," as Lord Chesterfield once called The Hague, in allusion to the fact that it never was, at any time in its history, a walled town.

No doubt Charles was lodged in the Hof, but there being little or no room within its walls for flower gardens, so near and dear to the hearts of the Dutch, William the Third, who was passionately fond of his tulips, removed

LUCY WALTER

to the Noord Einde and rebuilt a former palace there, on the site of the one inhabited to-day by Queen Wilhelmina.

It was on his arrival in Holland in June, 1648, that Charles probably first met and admired Lucy Walter, who was precisely of his own age.

"Brown, beautiful and bold," she was the daughter of William Walter of Roch Castle, near Haverfordwest, in the County of Pembroke. She was born either at the "great house" at Rhôsmarket or in the castle, and her mother was Elizabeth Prothero, a niece of John Vaughan, first Earl of Carbery, which effectually disposes of Evelyn's assertion that she was a Welsh woman of low extraction.¹

William Walter was not, I think, in any way related to the family of this name, frequently misspelled Walters, who became printers and proprietors of *The Times* newspaper towards the close of the eighteenth century. In process of time the powers of Printing House Square emerged from the commercial class, entered Parliament, and purchased a considerable estate in East Berkshire. On entering the ranks of the landed gentry they adopted the figure of a stork as their family crest.

Hereby hangs a tale which I will elaborate hereafter so far as it relates to the pathetic story of poor Lucy and her royal lover. If as became a squire's daughter she possessed even a superficial knowledge of heraldry, amongst the first objects which would have met her bright eyes on arriving at The Hague, would have been the familiar figure of her paternal crest surmounting the

¹ See Sir Samuel Meyrick's "Heraldic Visitations of Wales," Volume I, page 228, for Walter, and Volume II, pages 117-118, for Barlow of Slebech.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

church towers and public buildings of that picturesque town. To carry the parallel still further, every ounce of plate wrought by the skilful silversmiths of The Hague (celebrated as they have been for centuries for the excellence of their handiwork) bore then, as it does to-day, the emblem of the stork.

William Walter, Lucy's father, had his castle burnt down by the Parliamentarians, and his daughter, after a short stay in London (and, possibly, also in Paris), drifted over to The Hague, where she was undoubtedly living when Charles arrived there.

After the sacking of William Walter's ancestral castle the family drifted up to London, where Lucy's brother Justus studied for the Bar, though at which Inn of Court he entered I have not ascertained.

It has been stated in print that, even before the Walter family migrated to London, Charles and Lucy had met in Wales. But though I believe the Prince was at Raglan Castle in 1642, when he was, of course, a mere boy, there can then have been no thought in his mind, precocious though he was, of a possible union between Lucy and himself. Moreover, Raglan is a long way from Haverfordwest. It is just possible that he crossed the Severn into Wales during his sojourn at Bridgwater in 1645, and, until comparatively recent years, there was a lingering tradition in the Principality that if the parish registers of St. Thomas's at Haverfordwest—which is quite near Roch Castle—had not been lost under mysterious circumstances, the record of a marriage between them might have been found therein.

The story ran that the registers prior to the year 1714 were forcibly removed to London in the middle of the eighteenth century under Government custody, and that

they were never returned—the inference being, I presume, that the Hanoverian right of succession to the throne would have been endangered if proof of such a marriage could be established.

But taking into account Charles's and Lucy's youth in 1645, the story seems unworthy of acceptance. On the other hand, it is certain that Lucy's uncle, John Barlow of Slebech, left London for Paris, in company with Lord Glamorgan, in March, 1648, and if, as has been confidently stated, he took his attractive, young niece with him, it is possible that it was there, and not at The Hague, that the pair first met.

The whole truth will in all probability never now be recovered. But it is, at least, a singular coincidence that, as in the case of Marguerite de Carteret in Jersey, the question of a mutilated parish register should again have arisen; the first time in respect of the birth of the elusive James de la Cloche, and, on a second occasion, of an alleged marriage between the heir to the throne and the Duke of Monmouth's mother.

It is certain that a boy and girl attachment sprang up between Charles and Lucy in the summer of 1648 which soon ripened into intimacy, with consequences which perhaps neither altogether foresaw or desired. Both were engaged in killing time and trying to make both ends meet, for money was scarce and the Restoration was a long way off.

At this distance of time it is impossible to arrive at the whole truth of Lucy's alleged liaison with Robert Sidney before Charles fell a victim to her charms. As will be seen from her portrait, which forms the frontispiece to this volume, her beauty was undeniable.

Dixon's exquisite miniature of her in the Duke of

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

Buccleuch's collection represents her in a low-necked mauve dress, trimmed with lace fastened with a jewelled pendant, a blue mantle; and a ringlet of her rich brown hair falling over the right shoulder.

The story of her intrigue with Sidney told in Macpherson's "Life of James the Second," coming as it does from a tainted source, must not be hastily accepted.

Not only were the Duke of York and his agents only too anxious to give credence to anything which tended to discredit the Duke of Monmouth's paternity, but I believe that the story of Lucy's relations with Robert Sidney and his brother is, if not a pure invention, a gross exaggeration of the actual facts.

Macpherson states that Algernon Sidney, who was, so far as is definitely known, a man of austere character, "trafficked for her first and was to have had her for fifty broad pieces. This I had from his [King James the Second's] own mouth. But being commanded hastily out of London to his regiment, he missed his bargain, and she went to Holland, where his brother Robert lighted on her and kept her for some time.¹ . . . The King being at The Hague heard of her and got her from him, who said, at the same time to some of his friends: 'Let who will have her, she is already sped.' And after her being with the King, she proved so soon with child and came so near the time, that the world had cause to

¹ Algernon Sidney, who was at this time a colonel in the Cromwellian army, was in Ireland in 1646 and again until April, 1647. From October, 1648, until the end of 1650 he was Governor of Dover, and was never, so far as I can discover, at The Hague until 1651. His brother, Colonel Robert Sidney, born in 1626, became captain in 1643, and, afterwards, colonel of the Buffs, an English regiment in the Dutch service, recalled by Charles the Second to England after the Restoration.

LUCY WALTER

doubt whose son Monmouth was. When he grew [to be] a man, he proved the likeliest thing to him I ever saw, even to a very wart upon his face."¹

But when this precious story comes to be critically examined it will be found not to bear the impress of truth.

Lucy can hardly have been more than sixteen when Algernon Sidney left London for Ireland in 1646, nor does it sound at all like what is known of his character that he should have sought to buy a girl of gentle birth for an immoral purpose. Moreover, so far from being destitute, Lucy had a modest income of her own. We are nowhere told by whom the alleged sale was carried out, and, even if the scandalous story was founded upon fact, it reflects nothing but discredit upon the "pure and high-minded patriot" of after-days. As regards Robert Sidney's share in this disgraceful business, if he really did make use of the expressions attributed to him by Macpherson, he stands revealed as a heartless and despicable cad. It is easy to slander the dead where there is no possibility of refutation, and remembering that James and the infamous Jeffreys, acting in concert, were largely responsible for Algernon Sidney's condemnation and death upon the scaffold, one can readily understand that in his attempt to discredit Monmouth and his pretensions to the throne, James, as heir-presumptive, would not have hesitated to cast foul aspersions upon his unfortunate mother.

Poor Lucy, as I shall show later on, had sins enough of her own to answer for in the latter years of her short life, but, although she was so constituted by nature and

¹ In the only portrait of Robert Sidney which I have been able to trace, not only is there no wart upon his face, but none of Monmouth's authentic portraits bear the slightest resemblance to him.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

temperament that she could deny herself to no one, I am loath to believe that she sank so low at the very outset of her brief career as James, for base reasons of his own, was anxious to prove. This much, however, is certain, that, as soon as Charles arrived at The Hague, a boy and girl attachment sprang up between the pair, and, had it not been for his exalted rank, Charles's second indiscretion might well have been punishable by matrimony. The fates, however, ruled otherwise and it was Lucy only who suffered.

The stork we know brings children—at least in Holland—sometimes, it may be, to homes where they are not especially welcome, as well as to those in which they are ardently desired. And in due season, in strict accordance with this beautiful legend, Lucy was visited by one of these mysterious winged messengers, not, indeed, at The Hague, lest forsooth the susceptibilities of the Lange Vorhout should be unduly shocked, but a few miles away across the green water meadows, at the great commercial city of Rotterdam, to which the expectant young mother had prudently removed.

There on April 9, 1649—the year in which Charles became *de jure* King of England—was born the ill-fated Duke of Monmouth at a house still pointed out as his birthplace. The child did not, however, remain long at Rotterdam, as he was put out to nurse at Schiedam.

To this day the stork is venerated in the Netherlands and protected not only by the legislature but by popular sentiment. In the springtime its clumsy nest may be seen on many a chimney-stack in the picturesque old towns of Delft and Dordrecht, little changed, as regards their architectural features, since the seventeenth century.

Soon after Monmouth's birth Lucy seems to have

LUCY WALTER

dropped her maiden name and to have elected to be known henceforth as Mrs. Barlow, a family with which the Pembroke-shire Walters were connected by marriage.

It seems hitherto to have escaped notice that Barlow was the name which Charles himself assumed after his flight from Worcester in 1651, when, disguised as a serving-man in the employ of Colonel Lane, he worked his way to the coast in daily and hourly peril of his life—for there was a sum of £10,000 placed upon his head—and succeeded in making his escape to France.

In addition to the traditional marriage at Rhôsmarket to which I have referred, it has often been asserted that Lucy was legally married to Charles on the Continent. Even the place where the ceremony was alleged to have taken place—the city of Liège—has been confidently named.

In 1654, when she was living at Brussels, Lucy seems to have captivated Sir Henry de Vic,¹ whom she beguiled into seeking the King's consent to their union. Eventually the worthy knight was persuaded out of his folly and nothing more is heard of an alliance between the pair.

But her anxiety to marry Sir Henry seems to tell against her having been lawfully married to the King. Even in the seventeenth century bigamy must have had some terrors for the contracting parties to an illicit union, whilst the plausible story to the effect that documentary proof of such an alliance existed may well have been an invention of one of her more or less disreputable associates, after her connexion with the King had terminated.

Nor must Charles's solemn declarations before his Privy Council be wholly disregarded. In 1679 he swore,

¹ The Royalist English resident at Brussels at this time.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

not once but twice, that he had never been married, and, more important still, that he had never given a contract of marriage to any woman whatsoever except his Queen Consort.

Passionately fond though he was of Monmouth until he found that this misguided youth was intriguing with Shaftesbury behind his back, with the view of being recognized as the lawful heir to the throne, Charles assured his Ministers, in the blunt and forcible language of which he was such a master, that he would sooner see his illegitimate son hanged at Tyburn than legitimize him.

When at the age of twenty-one he was appointed Captain-General of the Army, he erased the words "natural son" in the Letters Patent—an assumption of legitimacy which Charles promptly countered by insisting on the word "natural" being restored to the text of the document.

On another occasion Monmouth removed the baton sinister from the Royal Arms emblazoned on the panels of his coach, in order to give countenance to his pretensions, and though in time his father came to despise him for his treachery, he could never put the son he so dearly loved entirely out of his heart, some of his efforts to shield him being positively pathetic.

On Lord Essex's death in the Tower, under mysterious circumstances pointing to suicide, the King, wishing to get Monmouth out of the way, had him brought privately from Mrs. Croft's lodgings wrapped in a long cloak. Ned Griffin, a horsey and doggy man and a Newmarket crony of the King's, happened to recognize him, went post-haste to Charles, and told him, as a piece of news, that his son had arrived in Whitehall, and that if the Guards were dispatched at once he could easily be apprehended.

LUCY WALTER

Whereon, with the disdainful countenance he knew so well how to assume, Charles replied: "You fool! James is at Brussels." And thenceforth he could never bear the sight of Ned Griffin.

Years after Monmouth's birth the story of Lucy's marriage was widely believed in England, but, if any such ceremony there was, I am of opinion that it can only have been in the nature of a mock marriage, such as was enacted at Euston in 1671 between the King and Nell Gwynne's pet aversion, Louise de Querouaille. To this I shall refer at greater length in "The Foreign Invasion" [Chapter VI].

In 1673, when the King told Shaftesbury and Carlisle that Mrs. Barlow was not his wife but his mistress, they contended: "Let him but say it, he should find such as would swear it."

Lord Brouncker, a friend of Pepys, also believed in the marriage, and Lord Newburgh went so far as to tell Sir James Cooke that he had been present at the wedding and that Ned Progers was one of the witnesses.¹

It is significant that Progers should have been named in this connexion, for he was undoubtedly the man deputed by the King to abduct Monmouth from his mother in April, 1658.

In 1650 one William Disney deposed that Progers took the boy away from his mother whilst she was looking for an important document which she lost at the time and was never afterwards able to recover.

This may have been the mysterious parchment often said to have been kept in a black box at Whitehall. From time to time it has figured in many a novelist's imagination, but in all probability no such document

¹ See Sir William Fraser's "Scotts of Buccleuch," Vol. II, page 7.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

was ever in the King's custody, although it is in accordance with what is known of his character that he sometimes pretended it existed in order to frighten his brother James.

In the autumn of 1648 the smallpox was rife in Holland, notwithstanding the inherent cleanliness of the Dutch, and its terrors being accentuated by the inability of medical science at this period to counteract its dire effects.

Charles himself fell ill at The Hague, but although his doctors diagnosed the case as a mild form of the complaint, he promptly recovered, as by Christmas he was well again and able to take part in the festivities of the season at the Dutch Court.

In June, 1649, Charles formed the intention of joining Ormonde in Ireland, where he entertained hopes of a rising in his favour, and though the project was soon abandoned, he left The Hague, as the attitude of the States General towards the heir to the English throne had by then become decidedly unfriendly.

After visiting Delft, Rotterdam, Breda and Brussels he proceeded on his way to Compiègne, where Louis the Fourteenth and Henrietta Maria were both in residence. The latter still cherished some faint hope of a marriage between Charles and la grande Mademoiselle, but she was destined to be disappointed once again, for all idea of their union was finally given up soon after this time owing to a revival of Charles's passion for "Báblon," the Duchesse de Châtillon.

During July and August, 1649, Lucy Walter was with Charles in Paris¹ and at St. Germain, and she may

¹ Evelyn wrote in his diary on August 15, 1649: "I went to St. Germain's to kiss His Majesty's hand. In ye coach which was my Lord

LUCY WALTER

possibly have accompanied him on the occasion of his second visit to Jersey in September of the same year.

Notwithstanding his liaison with Lucy he appears to have been anxious shortly before he left Holland to marry the Princess Palatine Sophie, the youngest daughter of Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia (whose beauty, grace and powers of fascination won for her the title of the "Queen of Hearts"). In the early days of her widowhood she had taken refuge at The Hague with Mauritz, Prince of Orange, one of a devoted band of admirers which included Gustavus Adolphus and Philip the Third of Spain.¹

Princess Sophie was a merry, fresh girl with a lively wit and unaffected manners, a good complexion, a graceful figure and fair curly hair. For a while Charles's suit prospered, for his cousin would have condoned his liaison with Lucy and the projected match was approved of by the "Queen of Hearts."² But his acceptance of the Solemn League and Covenant, his declaration of allegiance to Presbyterianism, and, still more, his abandonment of Montrose, so shocked Sophie Wilmot's was Mrs. Barlow, the King's mistress and mother to the Duke of Monmouth."

¹ Amongst the number of the "Queen of Hearts" devoted admirers should be included William, the first Earl of Craven, who applied a large portion of his fortune to relieving her necessities. On her arrival in London in 1661 she stayed at his house in Drury Lane, previous to her removal to Leicester House, where she died only a fortnight later. Lord Craven died unmarried at the advanced age of eighty-eight. It has repeatedly been stated that he was privately married to the "Queen of Hearts," but I suspect that there was no more truth in the story than that of Henrietta Maria having married Henry Jermyn, Earl of St. Albans.

² Princess Sophie was quite aware of this moral lapse on Charles's part, for in a small Court like The Hague the matter was common property, and he actually had the audacity to tell Sophie that he admired her more than his mistress.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

that any tender feelings which she had previously entertained for her cousin were promptly extinguished.

Yet how little this young pair, standing as they did on the very threshold of life,¹ could have foreseen the far-reaching consequences, the tremendous issues, which such an alliance would have entailed in the matter of the succession to the English throne! Had they married it is safe to assume that the Stuarts would have been the reigning Royal house in England to-day. There would then have been little or no necessity for those sentimental excursions of the Order of the White Rose to Charing Cross on each successive anniversary of the death of the Royal Martyr.²

Sophie did not marry until ten years later, but when at last she gave her hand to Ernest Augustus, Duke of Brunswick and Elector of Hanover, she became the mother of no fewer than six sons, of whom the first-born, according to the Act of Settlement, ascended the throne as George the First.

Had she married Charles, instead of being condemned to the interminable dullness of a small German Court, Sophie, as Queen Consort, might have won the hearts of the English people in a degree to which poor neglected Catherine of Braganza could never attain.

The year 1650 was emphatically an unlucky one for Charles. His brother-in-law, William the Second of Orange, the best friend he ever had in Europe, who had

¹ They were almost precisely of the same age.

² Whilst I would not for a moment offend the members of the Order for their consistent loyalty, their praiseworthy efforts on behalf of the Stuart dynasty might well be directed to the reinstatement in the Anglican Prayer Book of the memorial service for King Charles the First which was expunged therefrom within living memory.

LUCY WALTER

been married to the Princess Royal of England according to the barbarous custom of the times when he was only fifteen and she nine, fell a victim to the smallpox at the early age of twenty-four, only a week before his young widow gave birth to a son who was destined in due course to become William the Third of England.

In 1650 the Scottish Parliament, which had already proclaimed him King, invited Charles to visit his northern possessions, with a view to his being crowned at Scone with the elaborate ceremonial observed for centuries at the coronation of the Scottish sovereign.

Charles, who cordially disliked the Covenanters, was not at first disposed to give them the securities they demanded for the maintenance of the Protestant religion. Nor had he any liking for the Scottish nation as a whole, for he could not forget that it had sided with the Parliament and abandoned his father's cause. Yet, having reluctantly accepted the harsh terms offered to him by the Commissioners who waited upon him at Breda, he decided to go to Scotland, and to take his evil genius, Buckingham, with him. He arrived in Edinburgh on June 16, 1650, with a small suite, and, as befitted his rank, was accommodated with lodgings in the Castle.¹

The weary months which Charles spent in Scotland

¹ Charles did not leave Scotland until after the disastrous battle of Dunbar, at which, however, he was not present. At the head of the remnant of the Scottish army, captained by David Lindsay, he adopted the desperate scheme of marching southward and penetrating into the heart of England, hoping to enlist recruits to his standard en route. He fought with the utmost bravery at Worcester (which further disaster to the Royal cause occurred on the anniversary of Dunbar), where he headed the first cavalry charge, had two horses shot under him and only quitted the field when all hope of success was extinguished. The full story of his wanderings

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

were, perhaps, the most dismal experience of his reign. Compared with the exhilaration of Parisian society, the serener atmosphere of the hospitable Dutch Court, and the agreeable society of Lucy Walter, the conventions and restrictions attaching to residence in Covenanted Edinburgh must have been, to a man of Charles's peculiar temperament (standing as he did at the very threshold of vigorous manhood), like passing from light to darkness.

Gilbert Burnet,¹ who accompanied him to Edinburgh, has drawn in his "Life and Times" a sombre picture of the onerous conditions imposed upon the young King by his real masters, the narrow-minded and hypocritical Covenanters.

On weekdays as well as Sundays he was condemned to listen to sermons of portentous length. On one occasion—a fast day—no fewer than six of these diatribes were preached before him without intermission. No wonder Charles declared, in after-years, that Presbyterianism was no religion for a gentleman!²

He was not allowed to walk in the streets on the Sabbath, whilst such innocent recreations as dancing or an occasional game of cards were sternly discouraged.

Lord Lorne, the Earl of Argyll's son and heir, was selected by the Covenanters as a fit and proper person to spy upon his movements, his every word and action being "set down in a note-book, conned, and learned by note."

in disguise and his miraculous escapes before he reached the coast at Brighton and embarked once more for France, having been skilfully summarized by Mr. Beresford Chancellor in his recently published "Old Rowley," it will be unnecessary to recapitulate them here.

¹ In after-years Bishop of Salisbury.

² "I was there myself," wrote Burnet, "and not a little weary of so tedious a service."

LUCY WALTER

The sorely harassed King had not been long in Edinburgh before he gravely offended the Elders of the Kirk by his mode of life. Determined as were the "unco guid" to stifle the natural exuberance of youth, Charles's innate inclination towards the fair sex could not be wholly suppressed. Having been observed in the act of indulging in some familiarities with a Scottish lassie, a committee was appointed to reprove him for his loose behaviour.

Master Robert Douglas, who seems to have been less of a hypocrite than the majority of the Elders, was selected as their spokesman. On him devolved the task of informing the King that his unseemly conduct had caused great scandal amongst the godly and must under no circumstances be repeated.

At first, keeping strictly to the text of his instructions, the worthy minister enlarged upon the heinous nature of sin and its appropriate punishment, but, much to Charles's astonishment, he concluded his remarks by recommending His Majesty, if he should again feel inclined to disport himself in like fashion, to shut his windows and draw down the blinds! To sport with Amaryllis in the shade might be permissible, but to toy with Phryne in the open could not be tolerated by the hypocritical Covenanters.

We have no information as to the effect produced upon the minds of the Elders by this dispensation, but, according to Burnet, the King never forgot his obligation to Douglas, entirely contrary though such leniency was to the spirit and intention of his masters.¹

¹ That the Elders of the Kirk did not attempt the same disciplinary measures with Buckingham, whose dissolute habits were far more notorious than the King's, was owing to the fact that, to serve his own ends, the

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

During Charles's absence in Scotland, where for his reputation he had better never have gone, Lucy entered into illicit relations with Lord Taafe, afterwards Earl of Carlingford,¹ and on May 5, 1651, she gave birth at The Hague to a daughter, Mary, whom Charles persistently refused to acknowledge as his own child. Yet in spite of Lucy's proved infidelity Charles never entirely severed his connexion with her, nor, apparently—though it seems almost incredible—did he harbour any feeling of resentment towards his successor in her affections. On the contrary, Lord Taafe enjoyed his confidence in after-years and was entrusted with the management of several difficult and delicate affairs.

Her infant son having been put out to nurse at Schiedam at the house of a Dutch merchant named Claes Ghyson, Lucy appears to have migrated to Antwerp, no doubt taking her daughter with her, where she lodged for some time in the house of one John Harvey, said to have been a nephew of the great physician to whom posterity owes the discovery of the circulation of the blood.

Soon after Lucy's arrival in Antwerp there occurred the first of a series of attempts on the part of Charles, and perhaps also of Henrietta Maria, who seems to have

Duke advised Charles to place himself unreservedly in their hands. Disgusted with the hypocrisy and tyranny of the Kirk, once he had shaken the dust of Edinburgh off his feet, Charles never evinced the slightest desire to recross the border. In after-years he practically handed the government of Scotland over to Lauderdale, and in the later years of his reign when, for various causes, he wanted to rid himself of their presence at Whitehall, he sent his brother James, and his own bastard son, Monmouth, to Scotland, rather than go there himself.

¹ Not, as has repeatedly been misstated in print, Lord Arlington.

LUCY WALTER

taken an active interest in the boy's welfare, to abduct little James from his mother.

On one of her periodical visits to Schiedam Lucy found that James—so far he had no surname—was missing. His mother thereupon hastened to Maasluis, fearing that he might have been transported to England.¹

Having enlisted the sympathy of the mayor, who ordered a search to be made in the immediate neighbourhood, the boy was discovered at Loosdynen and taken by his mother to a house she had rented at Boscal. There and at Antwerp she seems to have resided for some time longer and there is evidence of Charles having visited her from time to time.

I gather from the Thurloe papers, that on one occasion they spent a "night and a day together." This was probably at Antwerp, to which town Charles made a trip from Bruges on May 22, 1656, putting up at John Harvey's house, wherein, as we have seen, Lucy had apartments.

At the beginning of 1655 Charles granted Lucy a pension of 5,000 livres (about £400 of English money), the first quarterly payment to date from July 1, 1654, with a promise to increase the allowance when it should please God to restore him to his kingdom.²

Lucy must have returned to The Hague about the close of this year, 1655, for early in 1656 Charles received

¹ Maasluis is not far from the Hook of Holland, the seaport at the entrance to the New Waterway formed at enormous cost some forty-five years ago.

² For the terms of the warrant, which was dated at Cologne, January 21, 1655, and signed by Sir Edward Nicholas, see *Mercurius Politicus*, No. 318.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

intelligence from Daniel O'Neill, one of the grooms of his bedchamber, to the effect that Lucy's dissolute mode of life amounted to such a scandal that John, Baron van Heenvliet, the Princess of Orange's steward, had only refrained from banishing her from the town "as an infamous person and by sound of drum," out of consideration for Charles.

Pressure was accordingly put upon Lucy by both Clarendon and Ormonde to leave Holland and proceed to England.

She reached London in June, 1656, bringing with her (in addition to her two children) Thomas Howard, a brother of the third Earl of Suffolk,¹ and her brother, Justus Walter. The small party took humble lodgings over a barber's shop in the Strand, close to Somerset House. Lucy's maid, Anne Hill, who knew too much of her mistress's chequered career to be safely parted with, seems to have joined her later.

Lucy now described herself as the widow of a Dutch captain, but her identity having promptly been discovered by Cromwell's secret agents, she was clapped into the Tower on suspicion of being a Royalist spy. She declared, on examination, that she had come to London to claim a sum of money, some £1,500, which had been left to her by her mother. This was quite conceivably true. She also maintained that the child which she had by the King was now dead, which was certainly

¹ I do not know exactly what position Thomas Howard filled in Lucy's household, though it would be easy to hazard a guess that it was not altogether to his credit. His son in after-years married Charles the Second's natural daughter by Viscountess Shannon, and died in 1669, aged only nineteen, leaving an only daughter, Stuarta Howard, a maid of honour to Queen Mary of Modena.

LUCY WALTER

untrue, adding further that the two children she had brought with her were by a husband she had married in Holland who was also dead. Whether this plausible story was believed or not, it seems to have answered its immediate purpose, for Lucy was released a few days later and ordered for deportation.

In the document setting forth the conditions on which she was permitted to go free she and her son are described as "Charles Stuart's lady of pleasure and the young heir." It was made out in Cromwell's own handwriting and stated that she was to be "set on shore in Flanders," the Protector adding that this was in itself "No ordinary Courtesie."

Poor Lucy now went to Brussels, where her accustomed mode of life seems to have given rise to as much scandal as it had caused in Holland.

In August a kinsman of her own or one of her servants wounded Tom Howard in the street and a lawsuit followed in which Howard declared that some papers, extremely damaging to his reputation if they were to be made public, had been stolen after being entrusted by him to Lucy's keeping.

A little later, Ormonde, who had never ceased from the attempt to persuade her to deliver her boy to the King, was so far successful that she promised to have him brought up and instructed as the King should appoint, provided that he remained in Brussels and that she was allowed to live with him in the same house. She was doubtless fully aware that young James was too valuable a pawn to be surrendered without a desperate attempt on her part to retain possession of him.

The climax to this long struggle was, however, reached a little later. Colonel Sir Arthur Slingsby, who had for

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

a time been the boy's nominal guardian, Daniel O'Neill and Edward Progers, acting in concert, at last succeeded in taking the boy away from his distracted mother.

Slingsby, who seems to have behaved with great brutality to Lucy and to have far exceeded Charles's instructions, which were to obtain possession of his son by quiet and peaceable means, attempted to carry her off to a public prison, in satisfaction of a debt which she was unable to pay. Lucy resisted "with great outcries, embracing her son," and the attitude of the Bruxellois who sympathized with her was so threatening as to compel Slingsby to permit both mother and son to stop the night at the Earl of Castlehaven's house, pending further instructions from the King.

She was offered asylum by the Don Alonzo de Cardenas, formerly the Spanish Ambassador in London, upon her promise to await the King's pleasure, Castlehaven being sent to Bruges where Charles was now living. One Egidio Mottet, Don Alonzo's secretary, followed post-haste with a letter to Ormonde in which he said:

I am so much ashamed of the proceedings of Mr. Slingsby and all his family against Madame Barlow and her child that I am loth to relate them, referring the same to what you will have of [from] my Lord Castlehaven and Mr. Berkeley, who have been witnesses of it, and depart this day, hence for your Court. My Lord Ambassador hath written to the King about it, being forced thereunto by the clamour of the people, who found this action most barbarous, abominable and unnatural.

Meanwhile Lucy remained in Don Alonzo's house, not knowing whether any further violence would be attempted. O'Neill proposed to put additional pressure upon her by searching her boxes for "suspicious papers" and there is little doubt that he and Progers, an adept at any backstairs work which was required, ultimately coerced

LUCY WALTER

her into parting, not only with her beloved son, but with such private papers as she had contrived to retain possession of.

After the final severance, which took place in April, 1658, Thomas Ross was appointed the boy's tutor and he was sent to Paris to be educated as a Catholic under the supervision of the Queen Mother.

"It is a great pity," Ross wrote to Sir Edward Nicholas, "so pretty a child should be in such hands as hitherto who have neglected to teach him to read or to tell twenty, though he hath a great deal of wit and a great desire to learn."

Deprived of everything which she most valued in life, Lucy went rapidly from bad to worse, and though she went back to Paris, it is certain that she never saw her son again. And towards the end of 1658 she died, a moral and physical wreck, "without anything to bury her"—as Evelyn wrote at the time.

William Erskine, son of John Earl of Mar, and cup-bearer to the King, who afterwards became Master of the Charterhouse, seems to have been the last to interest himself in this unhappy woman. He made himself responsible for the expenses of her funeral and she was laid to rest, unremembered and unmourned, and in an unnamed grave, in the Huguenot Cemetery in the Faubourg St. Germain. This would seem to have been the accustomed place of burial at this period for English residents who died in Paris.

It is doubtful whether any further details of Lucy Walter's unhappy and misspent life will ever now be recovered. So recently, however, as 1887, four letters were sold at Messrs. Sotheby's auction rooms, which might have thrown some additional light upon her sad

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

history. They were described in the catalogue of the Chauncy sale of July 26 of that year as (1) an autograph letter by Lucy (probably the only one in existence) in which her son is referred to, (2) a letter from Ormonde to Mottet, dated Bruges, December 17, 1657, "Concerning the King's wishes as to Mrs. Barlow and her child," and (3) and (4) letters from Don Alonzo de Cardenas, of October 24, 1657, and from Clarendon on the same subject.¹

Some time in 1649 or, perhaps, early in 1650, Mistress Elizabeth Killigrew, to call her by her maiden name, was taken into favour by Charles. She had been married ten years before to Francis Boyle (the fourth son of the great Earl of Cork), afterwards raised to the peerage as Viscount Shannon.

When little more than a child Elizabeth was appointed one of Queen Henrietta Maria's maids of honour, making her first appearance at Court in that capacity. Her father's family had been firmly entrenched in Whitehall, in common with the Villiers' since the early days of the reign of Charles the First; both families long retaining their hold at Court.

Elizabeth Killigrew's pretty face and graceful air completely turned the head of "sweet-spirited Frank," a well-bred Eton boy of sixteen, and in 1639, a match having been arranged between them by their parents, they were married with every mark of Royal favour.

Elizabeth had been christened on May 16, 1622, at

¹ These letters were bought by Mr. J. M. Teesdale, then residing in Old Jewry, who died in 1888, but, unfortunately, it has not been possible to trace their present whereabouts. See also Allan Fea's "King Monmouth," 1892, page 21, to which I hereby desire to acknowledge my indebtedness.

LUCY WALTER

St. Margaret's, Lothbury, in which City parish her grandfather lived in great style and brought up a large family, so that she was about a year older than her husband.

To modern ears Lothbury¹ does not sound an attractive place to live in, but it should be remembered that in the reign of James the First, when Betty Killigrew was born, there was no West End of London worth speaking of, save for a few detached mansions in Whitehall and a few of lesser importance in the quiet streets round about the Abbey.

Many of the nobility still sought the security of the City walls and their immediate vicinity. For instance, the Earls of Bridgewater clung to the Barbican until their house there was destroyed by fire towards the close of the seventeenth century, when they removed to the Duchess of Cleveland's house adjoining St. James's Palace.²

Neither the great square in Lincoln's Inn Fields, the west side of which was built by Inigo Jones, or the piazza in Covent Garden, both of which became fashionable under Charles the First, had even been begun. Piccadilly, as a place-name, was unknown until the first decade of the seventeenth century. It figures in old maps of

¹ Lothbury was formerly chiefly inhabited by brass founders and copper-smiths, but the utilitarian metal has in comparatively modern times given place to bars of solid gold, for one whole side of the street has been merged in the Bank of England, although the name Founder's Court remains to denote the former calling of the inhabitants.

² In a scarce little book, Thomas Delaune's "Present State of London," published in 1681, there is an illustration of Lord Shaftesbury's house in Aldersgate Street which was much admired at the time it was built, whilst Lauderdale House in the same street was not destroyed until late in the nineteenth century.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

London as "the way to Reading," running through green fields and tall hedgerows on either side to the hamlet of Knightsbridge, long of evil repute as a duelling ground owing to its remoteness from the town.

St. James's Palace was still, virtually, a country house, and the site of St. James's Square and the adjoining streets was one large open field.

Proceeding westward from Temple Bar there were a number of great houses, many of them bishops' "Inns" or palaces, with gardens reaching to the Thames, but, to all intents and purposes, residential London ended at Charing Cross, just as it had done in the days of good Queen Bess.

It is not often that one is so fortunate as to meet with a detailed description of an aristocratic wedding in the earlier half of the seventeenth century, but, as luck would have it, a circumstantial account of the marriage of Francis Boyle and Betty Killigrew was written down at the time by the bridegroom's father, and very interesting reading it makes. In his diary for October 24, 1639, the great Earl of Cork recorded:

This day my fourth son Francis Boyle was married in the King's Chapel at Whitehall, to Mistress Elizabeth Killigrew, one of the Queen's Majesty's maids of honour. The King with his own Royal hand gave my son his wife in marriage and made a great feast in Court for her whereat the King and Queen were both present, and I with three of my daughters sat at the King and Queen's table amongst all the great Lords and Ladies.

The King took the bride out to dance, and after the dancing was ended, the King led the bride by her hand to her bed-chamber, where the Queen herself did with her own hands help to undress her and His Majesty and the Queen both stayed in the bed-chamber till they saw my son and his wife in bed, and they both kissed the bride and blessed them, as I did, and I beseech God to bless them.

LUCY WALTER

There we will leave them for the moment although one cannot help wondering if the youthful Prince Charles was present at the earlier portion of the day's doings. He was by then nearly nine and a half, and very forward and observant, but how little he, or anyone else, could have foreseen that the young and lovely bride who was so exceptionally honoured that day by his father and mother, would not only be living with him within the next few years but that she was destined to become the mother of one of his many children.

After only three days of wedded bliss the child lovers were parted and the sixteen-year-old husband was packed off to Geneva with a tutor to complete his education, leaving his disconsolate bride behind him.¹

Not much of Betty Killigrew's history during the next few years can be recovered, but in 1647 I find that she was living at The Hague, a year before Charles ever set foot in that delightful village, of which I have attempted to give a brief description at an earlier page.

We know, of course, that her brother Tom—in after-years the King's jester and the first patentee of Drury Lane Theatre—under whose management Nell Gwynne made her first appearance on the stage, went to Holland for his second wife, Charlotte, daughter of John de Hesse, but I do not think that Tom was at The Hague in 1647 but in close attendance at that date upon Charles in Paris.

¹ Mrs. (Dorothea) Townshend's "The Great Earl of Cork," 1904, contains an admirable summary of the Earl's letters and diaries, and, in addition, by far the best account that I have met with of Eton school life as it was three hundred years ago, when Francis Boyle and his distinguished younger brother Robert entered the school under the provostship of Sir Henry Wotton.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

Another member of the family, Kate Killigrew, was, however, one of the Princess of Orange's ladies-in-waiting, and it was with her that Betty probably went to stay.¹

Francis Boyle, accompanied by his younger brother, went to The Hague (in 1647) to fetch Betty home. But a great change had come over the scene since we saw her on her wedding-day. She now preferred a gay and not very reputable life at Court to her husband's society and the seclusion of his beautiful Irish home at Shannon Park, not far from Carrigaline in County Cork. She must soon have returned to The Hague, if indeed she ever left it, for about this time she deserted her husband, who spent the remainder of his life on his Munster estates, whilst she plunged into gaiety and dissipation abroad.

Elizabeth Killigrew would appear to have been one of the few of Charles's mistresses who was older than he was.

The somewhat elusive Marguerite de Carteret I have already dealt with: Eleanor, Lady Byron, whom I shall come to a little later on, was about three years older than Charles, and Lady Shannon was also his senior by some eight years.

I have not been able to discover when "Chanticleer" added Betty Killigrew to his harem, nor has the date of her daughter's birth been definitely ascertained, though it must, I think, have been some time during the year 1651.

Their solitary love-child received at her baptism no fewer than four Christian names, Charlotte, Jemima,

¹ Kate Killigrew died of smallpox at Spa in 1654, whereon Charles and the whole of his suite, usually playfully alluded to by him as "the family," removed to Aix-la-Chapelle for fear of infection.

LUCY WALTER

Henrietta, and Maria, the two latter being, of course, intended as a compliment, though rather a doubtful one in the circumstances, to the Queen Mother.

This Charlotte seems also to have been the first of Charles's children to bear the significant name of Fitzroy, though after the Restoration the complacent heralds, whose business it was to find names for the illegitimate issue of their Sovereign Lord and Master—the fountain of honour and wisdom!—must have experienced considerable difficulty in devising new patronymics for Charles's offspring as they were ushered into the world, in rapid succession, year after year, until, in 1672, two were born of different mothers, within a fortnight of one another!

Having rung the changes upon Fitzroy and Fitz-Charles, the heralds had, perforce, to fall back upon Beauclerk, Lennox, and, finally, Tudor.

Charlotte married, as her mother had done, at a very early age. The husband selected for her was James Howard, a grandson of Theophilus, 2nd Earl of Suffolk, who died in July, 1669, aged only nineteen. They had one daughter to whom they gave the preposterous Christian name of Stuarda, who became eventually a lady-in-waiting to Queen Mary of Modena, consort of James the Second, after which her history cannot be traced.

Charlotte did not long remain a widow, for in 1674 she took for her second husband William Paston, second Earl of Yarmouth, a lineal descendant of that great territorial Norfolk family, whose letters have given to the world a fascinating account of the domestic life of the aristocracy in the later Middle Ages.¹

¹ Lady Shannon died in 1681, and is buried in Westminster Abbey, as was Lady Yarmouth in 1684.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

When Charles was in Scotland in 1650, Argyll¹ aspired to marry him to his daughter Lady Anne Campbell, and Charles went so far as to write to his mother to ask her consent to their union. But it seems that he was never really in love with the girl, though she may have been with him.²

The next lady whom it is possible to include in the long catalogue of Charles's mistresses, is Eleanor Needham, the daughter of Robert, Viscount Kilmorey in the Peerage of Ireland. She was the widow of Peter Warburton of Arley, when, in April, 1644, she married the first Lord Byron, the head of a family long settled at Newstead Abbey in Nottinghamshire, which had been built by the Augustinians in the twelfth century.

Following the almost invariable fate of alienated abbey lands converted into lay residences—for the Byrons only became possessed of it at the Reformation—the estate was sold by the poet in 1818.

Eleanor Needham's husband, who fought with exceptional bravery throughout the Civil War, followed Henrietta Maria to France, and became a member of her household in Paris, where he died in August, 1652.³

His widow, who was about twenty-five at the time, seems to have been taken into keeping by the King soon after, but very little is definitely known of her except from a casual reference in Pepys's diary for April 26,

¹ Archibald Campbell, 1st Marquis of Argyll. Born 1597. Executed for high treason at Edinburgh, 1661.

² Lady Anne died unmarried soon after the King returned to the Low Countries.

³ Lord Clarendon described his death as an "irreparable loss" to the Royal Cause.

LUCY WALTER

1667,¹ in which he declares that she was the King's *seventeenth mistress abroad*, though if this statement be true I must have overlooked a number whose names can never now be recovered.

According to the same authority, Lady Byron contrived to extort from Charles as much as £15,000 during his exile, but this must, I think, be an exaggeration, as when he was in Paris between 1652 and 1654, he did not know where to turn to for ready money, and he was certainly not in a position to squander large sums upon anyone.

Pepys added that: "She had got him to give her an order for £4,000 of plate, but, by delays, thanks be to God she died before she had it."

For years, whenever he was in Paris, Charles still dangled after Isabelle (Báblon), the widowed Duchesse de Châtillon, but whether she was ever actually his mistress it is impossible to say, although she had hosts of admirers throughout her career. Writing to his sister Henrietta in 1663, Charles frankly admits that he formerly had "more than an ordinary inclination for her," and pities her for having married a German.²

Apart from his attempts to make an honourable marriage, which were more numerous than has been generally supposed, and his innumerable affairs of the heart wherein no such penalty was ever even contemplated, Charles's name was talked of from time to time in connexion with several of the most unlikely and unsuitable alliances which the wit of man could possibly have conceived.

¹ Three years after Lady Byron's death, which occurred at Chester January 26, 1664.

² The Duke of Mecklenburgh.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

About 1653 it was rumoured that a match was intended between him and the virgin Queen Christina of Sweden, who had voluntarily resigned her crown and would have liked to wear another; but the negotiations, if ever they were seriously entered upon, were soon broken off.

At other times Charles's name was mentioned as a possible husband for one of Cromwell's, and even for one of Lambert's or Fairfax's daughters!

When he left France in July, 1654, Charles's fortunes were at about the lowest ebb to which they ever descended. After visiting Aix he went to Cologne¹ and thence to Dusseldorf, where he was hospitably entertained by the Count of Neuburg, one of the few minor German princes for whom he ever had any real liking.

For the most part the ruling powers in the Rhineland States maintained an attitude of aloofness and detachment which Charles never forgot or forgave. Throughout his life he distrusted Germany and its rulers and disliked their manners and habits. When soon after the Restoration his Ministers in their endeavours to find him a suitable bride went so far as to suggest the desirability of a German alliance, he declared in the most emphatic terms that he would rather remain single all his days than wed one of their princesses—because, forsooth, “they were all so foggy!”

Yet despite grinding poverty, always cheerfully endured, Charles and his “family” enjoyed themselves at Cologne and Dusseldorf after their accustomed fashion; the boredom of the petty German Courts they visited being rendered less irksome than would otherwise have been the case, by the King, adopting as his motto,

¹ October 9, 1654.



CHARLES II

From the mezzotint by E. Lutterell, after the portrait by Sir P. Lely.

"*Wein, Weib und Gesang*," pending the dawn of a brighter political horizon.

In after-years the Count of Neuburg, the son and heir of his former host at Dusseldorf, paid Charles a return visit at Whitehall and was introduced to, amongst other reigning favourites, Nell Gwynne. She seems to have astonished the Count not a little by her high spirits and her practical jokes, especially in one which she played on him at Hampton Court wherein he figured as the principal victim.¹

Charles returned to Cologne in November, where, as his financial resources were practically exhausted, the generous burghers provided him with "house, firing, bread and wine."

From Cologne he passed again into Holland, to Middelburg, and, after revisiting Dusseldorf, he and his sister proceeded to Frankfort to attend the great fair held annually in September.

In the winter of 1655 he was at Cologne again, but in February, 1656, he went to Brussels, via Louvain, where he put up at the "Sun" Inn, but soon retired to Vilvord, which he describes in one of his letters at this time as a "vile little dorp."

On St. George's Eve, 1656, he settled down at Bruges, where, save for certain brief excursions, he remained for nearly two years.²

On arriving in that delightful mediæval town he lodged at first in the house of Thomas Preston, Viscount Tara, whom he had raised to the peerage some years earlier.

Preston's house, which is still standing, has suffered a great decline in the social scale since Charles lived in

¹ See "The Life and Times of Nell Gwynne," 1924, page 231.

² Charles did not finally leave Bruges until February, 1658.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

it, for it is now a Flemish beer cellar of the bourgeois type.¹

It has frequently been stated by Charles's detractors that he showed himself ungrateful in after-years for the kindness and hospitality extended to him during his exile. But the following letter, written from Whitehall, on August 14, 1662, to Lord Orrery, who was one of the Governors (or Lords Justices) of Ireland at the time, shows conclusively that he was by no means unmindful of the services rendered to him by Lord Tara and his family (including a maiden aunt) during his stay in Bruges.

My Lord Orrery,

When I came first to Bruges in Flanders, and was far from being in a good condition, I found my Lord of Tara [Thomas, 1st Viscount Preston] there, who invited me to his house where I lodged more than a month till I could provide another place for myself; and during the whole of my abode in those parts he gave me frequent evidences of his good affection and duty to me, which I resolved to have requited if he had lived. And therefore since he and his wife are dead I most particularly recommend his children to you, and likewise their Aunt, Miss Warren, who were there likewise at Bruges, to your care that they may be out of hand put into the possession of ye several [estates] which belong to them, of which you are to advertise the other Lords Justices to the end that you may *all* give effectual orders to the Commissioners to that purpose, and let them know I expect a good account of their business.

Your very affectionate friend,

CHARLES R.

(Endorsed "This letter all written with ye King's own hand.")

Charles's suite again included the Duke of Buckingham—who was almost as much the King's evil genius as his father had been to Charles the First—Lords

¹ It will be found at the back of the Belfry at the corner of the Rue du Vieux Bourg and the Rue de la Halle. The Brugeois, whose predecessors entertained Charles so hospitably during his stay amongst them, would do well to mark this interesting house with a memorial tablet.

LUCY WALTER

Clarendon, Percy of Alnwick, Rochester, Taafe and Wentworth, Stephen Fox, Sir Edward Nicholas, Harry Jermyn, Dan O'Neill and Dr. Killigrew, but as the Prestons' house was too small to accommodate "the family," he soon removed to a larger one (now No. 6 in the Rue Haute) with a garden at the back sloping southwards to the canal which flows past the picturesque Quai des Marbriers.

This house, though it has long ceased to be a private residence, still retains some faint traces of its former importance, although much altered internally during the eighteenth century.

