

Literature, &c.

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From the Columbian Magazine.

CARRISBROOKE CASTLE.

REMINISCENCES OF CHARLES I. AND
HIS FAMILY.

BY MRS. E. R. STEELE.

FAIR Ocean Isle! how enchanting are the visions that arise in my memory, of summer lingerings among thy vales, or upon thy sea-bathed cliffs, while tracing these scenes of beauty when far away.

The Isle of Wight was called by the Britons Guicht, which meant separated, and from its name and conformation it is thought to have been broken loose from the shore of England by some great convulsion of nature. To reach it we embarked in a small steamer at Southampton, and sailed from an arm of the sea called Southampton Water, eight miles long and two broad. Its shores are covered upon one side by farms and grounds, and among the latter are seen the ruined aisles and cloisters of Nently Abbey. Upon the other shore those dark woods are the remains of the New Forest, so called by William the Conqueror; who, to form it, swept away houses, churches and villages for ninety miles in circumference. The game laws which still exist were instituted for this royal hunting ground. The office of bow-bearer also still remains, the holder of which must swear he will 'be of good behaviour to her Majesty's wild beasts.' The death of William's son Rufus, and of his grand son Richard, in this forest, were attributed by the superstitious to Divine retribution. While upon this matter let not cunning Canute be forgotten, who gave that celebrated rebuke to his flatterers. Sailing out from the English coast, we find ourselves upon a channel from one to five miles broad, running between the shore and the island. It was in this channel that the Royal George ship of war went down, with her crew of seven hundred souls.

In its outline the famed island of White resembles our Staten Island, but is larger, it being twenty-two miles long by thirteen broad. The river Medina divides it through the centre. Our steamer steered for this river, which at its mouth has upon each side of it two towns of East and West Cowes. Norris Castle, and other lordly mansions adorned the coast. At East Cowes we landed one fine day in June, and here also landed in the year 1647, upon a gloomy November day, the unfortunate king, Charles I., after his escape from Hampton Court. The time had come when Cromwell or Charles must die. The party of the Republican was strongest and the King was imprisoned. He fled with three followers, and lost in storms and darkness wandered in the forests until morning found them undecided where to turn. After a hurried consultation, Charles resolved to fly to the Isle of Wight and throw himself into Carisbrooke Castle. Arrived at last at Southampton, Charles dispatched Sir John Berkeley and Mr Ashburnham to discover the disposition of the governor toward him. At Carisbrooke they informed the governor of the flight of Charles and his wish to come over to the Island. The governor, who was in the interest of the army, was thrown into great consternation at the strait in which he found himself. 'Oh, gentlemen,' he exclaimed, pale with emotion, 'you have undone me by bringing the king here. If he is not in the island pray let him not come, for what between my duty to his majesty, and my gratitude for this fresh confidence on the one hand, and my observing my trust to the army on the other, I shall be confounded.'

'God be thanked! there is no harm done,' said Sir John, 'his majesty did propose to confer a favor upon you, and one not inconsistent with your duty, as the army is pledged to the king unless it play traitor.' The governor uncertain how to act was unwilling to refuse the king, lest he should fall into worse hands; 'and then what would the army and kingdom say to me,' he said. After a great deal of undecision governor Hammond concluded to receive him. Having gained the governor's reluctant consent the two agents hesitated whether to carry him to the king; but thinking it the best course to pursue, they accordingly all crossed over to the mainland, where at the house of Lord Southampton they found the wanderer.

Sir John Berkeley sought the king, who when he heard that the Governor was bound to the army wept and reproached Sir John Berkeley for having put his life in peril. Berkeley endeavored to re-assure Charles, by telling him Hammond had sworn to protect him. The king, however, still persisted in believing he should be made a prisoner, as was indeed the case. 'At least, your majesty is not obliged to go,' said Sir John, 'and as to this governor I will soon rid you of him by a pious in his side.' The king, however, judging matters had gone too far to retract, received Hammond pleasantly, and the whole party crossed over to the island and landed at Cowes. They remained there that night, and when Charles retired to his bed-room he found his bedstead was curiously carved in oak, having upon the head board, in gilt letters, 'REMEMBER THY KING.' The unhappy king torn from his throne and family, a houseless, friendless, wanderer, saw in this a token of his approaching doom, and kneeling down beside the bed prayed fervently. With lighter hearts and happier feelings did we leave Cowes, than those which prevailed with Charles and his party as they set out for Newport.

