

# THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

*By*  
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(D.M.S. of "Punch")

With Forty-five Illustrations



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TWO OF AKHENATEN'S DAUGHTERS

"The elder is chucking the younger affectionately under the chin."

*Painted in the tomb of Amenhotep, Akhenaten, and Nefertiti at Theban West, Egypt. The scene is from the tomb of Amenhotep, Akhenaten, and Nefertiti at Theban West, Egypt. The scene is from the tomb of Amenhotep, Akhenaten, and Nefertiti at Theban West, Egypt.*

TO  
MY SEVEN GIRL FRIENDS  
AVERIL, BARBARA, CECILY, DENISE, DIANA, MARGARET,  
AND MARY

## FOREWORD

WHEN after the publication of *The Boy through the Ages* my publishers, my critics, and my friends united in urging me to do for his little sister what I had just done for him the idea did not appeal to me very strongly. I feared that a certain amount of overlapping and duplication would be inevitable, and I had no wish to serve up what the Romans called *crambe repetita* and the Scots call "cauld kail het again." However, I was soon convinced that this was an ill-founded fear. In the course of miscellaneous historical and antiquarian studies covering a fairly wide field I encountered such multitudes of picturesque and engaging little girls that I decided that *The Girl through the Ages* would be quite as good a subject as *The Boy*—perhaps even better!

It has been no part of my purpose to trace the early years of famous women: this thing has already been done more than once, and done well; but whenever it has seemed to me desirable to illustrate some point by a personal example I have introduced actual historical figures, both familiar and obscure. Whenever possible I have quoted *verbatim* from the documents concerned, and I have given especial attention to the little girls in literature, a numerous and charming company. As in the case of *The Boy through the Ages*, my chief aim has been to give a vivid and faithful picture of the typical child in each age and setting, outward aspect, early environment, sports and studies, the influences brought to

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

bear upon upbringing by the events and movements of the time. After leaving Babylonia, Egypt, and ancient Greece behind I excluded all non-European countries from my survey, concentrating upon England, though with frequent excursions to Italy and France. The mass of materials at my disposal was so enormous that my greatest problem has been to avoid overcrowding. Much has of necessity been left out that I should have liked to put in.

My most grateful thanks are due to Lord Rennell of Rodd, for permission to quote from his *Love, Worship, and Death*; to Miss F. Melian Stawell, for the extracts from her translation of the *Iphigenia in Aulis* of Euripides; to the literary executors of the late Arthur S. Way, for an extract from his *Antigone*; to Professor A. H. Sayce, for details concerning the Babylonian tablets discovered at Kul-Tépé; to Mr C. J. Gadd and Mr S. R. K. Glanville, of the British Museum, for their kind assistance in tracking down little girls of ancient Egypt and Sumeria; and to the Chief Librarian of the London Library and his staff for their constant interest and help.

D. M. S.

## CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. IN BABYLONIA AND ANCIENT EGYPT	13
II. IN ANCIENT GREECE	31
III. IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE	54
IV. IN THE DARK AGES	76
V. IN FEUDAL EUROPE	95
VI. IN THE LATER MIDDLE AGES	115
VII. IN RENAISSANCE ITALY AND FRANCE	137
VIII. IN TUDOR ENGLAND	157
IX. IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY	178
X. IN AUGUSTAN ENGLAND	198
XI. FROM THE AGE OF REASON TO THE AGE OF STEAM	219
XII. IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY	239
INDEX	259

## ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
TWO OF AKHNATEN'S DAUGHTERS	<i>Frontispiece</i>
ONE OF THE EARLIEST KNOWN REPRESENTATIONS OF A GIRL'S HEAD	14
STELE OF SATPAIR	22
TWO HANDMAIDENS FOR MEHENKWETRE	23
CRETAN GIRL FROM A FRESCO AT KNOSSOS	38
GREEK GIRL DANCING	46
GREEK NURSE AND CHILD	47
GREEK GIRLS ON A SEE-SAW	49
ALTAR OF THE LARES AND PENATES	58
SARCOPHAGUS OF THE ROMAN LEGIONARY'S BABY DAUGHTER AT YORK	68
AN EARLY CHRISTIAN GIRL	73
A NINTH-CENTURY GIRL READING	77
WHITBY ABBEY	84
WOMEN OF THE DARK AGES COMBING WOOL	86
ST ANNE TEACHING THE VIRGIN	98
BIRTH OF THE VIRGIN	99
A GIRL HAVING HER HAIR DRESSED	105
GIRL WITH A HAWK ON HER WRIST	106
DIANA AND THE YOUNG MAIDENS	124
ST URSULA SHELTERING MAIDENS UNDER HER CLOAK	125
THE WIFE OF THOMAS HEVENYNGHAM AND THEIR SIX DAUGHTERS, 1499	134
A LITTLE DAUGHTER OF THE MEDICI	150
MARY STUART AT THE AGE OF SIXTEEN	151
THE FAMILY OF SIR THOMAS MORE	164

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

	PAGE
ARBELLA STUART	172
MARY, DAUGHTER OF JAMES I AND VI	182
THE DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM AND HIS FAMILY	183
THE CHILDREN OF CHARLES I	194
MADAME DE MAINTENON AND HER NIECE	195
THE DANCE	206
GIRL WITH BATTLEDORE	207
THE FRUIT BARROW	212
MARY ANN FLAXMAN	213
PRINCESS SOPHIA	216
COTTAGE CHILDREN	217
ELISABETH HOLIDAY'S SAMPLER	222
THE VISIT TO THE BOARDING-SCHOOL	223
MORNING TOILET	226
A PICTURE FROM "THE HISTORY OF THE FAIRCHILD FAMILY"	227
THE 'CARVED PARLOUR' OF CAMPDEN HOUSE SCHOOL, KENSINGTON	230
PORTRAIT OF A LITTLE GIRL CALLED 'MARY'	231
MISS MONFLATHERS AND LITTLE NELL	247
QUEEN VICTORIA AT THE AGE OF FOUR	250
TWO LITTLE GIRLS OF THE EIGHTEEN-SEVENTIES	251
MID-VICTORIAN	254





## CHAPTER I

### IN BABYLONIA AND ANCIENT EGYPT

**T**HE figure of the prehistoric girl is curiously indistinct. She seems to lurk in the smoky recesses of the family cave, an uncouth, not-much-regarded little creature, while her brothers go forth with their father to hunt the bison or the bear. We imagine her helping her mother to chip flints or scrape hides; we like to think that she made dolls out of knotty pieces of wood; we have reason to believe that she, as well as the boys of the tribe, used sometimes to wear a necklace of elks' teeth, or coloured pebbles, or glittering shells. But our direct contacts with her are few, and the earliest skeletons of prehistoric children that have yet come to light all appear to have been those of boys.

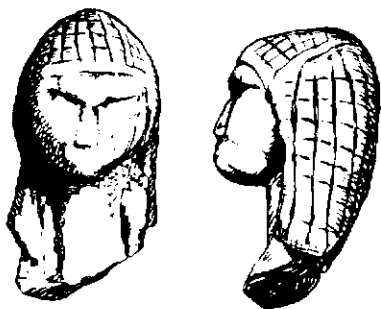
In 1892, in a cave at Mentone, the bones of a girl of the Aurignacian era (roughly 25,000—18,000 B.C.) were discovered. In the same cave a very tall man wearing a crown and necklace of fish-vertebræ and red deer teeth and a young boy with a cap and necklace of shells and fish-bones had been buried. The girl's head was supported on the femur of an ox and turned towards her left shoulder, so that she lay as if looking out to sea. Like the tall man—who may have been her father—she wore a diadem of fish-bones; in her case they were mingled with cowrie-shells, instead of with the teeth of the red deer. In her left hand was clasped a large flint knife.

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

Innumerable centuries pass, the hunters give place to the herdsmen, the climate of the globe changes, and changes yet again, the great beasts of the dawn die out, men learn to grow corn and to grind it in a quern, to domesticate animals, to spin wool, using spindle-whorls of clay, to make pots upon the potter's wheel, to wing their clumsy little boats with sails. And then the figure of the prehistoric girl emerges from the shadows, itself still shadowy, but beginning to assume definite lines and colours at last.

If we measure the centuries by the advance of civilization in China, Assyria, and Egypt the date 2000 B.C. has a comparatively recent look; but

in England the later Stone Age was then gradually merging into the Age of Bronze. To this period belonged a young girl whose bones were unearched in 1910 upon the Essex coast. About this girl Sir Arthur Keith has told us quite enough<sup>1</sup> to make us feel that she was a real person. She had a slender neck, unlike the over-developed,



ONE OF THE EARLIEST KNOWN REPRESENTATIONS OF A GIRL'S HEAD

Two views of the so-called 'Hooled Figure' carved in ivory, discovered at Brassempouy, Laudes.

too massive neck of the Neanderthal race which had roved Europe some forty thousand years before. Her face was oval, her hands and feet were small. Except that her teeth met edge to edge, instead of overlapping in the characteristic modern European fashion, she might have been a girl of our own day.

The bones of her right arm were so well developed that

<sup>1</sup> In *Ancient Types of Man* (Harper).

## IN BABYLONIA AND ANCIENT EGYPT

she must have used that arm with considerable industry and vigour, probably weaving, or grinding corn, or both. "Whether a lady of high degree or merely a handmaiden, she had her daily round of specialized toil," says Sir Arthur Keith. One more thing we know about her. She died at the season of the year when blackberries and dog-rose fruit are ripe, and it seems as if she may have died of eating more of these than were good for her, since nearly a pint of their seeds was found inside the hollow of her ribs!

At the time when this Early British girl was going about her tasks in a rather bleak and very primitive world there were girls in Mesopotamia and Egypt who for nearly a thousand years had lived in a high state of civilization, surrounded by people who knew how to read and write, who could weave the most delicate linen, erect the most impressive buildings, fashion the most exquisite gold and silver vessels and the loveliest personal ornaments, people who sailed upon the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, and the Arabian Sea, and who had already carved out great and aggressive kingdoms, rivals in trade and often opponents in war.

In ancient Babylonia the position of the daughter was almost equal to that of the son. When she grew up she might hold property in her own right, manage an estate, 'run' a business, act as a scribe in the courts of law, or, if she became a priestess, keep the accounts and administer the affairs of the divinity whom she served. She therefore learned to write, using the cuneiform, or wedge-shaped, Babylonian script so easily impressed on clay or chipped on stone; she learned grammar, arithmetic, the religious myths of her race and city—for every city had its own gods and its own cults—and she probably learned also to play upon the harp. The lot of the little girl born in the peasant class was, of course, rather different.

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

She would not learn to inscribe cylinders of pale, soft clay, or to make music on a silver harp inlaid with deep blue lapis lazuli and shimmering, iridescent shell. Her task would be to help her family in the fields, for Mesopotamia was then a great agricultural country, and depended upon its crops, its flocks, and its herds to balance its natural deficiency in timber and minerals. In all ranks of society the precept "Honour thy father and thy mother" was taught and observed many centuries before Moses gave it forth to the Jews as the fifth of the Commandments divinely revealed to him among the thunders of Sinai. A father's control over the destiny of his daughter was absolute, though he could not lawfully deter her from becoming a votaress of some god if she wished. It was expected of him that if he could afford to give her a dowry upon her marriage he should do so, and if she *did* enter a temple sisterhood he might hand over to her what would otherwise have been her dowry, but in neither case was he under any legal constraint. This dowry consisted usually of land, shares in houses or farms, men and women slaves, household gear, and sometimes pots of honey or jars of wine as well. It happened occasionally that a rich man would endow his daughter with a special gift of this kind, but she would not be permitted to give or to bequeath it to anybody except her own brother or brothers.

The gods of Babylonia may have been—they probably were—implored more frequently to send sons than to send daughters to their worshippers, but the little girl had greater importance among these people of the Land of the Two Rivers than she had among the ancient Greeks, or even among the ancient Egyptians. For example, the custom of adoption was very prevalent, and rich people who had very small families or no children at all used frequently to go

*IN BABYLONIA AND ANCIENT EGYPT*

through a legal form by which the child of another couple should become their own. Girls as well as boys were adopted in this way; they were expected to tend and support their adopted parents in their old age, while on their side they expected to inherit their property. It was not only poor folk who handed over their sons and daughters in this way. On one occasion we know that when a lady of rank adopted a little girl the real father gave two male and two female slaves as a contribution towards his child's future heritage. A tablet of adoption was given to the child, but this might be cancelled if there were any failure in duty towards the 'parent.' For example, a certain lady adopted a little girl who, when she grew up and her 'mother' was old, refused to provide her with food and drink. The lady and the girl were summoned before the judges in the great temple of Shamash in Sippara, with the result that the tablet of adoption was taken away from the young ingrate, who was also deprived of her heritage.

Northern and Southern Babylonia were known as Akkad and Sumer, and in their clay-built cities the little daughters of their governors, scribes, and merchants led a life much unlike that of their contemporaries in the far-off, misty world of the West. The first Sumerian dynasty of which we have as yet any sure knowledge flourished in the fourth millennium before Christ, but the people dwelling in the valleys of the Tigris and the Euphrates and upon the rich, marshy delta forming the northern shore of the Persian Gulf had already reached an amazing pitch of civilization, and were producing works of art which the third dynasty, the second of the two peak periods of Sumerian splendour, could not surpass. These people themselves believed that their forefathers had been taught the arts of peace by an amiable god with a fish's tail whose name was Oannes, but by the time that the huge, many-

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

coloured temples had been built in Lagash and Eridu, Erech and Ur, their chief devotion seems to have been centred upon the moon-god and the moon-goddess. It was they whom the little Sumerian girl was taught to worship, they whom she would serve if she should become a priestess instead of marrying some shaven-headed and woolly-kilted merchant or scribe.

She lived in a land where stone and wood were scarce, but where there was abundance of mud, good for brick-making, excellent for tablets and cylinders of clay. There was no lack of reeds for thatched roofs, for mats, for the seats of chairs; and whatever the resourceful Sumerians had not got at home they imported from other countries. Her knowledge of the world beyond Sumer would be drawn not only from contact with Egypt on the west, Persia on the east, and Assyria on the north, but also from glimpses of the great sea-traffic of the Persian Gulf. Much of the metal from which the Sumerian goldsmiths wrought marvellous diadems and bracelets for their patrons came from the Taurus Mountains, upon whose inhospitable flanks Babylonian and Assyrian merchants had established trading centres. The chief centre of their activities was at a place called Kanis (now Kul-Tepé), where innumerable clay tablets bearing commercial contracts and memoranda are still found. One of these tablets has been interpreted as meaning that there was at Kanis about this time a sort of college for the daughters of these merchants. A conjectural translation of the inscription runs:

Akrim the Superintendent  
of the University [or School]  
for Science [or Teaching]  
in the city of women,

and there is nothing improbable in the theory, as well as being much that is attractive.

## IN BABYLONIA AND ANCIENT EGYPT

At home the Sumerian child lived in a two-storeyed house built of clay bricks and roofed with reed-thatch. No windows pierced the wall level with the street, but there was a central courtyard admitting plenty of light and air to the various rooms, the kitchen, where the meals of the family were prepared, the chapel, where the household gods were worshipped and where—it seems a strange and rather dreadful idea—various members of that family would be buried under the flooring as their turn came to die, and the living- and sleeping-rooms. Coarse-ground flour provided bread, dates gave both wine and a sort of thick syrup, the numerous herds of cattle kept by the Sumerians supplied every household with its share of milk, cheese, and the clarified cooking-butter still popular in the East under its Arabic name of *samn*. Beef and mutton lent variety to the meals, and these were often cheered by a sort of beer brewed from grain. Under the earlier Sumerian dynasties men shaved their heads and faces, and wore as their principal raiment a sort of flounced kilt made of sheep's wool; at a later date they adopted a long garment resembling a shirt, over which they draped a fringed shawl something like the plaid of the Scottish Highlander, and wore their hair long also, binding it with a fillet, often a fillet of gold. The dress of the girl would be very simple at first, but later she went forth in elaborate garments decked from chin to ankle with pleated flounces or frills. We know from the headdress, bracelets, and rings discovered in the grave of Queen Shub-Ad at Ur how complicated, how costly, and how beautiful was the jewellery possessed by a Sumerian lady of high degree; we know from a different sort of grave opened up at a later date that the little daughter of such a lady might have lovely adornments of her own.

Mr Leonard Woolley discovered this grave during the

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

excavations carried out by him between the autumn of 1929 and the spring of 1930. It was not a vaulted sepulchre at the foot of a shaft, like that where the Queen lay among her hand-maidens, but an ordinary trough-grave, and the skeleton in it was that of a girl-child about seven years of age. Round the head was a complete headdress on a small scale, consisting of a garland of diminutive gold leaves, another garland or circlet of little gold rings, and yet another of pear-shaped pendants of gold, cornelian, and lapis lazuli. Half-moons of gold had hung from the child's ears, and necklaces of gold and semi-precious stones had encircled her neck. With her in the earth had been laid a miniature set of two bowls and a tumbler in silver and a plain cup in gold, perhaps because she had loved and played with them while she lived, perhaps for the use of her childish spirit in the world of shades.

Westward of Sumer lay the great land of Khem, or Egypt, where the position of the girl in the family was at no time so high as that of her Babylonian contemporary. This is not to say that the Egyptians were lacking in affection for their daughters. We know that they were not, and that among them, especially under the earlier dynasties, women had considerable influence and even some authority. The little Egyptian girl was probably in much happier case than are the little girls born in some Oriental countries to-day. She often received a name which suggested that her parents had welcomed her birth, such a name as Nefert (beautiful) or Netchemet (sweet). But she was not educated on the same lines as her brothers were, and though she might become a priestess she could not hold office as a scribe, at least, not under the New Empire, which began with the eighteenth dynasty about 1600 B.C., and ushered in the period with which the work of Egyptologists has made us most familiar. Under the third



## IN BABYLONIA AND ANCIENT EGYPT

dynasty, according to M. Eugène Revillout,<sup>1</sup> there had been at least *one* woman-scribe who occupied high administrative posts to the satisfaction of the Pharaoh of the time; but in general the Egyptian girl had to look forward to a less active and interesting life than that lived by her Babylonian counterpart. She had not the same legal and social status, nor did the same opportunities for self-expression lie open to her when she left childish days behind.

Those days, spent in a gaily painted house, with a garden where palms and fig-trees shaded a cool fish-pond, cannot have been anything but a happy time. The child had delightful toys, some of which, such as wooden crocodiles and hippopotami with snapping jaws, she must have shared with her brothers, while others, the dolls' furniture and the dolls themselves, were entirely her own. Made of wood or clay, many of these dolls were hardly more lifelike than a wooden spade, though others were carefully modelled, and had glass eyes and wigs fashioned of strings of beads. Their owner had living playthings as well: cats, birds, gazelles, even baby crocodiles and tame porcupines. Whether she spent her early years at home or, as some children did, in the house of some powerful friend of her father, she would have plenty of good things to eat: caraway cakes, roast goose, honey, dates, figs, melons, and cucumbers, such as the children of Israel remembered so wistfully when Moses had led them deep into the wilderness, very far away from all these joys. She would learn to love flowers, and would see and wear them every day.

In her early childhood little Nefert or Netchemet wore no clothing to speak of, unless we count her necklace of brilliant beads, gold, lapis, turquoise, cornelian, malachite, or blue faïence as bright as the brightest turquoise. Her head was

<sup>1</sup> *La Femme dans l'antiquité égyptienne.*

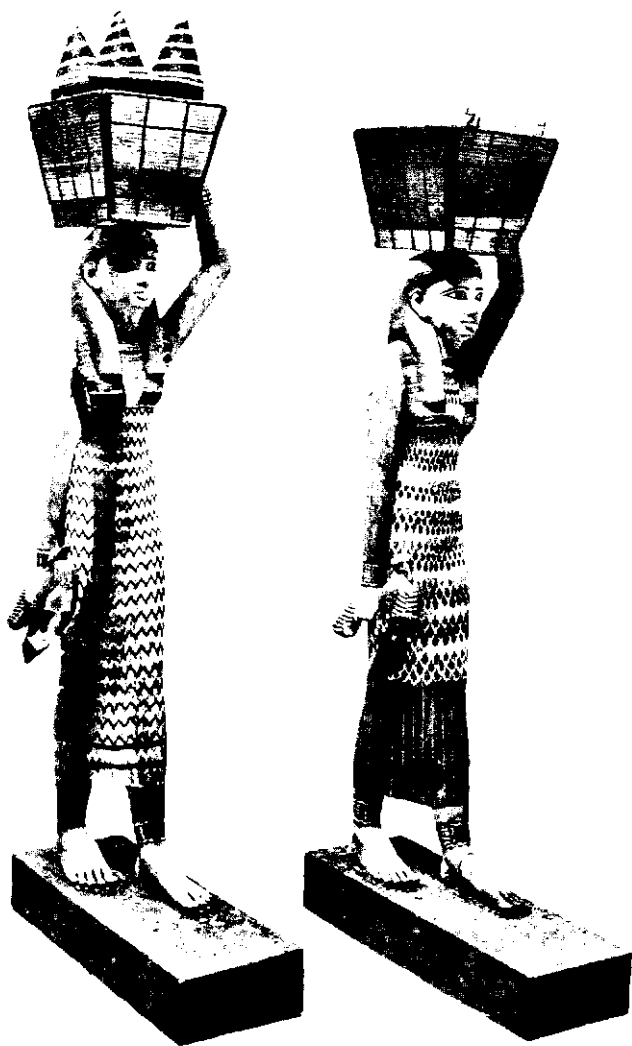
## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

shaved all over, or else adorned with a single dangling lock of hair, known as "the lock of youth" and worn by boys also. When she was a little older, but before she could be described as 'grown up,' she had an ankle-length dress of fine, transparent linen and an elaborate wig. Often a lotus-bud was fixed to the side-lock or to the wig, so that it drooped in the centre of the forehead. A painted limestone stele, or funerary tablet, of the eighteenth dynasty (second millennium B.C.) gives a portrait of a young girl called Satpair sitting on a chair of State, while a youth makes offerings to her of fruit and flowers. She wears a side-lock, a lotus-bud, and large earrings, and on the top of her head is one of the cones of nard (spikenard) mixed with grease which are seen upon the heads of so many ancient Egyptians at feasts and banquets. In a dry, dusty country like Egypt oils and perfumes were very necessary to prevent the eyes from getting sore and the skin from becoming cracked and painful. The Greek historian Herodotus, who visited Egypt in the fifth century before Christ, found that a great deal of castor-oil was used, in lamps and as an unguent, and he observed with truth that "it hath an evil smell," but from a very early period the Egyptians had imported olive-oil from Syria in large quantities. This oil, because it was brought by sea, was known as 'oil of the harbour,' and it was employed in salves and medicines as well as in various toilet preparations designed to keep the cheeks of the Egyptian lady smooth and her eyes clear. Oil was also obtained from sesame, flax, and lettuce, but olive-trees were scarce. When the little girl was still a very little girl she would have her own ivory or wooden comb, her bronze mirror, her tiny boxes of red and black colours for what would now be called 'make-up.' Whenever she grew a side-lock or was promoted to a wig she might on festal occasions have a



STELE OF SATPAIR

British Museum



TWO HANDMAIDENS FOR MEHENKWETRE

*By courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York*

## IN BABYLONIA AND ANCIENT EGYPT

cone of sweet-smelling, slowly melting nard upon her head. The daughter of the cultivator had her humble toys and her necklace of painted clay beads, and we may permit ourselves to believe that in her own way she was not altogether unhappy. Her earliest memories were of being carried on her mother's back through the wide fields of barley, millet, and wheat, where the soil was made fertile by the annual rise and overflow of the Nile; of the creak and splash of the *shaduf*, as the bucket plopped into the water and was pulled up again by the weight of the stone at the farther end of the see-sawing pole; of watching the patient oxen treading out the corn, or the reapers busy with their sickles at harvest-time. Her home was in a rude mud-hut, hardly better than a hovel, and neither roast goose nor 'oil of the harbour' was likely to come her way. If, however, the Egyptian girl's father belonged to the deft-fingered, industrious craftsman class they probably lived in the poor quarter of some busy town, under the shadow of some great palace or temple. Such a girl had to make herself useful betimes, and to learn to carry considerable weights upon her head. In the tomb of Mehenkwtetre at Thebes were found coloured wooden images of girls bearing baskets of wines and meats on their heads and live ducks in their hands, while among the Egyptian figurines and wooden models in the British Museum we see a young woman balancing a tray full of loaves, and another supporting on her head a decorated chest with four legs. One of these may have been the daughter of a baker and the other of a carpenter, or each may have been a servant in the household of some Court official. They were cheerful fellows, the craftsmen of Khem, but the carpenter's was a temper-testing occupation, for the coarse and knotty sycamore planks, the narrow, twisted trunks of the date-palms, and the tough blocks hewn from tamarisk-stems

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

must have been difficult to handle, and there was little else available in the way of wood, except the finer and more costly sorts, acacia, ebony, cedar, and pine, which had to be brought from other lands, from Nubia and Syria and the places where trees were tall and forests dark. The weaver, the dyer, the glass-maker, the goldsmith, the basket-weaver, the wig-maker, all these must have been watched at their work by their children; but the stone-masons and the wall-painters sometimes had tasks that took them far from home, as when they had to chip and fix the great granite or limestone blocks of some royal or holy building, or trace vividly tinted pictures upon some rock-hewn chamber deep in the cliffs that loomed above the Valley of the Tombs of the Kings.

Most happy among all the little girls of ancient Egypt were those whose lot fell unto them in the house of one of Pharaoh's honoured servants, a priest, a scribe, a captain of the chariots, or even a magician. The wife of a priest was very often herself a priestess, and their daughter was likely to be dedicated to the divinity whom they served. Such divinities were incredibly numerous and fantastically imagined, and bore different names according to the city or district in which their cult prevailed. In the royal city of Thebes, on the east bank of the Nile, the "great King above all gods" was Amen; next him in power and glory came Ra, the sun-god, sometimes fused with him and called Amen-Ra, and usually associated with the moon-goddess, whose name was Mut. On the west bank of the sacred river the sun was adored under the name of Osiris, his consort, the moon, as Isis, their son being Horus, the hawk-headed deity. Everywhere the chief figures of the vast Egyptian pantheon were associated with the sun and the moon, but up and down the land there existed a multitude of divine creatures, powerful or obscure, beauti-

## IN BABYLONIA AND ANCIENT EGYPT

ful or hideous, to the care of whom Egyptian mothers commended their children, and whose goodwill they would try to win. Such were Hathor, the cow-goddess, Bast, the cat-goddess, Sebek, the crocodile-god, and the unlovely but usually good-natured-looking hippopotamus-goddess, who was honoured under four different names.

The small daughters of the scribe and the captain of the chariots can have seen comparatively little of their fathers. The scribe was often absent, collecting taxes, superintending the royal masons, checking bushels of grain and bales of flax and noting their weight, inspecting the cargoes of Greek or Cretan or Syrian galleys lying at anchor off some bustling quay; the captain would be absent on foreign or on frontier service from time to time. Under warrior-kings like Tahutmes III or Rameses II the military classes had a strenuous time, and the chariots went far and fared stormily in Libya and Mesopotamia, Nubia and Palestine, and in the land of the Kheta, who in the Bible are called the Hittites.

A time came, about one thousand four hundred years before Christ, when these things were altered, when the myriad gods of Egypt were set aside, and when the chariots of Pharaoh went forth no longer to affright his foes in distant places. This was in the reign of Akhnaten, otherwise Amenhotep IV, whom the followers of the old god branded as the heretic king. When this time came there was also a great change in Egyptian art, in the wall-paintings and sculptures and the carved and coloured limestone stelæ. Throughout the land there were statues and pictures of Egyptian women young and old, queens and princesses, priestesses and their daughters, and the womenkind of the Pharaoh of the day and the officials of his Court. Some of them are very beautiful, with their intricate wigs and their pleated, gauzy robes, but it is difficult to

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

imagine any one of them as she must have been when she was a little girl, and played with a wooden doll or a clay crocodile on the edge of a fish-pond in a flowery garden. Egyptian art was stately and formal, and, however true to life the portraits may have been, they all had a certain rigidity much unlike the freedom and lightness of the natural pose of any young animal, human or otherwise. Here and there little girls were represented side by side with their brothers, usually in the act of making offerings to their father and mother, but they look stiff and joyless little girls, incapable of laughter or play.

Then came the heretic king, with his new cult of one sole god, the Father of All, and his new enthusiasm for love, and truth, and beauty. He desired that his sculptors and his painters should above all things seek truth, and that they should represent what they saw simply and naturally, without artificial conventions. First of the Kings of Egypt, and almost alone among them, he laid aside the ponderous ceremony of the royal estate, and delighted to lead the life of a simple Egyptian gentleman. He allowed himself to be seen, and caused himself to be carved and painted, embracing his queen Nefertiti, or playing with their six little daughters. He was altogether different from the remote and aloof Pharaoh of tradition, whom the people had been taught to worship as a god.

When the ruins of the city which he built for himself at Tell-el-Amarna were excavated the Egyptologists soon became familiar with these six princesses, whom they encountered in all sorts of places, sometimes carved, sometimes traced in colours, now taking part in some religious ceremony, now at home with their father and mother, one perched on the King's knee, or on the Queen's, or more than one sitting happily at their feet. One of the most charming of these glimpses of child-life more than three thousand years ago



## IN BABYLONIA AND ANCIENT EGYPT

shows two of Akhnaten's daughters squatting on a gaily hued cushion. Their dark hair is close-cropped, and they wear nothing but necklaces—though a great number of those—and earrings. The elder is chucking the younger affectionately under the chin.

Akhnaten seems to have enjoyed having his children with him, both on grave occasions and on gay. One of the Tell-el-Amarna paintings shows him and Nefertiti going to make offerings in the great temple which he had built to the glory of the one life-giving, all-loving, all-creating God Whom he symbolized in the sun-disk—the Aten. We see the King and Queen each driving in a separate chariot drawn by prancing horses with red and blue plumes on their heads, and following them four of their daughters, two in each chariot, wearing wigs, but very little else. The next picture shows the scene when the royal worshippers and their train of courtiers and ladies have descended from their chariots. Meryra, the high-priest, awaits them at the temple gate. Neither the King nor the Queen wears any jewels; both are girt with crimson sashes over their flowing skirts of pleated linen. Then, while the altar is piled high with offerings—geese, fruit, flowers, and vegetables—Akhnaten and Nefertiti sprinkle sweet-perfumed Arabian gums upon flaming bowls of bronze, and their four daughters standing in a row shake their sacred rattles (*sistra*), the part of their religious duties which probably pleased them best.

As they had no brothers, the position of these little girls was an important one, in the direct line of succession to the throne. Egypt had had a queen who reigned almost alone, the great Hatshepsut,<sup>1</sup> and it is possible that Akhnaten may have

<sup>1</sup> Hatshepsut's kinsman, afterwards Tahutmes III, was associated with her for twenty years, but it is clear that until her death he enjoyed very little independent authority.

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

dreamed that one of his dearly loved daughters might do the same; but the more usual course was to secure the succession by arranging a marriage between the princess nearest to the throne and some blood-relation, and this course would appear to have been chosen. The eldest, Princess Meryt-Aten, was married during her father's lifetime, but she and her young husband both died before the reign of the heretic king came to its mysterious close; the second, Princess Makt-Aten, also died before her father; the third, Ankh-es-en-pa-Aten, was given in marriage to the young prince Tut-ankh-Amen, whose tomb, crammed with incredible treasures, was discovered in 1925; another sister was sent to a distant land to be the wife of a foreign prince. The fate of the other two does not appear to be known.

After Akhnaten's death his third daughter, then a child about ten years old, and his equally youthful son-in-law succeeded to the double crown of Upper and Lower Egypt. Even at a time and in a country when responsibility was assumed by mere youths Tut-ankh-Amen would be regarded as too young to hold the reins of power unaided. The real ruler of Egypt during his brief reign was the chief priest and Court Chamberlain, Ay, who actually seized the throne after the Pharaoh's life had ended. It was probably at the urging of Ay that Tut-ankh-Amen removed the Court from Tell-el-Amarna to its former home at Thebes, abolished the purified worship of the Aten, and made Amen the chief of many gods worshipped by his people, as in the days before the heretic king saw visions and dreamed dreams. When the Court was re-established at Thebes the names of the king and queen were altered; his had originally been Tut-ankh-Aten, and hers now become Ankh-es-en-Amen.

The boy-king seems to have been much attached to his girl-

## IN BABYLONIA AND ANCIENT EGYPT

queen. Though the religion of Akhnaten had been overthrown, his influence upon Egyptian art survived, and in the tomb of his son-in-law there are several representations of family scenes which recall those at Tell-el-Amarna. On the back panel of the golden throne discovered there we see Tut-ankh-Amen sitting on a magnificent chair, while Ankh-es-en-Amen either adjusts his elaborate collar or puts a touch of perfume upon it. Her own collar is almost equally gorgeous; she wears a loose garment of pleated linen with an ornamental border and an elaborate headdress with the snake of royalty, the *uraeus*, on the brow. On the panels of a small golden shrine we see her again with her husband, offering him libations, flowers, and collarettes, tying a garland round his neck, or sitting at his feet while he pours sweet perfume into her upheld palm. On another of these panels the young Pharaoh, who was a passionate lover of sport, is shooting wild duck with a bow, and Ankh-es-en-Amen is pointing out to him a particularly fat bird esconced among the papyrus reeds, while at the same time she hands him a spare arrow.

Poor little queen, left a widow so young, surrounded by scheming, ambitious men, with the masterful figure of Ay looming over her! She was, however, a force to be reckoned with, for she sent a message to the King of the Hittites suggesting that one of his sons should come to Egypt, marry her, and share the throne of the upper and the lower kingdom. If the King of the Hittites had not hesitated and delayed her plan might have been successful, for there was actually no direct heir male to her father's diadem. We know that he was slow to respond to her appeal; we do not know whether any Hittite prince ever set off for Egypt, or ever reached that land. We do know that the next king was none other

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

than Ay, and that of Queen Ankh-es-en-Amen we hear no more.

Mr Howard Carter, who excavated Tut-ankh-Amen's tomb, has suggested that it was this youthful widowed queen who laid upon the second of her husband's three coffins the wreaths of natural flowers found there, over the shroud of filmy linen that veiled the golden mask covering the face. The smallest of these wreaths had been arranged over the protuberance caused by the golden vulture and serpent, emblems of the upper and the lower kingdom, on the mask. Beside so much gleaming gold and glittering enamel work those shy, soft-tinted living flowers must have looked like ghostly blossoms gathered in the world to which Tut-ankh-Amen had passed; they were blue lotus-lilies and cornflowers interwoven with olive and willow leaves.

## CHAPTER II

### IN ANCIENT GREECE

WE hear little of the young girls within the walls of Troy during the nine years' siege of Priam's city by the Achaians under Menelaus and Agamemnon. Though the daughters as well as the wives of the Trojans were wont to gather round the Skaian Gate when the captains of the host returned in the intervals of fighting upon the "ringing plains of windy Troy," no young girl stands out very clearly from the turmoil of the *Iliad*. We catch an occasional glimpse of the sisters of Hector, of Laodiké, who came forth with her mother, Hecuba, on the occasion when the hero refused either to pour forth a libation of the "honey-hearted wine" or to drink it, and of Cassandra, "the fairest of the daughters of Priam," whose suitor, Othryoneus, was slain by Idomeneus in battle, but they are mere shadows. In the Achaian camp we see Chryseis, daughter of Chryses, the priest of Apollo, whom Agamemnon was compelled by the sun-god to restore to her father, and we are made to feel that she was good to look upon: "the bright-eyed damsel," "Chryseis of the fair cheeks"; but hers is a silent, almost a passive figure from first to last. It is not until ten years after the fall of Troy that a young girl appears in the centre of the Homeric scene—Nausicaa, daughter of the Phæacian king Alcinous, "in form and beauty like to the immortal gods."

When first we have sight of Nausicaa<sup>1</sup> she is fast asleep in

<sup>1</sup> In the *Odyssey*, Book VI.

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

her "rich-wrought bower," guarded by two handmaidens almost as fair as she. The grey-eyed goddess Athene, knowing that Odysseus, King of Ithaca, will be driven ashore by tempest in the land of the Phæacians, and anxious that the sorely harried voyager should find succour there, comes in a dream to the sleeping princess and, assuming the appearance of her girl-friend, the daughter of Dymas the seafarer, urges her to rise betimes on the morrow and ask her father to let her have a mule-wagon to carry "the men's raiment, and the robes, and the shining coverlets" to the river to be washed. "Come," says the counterfeit daughter of Dymas, "let us arise and go a-washing with the breaking of the day."

Nausicaa, thus prompted, was early astir, but not earlier than her mother Arete, whom she found already busy with her handmaidens "spinning yarn of sea-purple stain." It was to her father, Alcinous, that she made her prayer, which was readily granted. The mules were soon harnessed, the shining raiment was brought out of the palace and stowed in the wagon, and Arete thoughtfully provided a basket of food, a goatskin bottle of wine, and a jar of olive-oil, so that Nausicaa and her maidens might anoint their limbs after bathing. Meanwhile Odysseus, flung ashore by the storm which his enemy, the sea-god Poseidon, had raised, was slumbering in the shelter of two intertwined olive-trees near the river-mouth.

When Nausicaa reached the river she and her companions set the mules loose to graze upon the sweet clover, while they themselves washed the robes and mantles, and afterwards spread them out to dry. Then, when they had bathed and—as we should now say—lunched, they began to play ball and to sing, Nausicaa leading the song. Homer compares her to the goddess of the chase, Artemis, surrounded by the wild

## IN ANCIENT GREECE

wood-nymphs whom she excels in loveliness, and indeed there are few more charming pictures in all poetry than this of the fleet-footed Phæacian girls dancing, singing, and tossing the ball from hand to hand in the flower-starred meadow.

The mules being reyoked and the now truly shining raiment packed into the wagon, Nausicaa flung the ball at one of her maidens, and by mischance—or maybe at the will of Athene—it went wide and fell into the water. Odysseus, awakened by cries of dismay, came forth from his shelter, a haggard figure, salt-stained and sun-browned, so terrible to behold that Nausicaa alone had the courage not to flee at his approach. And to her the far-wandering King of Ithaca spoke, as Homer says, “sweet and wily words.”