A lofty house in the Grande Place, with a gilded dial on its façade, at the corner of the Rue St. Amand, is often pointed out to tourists as one of Charles's residences during his stay in Bruges, but he seems only to have visited it for the purpose of witnessing the elaborate civic and religious pageants for which the city has long been famous.

The King's morals would not seem to have improved after his return to the Low Countries, for in a letter from Lord Taafe, the gay sprig of nobility who annexed Lucy Walter during Charles's absence in Scotland, the writer assured the King that he could not fail to succumb to the charms of a certain Mademoiselle d'Immercell of the Brussels Court, were he only to see her. Lord Taafe added: "That is *if* your Majesty be *libre* which Madame Renenbourg saies you are nott, having got a new one [mistress] at Bridges." [Bruges.]

The young lady referred to by Lord Taafe must, I think, have been Miss Catherine Pegge, although how she first came into the King's life I have not been able to discover. She was the daughter of a Derbyshire squire,

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

one Thomas Pegge of Yeldesley, who was created a baronet at the Restoration, probably owing to his daughter's influence.

In one of Charles's letters, written about 1656, he complains of the "solitariness" of Bruges *la Morte*, but he really enjoyed himself there very much, making himself extremely popular with the townspeople and local magnates, who vied with one another in entertaining him and "the family," although some of the latter severely taxed the patience of the good citizens at times by their boisterous spirits and uproarious mirth even in their chronic impecuniosity.

On one occasion Charles visited the English Convent in the Rue des Carmes, one of the stoniest of Bruges' narrow streets, and possibly never repaved since trodden by the King. There he was entertained to a collation by the Mother Prioress, Augustina Bedingfield. It is the privilege of Royalty to enter a convent, even of an enclosed order such as that in the Rue des Carmes; but though Charles won all hearts by his charm of manner, I doubt if some members of "the family," had they been eligible for admission, would have produced an equally favourable impression. Certainly Buckingham and Percy of Alnwick would not have commended themselves to the Mother Prioress if she had been aware of their reputations in Paris and elsewhere.

Charles must often have passed by this ancient religious house, for one of his favourite amusements in Bruges was to visit the picturesque archery ground of the Guild of St. Sebastian—at the farther end of the street in which the English Convent is situated. In this typically Flemish street there stands to this day a house

distinguished by the device of three swans, swimming sedately in single file. The Brugeois, it will be remembered, love their swans much as their neighbours the Dutch revere and protect their storks.

If, as I surmise, the Three Swans was a tavern—it adjoined a brewery—when Charles came to Bruges,¹ it may have been used by him as a house of call on his way to and from the Archery Ground, on the outskirts of the town and near the Porte St. Croix.

Many picturesque houses in this quarter retain their rose-red roofs and stepped gables, from whose narrow casements the friendly townsfolk must, time and time again, have descried a tall young man, shabbily dressed, no doubt, but looking every inch a king, as he stepped briskly over the cobblestones. Charles and his Cavalier “family,” too poor to hire a coach or even a saddle-horse and constrained to go on foot, must, perforce, have been familiar figures in the every-day life of Bruges *la Morte*. The King’s bust in white marble is still to be seen in the principal hall of the Archers, and in the Groot Huis near the Cathedral is a portrait group, including the King and his young brother, the Duke of Gloucester, painted in commemoration of a banquet given by one of the City Guilds in their honour. So popular was the King with the Archers of St. Sebastian that they elected him as their president, and amongst their most treasured possessions to-day is a silver arrow presented to them by his brother, the Duke of Gloucester.

Debarred by the States General from residing permanently in Holland and having outstayed his popularity in Cologne where, to the despair of Clarendon, he left

¹ The Three Swans was then a newly-built house, as it bears on its homely front the date 1632.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

large debts behind him, Charles found the Spanish Netherlands a pleasanter, and on the whole a safer, place of residence. Even at Bruges he was closely shadowed by Cromwell's intelligence officers, and though he was now in receipt of a small allowance from the King of Spain, he was never altogether free from money worries.

Catherine Pegge, who was reputed to be a great beauty, gave birth to a son, probably in 1657, at Bruges. He inherited in a striking degree his mother's good looks.

After the Restoration Charles created him Earl of Plymouth, but he was more generally known in Court circles, where he was extremely popular owing to his amiability, as "Don Carlo," a nickname derived from his early residence in Spanish territory. In 1678 he married Lady Bridget Osborne, daughter of the first Duke of Leeds, at one time Lord High Treasurer.

Poor Lord Plymouth was so deeply in debt, as appears from the recently published Treasury Books to which I have so often referred in these pages, that the King ordered his debts to be paid out of the Secret Service Fund, with the exception of a tailor's bill, which, as it amounted to nearly a thousand pounds, Charles characteristically directed was to "stand over" for a while.

The Earl of Plymouth died at the siege of Tangier by Mulai Ismail on October 17, 1680, of a bloody flux, to the great regret of his father and mother. Having no children the peerage became extinct. His style and title were almost immediately revived in the Hickman-Windsor family, in which it remains to this day. Don Carlo's portrait reproduced opposite this page of this volume fully bears out the common report of his good looks. Lady Plymouth married as her second husband



DON CARLO Earl of Plymouth.

DON CARLO, EARL OF PLYMOUTH

From the mezzotint by J. Savage.

LUCY WALTER

Philip Bisse, Bishop of Hereford, a handsome man of whom an amusing story is related to the effect that the Dowager Duchess of Northumberland, wishing to give him her hand in marriage, accidentally received the pressure of his lips in the dark in an embrace which the Bishop intended for her waiting-woman!

Catherine Pegge also had a daughter by Charles, born in 1658, and called after her mother. By some authorities she is said to have died in infancy and by others to have become a nun at Dunkirk and to have lived until 1759, in which case she must have been a centenarian! Catherine Pegge married, as his fourth wife, Sir Edward Greene, Bart., of Sampford in the county of Essex, and died at her house in Pall Mall in 1678.¹

Whilst on a brief visit to Amsterdam Charles heard of Cromwell's death at Whitehall. This startling intelligence was conveyed to him, three days after it occurred, by his brother James, who had learnt of it by accident from a trooper at Dunkirk.

The King's altered prospects now induced him to make a formal proposal for the hand of his cousin, Princess Henrietta of Orange, who was living at Breda with her mother.² The young Princess is said to have fainted with emotion on the receipt of Charles's letter, but her mother, after permitting her daughter's engagement, soon retracted her consent, and within a month the luckless Henrietta was betrothed to the Prince of Anhalt. Doubtless the Princess Amalia had heard that at the very time that Charles was asking for her daughter's

¹ In one of her few extant letters Nell Gwynne, who was a near neighbour, refers to an escutcheon having been placed on the front of her house, as was then and until the last century a general custom in London.

² Amalia, Princess Dowager of Orange.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

hand his name had been coupled in Brussels, and Antwerp, with that of Beatrix de Cusance, Comtesse de Chantecroix, mistress of the Duke of Lorraine, by whom Charles had been much attracted at a ball given in his honour by the Duchess of Newcastle at Antwerp, some little time before.¹

In October, 1659, Charles journeyed to Fuenterrabia and even so far as to Saragossa, in the hope of enlisting the sympathy of King Philip of Spain, but although he met with a cordial reception he elicited nothing beyond vague promises of support, whereon he proceeded to Colombes on a visit to his mother.

About the same time he made yet another attempt to secure an honourable and, as he, no doubt, devoutly hoped, a lucrative alliance before the long and weary days of his exile came to an end. During his visit to Spain he approached the then all-powerful Cardinal Mazarin, who chanced to be at Fuenterrabia at the time, as a suitor for the hand of the youngest of his highly attractive nieces, Hortense Mancini, stories of whose grace and beauty had no doubt reached him in the Low Countries, although he had not seen her since his stay in Paris when she was a little girl.

However, the wary Cardinal, not thinking that Charles's prospects of recovering his kingdom were anything like so good as they speedily proved to be, looked coldly upon the proposal. And not until many years later, when Hortense came to England, still an extremely beautiful and fascinating woman, were Charles and she destined to meet again. She would then have

¹ Singularly enough a match had been projected for Charles by his mother, so early as 1644, with Louise Henrietta, eldest daughter of Frederick Henry, Prince of Orange, the idea not being finally abandoned until early in 1646.

been quite willing to marry him had he been single, but, morality never having been one of her settled convictions, she was not unwilling to become his mistress—at a price. Nor had she been in London many weeks before the King granted her a pension of £4,000 a year—her immense fortune being by then practically dissipated—and provided her with luxurious apartments in the immediate neighbourhood of St. James's Palace.

From that time forward she became one of the "chargeable ladies about the Court" (as Shaftesbury aptly termed them) and a perpetual source of discord and envy to the Duchess of Portsmouth and half a dozen other favourites, who hated her as only one Royal mistress can hate another.¹

¹ I shall give a fuller description in Chapter VI of Hortense and the consternation which her arrival in London caused to Barbara Villiers and Louise de Querouaille, both of whom she succeeded in ousting temporarily from Whitehall.

Barbara Villiers, Countess of Castlemaine and Duchess of Cleveland (1640-1709)

KING STREET, Westminster, conveys little or no meaning to the present generation, nor could it well do so, seeing that what then remained of it was swept off the map of London some thirty years ago. Yet it played a prominent part in the life of Charles the Second, who from one cause or another must have passed through it almost daily.

In recent years King Street has been replaced by a ponderous mass of stone of uninspired and uninspiring design, capped with stunted towers and meaningless cupolas which are, apparently, so dear to the hearts of the architects of our modern public buildings, the new War Office in Whitehall being a case in point. Few of the numerous Government offices erected of late years have much to recommend them from the æsthetic point of view, though their interiors may, conceivably, be well adapted to utilitarian requirements.

The vast congeries of buildings devoted to the unexciting purposes of the Local Government Board and other official bodies, has lately been extended westwards as far as Storey's Gate, obliterating in its stony embrace many ancient residential quarters, such as Duke Street, the houses in which enjoyed within my recollection a pleasant prospect of St. James's Park.¹

¹ In Duke Street, near the Storey's Gate end, which was afterwards known as Delahay Street, lived Judge Jeffreys of evil repute. James the

The wholesale destruction of this portion of old Westminster began in the 'sixties when Lord Palmerston, in inviting designs for new public offices, made the initial mistake of selecting a Gothic architect, or, I should say, an architect with Gothic leanings. Inspired by the teaching of Pugin, Sir Gilbert Scott was compelled to design the new Foreign, Home, and Colonial Offices in the classic style with which he was never greatly in sympathy.¹

The result, as might have been expected, was disappointing in the extreme. Yet the new Temple of Janus in Whitehall, erected only a few years ago when the old War Office site in Pall Mall was abandoned, is hardly more satisfactory. The shabby and commonplace extension of the Admiralty on the Horse Guards Parade, a

Second allowed him to make a flight of steps into St. James's Park, a privilege not accorded to other, and worthier, inhabitants. These stairs and a portion of the house in a much altered state existed within my recollection. Matthew Prior also lived here in a house facing Charles Street, as did Matthew Hutton, one of the few Englishmen who have been Archbishop of York and Canterbury too.

¹ It is much to be regretted that Sir Gilbert Scott did not confine his talents to building churches, town halls and public buildings, for in the twenty years succeeding 1847, when he was called upon to renovate and refit that great architectural treasure the Cathedral Church of Ely, he wrought an infinite amount of injury by injudicious "restorations" in a number of English cathedrals, abbeys and parish churches. This now irreparable mischief was largely due to the regrettable zeal of well-meaning, but misguided, deans and chapters who, in the first frenzy of the Gothic revival, failed to perceive that in spending large sums of money on *imitative* work they were destroying the real interest of the sacred buildings which it should have been their first duty to preserve. In the same way Viollet-le-Duc neutralized the appeal of Notre-Dame in Paris to lovers of mediæval architecture by over-restoration of the fabric. Even greater injury was done to St. Albans Abbey by the late Lord Grimthorpe, an amateur architect with a long purse but little appreciation of ecclesiastical art as understood in the Middle Ages.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

building wholly unworthy to be the administrative home of the foremost naval power in the world, is a great deal worse than any of Sir Gilbert Scott's buildings, and should be razed to the ground so soon as the state of the national finances allow of its removal.

In Axe Yard, rebuilt in the eighteenth century and then renamed Fludyer Street, Samuel Pepys began to keep his immortal diary. It was a narrow lane running parallel to Downing Street and was destroyed when the first of Lord Palmerston's new public offices were built in the 'sixties.

Connecting King Street and Duke Street, was Gardener's Lane, a narrow winding street running East and West, which I well remember. In this unpretentious lane died Wenceslaus Hollar¹ on March 28, 1677, in abject poverty and with the bailiffs in his house. In his extremity he begged to be allowed at least the liberty of dying in his bed and that he might not be removed to any other prison but the grave. It remains a lasting reproach to the country of his adoption that the foremost architectural draughtsman of his time, and the man to whom we owe the greater part of such knowledge as we possess of the actual appearance of London at this period, should have been allowed to die under such tragic circumstances.²

In its latter days Gardener's Lane presented rather a melancholy appearance, and, when I last passed through

¹ Hollar comes quite naturally into the picture, for he had been drawing-master to Charles the Second, when Prince of Wales.

² Leonard Knyff, a Dutch artist working in conjunction with his countryman Johannes Kip, who came to London soon after the accession of William the Third, was another skilful draughtsman who has recorded faithfully the appearance of the principal public and domestic buildings in England, as they existed between 1690 and 1720.

it, many of the houses were boarded up prior to demolition.

The west side of King Street, which had for centuries formed the principal approach from Charing Cross and the City beyond, to Westminster, for such folk as did not come by water, was demolished when Parliament Street was built in connexion with alterations in the immediate neighbourhood consequent on the building of Westminster Bridge.

Years before, Charles had prepared a grandiose scheme of his own for making a worthier approach to Westminster, and it is on record that this great public improvement would have been carried out had it not been for the heavy expenses of his mother's funeral in France, amounting, as they did, to £5,000. For reasons of his own, which I will make apparent directly, Charles did not propose to interfere with the houses on the eastern, and preferential, side of the street.

When Parliament Street was widened in recent years the houses on the original line of King Street, on the western side, finally disappeared from the face of London.

Space does not admit of any detailed notice in these pages of the numerous distinguished Englishmen who lived hereabouts in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Lord Howard of Effingham of Armada fame, the poet Spenser (who died here), and Sir Henry Wotton, the author and diplomatist, who finished his official career in the leisured ease of the Provost's lodge at Eton,¹ all lived in King Street.

During his earlier Parliamentary career Oliver Crom-

¹ At Black Potts, a bend in the river below the Playing Fields, where Eton boys still cast their lines in my day, Wotton is said often to have fished in the company of his intimate friend, the great Izaak Walton.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

well had a house adjoining the "Blue Boar's Head" Yard, which existed, in a somewhat dilapidated condition, until the final demolition of the street. Thomas Carew, the courtier poet (who modelled his style on Donne, and had a rare gift of his own for sensuous verse), was another early inhabitant. He was the friend of both Ben Jonson and Suckling.

Dudley North¹ was another resident here, and from his house, which is said to have been the first in the street to be built wholly of brick, his son, Sir Dudley North, the economist, was stolen from his home when a child and found in an alley off Canon Row,² in the hands of a beggar woman who was discovered in the act of stripping the clothes off his back.

If my readers will cast their minds back some three hundred years and imagine themselves to be living in the reign of Charles the First, and endeavour to reconstruct the past in the mind's eye, I will show them that King Street was then a highly fashionable quarter of the town, the houses on its eastern side having large private gardens reaching, in some cases, to the river-side.

Houses in King Street were much sought after in the seventeenth century by peers and commoners and also by public officials on account of their proximity to the Houses of Parliament, the Abbey, the Courts of Law and the King's Palace.

If, after this digression, it be asked what has all this to do with the subject-matter of this chapter, my answer must be that it was the birthplace and the home, during

¹ Fourth Lord North of Kirtling, who died in 1677.

² Channel Row I believe to be a corruption of Canon Row, and that the lane took its name from the Canons of St. Stephen's Chapel, within the Palace of Westminster, who were domiciled here in Plantagenet times.

BARBARA VILLIERS

her early married life, of one of the most beautiful and, at the same time, most depraved and ravenous women who disgraced the Court of the merriest monarch who ever sat upon the throne of England.

I can picture to myself a little boy of dark complexion and luxuriant black locks, playing with his younger brother, in the Privy Garden one autumn morning in 1640—it was the 27th of November to be precise—and gazing at a bundle of white lace and flannel carried out of a neighbouring house (divided only by a low fence from his playground), to be driven in a lumbering family coach to St. Margaret's Church hard by. His nurses probably told him that Lady Grandison's infant daughter was being christened on that dark November day.¹

This was positively the first recorded public appearance on the stage of life of Barbara Villiers, who, in the years to come, was destined to play many parts and to wield tremendous power over the future King of England. And the little boy who watched with childish curiosity the departure of Lord and Lady Grandison and their infant daughter to St. Margaret's, was none other than the Prince of Wales, aged only ten and a half, but, as we have already shown, a precocious child for his years.

On an illuminating plan of the Palace of Whitehall as it existed about the year 1668,² the site of Lady Grandison's house, which adjoined the Privy Garden, lying

¹ In the admirable summary of the career of this notorious woman in the "Dictionary of National Biography" the date of her birth is wrongly given as 1641 instead of 1640, but on searching the registers of St. Margaret's for another purpose I accidentally came across the entry of her christening there on November 27, 1640.

² It is reproduced in my "Life of Nell Gwynne," 1924.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

practically within the verge of the Palace, is assigned to "Lady Villiers." There are now no rate-books of St. Margaret's parish in existence of earlier date than 1665, though had there been any I should not have expected to find Lady Villiers's name there, as her house, being within the precincts of the Court, would have been exempt from the unwelcome attentions of the rate collector. This Lady Villiers was Barbara's grandmother and the widow of Sir Edward Villiers, a former President of Munster. At her London house, which had the convenience of a private means of access from the river, the second Lord Grandison, and his wife, Mary, daughter of Paul, first Viscount Bayning, were accustomed to stay when not resident in Ireland. At this period of our history the Villiers, like the Killigrews, were indigenous to the soil of Whitehall.

For the next fifteen years young Barbara's life is more or less of a blank. We know, however, that her father died in 1643¹ from wounds received at the siege of Bristol, and that five years later her mother married again, her second husband being yet another member of the Villiers's family, the second Earl of Anglesey.²

Barbara seems now to have divided her time between her stepfather's house and her grandmother's in King Street, which latter she ultimately inherited. She probably received as good an education as any similarly well-born child was accustomed to at this period, though in later years she wrote a vile hand; some of her letters, of which

¹ Lord Grandison was buried in Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, where his daughter erected a monument to his memory, perhaps the only work of filial piety standing to her credit.

² Lord Anglesey died of the smallpox in 1661, whereon his widow took for her third husband Arthur Gorges of Chelsea, who died in 1668.

BARBARA VILLIERS

there are specimens in the manuscript department of the British Museum, being all but undecipherable.

Charles must have found great difficulty in reading them, and most of them were very lengthy, just as he may have those of Barbara's detested rival, the Duchess of Portsmouth, some fragments of whose handwriting have been reproduced in H. Forneron's "*Louise de Keroualle*." ¹ But if Louise's handwriting was execrable at least she had the advantage of Nell Gwynne who could hardly write at all. Therefore that "brittle beauty whom nature made so frail" considerably employed the services of an amanuensis, merely adding in large capital letters her initials, E. G., which was also her usual method of signing her banker's drafts.²

Whether it was the wild Irish strain in her blood I know not, but when she was still a mere slip of a girl and not more than fifteen, Barbara Villiers entered into a guilty intimacy with Philip, 2nd Earl of Chesterfield, well known to his contemporaries as a man of dissolute habits. He had recently become a widower, and this liaison apparently continued not only on her marriage to Roger Palmer, but after her open association with the King began.

It would seem as if it was not uncommon at this period for young ladies of irreproachable birth and good education to make assignations with men considerably older than themselves, both married and single. Yet we are constantly being told at the present day that young girls, who are allowed by their parents to dispense with the

¹ Published at Paris in 1886.

² Some of these, preserved amongst the archives of Childs' Bank at Temple Bar, I was favoured with a sight of when engaged in writing my account of her life and times.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

services of a chaperon, have a greater amount of liberty than was accorded to their forbears.

I have selected two of Barbara's earliest letters to Chesterfield as illustrations of the conspicuous lack of modesty for which she became notorious in after-life. That she was extremely attractive in the springtime of her youth is abundantly proved, though as she grew older the inherent selfishness and avarice of her nature found a certain reflection in her features.

She was of commanding height, with a fine figure, auburn hair and blue eyes, and the very attractive portrait of her [reproduced opposite page 96 of this volume] shows her at an earlier age than any other which I have had an opportunity of examining, either in public or private collections. Most of these, despite the skill of the artist, fail to conceal entirely the inherent cruelty and harshness of her temperament.

In the admirable summary of the career of this notorious woman in the "Dictionary of National Biography" no details are given of the guilty intimacy between her and Lord Chesterfield. The sordid details of this intrigue supply the keynote to Barbara's whole after-life, for what she was at fifteen so she was at fifty.

At the beginning of the last century a number of letters, which had been carefully copied by Lord Chesterfield into a large folio volume, were accidentally discovered in the library of old Bath House in Piccadilly, long the freehold property of the Pulteney family. These letters, remarkable as they are for their unblushing frankness, throw a lurid light upon their relations with one another and on Barbara's duplicity in playing off one lover against another.

Chesterfield, probably from vanity, made copies not

BARBARA VILLIERS

only of most of the letters he received from young ladies, many of them mere girls in their teens, but, in a number of instances, the drafts of his own replies.

This extremely unwise proceeding on his part enables us to envisage the precise nature of his liaison with Barbara, with whom, in some degree, must be associated her girl friend, Lady Anne Hamilton.¹

The first letter of the series is stated by Chesterfield to have been written in 1656, when Barbara cannot have been more than fifteen.² The first of her many paramours, it should be added, was at the time a young widower of ample fortune living in Lincoln's Inn Fields.

The next letter, which I shall quote, was written in the following year. It shows plainly that Barbara was already extremely jealous of her lover, as indeed she had good cause to be, for from what I have been able to discover of Chesterfield's mode of life he was an unprincipled blackguard where women were concerned.

Notorious in his youth for drinking, gaming and "exceeding wildness" and much addicted to duelling, in later life he was more than suspected of having poisoned one of his three wives.

"I would fain have had the happiness to have seen you at church to-day,"—now wrote Barbara—"but I was not suffered to go. I am never so well pleased as when I am with you, though I find you are better when you are with other ladies, for you were yesterday all the afternoon with the person I am most jealous of, and I know I have so little merit that I am suspicious you love all women better than myself. I sent you yesterday a letter³ that I think might convince you that I loved nothing beside your-

¹ Afterwards Lady Carnegie and Countess of Southesk.

² Unless it was written after her birthday in November.

³ The letter here referred to does not appear to be amongst those which were copied by Lord Chesterfield.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

self, nor will I ever, although you should hate me; but if you should, I would never give you the trouble of telling you how much I loved you, but keep it to myself till it had broke my heart. I will importune you no longer than to say that I am, and will ever be, your constant and faithful humble servant."

Only a few days later she wrote to him again:

"Let me see you about five o'clock: and if you will be at your private lodgings in Lincoln's Inn Fields I will endeavour to come."

The next letter of the series which I have thought necessary to reproduce was the joint production of herself and Lady Anne Hamilton, and from it we may infer that, even in Puritan times, there was as much sexual immorality amongst the higher aristocracy as ever there was after the Restoration, when it is customary to attribute every instance of moral declension to the bad example set by the King.

My friend and I are just now in bed together and contriving how to have your company this afternoon. If you deserve [I desire] this favour you will come and seek us at Ludgate Hill, about three o'clock at Butler's shop (on Ludgate Hill), where we will expect you, but lest we should give you too much satisfaction at once, we will say no more: *expect the rest when you see, Yours etc., etc.!*

If the walls of Butler's shop were still standing, which of course they are not, and could speak, a tale of profligate indulgence would be unfolded, perhaps rarely exceeded in the worst days of the Restoration era.

Years after this frank avowal of incontinence was penned, Charles expelled Henry Killigrew from the Court for daring to say that Lady Castlemaine (as she had by that time become) had been "a little lecherous girl" in her early youth.

Yet it is obvious from one of her next letters, that in

BARBARA VILLIERS

spite of all precautions and attempts at secrecy, the nature of her relationship to Chesterfield was well known to her contemporaries, and that Killigrew was only repeating what was a matter of common knowledge at Court.

In 1663 Lord Gerard's wife, a French lady, was dismissed from attendance on the Queen for speaking slightly of Lady Castlemaine, so absurdly jealous of her reputation was Charles at the height of his infatuation for this worthless woman.

In the summer of 1657 Chesterfield was staying at Tunbridge Wells, and in a letter which Barbara sent to him there she expressed the hope that "amongst the pleasures you receive in the place where you are (*which I hear affords great plenty of fine ladies*), you sometimes think of me."

As a matter of fact, Barbara had good reason to be suspicious, for her admirer was carrying on a criminal intrigue at the time with the Lady Elizabeth Howard, who subsequently married Dryden. All the same in his next letter he continued to address her as "My dearest life."

On his return to London Barbara wrote to tell him of the joy I had of being with you last night. It made me do nothing but dream of you, and my life is never pleasant to me but when I am with you, *or talking of you* [a very human and feminine touch]: yet the discourses of the world must make me a little more circumspect. Therefore I desire you *not* to come to-morrow but to stay till the party be come to town. I will not fail to meet you on Saturday morning.

In June, 1658, Chesterfield was sent to the Tower by Oliver Cromwell for dangerously wounding a Captain Whalley in a duel; in 1659 he was again in prison for participating in Sir George Booth's Royalist rising in Cheshire, and, not until he had given security for

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

£10,000, was he released. Some interruption of the intercourse between the guilty pair must have been caused by Chesterfield's two terms of confinement in the Tower, but that the intimacy continued even after her marriage to Roger Palmer is evident from the following letter, written soon after April 14, 1659, the date of her wedding:

Since I saw you I have been at home as I find the Mounseer [her husband] in a very ill-humour. He says that he is resolved never to bring me to towne again, and that nobody shall see me when I am in the Country. I would not have you come to-day, for that will displease him more, but send me word presently what you would advise me to do, for I am ready and willing to goe all over the world with you, and I will obey your commands that am, whilst I live, Yours.

I do not know why she alludes to her husband as "the Mounseer"—but it was probably in the nature of a slighting reference which Chesterfield would readily have understood.

The next entry in Chesterfield's letter book is headed: "From Mrs. Palmer when she was very ill of the small pox 1659."

I have been this day extremely ill and the not hearing from you has made me much worse. . . . The Doctor doth believe me in a desperate condition. There is nothing beside yourself that would make me desire to live a day.

Probably her sudden illness was not nearly so serious as she feared, for it was not unusual for doctors at this period to diagnose feverish cases, especially when accompanied by a rash, as incipient smallpox. However this may have been, the patient promptly recovered and in 1660, after she had become Chanticleer's mistress-in-chief, I find Chesterfield writing to ask her to send him

BARBARA VILLIERS

her portrait, "for then I shall have something that is *like you and yet unchangeable.*"

This well-deserved thrust was neatly expressed, when taken in conjunction with her previous declarations of undying affection and constancy.

Shortly before the Restoration was an accomplished fact Chesterfield was again in trouble for killing a Mr. Woolly in a duel at Kensington. Fearing arrest and a further term of incarceration in the Tower, he made his escape to France, but, having extracted a promise of pardon from Charles, he returned to England in the King's train in May, 1660.

Thenceforward but few letters seem to have passed between him and Barbara, though if they continued to correspond Chesterfield may have concluded that it would be imprudent to enter any more of her confessions in his letter book. Yet they continued to write to one another occasionally, for, in 1670, when her influence over Charles had practically ceased—owing to his growing infatuation for two or three other, and younger, women to be mentioned hereafter—Chesterfield no longer writes in the tone of an impassioned lover, but merely informs her that he had bespoken "a figure for your ladyship's garden ¹ which is a Cupid kneeling on a rock and shooting from his bow a stream of water towards heaven!" ²

Why Barbara thought it necessary or advantageous to

¹ No doubt this present was intended for Barbara's latest acquisition from the Crown, the valuable freehold of Cleveland House, in the immediate vicinity of St. James's Palace.

² A portion of this remarkable correspondence was published in a much abbreviated form in 1835, but the extracts here given are taken *verbatim* from Chesterfield's manuscript letter book in the British Museum.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

marry at all must always remain a mystery. Roger Palmer was not a great *parti*, although he had a moderately good estate in Wales. His future wife had ample means of her own, for her mother was a considerable heiress, having inherited a portion of the valuable Bayning estates in the Eastern Counties.

She certainly does not appear to have ever been the least in love with her husband, who seems to have been lacking in backbone, a failing which a woman of her impetuous temperament would be sure to resent. Hardly had her wedding-bells ceased ringing when she drifted over to the Low Countries (taking her husband with her, but only for propriety's sake), and with, I opine, the deliberate intention of throwing herself in Charles's way and ultimately becoming his mistress.

At no time was Barbara's nature such as permitted of an obstinate constancy, as Gramont once wittily remarked of Charles. Even at nineteen she was vain, extravagant, covetous and ambitious, a nymphomaniac, compounded of lust, avarice and deceit in equal portions; with nothing but her physical beauty to recommend her. Harsh and cruel by nature, so destitute was she of maternal affection that her children went in terror of her, so much so that her eldest son,¹ whom she seems always to have spited, grew up mentally deficient.

Barbara was, however, always keenly alive to the importance of marrying her sons and daughters well, but more, I think, from a desire to aggrandize herself than from any real love of her children.

Keeping this object steadily in view, she, on more than one occasion, terrorized the King into acknowledging as

¹Charles Fitzroy, Duke of Southampton and Cleveland, born 1662.

his very own the offspring of her numerous other paramours, until at last the deception became too transparent to warrant a moment's credence.

Returning to the year 1660, we know that Pepys went over to Holland with his patron, Admiral Montagu,¹ to fetch Charles home.

Even the ubiquitous Samuel, as yet a novice in the art of keeping a diary, does not seem to have been aware that "Mrs. Palmer" had already fascinated the King by her charms. Yet she certainly returned to England in his train, if not on board the same ship. When General Monk began his southward march the restoration of the Monarchy was brought within measurable distance, whilst Charles, who, as Emerson said of Napoleon, always knew what to do next, accelerated the pace by issuing his well-timed declaration of religious toleration from Breda. This historic pronouncement, addressed to "all his loving subjects of what degree or quality soever," sounded the death-knell of Puritan rule in England.

Events now continued to move rapidly in Charles's favour. On May 8, Parliament, after proclaiming him King by virtue of his birthright, decided to dispatch a Commission of six Lords and twelve Commoners to Holland to escort him on his homeward journey. Now that the tide had definitely turned, the Commons voted £50,000 to the King, £10,000 to the Duke of York, and £5,000 to their younger brother, the Duke of Gloucester. To Charles's infinite relief, Sir John Grenville soon after arrived at The Hague, bringing with him £4,000 in specie. For years past the King had not seen or handled a tithe of such potential wealth, and, in childlike glee, he called his sister the Princess of Orange

¹ Afterwards first Earl of Sandwich.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

to come and look at the bright golden coin as it lay in his capacious *porte-monnaie*.

Having been sumptuously entertained by the States General, who, reversing their former attitude of detachment and suspicion, could now not render him sufficient honour, the King set sail from Scheveningen in Montagu's flagship, the *Royal Charles*, as the ill-omened *Naseby* had been hurriedly re-christened. On the voyage home Charles, surfeited by this time by a succession of banquets and drinking of healths, won the hearts of the crew by insisting on sharing their rations of boiled pork and pease pudding, rather than partake of more luxurious fare. On landing at Dover, Charles fell upon his knees as he touched English soil, on being presented by the Mayor and Corporation with a copy of the Bible. Never at a loss for a suitable reply, the King assured them that he should value it more than any other gift in the world.

Proceeding on his journey by way of Canterbury, he wrote thence to his "deare deare sister," Henrietta, to say that his head was so stunned with the acclamations of his people that he hardly knew whether he was writing sense or nonsense. His passage towards London through Faversham and Rochester resembled a triumphal procession, the enthusiasm of cheering crowds who lined the roads at every stage causing him to exclaim as he entered the capital that it was no doubt his own fault he had been absent so long from his Kingdom, since he found no one who did not profess that he had always longed for his return!

After fourteen years of exile and hardship, on the thirtieth anniversary of his birth, well might he rejoice, with his loyal subjects, on his restoration to "Merry England."

Macaulay is not often found tripping, but for once in a

way the great Whig historian was misinformed when he wrote, at the close of a resounding passage descriptive of the rapturous reception of the King in London and his movements on this memorable twenty-ninth of May: "That the restored wanderer reposed safe in the Palace of his ancestors." As a matter of fact, it was at Sir Samuel Morland's house in Lambeth that the wanderer slept on the night of his arrival—and with Mrs. Palmer by his side!

An entry in Pepys's diary six weeks later describes Barbara as "a pretty woman whom the King has taken a fancy to," Samuel adding the significant prediction that her husband was likely to be made a cuckold in consequence!

The Duke of York was now reported to be enamoured of the same lady, but that cold-hearted libertine, who never possessed a tithe of his brother's powers of attraction where women were concerned, stood no chance whatever of supplanting Charles at the Court of Venus at this or any other time of his life.

The latter did not let the grass grow under his feet in the prosecution of his new *amour*, for Pepys, in company with Lord Sandwich, whose lodgings in the Cockpit area of Whitehall fronting St. James's Park adjoined the house of a Mr. Whalley, listened for an hour or more, about this time, to "great doings of music" which Sandwich's next-door neighbour had thoughtfully provided for the entertainment of the King and his latest mistress. Three months later he overheard the Duke of York talking "very wantonly" to Barbara through the hangings which separated the Royal pew in Whitehall Chapel from that in which the ladies of the Court were accustomed to sit.

On "Shrove Monday," February 25, 1661, Barbara

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

gave birth, in King Street, to her first child, Anne, subsequently Lady Dacre and Countess of Sussex. In after-years the girl so closely resembled Lord Chesterfield that little doubt was entertained in the inner circles of Whitehall that he was the actual father. However, both her husband and the King—the latter, I must admit, after some hesitation—professed themselves ready to acknowledge its paternity, while Chesterfield wisely laid low and said nothing.¹

When Lady Sussex grew up she showed herself as indifferent to the sanctity of marriage vows as her mother, deserting her husband to become the mistress of Ralph Montagu in Paris. Ultimately she returned to respectability and had a son by her husband, who was christened at Windsor Castle in June, 1682, the King in person standing sponsor.

According to Rochester she and Lord Sussex were:

Strangers to good but bosom friends to ill,
As boundless in their lusts as in their will.

Lord Sussex was also a spendthrift who, after dissipating his fortune, was compelled to sell Hurstmonceaux Castle in Sussex.

In the autumn of 1661 Charles, with a view to placating Roger Palmer for having annexed his wife, forced him to accept a peerage. "Prepare a warrant for Mr. Palmer to be Baron of Limerick and Earl of Castlemaine, in the same form as the last, and let me have it before dinner," was the peremptory order given by the King (the sole fountain of honour according to the Heralds) to the

¹ In his will Lord Castlemaine appointed Lady Sussex one of his trustees, which looks as if he still thought she might have been his own offspring.

official responsible for drawing up patents of nobility. The Court was then in residence at Newmarket for the autumn race meeting, but no records of the sport appear to have been preserved.

A year later, when the King married the Infanta Catherine of Portugal, solely for reasons of State and the large dowry brought him by his bride, Barbara had him firmly in the toils.

Even Catherine's dowry, which Charles had been led to expect would amount (in addition to the acquisition of Bombay and Tangier) to two million cruzados (over £800,000 sterling), proved a bitter disappointment. To the King's disgust a large proportion of it was paid over in dribblets of sugar, spices, raisins, and foreign securities which it was found difficult to negotiate at home, Charles remarking in his most cynical vein, that he would have preferred fewer currants and a little more cash.

Contemporary opinion was sharply divided as to the impression which Catherine produced upon her husband at the time of their union. Lord Cornbury, Clarendon's eldest son, writing to the Marchioness of Worcester soon after the wedding, said that the King "liked her very well and that he will out-do all that pretend to be good husbands, and it will be his own fault if he be not happy." But Sir John Reresby, who was also present at the wedding at Portsmouth, was by no means so optimistic. He was convinced that the King was not really in love with his dusky bride, whose teeth, we are told, "wronged her mouth" by sticking out too far, and that she had "nothing visible about her capable of making him forgo his inclination to my Lady Castlemaine."

Catherine is said to have been much perturbed at

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

finding, on her arrival, that English ladies spent so much of their time in dressing themselves. She feared that they bestowed but little upon God Almighty or even in the simple arts of housewifery.¹

That Charles insisted on his wife's accepting his mistress as one of her ladies-in-waiting, in the room of one of her numerous and ill-favoured Portuguese attendants—whom, by the way, he promptly repatriated—is an oft-told tale. And as there is not the slightest excuse to be made for the harsh treatment of his innocent Consort, and because the subject has been worn as threadbare as the story of his escape after the disaster to the Royal cause at Worcester, we may pass on to the month of June when Barbara's eldest son by the King, Charles Fitzroy, Duke of Southampton (and, at his mother's death, Duke of Cleveland as well), was born in King Street, Westminster.

This time, at all events, there was no manner of doubt as to the child's paternity. All the same, great domestic troubles were in store for Barbara's lawful husband, who had recently become a Catholic. Having ventured to have the child baptized by a priest, his wife, in defiance of her lord and master, had him re-christened, according to the Anglican rite, at St. Margaret's, Westminster, in the presence of the King (in person), the Earl of Oxford and the Countess of Suffolk. The latter, in addition to being a lady of the Queen's bedchamber, was the fair Castle-

¹ But meagre details have come down to us of the actual happenings at Portsmouth, and though the register of St. Thomas's Church records the signing of the nuptial contract on a gorgeously emblazoned vellum deed, the wedding ceremony was not performed in the parish church (owing, no doubt, to its being a mixed marriage), but in privacy at the Governor's house.

BARBARA VILLIERS

maine's aunt. This second christening led to a violent quarrel between husband and wife, which resulted in Barbara leaving London and retiring to the house of an uncle¹ at Richmond, carrying all her plate and jewels with her. It was a poor thing to quarrel about, especially when we remember that she was received a few years later into the Catholic Church.

"Mrs. Sarah," Lord Sandwich's housekeeper, with whom Pepys—who had the run of the house—was on friendly terms, told him that when Barbara left her lord, she took every dish and clout out of the house,² and all the servants except the hall porter.

Her husband now went over to France with the avowed intention of entering a monastery. This, he seems, on reflection, to have thought better of, for he soon returned to England and made his re-appearance at Court.³

Even before such a landmark in her profligate life as the birth of her eldest son, Barbara's reputation had sunk so low that Sir Thomas Crewe told Pepys⁴ that Mary, Duchess of Richmond, "Steenie's daughter, having had high words with her in the Park, called the King's

¹ Colonel Edward Villiers.

² Lord Castlemaine apparently had a house of his own in King Street at this time.

³ In after-years Lord Castlemaine, who would seem to have been consistently unlucky, was committed to the Tower on no fewer than six occasions, twice in Charles's reign for supposed complicity in the Meal Tub Plot, and four times by William the Third on suspicion of treasonable practices and being involved in numerous Jacobite plots. In all he must have spent between three and four years in prison. Early in 1689 he was brought to the bar of the House of Commons touching his embassy to Rome in the previous reign. He died at Oswestry, where he owned a small landed estate, in July, 1705, whereupon his widow promptly married again, and, as I shall show at a later page, once more with disastrous results.

⁴ April 21, 1662.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

haughty mistress 'Jane Shore' to her face, expressing the hope that she might come to the same bad end."

The Duchess would have been nearer to the truth had she likened Barbara to Alice Perrers, Edward the Third's equally rapacious favourite, whose greed of gain was greater by far than ever Jane Shore's was.

In July Charles and his mistress had a violent quarrel on their own account, but after a short time she returned to Court, and in the following month we learn, again upon Pepys's authority, that when she met her husband accidentally at Whitehall neither of them exchanged a single word, though each in turn took the baby from its nurse and dandled it in their arms. This would seem to have been almost the only approach to maternal affection which Barbara ever displayed, for, as I have already stated, the child grew up to be of weak intellect as the result of his mother's habitual cruelty.

His infirmity did not, however, prevent him from matriculating at Christ Church, Oxford, when he was only thirteen, and from taking his degree three years later. As he grew older his health must have improved, for his mother found him a bride, with an ample fortune, by whom he left a numerous family.¹

Barbara soon quitted King Street to live in the precincts of the Palace, for I find that in October, 1662, she gave a ball at her lodgings, "next door to Lord Sandwich." Probably this was Whalley's former house, and he may have been identical with the man whom Lord Chesterfield assaulted years before. What position he now occupied at Court I have failed to discover.

In November it was rumoured that Barbara was again

¹ Dying at Cleveland House, St. James's Square, September 9, 1730, he was buried in Westminster Abbey.



BARBARA VILLIERS, COUNTESS OF CASTLEMAINE

From a portrait in the possession of Lady de Saumarez.

with child, and Pepys hazarded the guess that its paternity would, in all likelihood, be laid to her husband's charge. Since Castlemaine's return he had been occasionally seen in his wife's company, although he seems to have taken care never to eat or sleep in the same house. The rumour proved to be unfounded and, towards the end of the year, Barbara's interest with the King was commonly reported to be greater than ever and far beyond that of the Queen.

It was her corrupt influence which now brought Sir Henry Bennet¹ into power in succession to Sir Edward Nicholas, an old and trustworthy servant of the Crown, the pair conspiring thenceforward to depreciate Clarendon in the King's eyes. Sir Charles Berkeley,² to whom she is believed to have extended a share of her favours, was also brought into service in the course of the same year.³ Another of her many paramours was that "epitome of lewdness" Jack Ellis, who rose to be an Under-Secretary of State in the reign of William the Third, and contrived to amass an enormous fortune by dishonest means.

Having offended Barbara by openly boasting of their intimacy, he was assaulted, at her instigation, by a gang of hired bullies, who, it is said, reduced him to the condition of Atys.

Yet his injuries would not appear to have been so serious as was reported at the time, for he died, at his

¹ Afterwards Earl of Arlington.

² Afterwards Earl of Falmouth.

³ Lady Falmouth, whom we shall have occasion to refer to later, was at one time a minor member of the Royal seraglio, though not, I think, until after her husband had been killed in a sea fight with the Dutch in 1665.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

house in Pall Mall, in 1738, at the patriarchal age of ninety-five!

In the fickle month of April, 1663, Barbara once more changed her lodgings, being said then to have removed "as to her bed" from her own house to a chamber in Whitehall "next to the King's own!" Yet in spite of Charles's persistent infidelity, the young Queen, after she had recovered to some extent from the shock of having Barbara thrust upon her, seems, not only to have tolerated her presence, but to have admitted her in some degree to her confidence. She frequently drove out with her in public, and took her to hear Mass in the Chapel at St. James's which Charles had fitted up for his wife's special use.

This building, now known as Marlborough House Chapel, has seen many changes of ritual in the course of three centuries, and is said to have been built from the designs of Inigo Jones, although it bears little trace of such distinguished parentage.

Pepys, who saw the Queen Consort for the first time at close quarters in September, 1662, contrived to gain admission to a soirée at Somerset House where the Queen Mother was then in residence. "Though not very charming yet she hath a good modest and innocent look," was his first impression of Catherine of Braganza.

It so happened that the King and Queen were in merry mood that night, teasing one another and making jokes which, to modern ears, would seem to verge on indelicacy. Charles would have his mother believe that his wife was with child, declaring that such must be the case as she had told him so herself. In reply, Catherine is reported to have made use of the first

English words which she had been heard to utter in public: "You lie."

This playful retort so tickled Charles's fancy that he tried there and then to teach his wife to repeat after him: "Confess and be hanged!" In such light-hearted fashion was the Court of the Merry Monarch accustomed to amuse itself at this period, but, alas, no legitimate heir to the throne was born either this year or at any subsequent date.

Deplorable as were Charles's shortcomings as a husband, it is only fair to his memory to recall that he invariably regarded his Consort with extreme deference in public and was assiduous in paying her little attentions in private. Though these may not have cost much, at least they gave her pleasure, coming from the source they did.

Writing to "Madame" in December, 1663, Charles begged his sister to send him over from Paris some "images to put in prayer books. They are for my wife who can get none here. I assure you that it will be a great present to her and that she will look upon them often. For she is not only content to say the great office in the Breviary every day but, likewise, that of our Lady too."

One cannot but pity Catherine, with her limited outlook in a state of society so widely different from that to which, from her youth upwards, she had been accustomed in her native Portugal. Whilst she sought—and, it is to be hoped, found—some measure of solace in the contemplation of those "images," her husband was squandering money by the handful on "great presents" conferred upon his insatiable mistress. So prodigal was his expenditure in this direction that whenever Barbara appeared at Court *en grande tenue* she was

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

more splendidly dressed and bejewelled than the Queen and the Duchess of York together.¹

On one occasion she wore pearls and diamonds of the estimated value of £40,000 at the theatre, and it should be borne in mind that this ostentatious display was not at night-time but in the afternoon, when the auditorium at Drury Lane was only scantily illumined by a few wax candles. Even these were considered a vast improvement upon the tallow dips in use before Tom Killigrew became the manager of the King's Company of players.

Barbara's influence suffered an appreciable decline in the summer of 1663 owing, in part, to the King's growing infatuation for "La belle Stuart," who had recently come over from France.

About this time it was reported that Barbara had miscarried, but the rumour was demonstrably untrue, for in September her second son by the King was born in the Palace.

Henry Fitzroy, first Duke of Grafton, was acknowledged to be the handsomest of all the King's sons with the possible exception of Monmouth and "Don Carlo" (Earl of Plymouth). Possessing great natural bravery, eminently sincere but rough as the sea of which he was so fond, he saw service with the French in Flanders in 1684, commanded the *Grafton* in the sea fight off Beachy Head in 1690, but died shortly after² from wounds received at the siege of Cork by Marlborough.