Every description of scenery may be found in this celebrated Island. We drove as if in an enchanting dream, through fairy vale and shady woodland, past pretty cottage and lofty castle, mounted the breezy hill, commanding lovely views, and climbed the ocean cliff to gaze out over its ever-moving waters. The lee coast presents a variety of curious scenery. Here are the needles, those tall, pointed rocks, standing like sentinels before the Western shore. Brilliant sand is found here, lying like coloured ribbons across the cliffs, and is used with gum to make curious painting. Freshwater Bay detained us a few days by its curious rocks and foaming surf. Those deep dark ravines or caves, called chines, are worthy a close inspection; and a ride beneath the frowning under-cliff, with the ocean dashing far below, will also charm the tourist who seeks for beauty and grandeur. Newport, the capital, stands upon the Medina in the centre of the island, surrounded by a valley covered with farms and gardens hemmed in by gently rising ground, crowned with woods, and gentleman's seats, and country mansions. It is a market house and spacious grounds for market days. Some of the town is ancient, but there are modern streets, paved, and lighted with gas. The old church of St. Thomas a Becket, is an object of interest; it was built in 1172, and has a Norman tower with a short spire. As king Charles passed through this town, a prisoner, he excited much compassion; for the island was much in his favour, except the governors of the castles. A lady wishing to show her sympathy came out and presented him with a damask rose. This blooming flower, shining among so much gloom the king accepted as a token for good, and thanking her warmly, seemed much affected. Charles was then carried to Carisbrooke castle, a mile from the city.

It was a soft and perfumed day, when we stood before the castle, musing upon the 'chance and change,' which had brought this once powerful and stately edifice to its present ruinous state, and its lordly owners many of them to an unhappy end. Even in decay, Carisbrooke is an imposing object, and its grand gateway, and towers, and its gray walls festooned with ivy, crowning the grassy eminence on which it stands! The date of this castle is uncertain. Roman, Saxon, and Norman remains are found in it. Among the former is shown a well in the churchyard, said to be three hundred feet deep. The followers of Charles were sent away and he was kept a close prisoner. Many plans were formed for his rescue. His son Charles, while coming with some ships of war to release his father was forced to return to Holland. One night the king was suddenly awakened by the beat of a drum, he knew that an insurrection had taken place in his favor, but, the island being in the power of Cromwell, the attempt did not succeed. There were but few indeed who cared to befriend the fallen monarch; for in his prosperity Charles had driven them recklessly from him in his insincerity and indigence. It was the misfortune of Charles Stuart to have been at the helm during the time of much commotion. A reformation in religion, and reduction of the kingly authority was required by the times, and the spirit of Charles was not equal to the emergency; he refused to bend and was crushed. As a private gentleman, he had abilities and qualities to render him estimable.

A window is shown in Carisbrooke castle from which the king endeavored to escape. Friends were near with relays of horses, and everything arranged, when it was found that he was too large to pass through the bars. After much straining he was forced to relinquish the attempt. The children of Charles were here sent to him. He had once before seen them while at a village near Reading. Cromwell who was present, shed tears at the affecting meeting. The princess Elizabeth, was a fine girl of thirteen; the duke of Gloucester, nine; the duke of York, fourteen. Charles then, as always, endeavored to instill virtuous principles into the hearts of his children. He conjured them, whatever misfortunes might befall the Church of England, to be constant to their faith. The princess, he enjoined always to be obedient to her mother and brother Charles after his death, and never to marry unless with the queen's consent. Alas, the young girl lived not long enough to obey these precepts. The duke of York was charged to make his escape as soon as possible. This he did soon after, when in London, by quietly slipping from the apartment without hat or cloak, and he then fled to a friend of his family, by whose means he reached Holland, and sought the protection of his sister Mary, the princess of Orange. After a few months Charles was carried to Newport, where, in the old gray stone school house, still standing, he signed the treaty with the Parliament, called the treaty of Newport. The spirit of Charles Stuart, instead of falling with his fortunes, rose the higher in adversity. Never has he appeared so well, as upon the last trying events of his life. During the formation of this treaty, the king displayed so much knowledge of law and divinity, and conducted his vocations so ably, that the earl of Salisbury observed to Sir Philip Warwick, who attended upon Charles: 'The king is wonderfully improved of late!'

Warwick quickly answered:

'No, my lord, he was always so; but your lordship too late discerned it.'