“I am thy suppliant, O Queen, whether goddess or mortal thou art! If a goddess, then I compare thee most to Artemis for beauty and stature and grace of form; but if thou art a mortal, then happy are thy father and thy mother, and thrice happy are thy brethren. Surely their hearts must burn within them for very joy when they see thee mingling in the dance, a flower among maidens! But above all others most happy is the man who shall woo thee and win thee in marriage, and lead thee to his home!”

After a good deal more to the same purpose he told her how he came thither, and implored her to give him some old garment and to show him the way to the nearest town. It is hardly surprising that Nausicaa should have decided that he was neither a knave nor a fool, and should have called her timid companions to return and give him food, raiment, and oil.

Athene now proceeded to make the freshly washed, clothed, and anointed Odysseus look truly royal and imposing. “As a skilful artificer lays gold upon silver . . . so did Athene shed

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

grace upon him." One cannot help feeling that this was hardly fair to Nausicaa. Astonished at the change, she confessed to her maidens that though the stranger had seemed uncomely enough at first he was now like one of the immortal gods; and she added, with engaging frankness, "Would that such a man might be my husband, and dwell with us!" Poor Nausicaa! She knew that the Phæacians were a people especially dear to the gods, by whose favour they abode in the isle of Scheria,<sup>1</sup> far from the haunts of other men and beyond the seafarers' course; she may have thought that this noble newcomer had been chosen by some kindly deity to be her husband, and that for no other end had he been cast upon the shores of the isle. She little recked that this was the King of Ithaca, homeward bound from the Trojan War, and that his dearest desire was to win back to his own land, and to behold again his young son Telemachus and his faithful Queen Penelope.

It was this same simplicity and candour, touched by this same dream, which prompted her to tell Odysseus that he must drop behind when they should reach the city and make his way alone to the palace, lest some of the Phæacians, seeing him in her company, should say:

"Who is this tall and goodly stranger with Nausicaa? Where did she find him? Surely he is her husband that is to be. Either she has had compassion upon some shipwrecked seafarer, or some god has descended from heaven at her prayer. It were better if she found a lord from some far land, for little she regardeth the many noble Phæacians that woo her."

When, finally, Odysseus reached the palace of Alcinous, with its brazen walls, its silver door-posts, its long benches spread with rich needlework, he was hospitably received, but

<sup>1</sup> Identified by the ancients with Corcyra.



## IN ANCIENT GREECE

Nausicaa was not present. She had withdrawn to her own inner chamber, where her faithful old waiting-woman Eury-medusa kindled a fire for her and made supper ready.

It would appear that much of the supernatural comeliness lent to Odysseus by Athene still lingered when he seated himself among the sons of Alcinous, for the King of the Phæacians immediately decided that this was just such a man as he would wish Nausicaa's husband to be. Fortunately she was still absent when her father exclaimed, "Would to Zeus, and to Athene, and to Apollo, that such a one as thou art would wed my daughter, and be counted among my sons, and dwell among us!" Odysseus, however, had already obtained a promise from Alcinous that he would help him to return to his own country.

Where that country lay the Phæacians did not yet know. Courtesy demanded that no man should ply the stranger with questions, and not until he had spent a day and a night in the palace did he disclose his true name and rank. Nausicaa's farewell words to him had already been spoken:

Now after the maids had bathed and anointed him with olive-oil, and had cast a fair mantle and doublet upon him, he stepped forth from the bath and went to be with the chiefs at their wine. And Nausicaa, dowered with beauty by the gods, stood by the door-post of the well-built hall and marvelled at Odysseus, beholding him before her eyes, and she uttered her voice and spake to him winged words:

"Farewell, stranger, and even in thine own country bethink thee of me upon a time, for that to me first thou owest the ransom of life."

And Odysseus of many counsels answered her, saying:

"Nausicaa, daughter of great-hearted Alcinous, yea, may Zeus the thunderer, the lord of Hera, grant me to reach my

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

home and see the day of my returning; so would I, even there, do thee worship as to a god, all my days for ever more, for thou, lady, hast given me life."<sup>1</sup>

From that moment Homer tells us nothing more of Nausicaa. She may have been present when Odysseus proclaimed his identity; she may have lingered to listen while he told the tale of his ten years' travail since the burning of Troy, of the enmity of Poseidon and the mercifulness of Athene, of his sojourn upon Circe's island and his reluctant tarrying upon Ogygia with the nymph Calypso; she may have hearkened to the story of his adventures with the Cyclopes and the Læstrygonians, one-eyed monsters and man-eating men, his escape from the sirens, his descent into the realms of the dead; but Homer leaves us in doubt. We do not know whether she stood beside her mother when the departing Odysseus pledged Arete in honey-sweet wine; we do not know whether she watched the furrowed foam fading behind his ship, or whether she withdrew into her inner chamber and remained there long after the stout-armed Phæacian rowers had borne the ship out of sight.

The young girl of the Homeric world, as we see her in Nausicaa, had a free and happy life. She was neither slighted nor kept aloof. She was obviously loved, perhaps even spoiled, by her parents and brothers. Nausicaa herself wore richly wrought garments which she made and washed with her own hands; she probably assisted Arete's fifty handmaidens when they ground the yellow corn and spun the yarn of sea-purple stain. She and her attendants slept in a room apart, with polished doors and vividly coloured hangings; they played vigorous games in which singing, dancing, and the tossing

<sup>1</sup> Translated by S. H. Butcher and A. Lang. By courtesy of the Oxford University Press.

## IN ANCIENT GREECE

and catching of a ball were combined; they could disport or repose themselves in a garden where apple- and fig-trees grew, pomegranates, olives, and pears. But she was not, strictly speaking, a Greek girl, only a figure in the heroic literature of the Greeks.

The Cretan civilization which dominated the Ægean in the third and fourth millenniums B.C. was also un-Greek, and reached its zenith before the Hellenes, from whom Greece took her ancient name of *Hellas*, had established themselves in the Archipelago. Women seem to have played a prominent part in the religious and social life of the Cretans. The legend of the Minotaur, to whom a tribute of maidens was said to have been sacrificed every year, arose from the characteristic Cretan sport of bull-leaping, in which young girl athletes as well as youths showed their skill at imminent risk of their lives. The principal divinity of these people was a goddess whose head was wreathed with snakes, and who was often depicted in art with a writhing snake in either hand. From the way in which she is attired we may imagine what was the usual dress of her priestesses and of the young girls of high rank who worshipped at her shrine. They wore long flounced skirts, tight round the knees, and short bodices, leaving the breasts bare. Waists were compressed, apparently with some sort of corset, and an embroidered apron, gracefully draped, was worn over the flounced skirt. Among the objects deposited upon the altars of the snake-goddess were miniature models of feminine raiment, made of glazed clay, which with their prim lines and elaborate trimmings recall the garb of mid-Victorian womankind. A sort of mitre, or a tam-o'-shanter-shaped cap, was the usual headgear of the Cretan priestess, but the girl athletes of the bull-ring wore diadems of blue and red bound about their brows. The large-eyed girl

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

painted on one of the walls of the palace at Knossos has a fringed and striped scarf of blue, red, and black drawn up into a bunch on the nape of her neck.

The tale of Troy, and of what befell the Trojans and their enemies after Troy had fallen, was like a great river into

which many tributary streams flowed. It was impossible that it should be confined within the limits set by the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Legend was added to legend, tale to tale, and the poets and dramatists of later ages took plots and characters from among the Trojans and the Greeks, refashioned them, gave them new forms and colours, transplanted them to lands far from Argos and from Troy. Two of the most famous girls in Greek tragedy were Iphigenia and Electra, the



CRETAN GIRL FROM A FRESCO  
AT KNOSSOS

From the "Annual" of the British School of Athens, and by courtesy of Sir Arthur Evans.

daughters of Agamemnon, King of Argos, and his masterful, treacherous Queen, Clytemnestra. The destinies of both these girls were determined by the events which Homer records, though he himself mentions neither. In the fifth century B.C. Euripides made Iphigenia the heroine of two plays, the *Iphigenia in Aulis* and the *Iphigenia in Tauris*; two thousand years later Jean Racine was to write his *Iphigénie*, and a

## IN ANCIENT GREECE

hundred years after that Gluck was to take her pitiful story as the basis of his opera *Iphigénie en Aulide*.

Aulis, on the coast of Bœotia, had been chosen as the starting-point of the great Greek fleet, to be led by Agamemnon, King of Argos, and his brother Menelaus against Priam of Troy, whose son Paris had carried off the wife of Menelaus, Helen, the fairest of mortal women. Yet when all the ships had assembled adverse winds kept them helpless in the harbour, and Calchas the soothsayer declared that unless Iphigenia, the youthful daughter of the Argive king, were sacrificed to Artemis, the patron divinity of that coast, the wind would never veer, and the fleet would never sail. Iphigenia was at home in Argos, with her mother, her younger sisters, and her little brother Orestes, when a messenger arrived from the Greek camp bidding the Queen hasten at once to Aulis with her eldest child, whose hand had been sought in marriage by Achilles, the valiant, arrogant, half-immortal chieftain. This message was a cruel ruse, devised by Calchas, Menelaus, Odysseus, and the reluctant Agamemnon, without the knowledge of Achilles, to lure Iphigenia to her death. And now the *Iphigenia in Aulis* of Euripides begins. The scene is before Agamemnon's tent by the seashore, and the hour is the dark hour between midnight and dawn.

Agamemnon, torn by remorse, seeks to dispatch a trusty old servant with a second letter to Clytemnestra, warning her to pay no heed to the first, but Menelaus meets and intercepts the messenger, and while the two kings are quarrelling a herald enters announcing the arrival of Clytemnestra, Iphigenia, and the child Orestes. Menelaus half relents, and for a moment seems almost ready to help his brother to avert the sacrifice; then they both recollect that Odysseus is in the

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

secret, and that from him they must look for no mercy. Clytemnestra enters, with her children, and there follows the heart-haunting interview between Agamemnon and Iphigenia. Running to throw her arms round his neck, she sees that his eyes are full of sorrow, and begins to question him. Presently she asks: "Will it be long ere you return to me?"

AGAMEMNON. As long for me as you, my darling child.

IPHIGENIA. If you could take me on the journey too!

AGAMEMNON. There is another journey you must take—

And you will not forget your father there.

IPHIGENIA. Shall I go with my mother or alone?

AGAMEMNON. Alone, alone, severed from both of us.<sup>1</sup>

After Iphigenia has disappeared into the tent and Agamemnon has vainly endeavoured to persuade his wife to return to Argos, leaving their daughter with him, Achilles enters, and is astonished to find a lady of queenly aspect alone by the shore. Still greater is his astonishment when the greeting of Clytemnestra reveals to him who she is, and for what purpose she has brought Iphigenia to Aulis. A moment later the old servant rushes in and stammers forth the terrible truth.

Everything now depends upon what course Achilles will follow. Clytemnestra breathes again when he declares that as his name was used "to lure the victim to the net of death" he will defend Iphigenia to the end; but first, he says, let the mother plead with Agamemnon. The 'pleading' of Clytemnestra is hardly tactful, for she adopts an aggressive and taunting tone only too likely to stiffen the resistance of a weak, stubborn man like her husband; even Iphigenia's pitiful appeal does not make him falter.

<sup>1</sup> Translated by F. Melian Stawell.

## IN ANCIENT GREECE

O kill me not untimely! The sun is sweet!  
Why will you send me into the dark grave?  
I was the first to sit upon your knee,  
The first to call you father. . . .<sup>1</sup>

All is vain. Agamemnon points to the waiting ships, to the camp teeming with armed men. If they do not sail for Troy the Trojans will come and attack them in their homelands. There is no hope. And now the army has heard of her presence, the army knows what Calchas has said and believes that Artemis exacts this sacrifice. They have flung stones at Achilles, even his own Myrmidons have assailed him, because it is clear that he wishes to cheat the inexorable goddess of her prey. The hero is still ready to defend Iphigenia, to try to save her, to ward off Calchas and Odysseus if they come to drag her to the altar by her long, bright locks; but Iphigenia will not have it.

I have been thinking, mother—hear me now!  
I have chosen death, it is my own free choice.  
I have put cowardice away from me. . . .  
The goddess needs my blood. Can I refuse?  
No: take it, conquer Troy!<sup>1</sup>

Unselfish to the last, she will not let Achilles risk his life for her sake, will not let Clytemnestra come with her to the altar, pleads with her not to think bitterly of Agamemnon for this—a vain prayer! Then a mood of exaltation comes upon her; she chants a hymn to Artemis, Queen of the land of Aulis; she feels that she, Iphigenia, is the victor, the conqueror of Troy, since her death will bring triumph to the Argive host. And so she passes from our sight, a youthful, gracious figure suddenly thrilled with heroic ardour and lifted to heroic heights. At this point it seems that the authentic

<sup>1</sup> Translated by F. Melian Stawell.

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

play of Euripides breaks off, though there are fragments attached to it which some scholars believe to have been written by his son, Euripides the younger. One of these fragments is the speech of a messenger who comes to Clytemnestra with "strange and marvellous tidings." He relates how at the very moment when Calchas was about to deal the fatal stroke the victim vanished, and he found a hind upon the altar, set there by the relenting goddess in her stead. Euripides may have adopted this traditional happy ending for poetical purposes, even if his curiously modern and sceptical mind did not accept it as historically true. In an earlier play, the *Iphigenia in Tauris*, he had described Iphigenia's life as a priestess of Artemis in the remote land of the Taurians, whither she had been miraculously wafted from the Bœotian shore; but the heroine of that play is a woman, haunted by sorrow, and memory, and unforgotten loves and loyalties, not a young girl.

The later story of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, traced in a few strokes by Homer, was told by Æschylus in the great tragic dramas usually called the Oresteian trilogy—the *Agamemnon*, *The Libation-bearers*, and *The Eumenides*. In the first of these we see how the King of Argos, on his return from the siege of Troy, was treacherously slain by his unforgiving Queen and the false Ægisthus; in the second how seven years later his son Orestes returned to avenge the murder; in the third how the remorseless Furies (the Eumenides) pursued the avenger until Apollo, at whose behest he had acted, cleansed him from the stain of blood. In the *Agamemnon* we meet Cassandra again, Priam's daughter, now a captive in a far country, prophesying woe, but unheeded, since Apollo, who gave her the gift of foreseeing the future, had laid upon her the doom that no man should



hearken to her words. In *The Libation-bearers* we see the reunion of Orestes and his sister Electra by the grave of their father, where he reveals to her that he has been commanded by Apollo to avenge Agamemnon, and where she, athirst for retribution, joins him in passionate invocations to the spirit of the murdered king. Both Sophocles and Euripides made Electra the central character in a tragedy, but in neither of these plays does she seem so youthful<sup>1</sup> as she does in *The Libation-bearers*. Hers is in any case a less engaging figure than that of her elder sister Iphigenia, for her heart has been seared by the sin of Clytemnestra and all the evil and misery following from it, and she seems prematurely fixed and hardened, though in actual years little more than a girl.

Another young girl in Greek tragedy who has a stern and austere air is Antigone, daughter of Œdipus, King of Thebes,<sup>2</sup> the heroine of Sophocles' play bearing her name. She appears also in his *Œdipus Coloneus* and, though her name is not mentioned, in his *Œdipus Rex*; she is one of the *dramatis personæ* in the *Phœnissæ* (*Phœnician Women*) of Euripides, and in a lost play of Æschylus as well. She and her sister 'come on'—to use a modern theatrical term—in *Œdipus Rex*, where their unhappy father, self-blinded and heaven-accursed, pleads with his friend Creon for his "hapless daughters twain," whom he has loved so well, who have never had "a table set apart," but have always shared his repasts. In the *Phœnissæ* we are in Thebes some years later, when Polyneices and Eteocles, the two sons of the deposed king, slay each other in mortal combat, and Creon, now in command of the situation, decrees that the body of Polyneices shall have no burial,

<sup>1</sup> When Orestes returned to Argos Electra was probably about twenty-two or twenty-three.

<sup>2</sup> Thebes in Bœotia.

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

that Antigone shall wed his own son Haimon, and that Œdipus shall be cast out of the city alone to die. This threefold decree Antigone determines to resist; she will bury the remains of her brother, she will not wed Creon's son, she will go with her blind father into exile. The tale may be traced from that point in the *Œdipus Coloneus* of Sophocles, who differs from Euripides in making the exile of Œdipus precede instead of follow the death of his two sons. Here we see the faithful Antigone and her father at Colonus, near Athens, whence certain old men of the neighbourhood, fearing the unforgotten curse upon Œdipus, seek to drive them, and where they are joined by the younger princess, Ismene, who arrives mounted on an "Etnean filly," and wearing a broad-brimmed hat of the shape worn in Thessaly. Creon appears in hot pursuit, and drags the weeping girls from their father's arms, but Theseus, King of Athens, enters at the critical moment, rescues them both, and restores them to Œdipus. Meanwhile Polyneices and Eteocles, who had agreed to rule Thebes during alternate years, have quarrelled, and Polyneices suddenly presents himself in the dominions of Theseus, announcing his intention to raise an army and march against his brother. Antigone implores him not to destroy "both his city and himself," but he will not heed her, and the play ends with the death of Œdipus. The next and last chapter of Antigone's tale is told in the tragic drama bearing her name.

The Greeks believed that libations and offerings might reach and gladden the dead in the world of shades, and therefore attached great importance to the due performance of funeral rites at the actual grave. Even Clytemnestra, the slayer of Agamemnon, dares not wholly neglect those rites, though she does not perform them herself, but, terrified by a dream, sends Electra and her handmaidens to pour forth

## IN ANCIENT GREECE

libations and strew garlands on the tomb. When Creon pronounced the cruel decree that the body of Polyneices should lie unburied he was dooming the spirit of Antigone's brother to dearth and desolation, as well as affronting her deepest religious beliefs. No such indignity was offered to the body of Eteocles, who, in Creon's view, had perished fighting for, and not against, his native city. Antigone knew that death would be the penalty for any defiance of this decree. Ismene faltered, but in her there was no faltering.

When the *Antigone* begins the fatal duel between the brothers is over, and guards have been posted near the spot where Polyneices still lies to ensure the fulfilment of Creon's ordinance. Thither Antigone steals unperceived, and strews dust upon the body, which is thus in a sense duly 'buried,' though not in any pit or mound. The guards detect her, however, in the very act of pouring libations from "a fair-chased urn of bronze." Her bearing when she is dragged before Creon is heroic, and to his question as to whether she has dared to disobey him she answers:

Yea! for not Zeus I ween proclaimed this thing;  
Nor Justice, co-mate with the nether gods,  
Not she ordained men such unnatural laws.

I knew that I must die—how should I not?—  
Though thou hadst ne'er proclaimed this. If I die  
Before mine hour, I count it for my gain.  
For whoso lives as I, beset with sorrows  
Manifold, how should death but be his gain?  
Even so for me to light upon this doom  
Is no grief. But had I endured that he,  
My mother's son, should lie a tombless corpse,  
That were mine anguish: not for this I grieve.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Translated by Arthur S. Way.

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

Sophocles heightens the tragedy by making Haimon and Antigone in love with each other, and by making the seer Tiresias command Creon—too late—to release Antigone from the lonely cavern where his guards have left her to die, and to give the rites of burial to Polyneices. In order to reach the cavern Creon must pass the place where the dead youth lies; he pauses to pour forth libations, to raise and kindle a funeral-pyre, and to heap the earth over the ashes. When, at last, he and his companions reach the cavern they find Antigone dead, “throat-tangled in her girdle’s fine-spun noose.”

Antigone is, perhaps, the noblest of the young girls in Greek tragedy, a grave, sorrowful, resolute figure, from which neither much suffering nor stern resolve can quite abstract the grace of youth; but she is no more girlish than Electra is girlish, and one turns from these two daughters of sorrow to Iphigenia, who seems by contrast hardly more than a child in her hopes and her terrors, her prayers and her tears, even in the mood of exaltation that comes upon her as she passes to her death. Though in the great dramas of the fifth century B.C., the Golden Age<sup>1</sup> of Athenian literature, these maidens, the daughters of Agamemnon and the daughters of Œdipus, were given leading parts, those parts were acted not by girls, but by boys wearing conventional tragic masks, and there was no intention and no desire in the mind of the poet to represent a typical Greek girl of his own time. Greek tragedy was in origin and character religious, and the *dramatis personæ* were heroic or idealized types, not representations of contemporary Athenians. The girl-children who were born and grew up in the days of Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides were made to lead colourless and secluded lives in the

<sup>1</sup> Often called the Attic Age, because the centre of Greek art and literature was in Athens, the principal city of Attica.



GREEK GIRL DANCING

British Museum



GREEK NURSE AND CHILD

"The little girl's nurse amused her with nursery-rhymes  
and baby-songs."

British Museum

## IN ANCIENT GREECE

women's quarters of the pink brick Athenian houses. The birth of such a child<sup>1</sup> was never greeted with delight, as the birth of a baby boy would always be: no olive wreath was hung over the door to bid the neighbours rejoice, but only a fillet of wool to invite their sympathy. She was placed in the care of a faithful family nurse, who gave her a bath in tepid water every day, swaddled her little limbs, and laid her in a wicker cradle shaped like a winnowing-basket. When she was old enough she would be fed on barley porridge and pulse broth, dried fish, honey, goat's milk cheese, radishes, and herbs; oil was much used in cooking, but butter was almost unknown. It is highly improbable that any Athenian father imitated the example of *Œdipus* and had his small daughters sitting at meat with him. The lady of the house might sup with her husband if he were alone, but not if he were entertaining his men-friends, and in any case she had to sit erect on a chair, while he reclined at his ease on a couch. There was none of the freedom of intercourse between the sexes which prevailed in ancient Egypt, and we know from *Xenophon* that a good mother instilled into her daughter's mind the idea that to be some day a faithful, obedient, and submissive wife was the be-all and the end-all of her existence.

The little girl's nurse amused her with nursery-rhymes and baby-songs, and sometimes, *Plato* mentions with disapproval, terrified her with stories of ghosts. All the old legends, beautiful or grotesque, heroic or horrible, were literally and absolutely true both to the nurse herself and to the round-eyed child who listened to her. There was no lack of toys in the women's quarters of a Greek house, where the girls spent most of their time till they married and the boys were kept until they reached their seventh year. The girl had many

<sup>1</sup> Unwanted girl-children were 'exposed,' or left to die, as late as *Plato's* time.

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

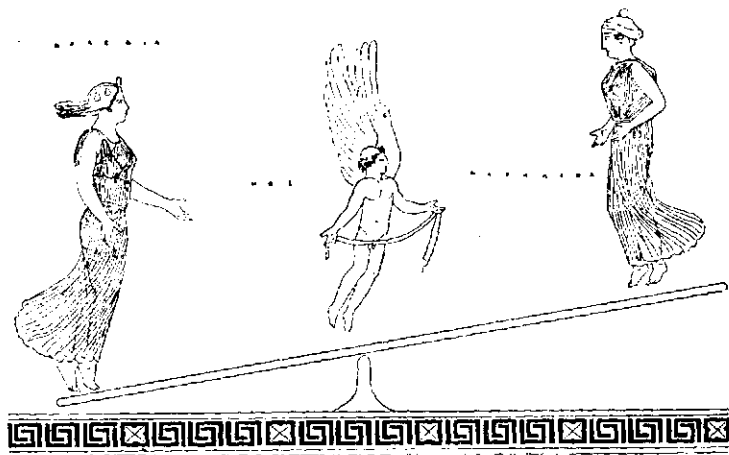
playthings, mostly fashioned of wax, wood, or clay; she had dolls with jointed arms, tiny cups and platters, models of chairs, lamps and urns in glazed pottery and bronze, toy doves, dogs and rabbits, knuckle-bones, sometimes actual sheep's bones, sometimes carved in onyx or variegated marble. In a girl's tomb near Athens was found a whole collection of small clay objects, a seated doll with movable arms, a pair of boots, a vase for lustral water (to be used in religious purifications), and a model of an *onos*, the semi-cylindrical shield placed on the knee by women when carding wool.

The Greek girl's dress was the same as her mother's on a smaller scale. Her chief garment was the *chiton*, either of the Dorian or the Ionic type. The Dorian *chiton* was made of a square piece of woollen stuff folded round the body, held in place by a girdle, and by pins or brooches on the shoulders and at the sides. The Ionic *chiton* consisted of two squares of fine, crinkly linen sewn up the sides and across the top, openings being left for the arms and the head. Small weights of lead or clay were fixed to the corners of garments to make them hang gracefully. The Ionic *chiton* was also worn with a girdle, over which it could be pulled up into a pouch. Besides woollen and linen fabrics Greek ladies had gauze-like materials woven at Amorgos and at Cos, and a more costly stuff called *byssos*, spun from the silky threads of the Pinna shell. All these might be dyed in the gayest colours, blue, yellow, purple, red, and green, and decorated with ornamental borders, or sprinkled with sprigs, stars, and birds. Out of doors the girl wore a sort of mantle known as a *himation*, of which one corner could be drawn over the head like a hood. Slender sandals were on her feet, and her hair was usually gathered behind into a pointed knot and held in position by bands of ribbon or fillets of gold.



## IN ANCIENT GREECE

The typical Athenian house, built round a central court, had often a small garden, though the Greeks had none of the Egyptians' love of flowers, and preferred to cultivate savoury herbs and vegetables in their plots. Under the shadow of pink-tufted tamarisks and leafy fig- or olive-trees the children of the family had swings and see-saws. To judge



GREEK GIRLS ON A SEE-SAW

From a vase-painting.

from the evidence of vase-paintings girls continued to amuse themselves in this way after they had left childhood well behind them. They had dancing and singing games, such as the Tortoise and the Flower games. In the first of these one girl sat in the centre, while the others danced round her singing questions, to which she had to make replies. The catechism begins: "Tortoise, tortoise, what are you doing?" And the 'Tortoise' answers: "I am weaving wool from the fleeces of Miletus," this being the principal city of Iona, famous for its flocks of sheep.

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

The Flower song was probably chanted by two opposing rows of dancers, and began:

Where are my roses, where are my violets, where is my fine  
parsley?

Here are your roses, here are your violets, here is your fine  
parsley!

Except in Sparta, where girls received the same strenuous athletic training as boys, Greek women of gentle birth in the age of Pericles (fifth century B.C.) and Plato (fourth century B.C.) had not many opportunities for open-air exercise, and were expected to devote most of their energy to household cares, especially weaving, spinning, and cooking. Upon the Ionian mainland and in the Ionian islands at an earlier period girls had studied poetry and music, and in the city of Teos they are said to have gone to school with their brothers, but Athenian ideas were very different, and no other instance of co-education has come to light. Plato, in his *Republic*, was original and courageous enough to suggest that girls might be trained physically and mentally upon the same lines as boys, but the suggestion was not followed, and it must be remembered that in the same book of the *Republic* he makes Socrates ask: "Need I waste time in speaking of the art of weaving and the management of pancakes and preserves, in which womankind really does appear great, and in which for her to be beaten by a man is of all things the most absurd?"<sup>1</sup>

These arts, the domestic arts, constituted the chief part of a Greek girl's education, yet the idea that a woman *might* know how to read and write cannot have been entirely unfamiliar, for in the drama of the Attic Age we see queens like Phædra and Clytemnestra reading and writing letters, and vase-paintings and terra-cotta figures exist showing young

<sup>1</sup> Translated by Benjamin Jowett.

## IN ANCIENT GREECE

girls reading from scrolls. It is certain that in the Lyric Age (seventh and sixth centuries B.C.) women were allowed to compete with men in poetical contests, and according to some authorities the poet Pindar was defeated no less than five times by a poetess called Corinna.

It was not only the finest fleeces and the most delicate linen fabrics which came from Ionia.<sup>1</sup> The cities forming the Ionian League were at the summit of their wealth and splendour in the eighth, seventh, and sixth centuries B.C., and when the hour of Athens came in the fifth century the more austere Athenians borrowed many ideas from the artistic, musical, and luxurious Ionians. One of the islands of the Ionian group, Lesbos, had been the centre of a school of exquisite lyric poetry in the seventh century B.C., and several of the most famous poets of that school were women. Their names have lived, though almost all their verse has perished. Among these were Sappho, of whom it was said that her poems made "a small garden, but all of roses," and Erinna, nicknamed "the Bee," who died at the age of nineteen. Of Erinna's poetry little remains beyond two epitaphs on a girl-friend called Baucis and a few scattered lines from her longest work, *The Distaff*, but three hundred years after her death Leonidas of Tarentum and Asclepiades were singing her praises, and later still an unknown Greek poet wrote thus concerning *The Distaff*:

This comb is from a Lesbian hive, Erinna's, sweet though small,  
And the honey of the Muses is brimming over all;  
For these three hundred lines may rank with Homer's own as peers,  
Although they be a maiden's, and she but nineteen years.  
Still trembling at her mother's frown this girl who might not choose  
But ply the loom and distaff in secret served the Muse.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ionia was the ancient name for the coast-lands and islands of Western Asia Minor.    <sup>2</sup> Translated by Lord Rennell of Rodd, in *Love, Worship, and Death*.

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

Here is an interesting picture of the typical Greek girl, submissive to her elders, industrious in weaving and spinning, a shy and docile figure.

To Athenian maidens who were skilful at the loom there might come a most exciting reward. Every four years a procession passed through Athens, starting outside the city boundaries and ending at the temple called the Erechtheum on the flat-topped cliff of the Acropolis, and in it certain highly favoured daughters of noble Athenian families took part. This procession formed the climax of the great Panathenaic festival instituted by a semi-mythical king of Athens, called Erechtheus, in honour of Athene Polios, the divine protectress of the city-state which bore her name. She had her own magnificent temple, the Parthenon, on the summit of the cliff, and she had to share the Erechtheum with Poseidon and with Erechtheus himself, but it was felt that the smaller and more ancient temple was more closely associated with the grey-eyed goddess in her character as patroness of the Athenians. The archaic wooden image of her which stood there could not compare for splendour with her mighty statue of ivory and gold in the Parthenon, yet men held it more holy, and every four years, at the close of the Panathenaic festival, it was garbed in a new *peplos*, or mantle, of saffron-yellow and sea-purple woven by certain young girls of her own city.

These girls, known as *ergastinai*, or workers, dwelt within the precincts of the Erechtheum, under the care of the priestess of Athene, while they were engaged upon their important task, and when the *peplos* was finished men bore it to the Acropolis slung upon the yard of a wooden ship mounted on wheels. The famous frieze carved by Phidias for the Parthenon represents the Panathenaic procession. At either end of the eastern portion is a group of girls, youthful and

## *IN ANCIENT GREECE*

serious-looking, intent upon their responsibilities. Some of them carry various objects connected with the religious rite in which they were privileged to take part, baskets with offerings, incense-burners, wine-jars, and bowls. In other parts of the long pageant gods and goddesses are seen, and mortal men both old and young, but there are no women, except the priestess of Athene, and she has two girl-attendants, each carrying on her head a four-legged stool.

### CHAPTER III IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

**T**HOUGH among the Romans a girl-child may have been of little more account than she was among the Greeks, there were differences between the daily life of a typical Greek and a typical Roman family which were to her advantage. Roman theory may have demanded that the daughters of the house should pass secluded and comparatively laborious days, but Roman practice was of necessity less austere. During the century before and the two centuries after Christ this energetic and enterprising people were borne upon a resistless tide of conquest which carried many Romans to places very far from Rome. Where the legions led the way the magistrates, merchants, engineers, physicians, teachers, and administrative officials followed. These men might have to make their homes in grey Britain or green Gaul, in grim Dacia, golden Iberia, or Egypt the myriad-hued, whence it came that their children grew up under conditions of much greater freedom and variety than did the children of the home-keeping and conservative Greeks. Such Greek colonies as there had been—in Sicily, for example, in Calabria, and in the Egyptian Delta—did not mean such prolonged or such remote exile for the Greek colonists as did the far-flung Roman annexations for certain sons—and daughters—of Rome.

Many Roman girls were born and spent their early years among Asiatics and Africans, Semites, Teutons, and Celts;

## IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

they had contact with almost all the known world, with all its fascinating diversity of character and colour. But whether they lived in Rome itself, or in some far-off, uncouth *colonia*, their youth was regulated according to certain habits and ideas which were definitely Roman. The ideal matron was, no doubt, a modest, thrifty, domesticated lady, the ideal young girl a demure and industrious damsel, yet the Romans were too practical and too active a breed to attempt to keep their womankind in Oriental seclusion. The daughter of a noble family was usually taught to read and write; like her brother, she had letters cut out of ivory to help her to master her alphabet, pebbles (*calculi*) for counting, a wax tablet, and a metal stylus with which to write; like him, she was lured along the path of learning with sweetmeats and tartlets. Sometimes she was placed in the care of the same schoolmaster, though not perhaps in the same schoolroom during the same hours. Her nurse was probably a Greek slave-woman, and she may have learned her first words in Greek rather than in Latin, though a knowledge of the Greek tongue was not an essential part of her equipment, as it was of her brother's. Her name itself might be Greek, as were the names of two of the little girls, Canace and Erotion, for whom the Roman satirist Martial wrote epitaphs. Music and dancing were long regarded as somewhat outlandish and demoralizing accomplishments, and Horace mentions with obvious disapproval that young girls of his day delighted in learning Ionic dances; but in the later ages of Imperial Rome, when manners were less simple and foreign influences were strong, both these arts were practised.

There was no dearth of toys in the typical Roman house—dolls and tiny bronze or ivory animals for the girls, chariots, models of gladiators, and figures of wild beasts for their

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

brothers. We know from Horace what were some of the amusements of these children: "to build houses, to yoke mice to a small cart, to play odd-and-even, to ride on a hobby-horse"; and we know from him and from other Roman poets that the Roman *paterfamilias* was often quite an indulgent parent, giving pet-names to his little ones, and bringing them home pears and other 'treats' when he went to a banquet. The father of three or more children was entitled to special privileges: he had a claim to the best seats at the gladiatorial games and the chariot-races, and as a candidate for public offices he was usually chosen in preference to the childless man.

The two first and greatest Cæsars, Julius and his nephew and successor, Octavianus Augustus, were anxious to revive the antique Roman spirit of simplicity and regularity in home life. Julius himself had been a prodigious flirt and dandy in his youth, and Augustus certainly did not succeed in persuading his only daughter Julia to dress or to behave with quietness and decorum; but both these Cæsars realized that the only sure and abiding foundation for a vast empire was a high standard of conduct among its women. This standard they were powerless to enforce. The personal habits of the Romans became more and more luxurious as the first decades of the Christian era passed, and not until the third century, when the influence of Christianity was making itself felt, did the Roman ladies feel much inclination to listen to the stern advocates of plain dresses, undyed hair, and meek manners. Before that time those advocates had no religious arguments to quote; they could not say that any god or goddess, either native or imported, had ever laid any such commandments upon womankind; and the plea that because their great-great-grandmothers had been blameless and frugal and sedate they



## IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

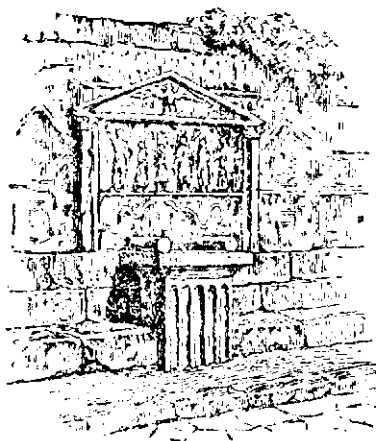
ought to be the same did not appeal to many of the patrician ladies of Imperial Rome.

There were always a few old-fashioned families who continued to set a good example. Their small daughters were taught to weave and spin, and were allowed no dangling ornaments for their wrists or ears, no teachers to instruct them in Ionic songs and dances. One father of such a family was that very uncouth and morose person Cato the Younger, a kill-joy of the type common seventeen centuries later in Puritan England. We can imagine under what severe discipline his children were brought up when we remember that he himself went without sandals in all weathers, travelled everywhere on foot, and once entered the theatre during the springtime festival of the Floralia only in order ostentatiously to get up and walk out to demonstrate his disapproval. His daughter Porcia seems to have been worthy even of such a "heroic, stoic" sire, and it was no doubt the severity of her upbringing which produced in her that iron fortitude she showed as the wife of Brutus.

Cato's careless habits in the matter of dress and deportment were in striking contrast to the general Roman practice. No cleaner people than the Romans ever lived. Both men and women frequented the magnificent public baths, where the bathers could be massaged, anointed, scraped, perfumed, and where there were swimming-pools both hot and cold. Hands and feet were carefully tended, the hair was oiled, combed, often artificially curled, sometimes dyed. A Roman satirist has recorded how a young lady called Lalage felled her luckless waiting-woman to the ground with her bronze mirror because one solitary tress had been pinned in the wrong position, and it is certain that from a very early age the Roman girl was elaborately 'groomed' by her own particular

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

attendant. At one time plucked eyebrows were fashionable. The names of two perfume merchants of the first century A.D. have been preserved—Cosmus and Niceros—and it is said that a phantom fragrance still clings to the auburn hair of the Roman lady preserved in the museum at York. Tooth-powder, hair-wash, nail-files, corsets, and sponges were among the paraphernalia of such a lady's dressing-room.



ALTAR OF THE LARES AND PENATES

The general plan of a Roman house was the same whether it stood in Italy or in some remote province. The central hall, or *atrium*, with its tessellated pavement, its pool or tank in the middle, its little shrine to the *lares* and *penates*, the friendly household gods, all these features were met with everywhere. In hot countries the house was so built as to be cool summer; in cold lands the brick flues of the hypocaust, warming the walls and floors, were kept at an even temperature by a stove outside. Horace, in his Ode to Phydile, gives a charming picture of a young girl making offerings to the "little gods," as the *lares* and *penates* were often called:

Thou art in no wise bound to slay many sheep in order to propitiate the little gods whom thou art crowning with rosemary and the fragile myrtle-flower. If their altar be touched by a pure hand a rich sacrifice will soothe the hostile *penates* no better than a sacred cake and crackling grains [of salt].

## IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

These little gods were more ancient than Rome itself; they were born of the very earth upon which the mighty city was built. Wherever the Romans went their shrines were set up, and kept bright with wax, and honoured with offerings of cakes, flowers, and salt. Other ancient divinities there were whose origin was far back in the mist of dawn, garden-gods, gods and goddesses of walls, thresholds, highways, flocks and herds; kindly spirits that looked after small children; grim spectres, such as the *lemures*, whom those kindly spirits drove away. Yet the chief deities of the Roman state religion were the old Greek gods under different names, and for a long time the religious beliefs of the Romans were a very queer mixture of native rural cults and myths borrowed from Greece. Then a time came when the Cæsar of the day was worshipped as a sort of god, and when a tremendous variety of foreign faiths appeared in Rome; and the exiled Romans acquired a tolerant and broad-minded habit of adopting the local gods of the non-Roman people among whom they had to pass a great part of their lives. The little Roman girl would have her own little gods before her eyes wherever she had her home; but in the West she might hear of Celtic divinities, especially where there were wells, hills, and rivers, while in the East she would make the acquaintance of Ishtar, the moon-goddess, Mithras, the sun-god, and perhaps even the one great impersonal Jahweh adored by the Jews.

Among the most ancient of the cults brought by early Greek settlers to Italy was the cult of Vesta, the hearth-goddess, worshipped in Greece itself under the name of Hestia. She was one of the household divinities, for she was honoured in every home, from the little hut of the husbandman to the patrician's house of tall pillars and many-coloured pavements. In the very centre of the Roman Forum she had

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

a circular temple, where her priestesses, the Vestal Virgins, guarded the sacred fire upon which the welfare of the whole city and State was thought to depend.

Of these priestesses there were at first four and afterwards six. They were under the control of the Pontifex Maximus, the head of the great college of priests which directed the religious affairs of Rome, and it was he who by the drawing of lots chose a little girl to fill any gap in the sisterhood. This child would be one of twenty candidates between the ages of six and ten, perfect in body and mind, the daughters of freeborn parents living in Italy. When the lot fell upon her she was legally transferred from her actual father's authority (*potestas*) to that of the Pontifex Maximus, to whom alone the Vestals owed obedience. Then began her ten years' training. She would be taught her duties and responsibilities to which the next ten years of her life were dedicated; another decade was spent in teaching the novices of the order, and, finally, at the age of forty, she was free to return, if she chose, to the outer world and to take a husband.

In addition to keeping the sacred fire alive the Vestals had to pour libations of wine and oil upon the flame, to purify their temple every day with water brought from the hallowed fountain of Egeria, to make offerings of salt cakes, and to recite prayers for the prosperity of Rome. They received high honours and enjoyed remarkable privileges. They paid no taxes, they could give evidence in the courts of law without taking the customary oath. If one of them met a criminal on his way to execution she could pardon and release him. When a Vestal went abroad in her chariot or litter a lictor preceded her, bearing the *fasces*, the bundle of rods with the axe in the centre, borne before the principal magistrates of the city, while all the passers-by, of whatever degree, saluted

## IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

her with profound respect. At the Circus the best place was hers of right, and if any doubt arose as to whether a wounded gladiator should be allowed to live hers was the decisive vote. Her pure white raiment and her diadem-shaped white head-band hung with ribbons were regarded with veneration wherever they were seen, for of all the priestly orders of ancient Rome the Vestals alone never decayed or became corrupt. They were not finally abolished until the reign of the Emperor Theodosius, in the fourth century of the Christian era. Every year upon the ninth day of June a festival known as the Vestalia was held in honour of the hearth-goddess. Various kinds of food were sent to the temple to be offered up by the Virgins, and on that one day no corn was ground in Rome: the idle millstones were wreathed with flowers, and the patient donkeys who turned the mill-wheels were given a much-needed holiday, and paraded through the streets with garlands round their necks.

Those streets were probably the noisiest in any city of the antique world. Wheeled traffic was prohibited between sunrise and four o'clock, but over the irregular cobbles surged a continuous flood of many-coloured and loud-tongued humanity, legionaries in their clanking bronze and leather attire, magistrates, merchants, hawkers, jockeys, actors and gladiators, idlers and saunterers, slaves with laden baskets on their heads, all talking or clattering, quarrelling or laughing, as the great stream flowed along, and at night, when carts and wagons were allowed to circulate, the din must have been insupportable. Wherever Romans of the upper class encountered each other, whether among the temples and colonnades of the Forum or in the gardens planted by the opulent Mæcenas on the Esquiline Hill, or in the broad Campus Martius, where lively ball games were played to the

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

imminent danger of the passer-by, their talk would follow certain stereotyped lines. Horace has given us a sample of their conversation, the sort of conversation that would be hushed for a moment as the Vestal Virgin passed:

What time is it? Is Gallina the Thracian a match for Syrus? The cold morning air is beginning to pinch those who are ill-provided against it. Good friend (you must know, since you draw nearer to the gods), have you heard anything about the Dacians?

Syrus was, of course, a gladiator against whom Gallina the Thracian would probably wield the Thracian sickle in the arena; the Dacians, the people of those territories now known as Transylvania, Moldavia, Wallachia, and that part of Hungary lying east of the river Theiss, were the objects of a Roman punitive expedition in the reign of Augustus. These were the topics interesting to the Romans: sport, the weather, politics, news from the seat of war. Perhaps to make the picture complete we should add some talk about the harvest and the vintage on the country estates of the speakers, a little gossip, a few comments on a law case or a new satirical poem, and some remarks about the excellence of the oysters or the mushrooms served at somebody's banquet the night before.

One of the most engaging traits about the Romans, one which persisted long after their sterner and more solid virtues had failed, was their love of the country and of country life. Every family which could afford to do so spent the summer at some villa or farm, where the children, boys and girls alike, were allowed to run wild, and where the turmoil of the great city was forgotten in the green tranquillity of woods and hills. Martial has described one of these delightful retreats, where

## IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

the poultry-yard was stocked with an amazing variety of birds, the gabbling goose, the jewelled peacock, the crimson-winged flamingo, the spotted partridge, the Colchian pheasant; in the turrets pigeons murmured, while the greedy pigs scrambled after the apron of the bailiff's wife—in which she would seem to have been carrying food for them. Indoors a bright wood fire flickered upon the happy household gods; the store-room was full of bursting corn-bins and casks of mellow wine. The steward bestirred himself to good purpose, setting nets for thrushes, fishing with hook and line, catching deer in snares. Sometimes one of the rustic tenants would arrive with his little gifts: a comb of white honey or a conical cheese, a sleepy dormouse, a capon or a kid. Tall young girls, the daughters of the husbandmen on the farmlands, came with osier baskets, bearing offerings from their mothers, and every one, masters, servants, and guests, ate their fill, without any cold meats being kept over for the morrow. Life upon an Italian farm in the first century A.D. was by no means hard or over-arduous. The soil was bountiful, the rich pastures fed fine flocks and herds, the kindly sun touched the grape-vines with colour and the clustering grapes with sweetness. Gray borrowed from Virgil the charming picture of the ploughman driving his team cheerfully afield in the early morning and returning at dusk to be greeted by his small children, who would "climb his knees the envied kiss to share"; but the English poet naturally refrained from describing the ploughman's wife using a vine-leaf to skim the broth bubbling in an earthenware pot on the open fire, vines being less plentiful than yews and elms at Stoke Poges.

Another characteristic of the Romans, though perhaps a less admirable one, which affected the daily life of their children was their love of good things to eat and drink. The

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

fertile soil of Italy gave them almost unlimited riches in the way of fruits, vegetables, and grain, her rivers and the seas washing her long coasts teemed with fish, her marshes were clamorous with wildfowl, her forests were full of game; yet all this was not enough, and bacon from Spain, oysters from Britain, cockles from Africa, lentils from Egypt, prunes from Damascus, saffron from Cilicia, white wine from the island of Cos, honey from Attica, and pickles from Byzantium were among the dainties familiar upon Roman tables in the first and second centuries A.D. A Roman poet did not think it beneath his dignity to expatiate gravely upon the insipidity of beetroot, the superiority of long over round eggs, of wild over cultivated mushrooms, of the juicy Tiburtian apples over the Picenian apples, which were prettier to look at. Another poet actually gives the menu of the banquet to which he invites his friends: mallows, mint, lettuce, leeks, elecampane, slices of egg crowned with anchovies, by way of *hors-d'œuvres*, a kid "snatched from the jaws of the wolf," green beans and young sprouts of cabbage, chicken, ham, ripe fruits for dessert, all "seasoned with pleasantry free from bitterness." This same poet—it was Martial—condescends even to give cookery hints: he declares that if pale beans boil for you in a vessel of red earthenware you may refuse the invitations of the wealthy, that you should use plenty of pepper when eating a fat-backed beccafico—a small bird of the warbler family—and that you should cook young cabbages with soda, so as to give them a tempting green tint.

Roman children were probably more interested in honey and figs and the enormous variety of cakes and tarts produced by Roman pastry-cooks than in the salads, shellfish, and strongly seasoned dishes dear to their elders. Shellfish, especi-



## IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

ally of the smaller kind, such as cockles, mussels, whelks, murices (the same from which the famous Tyrian purple dye was made), and sea-snails, were much appreciated, and quite an important part of Roman table-manners was learning to handle politely the long, slender spoons with pointed handles and very small bowls, used for extracting these creatures from their shells and eating them. Land-snails (*cochleæ*) also were eaten, and such a spoon was called on this account a *cochleare*, the name still used by physicians in writing their prescriptions, the measurement being graded according to whether a tablespoonful (*cochleare amplum*), a dessert-spoonful (*cochleare modicum*), or a teaspoonful (*cochleare infantis*, or *parva*) is desired. At a Roman banquet it was customary for the host to present his guests with little mementoes, varying in beauty and value with his wealth and his generosity. A *cochleare* spoon was not infrequently chosen, as were also baskets made by the "painted Britons," reed pipes, woollen slippers, fly-flaps of peacock or other feathers, small jars of ointment or tooth-powder, and strigils for scraping the body after the bath. From the character of some of the gifts enumerated by the Roman satirists it seems that the father of a family was sometimes given something suitable to be taken home to the children; such were balls of various kinds, inflated or stuffed with feathers, and babies' rattles.

Nowhere was the affection of the Romans for their girl-children more touchingly shown than in the epitaphs written for small girls and the monuments raised to them. It was not always the father himself who composed the epitaph; he might have recourse to a poetical friend, as the fathers of two little girls, Antulla and Canace, had to Martial, or he might be a relative only by adoption, as Martial was to the six-year-

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

old Erotion, for whom he wrote no less than three funerary poems. Of Antulla he wrote:

This grove and these goodly achres of tilled land Fænius has consecrated to the eternal honour of the dead. In this tomb is buried Antulla, too soon torn from her parents; here will each of them be united with her. If anyone should cast longing eyes upon this little plot I warn him that he must not hope for it; it is devoted to its owners for ever.

Poor little Canace died of some dread disease which deprived her of speech at the last: Death, says Martial, silenced her sweet voice, lest she should dissuade the stern Fates from their purpose. It is a pretty idea, but artificial, a poet's trick of the kind in which Elizabethan England took delight fifteen hundred years later. There is a much more sincere note in his lamentations over Erotion, who was buried between two older people, though whether her father and mother or *his* is not quite clear. He thinks that in their company she will not be so frightened of the dark shades, or of Cerberus, the deep-jawed dog of Tartarus; he imagines that her little ghost may sport between these two protectors, and that she may sometimes lisp his name; he desires that no rough sods shall enfold her delicate limbs, and that as she pressed so lightly upon the earth upon her it shall lie lightly:

*Mollia nec rigidus cæspes tegat ossa, nec illi,  
Terra, gravis fueris: non fuit illa tibi!*

From a phrase in another poem it would appear that Erotion was a slave child, born in captivity in Martial's house. He had no children of his own—indeed, in one of his poems he alludes ruefully to the fact that he was not entitled to claim those privileges of citizenship accorded to fathers of families—and he seems to have made a plaything of this pretty,

IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

auburn-haired baby, fairer than "Indian pearls, or newly polished ivory, or newly fallen snow"; and certainly no free-born child ever had a more charming epitaph than this:

Underneath this greedy stone  
Lies little sweet Erotion,  
Whom the Fates, with hearts as cold,  
Nipped away at six years old.  
Thou, whoever thou mayst be  
That hast this small field after me,  
Let the yearly rites be paid  
To her little slender shade;  
So shall no disease or jar  
Hurt thy house or chill thy Lar,  
But this tomb be here alone  
The only melancholy stone.<sup>1</sup>

There had been nothing in the literature of the Greeks which could be compared with these delicate elegies dedicated to the *manes* of girl-children; yet even more heart-haunting than they is the epitaph on a small sarcophagus unearthed at York:

*D.M. Simpliciae Florentine, anime innocentissime, que vixit menses decem, Felicius Simplex pater fecit Leg. VI. V.*

(To the sacred shades of Simplicia Florentina, a most innocent being, who lived for ten months, Felicius Simplex of the victorious Sixth Legion, her father, erected this.)

The Latin is not beyond criticism. Felicius Simplex was probably a Roman in name only, for the legions were recruited from all the far-flung provinces of the Empire, and included many non-Italian units. His wife, the mother of Simplicia, may have been a British woman: the legionaries often took wives from among the inhabitants of the occupied territories. Already when that little sarcophagus was hewn those forces

<sup>1</sup> Translated by Leigh Hunt.

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

were at work which were to necessitate the withdrawal of the legions from the island of Britain early in the fifth century A.D.

Long before the Germanic tribes of the river Elbe began to push their way west and south, long before Ostrogoths, Visigoths, Vandals, and Huns began to hammer at the frontiers of the Empire, Rome was rotting at the core. The



SARCOPHAGUS OF THE ROMAN LEGIONARY'S BABY DAUGHTER AT YORK

traditional Roman virtues had fallen out of favour. People laughed at the idea of patriotism, fortitude, temperance, integrity, being good or useful qualities. The rich vied with each other in folly and absurdity, the poor howled for *panem et circenses* ('bread and circuses'), and somehow succeeded in enjoying both until the foe was actually at the gate. Yet during these fateful decades another force was at work destined to have a more far-reaching and long-enduring influence upon the history not only of Rome but of all Europe than any invasions or conquests of Roman territory by barbarian tribes. By way of the Roman roads and the Roman trade-routes over land and sea Christianity was slowly, almost imperceptibly, spreading outward from Palestine.

## IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

The new religion was not taken very seriously at first by the educated and official classes in Rome. Its earliest adherents were mostly humble folk, slaves, gladiators, fishermen, even criminals, and not until it assumed political importance by opposing the recognized adoration of the ruling Cæsar as a god did the Romans condescend to pay much attention to the cult. Yet all the time that cult was growing; when its followers were disregarded, and later when they were persecuted, it never ceased to thrust itself deeper and deeper into the earth of Rome. Women were among the first to hear its message gladly. Christian slaves converted their mistresses, who then tried, with varying degrees of success, to convert their husbands. Philosophic pagans, sick of the evil times and weary of the hollow superstitions they had long outgrown, began to investigate this strange new faith. As Christianity claimed larger and larger numbers of converts in all parts of the Empire the lives of many Roman children were shaped and coloured by Christian ideas. A higher authority than that of national tradition was now invoked to dissuade Roman ladies from painting their cheeks and tinting their hair. Christian mothers were anxious to bring up their little daughters in accordance with Christian teaching, and the Fathers of the Christian Church, Clement of Alexandria, Cyprian, Jerome, all occupied themselves gravely with this great question. The follies of the pagan part of Roman society gave these saintly men an excellent text for their sermons, and they preached with energy and eloquence against them.

Clement of Alexandria, who was born at Athens, passed most of his life at Alexandria, and died in Palestine between 213 and 220, wrote a comprehensive treatise called *Pædagogus*, or *The Instructor*, in which he gives advice upon a vast variety

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

of subjects, including eating, drinking, bathing, sleeping, dressing, going to church. He believes in gymnastics for men, so long as they do not fill the time intended for more serious occupations, and he does not wish women to be debarred entirely from physical activities. "But they are not to be encouraged to engage in wrestling or running, but are to exercise themselves in spinning and weaving, and, if necessary, superintending the cooking." He disapproves of earrings—"if in the ear, why not in the nose also?"—and desires women to wear plain and seemly garments of pure white. Naturally, he condemns elaborate methods of dressing the hair, and the use of dyes to alter its colour; he severely censures a mincing gait and a sidelong glance. He would like to see young girls walking quietly with downcast eyes, clad in simple stuffs woven by themselves, wearing a veil or hood over the head when out of doors. He would have neither perfumes nor hand-mirrors, golden hairpins nor pots of rouge, in their possession. They must not don delicate robes of purple, flame-colour, or green; they must not have golden tags on their shoes; and, though a smile or "seemly relaxation of the countenance" is rather grudgingly permitted, giggling is strictly forbidden.

St Cyprian, who was born in Carthage at the dawn of the third century, converted to Christianity in 245, and suffered martyrdom under the Emperor Valerian in 258, had equally decided views, and wrote a discourse *On the Dress of Virgins*, in which he quotes with great approbation the remarks of the Apostles Peter and Paul upon the subject of braided hair, outward adorning of array, gold, pearls, and costly raiment. We know from the ornaments found in the graves of Roman children that quite tiny girls wore rings of delicate gold and bracelets of jet and amber. The saint refutes with energy the

## IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

argument, apparently advanced by some recalcitrant Christian maidens, that if they happen to be wealthy they should use those things which God had willed that they should possess. "Use them, certainly," says St Cyprian, "but for good purposes." He deplores the weakness of young women, even Christian young women, for beautiful colours, necklaces, and gems.

For God neither made the sheep scarlet nor purple, nor taught the juices of herbs and of shell-fish to dye and colour wool, nor arranged necklaces with stones set in gold and with pearls distributed in a woven series or numerous cluster, where-with you would hide the neck which He made.<sup>1</sup>

It was the fallen angels, intent upon the perdition of the human race, who, according to Cyprian, taught people to pierce the innocent ears of small children in order to hang heavy rings in them. It is clear from the vehemence of his exhortations that the more youthful part of his feminine flock was causing him no small anxiety at this time by indulgence in rich raiment and in 'make-up.'

Therefore hear me, O virgins, as a parent; hear, I beseech you, one who fears while he warns; hear one who is faithfully consulting your advantage and your profit. Be such as God the Creator made you; be such as the hand of your father ordained you. Let your countenance remain unpainted, your neck unadorned, your figure simple; let no wounds be made in your ears . . . let your feet be free from golden bands, your hair stained with no dye, your eyes worthy to behold God.<sup>1</sup>

From which it would appear that social habits had changed very little in the Roman Empire during the period between the death of Clement and the conversion of Cyprian.

<sup>1</sup> Translated by the Rev. R. E. Wallis.

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

More than a hundred and fifty years later we find St Jerome writing in much the same strain from his hermitage in Palestine. During his sojourn in Rome (382-385) this very remarkable man, a Dalmatian by birth, had made many converts, particularly among Roman ladies of high degree, two of whom, a pious mother and her not less pious daughter, Paula and Eustochium, followed him to the Holy Land and were his neighbours there during the last years of his laborious life. Paula left behind in Rome her only son Toxotius, whose wife, Læta, was the daughter of a pagan father and a Christian mother. Læta's faith was the same as her husband's and her mother's, and when a baby girl was born to her she solemnly dedicated the child to Christ. St Jerome, from his distant retreat among the Judæan hills, wrote a long letter, full of tender affection and apostolic ardour, to the young mother, giving her detailed advice as to the training of Paula the baby, whose birth, following a vow at a martyr's tomb, ultimately brought about the conversion of her pagan grandfather Albinus.

Little Paula is to hear none but holy words and sacred songs: she is not to be allowed to talk 'baby-talk.' Her mother must teach her to read by giving her letters of box-wood and ivory to play with. Not only should she learn how to recite their names like a song (*in canticum*); her mother must jumble them together sometimes, so that she may distinguish them by their form. "And when her faltering hand can lead the stylus across the waxen tablet, let a stronger hand guide her fingers, or trace the letters in advance so that she may follow the lines and not wander from them." The baby is to have grave and reverend women to wait upon her, and a tutor of ripe age, irreproachable character, and wide learning; but she is not to be scolded if she is slow in understand-



## IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

ing her lessons. When her still unconverted grandfather Albinus takes her in his arms she is to clasp him round the neck and chant *Alleluia*, whether he likes it or not! From Jerome's anxious exhortations it is clear that Roman mothers of the fourth century were in the habit of rouging their small daughters' cheeks, decking their necks and ears with pearls, and dyeing their hair red—the colour of the flames of hell! When Paula is no longer a baby she must lead a life of tranquillity and seclusion, as befits a little girl dedicated to God before her birth; Jerome's affection for this unknown lamb of his flock struggles with his severe principles in a way that is touching as well as amusing, for though he enjoins strict abstinence in all things, he adds that she may take a small quantity of wine, *propter stomachum* (for her stomach's sake), as St Paul put it, and that she may eat meat, in case her legs should give way before she is able to walk! Though she must never hear the mundane music of flute, lyre, or harp, she must learn the rhythms of Greek verse, and her mother must personally superintend her studies in her native Latin, so that her pronunciation may remain pure and correct.

True to classical tradition, the sage desires that Paula shall learn to spin, but she must not weave silken stuffs or embroider with threads of gold. He will not even allow her to possess books of devotion bound in rich covers and adorned with scarlet capitals and illuminated pages. She must never



AN EARLY CHRISTIAN GIRL

From a painting in the catacombs at Rome

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

stray a moment from her mother's side, even when they go together to pray in some basilica or at some martyr's tomb; no curled young dandy must be allowed to smile at her, nor is she to be present at banquets or at festivities following the marriage of any of the servants of the house. When he has completed his long list of prohibitions Jerome realizes that what he demands is almost beyond the bounds of possibility, and imagines Læta asking, not unreasonably, "How can a woman of the world like myself, in Rome, in the heart of the multitude, keep such watch and ward?" He answers the imaginary question by urging her to send her child to Bethlehem, to the convent founded there by Paula the elder and Eustochium, and to confide her to the care of those two holy women. "Oh," he exclaims earnestly, "if you could but see them, if you could but see what great souls dwell in their slender bodies, you yourself would precede your daughter!" And as a final inducement he makes the engaging promise that if little Paula should come to Palestine he himself would be her teacher and nurse; he would carry her on his shoulders and, old though he was, form her first prattling words. And he would be prouder than the philosopher who taught Alexander, for Aristotle only brought up a Macedonian king to die of poison in Babylon, but he, Jerome, would bring up a handmaid and spouse of Christ destined to reign with Him in Heaven!

These must have seemed hard counsels to Læta, though she knew from Paula's own letters that the life led by her and Eustochium in Judæa was pleasant as well as austere. These pious ladies ate with their coarse bread vegetables grown by themselves, slept upon beds of leaves, spent many hours in prayer; but they lived among flowering meadows, and, unlike the nuns in the West after the Rule of St Benedict was insti-

### *IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE*

tuted a hundred years later, they were not confined within cloister walls. In the event, Læta and her husband yielded to the urging of St Jerome, and sent their little daughter to Bethlehem, over many long and perilous miles of land and sea. She grew up in the care of her grandmother and aunt, saw Jerome complete his gigantic labour, the translation of the Bible into Latin, and was with him when he died. This befell in the year 420, and already the mark of the Dark Ages was closing down upon the Western world.

## CHAPTER IV IN THE DARK AGES

**T**HE Dark Ages" is a term somewhat loosely and diversely employed by writers of history, of whom one will contract it to the centuries between the sack of Rome by Alaric and the rise of Charlemagne's Empire, while another will stretch it so as to include all that space of time between the invasion of the Roman Empire by the barbarians and the rediscovery of classical learning at the Renaissance. Here we will take it as meaning those centuries, roughly the fifth to the tenth, during which the lamp of civilization flickered and burned low in Western Europe, when the ancient pagan culture had been overthrown and the new Christian order of art, thought, and chivalry had not yet been built up on the ruins.

The darkness of the Dark Ages was never absolute and unbroken. There were always little patches of perhaps rather feeble light here and there. In France, in Ireland, in Lombardy, and in the Frankish kingdoms of Central Europe the new faith had reared altars whence a faint glimmer pierced the gloom; and wherever Christian communities were found pious sisterhoods grew up, and young girls learned to read and to sing from their Latin psalters, and to embroider Church vestments and princely robes in many-coloured threads.

It has been suggested that the Germanic tribes, the Goths and the Lombards, showed greater readiness to accept the

## IN THE DARK AGES

Christian view of womankind, with its exaltation of the Blessed Virgin and of innumerable women saints and martyrs, than did the pagan communities of Southern Europe, because already these tribes paid high honour to women. The same was true of the semi-Romanized inhabitants of Gaul, a mixed race in which Celtic, Frankish, and Gaulish elements



A NINTH-CENTURY GIRL READING  
From a manuscript in the Bibliothèque Nationale.

were blended. As early as the sixth century Radegonde, Queen of France, founded a nunnery at Poitiers, whither she herself withdrew from the world, and within whose walls she applied herself to the daily study of pious books, including the works of St Gregory Nazianzen, St Basil, St Athanasius, St Hilary, St Ambrose, St Jerome, and St Augustine. This sainted lady must in her youth have received an education not unlike that which Jerome planned for little Paula; she must have been well versed in the Latin tongue, for we

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

are told that when she was reading aloud to the nuns at Poitiers she would explain to them any passages which they found it hard to understand. In order to do this she would need some knowledge of ancient history and of the philosophy and literature of the antique world. Early in the same turbulent century St Cesarius, Bishop of Arles, founded a convent in that city where the nuns were compelled to devote at least two hours in every day to study, and not to religious study only, for the holy bishops desired that they should apply themselves to *all* branches of learning, *omnes litteras*.

Meanwhile the Anglo-Saxon settlers in England were divesting themselves of their rude manners and primitive ways of life. Instead of grouping themselves in small, scattered communities and finding their chief occupation in hunting, farming, and fighting, they were now beginning to gather in the deserted Roman-British towns whence their fierce, golden-haired ancestors had driven the original Romanized Celtic inhabitants, and to practise some of the simpler arts of peace. One of the earliest glimpses we can catch of a young un-Christian girl in the Dark Ages is that of Hengist's daughter, with whom the British King of Kent, Vortigern, fell so suddenly and so desperately in love that he offered in exchange for her hand anything that her father might ask. Hengist, as we know, modestly demanded the whole of Vortigern's kingdom—and, what is more, he got it! The name of this youthful Saxon beauty does not appear to have been preserved, but the jewels unearthed from Saxon burial-grounds give us a fair idea of the manner of her adorning when first she dawned upon the dazzled eyes of Vortigern. She was probably of middle height, with long light-brown hair and a broad forehead. Her raiment would be of woollen

## IN THE DARK AGES

stuff spun and dyed in her father's house: her earrings, her brooches, her heavy gold bracelets, set with coral, amber, turquoise, or garnet, or enamelled with intricate designs in red, blue, and green, might have been fashioned by Saxon goldsmiths or brought by northern seafarers from waters as far asunder as the Baltic and the Bosphorus. It was towards the middle of the fifth century that she came with her warlike father to the shores of Kent; not until the very end of the sixth did the small band of Italian monks bring the Cross of Christ to those same green and pleasant shores.

The Frankish Bertha, queen of the kingdom that Hengist had wrested from Vortigern more than a hundred years before, had been bred a Christian, and kept a chaplain of her own among the heathen Kentishmen, but it does not seem that either she or this good man had made any very determined effort to convert King Ethelbert. That epoch-marking achievement was reserved for St Augustine and his Benedictine monks, one of whom, Paulinus, was destined to be associated with the early childhood of two royal girl-children in the grey north country, very far from the flowery meads of Kent.

For five and twenty years Paulinus worked and taught in the realm of King Ethelbert, and he may very likely have believed that the rest of his earthly life would be passed in or near the Isle of Thanet—then really something in the nature of an isle. He saw the children of the converted King nurtured in the faith of Christ, among them Prince Eadbald and the little princess Ethelberga. After Eadbald had succeeded his father as King of Kent ambassadors arrived from Edwin, King of Northumbria, asking the hand of Ethelberga for their master, who, though not himself a Christian, promised that his bride should practise her religion unmolested, and

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

even hinted that he might be persuaded to adopt it, if he should find it on closer examination to be better than his own. Edwin had had a disturbed and distressful boyhood, persecuted by Ethelfrid, his brother-in-law and predecessor on the Northumbrian throne, and more than once his life had been in the gravest peril. While he was living in exile at the Court of Redwald, King of East Anglia, the unscrupulous Ethelfrid sent a message to this King offering him rich rewards if he would murder his young guest. To his credit, Redwald, encouraged by his noble-hearted queen, at first refused. But Ethelfrid had excellent reasons for wishing to get rid of Edwin, who was the son of a former King of Northumbria and a possible claimant to the throne, and when he followed up bribes with threats the King of East Anglia wavered and finally gave way. One of Edwin's sympathisers warned him that he had better take to flight, but the prince refused to break faith with his royal host. Late that night, as he was sitting brooding upon his sad plight, he saw a vision or, perhaps, dreamed a dream. He thought that a stranger in unfamiliar raiment approached and asked him why he sat there alone and sorrowful, while all men slept. Rather churlishly he retorted: "What is that to you?" but the pertinacious stranger was not to be rebuffed, and proceeded to demand what reward Edwin would give to the man that should deliver him from his immediate danger, lay all his enemies low, and make him a more powerful king than any of his forefathers. Edwin, now more disposed to be polite, answered that he would give anything that it was possible for him to give, and he even promised that if these things came to pass he would willingly obey any counsels of his benefactor. The stranger then laid his hand upon the young prince's head, saying, "When this sign shall be shown unto you remember what



you have sworn, and hasten to fulfil your vow," and promptly vanished, after the recognized fashion of apparitions.

All things fell out as the midnight visitant had foretold. Redwald relented, refused to betray his guest, and raised an army with which he defeated Ethelfrid in the field. Edwin then succeeded his brother-in-law as King of Northumbria, and, after subduing the neighbouring tribes and annexing their territories, sought among the South Saxons a queen<sup>1</sup> to share his throne. We are told that Eadbald hesitated at first to give his sister in marriage to a heathen prince, but, reassured by Edwin's promises, he finally agreed. Paulinus, who had known Ethelberga all her life, was ordained a bishop and appointed to go with her and remain with her in her new northern home, lest she and her companions should be "corrupted by the society of the pagans." At a time when communications were difficult and slow, and distances appeared much greater, it was a great ordeal for a young girl to leave her home and her family and make a long journey through wild and desolate country to an unknown kingdom, where the speech and the customs and the beliefs of the people were different from her own. It must have been very comforting for Ethelberga to have Paulinus with her, and the good bishop on his side must have rejoiced to see how quickly Edwin's heart was won by his youthful consort. The King of Northumbria kept his pledge that the Christians should have complete liberty of worship; but, to the regret of Paulinus, he showed no immediate disposition to change his own faith. Quite a lot of things happened before Edwin, a proud and warlike king, could be persuaded to accept a religion which inculcated humility and peace.

<sup>1</sup> Edwin was at this time a widower; his first wife was Quenberga, a Mercian princess.

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

In the year 626 two great graces were vouchsafed to Edwin. He escaped from the dagger of the assassin treacherously sent to his Court by the King of the West Saxons, and a daughter was born to him and his dearly loved Ethelberga. Paulinus did not let slip so excellent an opportunity of urging the King to throw off his old errors, and in his enthusiasm the Northumbrian agreed not only to dedicate the baby-princess to Christ, but also to become a Christian himself if he should defeat the West Saxons in battle. The first part of the promise was unconditional, and so the child born on Easter eve was baptized at Whitby on Whitsunday, receiving the name of Eanfled. She was the first infant of Northumbrian birth to be baptized, and the heart of Paulinus must have rejoiced within him as he held her in his arms and made the sign of the Cross upon her head. When Edwin returned in triumph from a most successful campaign against his enemies the West Saxons the bishop no doubt anticipated that his next duty would be to perform the rite for the benefit of the baby's father. But Edwin still delayed. Even a letter from Pope Boniface V and the gift of a linen shirt embroidered in gold thread did not suffice to bring him to the point.

His Holiness must have been a diplomat, for he wrote and sent little gifts to Ethelberga as well as to Edwin, and urged her to pray without ceasing for her husband's conversion, so that they twain who had loved each other so faithfully on earth might meet again in heaven. It was Paulinus, however, who ended the King's hesitations. Either inspired by God—as the Venerable Bede suggests—or secretly prompted by the Queen, the bishop one day entered the room where Edwin sat pondering, laid his hand upon his head, and asked whether he recognized that sign. Then, when the startled King would have fallen at his feet, he raised him up, reminded him of

## IN THE DARK AGES

God's mercies towards him, and exhorted him to fulfil his former promise. Paulinus next found an unexpected ally in the chief of the pagan priests, who, when Edwin summoned his counsellors, roundly declared that the old gods had rewarded him very ill for his lifelong devotion to them, and that he, for one, was perfectly willing to abandon them. And so the struggle for the soul of King Edwin ended, and Paulinus began six laborious years of preaching to the still unconverted Northumbrians. So many people flocked to him to be baptized that for lack of churches and fonts he was fain to christen them in the Derwent and the Glen, the Trent and the Swale. The Venerable Bede heard from his friend the Abbot of Parteney that he had spoken with an aged man who, as a child, had been baptized by Paulinus in the Trent, and who remembered the great missionary-bishop as a tall, thin, dark old man with an aquiline nose and a slight stoop.

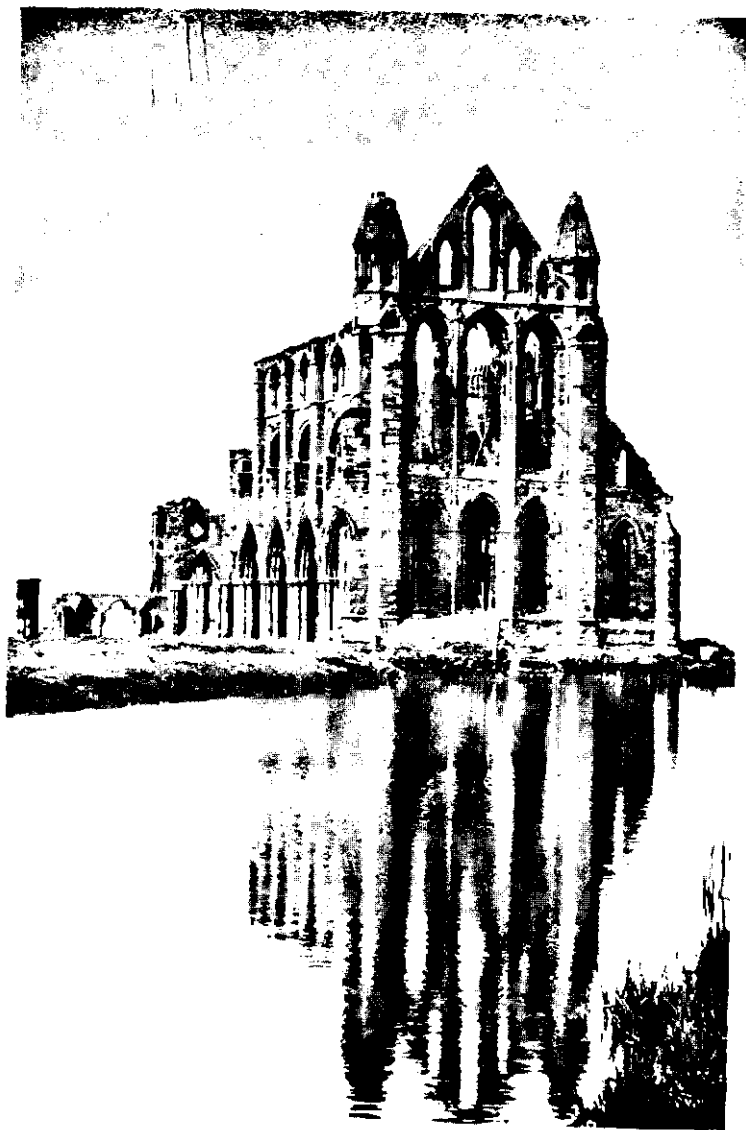
Unlike Kent, Northumbria was not fated to remain undisturbed in the Christian faith. Penda, the fierce heathen King of Mercia, in unholy alliance with the nominally Christian Welsh prince Cædwalla, invaded the dominions of Edwin and defeated the King in battle. The widowed Ethelberga and two of her children escaped with the aid of Paulinus, and made their way back to Kent, a land which neither she nor the bishop could have expected to see again when they quitted it under conditions so different eight years before. Eadbald received his sister with honour, and Paulinus was installed in the bishopric of Rochester. So it befell that Eanfled, the Northumbrian princess, the first of her race to be baptized, was brought up not in Northumbria but in Kent. When she grew up she became the wife of Oswy, brother of St Oswald, and in the fullness of time queen of the very kingdom whence she had been hurriedly borne as a little child.

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

She was a pious princess, and it was at her prayer that her husband built and founded the great monastery at Tynemouth; she probably had something to do also with the foundation of Whitby Abbey, where her kinswoman Hilda became the first Abbess, and it was partly due to her steadfast adherence to the Roman method of fixing Easter Sunday that King Oswy called the Synod of Whitby in 664 to decide whether the Celtic or the Roman rule was to be observed thenceforward in his dominions. Their little daughter Elflida was only three years old when Whitby Abbey was built,<sup>1</sup> but she had already been for two years in the care of Hilda, dedicated to God, and she spent the remainder of her life within the Abbey walls.