¹ This was at a State ball held in February, 1663. Though only twenty-two, Barbara was said by this time to be "skilled in all the tricks of Aretin," an allusion to the indecent letters and sonnets accompanying the still more disgusting postures engraved from the designs of Giulio Romano, of which Pepys had a copy.

² On October 9, 1690.

BARBARA VILLIERS

The following hitherto unpublished letter¹ written by Charles to his daughter, Lady Lichfield, from Winchester (where he had gone, with Nell Gwynne), to hurry on the building of a new palace which he did not live to occupy, may appropriately be inserted here:

Winchester 5 September 1684.

Your excuse for not coming hither is a very lawful one, though I am sorry I shall be so long deprived of seeing my dear Charlotte. Your brother Harry² is now here and will go in a few days to see Holland, and, by the time he returns, he will have worn out in some measure the redness of his face so as not to fright the most part of our ladies here. His face is not changed though he will be marked very much. I will give orders for the two hundred pounds for your building, and the reason that you have not had it sooner is the change I have made in my Treasury, which, now, in a little time, will be settled again, and so, my dear Charlotte, be assured that I am your kind father, C. R.

For my dear Charlotte.

The reference to the state of the King's finances towards the close of his life is characteristic, whilst the £200, which he was unable to send his daughter at once, was wanted in connexion with the building of her new house in Downing Street. At the present day it forms the garden portion of the Prime Minister's official residence. Although externally, except for its red-tiled roof, it does not look anything like so old, it is a genuine relic of Sir Christopher Wren's handiwork.

From a curious entry in Pepys's diary (January 20, 1664) I gather that though the King did not disown Barbara, many of his immediate entourage, Lord Fitzhardinge and Lord Sandwich amongst the number, "had their snaps at her" whenever she appeared at Court.

¹ Kindly communicated to me by Viscount Dillon.

² The Duke of Grafton.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

Sandwich would lead her from her lodgings "in the darkest and obscurest manner," leaving her at the entrance to the Queen's apartments so that he might himself escape observation. None are so blind as those who do not wish to see, and though, about this time, it began to be freely rumoured in Whitehall that my Lady Castlemaine had entered into a liaison with Colonel James Hamilton, the King professed himself wholly unconcerned. Few details have been recovered of this fresh lapse from decorum on Barbara's part, and it seems probable that, being merely of a transitory nature, the connexion was dissolved by mutual consent after a few months of desultory cohabitation.

A fire broke out in Barbara's lodgings on January 25, 1664, when she offered forty pounds to anyone who would rescue a cabinet by which she set great store. The feat was with difficulty accomplished, and it is to be hoped that she paid the brave man who rushed through the flames and carried it out, the promised reward; but, though wildly extravagant, she seems never to have enjoyed a reputation for generosity.

Even when in bad odour at Court this brazen woman took any and every opportunity which offered of asserting herself in public. Thus in February of this same year she seated herself in the King's box at Drury Lane, when Dryden's *Indian Queen* was being performed,¹ between Charles and the Duke of York, "putting everybody out of countenance and doing it to show the world that she was not out of favour yet." Some years later (in 1671), not being content with having only six horses

¹This play must not be confounded with Dryden's far better play *The Indian Emperor*, in which Nell Gwynne made her debut on the stage a year later.

to her coach, she appeared in Hyde Park with a team of eight, whereon, if we may believe the Comtesse d'Aulnois's not always very trustworthy memoirs, Nell Gwynne, determined not to be outdone in ostentation, retaliated by harnessing eight *bulls* to her own equipage. But Nell's coach was so cumbersome that there were few streets through which it could conveniently pass. Hardly had the team of bulls started for the Park when a crowd surrounded her, uttering cries of amazement at the novel spectacle. The wheelers, becoming restive, kicked the coach to pieces, Nell's position being, for a while, one of some danger. Though she played many other mad pranks in her time, she seems never to have repeated this particular experiment.

Whether Barbara was dissatisfied with the rooms allotted to her in Whitehall, or whether it was owing to the damage done to them by the fire, I know not, but in May, 1664, I find her lodged in Holbein's Gate, which had been General Lambert's quarters in Cromwellian times. The upper stories of that picturesque survival of Henry the Eighth's palace commanded a pleasant prospect over St. James's Park. The King visited her in her new lodgings on his birthday, dancing all night to the enlivening strains of his private string band.

Apparently the hectic life she led had already begun to impair her looks, for in October, 1664, Pepys's wife broke to him the sad news of: "My Lady Castlemaine's being now become so decayed that one would not know her; at least, she is now far from a beauty, which I am sorry for." Perhaps his informant being a woman, the wish was father to the thought, though if there was any truth in the story, her powers of attraction were still far from negligible.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

In 1665 the Court removed on account of the plague to Oxford, and in one of the fellows' lodgings in Merton College, Barbara's third son, George, Duke of Northumberland, was born on September 28. "Of all his Majesty's children the most accomplished and worth the owning" was Evelyn's summary of his character.

There can, I think, be no doubt that her temper, even more than her unbounded extravagance, gradually undermined Barbara's influence with the King, and though his invariable good nature and aversion to anything in the nature of a scene prevented him from discarding her, or even taking any effective steps to curtail her expenditure, the effect of her hysterical outbursts of passion was cumulative, and I have little doubt that Charles, by this time, was beginning to weary of her.

This is made abundantly clear from a letter written by one of the Ambassadors of France,¹ who watched every move in the game, when he wrote to Lionne in July, 1665:

"Madame de Castlemaine runs great risks and if her anger lasts she may well lose the finest rose in her hat. This comparison is allowable in a country where all women wear such things."

In June, 1666, there was a serious disagreement between Charles and Barbara, arising out of a conversation between the Queen and her ladies-in-waiting in the Royal drawing-room. Catherine having said to Lady Castlemaine that she feared the King had caught cold through staying so late at her lodgings, Barbara declared before the assembled company that as he did not keep late hours with *her*, the Queen must be misinformed, and that he must pass his nights elsewhere. The King, happening to come in, overheard her remarks and, telling her that she was a

¹ Honoré Courtin.

bold impertinent woman, bade her begone from the Court and not return till she was sent for. She therefore went to a "very private" lodging in Pall Mall for two or three days, and then sent to the King to know if she might fetch her things away from her house. Eventually the quarrel was patched up, but not until she had threatened to print all the private letters which Charles had written to her.

Charles, who was the most forgiving of men, paid her debts before the end of the year, to the extent of £30,000, two thousand of which was owing to Alderman Backwell (a goldsmith and financier whom we shall meet with again directly) for two diamond rings.

In 1667, and in the following year, there were frequent quarrels between the King and his imperious mistress. After one of these outbursts of ungovernable temper she left Whitehall to stay with Lady Harvey (a daughter of the second Lord Montagu of Boughton), for mimicking whom upon the stage the King sent Mrs. Corey, an original member of the Drury Lane Company, to prison. Mrs. Corey was generally known as "Doll Common" from her having portrayed that character in Ben Jonson's *Alchemist*. This was, I believe, the only occasion on which Charles visited his resentment upon an actress—as a rule they could say and do what they liked upon the stage, but the case of the male members of the company was very different. That they were often in grave danger of being punished for *lèse majesté* we have already seen.

If there was a man about the Court whom Charles thoroughly disliked it was Henry Jermyn, "le petit Germain" of Gramont's *Memoirs*. Despite the fact that he was extremely ugly and with a head too big for his body, this worthless young fop seems to have fancied that every woman must necessarily be in love with him.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

In some way he seems to have attracted Barbara's favourable notice, and in 1667 it began to be freely rumoured at the backstairs that she was again *enceinte* and that Henry Jermyn was, in all likelihood, responsible. She is said to have been determined that the King should own the child, "as other Kings have done," whether he was the father or not, and that it should be christened in the Chapel at Whitehall, or she would bring it to the Palace gate and dash its brains out before Charles's face. But, as it happened, the gossips were wrong in their suppositions, for no child was born to her between September, 1665, when, as I have recorded, her third son by the King was born [at Merton College, Oxford], and July, 1672, when on July 16 she gave birth to a daughter at Cleveland House, St. James's, of whom Jack Churchill, the future Duke of Marlborough, was almost certainly the father.¹ All the same, its paternity was ascribed to Charles, although by that time he had ceased to cohabit with its abandoned mother.

Barbara now entered into immoral relations with Charles Hart, the leading actor at the King's Theatre, not from any pronounced liking for him on her part but as an act of retaliation upon Charles for adding Moll Davis and Nell Gwynne to his seraglio.

¹ "Corporal John's" daughter had herself a very chequered career. Although she took the veil under the name of Benedicta and rose to be prioress of the Nunnery of St. Nicholas at Pontoise, she eventually wearied of the seclusion of the cloistered life, and, breaking her vows of chastity, had a natural son by James Douglas, Earl of Arran, afterwards 4th Duke of Hamilton. When her son was born in 1691 the father was a prisoner in the Tower. Having waited on William the Third at Whitehall, he was promptly cast into prison. After he succeeded to the dukedom, and was about to proceed to Paris as Ambassador, he was killed in a duel in Hyde Park by Lord Mohun.

Neither the connexion with Jermyn nor Hart proving of an enduring nature, she next picked out Jacob Hall, a rope-dancer at Bartholomew Fair, who was currently reported to be a man of giant strength, as the next recipient of her favours, and, although the facts are somewhat obscure, this undignified lapse on her part seems to have been one of the contributing causes of her final estrangement from the King.

Her temper, even before this scandal became generally known, was now so violent that some time in 1667 she fairly hectorcd Charles out of his wits by threatening to bring all her bastard children to the door of his private lodgings; and, not until Charles had gone down on his bended knees and asked her forgiveness, was peace restored between the virago and her too tolerant protector.¹

Barbara, who had some share in the dismissal of Clarendon from office, was the first to rejoice at his downfall. She hated him for many reasons, one of them being his refusal to sanction a grant in fee to her of the Phoenix Park in Dublin. Another was the truly feminine resentment she entertained for him because of his persistent refusal to allow his wife to call upon her! When he left Whitehall in disgrace she ran out in her smock into her aviary looking into the Palace garden.²

Exulting in her glee over the fallen statesman whose

¹ There were now five of these love children—aged three, four, five, six and seven respectively. This humiliating episode is referred to in Andrew Marvell's "Last Instructions to a Painter," printed in 1667, and widely circulated at the time.

² This looks as if she was back at her old quarters in King Street, unless she kept her birds at her mother's house adjoining the Privy Garden, although living within the precincts of the Palace. Blanquetfort told her that she was the "bird of paradise" in that precious aviary, though it would have been nearer the truth to liken her to a raven.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

ruin she had helped to bring about, she stood jeering at him as he went down the Palace steps for the last time. Whereupon Clarendon, turning towards her, exclaimed: "Madam, if you live you too will grow old."

His sarcastic words came true not many years later. It may be a truism to say that it is the pace that kills, yet the hectic life she had led since her girlhood caused it to be generally remarked at Court, when she was between thirty-five and forty years of age, that her beauty had appreciably waned; some unidentified poetaster even daring to write of her: "Poor Alinda's growing old" !

Apart from her violent temper and the open scandal of her intrigues with Harry Jermyn, Charles Hart, and Jacob Hall, there was a still more insidious influence at work calculated to undermine her influence at Court.

"La belle Stuart," whom Princess Henrietta of Orleans described to her brother as "the prettiest girl in the world," had lighted a new flame in his susceptible heart, although he would not own as much to his sister. Writing to her about this time, he said:

You were misinformed in your intelligence concerning the Duchess of Richmond. If you were as well acquainted with a little fantastical gentleman called Cupid as I am, you would neither wonder nor take ill any sudden changes which happen in affairs of his conducting, but in this matter, there is nothing in it.

I am afraid Charles did not speak the whole truth on this occasion, even to his sister, for his growing infatuation for the young duchess, who was now living in great state at Somerset House, was a matter of common knowledge at Whitehall.

Pepys gave it as his opinion that my "Lady Castlemaine's nose is quite out of joint," owing to the

increasing favour with which the King regarded his latest flame.

Jealousy, we know, is the most persistent of all the passions to which the human race is subject, but, in the impetuosity of his wooing "La belle Stuart," Charles sometimes cut a rather ridiculous figure.¹

One May evening in 1668, after ordering his coach to be ready to carry him to the Park, Charles suddenly changed his mind, took a pair of oars at Whitehall and went by water to Somerset House, only to find the riverside garden gate locked. Nothing daunted at this check to his ardour, he proceeded to clamber over a high wall, to the amazement of the sentries on duty—for Somerset House was a Royal Palace—in order to pay a clandestine visit to his latest innamorata.

If we may believe the French Ambassadors, intent upon reporting the latest gossip of Whitehall for their master's edification, "La belle Stuart's" notions of maidenly modesty were decidedly elastic. Courtin, writing to Lionne, August 23, 1665, said:

"Il est bon que vous sachiez que Mlle. Stuart songea hier, la nuit, qu'elle était couchée avec les trois Ambassadeurs de France. Il est vrai que, comme elle contait au Roi d'Angleterre, il m'appela en tiers [called me to witness] et cela fut causé qu'elle dit, en rougissant, qu'elle était au coté de M. de Verneuil."

That the prettiest girl at Court should redden at the recital of so singular a dream is no evidence of a propensity to frailty, but rather the contrary.

¹Not much is heard of "La belle Stuart's" husband at this time. He was sent on one foreign mission after another to get him out of the way; apparently without any objection being raised by his wife to his enforced exile.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

Yet the little that is known of her history reveals her as consistently frivolous and indiscreet. It would, therefore, be charitable to assume that, flattered by Charles's undisguised admiration of her youthful charms, his humorous comments on the situation as it presented itself to him, may have been the cause of her involuntary blushes. That she left no enduring mark upon the history of her times is due to the defects of her character.

Lely's exquisite portrait at Hampton Court shows us that her beauty—the raw material of conquest—equalled, if it did not surpass, that of the majority of her rivals near the throne. Yet the shallowness of her intellect would seem to have outweighed her natural advantages.

It is, I think, quite conceivable that Charles took pleasure in her society, if only as a welcome relief from the Castlemaine's ungovernable temper.

And though after she fell ill of the smallpox his infatuation for "La belle Stuart" undoubtedly waned, his capacious heart precluded his discarding her altogether, with the result that, as long as he lived, she remained one of the "Chargeable Ladies" about the Court.

Yet, so far as I have been able to discover, her name was never coupled in the scurrilous and abominable lampoons which abounded at this period with the more notorious of the King's mistresses, whilst the fact that she lived on terms of considerable intimacy with the Queen Consort, frequently accompanying her to Tunbridge Wells, Audley End and elsewhere, would seem to point to her having been, if occasionally indiscreet, certainly not consistently vicious or wholly abandoned to a life of dishonour.

In the spring of 1668 Lady Castlemaine, accustomed as she was to notoriety, was thrust suddenly into the



THE DUCHESS OF RICHMOND: "LA BELLE STUART"
*From the portrait by Sir Peter Lely at Hampton Court. Copyright of
His Majesty the King.*

limelight of public opinion in a manner which she would willingly have avoided had it been possible.

From time to time in the seventeenth century the London apprentices constituted themselves the arbiters of public morals. In this capacity they periodically diverted themselves, especially at Shrovetide, by seeking out women of ill fame and confining them to their wretched lairs for the duration of the Lenten season.¹

In March, by way of celebrating the approach of Easter, they pulled down a number of brothels in Moorfields, a district which had long borne a very questionable reputation. This interference on the part of the apprentices, reinforced, it may be, by young and hot-headed medical students, inspired some satirist of the day to frame an imaginary petition, addressed to my Lady Castlemaine, setting forth in detail the supposed grievances of the humbler members of what has been called the oldest profession in the world.

This remarkable production was followed a few days later by a burlesque answer, even more scurrilous than the original "Petition," purporting to have been written by the King's mistress.

I have decided to insert both these lampoons² here (correcting some grammatical errors and omitting a few extremely unsavoury passages not fit for modern ears) instead of relegating them to an Appendix, where, conceivably, they would never be read at all.

¹ Earlier in the seventeenth century a cockpit in Drury Lane, which had occasionally been used for stage performances, was wrecked by the apprentices, who objected to the tone of the plays produced there and took the law into their own hands.

² They were both issued without any printer's name so as to make detection impossible.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

Neither of them makes nice reading, even in the truncated state in which I have been compelled to present them, nor do they display any of that demonic force which Andrew Marvell or Rochester, to both of whom they have been ascribed (I believe without reason), could wield when they elected to dip their pens in gall.

Yet scurrilous as they are they deserve to be read, if only because they show clearly the notoriety which Barbara's vicious mode of life had by now acquired. No wonder the King was furious at the covert attack upon himself, and at the impossibility of bringing the authors to book. The reference in Barbara's imaginary answer to the London hetairæ to her recent conversion to Catholicism is interesting, as is the attack upon the Archbishop of Canterbury's private character. It seems to be indisputable that Gilbert Sheldon, the venerable head of the Anglican Church—he became a septuagenarian this year—earned, and perhaps deserved, a reputation for gallantry, sadly out of keeping with his sacred office.¹ Whilst such grossly indecent and blasphemous lampoons could serve no useful purpose, it was manifestly unfair to pillory the Archbishop and to single out two of his brethren on the Episcopal Bench as fit to associate with men of such notoriously bad character as Henry Brouncker or Bab May.

The Poor Whores' Petition to the most splendid, illustrious, serene and eminent Lady of Pleasure, the Countess of Castlemaine, etc.

Humbly sheweth,

That your Petitioners having for a long time connived at and countenanced in the practice of our . . . pleasures (a trade wherein your Ladyship has great experience, and for your diligence therein, has arrived to a high

¹ Similar reckless accusations were levelled, it will be remembered, against more than one seventeenth-century Pope.

BARBARA VILLIERS

and eminent advancement for these late years), but now we, through the rage and malice of a company of London apprentices and other malicious and very bad persons, being mechanic, rude and ill-bred boys, have sustained the loss of our habitations, trades and employments. . . . Will your Eminence therefore be pleased to consider how highly it concerns you to restore us to our former practice with honour, freedom, and safety; for which we shall oblige ourselves by as many oaths as you please, to contribute to your Ladyship (as our sisters do at Rome and Venice to his Holiness the Pope) that we may have your protection in the exercise of all our . . . pleasures. And we shall endeavour, as our bounden duty, the promoting of your great name and the preservation of your honour, safety and interest, with the hazard of our lives, fortunes and honesty.

Signed by us, Madam Cresswell and Damaris Page, in the behalf of our sisters and fellow-sufferers (in this day of our calamity) in Dog and Bitch Yard, Lukener's Lane, Saffron Hill, Moorfields, Chiswell Street, Rosemary Lane, Nightingale Lane, Ratcliffe Highway, Well Close, Church Lane, East Smithfield, etc., this present 25th day of March 1668.

The Gracious Answer of the most Illustrious Lady of Pleasure, the Countess of Castlemaine, to the Poor Whores' Petition.

Right Trusty and Well-beloved *Madam Cresswell* and *Damaris Page*, with the rest of the suffering sister-hood in *Dog and Bitch Yard, Lukeners Lane, Saffron Hill, Moor-fields, Ratcliffe Highway, &c.* We greet you well, in giving you to understand our Noble Mind, by returning our Thanks, which you are worthy of, in rendering us our Titles of Honour, which are but our due. For on *Shrove-Tuesday* last, splendidly did we appear upon the Theatre at Whitehall being to amazement wonderfully decked with Jewels and Diamonds, which the Subjects of this Kingdom have paid for. We have been also Serene and Illustrious ever since the Day that *Mars* was so instrumental to restore our Goddess *Venus* to her Temple and Worship; where, by Special Grant, we quickly became a Famous Lady: And as a Reward of our Devotion [was] soon created the Right Honourable the Countess of *Castlemaine*. And as a further addition to our illustrious Serenity, according to the ancient rules and customs of our Order, we have *cum privilegio* (always without our Husband) satisfied ourself with the delights of *Venus*; and in our Husband's absence we have had a Numerous Off-spring (who are Bountifully and Nobly provided

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

for). Which Practice hath Episcopal Allowance also, according to the principles of Seer *Sheldon*,¹ &c. Which wholesome and pleasing Doctrine did for some time hold me to his Religion. But since this Seer hath shewn more Cowardice, than Principle or Policy, in fearing to declare the Church of Rome to be the True, Ancient, Uniform, Universal, and most Holy Mother Church: Therefore we tell you (with all the Sisterhood) That we are now no longer of the Church of *England*.

But when we understood, in your Address, the barbarity of those rude Apprentices, and the cruel Sufferings that the Sisterhood was exposed unto; especially those which were in a hopeful way of Recovery, and others that were disabled from giving Accomodation to their Right Honourable Devotaries, with the danger which you convinced us our own Person was in, together with the remembrance of our two New Co-rivals, we were for many hours swallowed up with sorrow, and almost drowned in Tears, and could not at all be comforted, until the sweet sound of the Report came to our Ears, *That the L.C.J.K.² and his Brethren with our Counsel learned in the Law had Commission and Instruction given to frame a Bill of Indictment against those Traitorous and Rebellious Boys and to select a Jury of Gentlemen that should show them no Favour*: At which our Noble spirit revived, and presently we consulted how we might express our Grace and Compassion towards you, and also seasonably provide for the future safety of your Practice, and exercise our Revenge upon those that so grossly abused you, and therein offered such an insufferable Affront to our Eminency, that we cannot bear without great indignation.

Imprimis, We engage to contribute to your Losses, either out of the Annual Rents, which we have begged, or out of the next monies which shall come to our hands by our own Practice, or as soon as our Standing Revenue shall be established: For should we part with a hundred thousand pounds worth of our Jewels, since so much English Money hath crossed the Narrow Seas, we fear that our Goldsmiths will not be able to raise it upon them.

Item, For your Safety, we do conjure all *French, Irish, and English Hectors* to be a Guard to the whole Sisterhood, and to take up their

¹ The Archbishop of Canterbury.

² Sir John Kelyng, most unpopular of Lord Chief Justices, whose brutal treatment of prisoners, witnesses and jurymen, equalled if it did not exceed the worst performances of Jeffreys under similar circumstances.

BARBARA VILLIERS

Quarters with them for their better security: and if they want Money for their subsistence, let them put on Courage, and take it upon the High-ways; and if any of them should be taken in the Fact, we shall, upon our Honour, procure them Pardons: Or else let them cheat and cozen, and they shall have [? our] Protection.

Item, For your Honour, doubt not of having what countenance the Authority of Holy Mother Church can give you. And for the increase of our Practice, the Master of our Revels shall give Licence for the setting up as many Play-houses as his Holiness the Pope hath Holydays in his Kalendar, that the Civil Youth of the City may be Debauched and trained up in Looseness and Ignorance, whereby the Roman Religion may with ease be established in Court, Church, City, and Nation, the most effectual means for the accomplishment of our Designs.

Item, We have taken special care that our Sisterhood, and the whole Corporation, may be restored by Charter to their former Liberties, Privileges, and Immunities whatsoever.

Item, That Sir [John] Birkenhead and Sir [Job] Charlton, two worthy Patriots, together with Sr W. M.¹ lately become zealously tender of our Honour, be appointed to bring in a Bill upon *Wednesday* next, for a full Toleration of all *Bawdy-houses and play-houses*, and that all the Adorers of *Venus* may come to their Worship without molestation:

Item, We have appointed the Right Reverend Seer of *Canterbury*, with other Reverend Seers, *viz.* the Bishop of *Rochester*, the Bishop of *Gloucester* & Dean *Hardy*, the Earl of *Lauderdale*, Mr. [Henry] *Brouncker*, *Tom Killigrew* and *Bab May*, or any three of them, to be a close Committee to consult the Grievances of the Sisterhood and to remove all things that may hinder their happy Restoration with all Freedom, Safety, and Honour.

Item, That all Members of *Parliament*, of our Religion, during this Session, and no longer, may use their *Privilege* in sending for such of our Sisterhood to their Chambers, as they have a Mind to, upon their own terms; considering they have so Freely and Unanimously Voted Taxes, till their own Revenues will not maintain them: That the Ingenuity and Gentility of the Sisterhood may appear to all the World, That we are better bred, than to slight those that have so Nobly provided for us.

Only let Sir T. B.² and Lieutenant-Colonel Rouswell with their brethren that . . . withstood the Common Council in sending their Petition to the

¹ Sir William Morrice.

² I have failed to solve the mystery of these initials.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

Parliament have all the Courtesy imaginable. Above all we desire to be kind to those, who have (to this day, out of their good affection to the *Roman Interest*) prevented by several Artifices, the putting of the aforesaid Petition into the Hands of *Sir Thomas Allen*, that *Fanatic Zealot*, who was appointed by the Court of *Common-Council*, to deliver it to the Parliament; which now (to our great joy) will be Prorogued before they can do anything in it. Neither let those Worthies be forgotten who (in despite of the Importunities of several busy Citizens) have till now hindered the preparing of a most necessary additional Bill, for the Rebuilding of *London*: Which Work it is hoped will now cease, there being no time before the end of this Session, to carry that Bill through all the formalities of Parliament.

Item, That the same kindness be shewed to all Officers, both Civil and Military, that came to the Relief of the Sisterhood in the time of their necessity.

Item, To any other than here directed give no Entertainment without Ready Money, lest you suffer Loss. For had we not been careful in that particular, we had neither gained Honour nor Reward, which are now (as you know) both conferred upon us.

Given at our Closet in Kingstreet, Westminster.

Die Veneris April 24, 1668.

CASTLEMAINE.

Some time in this same year Charles ceased to cohabit with Lady Castlemaine, although he continued to treat her with greater consideration than she deserved.

Her infidelities had by now become so notorious that he could no longer pretend to be unaware of them. Therefore, after, no doubt, much cogitation, he determined to rid himself of her tyranny and the ever-recurring scandals to which her unseemly behaviour gave rise in Whitehall.

With the magnanimity which always distinguished him on such occasions, he presented her, in the month of May, with the valuable freehold of Berkshire House, St. James's, the former mansion of the Howards, Earls

of Berkshire, which the noble owner, who, as we have seen, had once been Charles's governor, was only too glad to be rid of. For this, the most desirable site in all the West End, Charles paid £4,000.

He may have intended it as a solatium for the annoyance caused to his former innamorata by the circulation of the lampoons printed above (so far as was permissible), in which she was held up to public ridicule.

Having regard to the amenities of the site and its prospective value as a building estate, Berkshire House was positively dirt-cheap at the price. But as the King was sorely in need of ready money at the time—for the stream of French gold secured to him by the secret Treaty of Dover two years later had not as yet begun to flow into his coffers, whilst the aftermath of the Dutch War had severely crippled his resources,¹ I used to wonder how the sorely tried Charles contrived to find the purchase money until I discovered the source in Dr. Shaw's invaluable Calendars of the Treasury Books.

He borrowed the money to place his former mistress (at what he, no doubt, considered a safer distance from Whitehall than King Street, Westminster), from Alderman Backwell, a prosperous London goldsmith, who was virtually the founder of the modern system of banking in this country. In the reign of Charles the First it had been customary for the King to lodge money with the principal goldsmiths, and these, from being originally money-changers, not infrequently became money-lenders

¹ Speaking in the House of Commons on December 1, 1670, Sir Thomas Clifford said: "We struggled on, after the Dutch War, with a debt of between two and three millions. In all these straits the King spent not above half his revenue. Whatever waited, he kept his Navy in repair."

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

as well. The notes issued by the goldsmiths of the City were the earliest germ, so to speak, of the modern bank-note as we know it. Backwell was by far the biggest man engaged in this particular branch of trade, for in addition to advancing large sums to Charles the First and the principal members of his Court, he also lent money to needy traders—at stiff rates of interest—and even to gentlemen's servants.

To the latter he is said to have charged fourpence per cent. *per day*, a rate which works out at an exorbitant figure by the year, though at the time it may have sounded reasonable enough to the would-be borrowers, who probably, in the majority of cases, did not realize what they were letting themselves in for.

In a sense Oliver Cromwell had been one of Backwell's clients, for when Blake captured the Plate fleet, with thirty-eight wagon-loads of pure silver on board, of the estimated value of £300,000, the whole of this treasure was sold by the Protector to Backwell and Sir Thomas Vyner, another leading goldsmith in the City, who, in after-years, became Lord Mayor. They paid £130,000 for it in cash, and minted it at the Tower of London at their own costs, charges and expenses. After the Restoration, Backwell found it even more profitable to do business with Charles the Second than he had with Oliver, for, as his Parliaments were always averse to imposing adequate taxation upon the community at large, the goldsmiths cheerfully advanced the King the sums voted by the House of Commons, on condition of their being repaid *by weekly instalments*, as the produce of the taxes was received at the Exchequer.

To find Alderman Backwell in the City one would have had to go to the "Unicorn" in Exchange Alley, next door

to Lombard Street, for as yet there were no goldsmith-bankers west of Temple Bar. In the eighteenth century one of Backwell's great-grandsons set up a bank of his own on the north side of Pall Mall, taking into partnership with him a Jew named Hart.¹

Returning to the purchase of Berkshire House for Lady Castlemaine, I find from the Treasury Books that Backwell agreed to lend Charles £4,000 on April 28, 1668, on the credit of some Exchequer tallies of the Queen Mother which he held, and which "are now by him to be distributed to my Lords" [of the Treasury].

A month later the notorious Chiffinch's name was brought into the transaction, for, on May 13, I find that his warrant for £4,000 "without account"—which meant that the transaction was as far as possible to be of a secret nature—was "to be in the Exchequer out of the Customs for January next."

But the astute Backwell required something more in the nature of a "visible security," for on July 7 the Treasury Books show that a warrant was to issue to Sir R. Long to deliver to Backwell one of the old Customs tallies for £7,500, and another for £4,000: "to be for so much lent by him into the Exchequer to buy Berkshire House," and a further sum of £3,500 lent to Lord Arlington for some unspecified purpose. Assuredly Backwell knew how to safeguard himself in making his bargains with the Crown.

The old home of the Howards had a long and interesting history before it passed into Barbara Villiers's possession, and as its pedigree has never yet been accurately

¹ Their names are to be found in the parochial rate-books of St. James's from 1757 to 1771, when they were succeeded by a firm called Croft and Company.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

recorded in print, or the complete story of the circumstances under which it was acquired, I make no apology to my readers for supplying the omission.

The property was of great extent, the mansion house being surrounded by gardens and pleasure grounds as large, if not larger, than those attaching to St. James's Palace. Its eastern boundary extended half-way up St. James's Street as far north as Park Place; on the south and west it had extensive frontages to St. James's Park and the Green Park, then often known as "Upper St. James's Park."

It would hardly be an exaggeration to estimate the present market value of the Berkshire House freehold, had it been retained by Barbara's descendants until the present day, at less than a million sterling if it were to be sold in one lot. Its noble owner, however, leased or sold a portion of the property before she had lived there many years, and her grandson, the second Duke of Grafton, parted with the remainder in the eighteenth century.

Sir Thomas Howard¹ was the first of his family to settle in the immediate neighbourhood of St. James's Palace. His name appears in the parochial books of St. Martin-in-the-Fields in 1617—there was no separate parish of St. James's until many years later—when the rate he paid for his holding was the modest sum of twenty-five shillings!

In the reign of James the First the property can only have possessed a prairie value, for it was quite in the country, green fields alternating with arable land, and good agricultural land too, with here and there a wind-mill or a barn, but never a substantial dwelling-house to be seen in a straight line drawn between St. James's

¹ Afterwards Viscount Andover and Earl of Berkshire.

Palace on the east and Pimlico and Knightsbridge on the west. Owing to their remoteness the spacious fields thereabouts were often chosen as a duelling ground by the gallants of the Court in the innumerable affairs of honour in which they became involved.

When some years ago I essayed to write the history of Piccadilly, I was unaware of the existence of an interesting letter, written in the reign of Charles the First by Sir Henry Wotton, to his nephew Sir Edmund Bacon. Not only does he give a circumstantial account of an early duel fought at Knightsbridge, but in it he makes one of the earliest known references to Piccadilly Hall, as an inhabited district, and not merely a single house.

"From St. Martin's by the Fields,

"18th April, 1633.

"Upon Monday was sevensnight fell out another quarrel, nobly carried, between my Lord Feilding¹ and Mr. Goring, son and heir to the Lord of that name. They had been the night before at supper, I know not where, together; when Mr. Goring spake something in diminution of my Lord Weston, which my Lord Feilding told him it could not become him to suffer, lying by the side of his sister. Thereupon these hot heads appoint a meeting next day morning, themselves alone, each upon his horse. They pass by Hide Park, as a place where they might be parted too soon, and turn into a lane by Knightsbridge, where, having tied up their horses at a hedge or gate, they get

¹ Basil, Lord Feilding, afterwards Earl of Denbigh, had married Anne, daughter of the Earl of Portland. He had three other wives, and after being sent as Ambassador to Venice in 1634, died in 1676. He fought on the side of the Parliament in the Civil War but, having concurred in the Restoration, was taken into favour by the King.

Lord Cork's daughter, Lady Lettice Boyle, had married George Goring in 1629. He became Lord Goring in 1644, when his father was created Earl of Norwich, and died at Madrid in 1657. A brilliant and prodigal

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

over into a close; then stripped to their shirts, with single rapiers they fell to an eager duel, till they were severed by the host and his servants of the Inn of the Prince of Orange, who by mere chance had taken some notice of them.

"In this noble encounter, wherein blood was spent, though (by God's providence) not much on either side, there passed between them a very memorable interchange of a piece of courtesy, if that word may have room in this place. Says my Lord Feilding: 'Mr. Goring, if you leave me here, let me advise you not to go back by Piccadillia Hall, lest, if mischance befall me, and [it] be suddenly noised (as it falleth out in these occasions now between us), you might receive some harm by some of my friends that lodge thereabouts.' 'My Lord' (replies Goring), 'I have no way but one to answer this courtesy. I have here by chance in my pocket a warrant to pass the ports out of England, without a name' (gotten, I suppose, upon some other occasion before), . . . 'if you leave me here, take it for your use, and put in your own name.' 'This is a passage more commended between them, as proceeding both from sweetness and stoutness of spirit, which are very compatible.'"

In 1623 Viscount Andover, as he had by then become, obtained a lease of the "Saw Pit Close" from the trustees of Lionel Cranfield, Earl of Middlesex, for three thousand years at the nominal rent of two shillings and sixpence! This close formed part of the great Manor of Ebury, which had at one time been the property of Hugh Audley, who amassed a vast fortune by lending money, though, according to his latest biographer, Mr. Gatty, at very reasonable rates. It was subsequently incorporated in the immensely valuable metropolitan estate of the Dukes of Westminster, through the marriage

courtier, his drunken habits and debauchery militated against his admitted abilities in the field. Clarendon said of him that "of all his qualifications dissimulation was his masterpiece." His father, the Earl of Norwich, after being sentenced to death in 1649, was respited by the casting vote of Speaker Lenthall. Dying in 1663 he was buried in Westminster Abbey. Goring House, adjoining the Mulberry Garden, was the predecessor of Arlington House, on the site of Buckingham Palace.

in 1677 of Sir Thomas Grosvenor with Mary Davies, the daughter of Alexander Davies, a London scrivener.¹

In 1627 the parochial rates paid by Lord Berkshire had increased to £2 11s., which leads me to suppose that by that time he had built the mansion which Barbara was destined to acquire some fifty years later, as the price of her banishment from Whitehall.

So haphazard were the rate collector's entries in 1627 that Lord Berkshire's house is placed under the heading of "Pecadilly" in the parochial books, this being the first time that much-discussed place-name occurs in these records, although Piccadilly Hall and a small group of houses in Windmill Street were in existence some years earlier.

At the beginning of Charles the First's reign Lord Berkshire's property must have been a perfect *rus in urbe*. I have not ascertained who designed it, but some idea of the appearance of Berkshire House may be gleaned from Faithorne and Newcourt's quasi-pictorial map of London. Drawn about 1650, the map shows a large house, of some architectural importance, with an enclosed court-yard entered from the south where Cleveland Row stands to-day.

A little farther westward stood a smaller detached building, either stables or a range of domestic offices, for kitchens at this period were often placed apart from the main building. Even at St. James's Palace the main kitchen, which still exists in much the same form as when Kent designed it for George the Second, was detached from the State apartments designed by Sir Christopher Wren. This highly inconvenient arrangement lasted until recent days.

¹ Their marriage took place at St. Clement Dane's in the Strand, the bridegroom being twenty-one and the bride twelve!

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

At Up Park, in the parish of Harting in Sussex, a nobly-planned house built by Lord Gray of Wark and bought by Sir Matthew Featherstonhaugh in the middle of the eighteenth century, the kitchen is also placed in an outbuilding at such a distance that the banquets which Sir Matthew gave to his neighbours could never have reached the dinner-table smoking hot. This domestic defect caused some caustic wit to observe that the fact of his kitchen being so far removed from the dining-room, did not prevent his son and heir, Sir Henry, the last of his race, from marrying his scullery-maid!

Sir Henry, who was born at Up Park in 1754, died there in 1846 in his ninety-second year. Though in his youth it took him the best part of two days to drive to London, he lived long enough to accomplish the journey by rail in as many hours.

Dover House, with its graceful façade towards the Horse Guards Parade, was built in the middle of the eighteenth century for Sir Matthew Featherstonhaugh from the designs of James Paine, and, with the exception of the Prime Minister's official residence, the garden portion of which dates, as we have seen, from the reign of Charles the Second, it was the last of the older private mansions within the verge of the palace of Whitehall.

The last private owner of Dover House was the late Lord Dalhousie, but, like Montagu House, and Gwydyr House on the opposite side of the roadway, it is now a Government office.

Lord Berkshire, who throughout his long life seems always to have been short of money, occasionally let his London house. I find the Earl of Lincoln living here in 1645 and the Countess of Carlisle in 1648.

This lady, the Erinnyes of her age, whose talents and

BARBARA VILLIERS

foibles have been sung by Waller and Suckling, was a noted beauty in her time, and, like Barbara Villiers, "very uneasy to her husband." At one time she was Lord Strafford's mistress, and, after his death on the scaffold, she seems to have acted in a similar capacity to John Pym, who, but for her timely warning, would have been arrested on the memorable day on which Charles the First penetrated into the House of Commons with the intention of seizing the five members—only to find his birds had flown!

Presumably Lady Carlisle found Berkshire House too expensive to keep up, for, a few years later, I find her living in Drury Lane. From Elizabethan times the Lane had been quite a fashionable place of residence, though it was never comparable at any time with any one of the mansions clustering round St. James's Palace and the Mall. Her husband, James Hay, 1st Earl of Carlisle, must have been a trying man to live with. He contrived to spend nearly half a million of money in a life of pleasure and profusion; and such was his extravagance that, at his death, he had so completely dissipated his fortune that he did not leave an acre of land or a single house by which his name might be remembered in future generations.

After 1664 Berkshire House was abandoned by its owner, and early in the next year it was fitted up for the French Ambassador. After being occupied for a time by Lord Craven, who removed here from Drury Lane—doubtless for the sake of the fresher air and to avoid the imminent risk of contagion in the crowded area of the Strand—it was taken by Lord Clarendon in 1666, pending the completion of his new palace in Piccadilly, a "Hyde Park" of his very own, which the rabble rudely

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

re-christened "Dunkirk House." Pepys visited the Chancellor at Berkshire House in November when, as he tells us, Clarendon "slept and snored" the greater part of the time.

When the King presented Barbara with the freehold the convenient fiction by which she was supposed to be still living with her husband is reflected in the rate-books, for in 1668 the house is stated to be in the occupation of the "Earl of Castlemaine," whereas in 1669 and thenceforward it is entered in her own name. In justice to Barbara it appears that she did, at least, pay her rates regularly, which some of the King's mistresses certainly did not.

The old Earl of Berkshire died in the course of the following year aged nearly eighty, and, with his passing, the long association of the house with the Howards came to an end.

It was, however, no more lucky to Barbara than Clarendon House proved to be to its owner. Her extravagance compelled her to sell or lease some portions of the garden ground for building houses, the old mansion house of the Howards being pulled down in or about 1670, when a number of small houses were built, on a portion of the site, at the south-west corner of St. James's Street. The rate-book for 1672 supplies us with the names of four of these new-comers: Sir Goddard Helthrupp (whom I have not been able further to identify); Lady Brouncker, a great heiress separated from her husband, a man pre-eminently vicious in an age of evil living; Sir William Pulteney, whose family had owned or leased land in the immediate neighbourhood since Elizabethan times; Squire Touchet, who was probably a near relative of Lord Castlehaven; whilst Sir John Fenwick, whom the rate-

collector at first miscalls "Phoenix," came to live at one of these new houses a few years later.

Greatly to Charles's relief, Barbara retired to Paris in 1676, where we shall meet with her again in these pages, and did not return to London, except for the briefest of visits, for several years. In December, 1679, Cleveland House was let to the Portuguese Ambassadors on their arrival in London; "a place," remarked the virtuous Evelyn, "too good for that infamous whore."

Further building took place in and about Cleveland Row about this time, and in the next reign another portion of surplus garden ground, lying to the northward, was sacrificed to the builders to form St. James's Place.

Barbara returned to England shortly before Charles's death, and finding, a few years later, that Cleveland House was altogether too large for her requirements, she subdivided it. The larger and better of the two houses into which it was transformed, passed into the occupation of the Earls of Bridgewater, whilst the smaller was inhabited for some years by the Earl of Nottingham consequent on the acquisition of the old home of the Finches at Kensington by William the Third.

Heneage Finch, 5th Earl of Winchilsea, whose wife died at Cleveland House in 1720, was succeeded by Daniel Finch, who, after being known for forty-seven years as Earl of Nottingham, became also Earl of Winchilsea in 1729. He it was who sold the family property at Kensington to William the Third.

As soon as the King took up his residence there a number of good houses in Kensington Square and on Campden Hill were built for members of his Court. The square in its earliest days was largely affected by Anglican bishops, desirous of living in the odour of

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

sanctity, and as close as possible to the secular head of the Church of England as by law established.

John Egerton, 4th Earl of Bridgewater, had been burnt out of his house in the Barbican in April, 1687, when his two young sons perished in the flames. He now removed from the City to the West End and was in occupation of the larger of the two houses, on the site of Barbara's original mansion, about 1690-91, whereon the Duchess removed to one of the largest houses in the then newly-built Arlington Street overlooking the Green Park.¹

The last Duke of Bridgewater, who died unmarried in 1803 at Bridgewater House, Cleveland Row, was the great-grandson of the fourth Earl, the first of his family to live at Cleveland House. The Duke, who has been called the founder of inland navigation in this country, undertook the colossal task of connecting Manchester by canal with Liverpool and the sea, and so taxed his resources during its construction that he was reduced for a time to living on £500 a year. Even then, he experienced great difficulty in paying his workmen. This canal, it may be added, was bought about thirty-five years ago by the Manchester Ship Canal Company for £1,710,000. At the Duke's death, Bridgewater House devolved, with a large portion of the Egerton family estates, upon the first Duke of Sutherland, with remainder to his nephew's second son, Francis, created Earl of Ellesmere in 1846.

The first Duke of Sutherland was as remarkable in his way as his Grace of Bridgewater, for the improvements he effected on his Highland estates. It is said that in

¹ Lord Bridgewater's son, the first Duke of that name, seems to have acquired the freehold of Cleveland House on the death of Barbara's eldest son, the Duke of Southampton (and Cleveland), in 1730.

1812 there was not a single road and only one bridge in the county of Sutherland; at his death in 1833 there were 500 miles of excellent roads in that county and no fewer than 134 bridges spanned its rivers.

When the first Earl of Ellesmere built the existing Bridgewater House, he converted two houses on the site of the original Cleveland House into one. Justly considered to be Sir Charles Barry's masterpiece in the realm of domestic architecture, its designer enlarged upon and improved the idea, carried out so admirably in the Reform Club, of an Italian palazzo, in which the central hall, often left open to the sky in the country of its origin, is roofed in, thus enabling the beauty of the surrounding arcades to be seen to the greatest advantage.

Having chronicled the principal events centring round Berkshire House and its successors during three centuries, I must now return (after this topographical excursion) to the private life of the most notorious of all its owners.

Years after her entanglements with the player and the rope-dancer, Barbara struck up an acquaintance (in 1671) with Wycherley (by common consent one of the handsomest and most dissolute men of his age), which soon ripened into sexual intimacy. To her he dedicated his first play, *Love in a Wood*, when it was printed in 1672.

Presented with a star cast at Drury Lane, with Hart, Mohun, Kynaston and Mrs. Knepp as principals—Nell Gwynne would probably have been included had she not recently taken her farewell of the stage—it proved sufficiently successful to encourage its author to write those even more daring comedies, *The Country Wife* and *The Plain Dealer*, which established their author's reputation as one of the most forcible, if vitriolic, dramatists the London stage had yet seen.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

In *Love in a Wood* Wycherley describes the fast life of the town and the manners of the Court as he and his fellow-rakes knew and enjoyed it. The sarcastic words put into Dapperwit's mouth were probably reminiscent of his own experiences of the weaker sex: "I think women take inconstancy from me worse than from any man breathing!"

Evelyn summed up his powers as a playwright very accurately when he wrote:

As long as men are false and women vain,
In pointed satire Wycherley shall reign.

His second venture, *The Gentleman Dancing Master*, did not catch the popular fancy, and was withdrawn after half a dozen representations; but his *Country Wife* and *The Plain Dealer* held the stage for a long period, being frequently revived in the eighteenth century, whilst the former was mounted for a run (in a somewhat bowdlerized form it is true) at a London theatre only within the last year; a distinction only equalled by Congreve's even more brilliant comedies at the present day.¹

The acquaintance between Barbara and Wycherley appears to have been begun in Pall Mall, when the Duchess of Cleveland, as she then was, leaning out of her coach addressed a coarse remark to the dramatist, arising out of one of the songs in a play which he had just produced. Wycherley, perceiving the advantages which a ducal patroness might bring, asked her to come and see the performance and judge of it for herself that very afternoon. And seating herself in the front

¹ Congreve, like Wycherley, had an influential patroness in the person of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, but unlike Wycherley and her Grace of Cleveland, their relations were entirely innocent.

row of the King's private box, she and the rising author kept up a running fire of ribald jest and coarse commentary during the whole three acts of *Love in a Wood*.

At the close of 1672 Barbara's name was removed from the list of the Queen's bedchamber women, probably much to Charles's relief, in consequence of the application of the Test Act, which forbade Catholics to hold appointments at Court.