The last days of Charles were passed in dignified resignation and Christian composure. Whatever were his errors, no one can read the description, the trial and death of the king without a sentiment of respect and compassion. In that lordly chamber, Westminster Hall, where he had so often sat in state, he appears as a criminal. In the place where stood his throne,

sat a long array of his enemies, Cromwell in the midst, having the arms of the commonwealth over his head. There he was sentenced to death. His last interview with his children was, according to Herbert, so touching, as to move his rugged guard to tears. There were only two of his children in England, and they were under the care of the duke of Northumberland, at Sion House. When they were brought into their unhappy father's presence, the poor children fell upon their knees, weeping bitterly and asked his blessing. The king raised them up, and seating the princess Elizabeth upon his knee, gave her his last advice. He desired her, when she saw her brother James, duke of York, to tell him their oldest brother Charles would be king after his father's death; and he must not only regard him as his brother, but as his sovereign. His dying wish, he said, was that his children might love each other and forgive their enemies. He also bade her to tell her mother, he had never ceased to think of her, and to love her to the last. 'Do not grieve for me my child,' he added, 'I die for the laws and liberties of the land, and for the Protestant religion.' He then gave her his blessing and sent it to her brothers and sister, and his remembrance to all who were dear to him.

'Sweetheart,' he said, 'you will forget all this.'

'No,' exclaimed Elizabeth, weeping bitterly, 'I shall never forget it as long as I live. I will write it down and be sure to remember it!'

Charles then gave her some jewels, and when she arose, placed the little duke upon his knee.

'Sweetheart!' he said, 'they will cut off thy father's head! The child looked wistfully in his father's face. 'Mark, child what I say; they will cut off my head and make thee perhaps a king. But you must not be made a king as long as your brothers Charles and James are alive. They will cut off their heads when they catch them, and cut off thy head at last; and therefore I charge you not to be made a king by them.'

The boy replied:

'He would be torn in pieces first!' which answer well pleased the king.

He then gave him also some jewels, and kissed them while tears rolled down his cheeks, and prayed the Almighty to bless them. As they were leaving the apartment, he again called them, embraced and kissed them fondly, and bade them adieu forever. To this fearful scaffold, Charles went with the same humility, Christian firmness and trust as had borne him through his sorrowing downfall. 'I go from a corruptible, to an incorruptible crown,' were his last words. That he was received, and his errors forgiven, let us hope. He is considered by the English Church as a martyr for his faith, and on the 30th January, the anniversary of his execution, a service is held called King Charles the Martyr's day. While we were in London, we visited the spot where the King was beheaded. It was before the palace of Whitehall, but a small part of which now remains. Here stands a statue of James, Duke of York, who, with a sad expression, points to the spot where fell his father's head.

The children of Charles were sent by Cromwell into confinement at Carisbrooke Castle, before which we have been lingering all this time, looking back to the past history of its royal inmates. Elizabeth was a fine child, of a good heart, with talents and abilities above her years; but the terrific events which had passed around her had blasted her young life, and in a year after her father's execution, the poor little princess died at the age of fourteen. She was buried privately in the church of St. Thomas a Becket, at Newport, whose spire we can just see through the fine old trees. No pomp, no carved sepulchral monument in Westminster, awaited this daughter of a royal house. Upon a plain stone, which covered the spot where they laid her, were chiseled her letters E. S. Afterwards, however, when her brother Charles ascended the throne, a brass plate took the place of the stone, with a more elaborate inscription. No fairer resting place could they give thee, sweet princess, than in the centre of this fairy island. In its fate it bears a resemblance to thee, for like thee it was torn by rude storms from its parents' side, and left as a prey to the cruel winds and the waves. Farewell to the elysian Isle; and farewell to the fair princess who rests in thy bosom.

American Annuals for 1846.

From the Snow Flake.

DEATH OF A CHILD.

BY T. S. ARTHUR.

THE death of a child, to those in no way connected with it either by relationship or daily intercourse, is a thing of little moment—a circumstance scarce noted but how different is such an event to those who have grown familiar with the little prattler; to those who have begun to listen, even in memory, for the music of its happy voice.

In the family where I once resided, was a dear child who had won his way into every heart. Ten of us there were—but of these, six only claimed relationship—the rest of us were strangers and sojourners. But words cannot tell how dear to us was that sweet child. He was our playmate when in the house, and claimed many of our most pleasant thoughts when we were away. The father and mother were very happy in the possession of such a treasure, and though sensible persons, found it almost impossible to restrain even their own expressions of fondness for, and interest in, the little one.