St Hilda herself had been among the Northumbrian children baptized by Paulinus. From her earliest days she was thoughtful, devout, eager to do good. As a princess of the Northumbrian blood-royal she might have been expected either to become a bride or a nun while she was still young. These were the two wonted alternatives put before girls of her rank in Anglo-Saxon England, but Hilda decided to 'gang her ain gait.' She would not have a husband; neither until she was thirty-one years of age did she take the final vows. Without holding herself aloof from the busy world of men, she spent her youth in prayer, study, and good works, enjoying the friendship of Bishop Aidan, like herself a future saint, the founder of the monastery on the wind-swept isle of Lindisfarne, and preparing herself, perhaps unconsciously, for the responsibilities of her later years. When after a time of probation in France and in England she became Abbess of Whitby she was admirably fitted by experience as well as by

<sup>1</sup> The existing buildings at Whitby date chiefly from the middle years of the thirteenth century, but rest upon Anglo-Saxon foundations.



WHITBY ABBEY  
From the Monks' Fish-pond  
*Photo J. Dixon Scott*

## IN THE DARK AGES

temperament to rule over a mixed concentration of monks and nuns, to preside at councils, to exercise a kindly despotism over the tenants of the Abbey lands.

The wise and saintly Hilda was the centre of a large and many-coloured community, not consisting solely of her black-robed monks and nuns. Kings and chieftains came to visit her, gaily clad as poppies and cornflowers; maidens of high degree, their long hair braided with amber and jet beads, sat at her feet; grave bishops robed in all the hues of the sunset sojourned at the Abbey, sang Mass in its great stone church, and held solemn converse with the Abbess before they went their way. But there was also the permanent population of herdsmen and fisherfolk, who lived on the Abbey lands, and shared in the life of the monks and nuns at certain times and seasons. These men were allowed to worship in the Abbey church, and sometimes even to gather round the Abbey board and taste the Christmas cheer.<sup>1</sup>

In this environment Elflida passed her childhood. She was about ten years old when the Synod of Whitby was held, and she must have watched with interest—and even with excitement—the arrival of the delegates, over whom her own father presided. To the great grey Abbey on the cliff came Celtic priests with dangling locks—the distinctive tonsure of the anti-Romanizing party—and pro-Roman monks with shaven crowns, bearded chieftains with girdles and mantle-clasps of enamelled bronze, simple peasants in tunics of sheepskin or cloaks of undyed wool. Thither came also that remarkable man St Wilfrid, whom in his youth Queen Eanfled had befriended, and whose eloquence and energy were largely responsible for the result of the Synod, which was the adoption by the Northumbrian Church of the Roman instead of

<sup>1</sup> *England's Story*, Part I (Harrap).

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

the Celtic calendar. These events must have been long remembered by the nuns of Whitby, and especially by the youngest of them, the little princess Elflida, called by Sir Walter Scott "the lovely Edel fled." She may perhaps have been present when Cædmon, the hitherto shy and silent cow-



WOMEN OF THE DARK AGES  
COMBING WOOL

From an Anglo-Saxon manuscript.

herd, suddenly burst into song before the Abbess Hilda, and she must certainly have been aware of the excited interest which this revelation of his long-dormant poetical gifts aroused in the whole community. The piety and learning of the Celtic

monks were well known upon the Continent, and we read that St Gertrude, Abbess of Nivelles, sent to Ireland for teachers to instruct the young novices in the Abbey. On the other hand, Anglo-Saxon girls—and, it would seem, boys also—were received as pupils in the school attached to the Abbey of Chelles, over which St Bertilla held sway. In convents where young children were admitted the austerity of the rule was often relaxed a little, though mere babies must have learned, perhaps not without a few tears, to stumble through the Latin psalter before they could speak their own language plainly. Growing up within cloister walls, they were, at least, remote from the tumults and alarms of a still semi-barbarous world.

One of the earliest of the great monarchs who set themselves to the uphill task of remedying this barbarism was Charlemagne, Emperor of the Franks, who in the eighth century gathered learned men from all parts of Europe at his

Court in Aix-la-Chapelle. Among these men was the witty Anglo-Saxon monk Alcuin, and among Alcuin's pupils the daughters as well as the sons of the Frankish royal house were numbered. The Emperor, far in advance of his age in this as in many other things, desired that those liberal studies wherein he himself took such delight should be pursued by all his children, without any unkindly differentiation between boys and girls. It is true that the princesses were taught to spin, and to weave cloth of gold in the Byzantine fashion, but these were not the sum of their studies. All the ladies of Charlemagne's family were 'roped in,' his sister, Gisèle, his wife, Liutgarde, his daughters, Gisèle and Richtrude. They must have found their hours of study amusing when Alcuin was their teacher. He enlivened his discourse with conundrums, quips, and jests, and seems to have been able to make even arithmetic a jocund science. From him they learned the elements of grammar, logic, and moral philosophy; all that he could teach of geography and astronomy would be added, and perhaps a few vague outlines of ancient history as well. Alcuin's feminine pupils must greatly have appreciated the compliment when, to reward their diligence and to spur them to fresh efforts, he dedicated to one or other of them some learned treatise composed by himself.

The life led by these Frankish ladies in the vast Romanesque palaces built by Charlemagne was in many ways less agreeable than the lives of the ladies in the last age of pagan Rome had been. Europe was full of clamour and confusion. The Emperor himself was liable to be called away from time to time to fight the Moors in Spain, the still-heathen Saxons, the wild Slavonic tribes beyond the Elbe, and at all times the Court of which he was the centre had its barbaric as well as its magnificent aspects. It was like a peak rising above a dark



## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

sea of ignorance and violence, and after his death the sea rose and engulfed that lonely summit.

Thirty-five years after the Frankish Emperor was laid to rest in the mighty cathedral he had built at Aix there was born at Wantage, in Berkshire, an Anglo-Saxon prince destined to do for his people on a small scale what Charlemagne had done for *his* with Imperial spaciousness. This was Alfred, who found when he had cleared his kingdom of the invading and intruding Danes that clergy and laity alike were sunk in brutish ignorance, that all the bookish knowledge and nearly all the books accumulated by the Anglo-Saxon monks before the coming of the Norsemen had been lost, and that if he desired to redeem the folk of Wessex from their spiritual bondage he must begin at the foundations and do the greater part of the work himself.

Alfred and his Queen Ealhswith were blessed with many sons and daughters, and to the education of his children the first English educationist in history gave anxious and loving care. The very books which they conned had been chosen and for the most part translated by him. He may not have insisted that the girls—or even the boys—should apply themselves to the *Pastoral Care* of Gregory the Great, which he had selected for the use of his clergy, but the *Universal History* of Orosius, the *Ecclesiastical History* of the Venerable Bede, and the *Consolations of Philosophy* by that last of the great pagan philosophers, Boëthius, would almost certainly form part of the royal curriculum. Orosius was a particularly useful writer, for in his voluminous pages was found a description of the world as well as an outline of human history based on the works of Jerome, Eusebius, and other earlier historians. The world as Orosius described it was, of course, a flat world containing only three continents, none of

## IN THE DARK AGES

them correctly mapped or even accurately imagined. Alfred's children would be more interested in the little vivid notes added by their father than in the long-winded and sometimes slightly vague original text. The first Arctic voyages of which any record has been preserved were made by a Dane called Ohthere, a henchman of Alfred's, who between 880 and 900 ventured twice into perilous northern seas on expeditions of trade and discovery for his royal master. Alfred incorporated in his translation of Orosius some of the information brought back by this hardy seafarer, and he told his readers something about Ohthere himself as well: he was a rich man, and he had six hundred tame reindeer.

These details may have been more fascinating to the young princes than to their sisters, three of whom survived infancy. These were Æthelfled, Ælfhryth, and Æthelgofu. The eldest married Eadred (or Æthelred), the valiant and loyal nobleman to whom her father entrusted the government of Mercia. As Lady of the Mercians she played an important part, both before and after her husband's death. William of Malmesbury says of her:

This spirited heroine assisted her brother<sup>1</sup> greatly with her advice, was of equal service in building cities, nor could you easily discern whether it was more owing to fortune or to her own exertions that a woman should be able to protect men at home and to intimidate them abroad.<sup>2</sup>

One imagines that Æthelfled, intelligent, energetic, perhaps a little masterful, was wont to take the lead among the children in the palace at Winchester, and to impose her will upon her younger brothers and sisters. Ælfhryth was married to Baldwin II of Flanders, and Matilda, wife of William the

<sup>1</sup> Edward the Elder.

<sup>2</sup> Translated by J. A. Giles.

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

Conqueror, through whom later sovereigns of England trace their descent from Alfred, was her great-great-great-great-granddaughter. Æthelgofu became a nun, and was afterwards Abbess of the convent founded by her father at Shaftesbury. These three little girls grew up in an atmosphere of learning. Sage bishops and grave monks frequented the Court; the King himself had an eager mind, insatiably curious about facts and fables, and such a wide range of interests that he was able to give hints both to goldsmiths and to falconers as to how they should set about their several tasks. In his translations his daughters probably liked best those passages wherein ancient myths and legends were retold, Orpheus and Eurydice, for example, in the writings of Boëthius. Alfred translated very freely, adding and adapting at his will. He says that when Orpheus descended to Hades Cerberus was so charmed by the music he made that "he began to wag his tail"; there is no warrant for this in the original, nor for the startling statement that Charon, the ferryman of the shades, had three heads.

Alfred mentions all his surviving daughters in his will, and bequeathes to the youngest the 'villages' of Woolwich, Greenwich, and Lewisham. His son, Edward the Elder, was three times married, and appears to have had no less than nine daughters, all of whom he brought up upon the principles laid down by his father. Their earliest years were consecrated entirely to letters—that is to say, to what humble people still call 'book-learning'; such knowledge as could be drawn from a very few standard works and from the instructions of their monkish teachers these Anglo-Saxon princesses acquired; "and afterwards they employed themselves in the labours of the distaff and the needle." Some of them were wedded to princes of higher degree than their own father,

## IN THE DARK AGES

one to Charles the Simple of France, one to Hugh, called 'the Great,' Count of Paris, son of King Robert I of France, one to Henry the Fowler, the founder of the German monarchy: some of them took the veil, and lived and died in the cloister; but all of them must have been more than commonly accomplished, as it was fitting that the grandchildren of Alfred should be. According to the old chronicler, all of them were also of remarkable beauty, but the most beautiful was Ethilda, whom Count Hugh sent ambassadors to seek in marriage towards the year 926. Her brother Athelstane had now succeeded to the throne, and it was at Abingdon, in Berkshire, that he received these envoys from the land of the Franks. They did not come empty-handed. Indeed, William of Malmesbury's list of the gifts they brought is almost overwhelming. Among these were:

Perfumes such as had never been seen in England before: jewels, but more especially emeralds, the greenness of which, reflected by the sun, illumined the countenances of the bystanders with an agreeable light: many fleet horses with their trappings and, as Virgil says, "champing their golden bits": an alabaster vase so exquisitely chased that the cornfields really seemed to wave, the vines to bud, the figures of men actually to move, and so clear and polished that it reflected the features like a mirror; the sword of Constantine the Great, on which the name of its original possessor was read in golden letters.<sup>1</sup>

It would appear that Count Hugh had been much impressed by the descriptions of Ethilda which had reached him, and, indeed, outside the realm of *fäerie* beautiful young princesses well versed in bookish learning and skilful with distaff and needle are hard to find.

The daughters of the Anglo-Saxon royal house seem to have

<sup>1</sup> Translated by J. A. Giles.

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

had a strong inclination towards the religious life, sometimes induced by the persuasions and desires of their parents, sometimes spontaneous and irresistible. Of Ethilda's elder sister Eadberga we are told that her father, Edward the Elder, decided when she was only three years old to seek for some sign as to whether she was destined to give herself to God or to remain in the world. The King placed in a room apart a chalice and a book of the Gospels, and, opposite these, glittering gear, such as necklaces and bracelets. He took the child from the arms of her nurse, set her upon his knee, and invited her to choose between the two groups of objects before her. Without even glancing at the jewels, she escaped from his arms and knelt down in adoration before the chalice and the holy books. There could be no mistaking the result of the experiment. Eadberga became a nun at Winchester, winning the love of the whole sisterhood by her unselfishness and humility, and, dying finally in the odour of sanctity, wrought many miracles after her death.

Humility was not the most conspicuous of the virtues of another young princess who entered a nunnery, Editha, daughter of King Edgar. She was placed as a mere baby in the convent at Wilton, near Salisbury, but she cannot have been brought up under very austere conditions, for when she was old enough to choose her own clothes she startled grave priests and disapproving prelates by the magnificence of her taste. St Ethelwold ventured to rebuke her, but the princess retorted that God's judgments alone were infallible, man being prone to err; that pride might hide under a wretched garb; and that a mind might be as pure beneath rich raiment as beneath his ragged furs. The saint answered nothing, but blushed—"with pleasure," says the chronicler. Another saint whom Editha numbered among her friends was St

## IN THE DARK AGES

Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury, who, while celebrating Mass one day in a church which she had built and founded in honour of St Denis, burst into tears and predicted her early death. "Soon," he exclaimed, "this blooming rose shall fade, soon shall this beloved bird take its flight to God." The prophecy was fulfilled six weeks later, and shortly afterwards Dunstan dreamed that he saw St Denis holding Editha by the hand and commanding her servants on earth to venerate her even as she was now venerated in heaven.

During the ninth and tenth centuries learned ladies of royal rank multiplied on the Continent. We do not hear much about their learning until they have left girlhood behind them and are established as the consorts of powerful kings or great feudal princes, but we may be certain that if such ladies are reported to have loved books they had acquired the taste in their young days. Thus we know that Bertha, Countess of Roussillon, herself composed the verses which she embroidered upon a chalice veil and presented to the church at Lyons, and we may conjecture that as a young girl she had been taught the Latin language, the rules of prosody, and the art of embroidery. It is also recorded of Agnes, the first wife of Geoffrey, Count of Anjou, that in exchange for a book of homilies she gave two hundred sheep, a hogshead of wheat, another of rye, another of millet, and a quantity of sables.

Such tastes as these are seldom acquired when youth is past; they derive partly from a natural bent, partly from early environment and education. A studious young girl of this period may easily have looked forward to the time when she should possess rich volumes of her own, with scarlet capital letters and clasps of silver gilt, and she would know that when once she was married she would be able to have her desire. The very fact that so many noble ladies had such

## *THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES*

desires is a decisive proof that even in the Dark Ages, and even among the daughters of semi-barbaric chieftains, the love of learning was never allowed to die.

Meanwhile the lot of girl-children born in the less happy ranks of society was very much what it had been in Egypt and Babylon, Greece and Rome. We know that they were set to work in the fields betimes; we can only trust that their hard and monotonous existence was brightened a little at such seasons as the spring sowing and harvest-time. Pagan cults still lingered on which demanded that at these seasons there should be dances, processions, and feasts, and when Christianity began to spread over Europe the Church in her wisdom substituted saints' days for these ancient festivals, so that the tillers of the soil might not lack—or regret—their much-needed interludes of mirth and ease. Monotony was perhaps the least of the evils which the children in the Dark Ages had to fear. It was then something to be thankful for if while they worked in the fields they were not brought to a halt by a smudge of smoke on the horizon, where some marauding band was burning their poor village, or frightened away from furrow or swath by a glint of spears approaching through the trees.

CHAPTER V  
IN FEUDAL EUROPE

**M**ANY of the young girls who lived towards the close of the Dark Ages—that is to say, in the tenth and eleventh centuries—were fortunate in at least one thing: they spent their lives where the gloom of those ages was least profound—to wit, within convent walls. Some sort of contact with the civilization of the antique world was maintained there; the gentler arts, the kindlier graces, contrived somehow to flourish, like a green oasis in a grey and thorny desert. Rich and intricate needlework was done, ancient and holy books were conned, prayers were intoned, psalms were sung to the sonorous Gregorian chant, while beyond the cloister Europe was scarred and shaken by wars and rumours of wars. At the Benedictine nunnery of Gandersheim, in the Harz Mountains, there was even, in the tenth century, a literary and learned nun, the pious Hroswitha, who wrote plays founded on the model of Terence, though bearing small resemblance to the Roman dramas in treatment or subject. It is probable, though not certain, that some of Hroswitha's were acted by her sister-nuns in the chapter-house before visiting bishops and their chaplains.

In one, at least, of these naïve and conventional plays the chief character is a young girl, brought up by a virtuous uncle who is incidentally a hermit. To the consternation of the good man she forsakes him and his excellent counsels,



## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

and plunges into a life of folly among companions the very reverse of good—this part of the story must have been the most interesting for the younger nuns—from which life she is ultimately rescued by her uncle, who goes in quest of her disguised as a reveller, and persuades her to repent and amend. Hroswitha's aim was, of course, to edify rather than to amuse, but her activities as a playwright can hardly have failed to infuse a certain welcome liveliness into the atmosphere at Gandersheim.

Before the eleventh century closed Europe had begun to settle down, and to assume those demarcations of dynasty, custom, and culture which gave to the early Middle Ages their characteristic form and colour. By that time the erstwhile heathen Norsemen had founded a Christian dukedom in Northern France, and had carved out Christian domains for themselves among Greeks and Saracens in Calabria and in Sicily; they had also conquered England. By that time Henry the Fowler had set up the German and Hugh Capet the French monarchy; the feudal system had come into being; the chivalric idea was crystallizing apace. The last years of the century saw the end of the struggle between the successors of St Peter and the heirs of Charlemagne's Empire, the launching of the First Crusade, and the capture of Jerusalem by the Crusaders. All these things influenced the environment and the upbringing of all gently born girl-children in the West for several generations afterwards.

The growing power of the Church had a very curious double effect upon the attitude of men towards their women-kind. On the one hand, the cult of the Blessed Virgin gave to the young girl a new sanctity and a new grace; on the other, the severity of clerical moralists who dwelt more upon

## IN FEUDAL EUROPE

the sins of Eve than upon the merits of Mary made people look upon women as frivolous, vain, and rather dangerous creatures, better avoided, or kept in subjection, or penned within cloister-walls. Parents who vowed their infant daughters to God must always have felt that they were securing the child's salvation as well as their own, and that it was actually the most merciful course they could take thus to keep her aloof from the errors and follies to which her sex was prone. Such parents were numerous in high places. Among them were William the Conqueror and his wife Matilda, whose eldest daughter, Cecily, became a nun at the Abbey of the Holy Trinity at Caen. Matilda seems to have had an especial affection for this convent, her own foundation and the dwelling-place of her child; she chose to be buried there, and in her will bequeathed to the nuns "my tunic, embroidered at Winchester by Alderet's wife, and the mantle with gold needlework which is in my chamber," as well as a golden girdle "wrought with emblems" on which to hang a lamp before the High Altar.

The legends which grew up round the childhood of the Blessed Virgin familiarized the faithful with the idea of a little girl set apart and sanctified from her birth. In art she was constantly seen with her mother, St Anne. Sometimes the saint is teaching her to read from a great book with golden clasps; sometimes she is teaching her to spin with a distaff, or to ply her needle. In sculpture and in painted glass, on illuminated vellum and in carved ivory, those two gracious and engaging figures appear and reappear. According to the legend the parents of the Virgin, Joachim and Anne, like the king and queen in a fairy-tale, had every blessing except a baby. While Joachim was watching his flock on the hills near Nazareth an angel came to him in a vision and declared

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

that to him and his wife would be born a child whose name should be blessed throughout the world. Overjoyed, they dedicated the unborn child to God, and when she was born they called her Mary. The birth of the Virgin was another favourite subject in medieval art, and the scene usually represents a room in St Anne's house, with the saint herself reclining in bed, and her handmaidens either bathing the infant or wrapping her in swaddling bands. A thirteenth-century treatise based on an even earlier one gives careful directions as to how such an infant should be cared for, and just as medieval mothers imagined Anne living in a house like their own and wearing the same garments as themselves, so they would think of her as seeing to it that her baby should have its mouth and gums rubbed with a honey-moistened finger, its limbs bathed with oil of myrtle and roses before being swaddled. The purpose of these swaddling bands was to keep the little legs straight, but a modern nurse would, of course, maintain with horror that the result would be to make them weak and therefore apt to bend.

When the child was three years old her parents felt that the time had come to make good their vow and dedicate her to God.

And Joachim said, "Let us invite the daughters of Israel, and they shall take each a taper or a lamp and attend on her, that the child may not turn back from the temple of the Lord." And being come to the temple, they placed her on the first step; and she ascended alone all the steps to the altar: and the high priest received her there, kissed her, and blessed her . . . and being placed before the altar, she danced with her feet, so that all the house of Israel rejoiced with her and loved her.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mrs Anna Jameson, *Legends of the Madonna* (Longmans).



ST ANNE TEACHING THE VIRGIN

From *The Book of Hours of Anne of Brittany.*

Bibliothèque nationale



BIRTH OF THE VIRGIN

Master of the Life of Mary (? Johann von Deyren)

*Photo Bruckmann*

## IN FEUDAL EUROPE

Her childhood was spent within the precincts of the temple, where, together with other little maidens, she studied the Law and the Prophets and learned to embroider, to weave, and to spin. Like one of the youthful *ergastinai* of Athens, she was chosen to weave the fine purple for the temple; and like the child-novices in Christian nunneries, she mastered betimes the words and the melodies of the Psalms of David.

All these charming legends and the charming pictures they evoked came to form part of the fabric of the medieval mind, which was itself reflected in them. The idea that a girl-child of the feudal age was doomed to the same sort of soulless and colourless existence as that of the girl-children of Plato's Athens is entirely erroneous. Whether she were placed early in a convent, or educated at home, or sent to be brought up in the household of some powerful friend of her father, she was expected to apply herself to bookish learning, and to master various branches of knowledge, some of them, no doubt, less deep and difficult than they sound. Already in the eleventh and twelfth centuries instruction was given to girls outside the limits of the cloister, and what is now called 'co-education' was not unknown. An Irish scholar called Barbosus received pupils of both sexes in his school, but as he insisted on bestowing the tonsure impartially upon boys and girls "he was put out of Irlond." The wife and daughters of an eleventh-century German philosopher called Manegold von Lutenbach kept a girls' school, and Fulbert, Canon of Notre-Dame de Paris, engaged a brilliant tutor to coach his beautiful and gifted seventeen-year-old niece Heloïse. This tutor, the unhappy Abelard, has left it on record that her learning was even greater than her beauty, which was not small, though he ungallantly

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

adds that such skill in letters and sciences is rare in women.

The early training of the youthful Princess Matilda of Scotland among the nuns at Romsey and at Wilton gave her a bent towards studious pursuits which must have been a bond between her and her Norman husband, the Conqueror's youngest son, Henry Beauclerc. Matilda was the first-born daughter of Malcolm Canmore, King of Scotland, and his saintly wife, the Anglo-Saxon Princess Margaret. She was a godchild of the eldest brother of her future husband, Robert, Duke of Normandy, and it was his second brother, William Rufus, who placed her and her sister at Romsey when, after the overthrow of their father in battle, the usurper Donald Bane seized the Scottish throne and they were rescued and brought to England by their uncle, Edgar Atheling. The Abbess under whose stern tutelage Matilda spent her childhood was her aunt Christina, a princess of austere character and very decided views. She saw to it that the young girl was instructed in music, needlework, and Latin, that she led the regular life of a nun, rising in the night to pray in the chapel with the other nuns, sharing their frugal fare, wearing upon her youthful head the sombre veil of their order. It seems that Matilda came very early to the decision that she herself would never take irrevocable vows; yet when Guillaume de Warenne, the son of the Conqueror's daughter Gundrada, sought her hand in marriage she rejected that easy means of escape from the cloister. Apparently she had already given her heart to Guillaume's book-loving young uncle, for when, on succeeding to the English throne, Henry I came forward as a suitor for her hand, Matilda was reluctant no more.

They reckoned, however, without the Abbess Christina,

## IN FEUDAL EUROPE

who, still eager that her niece should take the veil, proclaimed loudly that whoever should come to remove Matilda from the cloister would be guilty of the perilous sin of sacrilege. The problem then arose—was Matilda not a nun *already*? Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, summoned a great council of learned Churchmen at Lambeth to decide this knotty point, and the young Princess gave evidence in person. The learned Churchmen cross-examined her closely. Had she been vowed to God by her parents? Had she herself dedicated her life to Him? Matilda was able to answer “No” to both these questions. Then she was asked whether she had not worn the veil of a nun. Quite unabashed, she answered with perfect frankness and at considerable length. Yes, she said, her Aunt Christina had assuredly placed the black Benedictine veil upon her head while yet she was a child at her father’s Court in the land of the Scots, but her father himself had snatched it off and cast it down, saying that he desired that she should marry instead of becoming a nun. At Romsey, and later at Wilton, she explained that she had certainly donned the veil at the orders of her aunt, the Abbess. “If I attempted to take it off,” she said, “she would punish me with harsh blows and sharp words. Sighing and trembling, I wore it in her presence, but whenever I was alone I always threw it off and trod upon it!”

The Council, after due deliberation, decided that this high-spirited young Scotswoman was *not* a nun, and Anselm himself celebrated the nuptial mass when she was married to Henry in the Confessor’s great Norman Abbey at Westminster. Perhaps it may have been a lively recollection of her own childish struggles which deterred Matilda from vowing her own infant daughter to God, and which induced her to consent to little Matilda’s betrothal to Henry V,



## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

Emperor of Germany, when she was only seven years old. The future mother of the first Angevin King of England was eight years old when she was solemnly crowned Empress in the cathedral at Mainz. The Archbishop of Treves held her in his arms during the ceremony, and the Archbishop of Cologne placed the Imperial diadem on her childish head.

In order to acquire the first elements of what then passed for education it was not necessary that a girl should become a nun, nor even that she should betake herself to a nunnery. Up and down France and England, and other countries of Western Christendom, there were scattered women-hermits called anchoresses, who, though they had voluntarily cut themselves off from the world, sometimes gathered a group of children round their cells and gave them lessons through the grated window. Ailred, Abbot of Rievaulx, who died in 1166, disapproved of these proceedings. It was better, he said, for the anchoress to concentrate her mind upon holy things, for the little girls who formed her audience were apt to distract her by chattering and fidgeting. Whether she laughed at them or scolded them the disturbing effect was the same! Sometimes, remarks the Abbot, she would call a child to her in order to punish it, and then, relenting, would pat the tear-stained cheek and address the culprit as her "little friend."

Churchmen of the twelfth century, like the Fathers of the Church a thousand years before, were deeply perturbed at the frivolity of the younger part of their flock, and firmly convinced that things had been better in the good old days. Gilbert de Nogent, for example, laments that maidenly modesty has fallen off, and that maternal discipline has grown slack in *his* time, which was early in the century.

<sup>1</sup> Some chroniclers say five years old, but this seems to be a miscalculation.

## IN FEUDAL EUROPE

Girls wink and babble, laugh and dance; their garments are not like such garments were wont to be; they have jagged sleeves, they have tight bodices; their shoes are of Cordovan leather, with fantastically twisted points. "Thus, and after this fashion, our age is corrupted!"

Even the influence of pious prelates and learned men, to whom the guardianship of the little daughters of kings and princes was often confided, did not avail to keep feminine fashions and manners "sober, steadfast, and demure." Matilda, daughter of Henry I, was removed too young from the care of St Anselm for his gentle personality to have had much effect upon her natural arrogance, and it might be argued that Thomas Becket in his worldly days was not likely to encourage frugal habits in the three-year-old French princess, the affianced bride of the six-year-old son of Henry II of England, whom he went to Paris to fetch in 1160. Becket on that occasion dazzled and charmed the good folk of Paris with his magnificence; he rode through the streets followed by a train of knights and priests, who in their turn were followed by a cavalcade of falconers with hawks and hunters leading hounds; then came a long line of sumpter-horses, each horse having a live monkey perched upon its back. The baby princess was duly handed over to Becket, who escorted her back to England, where he superintended her education, though her actual maintenance was, as it were, 'farmed out' to Robert de Newburgh, one of King Henry's powerful barons. Robert had to undertake to bring her up in a manner befitting her royal birth, and it seems that Becket made it his concern to see that this undertaking was faithfully carried out.

To judge from the remarks of Bartholomew the Englishman, who wrote a sort of encyclopædia in the thirteenth

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

century, the behaviour of young girls was as unsatisfactory then as it had been in the time of Gilbert de Nogent. Maidens, he observes, are shy, easily frightened, easily moved to mirth; they are demure, soft of speech, delicate in their apparel. Their hands and feet are fine and flexible, their voices low, their manner of speaking easy and short. They walk lightly, taking short steps; they are compassionate, and quick to learn. All this sounds pleasant, and even charming, but it is not all. Maidens are also envious, guileful, untruthful, "and the malice of the soul is more in a woman than in a man." It is interesting, after we have compared Bartholomew's young girls with those of Gilbert de Nogent, to take a look at the anchoresses of his century and place them beside those described by Abbot Ailred of Rievaulx. Richard Poore, Bishop of Salisbury, addressed a little treatise entitled *Ancren Riwe* (the Anchorites' Rule) to three Cistercian recluses at Tarrant, in Dorsetshire. He is, on the whole, less severe than the Abbot; he does not desire the devout ladies to wear hair-shirts, to go barefoot, or to beat themselves with holly or briars; he does not deny them the indulgence of a little gossip through the curtained grating with carefully selected visitors; but he thinks that on the whole it would be better for them not to keep a school for girls, unless by doing so they could prevent these girls from being taught *with boys*. This last is an important clause. It proves that co-education was not uncommon in the thirteenth century, and shows that the Bishop disapproved of it.

Humbly born little girls were not always hopelessly shut out from all hope of learning to read, as witness the charming story told by Thomas of Chantimpré, a Dominican writer of the thirteenth century. The seven-year-old daughter

## IN FEUDAL EUROPE

of a Brabant labourer ardently desired to have a psalter 'of her very own,' and implored her father to buy one for her. "Nay, daughter," answered the poor man, "how can I buy thee a psalter when I am hardly able to earn our daily bread?" The little girl therefore prayed to the Blessed Virgin, repeating daily for a whole year, "O Blessed Mary, Mother of Christ, give unto me this psalter which my father cannot give me, and I will be thy servant for ever more!"



A GIRL HAVING HER HAIR DRESSED

From the Luttrell Psalter.

At the end of the year she had a dream or vision in which the Virgin appeared holding two psalters and saying, "Take now, my daughter, whichever of these thou wilt choose!" But hardly had the child taken hold of one of the books when the vision faded, and she awoke with empty hands. Her father, to whom she complained with tears that the Blessed Virgin had deceived her, suggested half-playfully that she should go on Sundays and holy days to the mistress—probably an anchoress—who taught the daughters of rich folk their psalter. "First learn to read," said he, "and then, peradventure, the Blessed Virgin will give thee a psalter." Taking him literally at his word, the seven-year-old peasant girl did as he counselled her. It is pleasant to know that she was not rebuffed, and that when she had learned to read the psalter certain great ladies of the neighbourhood gave her one, whereby her prayer was granted and the words of the vision were brought true. Later she herself became an

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

anchoress, enjoyed much credit for her sanctity, and was reputed to be able by her prayers to deliver men and women from sickness, perils, and adversities.



GIRL WITH A HAWK  
ON HER WRIST

What of the girls who instead of being penned in nunneries formed part of the household of some feudal chieftain and his lady? We catch a vivid glimpse of them in a thirteenth-century *Geste des dames*, which describes how the chattering creatures dine apart in their bower before tripping daintily into the great hall hand in hand. There they sit at the board and eat next to nothing, having eaten their fill already. They wear head-dresses with bosses like the horns of beasts, they have scarves of silk and cambric, buttons of coral and amber; they are so anxious that the rich embroidery on the backs of their dresses should be seen that before departing from the hall they make an excuse to turn round and sweep the backs of the benches! Once returned to their bower, they talk together about needlework, frilled work and open work, scalloped work and wool-work, diaper-work and the German and Saracenic stitchery.

She who knows most of these things shall be their lectress, to whom the rest hearken without sluggardy; none sleeps here, as they do at Mass, for all are cheerful companions in these lists of vanity.<sup>1</sup>

Preparations for a banquet seem to have been a formidable matter in these days: they began well in advance of

<sup>1</sup> Translated by G. G. Coulton, in *A Medieval Garner*.

the appointed day, and included the retwining of garlands, and the fresh braiding of hair. Beads, spangles, heraldic monsters cut out of coloured stuffs and sewn upon her gown, all these were items in the adorning of the medieval damsel who desired to look her best—and when did she not?

We learn a great deal about the habits and accomplishments of these girls in the *chansons de geste* and the interminable rhymed romances which English writers adapted or translated from French or Anglo-Norman originals. Bele Yolanz, the heroine of one such tale, could weave and embroider with coloured threads and threads of gold; Tristan taught Iseult of Ireland how to play the harp, how to write, and how to sing; in the tale of Galeran the heroine says that all day she does nothing

but read my psalter, work in gold and silk, listen to the tales of Thebes and Troy, and play lays on my harp, and checkmate some one else at chess, or feed my little bird upon my fist; I have often heard my master say that such habits come of gentle nurture.

The young girls whom we encounter in these old romances belong obviously to the period in which the romance was circulated; they are not all fabulous creatures of faërie, though they may meet dragons and wizards on their way; nor are they conventionalized types like the heroines of Greek drama. Their beauty, their accomplishments, their faithfulness in love, are, perhaps, common form; but most of them think the thoughts, wear the garments, and speak the speech of living medieval girls. Like them, they embroider, play the harp, are skilful at the Persian game of chess; like them, they keep pet birds, and love to listen to the exploits of the Greeks and Trojans as recorded by medieval minstrels

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

who gave to the narrative Christian and chivalric colour and form. One gathers from the early thirteenth-century romance of *Guy of Warwick* that it was quite a usual thing for a high-born girl to learn astronomy, 'ars-metrick,' or arithmetic, geometry, sophistry, rhetoric, 'clergy,' or clerkly knowledge, and music. In this instance her instructors were white-haired scholars from Toulouse, a place famous since pagan times for its wise men and the seat of a flourishing *studium generale*, or university.

Gentil she was, and as demurè  
As ger-fauk or falcon to lurè  
That out of mewè were y-drawe,<sup>1</sup>  
So fair was none in soothè sawe!<sup>2</sup>  
She was thereto courteous, free and wise,  
And in seven arts learnèd withouten mise.<sup>3</sup>  
Her masters were thither come  
Out of Thouloussè, all and some,  
White and hoar all they were,  
Busy they were that maiden to lere,<sup>4</sup>  
And her lered of astronomy,  
Of ars-metrick and of geometry;  
Of sophistry she was also witty,  
Of rhetorick and of other clergy,  
Lernèd she was in musick,  
Of clergy was her none like.

Josyan, the heroine of *Bevis of Hampton*, was a skilful musician, and much else beside:

Her shoon were gold upon her feet  
So fair she was, and bright of mood  
As snow upon the redè blood.

Men wiste no fairer thing alive,  
So hendy<sup>5</sup> nor so well y-taught;

<sup>1</sup> as easy to lure, or call to the falconer's hand, as any hawk drawn out of the mews. <sup>2</sup> in true saying. <sup>3</sup> miss, or exception. <sup>4</sup> teach. <sup>5</sup> gentle.

## IN FEUDAL EUROPE

but the palm for erudition and versatility should perhaps be given to Constance, or Custance, the heroine of a romance written in French by Nicholas Trivet, but derived from an ancient source, probably Oriental. This is the story told during the Canterbury Pilgrimage by Chaucer's Man of Law; it does not seem to have been translated into English until the fifteenth century. Constance, according to Trivet, was the only daughter of a Roman Emperor, Tiberius Constantius,

And for that cause that he had non other chyldre, with ful grete diligence [he] made her to be taught the Cristen feythe by wyse masteres, knowyng the vii sciences, the whyche beeth logyke, naturel,<sup>1</sup> moral,<sup>2</sup> astronomy, geometry, musique, perspective, whyche be the philosophies seculiers ynamed and cleped.

It will be seen that though Constance, like the damsel in *Guy of Warwick*, had seven accomplishments, they bear different names from hers, and are not at every point identical with the earlier list. 'Clergy' and 'moral' may have been closely similar branches of study; 'sophistry' and 'logyke' were probably much the same, but while Constance did not learn 'ars-metrick,' she *did* learn 'perspective,' or drawing, and her father, the Emperor (whose name is unknown in Roman history), "made her to be taught in divers langages." When she was thirteen years of age there came unto her father's Court

marchaunts paynemes out from the grete Sarasin neym, brynging full diverse and ryche merchaundyces, to whom Constaunce come doune for to avyse<sup>3</sup> [t]her ryches. And so she axed [t]hem of [t]her londe and of [t]her beleve. And whan that she understode that they were paynemes, she preched theym the

<sup>1</sup> physics.    <sup>2</sup> ethics.    <sup>3</sup> examine.



## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

Cristen feythe. And whan that they had assented to the feythe of Cristen men, she made [t]hem to be baptised and to be taught parfytely the feythe of Jhesu Cryst.

Oddly enough Chaucer does not mention the many accomplishments of Constance, perhaps because he had an inborn dislike and distrust of learned ladies. Excess of 'book-learning' was not among the qualities which made Nicolette, the heroine of *Aucassin and Nicolette*, one of the most charming girls in French medieval literature. She was a slave-child, brought from a far land by a Provençal nobleman, who, though he had had her christened and was himself her godfather, objected strongly when Aucassin, the son of his neighbour Warren, Count of Beaucaire, fell in love with her. Warren's objections were even stronger, and poor Nicolette was shut up in a turret-chamber.

O'er the window-ledge of stone  
Lean'd sad Nicolette alone;  
Golden-bright her tresses were,  
Sweet her face, her colour fair:  
Lovelier maiden saw you ne'er.

The story of Aucassin and Nicolette is too long to retell here, though comparatively short as medieval French romances go. With its nightingale-haunted gardens, its grey marble dungeons, its wild forests and walled cities, and glimpses of strange countries overseas, it is not a story of any real time or place, nor are its actors endowed with the gift of life, except Aucassin and Nicolette themselves—and she is the more richly endowed of the two. Against the changing background it is her figure that stands out, with her waist "so fine that your two hands could have girdled her," her beautiful fingers, skilful alike in building a bower of green

## IN FEUDAL EUROPE

branches and in setting the dislocated shoulder of Aucassin when he tumbled off his horse on his way to seek her there, her feet so white that the daisies looked black beside them! Her captor and guardian had not been altogether harsh and cruel; he had had her taught to play the lute; he had provided her with linen smocks, and ermine cloaks, and gowns of shining silken stuffs fit for a princess, and a princess she turned out to be, the daughter of the King of Carthage, no less.