Little more remains to be said of her, as after Charles's death she ceased to count either as a social or a political factor. Retaining in her later years her partiality for the stage, she entered, shortly before the King's death into immoral relations with Cardonell Goodman, a minor actor at Old Drury. By him she had a son, born in March, 1686 (when she was in her forty-sixth year), whom the wits promptly nicknamed: "Goodman Cleveland."

In 1705 her lawful husband, whom she had left over forty years before, died, and in the course of the same year she married "Beau" Feilding, a fortune-hunter and adventurer, who treated her badly from the first. Two years later their union was declared void, on the Duchess discovering that Feilding had a wife living.

She now withdrew to a house in Chiswick Mall, a pleasant place even now, with a view over the Thames towards Barn Elms. There she passed the remaining years of her life in comparative seclusion at what is known to-day as Walpole House,¹ from its having been at one

¹ In the last century Walpole House was a private school kept by Dr. Turner, who was responsible for Thackeray's early education; a much more recent tenant being the late Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree. This interesting riverside house has recently been restored as far as possible to its pristine condition by its latest owner, Mr. Bevan, so that it presents to-day much the same appearance as when Barbara Villiers came to live in it.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

time the property of the great Sir Robert, Prime Minister to George the Second.¹ Why he should have wanted two suburban houses is not apparent, as he was also in possession of the White Lodge in Richmond Park, only a mile or two farther from Downing Street than Chiswick.

By a singular coincidence the Duchess of Cleveland died—of a dropsical complaint—in the same month of the same year (October, 1709), as her great enemy, Lord Clarendon. She is buried in Chiswick Church without a monument.

Her hated French rival, the Duchess of Portsmouth, who lived for the most part, after her departure from England, on her estates at Aubigny, died in comparative poverty at Paris on November 14, 1734, aged about eighty-five. By another strange coincidence, Nell Gwynne also died on November 14; her pet aversion the "Weeping Willow," or "Squintabella," as she called her indifferently, outliving her for no less than forty-seven years!

Sadder still was the Duchess of Mazarin's end. In her latter years she gambled incessantly and drank

¹ Though Sir Robert Walpole is usually said to have been the first Prime Minister in the modern sense of the term, Lord Ailesbury in his valuable memoirs uses the expression "Prime Minister" when referring to Danby, who succeeded Lord Clifford as High Treasurer in 1673, sixty years before Walpole's assumption of that proud title. There was, of course, a vast difference between Charles's Prime Ministers and those of the earlier Hanoverian kings. For, in spite of repeated encroachments upon the Royal prerogative on the part of the Carolean Parliaments, the King was still, virtually, an autocrat, making and unmaking ministers of his own free will, whereas George the First and George the Second, handicapped as they were, not only by their Germanic origin but by their imperfect knowledge of the language of the people they were called upon to rule over, had to act as Sir Robert Walpole told them.

immoderately. After James the Second's death she lost her house in the precincts of St. James's Palace, and although William the Third magnanimously continued her pension, she, who had once been the greatest heiress in Europe, was perpetually harassed by debt. On removing from St. James's she went to live at a good-sized house at the south-east corner of the then newly built Kensington Square,¹ where she found herself in the uncongenial company of several Anglican bishops, who, on William the Third's removal from Whitehall to Kensington, suddenly awoke to the conclusion that the air of the new Court suburb agreed with them better than the banks of the Thames.

Hortense died in Chelsea, probably at a small house in Paradise Row, a picturesque group of red-brick houses not far from the Royal Hospital demolished only a few years ago. To the last she was befriended by her life-long admirer, St. Evrémond. At her death, practically insolvent, in July, 1699, her body was about to be seized by her creditors, in addition to such worldly goods as she had managed to retain, whereupon her ghoulish husband obtained possession of her coffin and carried it about with him wherever he went, as if to compensate him in some measure for the loss of her companionship in life.

¹ Her house in Kensington Square retains to this day a certain air of architectural distinction, and has an extensive garden at the back.

CHAPTER V

Stage, Throne—and Parliament Nell Gwynne and Moll Davis

SIR JOHN COVENTRY'S NOSE A Tragi-Comedy in 4 Acts

Act I. Westminster

SHORTLY before the House of Commons adjourned for Christmas in 1670 there was an interesting debate on the relations prevailing between the stage and the throne, of which, unfortunately, nothing in the nature of a verbatim report is extant. As it was forbidden to print or publish reports of Parliamentary proceedings until comparatively recent times, but scanty details of early debates at Westminster are now available.

Amongst the most valuable of the few which have come down to us are Sir Symonds D'Ewes' "Journals of Queen Elizabeth's Reign"; Anchitell Grey's summaries of speeches delivered between 1667 and 1694¹; and, for Queen Anne's reign and the early part of George I, Abel Boyer's "Political State of Great Britain," 1711-1729, in which, from the first year of publication, there appeared an abbreviated Parliamentary report.

Boyer somehow contrived to escape the censorship,

¹ Anchitell Grey was Member for Derby for thirty years, and posterity has reason to be grateful to him for the pains he took to collect the more important speeches delivered during his long membership of the House.

STAGE, THRONE—AND PARLIAMENT

but with the advent of the periodical magazine and, in a still greater degree, the daily newspaper, the sources of our knowledge of the actual sayings and doings of Parliament are appreciably amplified. From 1786, when the shorthand reporter gained an assured footing in St. Stephen's, the right of the constituencies to be informed of the proceedings of their elected representatives was tacitly conceded.

With the help of Anchitell Grey and the official records of the House, I will endeavour to reconstruct the main features of the debate which took place in Committee of the whole House on Saturday, December 17, 1670, and, with the Speaker in the Chair,¹ on the Monday following.

The discussion on December 17 arose on a proposal to levy an entertainment tax—it was quite a modest impost—which was sought to be imposed upon the playhouses, as will be seen hereafter, affecting only the King's Theatre in Drury Lane and the Duke of York's

¹ The Speaker at this time was Sir Edward Turnour (a direct ancestor of the present Lord Winterton), and the Chairman of Committees was Mr., afterwards Sir, Edward Seymour, an aristocratic Tory—the first Speaker for a hundred and fifty years who was not a lawyer. Seymour, when called to the Chair, proved himself a strong Speaker, ruling the House with a rod of iron in more than one of Charles the Second's Parliaments. Turnour, who sat in the Chair of the Commons for ten years, saw the downfall of Clarendon (though his policy continued to commend itself to the majority of the House of Commons), the loss of England's command of the sea, which ended with the humiliating Treaty of Breda, hurriedly concluded after the Dutch fleet sailed up the Medway, bombarded Chatham and threatened Dover and Harwich. We learn from Pepys that when the thunder of the Dutch guns caused something like a panic in London, Turnour was deliberately hindered from taking the Chair until after the King had proceeded to the House of Lords, lest the Commons should resolve upon anything contrary to the wishes of the Court.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

in Portugal Row, of which the original patentees were Tom Killigrew and Sir William Davenant.¹

In 1670 there was in the House of Commons a small but determined party in opposition to the Government. This section could see nothing but evil in the theatres and the amusements of the people in general, for this longest of long Parliaments was not even yet entirely purged of the Cromwellian doctrine that to laugh and be merry was in itself sinful.

The House as a whole was by no means averse to discussing, in connexion with the proposed tax, such a poignant subject as the state of the public morals and the nature and extent of the King's amours, notorious as they had by now become both in Court and City circles. But the representatives of the people little foresaw when they entered on a review of the playhouses that a murderous attack upon one of their own body would be the immediate sequel to their deliberations.

The political labels of Whig and Tory were not yet in general use. Still there were already signs of cleavage, for those who chose to look beneath the surface, of the gradual rise of the system of party government, which has, on the whole, worked well in England for two centuries and a half.

I think it may be taken for granted that St. Stephen's Chapel, the home of the Commons from the reign of Edward VI until the destruction of the greater part of

¹ After Davenant's death the management of the Duke's Theatre devolved principally upon Betterton, who, with Henry Harris, represented Lady Davenant's interests. In 1682 both Companies were amalgamated, a result which Charles had laboured hard to bring about since the early days of his reign. Thenceforward the United Companies acted at Drury Lane only.

STAGE, THRONE—AND PARLIAMENT

the ancient Palace of Westminster by fire in 1834, was crowded to the last bench in the dim candle-light of that dark December afternoon, for nothing would be more likely to attract a full House than what was tantamount to a vote of censure upon the Sovereign. I should add that although in the seventeenth century the House of Commons was accustomed to meet at eight or nine o'clock in the morning, its committees, as a rule, sat in the afternoons.¹

In our own days there is nothing the House at large enjoys so much as a vote of censure or a "personal explanation," if only as a relief from the monotony of debates upon Departmental Bills and wordy, but futile, discussions on the Estimates, more especially the Scottish ones.²

In December, 1670, the "Pensionary" Parliament (so-called from the number of place-men it contained), which sat for the record number of years without being dissolved and accomplished very little in the way of useful legislation in eighteen long years,³ was engaged from day to day in voting the supplies necessary to complete

¹ In the Middle Ages the Commons met earlier still. In 1352 they were commanded by Edward the Third to assemble at sunrise!

² I have known the House talk for hours on end on the question of the insertion or omission of a single word in its rules and orders or on such a purely domestic concern as the composition of its Kitchen and Refreshment Rooms Committee!

³ The "Pensionary" Parliament met for business in May, 1661, and was not dissolved until January, 1679. It did indeed pass that famous measure the Habeas Corpus Act, the Act which becomes more famous still when it is suspended, but, as the Lords incontinently threw it out, it did not reach the Statute book until the next Parliament of the reign. It also passed the Resolution, quoted in every textbook of Constitutional history, debarring the Lords from amending, though not of rejecting or suspending, a Money Bill originating in the lower House.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

the expenses of the King's Government for the current year.

I have not been able to discover, though I have searched diligently amongst old diaries and letter-books of the period, who initiated the discussion on the state of the public morals, but I gather that, early in the debate, the manner in which the two Patent Houses were alleged to be conducted was sharply criticized. Once again, as in Cromwellian days, a section of the House declared that theatres, in the abstract, were nothing but "nests of prostitution" and centres of "lascivious mirth and levity." Although I do not suppose that the playhouses were exactly temples of virginal innocence in 1670, any more than they are in this present year of grace, I shall endeavour to show that the Puritans spoilt whatever case they had by flagrant over-statements of fact.

It must be admitted that there is a significant line in one of Dryden's epilogues which runs: "Our Brydges Street is grown a strumpet fair." It is, however, of considerably later date than Charles's reign, whilst it is incontestable that in the reign of William the Third theatrical licence reached its lowest level. Infinitely worse things were said and done upon the London stage, words and actions unfit for decent men and women to hear or see, than had been customary when the Royal theatres were managed by Killigrew and Davenant.

Before resuming the debate at Westminster I may say, for the benefit of those of my readers who are unfamiliar with the topography of Covent Garden and Drury Lane, that the King's Theatre fronted one side of Brydges Street, as it does to-day (of late years it has been incorporated in Catherine Street), and closely adjoined the

STAGE, THRONE—AND PARLIAMENT

Rose tavern, a famous place of meeting in the seventeenth century for men of wit and fashion.

One of the entrances to the theatre was in Playhouse Passage, which, with Vinegar Yard, a court on the south side of the theatre, has now disappeared from the map of London.

Until so recently as the period of Sir Augustus Harris's management tall sentries resplendent in bearskins and scarlet tunics paced up and down beneath the portico in Catherine Street, and supplied, not only a welcome touch of warmth and colour to the scene, but served to remind the audience that this historic playhouse, with traditions reaching so far back as 1663, was the Theatre Royal *par excellence*. Of late years I have looked in vain for the uniform of His Majesty's guards at this particular spot, but it is to be hoped that, in the near future, the privilege of a military guard may be restored to Old Drury.

Catherine Street gained an unenviable reputation some years after Dryden had spoken in such disparaging terms of it, yet when Gay wrote in his "Trivia":

Oh may thy virtue guard thee through the roads
Of Drury's mazy courts and dark abodes!
The harlot's guileful path who nightly stand
Where Catherine Street descends into the Strand,

his caustic criticism was only too well deserved.

Returning to the House of Commons I find that the proposed tax upon the playhouses was, as might have been expected, viewed with disfavour by the Court, Sir John Birkenhead,¹ who had been one of Charles's

¹ Sir John was member for Wilton and a lawyer on the make at the period under review.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

companions in exile, being put up to oppose the project. He declared, not very wisely from a debating point of view, that the players, being the King's servants, were "a part of his pleasure." Apparently the next member to address the Committee was Sir John Coventry, one of those Parliamentary free-lances who, in modern times as in the century under review, persist in advertising themselves, sometimes, perhaps, from conviction, but quite as frequently from vanity or love of a little temporary notoriety, by voting against the Government of the day.¹

Seizing upon the opportunity afforded him by Birkenhead's concluding words, Sir John pertinently inquired: "Whether the King's pleasure lay amongst the men that acted, *or the women?*"; an insinuation which was strongly resented by a majority of the members present.

Act II. The Theatre Royal, Drury Lane

It was sufficiently obvious who were the players whom Coventry had in his mind when he asked the question, for it was a matter of common knowledge that Charles had recently taken into his keeping the two prettiest girls on the London stage. One of these was Moll Davis, a popular actress and dancer at the Duke's Theatre. The other was Nell Gwynne, the bright particular

¹ Sir John Coventry, who entered the House as Member for Weymouth and Melcombe Regis in 1667, at once ranged himself on the side of the Opposition, despite the fact that his better-known uncles, Sir William and Sir Henry Coventry, both held office under the Crown. Sir William had been a Commissioner of the Navy, thereby bringing Samuel Pepys into close association with him, and Sir Henry, who had a good diplomatic record behind him, became a Secretary of State in 1672. Both brothers died in the same year at Coventry House, at the top of the Haymarket, on the site of the old Piccadilly gaming-house popularly known as "Shavers Hall."



NELL GWYNNE (Aged about 25)

From a portrait by Sir G. Kneller in the possession of Lady de Saumarez.

STAGE, THRONE—AND PARLIAMENT

star of Old Drury, and the most talented comedian in Tom Killigrew's company.

If the gravamen of the charge levelled at the Patent Houses was that the character of the plays they presented was objectionable and demoralizing, it had little foundation in fact, at any rate at the time it was made, as I shall show directly.

I find that some time in December of the year under review Nell Gwynne, who had been absent from the boards for some months,¹ created the part of Almahide in Part I of Dryden's *Conquest of Granada*, and in the concluding lines of the epilogue there is a direct allusion to the cause of her prolonged absence from the stage.

Pity the virgins of each theatre;
For at both Houses 'twas a sickly year!
And pity us, your servants, to whose cost
In one such sickness *nine whole months* were lost.

Though there is not a single indelicate line to be found in the five long acts of *The Indian Emperor* or *The Conquest of Granada*, Dryden's work for the stage in after-years certainly did show a marked deterioration in taste. His *Assignation, or Love in a Nunnery*, produced in 1672,² with Pepys's friend, Mrs. Knepp, in one of the principal parts, is a typical case in point. And when (in 1678) he further prostituted his talents by writing the unspeakable *Limberham*, the play failed to attract and had to be withdrawn after a run of only two nights; which speaks volumes for the good taste of the audience in condemning the declension of the great

¹ Before and after the birth of her elder son by the King—the future Duke of St. Albans.

² When Nell Gwynne had retired from the stage.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

playwright's style. At the Duke's Theatre, "in the Row which men call Portugal," at the back of the south side of Lincoln's Inn Fields, the plays staged by Davenant were equally free from offence, and, as I shall show later, often extremely dull.

Lord Orrery, a soldier and a statesman, who in later middle life imagined that he had a gift for writing drama, succeeded in inducing Davenant to produce more than one of his dreary tragedies. It is surprising to find that they enjoyed any degree of popular favour, yet his *Mustapha* not only drew good houses but held the stage for many years.

It must be admitted that many of the prologues, and, more especially, the epilogues, spoken at both Houses were suggestive in tone and often rendered more risky still by "gags" introduced at the whim of the performers. Even at the present day, in spite of the vigilance of County Councils and the Lord Chamberlain, managers who desire the maintenance of a clean and healthy stage frequently have cause to complain of such interpellations in farcical comedies and *revues* made on the spur of the moment, and without their knowledge or approval. By means of nods, winks and gestures it is possible for a low comedian to impart vulgarity into a text which was never intended to be anything but decent and refined.

Monsieur Ragou, a farcical comedy by Lacy, which was staged at Old Drury in the summer of 1668, certainly came perilously near the border-line. Though the full cast of this boisterous piece has not been preserved, Lacy was probably seen in the title-rôle and Nell Gwynne in the part of Doll Troop. She was living at the time in Drury Lane, within a stone's-throw of the Maypole

STAGE, THRONE—AND PARLIAMENT

in the Strand, and some coarse allusions in the text to the uses to which a miniature maypole might conceivably be put, may have been intended to refer to her. But as a general rule such lapses from decorum were comparatively rare, nor do the stringent conditions imposed upon the patentees seem to have often been intentionally evaded.¹

The managers of the Royal playhouses had, however, to contend with a more insidious difficulty than the tone and quality of the plays they produced. This was the practice, which from small beginnings tended constantly to increase, whereby aristocratic patrons of the drama claimed, as of right, to be admitted behind the scenes.

In the Restoration era theatrical audiences consisted mainly of the Court and its *entourage*. The commercial class was slower to adopt the playgoing habit, the cheaper parts of the house being, for the most part, filled by lackeys in attendance on their masters and mistresses. These were admitted free to the upper, and noisier, gallery. But even thus early in the history of the London stage there were to be found in the pit and middle gallery a minority of independent playgoers capable of forming an unbiased opinion as to the merits of the entertainment they paid to witness.

In an age when there were no professional critics or daily newspapers it was the verdict of the Court and its followers which made or marred the fortunes of a play.

¹ In the Patent of April 20, 1662, under which Drury Lane opens its doors to-day, it is expressly laid down that no play should be acted "containing any passage offensive to piety and good manners," whilst any old play revived was to be "corrected and purged" of "scandalous passages" before it could be produced.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

The managers of the Patent Houses found themselves confronted by this dilemma: they must either run the risk of offending that section of society from which their most influential patrons were drawn, or play to empty benches. Quite naturally they adopted the line of least resistance.

Dryden, I think, must have had that frantic rake, John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, in his mind when he wrote:

We beg you last, our scene-room to forbear
And leave our goods and chattels to our care.

Wycherley, and Etherege, too, make pointed allusions to the same habit:

In to the pit already you are come
'Tis but a step more to our tiring room.¹

In modelling the character of Dorimant (in the best of his comedies of real life, *The Man of Mode*) on the "wicked Earl," Etherege makes him say:

I'll lay my life there's not an article but he has broken, talked to the vizards in the pit; waited upon the ladies from the boxes to their coaches; gone behind the scenes and fawned upon those little insignificant creatures, the Players.

Lord Buckhurst, one of the wittiest of Restoration rakes, and according to Nell Gwynne, her *Charles the First*, is pointed at in an interpolated song in the same play:

None ever had so strange an art
His passion to convey
Into a listening virgin's heart
And steal her soul away.

These lines would have been equally applicable to a number of other young sprigs of nobility and men of

¹ Wycherley's *The Gentleman Dancing Master*, printed in 1671.

STAGE, THRONE—AND PARLIAMENT

fashion, whose motto was, to put it briefly, "Seduction if possible, matrimony only if compulsory!"

To deal effectually with such a man as Rochester, who had vice enough in him to corrupt a whole *corps de ballet*, or to render null and void the vows of chastity entered into by a majority of the inmates of a nunnery, must have presented almost insuperable difficulties to Killigrew and Davenant in the domestic affairs of their respective theatres.

The practice of admitting influential members of the audience behind the scenes continued far into the eighteenth century. Even so late as Garrick's rule at Old Drury members of the nobility were accommodated with seats upon the stage on benefit nights!

Samuel Pepys, who was on friendly terms with many of the leading actresses, in one of his periodical intrusions behind the scenes discovered Nell Gwynne and some of her fair companions in various stages of picturesque unreadiness before the rising of the curtain, duly recording the incident with evident satisfaction in his immortal diary.

When Etherege, whom we shall meet with again in this chapter in connexion with Moll Davis, speaks of Dorimant talking to the vizards in the pit, he touches upon a very interesting detail of stage manners and customs.

Originally, ladies wore masks at the theatre for two reasons. Firstly, because they served to hide their identity; and secondly, because they enabled their wearers to keep a watchful eye upon their husbands and members of the audience not so nearly related to them, without being themselves recognized. Their masks also served to hide the blush of shame upon the cheek of modesty.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

But, when in course of time the wearing of masks in theatres became the distinctive badge of women of the town, ladies promptly discontinued their use. Pepys, writing on June 12, 1663, comments on this custom:

"My Lady Mary Cromwell [Viscountess Falconbergh] looks as well as I have known her, and well clad; but when the house began to fill, she put on her vizard, and so kept it on all the play, which of late is become a great fashion among the ladies."

There is nothing new under the sun, even in connexion with the ephemeral art of the stage, and the convention, by which masked women, married or single, are supposed to be unrecognizable by their husbands or lovers, was the predominant note in that amusing farcical comedy "adapted from the French," *The Pink Dominos*, in which the late Sir Charles Wyndham achieved one of his greatest successes.¹

Returning once more to the House of Commons debate, lest I should be accused of irrelevance, I incline with some confidence to the opinion that the gravamen of the attack upon the theatres in 1670 was not so much the character of the plays presented at the Patent Houses, the occasional lapses from good taste on the part of some of the performers, or even the forcible incursions of the rake-helly crew behind the scenes.

The real grievance, which found some faint reflection in the House of Commons, was the vicious example set by the highest in the land in seducing from their legitimate professional occupation many of the most capable and attractive young actresses, called, for want of a better name, "His Majesty's servants."

Theatrical audiences, apart from the Court and its

¹ At the Criterion Theatre.

slavish followers, were numerically insignificant. Yet the independent patrons of the pit and gallery, on whose favour actors and actresses in every age must largely depend, deplored, quite naturally, the disappearance from the boards of their especial favourites. For, once these pampered sirens exchanged the tinsel splendours of the stage for the more substantial advantages of a life of luxurious indolence at the west end of the town, they seldom or never returned to the scene of their early triumphs.

The abuse began so early as 1662 when Aubrey de Vere, Earl of Oxford, the twentieth and last holder of that proud and as yet unhyphenated title, decoyed Frances Davenport¹ from the stage and tricked her into becoming his mistress by means of a mock marriage. Downes, the prompter at the Duke's Theatre, who should at least have known what he was writing about,² declared that she was "by force of love erept the stage," and this, in spite of the fact that Davenant, as I have already mentioned, boarded the principal actresses of his company at his own house, adjoining the theatre!

With the exception of the virtuous Mrs. Sanderson,

¹ The Roxolana of *The Siege of Rhodes*, produced by Davenant at the Duke's Theatre.

² Downes's "Ruscus Anglicanus" is, in many respects, despite its faulty and haphazard arrangement, a valuable record of the Restoration drama. It gives with tolerable accuracy the titles of the plays produced at both the Patent Houses, and the names of the performers who took part in them. Occasionally when a play was so far successful as to be printed and published, the casts are given, but it has always been a source of wonder to me where the indefatigable Genest found the casts of many of the plays produced in the seventeenth century which did not achieve this distinction. The prompt books of the first Old Drury are believed to have perished when the theatre was burnt down, whilst after the amalgamation of the two companies in 1682 some valuable records may have been removed from the Duke's Theatre which have since disappeared.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

who became the wife of Davenant's star actor, the famous Betterton (one of the brightest ornaments of the stage for fifty years), most of his protégées were, within a short time, taken from the stage to live under the protection of gallants of the Court, and, in two notable instances, of the King himself. Frances Davenport may have believed herself to be Countess of Oxford when she resigned herself into Aubrey de Vere's power, but I think that Lavinia Fenton, the original Polly Peachum of *The Beggar's Opera*, was the first actress actually promoted from the stage to the peerage. Mrs. Long, an actress renowned for her elegant appearance in men's clothes, was taken from the Duke's House by the dissolute young Duke of Richmond; *not* Louise de Querouaille's son, but the equally unsatisfactory husband of "La belle Stuart." Mrs. Holden and Mrs. Johnson, both of whom were minor members of the same company, after a very brief experience of the stage, lived under the protection of men of fashion.

Tom Killigrew does not seem to have experienced so much difficulty with his company, though quarrels were not infrequent at Old Drury. Yet the loss of Nell Gwynne to the stage bore peculiarly hard upon him, for after her retirement¹ he could find no one competent to take up her great part of Florimel² for ten whole years, whilst Dryden's great tragedy, *The Indian Emperor*, in which Nell made her first appearance on the stage as Montezuma's daughter [Cydaria], was not revived at Drury Lane until 1681.

¹ In 1671.

² In Dryden's *Secret Love, or the Maiden Queen*, in which the character of the queen is said to have been modelled on that of Christina, Queen of Sweden.

STAGE, THRONE—AND PARLIAMENT

At this time Mistress Nell was living, in order to be near the King's Theatre, at the Cock and Pye tavern, on the west side of Drury Lane at its southern end, and nearly opposite Wych Street.

Pepys has left us a pretty picture of Nell standing at the door of her lodgings on May Day, 1667 (two hundred and sixty years ago), to watch the milkmaids dancing round the Maypole in the Strand. If that siren of the Restoration stage could come to life and revisit the same spot to-day it would not be the Maypole which her bright blue eyes would rest upon, but the towering mass of that Anglo-American monstrosity, the Bush House! If our modern commercial buildings continue to soar upwards, as seems inevitable owing to the ever-growing cost of the ground they stand upon, our church towers and spires will soon lose all sense of proportion to their surroundings.

By its overpowering bulk Bush House has dwarfed the little church of St. Mary in the Strand, whilst the even loftier Adelaide Building has completely obliterated the view of St. Magnus's Church from London Bridge. Other churches designed by Wren have suffered in like manner. Yet that great architect seems to have foreseen what might happen in days to come when he deliberately kept the tower of Bow Church, Cheapside, perfectly plain until it soared above the level of the adjoining houses, reserving any decorative features for its graceful spire, surmounted by the copper gilt dragon which is such a conspicuous feature seen from afar.

Wych Street, when I first remember it, was full of timbered and gabled houses of Elizabethan date, of a type similar to some which survived until recently in Cloth Fair, by St. Bartholomew's, Smithfield.

I can well remember my father pointing out the Cock

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

and Pye tavern to me when I was in my teens and re-peopleing old Drury Lane from his fund of anecdote and reminiscence. Having sunk to the level of an ordinary public-house, it was pulled down in 1891 and, although promptly rebuilt, it finally disappeared from the map of London on the formation of Aldwych and Kingsway by the County Council.¹

To show how "Mistress Nell" was regretted, a generation after her retirement, when Fletcher's *Philaster, or Love lies a-Bleeding* was revived in 1695, Hildebrand Horden, who spoke the prologue, said:

That good old play *Philaster*, ne'er can fail,
But we young actors, how shall we prevail?
Philaster and *Bellario*, let me tell ye,
For these bold parts we have no Hart, no Nelly,
Those darlings of the stage!

We will ring down the curtain for a while, and leaving the artificiality of the stage betake ourselves once more to the staid atmosphere of the House of Commons.

Act III. Westminster Again

The resolution arrived at in Committee of Supply was reported to the House at its next sitting² in the following terms: "That towards His Majesty's Supply every one that resorts to any of the Playhouses who sits in the Box[es] shall pay Twelve pence, any one who sits in the Pit shall pay Sixpence and every other Person Threepence."

The last recommendation was intended to refer to the

¹ To walk through the City or the West End with my father was at once a privilege and a delight, owing to the sense of reality which he imparted to his recollections of individual houses and their owners. His knowledge of old London was encyclopædic, every street, square or court appearing to have a history worth the telling. At the same time his teachings were invariably fresh, lively and convincing.

² Saturday, December 17, 1670.

Upper Gallery, for the original Drury Lane was a three-tier house, and, probably, the Duke's Theatre was so also.

When the Speaker put the question from the Chair, in language identical with that in use at the present day: "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution," the Clerk of the House recorded in his Minute book that: "It passed in the negative." Thus it is clear from the Journals that, in spite of the recommendation of the Committee, the King's Government was strong enough to ensure the rejection of the tax without the minority daring to press the motion to a division.¹

William Goldesborough, who became Clerk of the Commons in 1661, and held that responsible post for over twenty years, until, in fact, Charles decided to dispense with the services of Parliament altogether, recorded the doings of the Lower House in 1670. He may have been a lineal descendant of Sir John Guildesborough—whose family name was spelled indifferently Goldesborough and Guildesborough—who was called to the Chair by his fellow-members in two of Richard the Second's Parliaments.²

I shall return to the subject at a later page, in connexion with the demand preferred by Buckingham in 1677 for annual Parliaments, but I may remark that when, some years ago, I wrote a portentously heavy book on the Speakers of the House of Commons—heavy, I trust, only in the sense of *avoir du poids*—I was unaware that the highly responsible office of Clerk of the House could be traced to an earlier date than I was then able to ascribe to the appointment of its presiding officer.

¹ "Journals of the House of Commons," Volume IX, page 185.

² January to March, 1379-80, and November-December, 1380.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

In the course of more recent researches into the fascinating study of the genesis of the Speaker's office, I accidentally discovered, on searching the Patent Rolls, that one Robert de Melton was Under Clerk of the Parliament in 1363, whereas, not until January, 1377, when Sir Thomas Hungerford, Knight of the Shire for Wilts and the first in the long catalogue definitely mentioned by name in the Rolls of Parliament as "Parlour," does the office of Speaker emerge from the twilight which shrouds its origin.

The earliest entertainment tax ever proposed having failed to commend itself to Parliament, the House of Commons adjourned for a brief Christmas holiday on December 20, 1670.

The Commons and the country at large had, however, by no means heard the last of Sir John Coventry and his animadversions upon the relations existing between the throne and the stage.

So far from being a season of peace and goodwill to all, Christmas brought undeserved sorrow and suffering to one at least of the representatives of the people. For on the night the House adjourned (or, to be exact, in the early morning of December 21) Sir John Coventry was waylaid, on returning to his lodgings in Suffolk Street, Pall Mall,¹ and brutally assaulted by a gang of hired bullies, some fifteen in number, who had been lying in wait for their unsuspecting victim.

Against such overwhelming odds Sir John stood no possible chance, though he stood up against the wall and manfully defended himself, his sword in one hand and a flambeau snatched from his linkman in the other. Though he wounded some of his assailants he

¹ He had supped at the Cock Tavern previous to the outrage.

STAGE, THRONE—AND PARLIAMENT

was soon disarmed. His nose was then cut to the bone by one of his cowardly assailants—it was almost sliced off his face according to one contemporary account—receiving, in addition, severe contusions and flesh wounds from which he did not recover for many weeks.

Moll Davis, one of the two actresses directly pointed at by Sir John in his speech, was living in Suffolk Street at the time, having been installed there by the King early in 1668. It does not appear, however, that she finally retired from the stage until some months later. No doubt, like some others of her profession, the latest recruit from the ranks of the daughters of joy to attract Charles's favourable notice was reluctant to part altogether from the glamour and artificiality which surrounds the stage, even to place herself under the protection of so exalted a person as the King of England.

The following lines from Ned Howard's comedy *The English Monsieur* sum up the situation as it may well have presented itself to Moll, from the point of view of a young actress with one eye upon the profession in which she had won an assured position and the other upon the material advantages to be derived from such a coveted connexion.

This life of mine can last no longer than my beauty and though I want nothing whilst I am Mr. Wellbred's mistress, yet, if his mind should change, I might e'en sell oranges for my living, and he not buy one of me!

However, she decided to take the plunge and had nothing to complain of in her treatment by the King, who, fickle though his affections were, never ceased to provide not only for his mistresses but also for their numerous offspring.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

We will leave the stage for a while and return to Sir John Coventry and the events which immediately succeeded the savage assault upon him in the small hours of the morning of December 21.

As soon as the news became public property it formed the principal topic of conversation in the coffee-houses and taverns resorted to by courtiers and law-abiding citizens, as well as in Parliamentary circles.

When the House reassembled Sir John was still suffering from his wounds and unable to attend the call-over of members on January 9; yet the temper of the Commons was at once made evident by the introduction, on the next sitting day, of a Bill of Pains and Penalties, designed to prevent, if possible, the repetition of such outrages. At the same time the House decided to banish the ringleaders who had taken part in the assault upon one of its members.

The names of four of the principal offenders were therefore included in the Bill. They were Sir Richard Sandys, The Hon. Charles O'Brien, lieutenant of the Duke of Monmouth's troop of guards, Simon Parry and Miles Reeve.¹

It was alleged in Parliament that the murderous attack had been planned by the Duke of Monmouth, Nell Gwynne's name being mentioned as having had some share in instigating the crime. But except that she was an acquaintance of Lady Sandys—whose name appears in one of her visiting lists—I have not discovered a shred of evidence directly connecting her with this atrocious and premeditated act of revenge.

On January 10, 1671, Sir Thomas Clarges, member

¹ Charles O'Brien was a younger son of Murrrough, 1st Earl of Inchiquin.

STAGE, THRONE—AND PARLIAMENT

for the metropolitan borough of Southwark and a Justice of the Peace, to whom had been entrusted the preliminary examination of the facts, "gave a narrative thereof to the House"—to quote once again from its official minutes—but the document itself was, unfortunately, not entered in the Journals, or we should have learnt more of the details than can ever be recovered now. With the help, however, of Anchitell Grey one can judge of the gravity which the House attached to the commission of the crime which followed so swiftly on the Christmas adjournment. Amongst those who addressed the Chair—and as they were some thirty in number the sitting must have been a prolonged one—are to be found the names of many prominent men of the day, not only of the legal profession, who, naturally, had a great deal to say upon such a weighty subject as the amendment of the law for the protection of its members, but representative laymen in every branch of public life.

The legal opinion was voiced by the Attorney-General, Heneage Finch, a future Lord Chancellor. Amongst other members, too numerous to mention in detail, who took part in the discussion, were two Speakers in the making, Sir Job Charlton, "an old Cavalier loyal, learned, grave and wise," and Sir Edward Seymour.

Sir Thomas Meres, a Whig, whom Charles endeavoured to foist upon the House as its Speaker when he refused his assent to Seymour's re-election to the Chair in 1679, also spoke. Sir Charles Sedley, playwright and poetaster, who succeeded Henry, Lord Brouncker, in the representation of one of the Cinque Ports,¹ may have been present in his place, and, as one of the most

¹ The borough of New Romney.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

prominent of the rake-helly crew at Whitehall, his remarks might have been worth listening to. But he preferred to remain silent, although he did not dare to openly oppose the Bill.

The lawyers, who had occupied themselves during the recess in furbishing up precedents which might assist the House in coming to a decision, probably, as is their wont, took up most of the time. I even find the word "obstruction" in Anchitell Grey's summary of the debate, but this was probably due to impatience on the part of the majority to bring the matter to a conclusion. The Attorney-General quoted the case of a miscreant who assaulted Lord Cromwell in Palace Yard so long ago as the reign of Henry VI, for which outrage he was imprisoned in the Tower of London for a year.

Another contributor to the debate was Sir John Trevor, one of the Secretaries of State but *not* the Speaker of the same name, whose eye it was proverbially so difficult to catch because of his pronounced squint.¹

Three converted Puritans, Colonel Birch, Colonel Titus and Mr. John Swynfen, also spoke, as did Sir Robert Howard, the dramatist, who was closely associated with Tom Killigrew and Dryden in the management of the King's Theatre. Other speakers were Sir John Ernley, a future Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Richard Temple, a prominent member of the Country party, and both Sir John's uncles, who were naturally indignant at the outrage on their nephew. Edmund Waller, the poet, whose Parliamentary career extended over sixty-one years, also raised his voice in support of the Bill.

¹ He was expelled from the House in 1695 for accepting bribes, yet he was allowed to remain Master of the Rolls, an office which he had held concurrently with the Speakership.

STAGE, THRONE—AND PARLIAMENT

Sir Winston Churchill, Comptroller of the Board of Green Cloth—a Government department, which I may add for the benefit of the uninitiated, had nothing to do with the game of billiards—as Sir John Coventry's colleague in the representation of Weymouth, could not well give a silent vote. He therefore made a few disjointed comments on the Bill before the House. He was interrupted for saying that "not to be for this Bill would be to upbraid the House, and those persons who sat quiet in their Sovereign's blood wondered that this thing should be pressed, for it seemed to him like cutting the King over the face."

Sir Winston does not seem to have been gifted with the same power of lucid expression as his namesake and lineal descendant, the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, and, as reported by Anchitell Grey, there would seem to have been something in the nature of confused metaphor in his utterances, although he concluded his remarks by moving, with the general approval of his audience, that the Bill should be given preference over all other business and proceeded with *de die in diem* until it was finished. In this course the House concurred and an instruction was ordered to the Committee "to prepare a clause by to-morrow morning, for preventing mischiefs of a like nature for the future."

The Bill received further protracted examination in the House of Lords, and not until the sixth of March did it receive the Royal assent. It was carried up to the Peers by Speaker Turnour (with other measures awaiting the Royal approval), who alluded in his speech to the throne to the extraordinary expenses of His Majesty's Government and the amount of his Majesty's debts.

Charles, seated on the throne in his royal robes and

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

with his crown upon his head,¹ awaited the coming of the Commons in the Salle Blanche; the meeting-place of the peers since mediæval times. As the Clerk of the Parliaments read out the title of each Bill he bowed and said, "Le Roy le veult," the King never moving a muscle, whatever he may have thought of his own share in the events which made the Bill necessary. Conceivably he would have preferred to hear the Clerk say, "Le Roy s'avisera," which would have killed the Bill. This is the short history of the Coventry Act against maiming and mutilation of the person, which, for aught I know, may be on the Statute Book still.

Andrew Marvell,² one of the most vituperative satirists of the time, took advantage of the maiming of Sir John to issue a lampoon upon "Royal Resolutions," from which it will be seen that the recent arrival of Louise de Querouaille in England was already unfavourably commented upon.

And whatever it cost me, I'll have a French whore
As bold as Alice Perrers and as fair as Jane Shore,
And when I am weary of her I'll have more
Which if any bold Commoner dare to oppose
I'll order my bravoës to cut off his nose,
Though, for't I, a branch of Prerogative lose.
I'll wholly abandon all public affairs,
And pass all my time with Buffoons and Players
And saunter to Nelly when I should be at prayers.

Another daring pasquinade entitled "The Haymarket

¹ On the opposite page is reproduced an extremely scarce engraving showing the House of Lords and Commons in session, with Charles upon the throne in the Upper House. The standing figure in the Lower is probably intended as a portrait of one of the Parliamentary leaders.

² Andrew Marvell, who was the son of a parson, represented Hull in the "Pensionary" Parliament.



CHARLES II AND HIS PARLIAMENT

(From a Contemporary Print)

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

Hectors" made an even more direct allusion to the outrage which had so lately shocked the public mind:

Beware all ye Parliamenteers
How each of his voice disposes:
"Bab May" in the Commons, C. Rex in the Peers
Sit telling your fates by your noses
And decide at the mention of every slut
Whose nose shall continue and whose shall be cut.

This precious effusion sounds not unlike the productions of Rochester's caustic pen though its authorship has never been definitely ascertained.

"Bab" May and Edward Progers of "Backstairs" fame sat in the House of Commons at this time, but Will Chiffinch, an even more notorious pimp, and the man who was mainly responsible for the allocation of the Secret Service Fund, did not become a member of Parliament until the reign of James the Second.

Andrew Marvell compiled, about 1669, an annotated list of the "Pensionary" Parliament, which may be regarded as a seventeenth-century precursor of that useful little book "Dod's Parliamentary Companion," now approaching its centenary, it having been published annually since the passing of the great Reform Bill.

Intended for private circulation only, Marvell's *Flagellum Parliamentarium*, the original MS. of which is in the British Museum, contains, arranged alphabetically under counties, incisive commentaries upon some 300 members of the "Pensionary" Parliament. A few, culled at random, may serve as specimens of the whole.

Silas Titus, M.P. Lostwithiel.

Once a rebel, now groom of the
Bedchamber.

Sir Thomas Clifford, M.P. Totnes.

Treasurer of the Household.

Bribemaster General.

STAGE, THRONE—AND PARLIAMENT

- | | |
|---|---|
| Sir Winston Churchill, M.P. Weymouth and Melcombe Regis. ¹ | A pimp to his own daughter. |
| Sir William Bicknell, M.P. Liverpool. | Once a poor factor to buy malt for the brewers, now a farmer of the Revenues of England and Ireland on the account of the Duchess of Cleveland who goes snip with him. |
| Sir Allen Apsley, M.P. Thetford.
(The first lord Bathurst married his daughter and heiress.) | Master Falconer to the King. Has had £40,000 in other ways, not worth a penny before. |
| Sir George Downing, M.P. Morpeth. | Formerly Okey's little chaplain, a great promoter of the Dutch War. He keeps six whores in pay, and yet has got £40,000. |
| Sir Stephen Fox, M.P. Salisbury. | Once a link boy, then a singing boy at Salisbury, then a serving man, and permitting his wife to be common beyond sea. At the Restoration was made Paymaster to the Guards, where he has cheated £100,000, and is one of the Green Cloth. |
| Sir John Birkenhead, M.P. Wilton. | A poor ale-house keeper's son, now has the Faculty Office and is one of the Masters of Requests. |
| Sir Charles Sedley, M.P. New Romney. | Promised the King to be absent [? from the Debate on the cutting of Sir John Coventry's nose]. |

Marvell mentions several other members as having had "a lick at the bribe pot," but did not include Sir

¹ In Dorset, that county pre-eminent for the number of rotten boroughs, there were no fewer than four members for Weymouth and Melcombe Regis.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

Thomas Osborne's name,¹ perhaps because, though already a notable figure in the House of Commons, he was, like himself, a Yorkshire member.

Had this early Parliamentary "Who's Who" been published, Marvell would have laid himself open to an action for libel a dozen times over. But at this period the grossest attacks upon public men and women were circulated privately, one of the most notorious offenders in this respect being Robert Julian (whom the Duke of Buckingham christened "the Newsmonger of the Muses"). Julian made a living by slandering defenceless women, and it is probable that many scurrilous verses attributed to that indefatigable sensualist, Lord Rochester, really came from his foul pen.

Act IV. The Duke's Theatre : Lincoln's Inn Fields : Suffolk Street : St. James's Square

In the course of this same year Moll Davis became the proud possessor of a "mighty fine coach," and in 1675 she removed from Suffolk Street to a larger house on a portion of the site of the Army and Navy Club, her name being entered in the parochial books as then resident in Pall Mall *North*. From 1676 the same house is entered under the heading of "St. James's Square," this being the first year in which that highly aristocratic place of residence was fully inhabited and rated to the relief of the poor.

Her name also occurs in the rent roll of Henry Jermyn, Earl of St. Albans,² the ground landlord of the Square.

¹ Afterwards Earl of Danby, Marquis of Carmarthen, and Duke of Leeds, born 1631; died 1712.

² Lord St. Albans' Rent Roll is now in the British Museum (Add. MSS. No. 22,063). In the original the entries are made haphazard, but in my "History of St. James's Square" (1895) I arranged them in conformity with the modern numbering of the houses, beginning with the south-east corner.

STAGE, THRONE—AND PARLIAMENT

It has often been stated in print, but erroneously, that Moll Davis's house was at one time inhabited by Nell Gwynne. But it is certain that when the latter came to the West End she never lived anywhere but on the south, and shady, side of Pall Mall. Before she entered into occupation of No. 79,¹ she had been offered in 1670 a smaller house, some twenty doors to the eastward but on the same side of the street. But on discovering that it was only a leasehold she firmly refused to occupy it, saying that she would accept nothing less than a freehold grant from the Crown. In the end, of course, she had her own way, and until her death her name is found at No. 79, a house which the Lord Scarsdale of that day obligingly vacated in her favour, no doubt at the King's urgent request.

The mistake of supposing that she ever lived on the north side of Pall Mall originated, I believe, with Pen-nant, whom I have found frequently an untrustworthy guide in such matters. But such is the inveteracy of error that the misstatement will probably be perpetuated for years to come in books dealing with this neighbourhood.

It will be convenient at this point to give some particulars of the birth and origin of Moll Davis, and her stage career. None, however, of the King's mistresses has proved so difficult to trace as the elusive young woman who was, in part, one of the contributory causes of the deplorable events just described. It is not known for certain where or when she was born, but she appears to have joined Davenant's company about the year 1663, possibly slightly earlier. She was reputed to be an illegitimate daughter of Thomas Howard, first Earl of

¹ The office of the Eagle Insurance Company.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

Berkshire (Charles the Second's governor from 1642 to 1646), but this would seem improbable, as he was born in 1590 and married so early as 1614. If of semi-noble parentage, it is more probable that she was the daughter of the second Earl (1615-1679) or of one of his brothers. There was within living memory a tradition in Wiltshire that she was the daughter of a blacksmith at Charlton, where the Earls of Berkshire had a country seat, and that she followed the bucolic calling of a milk-maid.

In a scarce and scurrilous little book by one "Captain" Alexander Smith: "The Lives of the Most Celebrated Beauties," 1715,¹ she is said to have been the wife of a goldsmith at York,² though I have not found any corroboration of this story. According to Smith, she was "haughtier and wiser than Lucretia," and that she was divorced from her husband for an intrigue which she entered into with a gentleman of the City, who gave her £50 for "a night's lodging" and was discovered the next day. Her infidelity broke the goldsmith's heart, and he divorced his wife, who came up to London and, eventually, drifted on to the stage as a recruit of the Duke's Company.

Davenant's relations with his company seem to have been uniformly pleasant. A eulogistic summary of his life's work is contained in the line: "Since he it was, this later age, who chiefly civilized the stage," and such was the esteem in which he was held by his company that

¹ Re-issued in the following year as "The Court of Venus."

² There is an exhaustive list of the goldsmiths and silversmiths of York in the late Sir Charles Jackson's monumental work on "The English Goldsmiths and their Marks," but the name of Davis does not occur in it.



MOLL DAVIS

From the portrait by Sir Peter Lely in the National Portrait Gallery.

STAGE, THRONE—AND PARLIAMENT

when he died (in 1668) his body was followed to the grave by all the members of the Portugal Row play-house, male and female.