He was just three years old, when he was suddenly taken with symptoms of that terrible disease the croup. In the silent midnight his parents were startled from his sleep by his loud and difficult breathing. A hot bath was immediately prepared, and antimonial wine administered, but to no good purpose; and, ere dawn, an experienced physician had been summoned to the house. No relief could be obtained, however, for many hours, and that relief was but a slight abatement of the alarming symptoms. But little was eaten by any at the breakfast table next morning. Concern and anxiety were upon every face. How all was changed since the day before! Then we were happy with our little playmate—now we spoke low and ominous words together, and stole about softly, as if we feared to wake a sleeper.

When we again assembled at the dinner hour, hope had not yet dawned upon the hearts of the anxious parents. One by one we gathered in the sick chamber to look upon our pleasant companion, now struggling with pain, and subdued by sickness. For a moment his eye would brighten as each familiar face bent over him, but it would soon settle into an appalling look, as if he asked our aid in his extremity.

How ardently did he long to bestow that aid, and how humbled in spirit were we, as we turned away from his bed side, feeling as though his rebuke went with us for not rescuing him from the hands of his tormentor.

The day wore on heavily with each one of us who was absent on business, and at last the evening came.

'How is little Willie?' I asked, eagerly, of his mother who was the first that met me as I entered. She looked at me a moment before she spoke, evidently struggling to keep down her feelings, and then said, mournfully, and with wet eyes:—

'He is no better.'

Softly I entered the chamber, the stillness of which was broken only by the loud, quick, labored breathing of the child. How changed was our little friend! The rose of health had faded from his cheek—the gladness from his young bright eye, nor was he suffering from the violence of the disease alone. Powerful medicines had prostrated his system, without expelling the malady, and a large blister had burnt the skin from his breast without moving the spoiler from his vigorous hold. I whispered his name as I bent over him, but he heard me not—I spoke in a louder tone, but he heeded not my voice. Even to his mother's earnest call of 'Willie! dear Willie!' he answered not by a look, a word, or motion.

The night passed heavily. The first sound that greeted my ears in the morning, as I felt that my room, was the hoarse, suffocating of the child. It sounded through the house, fearfully distinct, from the half-opened door of his chamber.

Another day passed, and another night, and then we were called to see him die. How my heart beats with a troubled, unequal motion, even now, while I recall that scene. His throat had become so swollen, that to breathe was almost impossible. He lay panting and grasping before us, and we could not even smooth his passage to the grave. The mother supported the head of her darling, and the father stood looking on apparently unmoved, but there was a tempest of feeling subdued, not stilled, in his bosom. The former had ceased to weep. Her sorrow was too profound to allow of fearful relief.

The breathing of the little sufferer grew quicker and fainter, but he still labored fearfully. Each respiration convulsed his frame and distorted his features. Even to the last gasp, the struggle was painful. But when the spirit disengaged itself from the body, how calm, how still, how lovely was he in death! It was like a Sabbath rest after a week of toil and pain.

Bowed down in spirit we stole away from the chamber of death. What had we done that our delight was taken away, and our hearts stricken sorrow! How can I attempt to describe the agony of the mother's heart! It cannot be told. It was known only to Him who sustained her in her affliction, and in a voice of indescribable sweetness, whispering even from the inner temple of her spirit, said, 'He is not dead, but sleeping.' Far more touching is the silent, subdued, resigned grief of a Christian mother, than the transports of one whose sorrow looks not out from self. Never shall I forget when Mrs. H. bent over the coffin of her dear little Willie and kissed his cold forehead, lips and cheeks for the last time. Large drops were falling upon the mother's lips. Ah, how many dear hopes did that coffin lid enclose, when it passed over the face of her loved and lovely one forever.

Days, weeks, months did not take away the loneliness from that house. I never passed its threshold, that I did not miss something. My ear listened for a well known voice, but the sound never more fell sweetly upon it. Feeling thus myself, how often did I pity the bereaved parents; but they bore their loss with christian patience looking beyond the veil of death, and seeing, by an eye of faith, their little one in the company of celestial angels.

THE MAN.

BY W. H. CARPENTER.

THE weeds o'er ran the garden,
The weeds usurped the fields,
For nothing but weeds and briars,
The idle land would yield,
When a brawny man upstepped—
A Man! I say A Man!
Cried a loud—'I will amend this,
If a son of Adam can!'