One of the most popular romances of the earlier Middle Ages was the story of Floris and Blancheflour. It was probably, like the story of Aucassin and Nicolette, of Oriental origin, and may have been brought from the East by returning Crusaders in the twelfth century. A hundred years later the French version was translated into English rhyming couplets. Floris is the only son of the King of "Spaygne," and Blancheflour is his foster-sister, the child of his nurse; when the story begins they are both seven years old, and the King has decided that it is high time for Floris to begin his education,

On the book letters to know,  
As men done, both hye and lowe.

But the little Prince is recalcitrant; he will not go to "scole," he will not learn to "syng ne rede," unless Blancheflour goes with him and learns with him. The King assents, and for five years the two children 'do their lessons' together. Both are "good of wytte," and by the end of that time

Inow they couth<sup>1</sup> of Latyne  
And wel wryte on parchemyne.

The King, however, is perturbed at the depth of his son's love for his foster-sister, perceiving very clearly that when

<sup>1</sup> knew.

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

Floris is a man he will wish to make her his wife. But for the pleading of the Queen he would have put Blanchefflower to death, and the plan he did adopt was cruel enough. Floris, encouraged by a solemn promise that Blanchefflower should rejoin him within a fortnight, is sent away to the land of Mountargis, to his uncle and aunt, the Duke and Duchess of that land; meanwhile the little girl is sold to certain slave-traders from Babylon, who take her to their own country and sell her to the Admiral (Amir) for seven times her weight in gold. Poor Floris, returning home, is told that Blanchefflower is dead, and is shown what is supposed to be her grave, with the inscription, "Here lyth swete Blanchefflower."

Thereafter the story is sufficiently full of incident to satisfy even a medieval audience. The violence of the young Prince's grief so distresses his mother that she persuades the King to tell him the truth and to let him go forth in quest of Blanchefflower, with seven horses and seven men, three 'knaves,' or servitors, and the King's own Chamberlain, all disguised as merchants. The King also gives his son the gold cup from the treasure-house of Cæsar which had been part of the price paid by the Babylonish merchants for the young girl.

"Have this, Sonne," seide the King,  
"Herewith thou may that swete thing  
Wynne, so may betyde,  
Blanchefflower with the white syde,  
Blanchefflower, that faire may."

The Queen's parting gift to Floris is a magic ring.

Meanwhile Blanchefflower has been placed by the Admiral with forty-three other maidens in a marvellous tower of marble. From among these maidens the Admiral chooses a new wife each year; in the interim two go every morning to

## IN FEUDAL EUROPE

comb his hair and wash his hands, Blancheflour and a certain Clarys being chosen most frequently for this honourable duty. Floris reaches Babylon, and succeeds in bribing the Admiral's porter to hoist him up into the tower concealed in a basket of flowers, from which he emerges too soon, mistaking Clarys for Blancheflour. Fortunately Clarys does not betray him. She tells the other 'maydons,' who appear when they hear her first involuntary cry of alarm, that she had been frightened by a butterfly which flitted out of the flowers, and she hurries to fetch Blancheflour, inviting her to come and see a flower that shall please her well. And so the Prince and "that faire may" meet again, and kiss each other with white cheeks, not speaking a word, but weeping for joy.

The next day, and the day after, Clarys makes excuses for Blancheflour, so that she shall not have to leave Floris and go with her to comb the Admiral's hair, but that dread potentate, growing suspicious, sends his chamberlain to investigate matters, and Floris and Blancheflour are discovered together. Unlike the typical tyrant of romance, the Admiral does not act in haste. He summons his council of "erles and barons" to decide what shall be done with the children. Some of them are pitiful, others are the reverse. One, a "free burgeis," or free burges, suggests that the culprits should be heard in their own defence; the King of Nubia would see them burned to death on the spot. Floris, perceiving that they are now in great danger, tries to persuade Blancheflour to take from him the magic ring, his mother's gift, that she, at least, may be saved, but she will not, and the ring, falling to the ground, is retrieved by a "Duc." This stout fellow intercedes for the captives, and actually succeeds in calming the savage fury of the Admiral, after the two young creatures have contended as to which of them shall die first, each

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

determined that it shall not be the other. Touched by their devotion, the Admiral relents, nor does he do it half-heartedly. He decides to keep Floris in his retinue of knights, gives him the accolade, and decrees that he shall wed Blancheflour in church with a golden ring. It proves to be a double wedding, for at the suggestion of Blancheflour the loyal Clarys is brought down from the tower and becomes the Admiral's bride.

The figure of Blancheflour is shadowy compared with that of Nicolette; we are made to feel that she was winsome and gentle, fair to look upon, faithful both in friendship and in love; but we hear little or nothing about her actual appearance, and her linen smocks and ermine cloaks are left to the imagination.

There is another young girl in thirteenth-century literature whose name will dwell always in remembrance. It is the name of a girl who actually lived and died in Florence, Beatrice Portinari. On a May day in the year 1274 her father, Folco Portinari, gave a feast to which he invited his friend Alighiero Alighieri, and his friend's nine-year-old son, Dante. Beatrice was a few months younger. "Her dress on that day," wrote Dante afterwards, "was of a most noble colour, a subdued and goodly crimson, girdled and adorned in such sort as best suited with her very tender age"; and he tells us how from that time forward Love governed his soul.

He oftentimes commanded me to seek if I might see this youngest of the angels: wherefore I in my boyhood often went in search of her, and found her so noble and praiseworthy that certainly of her might be said those words of the poet Homer, "She seemed not to be the Daughter of mortal man, but of God."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Vita Nuova*, translated by D. G. Rossetti.

CHAPTER VI  
IN THE LATER MIDDLE AGES

**M**ANY young girls in France would have had an interesting and unusual education during the reign of Philippe le Bel if that monarch had acted upon the advice tendered to him by Pierre Dubois, a learned man with very original ideas. Dubois, distressed by the—to him—unaccountable failure of the Sixth and Seventh Crusades, composed a treatise, *De Recuperatione Terræ Sanctæ*, in which he solemnly suggested that a large number of children, both boys and girls, should be trained for the express purpose of winning the Holy Land by what we should now call propaganda. These children were to begin their studies with Latin, passing thence to Greek, Hebrew, and, presumably, Arabic; then the boys were to concentrate upon logic and theology, while the girls learned medicine and surgery. Dubois intended that the damsels thus equipped should be sent to Palestine, where pagan patriarchs and priests, not vowed to celibacy as were the clergy in the West, would surely seek their hands in marriage; nay, even the great warriors among the Saracens could hardly fail to be profoundly impressed by the virtues and accomplishments of these medical missionaries! And so the goodwill of the ruling powers and the confidence of the simple folk would be won; and so, by degrees, the Holy Land might be redeemed from heathenry and gained for Christ.

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

The suggestion of Pierre Dubois came to naught; and the level of feminine education dropped steadily through the fourteenth century. Politically Europe was disturbed by the Hundred Years War, spiritually by the Great Schism. This last was a more important factor in determining the moral and intellectual status of women, for the removal of the papal headquarters from Rome to Avignon and the setting up of a rival pontiff produced social and religious confusion and distress in every class of society, and led to slackness and corruption in crewhile pious circles. Much of the intellectual ground which had been gained during the thirteenth century was lost, not to be recovered till the end of the fifteenth; otherwise the Renaissance might have been antedated by two hundred years, and the girls of Chaucer's England might have been reading Plato in the original Greek instead of uncouth English versions of French romances.

There were, however, progressive improvements in the conditions of daily life which made the lot of the feminine members of the family more agreeable. The stark masonry of the inner walls of castles and manors would now be painted, panelled, or hung with tapestry; the floors, instead of being rush-strewn, were covered with coloured rugs brought from Spain or the East. Already in the first half of the thirteenth century Henry III had introduced frescoes and painted wainscots, imitating green curtains, or decorated with scenes from Anglo-Saxon history, in the royal palaces at Winchester and Westminster. Glass had begun to replace wooden lattice-work in the windows. To the solar chamber, originally an annexe to the great hall intended as a retreat for the lady of the castle, was added the maidens' bower, where her daughters and their friends might disport themselves, play chess, embroider, read aloud, frolic with their

### IN THE LATER MIDDLE AGES

numerous pets—birds, squirrels, lap-dogs, and monkeys. One part of the old palace of Westminster was known as the Maiden Hall in the days of Edward I, as the numerous daughters born to him and Eleanor of Castile were lodged there while the Court was in London.

When these little Plantagenets were taken to make offerings at the shrine of Edward the Confessor they must have passed near, and they probably lingered to look at, the solid silver effigy on the tomb of a three-year-old aunt of theirs, the deaf-and-dumb Princess Katharine, who died ten years before the eldest of them was born. Henry III seems to have had an especially tender affection for this baby. She alone is mentioned by name in the order which he gave in 1255, when she was two years old, that gold cloths embroidered with the royal arms were to be offered at Westminster on behalf of the King's children. When she was ill during his absence from Windsor messengers brought him constant news of her progress, and when she rallied he was so overjoyed that he gave "a goodly robe" to the bearer of the news, and offered a silver image as a thankoffering at the Confessor's shrine. Impecunious though he was, he spent seventy marks—about £700—on her tomb, and paid a certain hermit called Richard, who lived in what was then the village of Charing, fifty shillings every year to have Masses sung in the chapel of his hermitage for the repose of the soul of "Katharine, the King's dear daughter."

We know a good deal about Eleanor, the eldest of Edward I's daughters, from the wardrobe accounts and other records of royal expenditure. The early death of her young brothers and the tardy arrival of her youngest, the future Edward II, placed her for a great part of her girlhood in the position of heiress presumptive to the throne of England. She and her



## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

sisters had a separate household, of which the expenses were carefully recorded. Among the commodities purchased for the personal use of the Princess Eleanor were milk, beer, sugar, spices, oil of saffron, and violets. A dozen gold buttons were bought to adorn one of her robes, and furred gloves with the royal arms of England embroidered on each thumb were made for her. It is reassuring to find many entries relating to the warming and fetching of water for her baths, as it shows that personal hygiene was not completely neglected even in a proverbially unhygienic age.

Another daughter of Edward I whose youthful figure emerges from the wardrobe accounts is the fourth, the Princess Margaret, afterwards Duchess of Brabant. When she was only ten years old she had a tailor of her very own, Roger by name, who made new robes for her "against the feast of John the Baptist," and also at Christmas, when the whole household blossomed into fresh and festive attire. Margaret seems to have been skilful and diligent with her fingers, for spindles, gold thread, and coloured silks were frequently obtained for her use, and she amused herself making garlands with pearls—probably seed-pearls or pearl-coloured beads. The custom of dedicating a little girl to the service of God still prevailed, and the convent of Amesbury, in Wiltshire, was a very favourite dwelling-place for royal nuns of all ages. It was a royal foundation dating from Anglo-Saxon times, and had been placed by Henry II under the jurisdiction of the Abbey of Fontevraud, in Normandy, the burial-place of several of the successors of William the Conqueror and their queens. Eleanor of Provence, widow of Henry III, took the veil there, and her granddaughter Mary, sixth of Edward I's numerous daughters, 'made her profession' at the age of five, together with thirteen other

## IN THE LATER MIDDLE AGES

little girls of high degree, chosen to be her companions. Mary had already a young cousin at Amesbury, Eleanor of Bretagne, and in after-years she received a youthful niece and a one-year-old stepsister among the novices. It was no austere and monotonous existence to which Longshanks doomed his child. Mary was allowed to make frequent sorties from the cloister, to be present at weddings, to visit famous shrines, to stay with her relations. At Amesbury her bed-linen and tablecloths were of the finest, and green cushions stuffed with down mitigated the severity of the wooden benches in her bed-chamber. She played dicing games for money, and frequently lost the stakes; she encouraged minstrels, and patronized Nicholas Trivet, already mentioned as the author of the French version of the tale of Constance.

The expenses of each young princess's household, with her chamberlain, chaplain, steward, tailor, cook, and minstrel, were so great that one can well understand the anxiety of medieval potentates to secure sons-in-law at the earliest possible moment, and even when the little girl was assigned to some far-off little boy while they were both still children the question of her dowry<sup>1</sup> remained, and was a problem for the Exchequer. Some kings tried to solve the problem by evading payment of their daughters' marriage-portions, thereby undoing all the good in the way of conciliation and alliance which the marriage had done; but the cloister offered no alternative, for royal novices were expected to bring endowments to the Church.

Although the standard of instruction in convent schools

<sup>1</sup> Fathers in other ranks of life and in many lands found this question of a daughter's dowry a painful one. In Dante's *Paradiso* the spirit of a venerable Florentine remarks that among the features of Florentine life that had been better in his day than they were in Dante's was the fact that *then* the birth of a little girl was not greeted by the father with groans, because marriages were later and marriage-portions smaller.

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

dropped during the later Middle Ages, the number of pupils increased. Prosperous merchants and burgers took to sending their daughters to these schools, and girls who had been, like the wife of Symkin the miller in Chaucer's "Reeve's Tale," "y-fostred in a nonnerie" were apt to put on airs and graces after they were married to men in their own station of life. Symkin's wife

was as digne<sup>1</sup> as water in a ditch,  
As ful of hoker<sup>2</sup> and of bisemare.<sup>3</sup>  
Hir thoughtè that a lady sholde hire spare,  
What for hire kynrede and hir nortelrie<sup>4</sup>  
That she hadde lerned in the nonnerie,

and no doubt hers was a typical and not an exceptional case.

The eagerness of intelligent little girls to do well at their lessons did not diminish when less was demanded of them, as witness the story told by Cesarius of Heisterbach of two small maidens in a Frisian nunnery who tried earnestly to excel each other in learning. One of them, happening to fall sick, begged that the Prioress should come to her, and, when she came, said, "Good lady, let not my companion learn any more until I recover from my sickness, and I will pray my mother to give me sixpence, which I will give to you, if you will do this; for I fear that while I am sick she may get beyond me in learning, and I would not that she should!"

It was not always necessary for parents to send their little daughters to be "fostred in a nonnerie," or to seek out an obliging anchoress, if they desired them to receive an elementary education. In most European countries, and especially in France and Burgundy, there were schools where quite young children of both sexes learned their first lessons side by side, their teacher being usually the parish priest or some

<sup>1</sup> haughty.    <sup>2</sup> mockery.    <sup>3</sup> abusiveness.    <sup>4</sup> education, upbringing.

## IN THE LATER MIDDLE AGES

clerk in minor orders who had time to spare and was glad to 'turn an honest penny.' Froissart, for example, in his autobiographical *Espinette amoureuse*, tells how he was sent to school with little girls of his own tender age, to whom he would give gifts of pins, apples, pears, rings of glass, or garlands of violets. Discipline seems to have been relaxed as regards girl-children in the fourteenth century, for Chaucer's Doctour of Phisik, when he retells the story of Virginia, turns aside to make some severe remarks upon this subject. First, he describes the twelve-year-old Roman girl as he imagines her, fair to look upon, modest, gentle, free from affectation:

Discreet she was in answeyng alway,  
Though she were wise as Pallas, dar I seyn;  
Her facound eek, ful wommanly and pleyn;  
No countrefeted termés hadde she  
To semè wys; but after hir degree  
She spak, and alle hire wordés, moore and lesse,  
Sownynge in vertu and in gentillesse.

She was never idle, she touched no wine, she fled from feasts, revels, and dances. "Swich thynges," observes the Doctour of Phisik,

maken children for to be  
To sooné rype and boold, as men may se.

This, with other pieces of contemporary evidence, shows that both little boys and little girls were sometimes allowed to take part in 'grown-up' junketings, and that the effect of these indulgences was to make them pert and precocious, even in an age when "spare the rod and spoil the child" was held to be one of the wisest saws ever uttered by the wisest of mortal men.

Chaucer's royal master, Edward III, had five daughters,

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

Isabella, Joanna, Blanche, Mary, and Margaret, concerning whose childhood the wardrobe rolls of his reign have much to tell us. They were placed in the charge of gentlewomen of high degree, and had numerous trains of tailors, serving-men, and minstrels; they were dressed in stiff and splendid raiment, more suitable for their mother, Philippa of Hainault, than for little girls; they were early taught the virtues of alms-giving, and the grace which a gift gains from being bestowed by a princess's own hand. Before the eldest of the five was a month old her own particular tailor had made her a robe of Lucca silk, with four rows of rich trimming and edgings of fur. She had a gilded cradle adorned with the royal arms of England and lined with taffeta; as the season was the early summer it seems a little strange that the coverlet should have been made of fur!

The eldest two princesses spent a great part of their time in the company of their elder brother Edward, Prince of Wales, the future Black Prince. He and they were quartered for two months upon the Abbot of Peterborough during the summer of the year 1335. The good man may have been slightly disconcerted to find the tranquillity of his ancient abbey broken by the presence of these three children and their retinues of ladies, gentlemen, and serving-folk, but he knew the value of their father's favour, and seems to have bestirred himself to make them happy. The little girls grew so rapidly that on one occasion their tailor had hurriedly to make their new dresses over again, as the first had been of too small a size. Scarlet and grey cloth, buttons of gold or of silver thread, cloth of gold and finest silken stuffs were used for the garments which the King had made for his daughters at each great festival of the Church's year. Their stockings were of fine scarlet wool.

## IN THE LATER MIDDLE AGES

The eldest two girls were with their parents in the Low Countries during the summer of the year 1340, when the English fleet, commanded by the King in person, inflicted a crushing defeat upon the French at Sluys. The fear of a French counter-attack by land inspired Edward shortly after that famous sea-fight to send the Princesses Isabella and Joanna back to England and lodge them in the Tower. How they occupied themselves during the months that followed may be seen from their household accounts.

To Peter of the chamber, bearing letters of the Lady de la Mote, mistress of the King's children, to their dearest father and mother—5*s*.

To John Marle, one of the valets-de-chambre of the Ladies Isabella and Joanna, bearing their letters and those of the Lady de la Mote to the Queen in Flanders, by their own hands—16*s*. 8*d*.

To John the bargeman and his companion mariners, rowing in their boats the Ladies Isabella and Joanna, with their attendants, across the Thames and leading them into the gardens, by their gift, with their own hands—12*s*.

To Richard Crewe, valet of the Countess of Arundel, coming from the county of Sussex and bringing to the King's children four hounds for hunting, gift to him at his departing—3*s*. 4*d*.

For the offerings of the Ladies Anne and Isabella, from August 6 to October 28, each offering one penny per day, by the hands of the Lady de la Mote, their governess—14*s*.

To Gerard de Gay, the minstrel of the King's children, in money given to him by them, and also for a winter coat, given him by their own hands—6*s*. 8*d*.

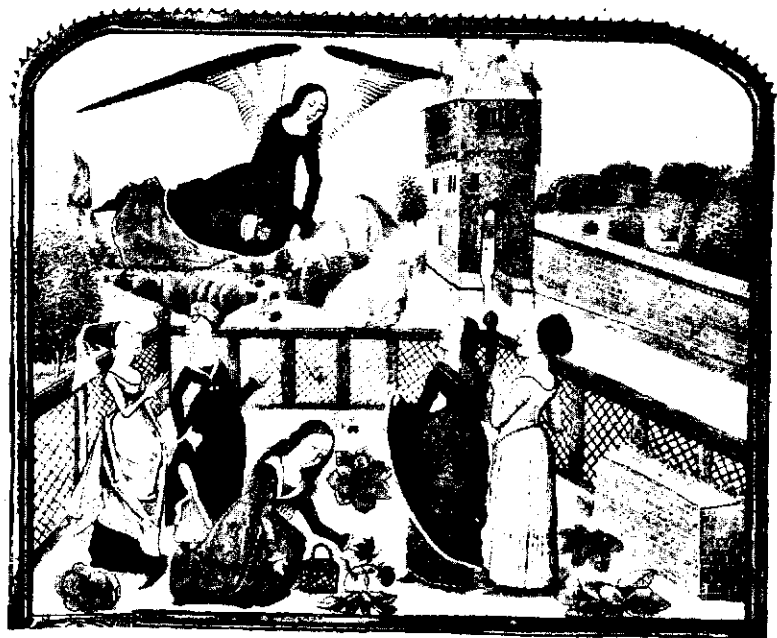
To the valet of the Bishop of Carlisle, coming from his master at Horncastle, and presenting to the Ladies Isabella and Joanna two young hares, as their gift on his departure—3*s*. 4*d*.

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

To Thomas de Bastenthwait, valet-de-chambre of the Lady Isabella, for leading her palfrey whenever she rode between London and Westminster, for a winter coat to be bought for him, as the gift of his mistress—5*s*.

The little girls—one was eight and the other seven—must have been encouraged to be actively benevolent towards their servitors, for in addition to winter coats for the minstrel and the serving-man they gave winter shoes to their clerk of the chapel, their water-carrier, candle-bearer, porters, and grooms. When they returned from their expeditions by land and water their supper was served upon silver plates, they sat upon green velvet cushions, and finally went to sleep upon mattresses and pillows covered with green silk. There is no mention of any books bought for their use outside the chapel where they heard Mass sung every day, and there is no reason to think that the letters they sent to their father and mother were written with their own childish hands. Their chaplain probably acted as their secretary, and if they 'did lessons' of any regular kind he would be their preceptor as well. Such lessons would include many Greek and Latin myths and legends queerly adapted to mediæval ideas. Hector and Achilles were imagined as clad in chain-mail or plate-armour, and the goddesses of the antique world appeared draped and winged like the angels of contemporary Christian art.

The life of the second princess was brief but eventful. Already when she was sent with her elder sister Isabella to the Tower she had spent some months very far from home, among strangers in strange lands. Before she was three years old negotiations had been begun for her marriage with an Austrian prince, and when she was five her father personally handed her over to her future kinsfolk in the ancient town



### DIANA AND THE YOUNG MAIDENS

"The goddesses of the antique world appeared draped and winged like the angels of contemporary Christian art."

From an illuminated copy of Christine de Pisan's *Épître de la déesse Othia*.





ST URSULA SHELTERING MAIDENS UNDER  
HER CLOAK  
Hans Memling  
*Photo Mansell*

## IN THE LATER MIDDLE AGES

of Coblenz. The plans made by the Plantagenet and Habsburg princes were not destined, however, to reach fulfilment. The Emperor Louis of Bavaria, kinsman of the intended bridegroom, refused to plunge into the Hundred Years War on the side of England and against France, and poor little Joanna and her attendants were so shabbily and ungenerously treated that her father was compelled to send her not only plate for her table, but money to buy food, when "sufficient meat and drink" had not been provided by the Emperor. Edward changed his mind, dissolved the marriage contract, and called his daughter home. Not until the Princess was thirteen years of age were fresh matrimonial manœuvres carried out on her behalf. This time the bridegroom selected by her father for political and dynastic reasons was "the most noble Peter, eldest son of the illustrious King of Castile," a fourteen-year-old prince destined to live in history as Pedro the Cruel.

Magnificent preparations were made for the wedding, and a huge mass of miscellaneous gear was assembled for transport to Spain. Joanna took with her complete bed-hangings of Tripoli silk wrought with a design of dragons and sprinkled with bezants of gold, tapestry hangings embroidered with popinjays and roses; she took her own bedroom furniture, including a looking-glass, two folding-chairs, a bath, and a copper warming-pan; she took her own chapel fittings, with vessels and altar-cloths and vestments for the priests; she took magnificent saddles of scarlet and purple velvet sewn with seed pearls. It was arranged that the ceremony should take place at Bayonne on All Saints' Day, 1348, but two months before the day appointed the youthful bride was struck down by the Black Death, that sinister and appalling pestilence brought to Europe from Central Asia by the

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

gilded carracks and caravels of Genoese and Venetian merchant-venturers. King Edward's grief was great for his daughter, "in whom," as he wrote to the Infante Pedro, "all the gifts of nature met," and who really appears to have been, as he then declared that she was, the best loved of all his children. Twenty years later, when his son the Black Prince had fought side by side with Pedro the Cruel and had learned what manner of man he was, the old King may have felt that Joanna's death was a signal grace and mercy, and might have said with Othello that heaven "strikes where it doth love."

What of the little daughters of the field-labourers and craftsmen during this period when the children of kings led lives so pleasant and so full of pomp? Conditions were altering gradually for the better, though much room for improvement remained long after. The Black Death, by breaking down the old repressive restrictions of the feudal system, raised the status and broadened the prospects of the poor folk who survived it. This was especially true in England; in France the fetters of feudalism continued to weigh heavily upon the serfs, whence came the horrors of the Jacquerie in 1358, horrors which made the English Peasants' Revolt of 1381 seem a mere flare-up and fizzle-out by contrast. Girl-children were still sent early to work in the fields, and were also occasionally apprenticed to embroiderers, glove-makers, and other pliers of light crafts requiring deft fingers; but the wording of certain statutes suggests that the daughters as well as the sons of the villagers sometimes attended the little school attached to the village church. In their homes they would help their harassed and hard-working mother to wash and spin, bake and sew, they would look after the younger children in her absence, and might peel rushlights

## IN THE LATER MIDDLE AGES

or make themselves otherwise useful during the long winter days when no work could be done out of doors. Hunger was a haunter of the little, smoky hut in which the labourer's young daughters lived; a farthing's worth of cockles and mussels, a handful of cherries, a morsel of ewes' milk cheese, seemed to them a gorgeous feast. Perhaps, like Chaucer's Patient Griselda, the elder girls might gather edible roots and plants, and "shred and seethe" them for supper. Their usual fare was dull and hard enough: black bread, or loaves made of beans or dried peas, crab-apples, savoury herbs, occasionally an egg, or a slice of tough, over-salted bacon. On those rare occasions when they tasted the flesh of hen, goose, or pig one feels that they must have needed powerful jaws, for the livestock were, like their masters, habitually under-nourished, and can have proved neither plump nor tender when they reached the cooking-pot or the spit.

A labourer was sometimes glad to get rid of a superfluous daughter by sending her to be a servant in the house of some more fortunate neighbours. Then her lot was anything but light. Our old friend Bartholomew the Englishman gives a dismal account of it. A bondswoman, he says, was made to do the hardest work, "toylynge and slubberyng," and fed on rough and plain food, and "kepte lowe under the yoeke of thraldom and of servage." He quotes Rabanus as saying that such servants are naturally rebellious and disobedient, and he declares that if they are not kept in subjection "they hartes swelle and wax stoute and proude agenst the commaundements of theyr souveraynes." Girls of the peasant class dressed like their mothers in sober-hued homespun, with coifs and half-aprons of coarse linen, but during the reigns of Edward III and Richard II there was a movement towards gayer colours, and John Gower, noting this movement

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

and its levelling-up tendency, augured the worst. When the knights and nobles and their womenfolk no longer enjoyed the monopoly of scarlet and blue, purple and green, were not the old class barriers beginning to crack?

We get a glimpse of two medieval maidservants in the dialogues translated and printed by Caxton a century after they were written in French and Flemish. Apparently these girls were not entirely uninstructed, for they could name "all the grete festes and the termes of the yere"; nor were they treated harshly, for one of them, Agnes, is addressed politely as 'Damyselle'; nor were they cowed into submissiveness, for when Agnes is requested to repeat the names of these "festes" she bluntly refuses, and delegates the task to her fellow-servant Agatha. From the way in which Agatha glibly reels off her lesson it is clear that she knew it well, and that she was familiar not only with the principal festivals of the Church's year, but also with the processions, or miracle plays, of York and Coventry.

From these dialogues we learn something about the various handicrafts in which women were employed. We meet Katherin the kempster, who combed wool, and Cecyle the spinster, who spun it, Clarisse the nopster, who finished the woven cloth by picking out the knops, or knots. Apparently Clarisse had learned her craft in her cradle, for the dialogue

runs:

Clarisse the nopster  
Can well her craft.  
"Syth when hath she lerned it,  
Cloth for to noppe?"  
"What axe ye?  
She was therewith rocked!"

We meet also Mabyll the shepster, who makes surplices, shirts, breeches, kerchiefs, and other garments of "lynnen

## IN THE LATER MIDDLE AGES

cloth," and Maulde the cap-maker, who makes caps "with two semes." Both these women would have girls to help them.

During the fourteenth century the daughters of the merchant class wore the same sort of comfortable and picturesque dress as their mothers. We may take Chaucer's description of the Oxford carpenter's young wife as typical:

A ceynt<sup>1</sup> she werede, y-barrèd al of silk;  
A barmclooth<sup>2</sup> eek as whit as mornè milk,  
Upon her lendès,<sup>3</sup> ful of many a goore;<sup>4</sup>  
Whit was her smok, and broyden al bifoore,  
And eke bihyndé, on her coler aboute,  
Of colblak silk withinne and eek withoute.  
The tapès of hir whitè voluper<sup>5</sup>  
Were of the samè suyte of her coler.

Among the medieval manuscripts collected by Sir Robert Cotton in the seventeenth century and now in the British Museum is one called *Pearl*, in which a disconsolate father bewails the death of his little daughter and sees a vision of her among the maidens robed in white "who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth." Sir Israel Gollancz, who modernized the very quaint and obscure alliterative English verses, stoutly rejected the suggestion that *Pearl* was an allegorical figure, and not the image of a much-loved and much-lamented child called Margaret, and indeed it is difficult to believe that the whole story is a pious fable. In the pictures which accompany the manuscript *Pearl* appears as a young girl clad in white, with a pearl-studded crown, not as the two-year-old baby that she was when she died; but medieval illuminators were not fond of depicting babies, and it is understood that it was as a fair maiden and not as an infant that the bereaved father saw her walking in the

<sup>1</sup> girdle.    <sup>2</sup> apron.    <sup>3</sup> hips.    <sup>4</sup> pleat.    <sup>5</sup> cap.

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

shining streets of Paradise. Lying on her grave in a green garden where gillyflowers and peonies shadowed the grass, he mourned her with tears and sighs. Then, while his body lay in a trance, his spirit sprang upward into an unknown land of crystalline cliffs and silver forests "where marvels are." Presently he came to a deep stream as bright as beryl, and on the farther side he saw "a maid of grace" in a gleaming white robe, the long sleeves decked with double braids of pearls, and with a precious pearl upon her breast.

"O pearl," quoth I, "bedight in pearls,  
art thou my Pearl that I have plain'd,  
bewept by me, so lone, a-night?  
Much longing have I borne for thee,  
since into grass thou hence didst glide;  
pensive, broken, forpined am I;  
but thou hast reach'd a life of joy  
in the strifeless home of Paradise!"<sup>1</sup>

It is hard for him, poor man, to learn the lesson of resignation to the will of God which she tries—at great length—to teach him. He would fain draw near her, touch her, but the river still rolls between them, and all he may win is a glimpse of the Heavenly City whereof each gate is one single pearl.

Then saw I ther my lyttel quene  
That I wende<sup>2</sup> had standen by me in sclade.<sup>3</sup>

The wonted medieval conventions of the garden, the dream, the fair maiden, the long admonitions, are all found in *Pearl*. Poets could not do without these things. James I of Scotland, looking down from a tower into a small hawthorn-hedged plot at Windsor, saw a young girl in a white

<sup>1</sup> Sir Israel Gollancz's version.

<sup>2</sup> thought.

<sup>3</sup> valley.

## IN THE LATER MIDDLE AGES

robe with a net of pearls upon her hair, and wrote *The Kingis Quhair* in her honour, and, in fulness of time, made her his Queen. So did poetry overflow into reality for the prince who was also a poet.

We have seen that Edward III did not think it necessary for his young daughters to 'do lessons.' Henry IV, the supplanter of Edward's grandson on the English throne, had more advanced ideas. For his two small daughters two ABC books were purchased at a cost of twenty pence when the elder was only in her seventh year. Even before Henry exchanged an earl's coronet for the crown-royal of England the household expenses of these children were considerable: a wick floating in a vessel of oil was kept burning in their bedchamber all night, large quantities of soap were bought for their use, and they were clad in rich silken stuffs brought from far lands—baudekin, Cyprus and Tripoli silks, and damask interwoven with threads of gold. They probably wore their hair drawn back from the forehead and flowing loose behind, after the manner of St Ursula and her companions as depicted by Memling.

In *Le Livre du dit de Poissy* Christine de Pisan, one of the earliest literary ladies in European history, describes how she and a party of friends rode from Paris to the convent at Poissy, a royal foundation, where her little daughter had been received at the request of Charles VI of France. It was a bright April morning in the year 1400, and the birds were singing in the woods through which they passed. On reaching Poissy they were hospitably received by the Abbess, Princess Marie de Bourbon, and Christine's little daughter ran forward and knelt down before her to ask her blessing before they went together, hand in hand, into the convent chapel, a beautiful building with a lofty vaulted roof and



## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

stained-glass windows shining like a woof of lovely jewels. Then the whole party were—as we should now say—‘shown over’ the convent. The nuns led their visitors along cloisters of fretted stone, shaded by a huge and ancient pine-tree which grew in the middle of the cloister-garth, and thence to the fountain, silver and songful, and to the garden where beds of sweet lavender alternated with cherry-trees and roses. Farther on they came to a well-stocked fish-pond, and to an enclosure where stags, goats, and rabbits frolicked unrestrained. After some refreshments Christine and her friends sat on the flowering turf beside the fountain and gathered round them the little girls of the convent school, to whom they told tales of angels and heroes. It is a charming picture, as quaintly gay as an illuminated missal. One imagines that Christine’s little girl must have been happy at Poissy, in spite of the tears she shed when the moment came to bid her mother good-bye: and Christine herself ended her days in a nunnery, after seeing the English triumph over the French and John, Duke of Bedford, governing France in the name of the infant Henry VI, while Charles the Dauphin dragged out a meagre, precarious existence at Chinon. She must have heard of the miraculous victories of Jeanne d’Arc; she may have heard of the betrayal and martyrdom of the Maid; but she did not live to see the English chased out of the land as Jeanne’s Voices had promised that they should be.

Jeanne was certainly the most remarkable girl of whom any record remains in human history; but her girlhood at Domremy may be taken as typical of the girlhood of a Lorraine peasant-girl of the early fifteenth century. She learned to spin, but not to read or write; she understood the care of cattle and horses; she went regularly to church and fasted faithfully on fast-days, but her orthodoxy did not deter her

## IN THE LATER MIDDLE AGES

from joining the other damsels of the village sometimes in their immemorial dance round the Fairies' Tree.

Manuals of instruction to aid the parents and preceptors of little boys of gentle birth had long been popular in France and in England, but it is not until towards the year 1430, near the time of Jeanne d'Arc's downfall, that we find an English work designed to guide mothers of the higher classes in bringing up their daughters. The writer of *How the Good Wife taught her Daughter* is supposed to be a woman teaching her child as she herself was taught by her own mother, but there are some little touches, such as the injunction to pay "tithis" and "offrynges" gladly, which suggest a clerical hand. Careful instruction is given as to proper behaviour in church:

Whanne thou sittist in the chirche thi beedis thou  
schalt bidde;<sup>1</sup>

Make thou no jangelynge to freende nor to sybbe;<sup>2</sup>  
Laughe thou to scorne nouter oold bodi ne yonge,  
But be of fair beerynge and of good tunge.

All the advice as to deportment is admirable. The girl must neither laugh too loud nor yawn too wide; she must not walk too fast, or jerk her shoulders about, or "braundische" with her head. If she is sent into the town to sell "borel," the coarse cloth she has made at home, she must not stray into the tavern, or go to see wrestling-matches or shooting at the cock. Most important of all, if she should some day marry and have children of her own, and they misbehave, she must

take a smert rodde and bete [t]hem on a rowe,  
Till thei crei 'mercy' and be of [t]her gilt aknowe.

The Paston letters, exchanged between the members of a

<sup>1</sup> thou shalt tell thy beads.      <sup>2</sup> to friend nor to relation.

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

Norfolk family during the period of the Wars of the Roses, show that parents translated this advice very conscientiously



THE WIFE OF THOMAS HEVENYNGHAM AND  
THEIR SIX DAUGHTERS, 1499

From the brass at Ketteringham Church, Norfolk.

into action, and would soundly beat even grown-up daughters of marriageable age who happened to incur their displeasure. Daughters, to judge from monumental brasses, were usually only too numerous.

## IN THE LATER MIDDLE AGES

Among the edifying books 'Englished' and printed by Caxton was a treatise written nearly a hundred years earlier by a Frenchman, the Knight of La Tour Landry, for the guidance of his three motherless daughters. The good knight, like the good wife of the English rhyming manual, gives advice—though not in rhyme—as to deportment in church and elsewhere. "Atte masse," he exclaims, "be not like the crane or the tortu; for thei are like the crane and the tortu that turneth their heads and fases backward and lokith over the shuldre!" He proceeds to tell the story of a King of England (unnamed) who sent ambassadors to choose a queen for him from among the three daughters of the King of Denmark. Though the eldest was the fairest, "she loked smal and wynked ofte, and spak afore she understode what was saide to her, and ever loked over the shuldre, and ever bete her eyelyddes togedre," and was therefore rejected by the English envoys; the second fared no better, for "she hadd mervailous muche langage"; so the third was chosen, to her great joy, and her sisters' no small astonishment. Another of La Tour Landry's stories is of a certain damsel who when a knight came to woo her donned, although it was winter, an unfurred garment fitting closely to the figure. As a result her features were so pinched and discoloured that her beauty was all gone, and the knight transferred his homage to a younger and actually less beautiful sister who was cosily clad and ruddy of hue.