I think that Moll Davis made her first appearance on any stage on May 28, 1663, as Violinda in Sir Robert Stapylton's tragi-comedy *The Stepmother*, though she does not appear to have been in the cast of the same author's *The Slighted Maid*, which was staged at the Duke's Theatre in the course of the same year.¹

Roger Boyle, first Earl of Orrery, a soldier and statesman of some note, in his later middle age, aspired to be a dramatist as well. He had already written a romance, entitled *Parthenissa*—in six volumes!—and he seems to have been the inventor of rhymed tragedies, most of them very dreary reading and of portentous length. In August, 1664, Davenant obligingly staged his heroic drama, *Mustapha, the Son of Solymán the Magnificent*, paying special attention to the scenic arrangements and the costumes of the company. Moll Davis took the part of Isabella, Queen of Hungary, if not on the first representation, at many subsequent performances. For some unaccountable reason, this play—I have waded through its five long acts without finding a single quotable line—seems to have been a *succès d'estime* and to have brought Davenant money. An earlier play by the same author, at first called *Altemira* and re-named *The General*, was acted first in Ireland, possibly at the Smock Alley Theatre in Dublin, and revived at Court in September, 1664. Davenant also produced in the course of the season Lord Orrery's *Henry V*, with Moll Davis as Anne of Burgundy. This was another ponderous tragedy, bearing little or no resemblance to Shakespeare's play of

¹ Genest at least does not record her name.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

the same title, its love scenes being absurd to the last degree. Yet Davenant revived it in 1667, when it ran for ten consecutive days.

Moll got a better chance of showing what she could do when she appeared as Aurelia in Etherege's *The Comical Revenge, or Love in a Tub*, produced in March, 1664.

So successful did it prove that it brought the management £1,000 in a month, a very large sum for a play to earn at that period.¹

Etherege, who forms a link in the chain connecting Molière with Congreve, Goldsmith and Sheridan, had lived in Paris for some years, where he had the advantage of studying contemporary French drama. He was virtually the founder of the comedy of intrigue, his dialogue being always lively and often humorous, even if he did not portray real life upon the stage quite so successfully as Wycherley and, in a lesser degree, Shadwell were able to do.

Had he not been incorrigibly lazy, Etherege could have done more for the English stage than he actually accomplished. He wrote in all only three comedies, *The Comical Revenge* (1664); *She Would if She Could*, produced, after a long interval, in 1668; whilst his best work, *The Man of Mode, or Sir Fopling Flutter*, in which many of the characters were drawn from life and were easily recognizable in Court circles, was not presented at the Dorset Gardens Theatre until 1676, years after Moll Davis had retired from the boards.

Mustapha, re-dressed and provided with new scenery,

¹ According to Downes's "Roscius Anglicanus," *The Comical Revenge* brought the Duke's Theatre more profit and reputation than any preceding comedy produced under Davenant's management.

STAGE, THRONE—AND PARLIAMENT

was revived on April 3, 1665, when Pepys saw Moll Davis as the Queen, with Betterton as Solyman the Magnificent and Henry Harris in the title rôle. But on this occasion he was so much taken up with Nell Gwynne and Beck Marshall, whom he had the good fortune to sit next to in the pit, that he seems to have had no eyes for what was passing on the stage.

With the outbreak of the plague both the Patent Houses closed their doors, neither company acting again until October, 1666, when Drury Lane reopened with *The Maid's Tragedy* and the Duke's Theatre with a revival of Etherege's *Love in a Tub*.

So far I have made no mention of Moll Davis's powers as a dancer, though she frequently compensated her audience for the extremely dull afternoon's entertainment afforded by Lord Orrery's tragedies, by exhibiting her skill, when at last the curtain fell, in a jig or a hornpipe.¹ That she was an expert dancer is evident from what Flecknoe wrote of her in his *Euterpe Revived*:

How I admire thee, Davis!
Who would not say, to see thee dance so light,
Thou wert all *air*, or else all *flame* and spright.

It was customary at both the Royal Theatres for one of the best-looking girls in the company, who could dance as well as sing, to announce the programme for the next day, and to send their audiences away in cheerful mood, for there were as yet no printed bills of the play, though placards were pasted up at the doors with the bald announcement:

¹ Pepys mentions in his diary for March 7, 1667, her dancing a jig in boy's clothes, and how on a later occasion when she danced at Court the Queen would not stay to see her performance.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

"To-morrow *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, or The Man of Mode*, will be presented"—as the case might be.¹

That Moll steadily progressed in her profession is apparent from her having been cast for one of the principal women's parts, Mrs. Millicent, in Dryden's *Sir Martin Mar All, or Feigned Innocence*, with Nokes, the principal low comedian of the company, in the title rôle. But a better chance still was afforded her when Etherege's second and highly successful comedy, *She Would if She Could*—a distinct advance upon his *Love in a Tub*—was produced on February 6, 1668.

So great was the crowd desiring to assist at the first performance that a thousand people were turned away from the doors by two o'clock, an hour before the usual time of raising the curtain. Pepys, who was a bit of a snob at times, was surprised to find a Duke² "sitting openly in the pit." Having only succeeded in getting a back seat "in the eighteenpenny box" he was prepared to grumble at the performance. And though forced to admit that the play was both "roguish and witty," he thought the ending insipid, adding the interesting statement that the dramatist was himself displeased with the actors, saying that they "were out of humour and had not their parts perfect."

Etherege seems to have founded *She Would if She Could* upon his recollections of *Tartuffe*, which he had probably seen acted in Paris. The scene, which is laid in the heart of the West End, is full of local allusions. The two principal girls don vizards to roam without

¹ In the voluminous collection of old play-bills preserved at the Garrick Club, there is, I think, speaking from memory, not one of earlier date than the reign of Queen Anne.

² Buckingham, in company with Sedley and the author of the play.

STAGE, THRONE—AND PARLIAMENT

a chaperon through the parks, the Mall and the Mulberry Garden. One of the scenes is laid at the "Black Posts" in St. James's Street and another at the Bear Inn in Drury Lane.

The main theme of the comedy is suggested by its title. Lady Cockwood (Mrs. Shadwell) is desirous of making her husband (James Nokes) a cuckold, but is continually disappointed in effecting her object. Though it would not prove attractive to a modern audience, two centuries and a half ago it succeeded, if only because it brought real life upon the stage.

Passing over Moll's next appearance—a revival of Shirley's *Love's Tricks*—in which she danced in shepherd's clothing, it began to be rumoured, early in 1668, that she was likely to leave the stage, "the King being in love with her." Nor did rumour lie, for, in a revival of Davenant's own play, *The Rivals*, an adaptation of Fletcher's *Two Noble Kinsmen*, her rendering of an interpolated song: "My lodging is on the cold ground," so charmed "Old Rowley" that she was soon after raised from that damp and uncomfortable position to a bed royal.

The revival ran for nine consecutive days, and at the end of May her definite retirement from the stage is chronicled by Pepys, who adds that an actress named Gosnell came to the Duke's Theatre "in her room," which seems to have been a matter of personal gratification to him. Moll Davis's history from this date onwards is very like that of any other of the King's minor mistresses. She was well provided for, and had ample means of her own, although she soon incurred the dislike of most of the young women in the same state of preferment.

She seems to have been possessed of personal courage,

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

for during a visit to Newmarket, at some unascertained date, she challenged a Colonel Abercromby, who had spoken disrespectfully of her, to a duel. Disguising herself in male attire she met and wounded her detractor in the left shoulder, whereon the colonel offered to compose the quarrel and to pay one hundred guineas to her by way of compensation. Unaware of the King's presence—for Charles had watched the duel from a distance—she was highly commended by him for her pluck, whilst the discomfited colonel went into retirement.

Like many of her rivals near the throne, Moll Davis developed a passion for cards and high play. From Theophilus Lucas's "Lives of the Gamesters"—an excessively rare book of which there is a copy in the Grenville Library at the British Museum—I gather that she came into collision with that notorious gambler and sharper, Colonel Thomas Panton.

On one occasion when he had paid her a visit he was "cunningly drawn in" by the ex-actress in the following manner:

A game of basset having been suggested, Moll drew 150 guineas out of a bag of gold which she carried, saying that if she found fortune favoured her in the first game she would then try her luck again. As Panton estimated that she had not less than 1,400 or 1,500 guineas in her possession, he purposely lost the game to her in the hope of winning all the money in her bag before leaving. But Moll, taking up the stakes she had won, would not play any more that day, because, she said, she never took any diversion in playing more than one set at a time.

Panton, much vexed at being taken in by a woman for what was to him the paltry sum of 150 guineas, took his

STAGE, THRONE—AND PARLIAMENT

leave with as complacent an air as he could muster up, to seek another adventure.

Not long after, he paid her another visit, the pair playing a second game of basset together. This time, with the low cunning for which he was noted, this Knight of the Golden Fleece placed her with her back to a looking-glass, so that, as she held her cards up, he could see exactly what she had in her hand. By this stratagem he won over £1,000 in gold in the course of the afternoon, and then had the audacity to laugh at her for her folly in risking so high a stake.

I believe that this card-sharper's trick has been practised successfully on board some of the large Atlantic liners only within the last few years by international crooks who spend their time in travelling to and from America in search of fresh victims.

Panton is said to have won large sums from, amongst others, the Dukes of Monmouth and Buckingham, and also from Lauderdale, for even a canny Scot may sometimes be drawn into a card-sharper's net. The most extraordinary event of his career, notorious as he was for his artistry in playing on the cross as well as, when it suited him, on the square, was his winning, in a single night, so large a sum as produced an income of fifteen hundred a year. With this Panton bought the freehold of several acres of undeveloped land at the top of the Haymarket on which stood the old Piccadilly Gaming House. On a portion of its garden ground he built the street still called by his name, and also James Street, in which there was a famous tennis court resorted to by the cream of the Cavalier aristocracy.

After this amazing piece of luck it is said that Panton would never touch cards or dice again.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

Having now related the events arising out of Sir John Coventry's half-jesting remarks in the House of Commons, it is time to drop the curtain on the tragi-comedy enacted in Suffolk Street at Christmas, 1670.

I must leave my readers to judge for themselves, after reading all the material evidence, how far Sir John was justified in implying that the King's interest in the performances at the Patent Houses was due more to the personal charm of the younger actresses than to the legitimate artistry of the stage, of which he and his intimate friends were such consistent supporters.

At the same time, it should be remembered that between the date of the attack upon Sir John and the giving of the Royal assent to the Coventry Act, Nell Gwynne, to the infinite regret of the play-going public, took leave of the stage she had so adorned to live henceforth under the protection of the King.

CHAPTER VI

The Foreign Invasion: Louise de Querouaille, Duchess of Portsmouth (1649—1734); Hortense Mancini, Duchess of Mazarin (1646—1699)

TO arrive at a complete understanding of the complex inner life of the Court (especially in the later years of the reign) it is essential to study the stream of correspondence which flowed without cessation between Louis the Fourteenth's ministers and his ambassadors at Whitehall during the twenty-five years which elapsed between the restoration of the Monarchy and "Old Rowley's" death. During that period half a dozen Frenchmen of proved ability, and, for the most part, men of the world possessed of charming manners, were ensconced in Whitehall, whose primary duty it was to report to Versailles, not only political events within the legitimate sphere of diplomacy, but all the scandal of the hour, however petty and ephemeral.

The national archives of France, labelled "*Affaires Etrangères (Angleterre)*" (which providentially escaped destruction at the Revolution), relating to the period between 1660 and 1685, show conclusively that nothing which occurred at the English Court was deemed too trivial or too transparently absurd for the French diplomatists to repeat and, it may be, to exaggerate in the telling.¹

¹ Some of this mass of material was used by Forneron in his sketch of Louise de Querouaille, published at Paris in 1887, but the voluminous

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

The "Gramont Memoirs," valuable though they are in their way in presenting the French view of English society from a different angle, are too vague to be altogether convincing, especially as they seldom mention the dates of events to which they casually refer.¹

As the machinery of espionage became perfected, Peers as well as Commons received, not only substantial bribes, but, in many instances, annual pensions for services supposed to have been rendered to France. For years Barillon, acting in concert with the Duchess of Portsmouth, persistently pursued the policy of subsidizing members of the British Parliament on a scale never hitherto attempted.

But that the system was in force years before is apparent from an autograph letter from Louis XIV to Colbert de Croissy, in which the *grand monarque* said: "Seeing how irresolute the King of England is, do not neglect to gain Lord Arlington.² I would willingly spend on him twenty thousand gold pieces."

correspondence which passed between Versailles and London at this period has by no means been exhausted, although M. Jusserand, a distinguished ambassador of France in our own times, dug deeper into this mine of historical information in his delightful sketch of Gaston de Comignes in his "French Ambassador at the Court of Charles the Second," published in 1892. Forneron's book has been freely translated, with explanatory notes and a preface by Mrs. G. N. Crawford, but, unfortunately, neither the original nor the translation was provided with an index, an omission which should be remedied in any future issue.

¹ This deficiency, has, however, been to a great extent remedied in Mr. Gordon Goodwin's admirable edition of Gramont (Edinburgh, 1908). To students of the Restoration era it would be impossible to over-estimate the value of the explanatory notes in these two volumes, the same remark applying with equal force to Mr. Goodwin's edition of Peter Cunningham's "Nell Gwynne."

² Sir Henry Bennet was raised to the peerage as Lord Arlington in 1663.

LOUISE DE QUEROUAILLE

Although Charles may have appeared to his brother of France to lack fixity of purpose, Louis invariably underrated his diplomatic ability in the many political duels in which they engaged from time to time.

When Gaston de Comignes was the ambassador of France, the system of wholesale bribery had not materialized to any great extent, for conditions were easier than they soon after became, Charles not being, as yet, in pressing need of money.

But, as Louis's jealousy of England grew from year to year, his ambassadors found it increasingly difficult to satisfy their master's demands for information. As soon as they realized that Charles was in dire pecuniary straits, owing to economic causes which he was powerless to avert, one of their main objectives was attained by the systematic corruption of the English Parliament.

Another, though less dependable, source of information of which the French diplomatists were not slow to avail themselves was the gossip of the backstairs—that *salle des pas perdus* presided over by the notorious Will Chiffinch, wherein the more voluble of the King's mistresses retailed from day to day and hour to hour the latest gossip of the Court.

But as many of the stories told to the ambassadors by these "ladies of pleasure and enemies of our nation," as the virtuous Evelyn styled them, proved to be self-contradictory, the intelligence thus obtained can seldom have been worth the price paid for it. Still the insidious process went on until enormous sums were spent annually by Versailles in the vain hope of eliciting information which might prove of value to Louis in his lust of power and conquest.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

It will, perhaps, be convenient to my readers if I review briefly the situation as it presented itself to Comignes, on succeeding Godefroi, Comte d'Estrades.¹

The new ambassador made his official entry into London, coming by water from Greenwich, on December 23, 1662. Having landed at the Tower, where the Royal Standard was unfurled, as the highest compliment which could be paid to the representative of a foreign power, he proceeded to Exeter House in the Strand² in one of the King's coaches drawn by six horses, no fewer than fifty others following in his train, amid a great concourse of people in the streets. The entry of a foreign ambassador at this time was always marked with elaborate ceremonial; the representatives of France and Spain, in particular, being extraordinarily jealous of any point of precedence being accorded to one and not to the other.

When d'Estrades represented France at The Hague, he dared to claim precedence of the Prince of Orange, contending that his coach was entitled to go first, a high-handed proceeding which nearly caused a tumult in the Vorhout!

Comignes, whose last diplomatic mission it was, had not been long in London before he complained that his letters were constantly tampered with in the post: "They have here tricks to open letters more skilfully than anywhere in the world," he wrote, but it was a case of diamond cut diamond where England and France were concerned, for Charles made precisely the same complaint in writing to his sister, "Madame," a few years later.

To meet the difficulty, Comignes directed Lionne to

¹ Ambassador to London in 1661 and 1662.

² This was the identical mansion occupied by the Duchess of Richmond at the time of Charles's christening. See page 7, Chapter I.

LOUISE DE QUEROUAILLE

send his letters in future under cover of Mr. Aymé, a surgeon living in Rose Street, Covent Garden.¹

The ambassador describes the King of England as being a "good-humoured Prince," hating business and trouble, passionately fond of ease and greatly enjoying his walk, his ride, and all bodily exercises, but "sick to death when the Queen is in danger, happy as an angel when the Castlemaine smiles."

Reinforced in London in April, 1665, by Antoine Courtin and the Duc de Verneuil as ambassadors extraordinary, Comignes returned to Paris, leaving Courtin in charge. Charles delighted in the new-comer's company, as he was full of wit, good sense, judgment, modesty and grace. According to St. Simon (no mean judge of a diplomatist's qualifications), "he pleased everybody everywhere."

Lady Castlemaine was one of the first of the chargeable ladies about the Court to be approached by the French King's accredited representatives at Whitehall.

Antoine Courtin did not remain long in London, as he was soon succeeded by Colbert de Croissy,² a brother of Louis's famous finance minister. Remaining in London until 1673, Colbert found that "the Castlemaine" was of little use as a secret service agent, willing though she was to accept overtures from France, and to receive presents in money or kind.

In spite of the huge sums lavished upon her by Charles, her expenditure always exceeded her available income,

¹ January, 1663.

² Colbert de Croissy, though an admirable diplomatist when dealing with his own sex, was not so uniformly successful in his negotiations with English ladies. He was, accordingly, recalled in the autumn of 1673, when he was succeeded by Ruvigny.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

and, though quite open to a bribe, from whatever source it came, she was so swayed by the caprice of the moment that no ambassador, charm he never so wisely, could rely upon her for a single hour.

In 1669, when her influence over Charles had become practically negligible, Courtin reported to Versailles that, in his opinion, it would be futile to spend more money upon her in the hope of obtaining any useful information. He therefore recommended that such small services as she might render would be sufficiently remunerated by trifling gifts, such as gloves (Martial was then the most famous *gantier* in France), ribands, silk stockings—green ones were all the rage at Court—and Parisian silks and satins, which Charles's mistresses fondly imagined to be of better quality than they could obtain at home; these were the only presents which he considered suitable to the ladies of pleasure at the Court. For the future he proposed to turn his attention to their waiting-women, most of whom were chosen rather for their good looks than their virtue. One of these, in Lady Castlemaine's service, whose name has not been ascertained, had already been compromised by the fickle King. But when the full extent of the unfortunate lady's guilt was discovered, Lady Castlemaine, infuriated by her indiscretion, turned her out of doors at midnight, to be no more heard of in Whitehall.

Another member of her train was that beautiful but remarkably silly young woman, "La belle Stuart." We may judge of her mental capacity by the childish nature of her amusements: blind-man's buff, hunt the slipper, building castles with cards, playing with dolls and watching old Lord Carlingford hold a lighted candle in his mouth without extinguishing it—such childish follies

LOUISE DE QUEROUAILLE

afforded her more pleasure than intellectual conversation or the pursuit of the arts. According to the custom of the times this fairest of the fair not infrequently slept with her mistress. On one occasion when the King surprised Barbara by an early morning call he found the pair in bed together, whereupon (as he pretended, by way of a "frolic") Charles suited the action to the word by making himself an additional bed-fellow.

It will be remembered that in the days of her girlhood Barbara Villiers and Lady Anne Hamilton had indulged in similar "frolics," occasionally occupying the same bed and penning their *billets-doux* to Lord Chesterfield therefrom.¹

On May 25, 1670, Henrietta, Duchess of Orleans, landed at Dover, bringing in her train nearly two hundred and fifty people, for the grandees of France were accustomed to travel in great state in the seventeenth century, and the occasion of her visit was one of international importance.

Her suite included the Maréchal de Plessis, the Bishop of Tournai, the Comte and Comtesse de Gramont and Anthony Hamilton—these latter were, of course, no strangers at Whitehall—and, in addition, a number of household officers, ladies-in-waiting, doctors, chaplains, grooms and menial servants of both sexes. The King and his sister were lodged in the Castle, whilst the humbler members of "Madame's" suite were billeted in the town.

Never before in its long and eventful history had the "Gateway to the Continent" been the scene of so much secret diplomacy as was enacted in the old Castle in the course of one crowded week.

Charles and Henrietta had not met for ten years, and I

¹ See page 83 of this volume.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

believe it is a fact that never after he landed at Dover in May, 1660, did Charles recross the Channel to visit France, Holland or any other continental country. He would frequently tell his friends that he had done with foreign parts, nor would he even go so far as Paris to attend his mother's funeral, an omission on his part which gave rise to much unfavourable comment at the time.

Amongst the minor members of "Madame's" train was Mademoiselle Louise de Querouaille, the elder daughter of a Breton gentleman of ancient lineage but small fortune, whose ancestral home was within a mile of Brest. Louise was not, strictly speaking, a beauty, and so far as I have been able to read her character from her portraits, she was merely a fresh baby-faced girl, with a complexion of cream and roses, rather small dark eyes, and a rather peevish expression of countenance. I expect also that, though still under age, she was already a designing minx, fully alive to the advantages which might accrue to her should she succeed in attracting the King's favourable notice.

I have written elsewhere that, in the language of the card table, Charles never discarded his mistresses even when he wearied of them. He merely added to his hand. But this time he drew a very bad card out of the pack could he but have foreseen the extent of the unrest he was laying up for himself.

A contemporary versifier wrote of Louise soon after her arrival in England:

None that had eyes e'er saw in that French face
O'ermuch of beauty, form, or comely grace.

Still, she possessed that *esprit froid* occasionally found amongst her countrywomen—cold and calculating rather

than impulsive, and never losing sight of the main chance. Her very *froideur* may well have been an attraction to Charles, who had ardour enough to melt an iceberg once his desires were aroused. But though Louise had a heart of flint from which it was impossible to kindle a single spark of passion, no sooner did the amorous King set eyes upon her than he designed to add her to his already overstocked seraglio.

For a whole decade he had been accustomed to periodical whirlwinds of temper at the hands of Barbara Villiers, and, now that "poor Alinda's" beauty was decidedly on the wane, he must, I think, have welcomed the idea of a complete change when the opportunity suddenly presented itself.

The main political object of "Madame's" visit was to sign and seal the Treaty of Dover, the details of which had been the subject of long and anxious correspondence between brother and sister for at least a year and a half. As a matter of fact, there were *two* Treaties, one for exhibition and the other for use, to which, later on, a third and revised edition was prepared.

Charles knew full well that many of the provisions, of the secret Treaty agreed upon in 1670, would, if ever they were divulged, be highly unpopular at home; therefore the strictest secrecy had to be observed if any material advantage was to accrue to him. Even Arlington and Buckingham, who had to a certain extent been taken into the King's confidence, were not allowed to know the details of the more secret articles of this amazing compact.¹

The Cabal was more in the nature of a "Shadow

¹ The original draft of the secret Treaty is, I believe, preserved to this day at Ugbrooke, the Devonshire home of Lord Clifford of Chudleigh.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

Cabinet" than an advisory body. Its members were not permitted to know more of the policy pursued by an absolute monarch—such as Charles undoubtedly was—than he considered necessary to attain his ends. His sister was somewhat suspicious of Arlington's *bona fides*, in view of his attachment to the Dutch and his known inclination towards Spain. It will be remembered that Lady Arlington, whom we shall meet with again later in this chapter, was herself a Dutch lady of high rank.¹

By the treaty Charles was to pledge himself to join France in the invasion of Holland and to co-operate with Louis XIV both on sea and land, on condition of receiving not only an annual subsidy of £230,000, so long as the projected campaign should last, but an ultimate share of the spoils of the conquered provinces.

He was to acquire Sluys, Cadzand, and the Isle of Walcheren at the mouth of the Scheldt, from the Dutch Republic, if and when it should be beaten to its knees, and, in addition, if Louis's designs against Spain should mature, Ostend and a considerable slice of territory in South America were to be added to the English dominions.

Sluys and Cadzand would have been of little use to England, for the channel to the sea from the former town, one of the oldest in Holland, was already silting up, but it is curious to notice the importance attached to Ostend, so often a bone of contention in future wars, as we have recently had cause to remember.

The article by which Charles agreed to make a public

¹ Isabella, the daughter of Lewis of Nassau, Baron of Leck and Beverwaet in Holland, who had married Lord Arlington in 1665, died at the ripe age of eighty-seven, in 1718, at Euston, her husband's family seat in Suffolk.

LOUISE DE QUEROUAILLE

announcement of his conversion to the Catholic faith, presented almost insuperable difficulties. Well aware as he was of the almost fanatical dislike of the majority of his subjects to Catholicism, he positively dreaded, as he pithily expressed himself, "being sent on his travels" a second time. He and his sister therefore agreed that the wisest course for him to pursue was to defer any definite announcement of his conversion for the nonce, Charles hoping by this means to gain time—and revenue—without publicly committing himself to a course which might, conceivably, entail the loss of his crown.

As all the world knows, the war did not result in a victory for Louis, who, finding himself unable to overcome the natural conformation of the land of dykes and polders, or to pierce the girdle of waters which encircled the towns he set out to capture, soon brought the land campaign to a close and returned to Paris. The Dutch, owing to superior seamanship, having had rather the better of the naval engagements, England was glad to make her own peace with Holland early in 1674.

Three years later, Charles skilfully consolidated his position by marrying his niece Mary to William of Orange, much to the annoyance of his brother of France, who is said to have received the news as he would the loss of an army. But when Parliament urged the King to join with Holland in alliance against Louis he promptly prorogued it, and though entreated by the Dutch Ambassador to meet the wishes of the legislature he threw his handkerchief into the air, saying: "I care just that for Parliament!"

The pendulum veered round in February of the next year, when Charles suddenly assumed a warlike attitude and declared his intention, probably without altogether meaning it, of going to war with France if Louis did not

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

at once make peace with Holland, whereupon the Commons, in a moment of enthusiasm, voted a million of money to support an army of 30,000 men and a fleet of nearly 100 ships. But without so much as consulting England Louis now made his own peace with the Dutch at Nymwegen, securing the whole of Franche Comté and a number of frontier towns which had formerly belonged to Spain. France thus became the predominant military power in Europe, whilst Louis skilfully avoided giving England any territorial acquisition whatever.

We will now return, after this digression, to Dover, and resume consideration of the treaty which was in process of hatching in the memorable month of June, 1670.

With consummate tact and ability "Madame" contrived to remove such obstacles as still delayed the completion of the commercial agreement between England and France. The French signatory, Colbert de Croissy, writing to Louis whilst the issue still hung in the balance, told him plainly that "Commerce is the idol of Great Britain's worship," and it is only due to Charles to recognize that never once did he lose sight of this paramount consideration.

"Madame" also reconciled Buckingham and Arlington, recovering her influence over the former without his becoming aware of the full text of the secret articles of the treaty he was called upon to sign. It had been the wish of her life, now drawing rapidly to its close, that her brother should make, at some unspecified date, a public confession of his conversion, but this he was not destined to announce until he lay upon his death-bed nearly fifteen years later.

The treaty was signed on June 1, when my Lords Arlington and Arundell of Wardour, Sir Thomas

LOUISE DE QUEROUAILLE

Clifford—who seems to have been its main author—and “Dick Bellings,” three of them devout Catholics, and the other (Arlington) well disposed to the faith, appended their signatures to the momentous document.¹

Immediately it had been signed, the French Ambassador at Whitehall left for Paris, where he hastened to report to his master the evidence of his own eyes and the hopes which he entertained of exercising political pressure upon England in the near future should “La Querouaille” become Charles’s mistress-in-chief in succession to the recently deposed Duchess of Cleveland.

On the anniversary of the Restoration the Royal party at Dover was reinforced by the arrival of the Queen Consort, Catherine of Braganza, whom “Madame,” who had never seen her before, described in a letter to a friend as: “A very good woman, not handsome but so kind and excellent that it was impossible not to love her.” One wonders whether, thus early, Catherine had become aware of her susceptible husband’s latest infatuation, though had she perceived it, she could scarcely have foreseen what a stranglehold the young Frenchwoman was destined to acquire over Charles for the term of his natural life.

In order to amuse the Court, the Duke of York’s troupe of players was commanded to attend, this being one of the earliest instances on record of a theatrical company making an excursion to the provinces, although, I think, that Tom Killigrew, the manager of the King’s Company at Drury Lane, had been summoned to appear before the Court at Tunbridge Wells in the plague year, when it is probable that Charles first saw Nell Gwynne off the stage, in the

¹ A fortnight later Charles and Louis exchanged secret ratifications of the treaty at London and Paris.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

springtime of her youth and beauty. The play presented for "Madame's" entertainment was Caryl's *Sir Solomon, or the Cautious Coxcomb*—its very title would be enough to damn it at the present day—in which the principal low comedian, James Nokes, a prime favourite with London audiences, had the bad taste to caricature the latest French fashions in dress in the presence of many of their wearers. A ballet was also staged before the Court, at Canterbury, followed by a banquet in the great hall of St. Augustine's Abbey. The Duke's Company, the earliest theatrical "Canterbury Pilgrims," soon returned to London, and after the treaty had been signed and the political atmosphere was less tense, the Royal party went yachting along the Kentish coast, going aboard some of the guard-ships lying off Dover. "Madame," in particular, won the hearts of the sailors by her demeanour afloat. "Many of our expeditions are on the sea," wrote a member of her suite, "where Madame is as bold as she is on land, and walks as fearlessly along the edges [gangways] of the ships as she does on shore."

When the time came, all too soon, for Charles to take leave of his sister, he showed his grief at her approaching departure by loading her with presents. He gave her six thousand pistoles to defray the cost of her journey, two thousand gold crowns towards building a memorial chapel to their mother's memory,¹ and, on the eve of her departure (June 12), another magnificent present of pearls and diamonds. He entreated her to leave behind one of her own jewels as a souvenir, without precisely conveying his inner meaning. But when Henrietta bade her Breton maid of honour fetch her casket (telling Charles to choose whatever he liked from it), he took Louise by

¹ I rather think this pious intention was never carried into effect.

LOUISE DE QUEROUAILLE

the hand and implored his sister to allow *her*, "the only jewel he coveted," to remain in England.

Greatly to her credit "Madame" declined to grant such an outrageous request, telling her brother that she was morally responsible to the girl's parents for their daughter's honour and safety, and that she must positively take her back to France.

Events now moved swiftly, for before the month was over Henrietta, to the inexpressible grief of Charles and every one who knew her, both in England and in the country of her adoption, was dead, and not without suspicions being raised of her having been poisoned.¹

It is an ill wind that blows no one any good, and "Madame's death," wrote Bussy Rabutin, "has been the cause of La Querouaille's good fortune. If it had not been for that she would hardly have found so exalted a lover in France!"

With, I believe, her parents' knowledge and consent, Louise returned to England in the autumn, when the King sent one of the Royal yachts on purpose to bring her over. As might have been expected, the precedent set in the case of Barbara Villiers was strictly followed, and, soon

¹ Dying at St. Cloud on June 30, "Madame" was buried with great pomp and ceremony at St. Denis beside her mother's grave. The Archbishop of Rheims said the funeral Mass, which was chanted by the King's own choristers, accompanied by Lully's violins, causing Madame de Sevigné to exclaim: "I doubt if there can be any sweeter music in heaven!" Bossuet, to whom "Madame" had been much attached, was commanded by the King to pronounce her funeral oration, which he did with even more than his usual eloquence.

At the Revolution her tomb and those of all the Bourbons were rifled and their coffins thrown into a trench dug in unconsecrated ground, but in 1817 they were solemnly reinterred, in the presence of the whole Royal family of France, in a vault underneath the church.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

after her arrival, Louise was appointed one of the long-suffering Queen Consort's ladies-in-waiting and provided with luxurious apartments in Whitehall.

There would seem to have been something in the nature of an interregnum in her recorded doings between the date of her appointment and her formal installation as *maîtresse en titre*. This was not actually effected until October, 1671, when she formed one of a large party of specially invited guests at Euston, Lord Arlington's country seat in Suffolk.

For some of the details of the mock ceremony of marriage staged by Lady Arlington, assisted by Lady Sunderland, we are indebted to the staid and sober Evelyn, who chanced to be staying at Euston at the time. If only Pepys had been Lord Arlington's guest instead of Evelyn we should have had short but incisive sketches of most of the house party; but by 1671 that inquisitive searcher after truth—and gossip—had ceased to write his immortal diary—a loss to posterity which it is hardly possible to over-estimate.

Charles was staying at Newmarket for the October meeting, but he managed to find time to ride over to Euston on the off days, across that delightful champaign country which lies between the head-quarters of the Turf and the sandy warrens and broad heaths round about Thetford. His new "Palace," as it was absurdly called, in the little High Street of Newmarket, was now finished, and, according to Evelyn, it had all the faults a gentleman's house should not have, the architect being a Mr. Samuel, of whose professional attainments history records nothing.

Charles had bought the site of an old house belonging to Lord Thomond, but he would have done better to build his "Palace" at the top of the town, overlooking the

LOUISE DE QUEROUAILLE

Heath,¹ where John Watts, a fashionable jockey of the last generation (whose Turf career was almost as successful as the great Fred Archer's), built himself a big house out of his professional gains, which more deserved to be called "palatial" than Charles's makeshift lodgings in the town below.

From Watts's windows overlooking the Heath could be seen the finish of races run over the old Cambridgeshire course.² Within my recollection there was a rickety little stand at the winning post at the top of the town for the use of the members of the Jockey Club and their guests, but this primitive point of vantage disappeared when the popular handicap run at the Houghton Meeting was transferred to the Rowley Mile.

Nell Gwynne was, I think, at Newmarket at the time, where she had a house of her own close to the King's in the High Street. Being by nature fond of sport and country life, she was a bold rider, and it is said that she acquired Bestwood Park in Sherwood Forest,³ in response to a challenge by the King, who told her that she could enclose as much of the forest land as she could ride round before breakfast. We may be sure that she got up that morning considerably earlier than usual. Nell greatly enjoyed her outings on Newmarket Heath, but I should imagine that, if she became aware of Louise's proximity at Euston, her pleasure on this occasion would not have been so unalloyed as on her previous visits to the head-quarters of the Turf.

¹ "On the very carpet [turf] where the sports are celebrated," wrote Evelyn in his diary.

² The old Cambridgeshire course has been disused since 1887.

³ Bestwood is still in the possession of Nell's lineal descendant, the Duke of St. Albans.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

When first she caught sight of the new French "miss" she promptly nicknamed her "Squintabella," from a slight cast which Louise had in one of her eyes.

A little later on, after the young Frenchwoman had acquired a definite hold over Charles, Nell, who was never accustomed to mince her words even in the Royal presence, told the King that as his Parliament had recently passed an Act by which *useless foreign commodities*, found to be prejudicial to the growth and expansion of British trade, were to be *condemned and burnt*, he would do well to apply its provisions to the latest French importation!

As Louise grew older she became crafty rather than clever or intellectual. She knew well the value of reticence, though she never possessed a tithe of the penetration and genius for diplomacy which distinguished Hortense, Duchess of Mazarin.

Charles, as a rule, was not lucky on the Turf, though he kept up large racing establishments at Newmarket and Burford and, later on, at Winchester. But he was an excellent judge of a thoroughbred horse and a fine rider, and more of a sportsman than his brother James, although he, too, kept a pack of harriers of his own at, or near, Newmarket, where hares abounded as they do to this day.

On the first day of the autumn meeting¹ we know from old records that Mr. Elliot's Flatfoot beat the King's Woodcock, owners up, in a match, but neither the weights they carried nor the distance they had to traverse have come down to us. Lord Rochester—"the Wicked Earl"—in one of his lampoons makes an impudent reference to the King as "Flatfoot the gudgeon taker," an allusion to Charles's well-known fondness for fishing. Possibly he borrowed the name from Elliot's racehorse.

¹ In October, 1671.

LOUISE DE QUEROUAILLE

Evelyn, who went to stay the night at Newmarket with Harry Jermyn, saw the great match; "many thousands being spectators; a more signal race has not been run for many years."

Two days later the King rode the winner of the Plate, "being a flagon of £32 price," beating his son, the Duke of Monmouth, Mr. Elliot, and "Tom of Ten Thousand," otherwise Mr. Thynne of Longleat, ancestor of the Marquises of Bath of that family, who must not be confused with the Pulteneys, ennobled at an earlier date under the same title. The race, which was apparently confined to amateur riders, was a great feather in Charles's cap, for I have reason to think that it was the first time he had ridden a winner at Newmarket.

It would be interesting to know if this trophy is still preserved in the Royal plate room at Windsor Castle.

The next day Charles rode over to Saxham—where "Old Q" had his stud farm in the eighteenth century—to see Lord Crofts, probably taking Monmouth with him, as "Mad Crofts" had been the boy's nominal guardian some years earlier.

Whilst he was at Newmarket this autumn Charles also rode to Spinney Abbey near Soham, and honoured Henry Cromwell, Oliver's fourth son, with a visit.

It is characteristic of his forgiving nature that Charles was willing to accept the hospitality of a son of the man who had sent his father to the scaffold. One can but wonder what they found to talk about at Spinney, for, although Henry Cromwell was following the peaceful occupation of a farmer, their conversation can hardly have been confined to the state of the weather and the crops!

The records of the Turf are so meagre at this period that we seldom know the names of the jockeys, nor have

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

I been able to discover who was the first professional bookmaker, although "the ring" is sometimes mentioned in old diaries and note-books. Gentlemen, in the period under review, as a rule made their bets with their own class, and thousands of pounds often changed hands over a single match even at this early stage in the development of "the sport of Kings." Tipsters there were already to be found at Newmarket and elsewhere, for Charles, writing to his sister in 1669, has supplied us with an amusing commentary on the predictions of one Abbé Pregnani,¹ though it must have struck him as peculiar that a dignitary of the Catholic Church, and an Italian one at that, should pose as a Turf prophet.

Unfortunately for his followers, his vaticinations, which he claimed were based upon astrological deductions, did not prove a whit more successful than the predictions of those peripatetic tipsters who infest our racecourses at the present day. It seems never to occur to their credulous dupes that if, as they pretend, these self-styled prophets are able to predict the winners of every important race, they need never pose as philanthropists, since they would make infinitely more money by keeping their information to themselves than by passing it on to all and sundry for the sake of a nominal fee. But then it must be remembered that there is born into this world every day in the year a new crop of fools who must buy their own bitter experience, especially upon the racecourse.

I came from Newmarket the day before yesterday—wrote Charles in one of his delightful letters to "Madame"—where we had as fine weather as we could wish, which added much both to the horse matches as well as

¹ He had come to England on a secret mission, in order to find out, if he could, if the King was likely to become a Catholic.

LOUISE DE QUEROUAILLE

to the hunting. L'Abbé Pregnani was there most part of the time, and I believe he will give you some account of it, but not that he lost his money, upon confidence that the stars could tell him which horse would win, for he had the ill-luck to foretell three times wrong together, and James¹ believed him so much that he lost his money upon the same score.

Charles graciously allowed the reverend astrologer to cast his horoscope—also on Monmouth's recommendation—though he was too shrewd to be taken in by any arts of the kind. "Cattle of this sort are little to my taste," he wrote to his sister, "and the less you have to do with them the better."

And on his return to Newmarket later in the month he wrote:

I have had very good sport here since Monday last both by hunting and horse races. L'Abbé Pregnani is here and wonders very much at the pleasure everybody takes at the races. He was so weary (riding from Audley End hither to see the foot match) that he is scarce recovered yet.

But it is now time to quit the invigorating air of Newmarket Heath—surely the purest that blows in all England—and transfer ourselves to Euston, in Charles's congenial company, to join the house-party there assembled. The gay doings at Arlington's hospitable house, fraught as they were with incalculable mischief and waste of the nation's resources, in years to come, were carefully recorded by Evelyn in his diary, though, unfortunately, he names but few of the guests. They included, however, the Treasurer of the Household (Sir Thomas Clifford), Lord Henry Howard (afterwards 6th Duke of Norfolk), Lady Sunderland—her husband was in Spain at the time—and several noble lords, and county gentlemen, accompanied by their wives and daughters.

Last, but by no means least, seeing the importance of

¹ The Duke of Monmouth.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

the diplomatic errand on which he was engaged, came Colbert de Croissy, the French Ambassador, to keep a watchful eye on Charles and Louise, and report to his master at Versailles how his deep-laid scheme progressed from day to day.

For fifteen days on end Arlington entertained two hundred people and put up half as many horses in his stables, besides servants and guards, at infinite expense. "The whole house," says Evelyn, "was filled from end to end with lords, ladies and gallants; there being such a furnished table as I had seldom seen, nor anything more splendid and free."

The mornings were mostly spent in hunting and hawking, the afternoons and evenings, "almost till morning again," with cards and dice.

Yet I must say—Evelyn continues—without noise, swearing, quarrel or confusion of any sort. I, who was no gamester, had often discourse with the French Ambassador (Colbert), and went sometimes abroad on horseback with the ladies to take the air, but not without more often [having] recess to my pretty apartment, where I was quite out of all this hurry, and had leisure, when I would, to converse with books, for there is no man more hospitably easy to be withal than my Lord Arlington.

During the fortnight—the diarist continues—the King came over every second day, sometimes bringing the Duke of Monmouth with him, but whilst the latter usually returned to Newmarket, the King often lay here, during which time I had twice the honour to sit at dinner with him, and with all freedom.¹

At this point Evelyn becomes more interesting still, although he is very careful to state that he was not actually present at the mock marriage between Charles and Louise. All that he permitted himself to record of this highly irregular proceeding is as follows :

¹ Evelyn's Diary, October, 1671.

LOUISE DE QUEROUAILLE

It was universally reported that the fair Lady Whore was bedded one of these nights and the stocking flung, after the manner of a married bride. I acknowledge that she was for the most part in her undress all day and that there was fondness and toying with that young wanton; nay, 'twas said, I was at the former [iformal] ceremony, but 'tis utterly false. I neither saw nor heard of any such thing whilst I was there, though I had been in her chamber, and all over that apartment late enough, and was myself observing all passages with much curiosity. However, 'twas with confidence believed [that] she was first made a *misse*, as they call these unhappy creatures, with solemnity at this time.

That Evelyn was correct in his facts does not admit of disproof, and from that day forth, "Madame Carwell," as she was commonly called, became not only the King's most expensive mistress but a notorious spy in the service of France. It was the Treaty of Dover which first brought her to England after "Madame's" untimely death, and it was the machinations of Louis the Fourteenth's crafty advisers, Colbert amongst the number, which riveted the fetters of France on Charles for the remainder of his natural life.

Almost exactly nine months after the events just recorded Louise gave birth to a son, the only child she ever bore, on whom the King bestowed the name of Charles Lennox and the proud title of Duke of Richmond. From the day of her installation at Whitehall Louise was held in detestation by the English people, her unpopularity contributing in no small measure to the kindly toleration with which Nell Gwynne was regarded by rich and poor alike.

It was not an easy matter to score off the crafty young Frenchwoman who became Chanticleer's mistress and ultimately his master too, but on one of the few occasions on which she seems to have visited Newmarket, a highwayman known as "Old Mobb," who was in league with

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

"the Golden Farmer," a receiver of stolen goods who kept an inn of that name on Bagshot Heath, accomplished that difficult feat with signal success.¹

As Louise was on the road to London, attended only by a small retinue, Mobb stopped her coach and demanded all that she had about her. But Louise, who had long been accustomed to command a monarch, resented being spoken to in such a peremptory manner, and asked the highwayman if he knew who it was he was addressing? "Yes, Madam," replied Mobb, "I know you to be the greatest whore in the kingdom and that you are maintained at the public charge. I know that all the courtiers depend upon your smiles and that the King himself is your slave. But what of that? A gentleman collector is a greater man upon the road and much more absolute than His Majesty is at Court. You may now say, Madam, that a single highwayman has exercised his authority where Charles the Second of England has often begged a favour, and thought himself fortunate to obtain it at the expense of his treasure."

Louise continued to regard him with a superior and lofty air, telling him that he was an insolent fellow, that she would give him nothing at all, and that he should suffer severely for the affront.

"Madam," said the highwayman, "that haughty French spirit will do you no good here. I am an English

¹ The sign of the "Golden Farmer," which is mentioned by Swift in one of his letters to Stella, was changed by some wiseacre within the last century to the "Jolly Farmer," thereby destroying the whole point of the allusion. The Portsmouth road was long infested by gentlemen of the road. This once notorious inn, now only a modest public-house, stands in what must have been a very lonely position in the seventeenth century, at the junction of the Portsmouth and Basingstoke roads, about a mile above the little village of Bagshot.

LOUISE DE QUEROUAILLE

freebooter and I insist upon it as my privilege to seize all foreign commodities. Your money is English and a proof of English folly. All you have about you is confiscated to me by being bestowed upon such a worthless b—h. I would have you know that *I* am king here. And I have also a whore of my own to keep on the public's contributions, just the same as King Charles has. It is for this reason that I take toll of all that pass this way."

From time to time Louise experienced similar rebuffs, not only from knights of the road and the London rabble, but from people of her own rank and standing. Desiring to take the waters of Tunbridge Wells, which at that time were considered to be as efficacious as those of Aix for certain complaints, she arrived there only to find that a house which she had written to engage was already occupied by Lady Worcester. After a heated altercation, in which Louise declared that, as the superior in rank, she claimed precedence over a Countess or a Marchioness, Lady Worcester bluntly told her that, as titles gained by prostitution conferred no such privilege, she must seek accommodation elsewhere in the town.

On another occasion when a silversmith in the West End¹ had made an elaborate service of plate for the Duchess, numbers of people crowded the shop to inspect it. They were unanimous in declaring that it would have been better bestowed on Mistress Nell than the detested

¹ I have little doubt that the silversmith in question was John Coques, who had a shop on the north side of Pall Mall, nearly opposite Nell Gwynne's house. He it was who made her celebrated silver bedstead, and also the sacramental plate for the Royal Chapels at Whitehall and Windsor. I find his name in the parochial rate books in respect of premises in Pall Mall North, from 1672 to 1696.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

French harlot; one man adding that he would like to melt the silver and pour it down her throat.

During her long subjugation of Chanticleer, Louise de Querouaille experienced periodical interruptions of her power. But owing to her *esprit froid* she does not seem to have often given the King much real cause for jealousy.

The withdrawal of her Grace of Cleveland to France, soon after the arrival of Hortense Mancini in England, left her with a comparatively clear field and contributed to consolidate her position. But in the summer of 1683 there arrived at Whitehall a handsome young Frenchman, Philippe de Vendôme,¹ a nephew of the Duchess of Mazarin, who soon proved himself a veritable thorn in the King's side, and a cause of considerable uneasiness to that, by then, somewhat indolent voluptuary.