It is obvious that the chief aim of the conscientious parent was to see his young daughters married, happily if possible, but in any case married. When the parent chanced to be a king dynastic and political motives coloured his proceedings, and even devoted fathers like Edward III of England and James I of Scotland did not hesitate to send their little girls

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

to far countries, to be brought up as the betrothed brides of princes whom they had never seen. These alliances often turned out better than might have been expected, but there could not fail to be tragedies like that of Princess Margaret of Scotland, sent at the age of eleven to France, to be wedded in due course to the Dauphin, afterwards Louis XI, 'Louis the Spider.' James and his Queen, the same Jane Beaufort whom he had espied walking in the garden, delayed the departure of their child as long as they dared, and shed bitter tears at the thought of her leaving them; but it does not seem to have occurred to them that it was an act of callous cruelty to banish this delicate, sensitive, highly gifted little Princess for ever from their sight. It is true that James tried to propitiate his unknown son-in-law by the present of an ancient Scottish sword adorned with figures of Our Lady and St Michael; it is also true that, though the Dauphin slighted and neglected his youthful wife, his parents were kind to her; the Queen of France regaled her with carraway cakes, nuts, and rose sugar, the King gave her every year of her brief life a more or less sumptuous New Year's gift—in 1437 it was a toilet mirror set with pearls. But the Dauphine broke her heart in the fair land of France. As befitted the daughter of a poet-king, she sought consolation in writing innumerable *rondeaux* and *ballades*, often sitting up all night absorbed in this pursuit. Of the many poems she wrote not one remains; all her manuscripts were destroyed by the Dauphin immediately after her death in 1445.

## CHAPTER VII

### IN RENAISSANCE ITALY AND FRANCE

WHEN the Ottoman Turks under Mahmoud II captured and sacked Constantinople in the year 1453 they can little have recked that one of the results of their victory over the Byzantine Christians would be the liberation of three generations of Western women from the tyranny of tradition. Yet so it was. The Renaissance, though not a sudden movement, gained its decisive momentum from the dispersal over Italy of fugitives from the Bosphorus bearing Greek manuscripts; and one of the most striking, though not the most enduring, of the developments which followed was the intellectual levelling-up of the sexes. Reaction set in about two hundred years later, and what was afterwards to be called "the higher education of women" fell into disfavour, not to be revived until the middle decades of the nineteenth century; but while the Renaissance influence made itself felt in the nurseries and schoolrooms of Europe girls blossomed out into classical scholars without anyone feeling either misgiving or surprise.

These Greek exiles were welcomed first in Florence and Rome, but Mantua and Urbino, Siena and Ferrara, soon received them gladly. The rulers of those Italian city-states were men of keen intelligence, eager to learn, avid of beauty; in their palaces and in their gardens the gods and poets of the antique world woke to life again. Thence, rather slowly, the golden river of the Renaissance flowed

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

northward into France, England, and the Empire, and wherever it thrust its way little girls were to be found conning their Greek text-books for all the world as if they had been little boys.

Though the Medici were the first of the great Italian ruling families to feel and to spread the new spirit, no Medici lady stands out in the early phases of the Renaissance, with the possible exception of Lucrezia Tornabuoni, the gifted and gracious mother of Lorenzo the Magnificent. It was in the houses of Este, Montefeltro, and Gonzaga that the first girl-children of the true Renaissance type were to be seen.

One of the most interesting and brilliant of these was Isabella d'Este, daughter of Ercole d'Este, Duke of Ferrara, born in 1474, and betrothed at the age of six to Giovanni Francesco Gonzaga, eldest son of the reigning Marquis of Mantua. The Mantuan envoys who negotiated the alliance were much impressed by the wit and grace of the pretty, auburn-haired child. One of them wrote home to his master that the good sense and quickness with which she had responded to his questions "on many subjects" seemed miraculous, while another was enchanted by her skill in dancing when she trod a measure with her Jewish dancing-master, Messer Ambrogio. A year later she saw her future husband, almost twice her own age, for the first time, and there began an exchange of courtly letters between them which continued until their marriage in 1490.

The Court of Ferrara, where she and her dark-haired younger sister grew up, was one of the most cultured and magnificent in Italy. Both in the towering, fortress-like palace in the cathedral square at Ferrara itself and in the Duke's country villas there were beautiful frescoes and rich tapestries on the walls, exquisite works of art, carved ivories,

## IN RENAISSANCE ITALY AND FRANCE

engraved gems, majolica plaques in the cabinets and on the tables, and what were then considered unusual numbers of books on the shelves. Isabella's mother, a Neapolitan princess, had a personal library which would have seemed exceptionally large and varied for a prince's use less than two decades earlier: in addition to illuminated copies of Spanish and Breton romances she had Pliny's letters, Cæsar's commentaries, and the philosophical works of our old friend Boëthius. The child's love of books was encouraged by both her parents, but it was her father's family from which she inherited her passion for music. Her first music-master was a German priest, who had been brought from Constance to train Duke Ercole's choir; later she learned to play the lute and the clavichord and to sing so charmingly that polite poets declared that she could have lured the sirens themselves from their rocks, or soothed the fury of the wild beasts with the magic art of Orpheus.

We know a good deal about Isabella's course of study, and about her various tutors. The first of these, Giovanni Battista Guarini, asked for a special ration of wheat during the famine which afflicted Ferrara when she was only eight years old, so that he might be equal to his task, while with his successor, Jacopo Gallino, she learned to repeat by heart portions of the *Eclogues* of Virgil and the *Epistles* of Cicero, and to construe the *Æneid*. Thanks to the care of these masters she became one of the best Latin scholars of her day, and she studied Greek as well, for in after-years Gallino reminded her how he and she used to read the grammar written by Manuel Chrysoloras, a Byzantine scholar who had begun to teach Greek in Florence more than fifty years before the Turks captured his native city.

When, in 1490, the sunny-tressed Isabella left her home



## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

and went as a bride to Mantua, she found herself in the same spiritual atmosphere that she had breathed from her babyhood. Her sister-in-law, Elizabetta Gonzaga, whom we shall meet again as Duchess of Urbino, had been nourished on the same mental food: her husband, the Marquis Gian-Francesco, loved to gather poets and scholars round him in the palace where Andrea Mantegna had painted the Triumphs of Julius Cæsar on the walls. His great-grandfather and namesake, Gian-Francesco II, had been one of the pioneers of Renaissance thought, and had chosen as the tutor of his children the philosopher-scholar Vittorino da Feltre.<sup>1</sup> So came into existence that remarkable school called the Casa Goiosa, the Joyous House, where the Gonzaga boys and girls studied Greek and Latin, mathematics and music, dancing, singing, and the not less important lessons of good manners and right thinking.

Vittorino's girl pupils did him great credit. In 1433, when the Emperor Sigismund visited Mantua, one of them welcomed him with a Latin poem of her own composition. Another, Cecilia Gonzaga, had already read the works of St John Chrysostom in Greek when she was eight years old, and could recite Latin poetry and prose with grace and ease. The Renaissance had not then assumed its definitely pagan colour, and the Early Christian Fathers were still allowed to stand side by side with the poets and philosophers of antiquity. Cecilia, pious, precocious, sensitive, sought refuge in the cloister from a dreaded marriage, but this retiring and contemplative spirit was by no means characteristic of the girls of the later Renaissance, vivid, vital creatures brimming over with the joy of life. Such a girl was Marietta Strozzi, who "at eighteen broke away from her guardians and lived

<sup>1</sup> See *The Boy through the Ages*.

## IN RENAISSANCE ITALY AND FRANCE

alone, and had snowball-matches by moonlight with all the sparks of Florence.”<sup>1</sup>

The little Gonzaga girls had a governess, Violante de Pretis, as well as a tutor. This lady wrote to their father in 1471:

Your Excellency will learn from these presents that their highnesses are well, full of good intentions, and very obedient. . . . They are anxious to learn, and even to work. When they desire to amuse themselves, they mount their little horse, one on the saddle, the other pillion behind her, while a man on horseback keeps pace with them.

Indeed, Italian girls of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries delighted as much in dancing, riding, and hunting as they did in hard study and learned disputation. They seem to have been especially self-possessed and successful as orators on occasions of public solemnity or rejoicing. When Costanza Varro was only sixteen she recited a Latin oration at a banquet at Pesaro; Ippolita Sforza welcomed Pope Pius II in choice Latin and at great length when she was fourteen, and a twelve-year-old girl, Margherita Scavarelli Solari, charmed Charles VIII of France by the grace of her Latin greeting when he entered the town of Asti.

The environment in which these children of Renaissance Italy were born and grew up was such as to stimulate their instinctive craving for beauty and colour. The girl-baby was swaddled in delicately tinted linen, often fringed or hemmed with gold. Her nurse, sometimes a negress, bathed her in tepid water mixed with fragrant herbs, rosewater, sulphur, or even wine; her cradle was of rare woods, or overlaid with gold paint and many-hued gesso; when she was old enough

<sup>1</sup> Edith Sichel, *The Renaissance* (Thornton Butterworth).

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

to discard swaddling bands her garments were as gorgeous as her mother's. She wore rich Florentine or Genoese velvets and brocades, woven in Chinese or Persian designs, striped taffeta glimmering like Milton's "iris woof," or pale silken stuffs scattered with cornflowers, pinks, and columbines. The lutes and clavichords on which she played were decorated with painted picnics and processions, sirens, dragons, and pomegranates; when she was married her dowry was stored in a magnificent coffer called a *cassone*, bearing allegorical scenes or heraldic devices. Gold-meshed caps studded with pearls constrained but did not hide the hair which she perfumed with ambergris and washed in wine.

More fortunate, perhaps, than her medieval forerunners, the Italian girl was dedicated by her father and mother not to the saints but to the Muses. In his monumental work *De Claris Muliebribus* (*Concerning Celebrated Women*) Jacopo di Bergamo mentions a certain Trivulzia of Milan, who at the age of fourteen was an accomplished Latin orator, and whose parents had consecrated her to the service of the Muses when she was in her seventh year. The great scholars of Renaissance Italy welcomed clever and cultured young girls, and delighted in their company; but they demanded of them that they should remain maidenly and gracious, and avoid all appearance of mannishness and intellectual arrogance. Thus we read of the young daughter of Giovanni d'Andrea, professor of jurisprudence at the University of Bologna, who in his absence took his place and lectured to his students; only, as she was very beautiful, she spoke from behind a little curtain, lest her hearers' minds should wander from their studies—perhaps a wise precaution!

When Elizabetta Gonzaga, one of the two little girls whom we saw on pony-back under their governess's eye,

## IN RENAISSANCE ITALY AND FRANCE

grew up she was married to the Duke of Urbino, and in her new home gathered round her a brilliant group of men and women, among whom the most famous was Baldassare Castiglione, the son of the captain of Gian-Francesco Gonzaga's mercenary army. In his treatise *Il Cortegiano* (*The Courtier*), translated into English by Sir Thomas Hoby in 1561, Castiglione reflects as in an enchanted mirror the mind and the body of the Italian Renaissance at its highest, before the splendid colours had begun to grow tawdry and the classical ideas had become insincere conventions. The third book of these half-imagined, half-remembered dialogues treats of that rare and—some cynics might suggest—fabulous being, the perfect young gentlewoman. Emilia Pia, one of the ladies taking part in the discussion, had expressed some misgiving lest one of the gentlemen should describe a woman "that can do nought elles but looke to the kitchin and spinn,"<sup>1</sup> two branches of feminine education usually taught by Italian nurses to their girl-nurslings; but in the event the picture was more proportionate. As this ideal gentlewoman was to be the counterpart of the ideal courtier, it was necessary that she should possess those outward and inward qualities which would make her fit into the framework of Elizabetta's Court—the Court of a great and gracious princess that "deserved to be Queene of the world." She must have beauty, "for (to saye the truth) there is a great lacke in the woman that wanteth beawtie"; she must have a sweet voice, a lively wit, "and the exercises of the body comlie for a woman shall she do with an exceading good grace." As the discussion proceeds we learn more about these exercises, of which the chief seems to have been "daunsinge" and "devising sportes and pastimes," which probably means organizing picnics and

<sup>1</sup> Hoby's translation is used in all the extracts from *Il Cortegiano* given here.

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

round games, and what the French call *petits jeux*. The Perfect Gentlewoman may not "practise feates of armes, ridinge, playinge at tenise, wrastlynge, and manye other thynges that belonge to men": even when 'daunsing' or playing on some musical instrument she must remember what is "comlie for a woman." One seems to hear the voice of Clement of Alexandria speaking across the ages.

. . . in daunsynge I would not see her use too swift and violent trickes, nor yet in singinge or playinge upon instrumentes those harde and ofte divisions that declare more counninge than sweetnesse. Likewise the instrumentes of musike which she useth (in mine opinion) ought to be fitt for this pourpose. Imagin with your selfe what an unsightly matter it were to see a woman play upon a tabour or a drumm, or blowe in a flute or trompet, or anye like instrumente: and this bicause the boisterousnesse of them doeth both cover and take away that sweete mildenesse which setteth so furth everie deed that a woman doeth. Therefore whann she commeth to daunse, or to show any kind of musike, she ought to be brought to it with suffringe her self somewhat to be prayed, and with a certein bashfulnesse that may declare the noble shamefastnes that is contrarye to headinesse.

Strangely enough one of the Renaissance girls most commended in her own time for her sedate and gentle demeanour was the one round whose name and memory the most lurid legends have gathered—Lucrezia Borgia, the golden-haired daughter of the Spanish Cardinal Rodrigo Borgia, who became Pope in 1492, taking the sonorous title of Alexander VI. Modern historians have done much to cleanse the fame of Lucrezia from the dark stains that have blurred it so long, and even her sinister, unscrupulous, hauntingly handsome brother Cesare Borgia, Duke of Valen-

## IN RENAISSANCE ITALY AND FRANCE

tinois, has found his apologists. Many of her contemporaries regarded her as a virtuous lady of manifold accomplishments, and when she died her widower, Isabella d'Este's brother, Alfonso, Duke of Ferrara, lamented her as if she had been his "late espoused saint." She was twelve years old when her father, the newly elected Pope, rode through Rome upon a snow-white horse, the most impressive figure in a cavalcade which included Turkish horsemen, mounted cross-bowmen, many red-robed Cardinals, and twelve riderless white horses with bridles of gold.

Lucrezia does not seem to have been particularly clever, though her father had sufficient faith in her good sense to leave her in charge of his business affairs and correspondence during his absence from the Vatican in the summer of 1501, when she was twenty-one years of age. Her education, less ambitious than that of the Este and Gonzaga children, had not been neglected; she is said to have spoken Spanish, Italian, Greek, French, "and a little Latin" very correctly; she was an accomplished musician, and astonished the good folk of Ferrara by her skill with the needle. Her library included many rich volumes bound in purple velvet with clasps of silver gilt; in addition to breviaries and psalters she had volumes of Spanish poems and proverbs, the poems of Petrarch and Dante, the Latin grammar of Donatus, and the letters of St Catherine of Siena. She had certainly been taught to write by a capable master, for hers was an unusually legible and decorative hand, and though no verses of her own composition have survived to show whether she was a good poetess or a bad one, she was the patroness and inspirer of at least three poets of some renown, Pietro Bembo and the two Strozzi, father and son.

All the accomplishments of these "golden boys and girls"

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

at Mantua, Urbino, and Ferrara fade into insignificance when compared with those of Olympia Morata, the most remarkable of the many remarkable girls of Renaissance Italy. Her father, Fulvio Peregrino Morato, had been tutor to the sons of Alfonso d'Este and Lucrezia Borgia, and, after a period of exile spent in Venice, became one of the most admired lecturers at the university, and she herself lectured there at the age of sixteen, in the Latin tongue. As one of her learned listeners exclaimed with enthusiasm,

Young girls of your age amuse themselves by gathering spring flowers and weaving them into many-coloured garlands; but you disdain these blossoms of a day, you who gather in the garden of the Muses unfading garlands, whose divine property it is to renew their beauty year by year!

Olympia had lived among scholars from her infancy; the great poets and philosophers of Greece and Rome had been her playfellows, and she had prattled in Greek and Latin almost before she could speak her native Italian plainly. Her father and his friends delighted in her quick intelligence, and, says her French biographer, M. Jules Bonnet, her name "was not slow in penetrating beyond the modest limits of the paternal roof." Among those whom reports of her gifts and acquirements interested most was Renée, Duchess of Ferrara, daughter of Louis XII of France, a plain-featured and intellectual princess with strong leanings towards the doctrines of Calvin. Her eldest daughter, Anna d'Este, was five years younger than Olympia, but had begun betimes to grapple with Demosthenes and Cicero, and the Duchess considered that the companionship of a young girl well versed in the classics would at once enliven the lessons of the little princess and spur her on to fresh efforts.

## IN RENAISSANCE ITALY AND FRANCE

Olympia was therefore removed from "the modest limits of the paternal roof" to the palace of Ferrara, where the two youthful students seem to have spent the greater part of their time poring over their books, enjoying by way of relaxation an occasional impromptu debate or literary improvisation. Olympia at the age of fourteen composed an Apologia for Cicero, while her royal friend translated the *Fables of Æsop*. Not only did the daughter of Fulvio Morato herself write Greek verse, she was a cause of Greek verse in others. Lilio Giraldi, a Ferrarese scholar, also declared in choice Latin that the friendship of this illustrious maiden cheered his gloomy old age and even made him forget the pangs of gout!

Renée of Ferrara is one of the earliest of those living links which joined the Renaissance to the Reformation. On the one hand, she encouraged the study of the pagan classics; on the other, she befriended men like Calvin and Clément Marot. In her immediate *entourage* were professors of the Reformed faith as well as exponents of antique philosophy, and the most brilliant of the fine spirits who came under her strong, austere influence followed whither she led. This was Olympia Morata, who soon added the study of the Bible to that of Plato and Cicero, though it is true that at first the contrast between Hebrew and Hellenic literature struck her as being very much in favour of the Hellenes. Some Greek verses upon the death of Cardinal Bembo were in a sense her farewell to the antique world; thenceforward her allegiance was gradually transferred from Plato to Calvin, from Greece to Geneva. After her father's death Olympia, suddenly and most unjustly deprived of princely favour, married a young German student at the University of Ferrara and followed him to perpetual exile from her beloved Italy under the grey



## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

skies of the north. There she died at the age of twenty-nine, dreaming on her deathbed of innumerable flowers, not "the unfading garlands of the Muses" but the many-coloured blossoms that she had gathered in her Muse-haunted youth in the meadows by the Po.

Between 1494, when Charles VIII invaded Italy, and 1525, when the Emperor Charles V defeated François I at the battle of Pavia, the tide of the Renaissance was setting steadily northward. At the Court of François the French poets tuned their lyres to Greek and Roman measures, and the French sculptors and painters replaced Gothic tracery with Græco-Roman masks and scrolls, Christian saints and sages with pagan goddesses and philosophers, pointed arches with colonnades, while the ladies of the French royal house, according to their several dispositions, wrote merry tales and patronized courtly poets, or chanted Calvinistic psalms and befriended bearded Reformers. Political and military events in Italy had helped this northward trend. Rome had been sacked in 1527 by the mutinous invading forces under the Constable of Bourbon, when Pope Clement VII had fled in disguise from the castle of St Angelo. His flight placed in peril the last direct descendant of the house of Medici, to which he himself belonged, the eight-year-old Catherine, orphan daughter of Lorenzo de' Medici, Duke of Urbino, and Madeleine de la Tour-d'Auvergne, upon whose youthful head the destiny of kings and kingdoms already hung.

Clement VII, then almost the sole kinsman of this child on the Medici side, was her grandfather's cousin—not a very close relationship. At the time of her birth, followed within a month by the deaths of both her parents, the Cardinal de' Medici—as he then was—had hurried to Florence, assumed the guardianship of the infant Catherine, and taken her back

## IN RENAISSANCE ITALY AND FRANCE

with him to Rome, where her great-uncle, Leo X, still filled with his ample form the Chair of St Peter. She was only two years old when Leo died, too young to remember the genial presence of that great lover of learning, good living, music, and the chase, and when she was six she was sent back to Florence, so that she should be in a position of comparative security if wars and tumults were to result from the alliance concluded between the Pope and François I against the Emperor Charles V. This inscrutable little Italian girl, with the finely modelled hands and the sharply receding chin, was to be another link in the historic chain, not this time connecting the Reformation and the Renaissance, but binding Italy to France. Herself half French, half Italian, and used from her childhood as a pawn in the great political game, she was destined to play an important part in European history, sometimes with and sometimes against Elizabeth of England, sometimes with but more often against Philip of Spain.

Her childhood, clouded by the loss of her parents, the downfall of her powerful kinsman the Pope, and the consequent unpopularity of the house of Medici with her own people, the Florentines, was spent chiefly in being transferred from one nunnery to another, sometimes for her own security, sometimes as a hostage, sometimes as a piece of political currency which had for the moment lost its value. She was never brought under those illuminating and enlarging influences which moulded the intelligence and the character of her French and Italian contemporaries among girls of royal descent. At the age of eleven she had decided to take the veil, but one year later, when the wheel of fortune had turned again and Clement VII was once more a power to be reckoned with, the youthful Duchess of Urbino

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

was withdrawn from the cloister, and the Venetian Ambassador sent this description of her to the Seignory of Venice:

The little Duchess is of a rather vivacious nature, but shows an amiable disposition. She was educated by the nuns of the Convent of the Murate, in Florence, ladies of holy life and the most excellent reputation, and she has very good manners. She is small and thin, her face is not refined, and she has the big eyes belonging to the family of Medici.<sup>1</sup>

Another Ambassador had described her not long before as "fairly good-looking without the aid of any cosmetics," and had added that she was reputed to possess "a very acute and adroit mind for her age." All her life long Catherine de' Medici was able to balance the handicaps of her imperfect education by her flexibility and resourcefulness, her truly Medicean subtlety. She had many suitors, a Stuart king and a Tudor princeling among them, but the choice of her guardians fell upon Henri, Duke of Orleans, second son of François I. She was fourteen and a half and he thirteen days older than she when they were married at Marseilles in October 1533. The French regarded the match without enthusiasm, considering that the daughter of a family of Italian bankers was no mate for a son of France, and suspecting that the Pope had cheated in the matter of Catherine's dowry; but as Henri was not then heir-apparent popular discontent did not become insistent. Three years later the death of the Dauphin placed the Duke of Orleans in the direct succession to the throne, and Catherine entered upon that long, tortuous career of intrigue which ended only with her death.

Young though she was, and little versed in the ways of

<sup>1</sup> A very attractive little scion of the Medici family was Maria, daughter of Catherine's distant kinsman Cosimo I, Duke of Florence, whose portrait by Bronzino is in the Uffizi Gallery at Florence.



A LITTLE DAUGHTER OF THE MEDICI

A. Bronzino

*Photo Aiminari*



MARY STUART AT THE AGE OF SIXTEEN

"When she reached her fifteenth year her beauty began to shine forth like the noonday sun."—BRANTÔME.

From a drawing by Louisa Costello, after the original painting at Hardwicke Hall.

## IN RENAISSANCE ITALY AND FRANCE

Courts, this Italian interloper showed consummate tact in her first step, which was to win the goodwill of her imposing father-in-law, François I. To please him she set herself to study Greek; to please him she followed the chase indefatigably, using a new type of saddle designed, said Court gossip, to give an occasional glimpse of her well-modelled foot and leg. To her ten children she was afterwards a devoted mother, supervising the affairs of the nursery with constant care, even dictating what ingredients were to be used in the preparation of the babies' *bouillon*; and she had miniature portraits of them painted in the little prayer-book which she wore hanging on a chain at her girdle. One of these portraits shows the twin princesses, Victoire and Jeanne, who did not survive their infancy, in swaddling-bands, peeping round the shoulder of their brother Charles, afterwards Charles IX.

Catherine de' Medici's life as Queen and as Queen-Mother of France does not concern us here, except in so far as it touched the lives of her young daughters, and of her young daughter-in-law, Mary, Queen of Scots. It is of interest, however, to recall at this point that the all-powerful Duke of Guise, the uncle of that daughter-in-law, was married to Anna d'Este, the one-time playfellow of the erudite Olympia Morata at the Ferrarese Court. The Duke's sister, Mary of Guise, was married to one of the princes who had at one time sought the hand of Catherine de' Medici, to wit, James V of Scotland, and their only surviving child, Mary Stuart, became Queen of Scots by the death of her father when she was hardly more than a week old. Looking northward with his little, crafty, sandy-lashed eyes, Henry VIII of England decided that here was the bride predestined by Providence for his only son, Edward, Prince of Wales. That section of

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

Scottish opinion which favoured the Reformation favoured this match; but those Scots who were faithful to the old religion and to the traditional alliance with France regarded Henry as a pestilent heretic and England as a neighbour whose friendship was more to be distrusted than her enmity. The unreasonable demands of the Tudor King perturbed even his friends in Scotland. He desired that the infant Mary, who was the grandchild of his sister Margaret Tudor as well as the potential wife of his son, should be transferred to his keeping, and all the principal Scottish fortresses garrisoned with his own men: and it is certain that in the event of the child's death he would have made an attempt to take over "the whole rule, dominion, and government of Scotland." His most useful tool among the Scots was the regent, the Earl of Arran.

Mary of Guise had very different plans, but, surrounded by pro-English nobles, she found it necessary to dissemble for a time. She allowed Henry's envoy to see her baby unswaddled, that he might judge for himself how false were the rumours that she was a sickly thing, unlikely to live; and she professed herself greatly flattered by the honour which Henry proposed to confer upon the little Queen of Scots. The negotiations, conducted with more adroitness than good faith on both sides, were complicated and long-drawn-out, but in the end they broke down. Even those Scots who had previously inclined towards the English match were infuriated and alarmed by Henry's policy. In 1543 Cardinal Beaton, its chief opponent, was confirmed by the Scottish Parliament in the office of Lord Chancellor of Scotland, and the old alliance with France was formally renewed. After the death of Henry and the accession to power of the Protestant party in England the refusal of that Parliament to

## IN RENAISSANCE ITALY AND FRANCE

make good the undertaking given by the Regent Arran to the dead King that the little Queen of Scots should be the wife of Edward, now Edward VI, led to the outbreak of war between the two countries, and to the defeat of the Scots at Pinkie Cleugh, near Musselburgh, on September 10, 1547. Meanwhile Henri, the husband of Catherine de' Medici, had succeeded his father on the throne of France, and the two powerful uncles of the five-year-old Queen, François, Duke of Guise, and the Cardinal of Lorraine, had begun to use their influence to bring about a marriage between the heiress of Scotland and the new Dauphin, a month and eleven days younger than she. French demands were, however, hardly less sweeping than those of the English had been, and it seemed as if Scotland would have to choose between being absorbed by England or annexed by France. Storms were already brewing over the unconscious head of the little dark-eyed girl spending her first years in the ancient castle of Stirling. Few anecdotes of these years have been preserved; we know that she had three clerical tutors, the parish priest of Inchmahome, the canon of the chapel royal at Stirling, and the parson of Balmaclellan; that she suffered from measles and chicken-pox; and that already the four famous Maries, Fleming, Livingstone, Seton, and Beaton, formed part of her household.

In July 1548 Mary, Queen of Scots, left her native land, and set sail for the land of France, which she was to love so well and regret so long. She disembarked at the little rocky harbour of Roscoff, in Brittany, and was first lodged in the *château* of Orleans, with her future sister-in-law and play-fellow, the princess Elizabeth of France. The French King and Queen fell in love with her at first sight. "She is," wrote Henri II, "the most perfect child I have ever seen." "Our



## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

little Queenlet (*reINETTE*) of Scotland," declared Catherine de' Medici, "has only to smile in order to turn the heads of all Frenchmen." One of the "Frenchmen" whose heads she turned was the Dauphin, of whom the Venetian Ambassador reported, "The Dauphin loves her Most Serene Highness the little Queen of Scotland very much. She is a very lovely little girl. Sometimes it happens that with their arms round each other they go away into a corner of the room so that no one may hear their childish confidences."

The Court of France was at that time the most brilliant in Europe. There were all the graces, splendours, charms, and marvels of the French Renaissance concentrated and summed up. Harder, shallower, more artificial, than the Italian Renaissance, its colours had an enamel-like glitter, and its landscapes were either formal gardens or wide parks, places sacred to conversation, dancing, and the chase. Great poets, great sculptors, painters only a little less than great, added to the glory of the French monarch. His palaces still stand, the most lordly pleasure-houses ever built for the soul—and the body—of a king. Though less intellectual than his father, Henri II was a true child of his age, and he saw to it that his children were educated as befitted the sons and daughters of the most enlightened prince in Christendom. Mary Stuart was brought up with them, sharing their studies and their sports, and keeping pace with her favourite Elizabeth, the most charming of the French princesses.

In the Bibliothèque Nationale are preserved some of the Latin exercises written by Mary when she was twelve years old. Most of these are in the form of letters to Elizabeth, and contain abstracts of her lessons for the day. It has been suggested that the originals were written in French by her tutor, and that her task was to translate them into Latin, but

## IN RENAISSANCE ITALY AND FRANCE

there are personal touches, such as allusions to hunting the fallow deer and suffering from toothache, which must surely have been introduced by Mary herself. The erudition displayed is almost overwhelming, and the scriptural, mythological, and historical characters introduced are many and diverse. We meet Apelles, Argus, Æsop, Cicero, Plutarch, Pluto, Nero, Socrates, Pythagoras, and Erasmus. We are edified by frequent quotations from pagan and from pious philosophers. One group of letters is stuffed with the names of learned and literary ladies of antiquity, among whom are to be found Deborah, Cassandra, Erinna, Sappho, the Mother of the Gracchi, and Istrina, Queen of Scythia, who, according to Herodotus, taught Greek to her son Sylus. "Remember carefully all those whom I name to you," Mary exhorts her young friend, "so that you may be able to reply to the people who despise our sex, and who say it is not a woman's province to know Latin."

A little over a year later she herself was "able to reply to those people," as Pierre de Brantôme bears witness:

When she reached her fifteenth year, her beauty began to shine forth like the noonday sun, which it surpassed in brightness. As for her mind, it was equal in beauty to her body: for she was well versed in Latin, and when she was between thirteen and fourteen years old she delivered a public oration in Latin before the King and Queen and the whole Court in the great hall of the Louvre, maintaining and upholding against the common opinion that it was becoming in women to be skilful in the liberal arts and sciences. . . . As long as she remained in France she set aside two hours of every day for study, and there was no branch of human knowledge upon which she could not admirably discourse. . . . She had, moreover, this perfection, the better to enchant all men—a most beautiful voice. She sang sweetly, keeping time to her lute,

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

which she played in masterly wise with that lovely white hand of hers, whose delicately tapered fingers were comparable to the rosy fingers of Dawn.

It is a little difficult for us to understand why Mary's contemporaries thought her so beautiful. Her portraits do not conform either to classical or to modern standards of beauty: the plucked eyebrows, the shaved forehead, the tightly frizzed hair, the strangling ruff, the stiff steel corsets, make it impossible for us to imagine her as she really was. Yet the young girl who won every heart at the Court of France, and kept all she had won, must have been one of the most radiant and enchanting creatures that ever were "remarkable beneath the visiting moon." As Chaucer said of Blanche the Duchess,

... I dar seye  
That she was lyk to torché bright  
That every man may take of light<sup>1</sup>  
Ynogh, and hit hath never the lesse.

<sup>1</sup> may take light from.

## CHAPTER VIII

### IN TUDOR ENGLAND

**T**HE Renaissance, having crossed the Alps into France, crossed the Channel into England; but first it had overflowed westward into Spain. For various reasons Spain did not prove as receptive as were the more northerly countries to prove themselves. For one thing Spanish culture was largely Islamic in origin; the Moors were still established in Granada when the Ottoman Turks captured Constantinople—it was not until 1492 that Ferdinand the Catholic, King of Aragon, overwhelmed the last stronghold of the Moors in Spain—and Islam has never taken colour from any other civilization. For another that part of the Spanish peninsula which was not under non-Christian domination was passionately and austere Christian and Catholic. Yet it was through the coming of a Spanish Princess to England that Renaissance influences were brought definitely to bear upon the upbringing and education of English girls.

This Princess was Katharine of Aragon, the youngest daughter of Ferdinand the Catholic and Isabel of Castile, and she came to England in her sixteenth year as the affianced bride of Arthur, Prince of Wales, eldest son of Henry VII. From her childhood she had been under the eye of her very remarkable mother, who had set herself to learn Latin thoroughly in the midst of all the duties and responsibilities of a Queen Regnant, and who was a far-seeing patroness of learned men. Katharine therefore was the most

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

accomplished princess who had ever set foot on English ground. During the twenty-four years that she occupied the hazardous if magnificent position of Queen Consort to Henry VIII the spirit of the Renaissance became powerful in England. Henry was himself no mean scholar, and he fostered learning with a zeal worthy of his grandmother, the Lady Margaret of pious memory, and his elder brother, Katharine's boy-husband, who had survived their marriage only six months, had bidden fair to be a prince as bookish as he, and much less hot-willed.

It was the third child and eldest daughter of Henry and Katharine for whose benefit was written the first Renaissance treatise on the education of girls which was circulated in her redoubtable father's realm. Mary, born in 1516, was during her babyhood and early childhood the delight and pride of both her parents. She was seven years old when a Spanish scholar, Juan Luis Vives, who had distinguished himself at the Universities of Paris and Louvain, came to England, and was by Queen Katharine chosen as the director of the studies of the little Princess, for whose benefit he drew up a plan of lessons and composed a treatise called *De Institutione Christianiæ Feminæ—Of the Upbringing of a Christian Woman*.

Vives, in his preface, remarks that Cyprian, Jerome, Ambrose, and other Fathers of the Christian Church, though they exhort young maidens to virtue and chastity, "write but few precepts and rules how to live," and this omission it is his purpose to repair. He begins with the upbringing of the Christian woman from her cradle, and his counsels resemble strikingly the advice given by Jerome to Læta more than a thousand years before. The stress which he lays upon the influence of the father and mother is interesting in view of

## IN TUDOR ENGLAND

the family which he had in mind when he wrote. Towards her seventh year the little girl should "learn her book," and beside that, to handle wool and flax, "for the dressing of wool hath ever been an honest occupation for a good woman." She must learn to cook, and not despise the work of the kitchen. Her kinsfolk will love her all the better if she is able to prepare delicate dishes for them when they are sick!

When he passes on to deal with the learning which is to be got out of books he alludes to a very remarkable group of Tudor girls, the daughters of Sir Thomas More, whose better acquaintance we shall shortly make, but he is of a much sterner temper than gentle, genial Sir Thomas, and if Katharine of Aragon had applied all his austere principles to the training of the little princess she and Vives might have been held responsible for the narrow, intense, inflexible character of Mary Tudor, first Queen Regnant of England. The Spanish moralist frowns upon the presence of ladies at jousts and tournaments, though in this matter at least Queen Katharine, we know, was not guided by him; he will not allow the young girl to hear love-songs sung or to read romances. Away with Amadis of Gaul, Lancelot du Lac, Floris and Blancheflour, Pyramis and Thisbe, Guy of Warwick, and Bevis of Hampton! "What delight can be in those things that be so plain and foolish lies!" Cicero and Seneca, St Jerome and the Holy Scriptures, are much more suitable reading for a young gentlewoman. Even upon holy days she must not play, or sit idle, or chatter with her friends; on her return from church she should apply herself to some pious book and "think of God, and this life of ours, and the life in heaven that is to come."

The diet of this girl is to be plain and simple, without

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

“potages, sauces or sops,” not spiced with rich spices, and her drink is to be clear water, though, like Jerome, Vives allows a little wine on the authority of Paul’s epistle to Timothy. “A cup of water was sent to Elias from heaven to refresh him with, and yet might God have sent from heaven partridges and pheasants and capons and marchpains.”<sup>1</sup> None of these dainties is to be conceded to the girl-child. Her bed must not be too soft, nor her raiment too delicate, but both must be scrupulously clean. She is not to sleep over-long; she is not to play at cards or dice. The sixteenth-century equivalent of lipstick is, of course, strictly taboo, and even perfumes come under the ban of this rigid moralist. As for dancing, “what holy woman did we ever read of that was a dancer?”

All these things smack more of primitive asceticism or post-Reformation Puritanism than of the Renaissance. It is rather in his insistence upon the importance of what we should now call ‘a classical education’ that Vives shows himself to be a true child of his age. He would have the little Tudor girl taught Latin and Greek betimes, and that thoroughly, with great attention to pronunciation, etymology, grammar, and style; she should be able both to speak and to write easily in Latin from her early years. As light reading she is allowed the *Utopia* of Sir Thomas More, and even—which is a little surprising—certain of the pagan poets, including Lucan and Horace. Mary profited by her studies. When she was scarcely twelve years of age she could read, write, and construe Latin, and had translated a prayer of St Thomas Aquinas out of Latin into English with grace and precision.

This most tragically fated of all Tudor girls remained in

<sup>1</sup> Marzipan.

## IN TUDOR ENGLAND

high favour with her father even after his heart had passed into the unworthy keeping of Anne Boleyn, and it was her steady refusal either to recognize Anne as her lawful step-mother or Anne's child Elizabeth as her legitimate sister which so enraged the tyrant that he began a course of oppression and cruelty which continued until Queen Katharine Parr, the last of his wives, interceded with him for the hapless daughter of the first. The precepts of Vives were not systematically applied to the upbringing of Mary, for she took part in dances, masques, and mummings at Greenwich Palace and elsewhere, and on one occasion was seen by the French ambassador to dance a pavan with her broad-shouldered and broad-footed sire. Her happy days ended before she was fourteen. Thereafter she had to face a series of dangers and affronts such as few young girls have been called upon to endure, resisting with dignity and courage Henry's efforts to make her bow to his dread will. She was disinherited after the birth of Elizabeth, and compelled for a time to act as a sort of unofficial maid-of-honour to the red-haired baby who had supplanted her. There was, however, this rather dismal comfort for the people who were made to suffer by the caprices of the second Tudor: so long as they contrived to keep their heads upon their shoulders they might hope to see his moods transformed and his decisions reversed. This Mary was to see more than once: in 1536, when Anne Boleyn's downfall eclipsed the infant star of Elizabeth, and again in 1544, when an Act of Parliament—tantamount then to an action on the part of the sovereign—recognized her as next heir to the throne after Edward, Prince of Wales, passing over not only Elizabeth, but any children Henry *might* have by Katharine Parr.