It was not his fair Roman cousin with whom Vendôme desired to ingratiate himself; his real objective in coming to London was to curry favour with Louise de Querouaille for his own unworthy ends. No doubt he had heard in Paris of the enormous wealth she and her equally avaricious sister, Lady Pembroke, had contrived to amass between them.

From the moment Philippe arrived in London he paid Louise assiduous attention, although she had by now lost any good looks she ever possessed. Her portrait by Mignard, painted at the age of thirty-five, fully bears out this statement. Cold and calculating though "Madame Carwell" was, she felt flattered by Vendôme's apparent devotion. Simulating an admiration which he did not really feel, in the hope of deriving some material advantage

¹ Philippe de Vendôme, Grand Prior of France, was a grandson of Henri IV of France and La belle Gabrielle, and was therefore entitled to call himself a cousin of the King of England.



LOUISE DE QUEROUAILLE, DUCHESS OF PORTSMOUTH
From the portrait by Mignard in the National Portrait Gallery.

LOUISE DE QUEROUAILLE

from the connexion, Louise was willing to grant him a share of her favours, though, at the same time, she was mortally afraid of being found out. Her fears were increased when, having written him some incriminating letters, she realized that they might be used against her should their contents ever be divulged.

For months their relations formed one of the principal topics of conversation at Court. Daring and scurrilous lampoons on the pair were circulated widely through the usual channels, any one of which, had it been brought to Charles's notice, might have jeopardized Louise's ascendancy in the country of her adoption. Those who hated the Frenchwoman—and they were a clear majority in Whitehall—hoped to compass her downfall, whilst the few in positions of authority who supported her, and who really counted in that unwholesome atmosphere of intrigue and corruption (Sunderland among the number), feared that her *liaison* with Philippe might imperil the continuance of her hold over the King. Barillon, watching Vendôme's every movement, reported his own conclusions to Louis XIV. But summer gave place to autumn before Charles, who was now somewhat languid in the prosecution of his amours, became, first suspicious and then frantically jealous, before he made up his mind to rid himself of this poacher on his preserves by sending him back to France. This was no easy matter until the Grand Prior's elder brother wrote, at Louis's instigation, to demand his return to Versailles. Vendôme left England in November, proceeding not to France however, but to The Hague, with the intention of returning to England as soon as the incident had been forgotten. Charles, now thoroughly alarmed, caused it to be known, early in 1684, that if he should attempt to revisit England,

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

or occasion Louise any further annoyance by his unwelcome attentions, he would be forthwith arrested and expelled the country.

In the winter of 1673 Louis XIV was striving to weaken the might of England on sea and land by every conceivable means in his power. But though tactics may vary, strategy is immutable. The main French objective, as in the Great War of 1914-1918, was the mouths of the Rhine and the Scheldt, for, like Napoleon, Louis perceived that Antwerp in the possession of France would be a pistol pointed at the heart of England, whilst, could he but capture Rotterdam as well, the Dutch Republic would be crippled for generations to come. Conscious of the advantages which would accrue to the Fatherland by securing a deep-water port upon the North Sea, had Germany succeeded in crushing Belgium and France in the Great War, Holland would assuredly have shared the same fate.

Fortunately for England and English trade, Louis was foiled in both attempts, and although until the end of his life *le Roy soleil* cherished the hope of weakening England, William of Orange, and, after him, Queen Anne (aided by the military genius of Marlborough), succeeded in leaving the French King weaker at his death than at his accession.

Ruvigny, who was too honest to be altogether successful as a diplomatist, seems to have doubted the expediency of subsidizing the King of England, and, through Buckingham, his Parliament. In a letter which he wrote to Louis on November 27, 1673, he expressed not only the disgust he felt at having to act as an agent in what he described as a "filthy traffic," but his grave doubts of such a policy being ultimately successful.

LOUISE DE QUEROUAILLE

He was recalled after three years, to be succeeded at Whitehall by Honoré Courtin.¹ The new-comer proved himself an ideal ambassador, amiable and courteous, and a great diner-out, with the perfect manners of a well-bred French gentleman, scrupulously polite to ladies, whom he delighted to entertain at his house, sincere but reticent, and a man of unblemished honour. But, with all these virtues to his credit, he applied himself steadily to the task of furthering the policy of his Royal master.

On Courtin's arrival in London in May, 1676, he took up his abode in St. James's Square.² He was the first ambassador of France to occupy the house at the south-east corner of York Street, and, though its homely front has long been concealed by a coat of stucco, it is believed to be the oldest house remaining in the Square since the destruction of old Cleveland House. It is also the only one which retains its original dormer-windows in the attics, precisely as they appear in Sutton Nicholl's view of this once ultra-aristocratic place of residence.

The premises of the modern club are of great extent, receding as they do to Apple-Tree Yard, a place-name which recalls to our memory the orchards which once covered St. James's Fields. Of late years the club-house has been painted a grey hue similar to that employed in the Navy, hence the nickname "the Slate Club" bestowed upon it by some humorist. It may interest its members to know that their smoking-room occupies the former site of a Catholic chapel, built at the back of his official residence, by Courtin entirely at his own expense. He disliked having to go as far as Lincoln's

¹ Honoré Courtin, Seigneur de Chanteroine, born 1622, died 1703, brother of Antoine, a former ambassador of the same name.

² At No. 8, now the Sports Club.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

Inn Fields to hear Mass,¹ for he was a good Catholic, whereas his predecessor, Ruvigny, was a Protestant.

Honoré Courtin's first impressions of English society, as it was then constituted, are interesting. "One must be a man of pleasure to get on here; otherwise it is useless to come to England," he wrote to Louvois soon after his arrival.

In another letter to Louvois, Courtin begged to be allowed to set aside a portion of the funds entrusted to him for political purposes² to enable him to add a chapel to the embassy. But Louvois, in refusing his modest request, told him plainly that the balance in his hands could not be devoted to such pious uses: "We have other things to do besides building Embassy Chapels in London." Thereupon Courtin built the chapel at his own expense. After being put to various secular uses, it was fitted up as a Protestant place of worship in the last century.³

¹ At the Portuguese Ambassador's chapel.

² Though the House of Commons never sat at all during 1676, these funds were intended to be devoted principally to the corruption of Parliament.

³ A few years before the acquisition of the site by the Sports Club I visited it when it was a Bohemian night club, where dancing went on until the small hours of the morning. After the Corinthian—for that was its name—had been raided more than once by the police, it was condemned as a public nuisance, mainly owing to the exertions of the late Lord Egerton of Tatton—his house, recently rebuilt by Mr. Farrer, was No. 7—who complained that he and his family could not sleep because of the noise of the band and the nightly whistling for cabs which disturbed the serenity of the Square. In my "History of St. James's Square," 1895, I gave the complete sequence of owners and occupiers of the house from 1676, amongst them being the Duchess of Buccleuch, Monmouth's widow, and her second husband, Lord Cornwallis, and many others too numerous to recapitulate here.

LOUISE DE QUEROUAILLE

At the present day the few remaining private houses in the Square are being rapidly replaced by clubs, insurance offices, banks and other places of business. It is still, however, the London residence of a duke and three or four minor members of the peerage, one of them an American and the husband of the first lady member to take her seat in the British House of Commons. Yet Lady Astor was not the first of her sex to be returned to Parliament: the very first having been adjudged incapable of sitting at Westminster owing to her being a convicted felon.

Sir Watkin Wynn's beautiful Adam house is occupied by a firm of land and house agents; Lord Derby's, at the south-east corner of Charles Street, is half a club and half a bank; old Cleveland House is a block of residential flats; and No. 3, long the town house of the Duke of Leeds, has lain empty and derelict for years.

After Honoré Courtin's departure came Barillon in May, 1677, and in almost the last letter which the outgoing ambassador wrote, he summed up his opinion of the ladies of the Court of Whitehall, with whom he had come in contact during his two years' stay in London, by saying: "I have never been in a country in which women are so prone to backbite each other as in England." I think he must have had Barbara Villiers in his mind when he wrote that acid sentence.

Of Lord I'Brickan, who was married to a sister of "La belle Stuart," he wrote: "Her husband sticks to her like a shadow, and is ready to shoot or stab anyone who looks at her. He once tried to kill her in a fit of jealousy." I have known men myself—especially those of Irish blood—who were so fond of their wives that they were ready to act, at a moment's notice, as my Lord I'Brickan.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

In the same letter Courtin added a bit of gossip about one of his own countrywomen:

The Duchess of Portsmouth has returned from taking the waters in sounder health. She is in good case. Her skin has grown again so fair and fresh that I cannot imagine that King Charles, *palled as he is with beauty*, will be long in her company without becoming once more her slave!

But here the ambassador, shrewd though he was as a rule, was wrong in his conclusions. Never until the closing hours of his life was the King "palled with beauty," and, as regards the position his detested French mistress had acquired at Court, the plain facts of the case were that it was impossible for Charles to extricate himself from the toils which Louise, with infinite patience, had woven around him.

Not indeed for nothing did he continue to quarter the lilies of France with the lions of England on his escutcheon. After the sale of Dunkirk, which Clarendon negotiated with the assistance of D'Estrades, England did not own an acre of French soil.¹

Yet the earlier Hanoverian kings continued to quarter the arms of France with their own, and not until after the Peace of Amiens did George the Third discontinue the use of this heraldic absurdity.

When, in January, 1676, Hortense Mancini burst like a meteor upon the horizon of Whitehall, Louise de Querouaille's ascendancy at Court received a rude shock, although she ultimately recovered some at least of her influence over Charles.

¹ "*Vous savez que l'on nomme déjà par soubriquet le palais que fait bâtir M. Le Chancelier Hyde la Nouvelle Dunkerque.*" Gaston de Cominges to Lionne, October 9, 1664.

HORTENSE MANCINI

Owing perhaps to her being in indifferent health at the beginning of this year, and her relations with the King having been for some considerable time merely platonic, Louise's position at Court after Hortense's arrival was never, I think, so authoritative as it had been in former years.

This time it was no insipid French doll, a tool in the hands of designing politicians, but a dazzling Roman beauty of European renown, who had come to England, it may be, in the hope of awakening a dormant note of sympathy and admiration in Charles's still susceptible heart.

He had not set eyes upon the youngest and fairest of the bevy of Mazarin's nieces (brought up at the French Court by the Cardinal who practically governed France during Louis the Fourteenth's minority) since the days of his exile in Paris. He would then have had frequent opportunities of meeting her and her sisters, for "Les Mazarinettes," as the Mancini sisters were called, were to all intents and purposes brought up at the Louvre, of which they had the entrée at any time of day or night, with the young King of France as their constant companion.

The impressionable Louis soon fell passionately in love with Marie, and, by a singular coincidence, had the proud Cardinal so willed it, Hortense might have been Queen of England and Marie Queen of France.¹ For reasons of his own Mazarin, as we have already seen, looked coldly upon Charles's offer for Hortense's hand—

¹ Marie de Mancini married Lorenzo Colonna, Grand Constable of the Kingdom of Naples, but after a few years of connubial infelicity she obtained a separation from her husband *di letto*, passing the greater part of the remainder of her life in various convents, and dying at Pisa in 1715.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

and fortune—in 1659: and forced Louis into a loveless marriage with his cousin the Infanta Maria Theresa of Spain.

As soon as the Restoration was an accomplished fact the Cardinal would have been willing to reverse his decision and to marry his niece to the King of England, but from a variety of causes, of which his infatuation for Barbara Villiers was, undoubtedly, one—the opposition of Clarendon to the proposal was another—Charles was no longer inclined to entertain any idea of such an alliance. The Infanta of Spain and Catherine of Braganza, who were ultimately selected as brides for Louis and Charles, purely for reasons of State—for the question of affection never seems to have arisen for an instant—were wholly unsuited to their respective husbands' temperaments. Both were rather plain young women, patterns of virtue no doubt, well-dowered, and exemplary Catholics. But they entirely lacked the faculty of pleasing, possibly owing to the fact that neither of them had ever spoken to a man, outside their own family circle, until they became betrothed.

On the whole Louis had even less excuse than Charles for indulging in those promiscuous amours for which they both became so notorious in after-life. His wife did, at least, present him with an heir, which was more than poor Catherine could ever achieve. For years she cherished the hope of becoming a mother, paying alternate visits to the cold springs of Tunbridge Wells and the hot waters of Bath and Bristol, but all without avail.

At one time or another the Cardinal entertained various projects of marriage for his favourite niece, for almost as soon as she set foot in Paris in February, 1654, her grace and beauty began to attract attention. Amongst her

HORTENSE MANCINI

earlier suitors were Charles Emanuel, Duke of Savoy, Pedro the Second of Portugal, the illustrious Maréchal Turenne, despite the fact that he was her senior by about thirty-five years, and the Prince de Courtenay, a young nobleman with the longest pedigree and the shortest purse in all France. Though he had nothing but his cloak and his sword to recommend him, the Prince, for all his pride of race, would willingly have exchanged the poverty of Job for the wealth of Cræsus, especially with a beautiful bride to boot. None of her uncle's earlier schemes for settling her in the world having matured, it was not until the Cardinal lay upon his death-bed—his enemies declared that he died of "stone in the heart"—that Hortense was sacrificed to a man twice her own age who proved himself as unworthy a husband as it is possible to conceive.

Husbands, in all ages, often prove unsatisfactory after marriage and fail lamentably to live up to the expectations of their consorts, but there can never have been a more impossible man to live with in peace and amity than was Armand de la Porte, Marquis de Meilleraye and Grand Master of the Artillery of France.

On his marriage to Hortense at Vincennes, on February 28, 1661, he took the Cardinal's name, the pair being known henceforth as Duc and Duchess Mazarin.¹

The Cardinal left Hortense the bulk of his immense fortune, including the older and finer portion of the Palais Mazarin in the Rue de Richelieu, the old Hôtel Tubœuf, the picture and sculpture galleries erected by Mansard and certain dependencies abutting on the Rue des Petits

¹ It is said that in the first draft of the patent of nobility the title ran "Duc de Mazarin," but that the Cardinal deliberately struck out the "de," as being too high an honour for his nephew-in-law.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

Champs, portions of which are, or were quite recently, still standing.

The contents of the Palais Mazarin rivalled if they did not excel the treasures of the Louvre. Pictures by all the greatest masters in Europe, statuary, furniture, books and jewels of priceless value, came to Hortense at her uncle's death.

Yet the greater portion of this vast inheritance was ultimately lost, partly through her own extravagant habits, and, to a great extent, by the inroads made upon her fortune by her half-crazy husband. A seer of visions and a dreamer, religious fervour wrought such a change in him before he had been married many months that he became obsessed, amidst other hallucinations, with the idea that the statues and pictures which his unfortunate wife had inherited were intrinsically immodest and ought to be destroyed. He therefore proceeded to smash the offending marbles with a sledge-hammer and to daub the old masters, collected by the Cardinal with such loving care, with a paint-box of his own in order to remove, as he contended, the indecency of these masterpieces of pictorial art.

A little later on he wrote to Louis the Fourteenth to say that he had been informed by the Angel Gabriel in a dream that, if he did not at once sever his connexion with Louise de la Vallière, retribution would speedily overtake him.

After putting up with her husband's eccentricities for seven miserable years, Hortense left him, whereon he besought Louis to help him to recover possession of her. But the French king, who by no means lacked a sense of humour, told him, in declining to interfere, that as he had been so solicitous in the past about his own relations with

HORTENSE MANCINI

La Vallière the best advice he could give him was to consult the Angel Gabriel.

After Hortense ran away from her husband she lived an irregular life abroad,¹ entering one convent after another, sometimes at her husband's bidding, and sometimes, though less frequently, of her own free will.

She and her sister Marie, though they must in the aggregate have passed years in retreat, never seemed to derive much material advantage from their devotions, Hortense going so far as to declare that the Bastille itself would be preferable as a place of residence to the strict seclusion and rigid discipline of the Convent of the Daughters of Mary in Paris, of which she was at one time an unwilling inmate.

During these wander years Hortense figured in numerous intrigues and amours in various parts of Europe, becoming the mother of more than one child of which her husband was certainly not the father. Sprung from a warm-blooded Italian race, like a true Mancini such little accidents sat lightly upon her. At no time of her life was she troubled by moral scruples or, for the matter of that, by the results of her indiscretions.

So early as 1672 Charles, having learnt that her husband was endeavouring to recover possession of Hortense by force, instructed Ralph Montagu, the English Minister in Savoy, with whom she had become intimate at Chambéry, to offer her asylum in England.

Montagu, throughout his career an unscrupulous adventurer versed in the by-paths of intrigue, hated the Duchess of Portsmouth. In the hope of doing her some injury he therefore urged Hortense, with all the powers of persuasion he could command, to go to England,

¹ From 1668 to 1675.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

hoping that her beauty would speedily enslave Charles, and lead, eventually, to Louise's downfall.

His deep-laid schemes did not mature at once, and not until the autumn of 1675, after Hortense had been curtly informed by the Duchess of Savoy that her room would be preferable to her company at Chambéry, in consequence of her persistent attentions to the reigning duke, did she make up her mind to quit Italy for good and all, and to avail herself of the hospitality of the English Court. There she felt assured of a cordial welcome by her first cousin, the child bride of James, Duke of York. Mary of Modena, it will be remembered, had married, by proxy, the heir to the throne before she was fifteen, her husband being just forty-three when she arrived in London.

At the first sight of "dismal Jimmy," as Nell Gwynne, in one of her mischievous moods, nicknamed the Duke of York, Mary is said to have burst into tears.

Though she was always kindly treated by the King, who admired her good looks and fine breeding, Mary never became popular with the English people at large. In their ignorance they suspected her from the first of being an emissary of the Vatican!

Another inducement to Hortense to settle in London was the presence there of St. Evrémond, one of her most devoted admirers and frequent correspondents. By a singular coincidence, he had been exiled by Louis XIV for some indiscreet criticism of her uncle, the Cardinal, at the time of the Treaty of the Pyrenees.

Charles, out of the kindness of his heart, took pity on him and not only provided him with a home but conferred on him the sinecure post of keeper of His Majesty's ducks. From the brilliance of his conversa-

HORTENSE MANCINI

tional powers he became a general favourite in London society, his admiration for Hortense only terminating with his death.

In the winter of 1675, she travelled on horseback, through Switzerland, Germany and Holland, "wearing a plumed hat and a peruque," reaching Amsterdam in December. She left Holland with a retinue of about twenty servants, including a Moorish boy to make her coffee—perhaps she had heard that it was as yet somewhat of a novelty in England—and reached London after a stormy passage across the North Sea in the early days of January.

Whatever her failings and her easy virtue, Hortense never lacked pluck. Few women could have been found willing to take such an adventurous journey in mid-winter attended only by menial servants. A house had now to be found for her at short notice, as before she landed on English soil she had announced that she did not wish to be an inmate of either Whitehall or St. James's Palace.

Lord Windsor, at this time Master of the Horse to the Duchess of York, obligingly vacated his house in favour of the proud Italian beauty who preferred the semi-independence of a separate place of abode to being domiciled in Whitehall in close proximity to the Duchess of Portsmouth. Lord Windsor's house, which is clearly indicated in Ogilby and Morgan's valuable map of London and Westminster, 1682, fronted St. James's Park and adjoined Cleveland House on the west. It was, of course, an encroachment on the Crown lands, as was Godolphin House, on the site of what was until recently Stafford House, the last of the ducal residences of the first order in London.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

Though such enclosures were possible in the Restoration era, even then they sometimes excited unfavourable comment, but any curtailment of the Royal parks, however small, in these democratic days, would almost inevitably overthrow the Government which dared to propose it.

Only a few years ago the formation of a gravelled carriage road across the Green Park from Piccadilly to Buckingham Palace, which would have appreciably relieved the congestion of traffic in the West End, caused such an outcry in the House of Commons that the road was turfed over again and restored to the Park, although the handsome entrance gates, removed from Devonshire House, serve to remind us of the project. As Hortense was a great lover of animals and devoted to outdoor life, she wanted ample space for stables, dog-kennels and aviaries; her love of horses, dogs and birds making a strong appeal to Charles, who was never so happy as when playing with his spaniels, terriers and lurchers, or feeding his ducks in St. James's Park. The duchess occasionally lost her dogs, and, as the King did under similar circumstances, she advertised in the *London Gazette*, offering rewards for their recovery.

Whether Hortense was over or under thirty when she entered Whitehall like Armida in the camp of Godefroi, a year or two more or less could have made little or no difference in her looks, for, so far from being impaired by the hard life she led after running away from her husband, her remarkable beauty of face and form had, so to speak, acquired a double lustre.

In addition to sheer physical loveliness she had glamour and fascination of no common order, whilst from long association with the brightest intellects of France and Italy, her conversational powers were, I should imagine,



Hortense Mancini Duchess of Mazarin. n.

HORTENSE MANCINI, DUCHESS OF MAZARIN
From the engraving by G. Valck, after the portrait by Sir P. Lely.

superior to those of most of her rivals near the throne. Some of these, charming and attractive though they may have been to one of Charles's peculiar temperament, were frankly illiterate.

Neither Barbara Villiers nor Louise de Querouaille had any taste for literature, and both wrote, at all events in their later years, vile hands. Nell Gwynne could hardly write at all, though in one of her letters to Ormonde asking him to expedite payment of the arrears of her Irish pension, she mentions that, in order to save time, she had spared him the infliction of her "wild characters."

No wonder the Roman beauty's arrival created consternation amongst the reigning favourites at Whitehall. The French Ambassador and his satellites, first perplexed and then alarmed at what might conceivably happen if Hortense should dominate the English King, cudgelled their brains how to meet and counter the new situation which had arisen.

That their fears were not altogether groundless is apparent from the fact that within six months the Duchess of Cleveland retired to Paris, only revisiting London in future at rare intervals, whilst her Grace of Portsmouth found it expedient to take the waters of Bourbon and to remain in her native country for a whole half-year, a thing she had never been known to do since she came to England.

Although marriage with Charles was of course out of the question, Hortense was willing to accept a less informal position at Court, if only she could be assured of an income sufficient for her needs. The greater portion of her immense fortune having been dissipated by her half-crazy husband, she importuned Louis XIV to secure her a pension, and to extract from the duke a competent

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

allowance; and not until she was compelled to abandon all hope of assistance from France did she make terms with Charles.

As in the case of Louise de Querouaille a few years earlier, there was much negotiation and manœuvring for position before she definitely accepted the position of one of the King's mistresses a year after her arrival in London.

But when, on the opening of Parliament in February, 1677, she appeared in a prominent position, raised above all the ladies of the Court grouped around the throne, all doubts were dispelled as to the precise nature of her relations with the King.

Nell Gwynne now appeared at Court swathed in the deepest mourning, in order, as she said, to mark the eclipse of her French rival and her vanished hopes. No doubt the wish was father to the thought, for there was never any love lost between "Mistress Nell" and the "Weeping Willow." For once, despite her quick wit, Nell prophesied too soon, as Louise's hold over Charles suffered a partial but not a total eclipse. The rivalry of the two foreign duchesses inspired Waller¹ to write a set of verses entitled "The Triple Combat," from which it will be convenient to extract a few lines.

When through the world fair Mazarine had run,
Bright as her fellow traveller the sun;
Hither at length the Roman Eagle flies,
At the last triumph of her conqu'ring eyes
. . . Legions of Cupids to the battle come
For *Little Britain*² these, and those for Rome.

¹ Edmund Waller was a near neighbour as well as an admirer of the Duchess of Mazarin, for he lived on the west side of St. James's Street from before the Restoration until his death.

² "Little Britain" was, of course, a neat allusion to the Duchess of Portsmouth's Breton parentage.

HORTENSE MANCINI

Another passage was evidently intended to refer to Mrs. Jane Middleton, as a representative type of English, as contrasted with French, beauty:

From distant regions two such beauties met
Venus had been an equal friend to both
And Victory to declare herself seems loth

Till *Chloris* shining in the field she spies.

Her matchless form made all the English glad;
And foreign beauties less assurance had.
Yet, like the three on Ida's top, they all
Pretend alike, contending for the ball.

Though by no means one of Waller's happiest efforts his lines have a distinct value as showing the interest which Whitehall took in the struggle for the supremacy of looks, entered upon between representatives of France, Italy, and England at the imaginary Court of Venus.

A discordant note was struck by Sir Carr Scrope in the prologue which he wrote to Etherege's *Man of Mode*,¹ in which the Duchess of Mazarin was clearly pointed at in the lines:

Of foreign women why should we fetch the scum
When we can be so richly served at home?

There are other coarse allusions to Hortense in the so-called "State Poems," by Lord Rochester and others. Yet she was never so feared and distrusted in England as was the Duchess of Portsmouth.

Hortense had not been in London two months before there appeared a little book of 130 pages, purporting to be her memoirs "written in French by her own hand and done into English by P. Porter, Esq." Licensed by

¹ Produced at the King's Theatre in 1676.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

Henry Oldenburgh on February 22, though of slight biographical value, it sheds a tiny ray of light upon the vexed question of her age—a subject on which Hortense was always extremely reticent. “I was only six years old when I was brought into France,” she states; therefore, if we accept 1646 as the date of her birth, she would have been fifteen at the time of her ill-starred marriage, whilst her husband would have been still under thirty.

Another sentence serves to illustrate her inherent extravagance, even in early youth.

One day we threw above three hundred pistoles out of the window of the Palais Mazarin, to have the pleasure of seeing the company of servants that were in the Court scramble and fight for them. This prodigality being told to the Cardinal, it caused so much displeasure to him, that it is believed it hastened his end; whether it were so or no, he died within eight days after, and left me the richest heiress but the unhappiest woman in all Christendom!

In the course of the next summer Hortense, with all the winning cards in her hand, deliberately threw away her advantages by her undisguised encouragement of the young and handsome Prince of Monaco. He had followed her all the way to London from his picturesque castle perched on the rock which overlooks Monte Carlo, with the avowed intention of adding yet another to Hortense's long catalogue of lovers.

The relations between them soon became so notorious that Charles awoke from his dream and revoked a pension of £4,000 a year which he had conferred on Hortense. Yet, with his habitual generosity to women, even when he tired of them, in a few weeks it was restored to her in full. Her brief spell of authority, however, soon came to an abrupt conclusion, and though Charles occasionally visited her at her house in St. James's,

HORTENSE MANCINI

where music, flirtation and agreeable conversation made the time pass pleasantly enough, she never regained the position she lost by her encouragement of the Prince of Monaco.

In later years the duchess fell a victim to the mania for basset which infected London society. The game had been introduced to London society by a disreputable French croupier named Morin, who started the craze at the Duchess of Mazarin's house.

Charles, never a reckless gambler himself, either on the turf or at cards, disliked seeing his mistresses play for high stakes. No doubt he felt that if they lost heavily, as they frequently did, at the basset-table, sooner or later he would be called upon to foot the bill.

In a letter of the year 1679 from one of the Verney family to Ralph Montagu in Paris the writer says:

The Duchess of Cleveland is lately come over, and will shortly [go] to Windsor if not there already. His Majesty gave the Commissioners of the Treasury fair warning to look to themselves, for she would have a bout with them for money, having lately lost £20,000 in money and jewels *in one night* at play.

Hortense had not been long in London before the youthful Lady Sussex conceived a passionate admiration for the Italian beauty which, in itself, led to complications which neither, perhaps, foresaw. Lady Anne Fitzroy, who had been acknowledged by Charles as his child, though she was in all probability Lord Chesterfield's daughter, was married to Lord Sussex when only fifteen, and the fact that the union did not prove a very happy one may have been a bond of union with Hortense. Lady Anne's husband, the thirteenth Baron Dacre, was raised to the dignity of Earl of Sussex on his marriage. He was then the owner of the picturesque mediæval castle

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

of Hurstmonceaux,¹ but, owing to his reckless extravagance, it had to be sold to pay his debts. The intimacy between Hortense and Lady Sussex incidentally afforded the duchess frequent opportunities of meeting the King in private and, at all events for a time, without attracting general attention.

Yet it was not long before the French spies, who were to be found at Whitehall in big battalions, realized how the land lay.

By a singular coincidence Lady Sussex had been installed in the identical rooms, immediately above the King's private apartments, which had been occupied by her mother in the days of her supremacy. To this Royal preserve no one possessed the master-key except Will Chiffinch and the King himself.

The French fiddlers, of whom Charles was a generous patron, may occasionally have been admitted to this inner *salle des pas perdus*,² for the French Ambassador reported to his Royal master on one occasion that Hortense and Lady Sussex were dancing, singing and playing battledore and shuttlecock together the whole day long. So constant were Hortense's visits that Charles must have found her neither in the way nor out of it, as he once said of Lord Godolphin.

It must have been galling in the extreme to her Grace of Cleveland to see the apartments she had occupied in

¹ Built by the Fiennes family in the fifteenth century, the castle has been tenderly restored to its pristine condition in recent years by Colonel Claude Lowther, its present owner.

² During the height of the so-called Popish Plot Charles sent his French musicians to Barillon's house in St. James's Square, whilst the Duchess of Portsmouth was in such a state of panic that she summarily dismissed all her foreign servants.

HORTENSE MANCINI

the days of her power, and from which she was now rigorously excluded, devoted to this novel purpose.

Some time in 1677 the intimacy between this strangely assorted pair suffered an interruption, if indeed it did not terminate, owing to Lady Sussex leaving her husband and going to Paris to join her mother. During the latter's temporary absence she would seem to have supplanted her in the affections of Ralph Montagu,¹ but in 1681, at the King's insistent demand, she returned to England and resumed cohabitation with her husband. Next year she gave birth to a child which was christened at Windsor Castle in June, the King standing sponsor.

The Foreign Invasion became more dangerous in 1678, owing to the revelations made by Titus Oates and others (mostly on perjured evidence) and to Shaftesbury's attempts to foist the Duke of Monmouth on the country as the rightful heir to the throne. It was freely rumoured, in order to support Monmouth's pretensions, that the King had himself become a convert to Rome in 1668. This, it should be recollected, was the year in which the mysterious James de la Cloche is believed to have paid his first visit to England, though it is doubtful if Shaftesbury was aware of the true facts of the case.

Although at the time the "*Traité de Madame*" was negotiated "*Madame*" had striven hard to induce her brother to announce his adhesion to the Catholic Church, no decision was reached; but when, in 1672, the legitimate heir to the Crown openly declared himself a convert to the ancient faith, Charles was faced by a most awkward dilemma. No one was better aware than he was of the difficulties which a public declaration of a change of faith on his part would entail. He was fully cognizant of the

¹ British Ambassador to France, and subsequently first Duke of Montagu.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

distrust with which a large section of the population regarded Catholics; the Presbyterians, in particular, professing to fear that James's conversion was a preliminary to the rekindling of the fires of Smithfield. Charles also foresaw clearly that to preserve the succession for his brother would lead him into endless complications with his Parliament, as was abundantly proved in the course of the next few years.

Yet undismayed by Test Acts and Exclusion Bills, he stood loyally by James in the darkest days of the so-called Popish Plot. Lord Ailesbury's little-known memoirs¹ are especially valuable at this period, illustrating as they do the King's isolation during the height of the agitation, although he eventually surmounted every obstacle standing in the way of his brother's succession.

It would seem as if, though he had a strong inclination towards Catholicism, Charles but hovered on the brink of such a momentous change not once but many times. Dreading as he did the very idea of being "sent on his travels" a second time, he deemed it inexpedient to make any public announcement of his religious views. Aware that he owed his crown to the Presbyterians, he never forgot that he also owed his life to the Catholics, a conviction which goes far to explain his oft-reiterated desire for toleration of all creeds. His Parliaments, on the other hand, were tireless in persecuting first one religious community and then another, with a strong preference for penalizing his loyal Catholic subjects. Charles, therefore, consistently declined to be drawn into religious controversy, in public or in private, contenting himself with telling the French Ambassador,² when he became too

¹ Published by the Roxburgh Society.

² Colbert de Croissy.

HORTENSE MANCINI

insistent, that, in his opinion, no creed agreed so well with the absolute authority and the divine right of Kings as Catholicism.¹

¹ Less than a year before his death Charles, who, whatever his faults, was no hypocrite, attended the Communion service according to the Anglican rite in the Chapel at Whitehall, together with three of his natural sons: the Dukes of St. Albans, Northumberland and Richmond. The last-named (Louise de Querouaille's only son) became a Catholic some years later, but reverted to Protestantism in middle life.

CHAPTER VII

Last Years: The Wreckage of Whitehall

IT will be convenient to digress, at this point in Charles's life, from the purely social history of his reign, in order to arrive at a clear understanding of the difficulties and complications of the political situation with which he had to contend between 1678 and 1681, in which latter year he decided to govern without the aid of a Parliament. Had he not been plentifully endowed by Nature with tact and discretion, he could never have survived the numerous hostile combinations against the throne and the legitimate succession with which he was confronted in those momentous years.

In the sphere of diplomacy Charles, acting as his own foreign minister, triumphed, by his own personal exertions, over obstacles of almost incredible difficulty.

In the sixteenth session of that corrupt assembly known as the "Pensionary Parliament," the King asked for an additional revenue of £300,000 with which to support the dignity of the Crown and to support the authority of England on the Continent. As the Commons made no response whatever to his demand, Charles sent an expeditionary force to Flanders, under Lord Ossory, to strengthen the garrison at Ostend, and thereby put pressure upon France to evacuate the border fortresses lately wrested from Spain. Louis, for once in a way impressed by Charles's war-like attitude, reconsidered his position, and having signified his willingness to make the conces-

THE WRECKAGE OF WHITEHALL

sions demanded by England, the Treaty of Nymwegen was at last concluded.

Despite Charles's conspicuous success in the conduct of foreign affairs, fresh trouble was in store for him at home. In the next session of Parliament, which was opened by the King in person, a heated debate took place on the seizure of Ralph Montagu's papers, wherein Danby's letters were produced and read out in the House by the Speaker. One member declared that he wondered that they sat there silent when they saw themselves sold to the French for six millions of livres! But the speaker was singularly misinformed, for Charles's firm and patriotic action in the matter of the Treaty of Nymwegen only resulted in his losing altogether a subsidy of £200,000 which would have been of the greatest possible assistance to him in the financial difficulties in which he found himself owing to the niggardliness of Parliament.

In order to save Danby from impeachment, at all events for the moment, Charles, on December 30, prorogued Parliament until February. It never met again, being dissolved by Royal Proclamation on January 24, 1679, after an existence of all but eighteen years.¹ As in the new Parliament the Court party was in a hopeless minority, Danby was committed to the Tower in April, where he remained a prisoner for nearly five years.

With an all but empty Treasury Charles contrived to keep England at peace after the Treaty of Nymwegen, although he had to fight against tremendous odds before he emerged triumphant not only over the machinations of his enemies and the incompetence and treachery

¹ By way of contrast, it may be remarked that of Charles's three later Parliaments, the first sat for four months, the second for three, and the last for only a week!

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

of some of his Ministers, but the avowed hostility of Parliament.

For eighteen years his reign had been singularly free from internal plots or organized conspiracies against the regal power.

The rising in 1661 of Venner and the Fifth Monarchy men, who pretended to believe that the millennium was at hand, had been quickly suppressed. But in the summer of 1678 the fruits of the Foreign Invasion developed into a positive menace.

For the next three years it needed all the diplomatic ability at Charles's command to avert an armed rising directed against the throne and his brother's succession.

The widespread distrust aroused by the Duchess of Portsmouth's influence at Court and the unreasoning hatred of Catholicism entertained by a considerable section of the members of the "Pensionary Parliament" were amongst the contributory causes to this highly dangerous state of affairs.

An even more formidable situation was reached when three despicable villains, Titus Oates, Israel Tonge, and William Bedloe concocted the "Popish Plot." A monstrous imposture from its inception, none the less it impressed itself upon the minds of the Exclusionists, who pursued not only the Duke of York and his wife, but also her secretary, Edward Coleman,¹ with an undying hatred.

¹ Amongst Coleman's papers was discovered, when the plot was launched, an incriminatory letter for which, following on Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey's death, he was condemned on a charge of high treason. It contained the following passage: "We have now a mighty work in our hands, no less than the conversion of three kingdoms and by that the utter subduing of a pestilent heresy which has so long domineered over

THE WRECKAGE OF WHITEHALL

By perjuring themselves up to the hilt and by the systematic manufacture of false evidence, Oates and his accomplices contrived to inflame public opinion against Catholicism in general and the Jesuit Order in particular.

In the autumn of 1678, when Oates was summoned to appear before the Privy Council, he laid before that body no fewer than eighty-one "articles," in which he professed to have discovered a deep-laid scheme to murder the King and enforce the immediate adoption of the Catholic faith by the nation at large.

Charles, who seems at first to have treated the story with the contempt it deserved, was inclined to think that if the perjurers were "given rope enough" their nefarious schemes would speedily come to nought. He attended the meetings of the Privy Council, and personally interrogated Oates on his statement that Don John of Austria, having granted him an audience, had promised to provide funds for the murder of the "Black Boy in Whitehall," a phrase strongly reminiscent of Cromwellian times.

"What sort of a man is this Don John?" asked the King.

"Lean, tall and black," replied Oates, at which the King smiled, well knowing that the Spaniard in question was short, fat and red-haired. And when the perjurer further declared that within his knowledge the preliminaries of the plot had been arranged in the house of the Jesuit fathers, "close to the Louvre in Paris," Charles, aware by this time that the witness was lying,

great part of the northern world." And though Coleman, far from countenancing a plot to murder the King, may have intended merely to allude to a religious crusade, the prosecution, taking a prejudiced view, only too characteristic of the legal mind at this period, sent him to the scaffold.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

exclaimed: "Man, the Jesuits have no house within a mile of the Louvre!"

Having, as he believed, effectually disposed of Oates's allegations, Charles, characteristically, left London for Newmarket to attend the autumn race meeting, at which he had some horses running, leaving Danby explicit instructions to take no further steps in the matter, and on no account to broach the subject to his brother James.

The Treasurer, however, for reasons of his own, disregarded the King's orders, and acquainted Parliament with the whole of the details at the first convenient opportunity; thereby doing infinitely more harm than good, and, incidentally, precipitating something like a national panic. After the mysterious murder of Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey¹ in October, Oates, growing bolder still, shifted his ground and made a direct accusation against the Queen Consort, whom he declared was an accessory to the scheme for taking the King's life.

Shaftesbury, playing always for his own hand, if he did not actually contemplate the possibility of the King's death by violence, overstepped the limits of Charles's toleration when he dragged the Queen's name into the controversy. In the vain hope of excluding James from the succession, he sedulously fanned the rising flame by insinuating that it was the King's duty to divorce his wife and marry again, in the hope and expectation of begetting a Protestant heir to the throne.

Charles, always at his best in an emergency, awoke from his apparent lethargy at the shameful attack upon his blameless Consort, and exclaimed: "They think I

¹ Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey was the magistrate who had received the sworn declarations of Oates and his confederates.

THE WRECKAGE OF WHITEHALL

have a mind for another wife, but, for all that, I will never allow an innocent woman to be thus accused." His refusal to countenance for an instant any attack upon his Queen, covert or overt, aroused the inherent manliness of his character, and must count amongst the most creditable actions of his career. Surrounded as was Catherine by enemies in disguise, and finding herself the object of wholly undeserved suspicion, she clung to her husband as her one and only protector, accompanying him on all his journeys, feeling that she "could be nowhere safe but where the King is present."¹

As the perjured testimonies of Oates and his hirelings became more widely diffused, the banishment of the Duchess of Portsmouth was openly demanded. Shaftesbury, ever ready to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds, proceeded to indict her as a common nuisance and a source of public danger before the Court of Common Council.

That Parliament was virtually in a state of panic is evident from the fact that a Mr. Vaughan, a Welsh member, went so far as to speak in open debate in the Commons of "popery being found in the King's bed!" The insistent demand for Louise's expulsion from Court was little, if at all, appeased by her dismissal of all her Catholic servants. Yet the crafty Frenchwoman contrived to escape the deportation she richly deserved, and to retain some at least of her sinister influence over Charles until his death.

On Danby's extinction as a political force² Charles put

¹ *Vide* "The Prideaux Correspondence" (Camden Society), page 82.

² On Danby's release in February, 1684, he visited the King at Court the same day, but took no further part in public affairs during the remainder of Charles's reign.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

the Treasury in Commission, appointing Lord Essex, who had proved himself a model Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, First Lord, with Lory Hyde and Godolphin as his colleagues on the Board. Sunderland, who about this time was appointed Secretary of State, now acquired a position in the Cabinet which the King could not afford to disregard. But as the rising hope of the Whigs soon showed himself too shifty to be trusted very far, he lost his post in 1681 and was struck off the roll of the Privy Council.¹

Having advised the King to come to terms with the Opposition, with a view to buying off Shaftesbury's hostility, Sunderland had recommended Charles to turn towards the moderate party, whose acknowledged chief was Sir William Temple. In addition to a good diplomatic record the author of the Triple Alliance was regarded generally as an eminently safe man owing to his being unfettered by party ties. To a plan adumbrated by Temple for an enlarged Council drawn from both political parties (who were, by now, differentiated by the respective labels of Whig and Tory, although the precise measure of their attachment to either political group would, in some cases, have been difficult to define), Charles consented to give the plan a trial, though he never wholly commended it. With Shaftesbury as its nominal head, the new Council, the earliest germ of a Coalition Ministry, soon proved unworkable, chiefly owing to its unwieldiness. England did not love Coalitions any more in the seventeenth century than it does to-day, and once

¹ At a later date Sunderland, having cast in his lot with the Duchess of Portsmouth, was re-appointed a Secretary of State, whereon he entered into a fierce political rivalry with his brother-in-law, Lord Halifax.

THE WRECKAGE OF WHITEHALL

again Charles dissolved Parliament after a session of only four months.¹

The King now formed the opinion that the best way of averting hostility to the Crown and the succession would be for his brother to absent himself for awhile from England. He therefore addressed a diplomatic letter to James, in the course of which he said: "I have already given you my reasons at large why I think it fit you should absent [yourself] from me for some time beyond the seas; as I am truly sorry for the occasion, so, you may be sure, I shall never desire it longer than it will be absolutely necessary both for your good and my service."

To Charles's infinite annoyance (having disposed of James for the time being),² he next had to reckon with Monmouth's growing ambition to be recognized as his heir. Having fallen under the influence of Shaftesbury, that weak and misguided youth—as vain as he was incompetent—now allowed his name, though well knowing that his mother was never married to the King, to be put forward as the legitimate, and Protestant, heir to the throne, hoping thereby to injure his uncle's prospects.

It must have been a bitter pang to send away the son he had idolized—until he found out that he was conspiring against him—but when the King fell ill at Windsor, in the summer of 1679, the dangers of a disputed succession, in the possible event of his demise, once more became acute.

It is at this point in Charles's career that the little-

¹ In the next Parliament, which met at Westminster in October, 1680, the Whigs again obtained a clear majority, whereon another dissolution followed within three months which resulted even more unfavourably for the Tories.

² At the end of February, 1679.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

known memoirs of Lord Ailesbury, or, as he then was, Lord Bruce, become even more valuable. The King, who had taken a great fancy to the young courtier, appointed him one of the gentlemen of his bedchamber, and entrusted him with his complete confidence from this time onward until his death.

In the summer of this year Monmouth was sent to Scotland, ostensibly to quell an insurrection which broke out after the murder of James Sharp, Archbishop of St. Andrews, by the Covenanters, but really to get him out of the way. His notable success at Bothwell Bridge enhanced his popularity, and on his return to London (with his father's permission), in November, he was greeted with every token of popular enthusiasm; his uncle James's unpopularity increasing in inverse ratio to the esteem in which the Protestant Duke was now held.

Monmouth was received by Nell Gwynne at her house in Pall Mall, but to her appeals to Charles to restore him to favour he turned a deaf ear. Nell had hoped to soften the King's heart by telling him that his son looked "pale, wan, lean and long visaged," but, for once in a way, Charles would not listen to her and "bade her be quiet."

She was probably aware that Monmouth was not legitimate, and she apparently knew enough of English history to call him "Perkin" to his face. Never a political schemer, in the sense that the Duchesses of Cleveland and Portsmouth were, Nell preferred to describe herself in her own naïve way as "a sleeping partner in the ship of State!"

As Monmouth was now forbidden to show himself at Court, he betook himself, probably at Shaftesbury's instigation, to the west of England, where he was again

THE WRECKAGE OF WHITEHALL

well received. On his return he dared to disobey the King's orders, for he both spoke and voted, in the House of Lords, for the exclusion of the Duke of York.¹

For reasons not apparent on the surface, Charles refused to confirm the choice of the Commons when Speaker Seymour was re-elected to the Chair in 1679, notwithstanding that he was an aristocratic Tory and had proved himself a capable, if somewhat arrogant, Speaker.²

It is on record that a wholly irregular debate took place in the Commons in October, 1673, months after Seymour had been voted to the Chair, wherein the Speaker's mode of life outside the House was commented upon unfavourably. Mr. William Harbord (whose name, I find, was on the French Ambassador's pay list) was particularly offensive, alleging that Seymour kept bad company, frequenting taverns and gaming-houses, and was altogether "too big a man" for his exalted station. Seymour treated these animadversions on his private character with contempt, and the subject dropped without any vote being taken reflecting upon the dignity of his office.

But what may afford a clue to Charles's hostile attitude towards Seymour in the matter of his re-election will be found in a letter which Lord Conway wrote to Lord Essex on December 1, 1673.³ From this it appears that

¹ Shaftesbury's last card was played when the eight-day Parliament at Oxford—the last ever called by Charles—was dissolved in March, 1681. He and his "brisk boys" whom he enlisted in the hope of overawing the King, left Oxford a beaten and discredited rabble.

² The King had wished Sir Thomas Meres to be chosen, but the House unanimously called Mr. Serjeant Gregory, a Whig, to the Chair.

³ The Essex Papers, which are valuable for the sidelights which they cast upon the frivolous life of the Court, have been published by the Camden Society.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

he was carried by "My Lord Treasurer"¹ to Lady Shrewsbury's house, in King Street, Westminster, where he found Nell Gwynne—he put her name first—the Duke of Buckingham, "Mr. Speaker," and, no doubt, others whom he omitted to mention. "About three in the morning we went to supper and drank smartly." The King was always unreasonably jealous of Mistress Nell, although it has been abundantly proved that she was the one and only constant nymph whom he ever encountered in his long and varied experience of the frailty of human nature. His jealousy of her was a thing altogether distinct from his infatuation for the Duchess of Portsmouth,² of whom he was not a little afraid—for reasons which I have already sufficiently indicated.

Where Nelly was concerned he would not tolerate for a moment any poaching on his preserves. Moreover, Lady Shrewsbury and Buckingham were as dissolute a pair as could be found in London Society at this date, whilst the constant nymph was still only twenty-three and at the zenith of her beauty. It would appear that Charles's suspicions of Seymour were allayed in after-years, for it was in the ex-Speaker's coach that he drove out of Oxford, en route for Windsor, after the dissolution of the abortive Parliament of March, 1681.

At the recent polls the Whig faction, headed by Lord Russell, had been reinforced "like a spring tide at full moon." Yet the downfall of Shaftesbury and his dupes, whose hopes of overthrowing the Constitution had been stimulated by the activities of the Green Ribbon Club and other disloyal societies, was near at hand.

¹ Thomas, Lord Clifford of Chudleigh.

² Louise de Querouaille, who had only recently come into the King's life at the time referred to.

THE WRECKAGE OF WHITEHALL

Lord Ailesbury, who accompanied the King to Oxford, took careful notes of the proceedings of this last, and shortest, of Charles's Parliaments.

At the very outset of its deliberations an under-current of hostility to the Crown manifested itself.

William Williams, who was called to the Chair of the Commons, was, according to Ailesbury, "a lawyer of competent learning, but of a fiery and vicious temper, subservient to the Whigs and as pliant as a spaniel dog," though obviously not one of King Charles's especial breed.

In an insolent speech to the throne he dared to say: "As a mark that the House of Commons is not given to change they have made a choice of me for their Speaker"; at which the King said nothing but thought the more.

On the re-introduction of the Exclusion Bill only one member, Sir Leoline Jenkins who represented the University, ventured to raise a dissentient voice. The temper of the House was all but unanimous in advocating the exclusion of the Duke of York from the succession, and to set up Monmouth, "the Protestant Duke," illegitimate though he was, as the alternative heir to the throne. But if Shaftesbury hoped to overawe the King, with his ragged regiment of "brisk boys," recruited for the most part from the purlieus of Wapping, he was speedily disillusioned. At a meeting of the Cabinet, held on the following Sunday at Merton, Charles resolved on an immediate dissolution, and, next morning, when Ailesbury went to Christ Church he found the King already seated on his throne, wearing his robes and crown, and in the best of spirits.

"He gave me a most gracious smile, and I never saw him with such a cheerful countenance."

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

He called on Lord Chancellor Finch to do his duty by declaring it to be his Royal pleasure that the Parliament should be dissolved forthwith. At which wholly unexpected announcement the Whigs looked aghast and "sighed audibly," realizing as they did that Shaftesbury had played his last stake—and lost it.

On going to assist his master to unrobe, Charles touched Ailesbury on the shoulder, saying, with a merry twinkle in his dark eyes: "I am a better man than you were a quarter of an hour ago, for you had better have one King than five hundred!" And without further ado he drove off post-haste to Windsor, leaving the Whigs to slink out of Oxford a beaten and disheartened rabble.¹

The discomfiture of the Whigs, so skilfully engineered by the King himself, and the resulting consequences, have been so admirably summarized by Sir H. Imbert Terry that I make no apology for inserting the following quotation from "A Misjudged Monarch," published so recently as 1917:

"Practically alone and unaided, Charles had triumphed; the crisis of his reign was over. . . . He gauged the public feeling accurately. He knew that the excesses of Shaftesbury and his faction alarmed all moderate men by recalling the days of the Civil War; he understood, moreover, the character of his countrymen. . . . He bore more insults and suffered greater disregard, not only of his wishes, but of his just claims, than any other sovereign in English history; he sustained it all with matchless non-chalance, never losing his temper, never losing his head, knowing exactly the time to do nothing, choosing to an hour the moment for decisive action."

¹ Following on the dissolution Charles drew up a declaration which he commanded to be read from every pulpit in the land, in which he recapitulated the shortcomings of his three last Parliaments, affirming, at the same time, his adherence to the Established Church. I have not been so fortunate as to meet with a copy of this pronouncement though there must surely be some in existence.

THE WRECKAGE OF WHITEHALL

The tide having definitely turned in the King's favour, Shaftesbury was sent to the Tower, whilst Charles, with an eye upon his sadly depleted exchequer, proceeded to negotiate, with the help of Barillon and Laurence Hyde, the First Lord of the Treasury, an advance of £200,000 by Louis XIV, conditional upon the King's withdrawal from the Spanish alliance, and his remaining, if humanly possible, independent of Parliamentary assistance, stipulations which Charles readily assented to.

Relieved from the vexatious attempts of the legislature to curtail the Royal prerogative, and, at the same time, interfere with the succession to the throne, the King was now free to spend more of his time at Windsor than at Whitehall. In the course of this same eventful year, 1681, he settled Burford House, adjoining the Castle, on Nell Gwynne and her heirs, in whose possession it remained until almost the close of the eighteenth century, when the Third Duke of St. Albans, having dissipated the family fortunes and retired to Brussels, it reverted to the Crown.

At Windsor, as in Pall Mall, the King passed more of his time, in the few years of life which remained to him, in Mistress Nell's congenial company. Such, however, was his insatiable appetite for erotic gratification that, although he was undoubtedly fonder of her than any of his other favourites, she must, I think, have found him a trying knight-errant to put up with. And yet she achieved a distinction to which none of her rivals near the throne could lay claim. She loved him for himself, and loved him disinterestedly. When, for instance, Sir John Germain, a coarse Dutchman of low extraction, who began life by keeping an ordinary in a provincial town, made advances to her after Charles's death, she

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

told him that she was "no such sportsman as to lay the dog where the deer should lie."

And when Buckingham, chancing to meet her alone in the King's antechamber, once attempted to snatch a kiss on the sly, all he got for his pains was the discovery that her tiny hand could deliver quite a sound box on the ear.

On another occasion, it having come to Charles's knowledge that Lord Cavendish¹ was endeavouring to force his attentions upon her, the King positively forbade Nell to have anything to say to him or even to be seen in his company.

It is evident from a pathetic letter which she addressed to James the Second, soon after his brother's death, that she respected his judgment, both of men and affairs.

She told King James that she was accustomed to tell him all her griefs, and that he told her who were her real friends and who were not.

In dealing with what may fairly be termed the wreckage of Whitehall some mention should perhaps be made of certain fair and frail ladies whose names have not so far occurred in these pages.

One of these was Mistress Winifred Wells.* She was a tall girl, exquisitely shaped, faultlessly dressed, and walked, we are somewhere told, "like a goddess." Yet Nature had invested her fair features with a certain

¹ Afterwards first Duke of Devonshire, and the rebuilder of Chatsworth. His reputation where women were concerned was of the worst.

* Winifred Wells was the youngest daughter of Squire Wells of Bambridge, Twyford, Hants, who died in 1642, by Mary, daughter of Sir Edward Mansel. Miss Henrietta Maria Price, whose name crops up so frequently in Gramont, was one of the Queen's Maids of Honour and Winifred's first cousin.

THE WRECKAGE OF WHITEHALL

careless indolence which her envious contemporaries declared made her look somewhat sheepish.¹ The frequency with which her name occurs in the State Papers and Secret Service Accounts leaves no manner of doubt as to the nature of her relations with the King, and it would appear that she retained her hold upon him for ten whole years—if not longer. The ingenuity which Charles displayed in remunerating the fair Winifred, and other late-comers to the Court of Venus, after all the larger prizes had been secured by their Graces of Cleveland and Portsmouth, was worthy of a better cause. In April, 1664, I find that Miss Wells was in receipt of all monies arising from the sale of underwood in certain coppices in the New Forest, these being valued at a high figure, and although in January, 1667, a pension of £200 a year was conferred upon her, she subsequently received further lavish grants in connexion with the New Forest, including such unconsidered trifles as felons' forfeitures and other odd sources of revenue.

On September 17, 1672, she was also given a warrant for £2,150 out of the Royal Bounty "without charges thereon."

Winifred's most persistent opponent at Whitehall was the Duchess of Cleveland. It will be remembered that, according to Gramont, one of the articles of the so-called "treaty," whereby Barbara bound herself to sever her connexion with Harry Jermyn, was that she should "rail no more" against either Winifred or "La belle Stuart."

In consideration of her observing these conditions the King promised to make her a duchess, and to increase

¹ A fine miniature of her, by an unknown artist, in the Duke of Buccleuch's collection, seems to bear out this impression.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

her emoluments in order to support that dignity adequately.¹

The Duke of Buckingham made an atrocious pun upon her name which I venture to reproduce in French as a footnote.² It is to be found only in the rare first edition of Gramont's Memoirs published at Cologne in 1713.

Some time in 1675, Winifred married Thomas Wyndham, one of the Queen's dressers, but after this date I have not discovered any further mention of her.

Charles, never more ingenious than when engaged in devising new methods of remunerating the ladies of his seraglio, hit upon an entirely new source of supply in order to provide suitably for Lady Falmouth. He gave her the whole of the profits derived from the mooring of vessels and lighters in the Pool of London. These were accustomed to make fast to buoys floating in the stream and fitted with iron rings for that express purpose. Owing to the expansion of England's maritime trade, which, after the conclusion of the Dutch wars, increased by leaps and bounds, the profits arising from this source alone amounted to a very considerable sum.

Lady Falmouth, on whom Charles squandered a small

¹ Pepys, who chanced to sit next to Winifred at the theatre on May 30, 1669, speaks of her as "a great beauty and a woman of pretty conversation," from which we may infer that she flattered Samuel's vanity by condescending to take any notice of that irrepressible gossip.

² *Le duc de Buckingham fit un couplet de chanson sur ce sujet, dans lequel le Roi parle à Progers, confident de ses menus plaisirs. L'Alusion de Wells, qui veut dire Puits, fait toute la pensée du couplet. En voici le sens.*

*"Quand le Roi de ce puits sentit l'horreur profonde,
Progers, s'écriait-t-il, que suis je devenu ?
Ah, depuis que j'y sonde
Si je n'avais cherché, que le centre du monde,
J'y serais parvenu."*

THE WRECKAGE OF WHITEHALL

fortune from first to last, in addition to providing her with luxurious quarters in Whitehall, was the widow of Charles Berkeley, Baron Berkeley, Viscount Fitzhardinge, Baron Botetourt and, lastly, Earl of Falmouth. He was killed only six months after his marriage, much to the King's regret, in the great sea fight with the Dutch, off Sole Bay.¹ To the long catalogue of women of prepossessing appearance and easy virtue whose names were associated with the King at one time or another, were Elizabeth, Countess of Kildare, daughter of the Earl of Ranelagh; Jane Roberts, who seems to have died in 1679 after giving birth to a daughter, Roberta, whose name figures in the Secret Service accounts for considerable sums of money; Mrs. Knight, a singer as well as a siren of the stage who lived in Pall Mall near Nell Gwynne; and Mary Kirk (a Killigrew by birth), who, in addition to being provided with a house of her own in the precincts of Whitehall, received from 1679 onwards an annual pension from the Crown.

In the closing years of his life, the King spent more of his time at Windsor than in London, and he was probably happier there than elsewhere, free to enjoy, almost to the end, the manly sports in which he excelled.

The Castle, which had fallen into disrepair during the Civil Wars, was restored and made more comfortable than it had ever been before, although it is probable that a good deal of mediæval work was destroyed in the process of renovation. Some of Charles's decorations, on which Verrio was employed for years, might well have

¹ In 1674 Lady Falmouth married again, her second husband being Charles Sackville, Earl of Dorset.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

been dispensed with. Taste has changed for the better since the seventeenth century, and nowadays the sprawling saints and allegorical figures of Verrio and Laguerre are rightly thought to be out of place in a mediæval castle. The Keep, or Round Tower, as we now call it, was fitted up for the Constable of the Castle, the modern designation of the Plantagenet Castellans of Windsor.

Sir Robert Moray, writing to Lauderdale, on August 30, 1670, from Windsor, said:

Yesterday the King and the Duke hunted and had an excellent chase, that stood but two hours, so that they came here about two o'clock, and dined with the Prince in the new apartment in the Keep, which is fine above all imagination. Especially his hall hath the noblest and richest hangings that ever was seen, some two or three thousand arms of all sorts so ranged and placed about the walls that you never saw a prettier sight, insomuch as it is well worth a journey from London to see that alone.

But besides his rooms are so prettily furnished and so neat, you will say when you see them perhaps, as the King does, that certainly the Prince doth not lie there—the rooms are so neat. He gave the King a very noble dinner about three o'clock after which the King slept a little in his chair.

Throughout his life the King was passionately fond not only of hunting but of fishing. The Queen Consort was equally fond of fishing and of those impromptu water picnics, for which the Court was long famous. I gather from Sir Robert Moray that the King would get up at five o'clock in the morning in order to join his Consort in a day's fishing at Hampton Court; "a recreation wherein she takes much pleasure." Often astir at six o'clock, she divided her time between angling and archery, her fondness for the latter recreation being reflected in "La belle Stuart's" portraits and others of her ladies-in-waiting, wherein they are shown holding bows and arrows.

THE WRECKAGE OF WHITEHALL

When Windsor Castle fell into disrepair the Park was equally neglected in Cromwellian times; fences were broken down, the deer escaping from the various enclosures into those vast solitudes of the forest round about Easthampstead Plain and Bagshot Heath, then sparsely inhabited, although in the seventeenth century the coach roads near London were infested by highwaymen in search of human prey. In the Middle Ages the greater part of the County of Berks was covered with wood, Windsor being one of five forests named in Domesday Book¹; whilst when John Norden, a most painstaking antiquary and topographer, made his survey of the forest in the reign of James the First, its circumference was estimated at 80 miles. Within its bounds were sixteen "walks" or enclosures, each under a separate keeper appointed by the Crown. Of these Easthampstead was a Royal residence at least as early as the reign of Richard the Second, whose badge, the white hart couchant, still swings over the door of many a village inn in the forest.

Foliejon, near Bray, a charming miniature park, was enclosed under Royal licence by Oliver de Bordeaux so early as 1317; whilst Sunninghill, renowned for the excellence of its timber and for one venerable oak as old as any of the giants of the Great Park, is another park of ancient date.

When Charles inherited Windsor the outlying portions of the forest were bounded, roughly speaking, by Maidenhead on the north (whence most of the timber felled within its borders was conveyed by water to London

¹ In the thirteenth century four-fifths of the county was forest, the Abbot of Westminster having so early as 1235 the right to five bucks for his table on St. Peter's Day.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

and other riparian towns),¹ Wokingham, known locally as Oakingham, on the west, and Chertsey on the east; whilst on the south it extended as far as Guildford on the little river Wey.

Distant only some twenty miles from London, this fair sylvan scene provided every facility for hunting, hawking, fishing, shooting, and racing, in all of which Charles delighted. Many mighty oaks, gnarled and twisted into fantastic shapes, dating from the days of the Plantagenets, still put forth their green leaves in each recurring spring. Avenues of elm—Charles planted the Long Walk—and clusters of spangled thorns abound, though at Windsor there are none of those cathedral-like avenues of beech such as adorn Savernake. Blue lake and purple moor, emerald sward and amber gorse (that prickly shrub which blooms in every month of the year), are found throughout the forest, which, even since its curtailment in the reign of George III, is still one of the chief glories of the home counties, though the great woodland tract of Savernake and the park at Blenheim, in the adjoining counties of Wilts and Oxford, run it close in charm and variety.

In spite of his fondness for sport, Charles kept constantly in touch with his Ministers in London, owing to an excellent service of coaches and stage wagons which he inaugurated soon after the Restoration. These conveyances ran every day in the week, making Windsor as accessible as Hampton Court or Oatlands.²

The King frequently entertained, not only his Minis-

¹ Leland in his *Itinerary* mentions the importance of Maidenhead in this respect.

² See Delaune's "*Present State of London*," 1681, for the means of communication by coach between the metropolis and Windsor.

THE WRECKAGE OF WHITEHALL

ters, but his boon companions at the Castle, one of whom deserves my reader's attention, if only for his pre-eminence in the world of fashion and extravagance.

I have observed a tendency in modern biography to discover new and unsuspected virtues in historical characters hitherto supposed to be branded with an indelible stain of infamy. Though no apologist has as yet, so far as I am aware, appeared for John "Lackland," Shakespeare must be held responsible in great measure for the odium attaching to the memory of Richard III. Apart from his inexcusable mal-treatment of his relations, he is now held to have been a conspicuous success as a constitutional ruler, sanctioning, if he did not originate, much beneficent legislation tending to improve the condition of the poorer classes. It would be easy to adduce other instances in which recent biographers have shown a similar tolerance of public characters long regarded as hopeless reprobates.

I have myself attempted to find some measure of good in "Old Q," who, from his dissipated habits, would have been quite as much at home in the reign of Charles the Second as he was in the eighteenth, and the early nineteenth, century.¹

In the summer of 1680 there died, prematurely worn out by dissipation and intemperance, John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, commonly known as the "wicked Earl" to distinguish him from his father, and also from Lory Hyde, for whom the King revived the title.

It has been often stated in print that Charles was led into temptation in his youth by Jack Wilmot, but this

¹ In "Piccadilly in Three Centuries" I think that I proved my case by citing numerous instances of his generosity to the poor and needy.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

view is based upon a fallacy, for it was the "wicked Earl's" father who accompanied the Prince of Wales in exile. Buckingham, no doubt, did exercise a bad influence over him when they were in Paris together in the impressionable days of their youth, but, as I have shown at an earlier page, Charles was already a father before Rochester was born.¹

One of the wittiest satirists of the century, had he not prostituted his talents by writing indecent verse, and could he only have kept sober, Rochester, with his great natural abilities, might have done good service to the State, instead of incurring the contempt not only of his contemporaries, but of posterity. Throughout his career he showed a profound contempt for professional politicians, and during one of his periodical exclusions from Whitehall his distrust of the self-seeking politician is well illustrated in a mock address which he delivered on Tower Hill in the guise of a quack doctor, Alexander Bendo by name.

In this manifesto the "wicked Earl" compared the politicians of his day to mountebanks, accurately diagnosing their shortcomings and holding them up to ridicule in much the same style in which the Editor of the *National Review* is accustomed to expose the failings of His Majesty's Ministers at the present day, in the scathing language always at his command.²

Now for the politician: he is a grave, deliberating, close-prying man. Pray are these not grave, deliberating close-prying fools? . . . Reflect a little what kind of a creature it is: he is one, then, who is fain to supply

¹ "The Prince of Wales in Jersey," 1646, Chapter I.

² "Mountebanks," "Muddlers" and "Mugwumps," all of them bearing the Rochester hall-mark, have, I think, been included in his extensive vocabulary.

THE WRECKAGE OF WHITEHALL

some higher ability he pretends to with craft; he draws great companies [audiences] to him by undertaking strange things, *which can never be effected*. The politician (by his example, no doubt), finding how the people are taken with specious miraculous impossibilities, plays the same game, protests, declares, promises I know not what things, which he is sure can never be brought about. The people believe, are debauched—are pleased—the expectation of a future good (which shall never befall them) draws their eyes off a present evil. Thus are they kept and established in subjection, peace and obedience; *he*, [the politician] in greatness, wealth and power. So you see the politician is, and must be, a *mountebank* in state affairs.

If we forget for a moment that these withering sarcasms were penned two hundred and fifty years ago, they may be held to apply with equal force to the election “manifestos” of opportunist Prime Ministers, casting their net as wide as possible to ensure a majority at the polls, in any year of the present century which you, my readers, may choose to select!

Soon after Rochester's death Charles revived the title in favour of Lord Clarendon's second son, Laurence Hyde, whom he had already created Viscount Hyde of Kenilworth.

As a candidate for high ministerial office “Lory” was emphatically a dark horse. Metaphorically speaking, he was also a slow one. His attempts to patch up the Peace of Nymwegen extended over nearly two years, off and on. When at last peace was signed it did not please everybody—no treaty of peace ever does—but, at least, it kept England from going to war again for a whole decade.

Laurence Hyde on his return so ingratiated himself at Court that he earned the title of “Hushai, the friend of David in distress” in *Absalom and Achitophel*,¹ Dryden's masterpiece in the realm of satire.

¹ *Absalom and Achitophel* was first published in November, 1681, the month in which Laurence Hyde was created Earl of Rochester.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

He was one of the earliest settlers in St. James's Square, for in 1676 I find his name in the rate-books of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, when the collector made a sad mess of his Christian name, setting him down in the parochial books as "Glory" Hyde!

As his influence with Charles increased—Evelyn speaks of him as the King's "great favourite"¹—he coveted the highest ministerial prize the sovereign could bestow: the white staff of the Lord High Treasurer. This Charles would not give him, though, by way of a consolation prize, he made him First Lord of the Treasury Board in November, 1679. England now beheld the singular spectacle of a high Tory administration, acting independently of Parliament, in which the Court was in a hopeless minority.

Sunderland, Godolphin, Lory,
These will appear as Chits in story,
"Twill turn all politics to jest.

Yet the "Chits" were not so youthful as the rhymester professed to believe. Sunderland, who was born in 1640, was a year older than Laurence Hyde, whilst Godolphin, the youngest of the new triumvirate, was not born till 1645.

On entering public life Sunderland paid assiduous court to the King's Ministers, hoping thereby to ingratiate himself at Court. He lost large sums at basset to the Duchess of Portsmouth at his house in Great Queen Street, then a fashionable quarter of the town, and invited the Duchess of Cleveland to visit him at Allthorp.

¹ Nell Gwynne must also have liked and trusted him, or she would hardly have made him one of the executors of her will.

THE WRECKAGE OF WHITEHALL

In 1681 Rochester, Prime Minister in all but name, is believed to have negotiated, in concert with Barillon, one of the last, if not the very last, of the many subsidies given to Charles by Louis XIV. Estimates of its amount vary materially, but it was in the neighbourhood of 300,000 livres, and with this and such of his hereditary revenues as were not already mortgaged to his mistresses and their children, Charles was enabled to pass the remainder of his life in easier circumstances than in those long years of strife between Throne and Parliament.

Yet the abrogation of constitutional methods outweighed to an appreciable extent the measure of relief which it afforded to the King's privy purse.

The Navy, which it had been Charles's especial care to raise and maintain in a state of efficiency, suffered from want of funds. In 1683 yet another jewel was torn from the Queen Consort's diadem. Tangier, for want of money necessary to keep its defences in repair, was abandoned, and it must have been a bitter pang to Catherine of Braganza to see the gateway to the Mediterranean, which had formed part of her dowry, lost for ever to the English Crown. William Legge, who was sent out to blow up the fortifications, was rewarded with £10,000 and a peerage on his return, and some interesting particulars of the expedition will be found in the Report of the Historical Manuscripts Commission on Lord Dartmouth's papers.

In the month of August, 1684, Rochester, disappointed of the High Treasurer's staff, was succeeded by Godolphin at the Treasury Board, and made Lord President of the Council: an Irish rise which caused Halifax to remark that he had often heard of a man being kicked

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

downstairs but never before of one being kicked upstairs!¹

We have Horace Walpole's authority for saying that he made a collection of Charles's witticisms, and also the humorous replies made to the King by members of his *entourage*. Unfortunately these would appear to have been lost, since there is no mention in the sale catalogue of Strawberry Hill of any such compilation. Yet it may be that it is lying unheeded in some country house library, to be recovered and given to the world in years to come.

Here is one which might well have been included in the Strawberry Hill collection. Once when the King chanced to meet a member of the Queen's suite at Whitehall—I should hazard the opinion that she was young, fair, and unmarried—he greeted her by saying: "I am very pleased to see you here again, for a rumour reached me that you had been laid up with twins!"

"But, Sir, you must never believe more than half what you are told!" was the sprightly young lady's rejoinder.

So good-natured was Charles that he never seems to have taken offence at any of the nicknames by which he was commonly known in the inner circles of the Court. On the contrary, he seems to have enjoyed the humorous situations to which they occasionally gave rise. Passing by Mrs. Holden's apartments in the corridor which connected the Queen's suite with the rooms assigned to the Maids of Honour, he heard some one within crooning over the tune of "Old Rowley"; and when the King

¹ In like manner Arlington had hoped to succeed Clifford as Treasurer when Charles selected Danby (or Sir Thomas Osborne, as he then was) for that important post.

THE WRECKAGE OF WHITEHALL

knocked at the door, and the lady exclaimed: "Who is there?" back came the answer: "Old Rowley himself, Ma'am, at your service!"

No one could convey a reproof more delicately than could Charles. When William Penn was admitted to the Royal presence he kept his hat on, whereon Charles promptly removed his own. "Friend Charles," said the Quaker, "why dost thou not keep on thy hat?"

"'Tis the custom of this place," replied the King, "that only one man should remain uncovered at a time."

He could likewise parry an inconvenient question better than most men. When Sir Robert Moray,¹ whom the King respected in spite of his leanings towards Presbyterianism, was staying at Windsor, he chanced to meet Charles in one of the corridors of the Castle. Anxious to ascertain what many people were curious to learn, why it was that Buckingham had gone to Paris at that particular juncture,² he ventured to ask:

"And when and where does your Majesty expect to see the Duke of Buckingham again?" Rising to the occasion, Charles replied, with a merry twinkle in his dark eyes: "On the Day of Judgment, in the Valley of Jehoshaphat!" and disappeared into his private apartments.³ Even at moments of imminent peril his sense of humour never deserted him. During his flight from Worcester he encountered, whilst disguised as a serving-man, a Puritan blacksmith who had heard a report of the capture of "that rogue Charles Stuart." Unable to

¹ President of the Royal Society.

² In August, 1670, Buckingham was in Paris endeavouring to negotiate a third, and revised, edition of the Treaty of Dover.

³ Lauderdale Papers, Vol. II, p. 201.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

resist the temptation of having a dig at his old persecutors, the Covenanters, Charles rapped out: "Ayel and he richly deserves to be hanged for having brought the Scots into England!"

Although he accepted money from Louis XIV time and time again, Charles was far more astute than *le grand monarque* realized. Though the latter was pretentious rather than great, in the true sense of the word, there was one trait in his character which must have been extremely gratifying to Charles in his chronic impecuniosity. Louis never seems to have wanted his money back, once he had parted with it.

In spite of his dependence upon France for financial aid in the later years of his reign, Charles was English to the backbone. From the time that he decided to dispense with the services of Parliament he applied himself steadily to the task of paying not only his own but his father's debts, and in effecting far-reaching economies in his household.

Prejudiced Whig historians, unaware of the actual facts of the case, would have us believe that no patriotic or honourable motive ever actuated any member of the Royal House of Stuart, and that Charles, in particular, was willing to connive at a policy which, had it succeeded, would eventually have reduced England to the humiliating position of an appanage to the French Crown.

Yet the irrefutable evidence of the recently published Treasury records should convince any fair-minded student of history that if some of the methods by which the sorely-tried King secured a living wage were questionable, they were excusable in the peculiar circumstances of the time.

THE WRECKAGE OF WHITEHALL

It should be remembered that, at the Restoration, the revenue settled upon the King by the Convention Parliament was less by £100,000 per annum than that which Cromwell had enjoyed. Whilst a debt of no less than £1,250,000 had accumulated on the upkeep of the Navy during the Commonwealth, Charles never received from his Civil List more than a yearly average of £572,000.

There is, it should also be remembered, a vast difference between applying money derived from a foreign source to the requirements of national administration and selling the interests of one's country to a foreign foe. From that reproach Charles must, unhesitatingly, be absolved.

To find the King posing as an economist is surprising, yet it is the fact that grandiose schemes of retrenchment in the national expenditure were foreshadowed so early in his reign as 1668 and 1669, though one is inclined to think that, as in the case of the Treasury "axe" (often advocated—primarily for electoral purposes—by Chancellors of the Exchequer in our own times), it is the headsmen who as a rule escape, leaving the weapon's sharper edge to fall on less articulate members of the Public Service.

Hoping as he did to allay the fears of his Protestant subjects by marrying the Princess Mary to William of Orange, Charles declared to Barillon, soon after that williest of French ambassadors arrived in London, that the jealousy and distrust with which the English people persisted in regarding France was due to his brother having openly announced his conversion.

"Since he preferred the Catholic religion all England has been in motion. But I am assured that the

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

marriage of the Prince of Orange with my niece will dissipate part of these suspicions.”¹

Louis XIV, when he heard of the projected alliance, is said to have regarded it as he might have the loss of one of his armies.

After the flight and death of Shaftesbury in 1683, and even more after the discovery of the abortive Rye House plot, a great wave of reaction swept over England in favour of the King, whose popularity thenceforth was never again endangered. Monmouth, who was arrested, in company with Algernon Sidney and Lord Russell, both of whom ultimately paid the death penalty, was banished to The Hague, and, although he is believed to have revisited England in November, 1684, it is doubtful whether he ever saw his father again.

In 1679, and again in the summer of 1682, Charles, almost for the first time in his life, was rather seriously unwell. On the first occasion he caught a chill after being overheated at tennis. At the later date his indisposition gave rise to some alarm on the part of his *entourage*.

Owing to his fine constitution he made a speedy recovery, yet it began to be remarked at Court that the King was showing signs, not perhaps of decrepitude, but of a marked diminution in vigour; often falling asleep in his chair after dinner, although always a moderate eater, whilst, as his constant attendant, Lord Ailesbury, noted in his diary, he “drank only for his thirst.” In June, 1682, he intended to stand sponsor to Ailesbury’s son who was born on the anniversary of the Restoration,

¹ Dalrymple, Vol. I, page 179. There is no doubt that the matrimonial alliance with the House of Orange conducted to the conclusion of the Peace Treaty at Nymwegen in August, 1678.

THE WRECKAGE OF WHITEHALL

and was much annoyed at not being allowed to do so by his doctors.

I should imagine, after weighing all the available evidence, that if "Chanticleer" crowed at all after his fifty-fourth birthday, it was but a feeble effort. Yet in the autumn of 1684 he visited Winchester (with Nell Gwynne in attendance) for what proved to be the last time. As all the world knows, he did not live to see the palace he was building at the old cathedral city completed; Lord Ailesbury recording with sincere regret that Charles, who had desired to show him how the work was progressing in January, 1685, was obliged to put off their visit.

"This week I will be so happy as to have my house covered with lead," Charles wrote; "and God knows," adds Ailesbury in his diary, "on the Saturday following he was put in his coffin."

On February 2, 1685—it was a Monday and also Nell Gwynne's birthday—the King was struck down with an apoplectic seizure which baffled the skill of a dozen Court physicians and surgeons,¹ and on the 6th, a black Friday for England if ever there was one, he died, to be succeeded by his brother James, for whom he had fought so valiantly in the face of almost insuperable difficulties.²

Nothing in life became him more than the fortitude with which Charles faced death. When he felt himself about to enter into the haven of immortality and nearing

¹ In Dr. Raymond Crawford's "Last Days of Charles the Second," 1909, the writer, after summarizing all the available evidence, gives it as his considered opinion that Charles died from a form of Bright's disease of some years' standing.

² Paradoxical though it may sound, the autopsy revealed that the King's heart was large and firm and free from any malformation.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

the confines of a greater inheritance than any earthly crown can bestow, he allowed himself to be reconciled to the ancient faith of his fathers, to which, at one time or another, he had decidedly inclined.

For once the Duchess of Portsmouth did the right thing. In concert with the Duke of York, when it was apparent that the end was approaching, she summoned to the King's bedside Father John Huddleston, who, after the disaster to the Royal cause at Worcester, at imminent risk to his own life, helped to conceal the Prince of Wales at Boscobel and to aid him in his miraculous escape from the Cromwellian army then hot upon his track.

Well, indeed, may Charles's wanderings, extending as they did over six weeks before he reached the coast at Brighton and embarked for France at Shoreham, be termed miraculous. For during that time he was recognized by at least fifty people, not one of whom betrayed him, despite the temptation of a thousand pounds blood-money which Cromwell offered for his capture. Undeterred by the threat of the death penalty to be inflicted upon whomsoever should aid in his concealment, one and all, women as well as men, stood loyally by the heir to the throne.

The manly tone of his greeting to Father John Huddleston, when the Benedictine priest was ushered into the death-chamber to administer the last Sacraments, was in the highest degree appropriate: "Father, you who once saved my body, are now come to save my soul!"¹

Since the Reformation the Deans of Westminster have always been masters in their own house. Therefore Dean Sprat, free from all episcopal control, was technically

¹ "This is literally true on the word of a Christian," wrote Lord Ailesbury in his diary.

THE WRECKAGE OF WHITEHALL

within his right in forbidding the Catholic ritual to be publicly observed at the King's obsequies.

His death-bed conversion to the ancient faith came as a shock to the posse of Anglican prelates whom Charles waved aside as he lay a-dying. Therefore the much misjudged monarch was literally huddled into his grave at dead of night, without any of the ceremonial customary on the death of the sovereign. To this day no stately monument, marble bust, or storied urn marks the site of his inconspicuous grave in the matchless Gothic chapel of Henry the Seventh. And by a singular coincidence no English sovereign since James the First has been deemed worthy of a permanent memorial at Westminster, despite the fact that William the Third and his consort Mary, Queen Anne and George the Second were all buried there.

In the Valhalla of the English race Charles is commemorated only by a tawdry wax effigy (in the company of good Queen Bess and the immortal Nelson) in Abbot Islip's Chantry Chapel on the north side of the sacrarium: a chamber of horrors which probably not one in ten thousand visitors to the Abbey ever sees, or even knows of.¹

When Queen Victoria visited the Abbey on one occasion she showed great interest in Charles's effigy when it was brought to her notice by Dean Stanley; remarking that, in spite of his moral failings, she regarded him as one of the most attractive of her predecessors upon the Throne! ²

¹ The waxen presentment of Charles's features is still in fair preservation, as are his Royal robes and costly point lace ruffles, although they sadly need cleaning at the present time.

² Dean Stanley, whose own tomb is within a stone's-throw of King Charles's, communicated the Queen's remarks to my father, who repeated the substance of their conversation to me some time in the early 'seventies.

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHARLES THE SECOND

Her Majesty, had she but known it, was echoing the opinion of that stern *censor morum*, Samuel Johnson. The worthy doctor would never hear a word against King Charles, whom he declared was the best King of England down to his own time. When his character was assailed by one of his associates, the Doctor blazed out in wrathful indignation, declaring with all the emphasis at his command: "that if licentious in practice, Charles never failed to reverence the good. Even if he did take money from France; what of that? Never did he betray those over whom he ruled, nor would he ever suffer the French fleet to pass ours."

At Westminster, within a few yards of Charles's grave, there were buried half a dozen of his natural children. Those "pleasant thefts of love" which, in death, can no longer be concealed, include the Countess of Yarmouth, the Earl of Plymouth, the Dukes of Northumberland, St. Albans, Cleveland, and Richmond;¹ the offspring respectively of Betty Killigrew, Catherine Pegge, Barbara Villiers, Nell Gwynne and Louise de Querouaille.

The line so often quoted in connexion with Wren and St. Paul's Cathedral is as appropriate an epitaph for a King who prided himself in life as being the father of so many of his people.

And to *Si monumentum requiris circumspice*, I desire to add, in all sincerity:

R.I.P.'

¹ In 1750 the Duke of Richmond's remains were transferred to Chichester Cathedral.

INDEX

- Abercromby, Col., and Moll Davis, 170
- Absalom and Achitophel*, Dryden's, 245 (and note)
- Acton, Lord, and the career of James de la Cloche, 20 (and note), 21, 24, 26, 27
- "Affaires Etrangères (Angleterre)," value of, 173
- Ailesbury, Lord, 132 (note); and Parliament at Oxford, 233
- Ailesbury Memoirs, 220, 230
- Alchemist*, Mrs. Corey plays in, 105
- Aldersgate Street, London, notable houses in, 57 (note)
- Alonzo de Cardenas, Don, offers asylum to Lucy Walter, 54
- Attemira* (re-named *The General*), produced in Dublin, 165
- Amalia, Princess Dowager of Orange, 71
- Amsterdam, *Royal Charles* taken by de Ruyter to, xvi (and note)
- Anglesey, (2nd) Earl of, marries widow of Lord Grandison, 80; death of, 80 (note)
- Anhalt, Prince of, betrothal of Princess Henrietta to, 71
- Antwerp, Lucy Walter in, 50, 51
- Apple-Tree Yard, 201
- Apprentices as arbiters of public morals, 111
- Argyll, Archibald Campbell, 1st Marquis of, 62 (and note)
- Arlington, Lady, death of, 182 (note)
- Arlington, Lord, 174 (and note), 194; signs Treaty of Dover, 184 (*see also* Bennet, Sir Henry)
- Arlington House, 122
- Arran, James Douglas, Earl of (afterwards 4th Duke of Hamilton), 106 (note)
- Arundell of Wardour, Lord, and Treaty of Dover, 184
- Assignment, or Love in a Nunnery*, Dryden's, 141
- Astor, Lady, 203
- Audley, Hugh, 122
- Axe Yard, Westminster, Pepys commences his diary in, 76
- "Bâblon" (*see* Montmorency, Isabelle Angélique, Duchesse de Châtillon)
- Bacon, Sir Edmund, letter from Sir Henry Wotton to, 121
- Backwell, Alderman, 105; founder of modern system of banking, 117; Charles as client of, 117; City office of, 118-19; terms of loan to Charles, 119
- Bank of England, on what modelled, xxi (note)
- Barbican, the (London), old-time importance of, 57

INDEX

- Barillon, 174, 199, 203, 218 (note), 251
- Barlow of Slebech, John (uncle of Lucy Walter), 37
- "Barlow, Mrs.," name assumed by Lucy Walter, 41
- Barnes, Monsignor, refused opportunity of perusing Charles's letters, 27
- Barry, Sir Charles, architect, 129
- Basset, game of, introduced in London, 217
- Bedford, Earl of, at Charles's christening, 7
- Bedingfield, Augustina, Mother Prioress of English Convent, Bruges, 68
- Bedloe, William, and Popish Plot, 224
- "Bellings, Dick," 185
- Bennet, Sir Henry (afterwards Earl of Arlington), 97 (and note), 174 (and note)
- Berkeley, Sir Charles (afterwards Earl of Falmouth), 97 (and note)
- Berkshire, 1st Earl of, as Charles's governor, 13 (note), 17, 117; parochial rates paid by, 123
- Berkshire House, St. James's, purchased by Charles and presented to Barbara Villiers, 116-17, 126; history of, 119-20; old-time appearance of, 123; let by its owner, 124, 125
- Betterton, Thomas, actor, and the Duke's Theatre, 136 (note); in *Mustapha*, 167
- Bevan, Mr., owner of Walpole House, Chiswick, 131 (note)
- Birch, Col., 156
- Birkenhead, Sir John, opposes tax on playhouses, 139-40
- Bisse, Philip, Bishop of Hereford, 71
- Black Potts, Eton, 77 (note)
- Blake, Admiral, captures Plate fleet, 118
- Blanquefort, likens Barbara Villiers to a "bird of paradise," 107 (note)
- Bodleian Library, horoscope of Nell Gwynne preserved in, 4 (note)
- Boero, Fr. Giuseppe, and the conversion of Charles II to the Catholic faith, 20
- Booth, Sir George, revolt of, 85
- Bordeaux, Oliver de, 241
- Boscal, Lucy Walter takes her son to, 51
- Bossuet, 187 (note)
- Bothwell Bridge, battle of, 230
- Boyer, Abel, 134
- Boyle, Francis, marriage of, 56, 58; at Eton, 59 (note); sent, after marriage, to complete his education, 59; visits The Hague to bring home his wife, 60
- Boyle, Robert, at Eton, 59 (note)
- Breda, Declaration of, 89
- Bridgewater, Earls of, City residence of, 57
- Bridgewater, Francis Egerton, 2nd Duke of, 128
- Bridgewater, John Egerton, Earl of, 127
- Bristol, surrenders to the Parliament, 14 (note)
- Britannia* replaces the seized *Royal Charles*, xvi

INDEX

- British Museum, holograph letter from Charles in, 13; Chesterfield's MS. letter book preserved in, 87 (note); Rent Roll of Lord St. Albans in, 162 (note)
- Brouncker, Lady, 126
- Brouncker, Lord, and the marriage of Charles to Lucy Walter, 43
- Bruce, Lord (*see* Ailesbury)
- Bruges, Charles at, 65 (and note); Charles's residences at, 65, 66, 67; Preston's house, 66 (and note); Charles visits English Convent at, 68; archery ground at, 69; the Three Swans, 69 (and note); Charles's money worries in, 70
- Brussels, Lucy Walter in, 41; scandal caused by her life in, 53
- Buccleuch, Duchess of, residence of, 202 (note)
- Buckhurst, Lord, Nell Gwynne and, 144
- Buckingham, George Villiers, 1st Duke of, murder of, 10
- Buckingham, George Villiers, 2nd Duke of, 28; accompanies Charles to Scotland, 47; Elders of the Kirk and, 49-50 (and note); as Charles's evil genius, 66; prefers demand for annual Parliaments, 151; and a card-sharper, 171; Nell Gwynne and, 236; pun on name of Winifred Wells, 238 (note); in Paris *re* revised edition of Treaty of Dover, 249 (note)
- Burford House, Windsor, settled on Nell Gwynne, 235
- Burnet, Gilbert (afterwards Bishop of Salisbury), Charles extenuates himself to, xiv; accompanies Charles to Edinburgh, 48; describes Charles's life in Scotland, 48 (and note)
- Byron, Lady (Eleanor Needham), 60, 62; becomes Charles's mistress, 62, 63; Pepys on, 63
- Byron, Lord, sells Newstead Abbey, 62
- Cambridgeshire old course at Newmarket, 189 (and note)
- Campbell, Archibald, 1st Marquis of Argyll, 62 (and note)
- Campbell, Lady Anne, 62 (and note)
- Campbell, Sir James (Lord Mayor of London), at christening of Charles, 7
- Canon Row, Westminster, suggested origin of its name, 78 (note)
- Canterbury, the Duke's company of players at, 186
- Carew, Thomas, residence in Westminster, 78
- Carlingford, Lord, 178 (*see also* Taaffe, Lord)
- Carlisle, Countess of, 124; liaisons of, 125
- Carlisle, James Hay, 1st Earl of, 125
- Carteret, Marguerite de, first mistress of Charles, 15, 18; death of, 18
- "Carwell, Madame" (*see* Querouaille)

INDEX

- Castlehaven, Earl of, 54
- Castlemaine, Countess of (*see* Villiers, Barbara)
- Castlemaine, Roger Palmer, Earl of, and paternity of Barbara Villiers's child, Anne, 92 (and note); joins Roman Catholic Church, 94; committed to the Tower, 95 (note); death of, 95
- Catherine, Queen, Catholic priests as part of household of, 24; Charles marries, 93; dowry of, 93; her opinion of English ladies, 93-4; and Barbara Villiers, 98, 104; her passion for fishing, 240
- Cavendish, Lord (afterwards 1st Duke of Devonshire), and Nell Gwynne, 236
- Chamberlayne, Dr. Edward, and the horoscope of Charles II, 4 (note)
- Channel Islands, Charles removed to, 15, 17
- Channel Row, Westminster, probably a corruption of Canon Row, 78 (note)
- Chantecroix, Comtesse de (*see* Cusance)
- "Chanticleer," nickname for Charles II, xxii
- "Charlemagne," nickname for Charles II, xxii (note)
- Charles I, birthplace of, 2; dissolves his third Parliament, 11; parliamentary hiatus in reign of, 12; execution of, 14; gives away Elizabeth Killigrew in marriage to Francis Boyle, 58
- Charles II, pedigree a probable cause of his amorous disposition, xiii; extenuates his moral failings, xiv; conduct of public affairs insufficiently appreciated, xiv; strengthens the Navy, xvi *et seq.*; patriotic speech to Parliament (1671), xvii; desire to secure pre-eminence of English trade, xviii; attends Cabinet Council in Clarendon's sick-room, xix; inaugurates Treasury control over national finances, xix, 228; nicknames by which he was known, xxii (and note); birth at St. James's Palace, 1; baptism of, 5, 6; christening presents for, 6, 7; his infantile household, 9-10; holograph letter from, in British Museum, 13; fondness for his children, 16; estimated number of his offspring, 16; sends for James de la Cloche, 21, 23; leanings toward Catholicism, 23, 24; and Mlle. de Montpensier, 30; joins Royalist fleet and blockades the Thames, 32; meets Lucy Walter, 35, 37; becomes King of England, 40; flight from Worcester under assumed name, 41; sworn declarations before Privy Council regarding his supposed marriage, 41-2; illness at The Hague diagnosed as mild form of smallpox, 44; accepts the Solemn League and Covenant, 45; audacious admission to Princess Sophie, 45 (note); in-

INDEX

vited by Scottish Parliament to visit his northern possessions, 47; reproved by Elders of the Kirk, 49 (and note), 50; attempts to abduct his illegitimate son James, 51, 53, 54; takes Betty Killigrew as mistress, 60-1; appreciation of services rendered by Lord Tara, 66; visits English Convent at Bruges, 68; formal proposal for hand of Princess Henrietta of Orange, 71; scheme for improved approach to Westminster, 77; issues Declaration of Breda, 89; changed attitude of States General to, 90; marries Infanta Catherine of Portugal, 93; attends re-christening of his son the Duke of Southampton, 94; frequent quarrels with Barbara Villiers, 96, 104, 105, 107; growing infatuation for "La belle Stuart," 100; an all-night dance in Barbara Villiers's new lodgings, 103; clandestine visit to "La belle Stuart," 109; his fury at lampoons on Barbara Villiers and himself, 112; ceases cohabitation with Barbara Villiers, 116; and the Treaty of Dover, 182; secret ratification of Treaty of Dover, 185 (note); mock marriage with Louise de Querouaille, 188, 194-5; love of racing, 190; rides winner of the Plate at Newmarket, 191; revokes pension to Hortense Mancini, 216; as his own foreign minister, 222; dissolves Parlia-

ment, 223, 229, 233-4; and the Popish Plot, 224 *et seq.*; refuses to countenance an attack on his Queen, 226-7; affirms adherence to Established Church, 234 (note); subsidies from Louis XIV to, 247, 250; typical witticisms of, 248-50; revenue settled by Convention Parliament on, 251; seized with apoplexy, 253; death-bed conversion to Catholicism, 254-5; buried at dead of night, 255

Charles Emanuel, Duke of Savoy, 207

Charlton, Sir Job, 155

Chatham, Dutch raid on, xvi

Châtillon, Duchesse de (*see* Montmorency)

Chauncy sale, Lucy Walter letters in, 56 (and note)

Cheshire, Royalist rising in, 85

Chesterfield, Philip, 2nd Earl of, liaison with Barbara Villiers, 81, 82 *et seq.*; discovery of volume of copied letters to and from, 82 *et seq.*; an intrigue with Lady Elizabeth Howard, 85; duel with Captain Whalley, 85; two terms of confinement in the Tower, 85, 87; kills Mr. Woolly in a duel, and escapes to France, 87

Chiffinch, Will, and the allocation of Secret Service Fund, 160

Childs' Bank, Nell Gwynne's bankers' drafts preserved at, 81 (note)

Chiswick Mall, Barbara Villiers at, 131

INDEX

- Christina of Sweden, Queen, and de la Cloche, 22; a rumoured match between Charles and, 64
- Churchill, Jack ("Corporal John"), liaison with Barbara Villiers, 106; chequered career of his daughter, 106 (note)
- Churchill, Sir Winston, Comptroller of Board of Green Cloth, 157
- Civil War, first battle in, 14
- Clarendon, Lord, a Cabinet Council held in sick-room of, xix; presses Lucy Walter to leave Holland, 52; dismissed from office, 107; dignified rejoinder to Barbara Villiers, 108; takes Berkshire House, 125; death of, 132
- Clarges, Sir Thomas, 154
- Cleveland, Charles Fitzroy, Duke of (*see* Southampton)
- Cleveland, Duchess of (*see* Villiers, Barbara)
- Cleveland House, 87 (note); subdivided by Barbara Villiers, 127; purchased by 1st Duke of Bridgewater, 128
- Clifford, Sir Thomas, 193; on Charles's care for the Navy, 117 (note); and the Treaty of Dover, 184
- Coalition Ministry, Charles's, 228
- Cock and Pye tavern, Drury Lane, 149-50
- Colbert de Croissy, French Ambassador, 23, 174, 177 (note), 184, 194, 221
- Coleman, Edward, 224 (and note)
- Cologne, Charles at (Oct., 1654), 64-5
- Colombes, Charles visits his mother at, 72
- Colonna, Lorenzo, marries Marie de Mancini, 205 (note)
- Comical Revenge, The, or Love in a Tub*, 166, 167
- Commons, House of, disorderly scene in (1629), 11; early sittings of, 137 (and note); and the assault on Sir John Coventry, 154 *et seq.*
- Congreve, William, dramatist, 130 (and note)
- Conquest of Granada*, Dryden's, 141
- Constant Reformation*, bravery of Charles on, 33
- Convention Parliament, and revenue settled on Charles, 251
- Cooke, Sir James, 43
- Coques, John, silversmith, 197 (note)
- Corey, Mrs., sent to prison, 105
- Cork, Earl of, diary record of marriage of his son to Elizabeth Killigrew, 58
- Cornbury, Lord, on marriage of Charles with Catherine of Portugal, 93
- Country Wife, The*, Wycherley's, 129, 130
- Courtin, Antoine, French Ambassador, 177
- Courtin, Honoré, French Ambassador, letter to Lionne, 104; relates a dream of "La belle Stuart," 109; succeeds Ruvigny, 201 (and note); impressions of English society, 202, 204

INDEX

- Covenanters, conditions imposed on Charles by, 48 *et seq.*
- Coventry, Sir Henry, 140 (note)
- Coventry, Sir John, and proposed tax on playhouses, 140; brutal assault on, 152-3
- Coventry, Sir William, xix, xxi, 140 (note)
- Coventry Act against maiming, 158 (*see also* Pains and Penalties, Bill of)
- Cranfield, Lionel, Earl of Middlesex, 122
- Craven, William, 1st Earl of, and the "Queen of Hearts," 45 (note); death of, 45 (note)
- Crawford, Dr. Raymond, on cause of Charles's death, 253 (note)
- Crewe, Sir Thomas, 95
- Cromwell, Henry, Charles's visit to, 191
- Cromwell, Lady Mary (Lady Falconbergh), 146
- Cromwell, Lord, assaulted in Palace Yard, 156
- Cromwell, Oliver, Charles's memorable offer to, xv; appoints Downing Ambassador to United Provinces, xx; sides with malcontents in refusing to adjourn House of Commons, 12; at battle of Naseby, 15; order for deportation of Lucy Walter, 53; death of, 71; one-time residence of, 77-8; and Alderman Backwell, 118
- Cusance, Beatrix de, Comtesse de Chantecroix, 72
- Dacre, Lord (*see* Sussex, Earl of)
- Dalhousie, Lord, 124
- Danby, impeachment of, 223; released from prison, 227 (note)
- D'Aulnois, Comtesse, Memoirs of, 103
- Davenant, Sir William, patentee of Duke of York's Theatre, 136 (and note); relations with Duke's Company, 147, 164-5
- Davenport, Frances, mock marriage of, 147, 148
- Davies, Mary, marries Sir Thomas Grosvenor, 123
- Davis, Moll (actress), 140; becomes Charles's mistress, 106, 169; retires from stage, 153, 169; birth and career of, 163 *et seq.*; as dancer, 167 (and note); challenges Col. Abercromby to a duel, 170; passion for cards and high play, 170
- De Comignes, Gaston, French Ambassador, 175, 176 *et seq.*
- De Courtenay, Prince, 207
- De Croissy, Colbert (*see* Colbert)
- De Hesse, Charlotte, marries Tom Killigrew, 59
- De Hesse, John, 59
- De la Cloche, James (first of Charles's illegitimate offspring), 18; admitted as novitiate of Jesuit Order, 19, 22; recognized by Charles as his son, 21, 22; returns to Continent, 22; joins Catholic Church, 22; compelled to call himself Henri de Rohan, 24; supposed death in Naples challenged, 25, 26

INDEX

- De la Cloche, Jean, marries Marguerite de Carteret, 18
- De la Porte, Armand, marries Hortense Mancini, 207; hallucinations of, 208
- Delaune, Thomas, a scarce book by, 57 (note)
- Denbigh, Countess of, "lady governess" to Charles, 9 (note)
- De Seigné, Madame, 187 (note)
- D'Estrades, Godefroi, Comte, French Ambassador, 176
- De Vic, Sir Henry, Royalist English Resident at Brussels, 41 (and note)
- D'Ewes, Sir Symonds, 134
- De Witte, Cornelis and Jan, 34
- Disney, William, deposition regarding abduction of Monmouth, 43
- Dixon, N., miniature of Lucy Walter by, 37
- "Don Carlo" (*see* Plymouth, Earl of)
- Dorset, rotten boroughs in, 161 (note)
- Dorset, Lord, his sarcastic reply to Charles II, xiii
- Douglas, James, Earl of Arran, imprisonment of, 106 (note)
- Douglas, Robert, conveys reproof of Elders of the Kirk to Charles —with a dispensation, 49
- Dover, Charles lands at, 90; landing of Duchess of Orleans at, 179
- Dover, Treaty of, 181, 184; signed, 184
- Downes, prompter at the Duke's Theatre, 147
- Downing, Sir George, xix, xx, xxi (and note)
- Downing Street, after whom called, xxi; garden portion of Prime Minister's official residence in, 101
- Drury Lane, a cockpit wrecked by apprentices in, 111 (note)
- Drury Lane Theatre, first patentee of, 59; wax candles as illuminant at, 100; provisions of Patent of 1662, 143 (note); destroyed by fire, 147; closed during plague, 167
- Dryden, John, 144; marries Lady Elizabeth Howard, 85; stage works of, 102, 141; a significant line in epilogue by, 138
- Duke of York's Theatre, 135, 136 (note), 147-8, 162 *et seq.*; closed during plague, 167
- Duke Street, Westminster, famous residents in, 74-5 (note)
- Dunbar, battle of, 47 (note)
- Dunkirk, sale of, 204
- Dusseldorf, Charles at, 64
- Dutch, the, sea power of, in seventeenth century, xvi; passion for flower gardens of, 34
- Dutch Wars, xvi, xvii; National Debt after, 117 (note)
- Edgehill, battle of, 14
- Edinburgh, onerous conditions imposed upon Charles in, 48 *et seq.*
- Egerton, Francis, 2nd Duke of Bridgewater, 128
- Egerton, John, 4th Earl of Bridgewater, 127, 128

INDEX

- Egerton of Tatton, Lord, and the Corinthian Club, 202 (note)
- Elders of the Kirk reprove Charles for loose behaviour, 49-50 (and note)
- Eliot, Sir John, protests against levying of Tonnage and Poundage, 11; dies in prison, 12
- Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia ("the Queen of Hearts"), death of, 45; her admirers, 45 (and note)
- Elizabeth, Queen of England, birthday anniversaries kept as public holidays, xiii
- Ellesmere, Francis, Earl of, 128
- Ellis, Jack, paramour of Barbara Villiers, 97; an assault on, 97; death of, 98
- Emerson, a dictum of, 89
- English Monsieur, The*, quoted, 153
- Entertainment tax, discussed in Parliament (1670), 135 *et seq.*; rejected by House of Commons, 151
- Ernest Augustus, Duke of Brunswick and Elector of Hanover, marries Princess Sophie, 46
- Ernley, Sir John, 156
- Erskine, William, pays funeral expenses of Lucy Walter, 55
- Essex, Lord, becomes First Lord of Treasury, 228
- Etherege, Sir George, founder of comedy of intrigue, 140, 145, 166, 215
- Eton, school life three hundred years ago, 59 (note); Sir Henry Wotton at, 77 (and note)
- Euston (Suffolk), mock marriage of Charles to Louise de Querouaille at, 188
- Evelyn, 175, 189, 191, 193, 194, 195; and Lucy Walter, 35, 55; on character of George, Duke of Northumberland, 104; summary of Wycherley's powers as playwright, 130; and Lory Hyde, 246
- Exclusion Bill, reintroduction of, in Oxford Parliament, 233
- Fairfax, Thomas, general of Parliamentary Army, 15
- Falmouth, Earl of, killed in a sea fight, 97 (note), 239
- Falmouth, Lady, 97 (note); re-marriage of, 239 (note); her association with Charles, 238-9
- Fanshawe, Sir Richard, Charles's secretary, 17
- Featherstonhaugh, Sir Henry, 124
- Featherstonhaugh, Sir Matthew, 124
- Feilding, Basil, Lord (afterwards Lord Denbigh), duel with Mr. Goring, 121
- Feilding, "Beau," marries Barbara Villiers, 131
- Fenton, Lavinia, 148
- Fenwick, Sir John, 126
- Ferdinand III, Emperor, 30
- Fifth Monarchy men, rising of, 224
- Finch, Daniel, Earl of Nottingham, 127
- Finch, Heneage, 5th Earl of Winchelsea, 127, 155

INDEX

- Finch, Lord Chancellor, 234
- Finch, Sir John (Speaker), held down in his Chair, 11; flees the country, 13; a peerage for, 13 (note); Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, 13 (note); death of, 13 (note)
- Fitzroy, Lady Anne, paternity of, 217
- Fitzroy, Charles, Duke of Southampton, death of, 96 (note) (*see also* Southampton)
- Fitzroy, Henry, 1st Duke of Grafton, birth of, 100
- Flagellum Parliamentarium*, Andrew Marvell's, 160-1
- Flanders, expeditionary force sent by Charles to, 222
- Fludyer Street, Westminster (formerly Axe Yard), 76
- Forneron, H., "Louise de Keroualle" by, 81, 173 (note)
- Founder's Court, Lothbury, 57 (note)
- Fox, Stephen, at Bruges, 67
- Frankfort, great fair at; attended by Charles, 65
- Fraser, Sir William, "Scotts of Buccleuch" by, 43 (note)
- Frederick V, King of Bohemia, sponsor by proxy at christening of Charles, 6
- Fuenterrabia, Charles at, 72
- Gardener's Lane, Westminster, Hollar's death in, 76
- Gardiner, Dr. R. S., on disaster to Royal cause at Naseby, 14
- Garrick Club, play-bills preserved at, 168 (note)
- Gay, criticism of Catherine Street by, 139
- Gentleman Dancing Master, The*, 130; quoted, 144
- George, Duke of Northumberland, 104
- George I, King, birth of, 46
- Gerard, Lord, his wife dismissed from attendance on the Queen, 85
- Germain, Sir John, and Nell Gwynne, 235-6
- Germany, Charles's distrust of, 64
- Ghyson, Claes, 50
- Gloucester, Duke of, and the Archers of St. Sebastian at Bruges, 69; sum voted by Parliament to, 89
- "Godfather of Downing Street," by John Beresford, xxi (note), xxii
- Godfrey, Sir Edmund Berry, murder of, 226
- Godolphin House, 211
- Godolphin, Lord, 228; succeeds Rochester at Treasury Board, 247
- Goldesborough, William, Clerk of the House of Commons, 151
- Goldsmiths, as money-lenders, 117, 118
- Goodman, Cardonell, Barbara Villiers's relations with, 131
- Gorges, Arthur, marries widow of second Earl of Anglesey, 80 (note)

INDEX

- Grafton, Henry Fitzroy, 1st Duke of, 100
- Grafton, 2nd Duke of, parts with unsold portion of Berkshire House freehold, 120
- Grandison, Lady, christening of her daughter (Barbara Villiers), 79; site of her house in King Street, Westminster, 79-80; re-marriage of, 80 (and note)
- Grandison, Lord (father of Barbara Villiers), death of, 80; monument to his memory in Christ Church, Oxford, 80
- Gray of Wark, Lord, 124
- Greene, Sir Edward, marries, as fourth wife, Catherine Pegge, 71
- Grenville, Sir John, brings specie to Charles at The Hague, 89
- Grey, Anchitell, 134 (and note), 155, 156, 157
- Griffin, Ned, 42, 43
- Grosvenor, Sir Thomas, marriage of, 123
- Guild of St. Sebastian Archers at Bruges, Charles's popularity with, 68-9
- Gustavus Adolphus, King, and the "Queen of Hearts," 45
- Gwynne, Nell, Kneller's portrait of, xxiii; horoscope of, in Bodleian Library, 4 (note); popularity of, 10 (note); debut of, 59, 102 (note); and the Count of Neuburg, 65; illiteracy of, 81, 213; a mad prank by, 103; death of, 132; birth of her elder son by the King, 141 (note); and Lord Buckhurst, 144; retires from the stage, 148, 172; and the assault on Sir J. Coventry, 154; house in Pall Mall, 163; house at Newmarket, 189; her nickname for Louise de Querouaille, 190; her nickname for James, Duke of York, 210; hatred of Louise de Querouaille, 214; appeals to Charles to restore Monmouth to favour, 230; disinterested love for Charles, 235; appoints "Lory" Hyde one of her executors, 246 (note)
- Habeas Corpus Act, passed by "Pensionary" Parliament, 137 (note)
- Hague, The, unchanged appearance of, 33; Lord Chesterfield's description of, 34; silversmiths of, 36; Lucy Walter returns to, 51; Betty Killigrew at, 59
- Halifax, Lord ("the Trimmer"), and the maintenance of the Navy, xvii (and note)
- Hall, Jacob, Barbara Villiers's liaison with, 107
- Hamilton, Lady Anne (afterwards Lady Carnegie and Countess of Southesk), 83
- Hamilton, Col. James, liaison with Lady Castlemaine, 102
- Hamilton, 4th Duke of, killed in a duel, 106 (note)
- Hamilton, Marquis of, as proxy at Charles's christening, 8; execution of, 8 (note)
- Hampton Court, portrait of "La belle Stuart" at, 110

INDEX

- Harbord, William, and Speaker Seymour, 231
- Harris, Sir Augustus, manager of Drury Lane Theatre, 139
- Harris, Henry, 136 (note), 167
- Hart, Charles, Barbara Villiers's immoral relations with, 106
- Harvey, Dr., takes charge of young Princes at battle of Edgehill, 14
- Harvey, John, Lucy Walter lodges with, 50
- Haverfordwest, missing parish registers of St. Thomas's Church at, 36
- "Haymarket Hectors, The," pasquinade on maiming of Sir John Coventry, 158, 160
- Heenvliet, John, Baron van, 52
- Helthrupp, Sir Goddard, 126
- Helvoetsluis, departure of Royalist fleet from, 32; Charles returns to, 33
- Henrietta Maria, Queen, gives birth to Charles II, 1; letter from, in British Museum, 13 (and note); finally leaves England, 27; desires match between Charles and Mdle. de Montpensier, 29, 44; and the attempted abduction of James (Lucy Walter's son), 50; attends wedding of Francis Boyle and Elizabeth Killigrew, 58
- Henrietta of Orange, Princess, 71, 179, 181, 186, 187 (and note), 192-3
- Henrietta of Orleans, Princess, her description of Duchess of Richmond, 108; and Buckingham, 184
- Hertford, Edward Seymour, 9th Earl, marriage of, 6-7
- Hertford, Marquis of, becomes Governor to Charles, 13 (note)
- Hickman-Windsor family, peerage of Plymouth revived in, 70
- Hobart, Sir Miles, locks door of the House of Commons, 12
- Holbein's Gate, Barbara Villiers lodges in, 103
- Holland, banking system in, xxi (note)
- Hollar, Wenceslaus, 76 (and note)
- Holles, Denzil, and Sir John Finch, 11, 12
- Horden, Hildebrand, actor, 150
- Howard, Lady Elizabeth, Lord Chesterfield and, 85; marries Dryden, 85
- Howard, Lord Henry, afterwards 6th Duke of Norfolk, 193
- Howard, Sir Robert, 156
- Howard, Stuarta, maid of honour to Mary of Modena, 52 (note), 61
- Howard, Thomas, accompanies Lucy Walter to London, 52 (and note)
- Howard, Sir Thomas (afterwards Viscount Andover and Earl of Berkshire), 120
- Howard of Bindon, Thomas, Viscount, 6
- Howard of Effingham, Lord, residence of, in King Street, 77
- Huddleston, Father John, summoned to death-chamber of Charles, 254

INDEX

- Hungerford, Sir Thomas, Speaker of House of Commons, 152
- Hurstmonceaux Castle, sale of, 92, 218; restored, 218 (note)
- Hutton, Matthew, residence in King Street, 75 (note)
- Hyde, Edward (afterwards Earl of Clarendon), accompanies Charles to Jersey, 17
- Hyde, Lory, 228; Dryden's title for, 245; and the Peace of Nymwegen, 245; created Earl of Rochester, 245; settles in St. James's Square, 246; influence with Charles, 246; negotiates subsidy to Charles from Louis XIV, 247; First Lord of Treasury Board, 246
- I'Brickan, Lord, 203
- Indian Emperor, The*, Nell Gwynne's debut in, 102 (note); revival of, 148
- Ireton, commands Parliamentary forces at battle of Naseby, 15
- James I, birthplace of, 2
- James II, King, watches battle of Edgehill, 14; a privilege granted to Judge Jeffreys by, 74-5 (note); declares himself a Catholic, 219; pathetic letter from Nell Gwynne to, 236; succeeds to the throne, 253
- Jenkins, Sir Leoline, and the Exclusion Bill, 233
- Jermyn, Henry, 67; Charles and, 105; liaison with Barbara Villiers, 106
- Jersey, mutilation of baptismal registers in: a possible explanation, 19
- Johnson, Dr., tribute to Charles, 256
- Johnson, Mrs., actress, 148
- Jones, Inigo, reputed designer of Marlborough House Chapel, 98
- Jonson, Ben, 104
- Julian, Robert, "Newsmonger of the Muses," 162
- Kelyng, Sir John, Lord Chief Justice, 114 (note)
- Kensington Square, house of Duchess of Mazarin in, 133 (and note)
- Kent, English agent to Williamson at Naples, 26
- Kildare, Elizabeth, Countess of, Charles and, 239
- Killigrew, Dr., at Bruges, 67
- Killigrew, Elizabeth, becomes maid of honour to Henrietta Maria, 56; becomes mistress of Charles, 56, 60; marriage to Francis Boyle, 58; deserts her husband, 60; love-child of, 60 (*see also* Shannon, Lady)
- Killigrew, Henry, 84
- Killigrew, Kate, 60 (and note)
- Killigrew, Tom, suggests "Carolus, Protector" as appropriate designation for Charles, 5; patentee of Drury Lane Theatre, 59, 136

INDEX

- Kilmorey, Robert, Viscount, 62
 King Street, Westminster, notable residents in, 74-5 (note) *et seq.*;
 Lord Castlemaine's house in, 95 (note)
 King's Theatre (*see* Drury Lane Theatre)
 Kip, Johannes, 76 (note)
 Kirk, Mary, Charles and, 239
 Kitchens, where placed in old days, 123, 124
 Kneller, Sir Godfrey, paints portrait of Nell Gwynne, xxiii
 Knepp, Mrs., actress, 129, 141
 Knight, Mrs., and Charles, 239
 Knyff, Leonard, 76 (note)
 Kynaston, Edward, actor, 129

 "La belle Stuart" (*see* Richmond, Duchess of)
 "La grande Mademoiselle" (*see* Montpensier, Mlle. de)
 Lambert, General, 103
 Lang, Andrew, and career of James de la Cloche, 20 (and note), 26, 27
 Laud, William, Bishop of London (afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury), 5 (note); christens Charles, 5, 8, 9
 Lauderdale, government of Scotland practically in hands of, 50 (note)
 Lauderdale House, Aldersgate Street, 57 (note)
 Lauderdale Papers quoted, 249
 Lauzun, Comte de, marries Mlle. de Montpensier, 31; remarriage of, 32
 Legge, William, peerage bestowed on for demolition of Tangier, 246
 Lely, Sir Peter, portrait of Nell Gwynne by, xxiii; portrait of "La belle Stuart" by, 110
 Lennox, Duke of, 8
 Leper hospital, St. James's Palace built on site of a mediæval, 2, 4
 Lichfield, Lady, letter from Charles to, 101
 Liège, alleged marriage of Charles and Lucy Walter at, 41
 Lilly, William, casts horoscope of Charles II, 4 (note)
 Limberham, Dryden's, 141
 Lincoln, Earl of, 124
 Lindsay, David, captain of Scottish army, 47 (note)
 Long, Mrs., actress, 148
 Long, Sir R., 119
 Long Parliament, impeaches Sir John Finch, 12
 Loosdynen, Holland, Lucy Walter's missing son discovered at, 51
 Lords, House of, and finance bills, 137 (note)
 Lorne, Lord, selected by Covenanters to spy upon Charles's movements, 48
 Lothbury, former inhabitants of, 57 (note)
 Louis XIII, sponsor by proxy at christening of Charles, 6
 Louis XIV, and Mlle. de Montpensier, 31; makes peace with the Dutch, 184; secret ratification of Treaty of Dover, 185

INDEX

- (note); and Marie Mancini, 205; appealed to by husband of Hortense Mancini, 208-9
- Louise Henrietta, Princess, a match for Charles with, projected by his mother, 72 (note)
- Love in a Wood*, Wycherley's, 129, 130
- Love's Tricks*, Shirley's, 169
- Lowther, Col. Claude, 218 (note)
- Lucas, Theophilus, 170
- Maasluis, Holland, Lucy Walter's search for her son at, 51
- Macaulay, Lord, and Charles's return to London, 90, 91
- Man of Mode, The, or Sir Fopling Flutter*, 144, 166, 215
- Mancini, Hortense, Duchess of Mazarin, biography of by Cyril Hartman, viii; becomes Charles's mistress, 73, 214; death of, 133; and Charles, 204 *et seq.*; Charles as suitor for, 205; marriage of, 207; leaves her husband, 208, 209; intrigues and amours of, 209; enters a convent, 209; reaches London, 211; her love of animals, 212; vexed question of her age, 216
- Maria Theresa, Infanta of Spain, marriage of, 206
- Marie de Medicis, sponsor by proxy at christening of Charles, 6; monetary inducement to return to France, 6
- Marlborough, Sarah, Duchess of, and Congreve, 130 (note)
- Marvell, Andrew, lampoon on "Royal Resolutions" by, 158; compiles annotated list of "Pensionary" Parliament, 160-1
- Mary of Modena, child bride of James, Duke of York, 210
- Masks, use of in theatres by ladies, 145-6
- Mauritz, Prince of Orange, 45
- May, Baptist ("Bab"), as art connoisseur, xxiii; sits in Parliament, 160
- Mazarin, Cardinal, approached by Charles as suitor for Hortense Mancini, 72; and his nieces, 205 *et seq.*; death of, 207; bequests to, 207-8
- Mazarin, Duchess of (*see* Mancini, Hortense)
- Mecklenburgh, Duke of, marries "Báblon," 31, 63 (note)
- Meres, Sir Thomas, 155, 231 (note)
- Meyrick, Sir Samuel, 35 (note)
- Middlesex, Lionel Cranfield, Earl of, 122
- Middleton, Mrs. Jane, 215
- Mobb, "Old," and Louise de Querouaille, 195-7
- Monaco, Prince of, liaison with Hortense Mancini, 216
- Monk, General, his part in the Restoration, 89
- Monmouth, Duke of, question of paternity of, 38-9; Charles's affection for, 42; Shaftesbury and, 42, 219; alleged to have planned attack on Sir J. Coventry, 154; and a tipster at Newmarket, 193; ambition to

INDEX

- be recognized as heir to throne, 229; increased popularity of, 230; disobeys Charles and votes in the Lords, 231; banished to The Hague, 252
- Monsieur Ragou, Lacy's*, 142
- Montagu, Admiral (afterwards 1st Earl of Sandwich), 89; his flagship conveys Charles to England, 90
- Montagu of Boughton, 2nd Lord, 105
- Montagu, Ralph, liaison with Lady Sussex, 92
- Montmorency, Isabelle Angélique, Duchesse de Châtillon, 30
- Montpensier, Mdle. de, a projected match between Charles and, 29, 44; correct summary of Charles's character, 29 (note); and the Duchesse of Châtillon, 30; marriage ambitions of, 30, 31; marries Comte de Lauzun, 31; banished from French Court, 31 (note); separates from her husband, 32; death of, 32
- Moray, Sir Robert, 240, 249
- Morin, introduces game of basset in London, 217
- Morland, Sir Samuel, 91
- Morrice, Sir William, 115 (note)
- Mottet, Egidio, secretary of Don Alonzo, 54
- Motteville, Mdme. de, pen portraits of Charles in "Memoirs" of, 28; Mdle. de Montpensier and, 31
- Mustapha, the Son of Solymán the Magnificent*, 142, 165, 166
- Naseby, battle of, 15
- Naseby, ship of the line, re-christened *Royal Charles*, 90
- National Portrait Gallery, Peter Pett's portrait in, xvi; portrait of Nell Gwynne in, xxiii
- Needham, Eleanor (*see* Byron, Lady)
- Neuburg, Count of, visits Charles at Whitehall, 65
- Newburgh, Lord, and supposed marriage of Charles with Lucy Walter, 43
- Newcastle, Duchess of, a complimentary ball to Charles at Antwerp, 72
- Newcastle, William Cavendish, 1st Duke of, Governor of Charles, 13 (and note)
- Newmarket, Charles at, 188 *et seq.*
- Newstead Abbey, Notts, 62
- Nicholas, Sir Edward, 51 (note), 55, 67, 97
- Nokes, James, actor, 169, 186
- Norden, John, antiquary and topographer, 241
- North, Dudley (4th Lord North of Kirtling), his house in King Street, Westminster, 78
- North, Sir Dudley, kidnapping of, 78
- Northumberland, Dowager Duchess of, and the Bishop of Hereford, 71
- Northumberland, George, Duke of, birth in Merton College, 104, 106
- Norwich, Earl of, sentenced to death and respited, 122 (note)

INDEX

- Nottingham, Daniel Finch, Earl of, 127
- Nymwegen, Treaty of, concluded, 223; events conducing to conclusion of, 252 (note)
- Oates, Titus, and Popish Plot, 219, 224 *et seq.*
- O'Brien, Hon. Charles, and the assault on Sir J. Coventry, 154
- "Old Rowley," nickname for Charles II, xxii (note)
- Oliva, general of Jesuit Order in Rome, 18, 27
- O'Neill, Daniel, reports to Charles Lucy Walter's dissolute mode of life at The Hague, 52; abducts James, son of Lucy Walter, 54; at Bruges, 67
- Orange, Prince of (brother-in-law of Charles), 32, 33
- Ormonde, Duke of, 52, 53, 54
- Orrery, Lord, letter from Charles to, 66; as playwright, 142, 165
- Osborne, Lady Bridget, marriage of to Don Carlo, 70
- Osborne, Sir Thomas, 162 (and note)
- Ossory, Lord, 222
- Oxford, Court removes to, 21, 104; eight-day Parliament at (1681), 231 (note)
- Oxford, Aubrey de Vere, Earl of, 147
- Paille Maille, game of, 34
- Paine, James, architect of Dover House, Whitehall, 124
- Pains and Penalties, Bill of, 154; receives Royal assent, 157-8
- Pall Mall, Barbara Villiers in a "very private lodging" in, 105
- Palmer, Mrs. (*see* Villiers, Barbara)
- Palmer, Roger, marries Barbara Villiers, 81, 88; created Earl of Castlemaine, 92
- Palmerston, Lord, on source of England's greatness, xix
- Panton, Col. Thomas, gambler and card-sharper, 170-1
- Panton Street, by whom built, 171
- Paris, Charles passes two years with his mother in, 28; death of Lucy Walter in, 55
- Parish registers, mutilation of, for State reasons, 19, 37
- Parliament, proclaims Charles King by virtue of his birthright, 89; reports of proceedings in, formerly forbidden, 134; debate on relations between stage and throne in, 134 *et seq.*
- Parliament Street, Westminster, building of, 77; widening of, 77
- Parry, Simon, and the assault on Sir J. Coventry, 154
- Parthenissa*, Earl of Orrery's, 165
- Pedro II of Portugal, 207
- Pegge, Catherine, 67; birth of a son to, 70; marries Sir Edward Greene, 71; has a daughter by Charles, 71
- Pegge of Yeldesley, Thomas, 68
- Penn, William, reproved by Charles, 249
- "Pensionary" Parliament, the, 137 (and note); Andrew Marvell's

INDEX

- annotated list of, 160-1; Charles asks for additional revenue, 222; dissolution of, 223
- Pepys, Samuel, 167, 169; his contempt of Downing, xx; and Charles's mistresses, 62, 63; describes Barbara Villiers, 91; hears Duke of York "talking very wantonly" to Barbara Villiers, 91; Sir Thomas Crewe and, 95; and Lord Sandwich's housekeeper, 95; first impression of Catherine of Braganza, 98; and impaired looks of Lady Castlemaine, 103; and Charles's infatuation for "La belle Stuart," 108; visits Lord Clarendon, 126; and Dutch bombardment of Chatham, 135 (note); behind the scenes at Old Drury, 145; on custom of ladies wearing masks in theatres, 146; and Nell Gwynne, 149
- Percy of Alnwick, Lord, 28, 67
- Pett, Peter, as King's Shipwright, xvi; portrait of, in National Portrait Gallery, xvi
- Philaster, or Love lies a-Bleeding*, Fletcher's, 150
- Philip III of Spain, and the "Queen of Hearts," 45
- Piccadilly, Clarendon's house in, xix (note); how described in old maps, 57-8
- Piccadilly Hall, 121, 122
- Plague of London, xxi, 21, 104, 167
- Plain Dealer, The*, Wycherley's, 129, 130
- Playhouses, a proposed entertainment tax on, 135
- Plessis, Maréchal de, 179
- Plymouth, Earl of (Don Carlo), house of, fronting St. James's Park, 68 (and note); death at Tangier, 70; Catherine Pegge's son created, 70
- Plymouth, Lady, second marriage of, 70
- "Poor Whores' Petition," the, 112 *et seq.*
- Popish Plot, 220, 224 *et seq.*
- Portsmouth, wedding of Charles and Catherine at, 94 (note)
- Portsmouth, Duchess of (*see* Querouaille, Louise)
- Prannell, Henry, marriage of, 6
- Prayer Book, suggested reinstatement of memorial service for King Charles I in, 46 (note)
- Pregnani, Abbé, as Turf prophet, 192, 193
- Presbyterianism, Charles declares allegiance to, 45; declared by Charles to be "no religion for a gentleman," 48
- Preston, Thomas, Viscount Tara, Charles lodges with at Bruges, 65, 66 (and note)
- Price, Miss Henrietta Maria, 236 (note)
- "Prideaux Correspondence" quoted, 226-7
- Prior, Matthew, residence of in Duke Street, Westminster, 75 (note)
- Progers, Edward, and the abduction of James (Lucy Walter's son), 43, 54

INDEX

- Proud Black Eagle* conveys Charles to Jersey, 17
- Pulteney, Sir William, 126
- Puritanism in England, death-knell of, 89
- Puyguilhen, Marquis de (*see* Lauzun, Comte de)
- Pym, John, opposes further supplies to the Crown, 12; Lady Carlisle and, 125
- "Queen of Hearts," the (*see* Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia)
- Querouaille, Louise de, Duchess of Portsmouth, 173 *et seq.*; and Hortense Mancini, 73; execrable handwriting of, 81; unpopularity of, in England, 195, 199; mock marriage with Charles, 43, 188, 194-5; death at Paris, 132; appointed lady-in-waiting to Queen Consort, 188; and the death-bed of Charles, 254
- Rabutin, Bussy, on death of Henrietta of Orange, 187
- Reeve, Miles, and the assault on Sir J. Coventry, 154
- Reresby, Sir John, and wedding of Charles and Catherine, 93
- Rhœsmarket, traditional marriage of Charles with Lucy Walter at, 36, 37, 41
- Richmond, Duchess of, proxy for Marie de Medicis at christening of Charles, 6, 8
- Richmond, Duchess of ("La belle Stuart"), Charles's infatuation for, 108; childish nature of her amusements, 178
- Richmond, Duke of (husband of "La belle Stuart"), enforced exile of, 109 (note)
- Richmond, Charles Lennox, Duke (son of Louise de Querouaille), 195; becomes a Catholic but reverts to Protestantism, 221
- Rivals, The*, Davenant's, 169
- Roberts, Jane, association with Charles, 239
- Roch Castle, near Haverfordwest, 35
- Rochester, John Wilmot, Earl of (the "Wicked Earl"), 144, 145; lampoons Charles as "Flatfoot the gudgeon taker," 190; contempt for professional politicians, 244-5; death of, 243
- Rodney, Sir George, a love affair and suicide of, 7
- Rohan, Henri de (*see* De la Cloche, James)
- Romano, Giulio, 100 (note)
- Ross, Thomas, appointed tutor to James (Lucy Walter's son), 55
- Rotterdam, birth of Duke of Monmouth at, 40
- Royal Charles* seized by the Dutch at Chatham, xvi; flagship of Admiral Montagu, 90
- Royal playhouses, difficulties encountered by managers of, 143 *et seq.*
- Rupert, Prince, cavalry charge at battle of Edgehill, 14; fights in battle of Naseby, 15; commands Royalist fleet, 33

INDEX

- Russell, Lord, Whig leader, 232, 252
- Ruvigny, French Ambassador, 177 (note), 200
- Ruyter, Admiral de, raids Thames ports, xvi
- St. Albans, Henry Jermyn, Earl of, 45, 141 (note), 162, 221
- St. Evrémond, befriends Hortense Mancini, 133; exiled by Louis XIV, 210
- St. James's Palace, birthplace of Charles II, 1, 2; builder of, 2; christening of Charles at, 6
- St. James's Square, 58, 201 *et seq.*
- St. Margaret's, Westminster, christening of Barbara Villiers at, 79 (and note); re-christening of Barbara Villiers's eldest son at, 94
- St. Simon, and Courtin (French Ambassador), 177
- Sanderson, Mrs., marries Betterton, 147-8
- Sandwich, Lord, 91; and Barbara Villiers, 101, 102
- Sandys, Sir Richard, and the assault on Sir John Coventry, 154
- Saragossa, object of Charles's visit to, 72
- "Sarah, Mrs." (Lord Sandwich's housekeeper), 95
- "Saw Pit Close," Pimlico, 122
- Saxham, "Old Q's" stud farm at, 191
- Scarsdale, Lord, 163
- Scheveningen, Charles returns to England from, 90
- Schiedam, Duke of Monmouth as nurse child at, 40, 50
- Scotland, Charles's weary months in, 47 *et seq.*
- Scrope, Sir Carr, prologue to *Man of Mode*, 215
- Secret Love, or the Maiden Queen*, Dryden's, 148
- Sedley, Sir Charles, 155
- Seymour, Sir Edward, Speaker of House of Commons, 135 (note), 155, 231
- Shadwell, Mrs., actress, 169
- Shaftesbury, Lord, intrigues for legitimization of Duke of Monmouth, 42; Aldersgate Street residence of, 57 (note); and "chargeable ladies about the Court," 73; and the Oxford Parliament, 231 (note), 233; downfall of, 232; sent to the Tower, 235
- Shannon, Lady (Elizabeth Killigrew), 52 (note), 61; becomes Charles's mistress, 60; death of, 61 (note)
- Sharp, Archbishop, murder of, 230
- "Shavers Hall," Piccadilly gaming house, 140 (note)
- She Would if She Could*, 166, 168, 169
- Sheerness, Dutch raid on, xvi
- Sheldon, Gilbert, Archbishop of Canterbury, his reputation for gallantry, 112
- Ship-money, Finch's judgment on levying of by the Crown, 13 (note)

INDEX

- "Short Parliament," dissolution of, 12
- Sidney, Algernon, 38 (note), 39; execution of, 252
- Sidney, Col. Robert, Lucy Walter's alleged liaison with, 37, 38-9 (and note)
- Sir Solomon, or the Cautious Coxcomb*, Caryl's, 186
- Slighted Maid, The*, Stapylton's, 165
- Slingsby, Col. Sir Arthur, takes Lucy Walter's son from his mother, 53-4
- Smith, "Captain" Alexander, 164
- Sole Bay, battle of, 239
- Solemn League and Covenant accepted by Charles, 45
- Somerset House, residence of "La belle Stuart" at, 108; Charles's clandestine visit to, 109
- Sophie, Princess Palatine, Charles and, 45; knowledge of Charles's moral lapse, 45 (note); marriage of, 46
- Sotheby, Messrs., important Lucy Walter letters sold by, 55, 56 (and note)
- Southampton, Charles Fitzroy, Duke of, 88, 94; re-christened according to Anglican rite, 94; death of, 128
- Speaker of House of Commons, genesis of his office, 152
- Spenser, Edmund, residence of in King Street, Westminster, 77
- Sprat, Dean, and obsequies of Charles, 254-5
- Stanley, Dean, and Queen Victoria's estimate of Charles, 255 (note)
- Stapylton, Sir Robert, 165
- Star seen in daylight at birth of Charles II, 1, 4
- Stepmother, The*, Stapylton's, 165
- Stork, the, family crest of Walter family, 35; how protected in the Netherlands, 40; legendary significance of, 40
- Strafford, Lord, and Lady Carlisle, 125
- Suffolk, Theophilus, 2nd Earl of, 61
- Sun, eclipse of (1630), and its portent, 4 (note)
- Sunderland, Lord, 228 (and note), 246
- Sussex, Earl of, improvidence of, 92; marriage to Lady Anne Fitzroy, 217
- Sussex, Lady, becomes mistress of Ralph Montagu, 92; and Hortense Mancini, 217, 218
- Sutherland, 1st Duke of, as road-maker, 128
- Swift, mention of the "Golden Farmer" by, 196 (note)
- Swynfen, John, 156
- Taafe, Lord (afterwards Lord Carlingford), Lucy Walter's illicit relations with, 50; recommends Charles another mistress, 67
- Tangier, Don Carlo dies at, 70; abandoned to reduce expenses, 247

INDEX

- Tara, Thomas Preston, Viscount, 65; house of at Bruges, 65, 66 (and note)
- Tartuffe*, a comedy founded on, 168
- Teesdale, J. M., purchases letters dealing with Lucy Walter, 56 (note)
- Temple, Sir Richard, 156
- Temple, Sir William, negotiates Triple Alliance, 228
- Terry, Sir H. Imbert, viii, 234
- Thackeray, W. M., and Walpole House, Chiswick, 131 (note)
- Thomond, Lord, 188
- Thurloe papers, Charles's visit to Lucy Walter at Antwerp recorded in, 51
- Thynne of Longleat ("Tom of Ten Thousand"), 191
- Titus, Col., 156
- Tonge, Israel, and Popish Plot, 224
- Touchet, Squire, early resident in St. James's Street, 126
- Tournai, Bishop of, 179
- Tower of London, Lucy Walter imprisoned in, and released, 52, 53
- Tree, Sir Herbert Beerbohm, at Walpole House, Chiswick Mall, 131 (note)
- Tunbridge Wells, Drury Lane company at, in plague year, 185
- Turenne, Maréchal, 207
- Turner, Dr., Thackeray's schoolmaster at Chiswick, 131 (note)
- Turnour, Sir Edward, Speaker of the House of Commons, 135 (note), 157
- Two Noble Kinsmen*, Fletcher's, 169
- Ugbrooke, original draft of secret Treaty of Dover at, 181
- Up Park, Lord Gray's house at, 124
- Vaughan, Mr., 227
- Vendôme, Philippe de, and Louise de Querouaille, 198-9
- Venner's Plot, 224
- Verneuil, Duc de, French Ambassador, 177
- Victoria, Queen, her tribute to Charles, 255-6
- Villiers, Barbara, Countess of Castlemaine and Duchess of Cleveland, 74 *et seq.*; portrait of, xxiii; christening of, 79 (and note); inherits her grandmother's house in King Street, 80; undecipherable handwriting of, 80, 81, 213; intimacy with Philip, 2nd Earl of Chesterfield, 81, 82; typical letters to Chesterfield, 82 *et seq.*; personality of, as revealed in her portrait, 82; becomes Charles's mistress-in-chief, 86; lack of maternal affection, 88; terrorizes Charles into acknowledging offspring of other paramours as his own, 88-9; returns from Holland in Charles's retinue, 89; birth of her first child, Anne, 92; becomes lady-in-waiting to Queen Catherine, 94; joins Roman Catholic Church, 95; remarries, 95 (note), 131; birth of second son by Charles, 100; liaison with Col.

INDEX

- James Hamilton, 102; birth of third son (Duke of Northumberland), 104; frequent quarrels with Charles, 96, 104, 105, 107; banished from the Court, 105; birth of daughter by John Churchill, 106; immoral relations with Charles Hart, 106; and Jacob Hall, a rope-dancer at Bartholomew Fair, 107; and downfall of Clarendon, 107; the "Poor Whores' Petition" to, 111 *et seq.*; freehold of Berkshire House presented to, 116; leases or sells portions of freehold of Berkshire House, 120; retires to Paris, 127; her relations with Wycherley, 129, 130-1; her name removed from list of bed-chamber women, 131; son by Cardonell Goodman, 131; death of, 132; gambling losses of, 217; and Winifred Wells, 237
- Villiers, Col. Edward, 95 (and note)
- Villiers, Sir Edward, 80
- Villiers, Lady (grandmother of Barbara Villiers), 80
- Villiers, Lady Mary, 8
- Vilvord, Charles's description of, 65
- Vyner, Sir Thomas, 118
- Waller, Edmund, 2-3, 156, 214 (and note)
- Walpole, Horace, compiles list of Charles's witticisms, 248
- Walpole, Sir Robert, 132
- Walpole House, Chiswick, 131 (and note)
- Walter, Justus (brother of Lucy Walter), 36, 52
- Walter, Lucy (mistress of Charles II), 10 (note); Charles's meeting with, 35; paternal crest of, 35; arrives at The Hague, 36; traditional marriage to Charles at Rhôsmarket, 36, 37, 41; alleged liaison with Robert Sidney, 37, 38; gives birth to Duke of Monmouth, 40; migrates to Antwerp, 50; illicit relations with Lord Taafe, 50; Charles grants a pension to, 51-2; imprisoned in the Tower as a suspected Royalist spy, 52; dissolute mode of life at The Hague, 52; final severance from her son James, 55; death and funeral of, 55
- Walter, William (father of Lucy Walter), 35, 36
- Walton, Isaak, 77 (note)
- Warburton of Arley, Peter, 62
- Warwick, Earl of, in command of Parliamentary fleet, 32
- Watts, John (jockey), 189
- Wells, Squire, 236 (note)
- Wells, Winifred, relations with Charles, 236-7; marriage of, 238
- Wentworth, Lord, 67
- Westminster Abbey, Charles's grave in, 255; wax effigy of Charles in Islip Chapel, 255 (and note); natural children of Charles buried in, 256
- Weston, Lord, 121
- Whalley, Captain, wounded in a duel with Lord Chesterfield, 85

INDEX

- Whalley, Mr., entertains Charles and Barbara Villiers, 91
 Whig historians, bias against Charles of, xiv, xv
 Whigs, discomfited by Charles, 234
 White Lodge, Richmond Park, 132
 Wilkes, John, fascination of women for, 31
 William II of Orange, death of, 46, 47
 William III continues pension of Duchess of Mazarin, 133; marriage of, 183, 251
 Williams, William, chosen Speaker of House of Commons, 233
 Windsor, Charles's life at, 240 *et seq.*; Long Walk planted by Charles, 242
 Windsor Castle, restoration of, 239-40
 Windsor Forest, 241-2
 Woolly, Mr., killed in duel with Lord Chesterfield, 87
 Worcester, battle of, 47 (note)
 Worcester, Lady, and Louise de Querouaille, 197
 Worcester House, Strand, former residence of Lord Clarendon, xix
 Wotton, Sir Henry, provost of Eton, 59 (note); his residence in King Street, Westminster, 77; account of a duel fought at Knightsbridge, 121
 Wren, Sir Christopher, 102; selected by Charles for rebuilding City after Great Fire, xv
 Wycherley, 144; Barbara Villiers's liaison with, 129, 130-1
 Wyndham, Sir Charles, 146
 Wyndham, Thomas, marries Winifred Wells, 238
 Wynn, Sir Watkin, 203
 Yarmouth, Lady (natural daughter of Charles II), 52 (note), 61
 Yarmouth, William Paston, 2nd Earl of, 61
 York, Duke of, afterwards James II, joins Royalist fleet at Helvoetsluis, 32; sum voted by Parliament to, 89; and Barbara Villiers, 91