A letter written by Lady Bryan to Thomas Cromwell not



## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

long after Anne Boleyn's execution throws a vivid light upon the conditions under which Henry's second daughter was then living at Hunsdon. Lady Bryan was the child's 'governess'—in such cases this means also guardian and general protectress—and her task was not easy, for her charge was kept short of clothes and other necessaries, and her authority was disputed by a certain Mr Shelton, a kinsman of the dead Queen, who probably wished to ingratiate himself with the lively three-year-old on the off chance that some future turn of fortune's wheel might bring her, if not to the throne, at least back into royal favour. The harassed lady writes to Wolsey's successor in the King's confidence:

Now it is so, my Lady Elizabeth is put from that degree she was afore, and what degree she is of now I know not but by hearsay. Therefore I know not how to order her, nor myself, nor none of hers that I have the rule of—that is, her women and grooms, beseeching you to be good lord<sup>1</sup> to my lady, and to all hers: and that she may have some raiment. For she hath neither gown, nor kirtle, nor petticoat, nor no manner of linen, nor smocks, nor kerchiefs, nor rails,<sup>2</sup> nor body-stitchets,<sup>3</sup> nor handkerchiefs, nor sleeves, nor mufflers,<sup>4</sup> nor biggens.<sup>5</sup> All these her Grace must take I have driven off as long as I can, that by my troth I can drive it off no longer. . . . My lord, Mr Shelton would have my Lady Elizabeth to dine and sup every day at the board of estate. Alas! my lord, it is not meet for a child of her age to keep such rule yet. I promise you, my lord, I dare not take it upon me to keep her Grace in health an she keep that rule. For there she shall see divers meats, and fruits, and wine, which it would be hard for me to restrain her Grace from. . . .

God knoweth my lady hath great pain with her great teeth,

<sup>1</sup> Cromwell had in the year of Anne Boleyn's fall been created Baron Cromwell of Oakham.

<sup>2</sup> nightgowns.    <sup>3</sup> corsets.    <sup>4</sup> mob-caps.    <sup>5</sup> nightcaps.

## IN TUDOR ENGLAND

and they come very slowly forth, which causeth me to suffer her Grace to have her will more than I would.

Elizabeth's education was not neglected, however short she may at one time have been kept of "rails" and "biggens," but the extent of her learning was probably exaggerated in after-years by courtly enthusiasts. She knew Latin well, and 'had' some Greek; she early developed a flowery and ornate English style, thick-sprinkled with images and metaphors; but her knowledge was not profound; she was capable of misquoting, and of attributing her quotations to the wrong source; and there was in her culture a certain element of what would now be called 'window-dressing.' If her knowledge lacked profundity her character did not. During a girlhood spent in a position of constant difficulty and frequent danger she seems never to have lost her astuteness, her presence of mind—or her faculty for flattering the people upon whom her safety hung, whether they happened to be her Protestant half-brother Edward and *his* councillors or her Catholic half-sister Mary and *hers*.

We have seen how approvingly Juan Luis Vives alluded to the womenfolk of the family of Sir Thomas More, and they certainly formed a very remarkable group. More had intended to translate the treatise of Vives into English, and abandoned the intention only when he learned that his daughters' tutor, Richard Hyrde, had already applied himself to the task. Vives knew More personally, and had been a witness of the charming comradeship uniting him to those daughters Margaret, Elizabeth, and Cecilia, and their kinswoman, Margaret Giggs, though it is from Erasmus, from More's son-in-law William Roper, and his great-grandson Cresacre More that we learn most about that household at Chelsea so vividly traced by the pencil and the brush of

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

Holbein. More's house has vanished, only a fragment of one of its walls remaining now, embedded in the wall of the Moravian cemetery; of his garden, where Henry once loved to walk with him, only one mulberry-tree survives; Holbein's painting of him and his family has been lost: but while



THE FAMILY OF SIR THOMAS MORE

After a sketch by Holbein.

Holbein's preliminary sketch for that painting endures the inside of the house and the aspect of its inhabitants will never fall into oblivion.

Margaret, the eldest and best loved of Sir Thomas's daughters, is there seen seated at his feet, with an open book on her knee; Elizabeth stands with folded hands on the extreme left; Cecilia is close behind Margaret, and their kinswoman bends down towards More's aged father as if showing him a page in the book she holds.

## IN TUDOR ENGLAND

Sir Thomas took a lively interest in the studies of all four girls, and his friend Erasmus encouraged them by corresponding with them in Latin. All were good scholars, and Margaret Giggs, the 'poor relation,' married her tutor, Dr John Clement, who was as skilful in Greek as she was in Latin. But it was his "sweet Megg" of whom More was most proud. When he was absent, at the Court or elsewhere he wrote constantly to her,<sup>1</sup> sometimes late at night, and she as constantly to him. In his fatherly pride he could not resist the temptation to show "Megg's" letters to men such as the Bishop of Exeter and Reginald Pole, the future Cardinal. The Bishop was particularly appreciative, as More relates in a letter to his "dearest daughter Margarett."

It happened me this evening to sitt with John, Lo. Bishop of Exeter, a learned man and, by all men's judgment, a most sincere man. As we were talking together and I taking out of my pocket a paper which was to the purpose we were talking about, I pulled out by chance therewith your letter. The handwriting pleasing him, he took it from me and looked on it: when he perceived it by the salutation to be a woman's he beganne more greedily to read it, noveltie inviting him thereunto. But when he had read it, and understood that it was your writing . . . why should I not report what he sayd unto me? So pure a stile, so good Latine, so eloquent, so full of sweete affections, he was marvellously ravished with it.

More was then moved to show the good prelate certain verses and discourses of Margaret's composition; he was a notoriously untidy man, and no doubt the pockets of his ill-fitting garments were bulging with manuscripts from the

<sup>1</sup> It will be remembered that the last letters written by More from the Tower, painfully traced with a piece of coal, were addressed to his "derlyng Megg."

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

quills of the learned young gentlewomen of Chelsea. He says that the Bishop, after many words of praise,

forthwith drew out of his pockett a Portugué,<sup>1</sup> the which you shall receive enclosed herein. I could not possibly shune the taking of it, but he would needs send it unto you, as a sign of his dear affection towards you, although by all means I endeavoured to give itt him againe.

After that More felt that he could not very well produce examples of the scholarship of his other two daughters, lest the Bishop should feel it incumbent upon him to send "a Portugué," or some other token of his regard, to each.

It was not only among those who were staunch in the old faith that the educational ideals of Renaissance scholars were accepted and applied. The gentlewomen of the later Tudor period were often very good scholars, and even among the middle and lower classes girls had opportunities to escape from total illiteracy. For example, the statutes of Banbury Grammar School excluded girls over nine years of age, which suggests that there must have been some very youthful ones who *were* admitted, and in the Harrow Rules (1590) it is specifically laid down that "no girls shall be received to be taught in the school." It has also been suggested that Holofernes, the schoolmaster in Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost*, taught pupils of both sexes. Yet it is among the upper classes that we must look for outstanding examples of learned girls, and we shall find the exemplar of them all in Lady Jane Grey, great-niece of Henry VIII and for nine days Queen of England. Roger Ascham's famous description of a visit he paid to her at Bradgate, in Leicester-

<sup>1</sup> A Portuguese gold coin, of such value and rarity that in Elizabeth's reign coiners took much trouble to counterfeit it.

## IN TUDOR ENGLAND

shire, has been often quoted, but without it no study of the Tudor girl would be complete.

Her parents, the Duke and Duchess, with all the household, gentlemen and gentlewomen, were hunting in the Park: I found her in her chamber, reading *Phædon Platonis* in Greek, and that with as much delight as some gentlemen would read a merry tale in Boccace. After Salutation and duty done, with some other talk, I asked her why she would lose such pastime in the Park; smiling she answered me, "I wisse all their sport in the Park is but a shadow to that pleasure that I find in Plato. Alas, good folk, they never felt what true pleasure meant." "And how came you, madam," quoth I, "to this deep knowledge of pleasure?" "I will tell you," quoth she, "and tell you a truth which perchance ye will marvel at. One of the greatest benefits that ever God gave me is that He sent me so sharp and severe parents, and so gentle a schoolmaster. For when I am in presence of either father or mother, whether I speak, keep silence, sit, stand, or go, eat, drink, be merry or sad, be sewing, playing, dancing, or doing anything else, I must do it, as it were, in such weight, measure, and number, even so perfectly as God made the world, or else I am so sharply taunted, so cruelly threatened, yea, presently with pinches, nips, and bobs . . . that I think myself in hell till time come that I must go to Mr Elmer; who teacheth me so gently, so pleasantly, with such fair allurements to learning, that I think all the time nothing while I am with him."

The "Mr Elmer" here mentioned was John Aylmer, afterwards Bishop of London, who did not in his latter years show much of that gentleness that charmed Lady Jane. If her accomplishments were all acquired from him he must have been a person of unusual erudition, for we are told that she understood both the Platonic and Aristotelian philosophies, Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Chaldee, Arabic, French,

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

and Italian. "She had," says good old Fuller, "the innocence of childhood, the beauty of youth, the solidity of middle and the gravity of old age . . . the birth of a princess, the learning of a clerk, the life of a saint, yet the death of a malefactor for her parents' offences."

One of the curious features in daily life noted by visitors to Tudor England was the national habit of sending children, both boys and girls, to be educated in other families than their own. In the commercial classes this habit was a part of the system of apprenticeship, which necessitated the handing over of the child to the master or mistress from whom it was to learn the craft or 'mystery' which would afterwards be its means of livelihood. In Elizabeth's reign

Even girls of well-to-do families were often bound apprentice, not so much, it appears, in order to learn a trade as for the sake of the general education and discipline which apprenticeship afforded. At Bristol the emoluments are fuller than is often the case, and from them it can be learnt that though the girls, like the boys, were bound for seven years, and were to be given "meat, drink, lodging, apparel, both linnen and woollen, and all other things necessary and convenient for an apprentice," and at the end of their term double apparel and a small sum of money, yet in their case it is usually added that they were to be "brought up in all things belonging to a servant-maid."<sup>1</sup>

In the upper classes this 'boarding-out' habit was partly a survival of the medieval practice of placing boys as pages in the house of some prince, noble, or knight, and girls as companions to the little daughters of families slightly higher in rank than their own. Margaret Giggs, though she was related in blood to the More family, and shared the studies of the three daughters of Sir Thomas, obviously acted as a sort of

<sup>1</sup> *English Apprenticeship and Child Labour*, by Jocelyn Dunlop.

## IN TUDOR ENGLAND

'maid-companion' to Margaret, Elizabeth, and Cecilia, and when she married made a much less distinguished match than they. A certain Sir Robert Plympton did not scruple to place his daughter by his first marriage in a sort of semi-menial position in the household of his second wife's mother. A letter from this girl to her father has been preserved in which she tells him that she had sent him "dyverse messuages and wrytings," one of them asking him to send for her to come home, "but had never answeare agane."

Wherefore yt is thought in these partes by those persones that list better to say ill than good that ye have litle favour unto me; the which error ye may now quench yf yt will like you to be so good and kynd father unto me. Also I besech you to send me a fine hatt and some good cloth to make me some kevercheffes. And thus I besech Jesu to have you in his blessed keeping to his pleasure and your hart's desire and comforth. Wryten at the Hyrste,<sup>1</sup> this XVIII day of Maye

By your loving daughter

DORYTHE PLOMPTON

One hopes that Sir Robert did not fail to send the "fine hatt"! From the fact that her name is not mentioned in his will it appears that either "Dorythe" did not survive her father or that she was not on good terms with him when he made it.

Another result of the 'boarding-out' practice referred to above was the gradual rise of independent and often amateurish schoolmistresses who received girls for instruction in their houses and so laid the foundations of the boarding-school, which in the succeeding century was quite a flourishing institution in England.

<sup>1</sup> Temple Hirst, in Yorkshire.



## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

One of the most picturesque young girls of Elizabeth's time was Grainne O'Mailley, an Irish sea-queen, the daughter of Owen O'Mailley of the Black Oak, Lord of the Isles of Arran, a gentleman of very ancient family and a notorious pirate. The name Grainne means 'ugly,' and it was certainly chivalrous of the English, who were first her foes and afterwards her allies, to render it as Grace. Like the ill-fated skipper of the schooner *Hesperus*, Owen O'Mailley used to take "his little daughter to bear him company," and Grainne at an early age gained a practical first-hand knowledge of seamanship and of the pirates' trade. When her father died she was nineteen, very dark, of gigantic stature, with a personality that bore all before it. Setting aside the claims of her brother to take command of the pirate fleet, she herself stepped into the place of the departed chieftain. Although the majority of her vessels were wicker coracles of the most primitive type, she did so much damage to English shipping that the English, after setting a price on her head, were fain to enter into an alliance with her. The fact that she had devoted a good deal of her attention to Spanish merchantmen trading wine for salt no doubt gave England a bias in her favour! Tradition says that Grainne afterwards came to London, and was received in audience by Elizabeth.

Unfortunately tradition does not state at which of the royal palaces the pirate-queen made her obeisance to the greatest of the Tudors, whether at Greenwich, Windsor, Oatlands, Richmond, Eltham, or at that fantastic building known as Nonsuch House. The Reverend William Harrison, Canon of Windsor, writes very appreciatively of the ladies of the Court in his *Description of England* (1577). He speaks of their "virtuous beauty and beauteous virtues"; commends

## IN TUDOR ENGLAND

their skill in sundry speeches,"<sup>1</sup> and describes how, while the "ancient ladies" do needlework, read the Scriptures, study history, make translations from the Latin, "the youngest sort in the meantime apply their lutes, citherns, prick-song,<sup>2</sup> and all kinds of music." So long as her maids of honour showed no disposition to marry Elizabeth seems to have treated them well, though some of them—for example, that unhappy young sprig of the Tudor tree Lady Catherine Grey—found her a somewhat harsh mistress.

A problem which both the "ancient ladies" and "the youngest sort" had to face every year was what gift would best please her Majesty at the time of Yule. Many of them solved it by offering her nightcaps, pillowslips, and counterpanes of fine stitchery, 'cut-work,' or silken embroidery sprinkled with spangles, made by their own hands. She who as a baby had lacked her due quota of 'biggens' had in her old age an incredible number of nightcaps, sparkling with many colours.

The position of poor Lady Catherine in the line of succession to the throne, through her descent from Mary, the younger sister of Henry VIII, probably gave Elizabeth a distrustful sense in her regard; but there was a still younger possible 'starter' in the field in the person of the Lady Arbella (sometimes incorrectly called Arabella) Stuart, who was descended from Margaret Tudor, the grandmother of Mary, Queen of Scots, through the marriage of Margaret's daughter<sup>3</sup> Lady Margaret Douglas with the Earl of Lennox. The son of this marriage, Charles Stuart, also Earl of Lennox,

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.*, languages.

<sup>2</sup> A song with the air printed with it in musical notation.

<sup>3</sup> The daughter of her second marriage, her husband being Archibald Douglas, Earl of Angus.

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

married Elizabeth Cavendish, and Arbella was their only child, born in 1575.

Genealogies are proverbially confusing and hard to disentangle, so it is sufficient to point out that Arbella, in whose veins was mingled the blood of the Tudor and Stuart dynasties, was an important little girl, and a source of anxiety to many interested people in England, Scotland, France, and Spain. She had a notable grandmother on either side. On her father's it was that Countess of Lennox who died so deeply in debt that Elizabeth was fain to pay for her funeral and for the stately monument set up to her in Henry VII's Chapel, that Countess who was also Mary, Queen of Scots' second mother-in-law, having succeeded Catherine de' Medici in that estate ten years before Arbella's birth. Lady Lennox, who died when the little girl was only three, bequeathed a casket of jewels to her to be handed to her when she should reach the age of fourteen. These included a jewel—probably a pendant—"set with a fair table diamond, a table ruby and an emerald with a fair great pearl," and a "clock set in crystal with a wolf of gold upon it." Arbella never received this bequest, and Elizabeth declared certain English estates which she might otherwise have inherited forfeit to the English Crown, as they had been settled upon heirs *male*.

On her mother's side Arbella's grandmother was that very masterful old lady Elizabeth, Countess of Shrewsbury, familiarly known as Bess of Hardwick, and noteworthy as an almost perfect illustration of the saying that "the grey mare is sometimes the better horse." Bess was four times married, and survived all her husbands, each of whom bequeathed her all his property. When Arbella was left an orphan at the age of seven Lady Shrewsbury took charge of



ARBELLA STUART

"She has a distinct look of her maternal grandmother, the redoubtable Bess."

*By courtesy of the Duke of Devonshire, from the original in his possession*

## IN TUDOR ENGLAND

her, obviously assuming that "her sweet jewel Arbel"—as she calls her in a letter to Lord Burghley—was heiress presumptive to the throne of England. The position was complicated by the fact that Lord Shrewsbury, the fourth and last of Bess's husbands, was for a time the gaoler chosen by the Queen to lodge and guard Arbella's captive aunt-by-marriage, the unfortunate Queen of Scots, herself the likeliest claimant in the event of Elizabeth's death.

Among these clashing claims and counter-claims Arbella grew up, an affectionate, precocious child. There is a picture of her at Hardwick, painted when she was still of an age<sup>1</sup> to clutch an elaborately dressed doll in her left hand, and in this earliest presentment she has a distinct look of her maternal grandmother, the redoubtable Bess, whose tightly compressed lips and steady eyes she seemed to have inherited. But such family resemblances are often fugitive, and by the time that she was sixteen Arbella's features had lost their firm contours, and she had become a Lennox Stuart, with the prominent eyes, the rather 'blobby' nose, and the receding chin of her uncle Henry, Lord Darnley.

When she was twelve years old she was presented at Court, not by Bess, who was out of favour for the moment in high places, but by her young uncle Charles Cavendish. The family were evidently anxious that Arbella's accomplishments should be paraded before the Queen, whose favour might determine her whole future fate and theirs, and who herself loved to pose as a prodigy of feminine learning. After the first interview Cavendish wrote, a little regretfully, "Her Majesty spake unto her, but not long, and examined her nothing touching her book," but he added in a more hopeful tone, "It is wonderful how she profiteth in her book, and

<sup>1</sup> Not yet two years old, according to the inscription on the picture itself.

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

I believe she will dance with exceeding good grace and can behave herself with great proportion to everyone in their degree." If Elizabeth was slightly non-committal the Lord Treasurer, the all-powerful Lord Burghley, had no such reserves. Cavendish writes concerning his niece:

She dined in the presence, but my Lord Treasurer bade her to supper; and at dinner, I dining with her and sitting over against her, he asked me whether I came with my niece or no? I said I came with her. Then he spake openly, and directed his speech to Sir Walter Rawley, greatly in her commendation, as that she had the French, the Italian, played of instruments, danced, wrought, and writ very fair. . . . At supper he made exceeding much of her; so did he the afternoon in his great chamber publicly.

It is obvious that shrewd old Burghley suspected some intention on Elizabeth's part to name Arbella her heir, and so, by excluding James VI, "keep out the Scots." If they could be kept out without endangering the Protestant succession or breaking the direct line of descent from Henry VII both Burghley and Sir Walter would be well disposed towards the step.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile Arbella did not forget her grandmother, and a letter she wrote to her about this time has survived.

GOOD LADY GRANDMOTHER,

I have sent your ladyship the endes of my heare which were cut the sixt day of the moone on Saturday last, and with them a pott of jelly which my servant made. I pray God you finde it good. My aunte Cavendissh was here on Monday last; she certified me of your ladyship's good health and dispositione, which I pray God longe to continue. I am in good

<sup>1</sup> It will be remembered that it was on a charge of conspiring to place Arbella on the throne that Raleigh was condemned to death in 1603, and when reprieved sentenced to lifelong imprisonment in the Tower.

## IN TUDOR ENGLAND

health. My cousin Mary hath had three little fittes of an agew, but now she is well and merry. This with my humble duty unto your ladyship, and humble thankes for the letter you sent me laste, and craveing your dayly blessinge, I humbly cease. Your ladyship's humble and obedient childe,

ARBELLA STEWART

Elizabeth's purpose—if she ever had such a purpose—was soon abandoned when she saw what a lodestar Arbella became to plotters and schemers all over Europe. It is true that she kept the girl much at Court, under her own eye, but this was probably to make sure that she should not escape abroad, submit to the Pope, marry a Catholic prince, and return at the head of a foreign fleet to claim the throne of England. That poor Arbella showed not the slightest personal inclination to do any of these things availed her little. Her star, after rising above the horizon and twinkling hopefully for a while, was in eclipse before she reached her eighteenth birthday.

Arbella probably saw several of Shakespeare's plays acted at Court, and may have seen the poet himself when, as a member of the Lord Chamberlain's company of players, he appeared before the Queen. It is worthy of note that though there are three baby girls in his plays, and any number of young girls upon whom the heroine's part devolves, there is no such thing as a *little* girl in any of them. There are little boys, and lifelike little boys too, but all the girls are either infants or marriageable maidens. Of the infants one, Perdita, actually appears upon the scene, and two, Juliet and Miranda, are described retrospectively, the first by her nurse, the second by her father. Helena does, however, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, give us a pretty glimpse of her childhood and Hermia's:

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

. . . Oh, is it all forgot?

All schooldays' friendship, childhood innocence?  
We, Hermia, like two artificial gods,  
Have with our needles<sup>1</sup> created both one flower,  
Both on one sampler, sitting on one cushion,  
Both warbling of one song, both in one key,  
As if our hands, our sides, voices, and minds,  
Had been incorporate. So we grew together,  
Like to a double cherry, seeming parted,  
But yet an union in partition;  
Two lovely berries moulded on one stem.

The young girls—most of them would now be regarded as little more than children—who play leading parts in *The Winter's Tale*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night*, fresh and charming though they be, have a certain force of character which makes them seem older than they are; this is true even of Perdita, the most childish of the company. Fear, danger, love, change of fortune, bring into high relief qualities which might otherwise have remained latent a little longer. It is not so with Anne Page in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* or Miranda in *The Tempest*. About both those young girls—neither more than sixteen years old—there floats a delicate atmosphere of unawakened youthfulness. "She has brown hair," observes Master Slender of sweet Anne Page, "and speaks small like a woman." Anne, one feels, had a retiring disposition, though Mrs Quickly's remarks about her "allicholy" were probably framed to encourage her admirer Master Fenton; she says very little, but we never conclude that this is because she has very little to say. As for Miranda, she is simply exquisite, and if, as has been suggested, Shakespeare took his own elder daughter as his model Susannah Shakespeare must indeed have been, like Nausicaa of old, "a flower among maidens."

<sup>1</sup> needles.



IN TUDOR ENGLAND

When Prospero is telling her for the first time the story of Antonio his brother's treachery he gives us—and her—a sudden vivid glimpse of her babyhood:

A treacherous army levied, one midnight  
Fated to the purpose did Antonio open  
The gates of Milan; and, i' th' dead of darkness,  
The ministers for the purpose hurried thence  
Me and thy crying self.

Like the dear creature that she is, Miranda, hearing how they were set adrift in an open boat, exclaims,

Alack, what trouble  
Was I then to you!

But Prospero answers quickly and tenderly,

Oh, a cherubin  
Thou wast, that did preserve me! Thou didst smile  
Infusèd with a fortitude from heaven,  
When I have deck'd the sea with drops full salt,  
Under my burthen groaned; which raised in me  
An undergoing stomach, to bear up  
Against what should ensue.

CHAPTER IX  
IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

WHEN that uncouth but well-meaning monarch, James VI of Scotland, and his fair-haired, sport-loving Danish wife came to take possession of the throne left vacant by Elizabeth they brought in their train three children, to fill the royal nurseries left more or less vacant since the days of Henry VIII and Elizabeth of York. The peculiar matrimonial arrangements of Henry VIII, the early death of Edward VI, the childlessness of Mary Tudor, the stubborn spinsterhood of Elizabeth, had combined to keep the royal palaces childless for nearly a century. Now there were two small princes and a small princess.

The 'boarding-out' system had taken a strong hold upon the Scottish social habits, and the Princess Elizabeth, the eldest daughter of King James, had early been placed in the care of a Scottish nobleman and his wife, Lord and Lady Livingstone. The household accounts record certain purchases made on her behalf, a hair-brush, quaintly described as "ane birst to straik her hair with," silk stockings, and "twa babies," or dolls, "for her to play with." She was seven years old when the great change in the fortunes of her family took place, and when she was handed over to Lord and Lady Harington, in whose care the greater part of her childhood was very happily spent. In an age when foolish mothers and nurses were lacing the waists of little girls to keep them slender, and forbidding them to walk or sit in the sunlight lest

## IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

their complexions should lose the pure, waxen pallor so much admired, Lady Harington must have been a woman of great good sense, for Elizabeth was allowed to lead a healthy, open-air life, and to develop early that passion for field-sports which was one of the strongest bonds between her and her beloved elder brother, Henry, Prince of Wales.

If this intelligent child had been born seventy or eighty years earlier she would probably have received an education worthy of her natural gifts; even as it was she ranked as an accomplished princess, though she knew more French than Latin, and could dance better than she could write English. She *could*, however, 'drop into poetry' on occasion, and the pious, slightly Puritanical tone of her youthful compositions must have delighted Prince Henry, himself a potential Square-toes of the more enlightened and scholarly type. From time to time she appeared at Court, a vivid, beautiful figure with her bright hazel eyes and her naturally waving dark auburn hair. She took part in the Masque of the Rivers held in June 1610 to celebrate the creation of her elder brother Prince of Wales, when their mother, wearing a huge silver shell on her head and seated on a throne of silver rocks, impersonated Tethys, and poor Arbella Stuart, not then finally fallen out of favour, was the nymph of the River Trent. Elizabeth herself was

The lovely nymph of stately Thames,  
The darling of the ocean.

That she possessed dauntless courage and a strong vein of pertinacity she proved two years later, when she tried to force her way in disguise to the bedside of her dying brother, from whose presence the physicians had debarred her and the Queen. At the age of sixteen she became the bride of

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

Frederick V, Elector Palatine of the Rhine, and so opened a chapter in her arduous and adventurous life which lies outside the scope of this book.

Anne of Denmark's love of masques and pageants was well known in England, and severely condemned by the Puritan element in the nation. It is thanks to this taste of hers, and to certain methods adopted in May 1617 to gratify it, that we are able to catch a glimpse of the very first boarding-school for girls ever established in England, the Ladies' Hall at Deptford. This school, planted in the very shadow of the royal palace at Greenwich, might with justice boast that it was "under distinguished patronage," for at least two of the pupils were god-daughters of the Queen, and one of them, Anne Chaloner, was the daughter of Sir Thomas Chaloner, Chamberlain to the Prince of Wales, afterwards Charles I.

The title of the masque was *Cupid's Banishment*, and it was written by one Robert White (probably the proprietor of the school), who took the part of Occasion—*i.e.*, Opportunity. He must have presented an imposing, if somewhat grotesque, spectacle in a rich garment embroidered with silver, a crimson mantle, a short cloak of tinsel, and a wig with "a long locke before and bald behind," in allusion to the difficulty of recalling Occasion when once it is past.

The time was still distant when women were to fill women's parts on the regular stage, and in 1617 nobody would think it at all curious that several obviously feminine rôles, such as that of Diana, and of Occasion herself, should be taken by men and boys. Diana was played by Master Richard Browne, aged twelve, whose son-in-law, John Evelyn, the diarist, preserved the programme and the text of the masque among his papers many years later, and thus handed down to us some

## IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

faint impression of the proceedings. "The young gentlewomen" took the parts of dryads and wood-nymphs,

attired all in green garments, the upper part close to their bodies, the lower, full and loose, with silver and carnation lace from the brest to the foote, their armes half naked with bracelets of berries about them; on their heads garlands with great variety of flowers, their hayre dissheveled, hanging careles aboute their shoulders bare, with puffs of tiffany round aboute, green pumps and gloves.

They performed very elaborate dances, in the course of which they so grouped themselves as to fashion the words *Anna Regina, Jacobus Rex, and Carolus P.*, but it is improbable that they took any share in the anti-masque, a rather riotous interlude wherein a corpulent, vine-crowned Bacchus enters "in a flesh-colour'd buckram," and his rout of tipsy tinkers, fiddlers, and swashbucklers provide what is evidently intended to be comic relief.

At the close of the masque proper Diana leads up to the Queen her two little god-daughters, who, kneeling, present to her Majesty examples of their needlework, one an acorn and the other a sprig of rosemary—for A.R.—embroidered in fine threads of silk. The epilogue, addressed to Anne of Denmark and recited by Occasion, ends thus:

Vouchsafe to shine upon our childish sports;  
Wee professe no stage, no Helicon,  
Our Muse is home-spunn, our action is our owne;  
Then, bright Goddess, with thy sweet smile grace all  
Our nymphs, Occasion, and our Ladies' Hall!

Two daughters were born to James and his Danish consort after they came to England: one, Mary, in 1605, the other, Sophia, in 1606. Both died in infancy and are buried in that nook of Henry VII's Chapel which Dean Stanley so happily

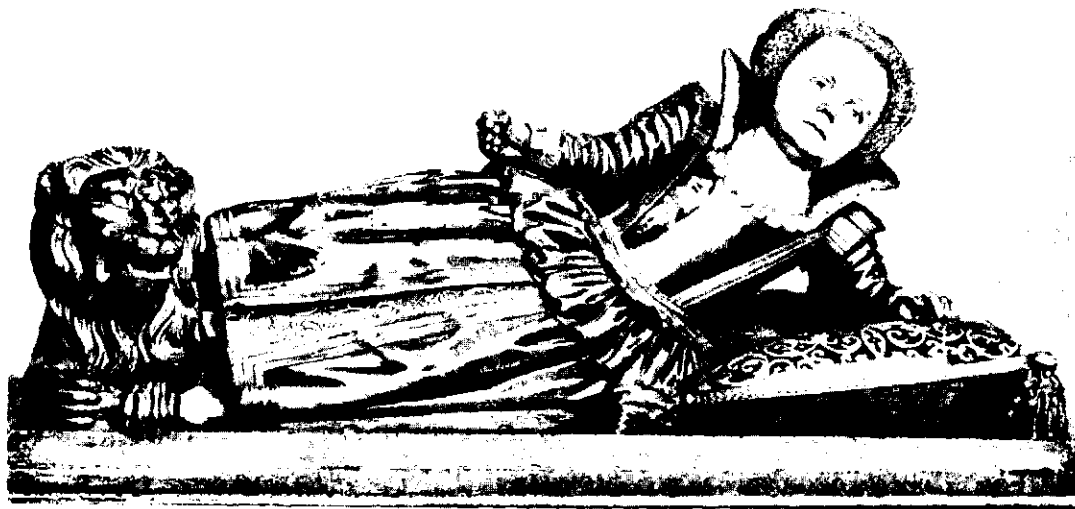
## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

called the Innocents' Corner, not far from the dust of their beautiful and unfortunate grandmother, Mary, Queen of Scots. The elder child, concerning whom James was wont to say that though he might not pray *to* the Virgin Mary he might pray *for* the Virgin Mary, spent the greater part of her brief life at Stanmore, in the care of her foster-parents, Lord and Lady Knevet. The Reverend Mr Leech, who preached the little girl's funeral sermon, vividly described her last moments. She had lain speechless for some time, in a high fever, when she raised herself upon her elbow, as she appears on her tomb, and "cried out, 'I go, I go!' and, fixing her eyes upon her nurses with a constant look, she repeated, 'Away I go!'" The younger Princess is represented as a baby in a very richly draped cradle, with a lace cap framing her small, chubby face.

Girls' schools continued to multiply all round London during the first half of the seventeenth century, Stepney, Hackney, Chelsea, Enfield, and Waltham, then pretty out-lying villages, being among the most favoured sites. In 1639 Sir Edward Nicholas had a daughter called Susannah at Mrs Freind's school in Stepney, and the Christmas quarter's bill was as follows:

For a payer of shooes . . . . .	. 00 01 10
For watchett sattin for her Sweet Bagg . . . . .	. 00 4 6
For Taffetic . . . . .	. 00 13 0
For Gold and Silver Lace . . . . .	. 00 18 10
For Silver Ribbon . . . . .	. 00 2 3
For an Ounce of Silver Thred . . . . .	. 00 5 4
For one Quarter for her Bord and teaching, due this Christmas, 1639 . . . . .	. 5 10 0
For her Washing and Starching at 8 <i>d.</i> ye weeke . . . . .	. 07 03 7

The entries for gold and silver ribbon and lace and silver



MARY, DAUGHTER OF JAMES I AND VI

"She raised herself upon her elbow, as she appears on her tomb, and cried out, 'I go, I go!'"

From her tomb in Westminster Abbey.



THE DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM AND HIS FAMILY

G. Honthorst

National Portrait Gallery



## IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

thread suggest that a large part of Susannah's time was devoted to what in the Victorian epoch would have been called 'fancy-work.' School-mistresses who were not themselves qualified to give instruction in more solid subjects salved their consciences and satisfied the parents of their pupils by teaching an enormous variety of more or less useless accomplishments. Hannah Woolley, left an orphan at the age of fourteen, started a small school, and for two years "was sole mistress thereof," after which she became a governess in the family first of one "Noble Lady" and then of another. She drew up a list of some twenty things in which she claimed especial skill: some of them, such as "healing any wounds not desperately dangerous" and "making Salves, Oyntments, Waters, Cordials," are decidedly practical, but others, the vast majority, sound almost exasperatingly futile. Among the twenty were:

Works wrought with a needle, all Transparent Works, Shell-work, Moss-work, also Cutting of Prints, also adorning Rooms or Cabinets or Stands with them.

All kinds of Beugle-works upon wyers or otherwise.

Rocks made of Shell or in Sweets.

Feathers of Crewel for the corners of Beds.

Setting out of Banquets.

All manner of Cookery.

Writing and Arithmetic.

Washing black or white Sarsnets.

Making Sweet Powders for the Hair or to lay among Linnen.

At a later stage in the scholastic career thus precociously begun Hannah extended her range. She learned French, "became acquainted with the Court," and "with a deportment suitable thereunto," and mastered "Courtly Phrases and Graces." When she married she and her husband started a boarding-school at Hackney, which seems to have flourished,

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

but as the pupils were boys and not girls most of her accomplishments were there superfluous.

Among the children who were at boarding-schools near London on the eve of the Civil War was Katherine Philips, who afterwards won some renown as a poetess, a dabbler in philosophy, and the correspondent of Dr Jeremy Taylor, Bishop of Down, and who was nicknamed by her admiring contemporaries the Matchless Orinda. At the age of eight Katherine was placed at Mrs Salmon's establishment in Hackney: there Aubrey the antiquary tells us that

She was very apt to learn, and made verses when she was at School; that she devoted herself to religious duties when she was very young; . . . that she could say by heart many passages and chapters of scripture; was a frequent hearer of sermons, which she would bring away intire in her memory, and would take sermons verbatim when she was about ten years old.

Though Orinda became a stout Royalist, she was bred in a Puritan atmosphere. Dancing is not mentioned among the subjects taught at Mrs Salmon's, though it formed an important part of the curriculum in many schools, and neither French nor Italian would appear to have been taught, as we are informed that "she became afterwards a perfect mistress of the French tongue, and learned the Italian under the tuition of her ingenious and worthy friend Sir Charles Cottrell."

More than one treatise on shorthand appeared in England during the seventeenth century, and there is more than one piece of evidence that it was for a time a favourite accomplishment with English girls—and their parents. Sir Ralph Verney, writing to his friend Dr Denton concerning the education of the Doctor's daughter and his god-daughter, Nancy Denton, is emphatic in his disapproval:

## IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

Let not your girle learne Latin nor Short-hand : the difficulty of the first may keepe her from that Vice, for soe I must esteeme it in a woeman: but the easinesse of the other may bee a preiudice to her; for the pride of taking Sermon noates hath made multitudes of woemen most unfortunate.

Nancy had views of her own, which she did not hesitate to bring before her godfather, of whom she seems to have stood in very little awe. Sir Ralph and his children were then living in exile in France, and Nancy wrote to him in 1652, when she was twelve years old:

i know you and my coussenes wil out-rech me in french, but i am a-goeng whaar i hop i shal out-rech you in ebri, grek and laten, praeng you ser if i may be so bould as to desier on leter from you then shuld i thing myshelf veri much bound unto you, ser, resteng youer veri loveng dater,

ANNE DENTON

Sir Ralph was not deaf to this appeal; he replied in a charming and affectionate letter, which must have delighted his god-child even while it discouraged her zeal for "Lattin, Greeke, and Hebrew too"—a zeal which Sir Ralph's royal master would certainly *not* have discouraged. "Good sweet hart, bee not soe covitous," urged the exiled cavalier. "Beleeve me, a Bible (with ye Common prayer) and a good plaine cattichisme in your Mother Tongue . . . is well worth all the rest, and much more suitable to your sex." He desires, however, that she shall apply herself diligently to the French language, as "it affords many admirable bookes," not only romances, plays, and poems, but manuals on cookery and gardening; of these he promises to send her half a dozen, and ends his letter, "I am, sweet heart, your most affectionate and humble servant."

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

Some little girls had opportunities which Sir Ralph would fain have denied to them all. One of them was Lucy Apsley, the daughter of Sir Allen Apsley, Lieutenant of the Tower of London, and afterwards wife, widow, and biographer of the Puritan patriot Colonel John Hutchinson. We know from the fragment of autobiography which she prefixed to her *Life* of her husband that she was a precocious and serious-minded child, and that her education was unusually thorough.

When I was about seven years of age, I remember, I had at one time eight tutors in several qualities,<sup>1</sup> language, music, dancing, writing, and needlework; but my genius was quite averse from all but my book, and that I was so eager of that my mother, thinking it prejudiced my health, would moderate me in it; yet this rather animated than kept me back, and every moment I could steal from my play I would employ in any book I could find, when my own were locked up from me.

Sir Allen, proud of his little girl's intelligence, had her taught Latin; and though her tutor, his Chaplain, was "a pitiful dull fellow," and though her brothers "had a great deal of wit," she got far ahead of them in the race for learning.

At music and dancing she confesses that she did not excel—

. . . and for my needle, I absolutely hated it. Play among other children I despised, and when I was forced to entertain such as came to visit me, I tired them with more grave instructions than their mothers', and plucked all their babies [*i.e.*, dolls] to pieces, and kept the children in such awe that they were glad when I entertained myself with elder company.

One can well believe that the poor children were glad! A rather different picture of her early days was traced by Margaret, Duchess of Newcastle, a lady of immense gravity

<sup>1</sup> accomplishments.

## IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

and a certain degree of eccentricity, whose husband was for a time Governor to the little Prince of Wales (afterwards Charles II), and then general of all the Royalist forces north of the Trent during the Civil War. Margaret was one of a large family, all of whom, according to her account of them, possessed an unusual share of virtue and intelligence. She was the youngest of five sisters, and was brought up, she says, "Virtuously, Modestly, Civilly, Honourably, and on honest principles," but not austere, for "as for our garments, my Mother did not only delight to see us neat and cleanly, fine and gay, but rich and costly, maintaining us to the height of her estate, but not beyond it." Nor was there any such striving after learning as there was in Sir Allen Apsley's household within the grim walls of the Tower:

As for tutors, although we had for all sorts of vertues,<sup>1</sup> as singing, dancing, playing on musick, reading, writing, working and the like, yet we were not kept strictly thereto, they were rather for formality than benefit, for my Mother cared not so much for our dancing and fidling, singing and prating of severall languages, as that we should be bred virtuously, modestly, civilly, honourably, and on honest principles.

Margaret seems to have been anxious to stress that virtue, modesty, civility, and honour, and those honest principles, for she uses the same words twice in three pages. Of the amusements enjoyed by her sisters in the happy days before the war-clouds broke over England she gives us a charming picture:

Their customs were in Winter-time to go sometimes to Plays, or to ride in their Coaches about the Streets to see the concourse and recourse of People: and in the Spring-time to visit the

<sup>1</sup> accomplishments.

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

Spring-garden, Hide-park and the like places; and sometimes they would have Musick, and sup in Barges upon the water.

She resembled Lucy Hutchinson in caring nothing for toys as a child, but unlike her she had a "naturall stupidity" in learning foreign languages, and—more unlike her yet—she "took great delight in attiring, fine dressing, and fashions." This frivolous bent on the part of an otherwise portentously solemn young gentlewoman was probably due to the influence of her mother, who was left a widow when Margaret was an infant, and brought her up without the benefit of a father's more solid judgment and counsel.

There is a queer, sad charm about these glimpses of English social life on the eve of the Great Rebellion, a life so seemly, so gracious, so well ordered, a life so remote from the tinselled vulgarity of the Tudors, the morose gloom of the Cromwellians. One sees them, as Henry Vaughan saw his *Friends Departed*, "walking in an air of glory," these great English gentlemen of Charles I's happy years, with their fair-faced wives and their chubby-checked, lace-capped children, all touched by that too clear, too perfect silvery sunshine that sometimes floods the landscape before a shattering storm.

It can hardly be doubted that but for the Civil War Charles I would have raised feminine education to its Renaissance level in his realms. To teach his own daughters, especially the thoughtful and bookish Elizabeth, he engaged the most learned of all available ladies, Bathsua Makin. This prodigy of learning, whose father was a Sussex rector and whose brother, John Pell, was a distinguished linguist and mathematician, knew, and presumably taught, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French, Italian, and Spanish. Charles granted her a pension of £40 a year for life, but Parliament repudiated

## IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

her claim, and she was compelled to start a girls' school. It has been suggested that hers was the establishment at Putney visited by John Evelyn within four months of the King's death, and it is certain that after the Restoration she kept a sort of college at Tottenham High Cross. In her prospectus Bathsua sets forth how

gentlewomen of eight or nine years old that can read well may be instructed in a year or two (according to their parts) in the Latin and French tongues—the Names, Natures, Values and Use of Herbs, Shrubs, Trees, Mineral Juices, Metals and Stones—Limning, Preserving, Pastry and Cookery,

but, remembering the popular prejudice against learned young ladies, she takes care to add: "Those that think one Language enough for a Woman may forbear the Languages and learn only Experimental Philosophy."

Poor Princess Elizabeth had much need of philosophy, experimental or otherwise, for the whole of her conscious life was darkened by the shadow of the Civil War. Of all Charles I's children she was the one most closely akin to him in her tastes and talents.

In 1644 a certain William Greenhill dedicated to her an erudite commentary upon the first five chapters of Ezekiel, and we learn from the dedicatory epistle that she desired to master Greek and Hebrew in order to read the Scriptures in the original tongues. "If," exclaims Mr Greenhill, enthusiastically, "the harvest be answerable to the spring, your highness will be the wonder of the learned and the glory of the godly!"

Unlike the French revolutionaries of the eighteenth century, the English Parliamentarians treated the young children of their fallen sovereign with the most honourable humanity.

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

When the last scenes were played out at St James's Palace and in Whitehall only Elizabeth and her younger brother, Henry, Duke of Gloucester, remained in England. Parliament had allowed them to be with their unhappy father at Hampton Court from time to time during the autumn of 1647, and at some of these interviews there was present a stalwart figure in a buff jerkin, with roughly hewn features and watchful grey eyes—none other than Oliver Cromwell. It was to Elizabeth that her unhappy father spoke his last words of farewell, which she carefully wrote down while they were fresh in her remembrance. To ensure that she should follow his counsels to read Bishop Andrewes' sermons and Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity*—fairly solid reading for a girl of thirteen—the King arranged that his own copies of these books should be sent to her after his death; at the actual moment of parting he had given her all his jewels, except the one pearl earring and the George which he wore the following day on the scaffold, and with them two seals set with diamonds which he had constantly used.

Even after Parliament had ceased to accord her the outward marks of honour never withheld till after her father's execution Elizabeth received nothing but honourable treatment at the hands of the triumphant faction. After remaining some time at Penshurst, Sir Philip Sidney's early home, in the care of the Countess of Leicester she and her little brother were removed to Carisbrooke, and there she died on September 8, 1650. She had been ailing for many months, but grief for her father "shore her frail thread in twain."

In Van Dyck's famous picture at Windsor Castle of the children of Charles I Elizabeth is bending over her baby sister, the Princess Anne, who, more fortunate than she, died before the storm broke that was to bring their father low. Fuller,



## IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

in his *Worthies*, gives us a glimpse of the death of this engaging three-year-old baby:

Being minded by those about her to call upon God even when the pangs of death were upon her, "I am not able," saith she, "to say my long prayer (meaning the Lord's Prayer) but I will say my short one: Lighten mine eyes, O Lord, lest I sleep the sleep of death!" This done, the little lamb gave up the ghost.

When the learned Mrs Bathsua Makin spoke of "those that think one Language enough for a Woman" she all unwittingly included the greatest poet of the age, John Milton, who was wont to use those very words concerning his three daughters, Anne, Mary, and Deborah. The Misses Milton were not permitted, however, to remain in blissful ignorance of the sounds and forms of foreign tongues, however little they were allowed to learn of their actual meaning, for their relentless parent kept the two younger ones—Anne had an impediment in her speech—reading aloud to him for long hours at a stretch from Latin, Greek, French, Italian, and Spanish poetry and prose. The relations between Milton and his daughters illustrate an aspect of his personality which his admirers would be glad to forget. Perhaps the poor girls are hardly to be blamed if they performed grudgingly services which would have been cheerfully rendered to a less austere despot; but it is hard to forgive them for purloining and selling some of the books they had come to loathe. It must have been a joyful deliverance for them all when their sensible step-mother, Milton's third wife, persuaded him to have them taught embroidery so that they could leave home and become self-supporting elsewhere.

At the Restoration schools for girls were opened in most of

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

the pleasant villages round about London. A favourite locality was Hackney, then a place of stately old houses and fair green gardens. In April 1667 Mr Samuel Pepys took the trouble to go all the way to Hackney Church—of which only the tower is now standing—to see “the young ladies of the schools, whereof there is great store, very pretty,” but no establishment of the kind was better known than Priest’s school at Chelsea.

John Priest, a dancing-master, opened his “school for young gentlewomen” in Leicester Fields, and moved to Chelsea in 1680. “The Great House” to which he moved stood just behind what is now known as Lindsey Row and had been the property of the Gorges family, whose impressive memorials the girls must have seen when they attended divine service in Old Chelsea Church. The eight-year-old granddaughter of that fine cavalier Sir Ralph Verney was sent to this school. Her father, Edmund Verney, brought her to London himself. “To-morrow,” he wrote, on the eve of their journey, “I intend to cary my girle to schoole after I have showd her Bartholomew Fayre & the Tombs,<sup>1</sup> and when I have visited her and a little wonted her to her place, I’ll come home.”

The curriculum at Mr Priest’s school was more ornamental than solid. Molly Verney learned dancing and—at her own earnest desire—to japan boxes. This ‘extra’ cost “a guinea entrance & some 40s. more to buy materials to work upon,” but her indulgent father could not deny her. “I find,” he wrote,

you have a great desire to learn to Jappan, as you call it, and I approve of it: and so I shall of anything that is Good and Virtuous, therefore learn in God’s name all Good Things & I will willingly be at the Charge so farr as I am able.

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.*, Westminster Abbey.

## IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

In his *History of Music* Sir John Hawkins, Dr Johnson's friend, relates how Henry Purcell, the greatest of all English composers, provided the music for a performance of *Dido and Æneas* given by Mr Priest's pupils. "The exhibition' of this little piece by the young gentlewomen of the school," remarks Sir John, "was attended with general applause, no small part of which was considered as the due of Purcell." The epilogue was spoken by Lady Dorothy Burke, daughter of the Earl of Clanricarde, and composed by Mr Priest's literary friend, Tom d'Urfey. Mr d'Urfey himself wrote a comedy called *Love for Money; or, The Boarding School*, of which the scene was laid in "Chelsey, by the River," and in which the *dramatis personæ* included "two tawdry, hoyden, overgrown Romps of the Boarding School," a singing-master, and a dancing-master. In his Preface to the play the author energetically denied that he had "liv'd at a Boarding School near London all last Summer and in return of their hospitable Civility writ this Play ungratefully to expose 'em," but there is no doubt that some of the scenes are a burlesque representation of Priest's methods and of the manners of his pupils.

There we see Jenny, one of the hoydens, wearing a "bib and apron," holding a "Prickt-Song in one hand and a great piece of Bread and Butter in t'other," and hear Semibrif, the music-master, trying to teach her "the Trill," while she alternately sings and munches. Then Coopee, the dancing-master, gives her a lesson in the minuet, himself humming the tune, and this is followed by a fragment of dialogue between him, Mrs Crowstitch, the proprietor of the school, and Jane, a maid-servant. Mrs Crowstitch says to Jane:

<sup>1</sup> Sir John Hawkins gives 1677 as the date of this performance, but Mr W. Barclay Squire has demonstrated that it cannot have taken place before 1688.

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

Bid the Cook-maid Cut a hundred and fifty pieces of bread and butter round the Loaf: these hoyden tits have plaguey stomachs.

COOPEE. What, is it breakfast time with 'em already then?

MRS CROWSTITCH. Always at nine a Clock, and they watch the hour as warily as a Parson does his Glass when he is tired with preaching. This is their bread and butter days, and each of 'em has a full half-yard by measure, of which if there were but an Inch wanting, the greedy things will cry they are starv'd and complain to their parents.

We are allowed to overhear a squabble between Jenny and Molly, in which one tells the other tauntingly to "go and make dirt-pyes again," while the other brags that she is soon to "leave off her Bib and Apron"; we are present also at a sort of breaking-up party at the school, just such an occasion as that when Purcell's *Dido and Æneas* was performed. On this particular occasion all the doting parents think their respective daughters the prettiest and the best-behaved, and one of the stage-directions runs, *Here the Romps perform a Ridiculous Dance with Guitars out of Tune*. Jenny and Molly are unattractive, as spoiled children must always be, but they were not typical English girls of the late seventeenth century, not worthy to be remembered with the little girl buried in the east cloister of Westminster Abbey in the year 1688, whose monument bears the hauntingly simple inscription, "Jane Lister, deare Child."

During this century charity schools for girls began to appear here and there in England. Among these was the foundation of Alderman John Whitson of Bristol, where forty daughters of freemen of that ancient city were to be educated and maintained. From a stipulation in his will that they should be "apparelled in red cloth" they became



THE CHILDREN OF CHARLES I  
After Van Dyck's picture at Windsor Castle,  
National Portrait Gallery



MADAME DE MAINTENON AND HER NIECE

Ferdinand Elle

*Photo Mansel*

## IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

to be known as the Red Maids. In 1634 the Court of Aldermen proceeded to give effect to Whitson's wishes, and six beds, a frying-pan, and some wooden platters were purchased for the use of the Maids, of whom there were then only twelve. Apparently they slept two in a bed!

Beyond doubt the worthy alderman's intentions were wholly benevolent, but it is to be feared that his foundation was an early example of the type which rapidly degenerated into commercial concerns in which the children were heartlessly exploited, and their labour was turned into a source of gain. The Red Maids were each indentured for seven years to the mistress appointed to take charge of them, and it was she who pocketed the profits of their industry and skill. In the eighteenth century the scandal of these so-called 'charity schools' became a crying one, and engaged the attention of several indignant English philanthropists.

Meanwhile how had things been with girls of the upper and middle classes on the other side of the Channel? Those whose youth was spent in France when Louis XIV himself was young could hardly escape the influence of the *Précieuse* movement so brilliantly satirized by Molière. While the fashionable craze for science and philosophy was at its height young ladies of the *Précieuse* persuasion indulged in a thousand absurdities. They gave each other high-falutin' names, as did Molière's Cathos and Madelon, who insisted upon being addressed as "Aminte" and "Polyxène"; they peered through telescopes, they fainted with excitement when some fine philosophical point was demonstrated, they poked their noses into ponderous tomes far beyond their comprehension. Yet one result of this grotesque vogue was to raise the standard of feminine education in France.

The Sun King, whose own early instruction was as meagre

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

as if he had been a little princess instead of a little prince, had chosen as governess for certain of his numerous children the accomplished young widow of the satirical poet Scarron. Though Madame Scarron, *née* Françoise d'Aubigné, was not a *Précieuse*, she was a highly educated woman according to the standards of the day. Her intellectual ability may have been the secret of her ascendancy over the King. How else can one explain his enduring passion for a not particularly beautiful and exceedingly serious woman three years older than himself? After their marriage in 1684 she continued to be called Madame de Maintenon, from the estate of Maintenon which he had enabled her to acquire. Nobody called her 'queen,' but the charming little child-wife of the King's grandson, the Duc de Bourgogne, always called her 'aunt.' Piety, tedium, and gloom prevailed at Versailles under her sway; yet it must be remembered to her credit that she inspired the King to found the great convent-school of Saint-Cyr. The idea had been suggested to Madame de Maintenon by the efforts of an Ursuline nun to start a small school for village children at Montmorency. From this grew a larger school established by Madame herself, first at Rueil and later in a *château* at Noisy transferred to her by Louis for the purpose. Here the girls were taught not only spinning and sewing, but music and fine embroidery. When one day their royal benefactor paid them a surprise visit on his way home from hunting he was so favourably impressed by everything he saw that he lent a ready ear to his wife's plea that something should be done on a larger scale for daughters of needy gentlefolk.

So came into existence in 1686 the royal foundation of Saint-Cyr. In the spacious and dignified building designed by the King's own architect two hundred and fifty girls of



## IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

gentle birth were received between the ages of seven and twelve and kept till the age of twenty, when each one would either receive a marriage-portion or be established in some religious sisterhood. They wore blue cloaks, blue gowns, and white, lace-trimmed caps leaving part of the hair visible. The King, who took a lively interest in the *demoiselles de Saint-Cyr*, rejected as *trop mesquin* the type of cap originally proposed by Madame de Maintenon. On each cap was a ribbon bow of the colour of the division in the school to which the wearer belonged, blue for the seniors, green for those next in age, yellow for those younger still, and red for the youngest of all. These colours were also introduced in the ribbons holding back the dormitory curtains.

Madame de Maintenon had a soft spot in her heart for her *protégées*, among whom was her little niece, Mademoiselle d'Aubigné. Anxious that they should not appear awkward and shy when they emerged into the world outside Saint-Cyr, she was willing that they should act in the classical tragedies of Racine in order to acquire grace and ease in speaking and moving. When, however, she saw how wholeheartedly they entered into the ardours and agonies of *Andromaque* she was fain to request the poet to compose for their benefit something more edifying, something less pagan and less passionate. Racine obliged with the sacred drama of *Esther*, which the *demoiselles* presented with great applause before Louis and his Court on January 26, 1689.

After the King's death the old lady retired to Saint-Cyr, and lived there till her own turn came to die. The school he had founded at her request continued its gracious work till the Revolution came and swept away the good as well the evil that had been done by the Kings of France.

CHAPTER X  
IN AUGUSTAN ENGLAND

IF the fashion for writing imaginary "Characters" in the manner of Theophrastus had been as prevalent in the eighteenth as it was in the seventeenth century one can well imagine some wit of the time tracing a sketch of the Indulgent Father. It was not a type entirely new in the England of Queen Anne and the earlier Georges; it was, indeed, fairly common in the England of the later Stuarts, as witness Edmund Verney in real life and the too fond father, Mr Deputy Nincompoop in d'Urfey's *Love for Money*. Yet it is not until the first decades of the Hanoverian period that examples multiply of the father more devoted, more interested, more tender, than the mother, the father proud of his small daughter, anxious to do well by her. An early and classical instance is George Savile, first Marquis of Halifax, whose *Advice to a Daughter*, written in 1688, shows him as the most anxious as well as the most practical and worldly minded of parents.

Another affectionate father, though a less wise, was Lord Kingston, whose delight in the precocious intelligence of his eight-year-old daughter Lady Mary Picrepoint (afterwards Lady Mary Wortley Montagu) led him to introduce her into somewhat unsuitable company. Like most leaders of fashion, especially on the Whig side, Kingston belonged to the Kit-Cat Club, a famous institution which met at the Cat and Fiddle tavern in Shire Lane, off Fleet Street, during the winter and

at Ranelagh in the summer. It was evidently in the course of one of their winter meetings, when the members were drawing up their reigning toasts for the year, that his lordship nominated his own child, declaring that she was "far prettier than any lady on their list." What followed may be told in the words of his great-granddaughter, Lady Louisa Stuart:

The other members demurred, because the rules of the Club forbade them to elect a beauty whom they had never seen. "Then you shall see her," cried he; and in the gaiety of the moment sent orders home to have her finely dressed and brought to him at the tavern, where she was received with acclamations, her health drunk by everyone present, and her name engraved upon a drinking-glass. The company consisting of some of the most eminent men in England, she went from the lap of one poet, patriot, or statesman to the arms of another, was feasted with sweetmeats, overwhelmed with caresses, and what perhaps pleased her better than either, heard her beauty and wit loudly extolled on every side.

It is clear that the Indulgent Father was not always the Prudent Father!

In the *Tatler* of March 1, 1710, Richard Steele came near drawing the character of the Perturbed Father in the person of his imaginary correspondent 'T.T.', whom he made to say that, having a nine-year-old daughter, he "would endeavour she might have an education," and was thinking of placing her at "some good boarding-school situate in a good air." In this purpose T.T. found himself opposed by his wife, who gave "as her greatest reason" the fact that their child understood "the formalities of visiting and a tea-table so nicely that none, though much older, can exceed her." Evidently this socially accomplished little person's education had been neglected in what was then regarded as the most essential

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

branch—needlework; for her father ruefully remarks that she “could scarce thread a needle.”

Steele reverted to this question of feminine education eight months later, when he described the delightful impression left on his mind by a chance encounter with a young lady on horseback in Enfield Chase. His recollections of her clear colour, her grace and charm, lead him to lament the inactive and fatuous lives imposed upon so many young girls by their short-sighted parents. He remarks with some severity:

I am apt to believe there are some parents imagine their daughters will be accomplished enough if nothing interrupts their growth or their shape. According to this method of education I could name you twenty families where all the girls hear of in this life is that it is time to rise and come to dinner; as if they were so insignificant as to be wholly provided for when they are fed and clothed.

Another and a pleasing example of the Indulgent Father was Dr Van Lewen, a fashionable Dublin physician of the early eighteenth century. His only daughter Letitia, who later married a parson called Pilkington, and led a somewhat hectic life on the outer fringes of the social and literary world in Ireland and in England, left us in her reminiscences some vivid glimpses of her childhood. Mrs Van Lewen, a handsome, well-born Irishwoman, “strictly followed Solomon’s advice in never sparing the rod,” and energetically discouraged Letitia’s early efforts to learn to spell.

This restraint, as generally happens, made me but more earnest in the pursuit of what I imagined must be so delightful. Twenty times a day have I been corrected for asking what such and such letters spelt: my mother used to tell me the word, accompanying it with a good box on the ear, which I suppose imprinted it on my mind.

## IN AUGUSTAN ENGLAND

The pertinacious child learned to read almost unaided, and then proceeded to 'try out' her new accomplishment, being then some five years old.

My mother being one day abroad, I had happily laid hold on *Alexander's Feast*, and found something in it so charming that I read it aloud—but how like a condemned criminal did I look when my father, softly opening his study door, took me in the very fact!

Dr Van Lewen was not angry, however; no severe reproofs, no sudden castigation, followed. He took the conscience-stricken child in his arms, gave her a kiss and a shilling, and promised that he would give her another shilling as soon as she had got another poem by heart. The "other poem" proved to be "Mr Pope's sacred Eclogue," and Letitia mastered it with a promptitude that impressed even her mother. Thenceforward she was allowed to read her fill, under the guidance of her father, who took care that she should become acquainted only with "the best and politest authors."

The standard of education for girls was still, however, very low, and tended to get lower with the passing of years. Sir Walter Scott has pointed out that Esther Johnson, Swift's Stella, who had had as her tutor no less a person than the future Dean of St Patrick's, was "neither well informed nor well educated." There are few more charming pictures in the history of letters than this of the gaunt, awkward, already eccentric but profoundly gifted young Irishman giving lessons to the dark-eyed, bright-faced, admiring little girl, fourteen years younger than himself. Swift taught Stella to write, and so carefully did she follow the copies he set her that her writing was hardly distinguishable from his in after-years, when he wrote to her:

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

I met Mr Harley in the Court of Requests and he asked me how long I had learnt the trick of writing to myself. He had seen your letter through the glass case at the coffee-house, and would swear it was my hand. I think I was little M.D.'s' writing-master?

Sir Walter's poor opinion of Stella's acquirements is based on the marginal notes added by Swift to a copy of Milton's works given to her and her friend Mrs Dingley in 1703. Obviously if Stella herself had known that Palestine was the Holy Land, that a pilaster was a pillar, that the Rhine and the Danube were "two German rivers," and that Columbus was "he who discovered America," she could have imparted the information to Mrs Dingley, and Swift would not have thought it necessary to annotate Milton so thoroughly.

Very little was demanded of girl-children in the way of book-learning in Augustan England, but those whose destiny might place them somewhere within the charmed circles of Kensington Palace, Windsor, or St James's were expected to acquire at least some tincture of the French language. Matthew Prior's delightful verses to Lady Margaret Cavendish Harley, only daughter and heir of Edward Harley, second Earl of Oxford, suggest that such children were sometimes taught to repeat the Lord's Prayer both in English and in French:

My noble, lovely little Peggy,  
Let this my First Epistle beg ye  
At dawn of morn and close of even  
To lift your heart and hands to heaven.  
In double duty say your prayer:  
Our Father first, then *Notre Père*.

<sup>1</sup> "M.D." was one of Swift's pet-names for Stella. It has never been satisfactorily explained.

## IN AUGUSTAN ENGLAND

And, dearest child, along the day,  
In everything you do and say,  
Obey and please my lord and lady,  
So God shall love and angels aid ye.  
    If to these precepts you attend  
    No second letter need I send,  
    And so I rest your loving friend.

When "noble, lovely little Peggy" grew up she married William Bentinck, second Duke of Portland. For her own children she engaged as governess one of the few really 'bookish' ladies of the time, Elizabeth Elstob, of whom more anon. It is to this charming Duchess that we owe the autobiographical letters in which her friend Mrs Delany sketched her own girlhood, spent in London and in the Vale of Evesham during the first fifteen years of the eighteenth century. Mrs Delany, *née* Mary Granville, was at the age of six placed in the care of a French lady, a Mademoiselle Puelle, who had fled to England upon the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Among the twenty small girls who shared her tuition were Lady Jane Douglas, Lady Catherine Knollys, and "Miss Halsey, the daughter of a very considerable brewer"—an early illustration of Herbert Pocket's saying (in *Great Expectations*) that "it is indisputable that while you cannot be genteel and bake, you may be as genteel as never was, and brew." Mary had already developed her talent for cutting flowers out of paper, and she mentions that Lady Jane used to pin the paper blossoms upon her cap or apron.

At the age of eight the little girl was removed from school, and placed for some time in the care of her aunt and uncle, Sir John and Lady Stanley, in London. At their house she saw the great George Frederick Handel, who, for lack of a more adequate instrument, condescended to play upon her

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

little spinet, and "performed wonders." She herself, however, was not impressed. Whenever Handel had gone she sat down and rattled off the most difficult 'piece' she knew. "My uncle," she records, "archly asked me whether I thought I should ever play as well as Mr Handel. 'If I did not think I should,' cried I, 'I would burn my instrument!' Such," she adds, "was the innocent presumption of childish ignorance."

This presumptuous child was brought up in the expectation that she would in due course become a maid of honour to Queen Anne, but the Queen's death frustrated these plans, and Miss Granville retired with her parents and younger sister to a small country house overlooking the Vale of Evesham, a pretty house, "the outside entirely covered with laurels," the inside "neat furnished with homespun stuffs," and "adorned with fine china and prints." She characteristically proceeded to cover the walls of her own particular room with paper trophies cut out by herself, and then settled down to a humdrum existence, keeping to regular hours for reading, writing, music, and French, after which she was "expected to sit down to work" unless called upon to make up a party at whist with her father, her mother, and the rector of the parish. Some sixty years later Sheridan's *Lady Teazle*, "a girl bred wholly in the country," thus described her girlhood:

I remember it very well, and a curious life I led. My daily occupation to inspect the dairy, superintend the poultry, make extracts from the family receipt-book, and comb my Aunt Deborah's lap-dog. . . . And then, you know, my evening amusements! To draw patterns for ruffles which I had not the materials to make up; to play Pope Joan with curate; to read a sermon to my aunt; or to be stuck down to an old spinet to strum my father to sleep after a fox-chase.



## IN AUGUSTAN ENGLAND

Another parent who might have sat for the portrait of the Indulgent Father was Canon Seward of Lichfield, whose literary daughter, by him christened Anne, by her mother called 'Nancy,' and by herself styled 'Anna,' was one of the minor celebrities of the later Georgian period, known to fame as the Swan of Lichfield. In a burst of lyrical and filial enthusiasm, Anna apostrophized the worthy gentleman as

Source of my life and all its joys  
That from a cultured mind arise!

and he certainly encouraged her early poetical flights, being himself something of a verse-spinner, while her mamma was a little bit inclined to look askance at them. She was a precocious child, who "lisp'd *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* when in her third year," and found constant inducements to quotation in the picturesque scenery surrounding her birthplace, Eyam, in Derbyshire. The *European Magazine* of April 1782<sup>1</sup> quotes the testimony of "a lady who knew her in her infancy" to the effect that Anna "when she was not more than five years old, in the midst of that childish playfulness with which she bounded among the rocks and over the Alpine heights of her native mountains," would frequently stop and, "with eyes swimming with delight," repeat long pieces of poetry by heart.

At the age of thirteen the future Swan of Lichfield went on a visit to a "Mrs C," who for a month nourished her "like a porket," with chocolate, tea, hot rolls, "pease soup at one, a luxurious dinner at four, and a hot and splendid supper at midnight." The daylight intervals were filled up with "slow airings in the old coach along the dusty roads, or lying on a couch picking honesty for Madam's flower-pots." "I

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Mr E. V. Lucas in *A Swan and her Friends*.

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

wanted," records Miss Seward, "to read to her: 'No, child, I detest reading.' I begged permission to walk about the gardens: no, that would spoil my complexion; to pursue my needlework in her presence: no, that was vulgar." Anna observes regretfully, "Till this luckless excursion I was as light as a wood-nymph," and she dated from that month of excessive hospitality the "propensity to plumpness" which no subsequent austerities could subdue.

It is curious to reflect that this 'high-brow' young lady might, if she had so wished, have been Dr Johnson's step-daughter-in-law, for on the death of her sister Sarah, the *fiancée* of Mr Joseph Porter, that young gentleman, the son of Johnson's Tatty by her first marriage, showed a strong disposition to transfer his affections to the surviving Miss Seward. It is just as well that the Swan looked coldly on his suit, for she and the Great Lexicographer did not appreciate each other's good qualities at all.

Like many another warm-hearted spinster, Miss Seward took a lively interest in the upbringing of the children of her friends. She was particularly concerned about the education of a little Yorkshire girl called Marianne Sykes, to whose mother she indited interminable epistles:

Since you have opportunities at Hull of having her instructed well in French and dancing,<sup>1</sup> I think you will scarce persuade yourselves to send her further from you. You are perfectly capable of giving her every other accomplishment except music, which though ornamental may well be spared amidst the liberal assemblage of other endowments. I have but one reason for wishing Marianne to go further from home: it is this—lest she should contract a Provincial tone of voice: that of Yorkshire is

<sup>1</sup> Even a serious-minded lady like the Swan realized that dancing was one of the most important branches of a girl's education.



THE DANCE

Watteau

*Photo Bruckmann*



GIRL WITH BATTLEDORE

" . . . that she may not want exercise I have procured a battledore and shuttlecock."—MISS SEWARD.

J.-B.-S. Chardin

*Photo Mansell*

## IN AUGUSTAN ENGLAND

very peculiar, and few of the genteel people who have been educated there have been free from it. There is perhaps no outward grace so essential to a young lady as a polished manner of speaking.

When Marianne was sent to a boarding-school kept by a Mrs Lataffier—Miss Seward's stepniece-in-law, Maria Edgeworth, was another of this lady's young pupils—she does not appear to have found herself very happily placed. The Swan waxed quite indignant in a letter to Mrs Sykes because the schoolmistress "saw nothing that was uncommonly amiable in Marianne," and indeed she knew the child well, for 'Psyche,' as she was nicknamed, spent some time at Lichfield in her care and under her tuition. We have a description of her arrival there:

At two o'clock she *came*, healthy, plump, and blooming as the morning; she is indeed a very amiable little creature—what a benevolent intention to please at an age when most human beings think only of *being* pleased!

Marianne's amiability seems, indeed, to have caused her temporary guardian and preceptress certain misgivings, for there was some danger that it might be allied to "the torpid balefulness of indolence." Nor was the Swan entirely satisfied with the child's response to her endeavours to teach her to read English aloud with the requisite degree of sonority and expression. Upon this point she wrote to Mrs Sykes:

I am not sure that it is *possible* for her ever to read *oratorically*; I think her voice has not sufficient *power* and *variety* . . . and *then* her natural *diffidence* is *against* that *animated* spirit *necessary* to *fine* reading and speaking. . . . All the instruction on this and every *other* subject in *power* to give her, I have a pleasure in giving. I hope the dear girl does not think me a rigid

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

monitress, though perhaps a little too *indefatigable*, i.e., for that tender indolence which is often the concomitant of a *gentle spirit*.

It is difficult not to feel some pity for poor little Marianne, with her rosy cheeks, her sweetly unenergetic disposition, trying to declaim in the oratorical manner and with the "animated spirit" so earnestly desired by Miss Seward, whose declamatory methods probably resembled those of Mrs Siddons. But the "rigid monitress" realized that exercise and amusement ought to have a place in the child's life, and we find her writing to Mrs Sykes:

The weather was so piercing, the ground so slippery, and Psyche seemed to have so little inclination to walk out, that I could not find it in my heart to venture her; but that she may not want *exercise* I have procured a battledore and shuttlecock, and she plays in the gallery half-an-hour in the morning and half-an-hour after dinner.<sup>1</sup>

If they had but known it Dr Johnson and Miss Seward had at least one taste in common, and that was their affection for children. When, to the astonishment of everybody, including himself, Boswell in 1773 succeeded in persuading the sage to leave his beloved Fleet Street and explore the uncouth northern lands beyond the Border in his company an encounter took place in Edinburgh between the English stranger and Boswell's infant daughter Veronica which is worthy of remembrance as a charming interlude in the *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*. Johnson, with his face scarred by scrofula, his short-sighted eyes, his nervous jerks and twitches, was hardly an engaging object to set before a baby girl, yet this, in Boswell's own words, is what happened when they met:

<sup>1</sup> These letters from Miss Seward to Mrs Sykes are all quoted from an essay on the Swan of Lichfield in the late Lady Ritchie's book *From the Porch* (Murray).

## IN AUGUSTAN ENGLAND

Johnson was pleased with my daughter Veronica, then a child of about four months old. She had the appearance of listening to him. His motions seemed to her to be intended for her amusement; and when he stopped she fluttered, and made a little infantile noise, and a kind of signal for him to begin again. She would be held close to him : which was a proof from simple nature that his face was not horrid. Her fondness for him endeared her still more to me, and I declared she should have five hundred pounds of additional fortune.

Another of Johnson's little girl-friends was the daughter of Mr Bennet Langton, to whom he wrote on one occasion that he hoped she was minding her pen, her book, and her needle, but his keenest interest seems to have been concentrated upon Hester Maria, the eldest of the numerous children of his friends Mr and Mrs Thrale of Southwark and Streatham. He nicknamed her 'Queen Esther,' and then shortened this nickname into 'Queeney.' When she was eight years old, in 1772, he began a correspondence with her which ended only with his death in 1784.' The first of his letters begins, "Dear Miss" and the last, "Dearest Madam," but the intervening epistles exhibit a great variety of playful and affectionate openings, "My dear Charmer," "My dearest Love," and "Dear Sweeting" among them. Queeney's education was planned more ambitiously than that of the typical girl of the mid-Georgian period. For a time her tutor was the same Mr Joseph Baretta who, in 1769, had been tried for the murder of a ruffian whom he had stabbed in self-defence, and duly acquitted. With Baretta she studied Italian, and apparently she was apt to be an elusive and inattentive pupil, for in 1774 he drew up and she signed and sealed a serio-comic covenant in which she pledged herself "to

<sup>1</sup> See *Johnson and Queeney*, by Lord Lansdowne (Cassell).

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

come down every day (Sundays excepted) at nine o'clock in the morning," and read or write Italian with him "during a full hour, but no more," and then to come to him again at three o'clock for another hour's study "and no more":

And I promise further that, whether I am in good humour or out of humour, I will be in earnest and very attentive to my lesson, as if I were in the very best humour, nor will I look about me with a vacant and weary countenance. . . .

This covenant was witnessed by Queeney's mother and by "Sam: Johnson LL.D." The Doctor himself taught her Latin, and for a time she had Fanny Burney as her fellow-pupil, but Fanny's father, more typical of his age than Johnson, did not encourage these pursuits, as he considered grammar "too masculine for misses."

No two men living in the same great city at the same period in history could have been more emphatically unlike each other than Dr Samuel Johnson and the Honourable Horace Walpole. Indeed, it has been recorded by that very elegant and fastidious gentleman, Mr Walpole himself, that he would not allow Sir Joshua Reynolds even to introduce the Doctor to him when they were all fellow-guests at a Royal Academy banquet. Yet here again, had they but known it, was common ground where the Great Bear of Fleet Street and the dandified antiquary of Strawberry Hill might have met and understood each other, for Walpole too loved children, especially little girls.

In 1754 Walpole was writing to his cousin Field-Marshal Conway that he was expecting a visit from his step-sister Lady Mary Churchill, "who has desired to bring her poor little sick girl here for a few days to try the air. You know," he adds, "how courteous a knight I am to distressed virgins



## IN AUGUSTAN ENGLAND

of five years old, and that my castle-gates are always open to them." And it was not only his mock castle at Twickenham of which he opened the gates to little visitors of the feminine gender. His snug bachelor establishment in Arlington Street, Piccadilly, had been enlivened by the presence of a three-year-old child during the summer of 1752, when Conway's only daughter Anne stayed there with her nurse. Walpole seems in his letters to her absent father and mother to be quite proud of the good terms upon which he and his baby guest share the house, and also of her thriving looks while under his care. Another of his little friends was the ten-year-old Henrietta Hotham, who lived with her aunt, Lady Suffolk, at Marble Hill, near Twickenham, and for whose amusement he wrote a rhyming fable entitled *The Magpie and her Brood*. His indefatigable quill was also plied to amuse Lady Anne Fitzpatrick, for whom he composed a mock-Chinese fairy-tale, *The Peach in Brandy*. This was one of five *Hieroglyphic Tales*, which, he declared, "were undoubtedly written a little before the creation of the world and have ever since been preserved by oral tradition in the mountains of Crampcraggiri, an uninhabited island not yet discovered."

It was to Lady Anne, when five years old, that Walpole in 1772 sent a present of coloured shells accompanied by these verses:

O nymph, compar'd with whose young bloom  
Hebe's herself an ancient fright,  
May these gay shells find grace and room  
Both in your baby-house and sight!  
Shells! What are shells? you ask, admiring,  
With stare half-pleasure, half-surprise;  
And, sly with Nature's art, enquiring  
At dear Mamma's all-speaking eyes.

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

Shells, fairest Anne, are playthings made  
By a brave god call'd Father Ocean,  
Whose frown, from pole to pole obey'd,  
Commands the waves and stills their motion.  
From that old sire a daughter came  
As like Mamma as blue to blue;  
And, like Mamma, that sea-born dame  
An urchin bore, not unlike you.  
For him fond Grandpapa compels  
The floods to furnish such a state  
Of corals and of cockleshells  
Would turn a little lady's pate.  
The chit has tons of baubles more;  
His nurs'ry's stuffed with doves and sparrows;  
And littered is its azure floor  
With painted quivers, bows and arrows.  
Spread, spread your frock; you must be friends;  
His toys shall fill your lap and breast;  
To-day the boy this sample sends,  
And some years hence he'll send the rest.

One happy change is noticeable from the middle of the eighteenth century onward, and that is the change in the costume of the little girls. No longer were infants tortured with whalebone stays and padded petticoats; the baby-sister of the sculptor Flaxman has a roomy, easy frock, and the engaging child in Walton's *Fruit Barrow* wears a simple white dress with a shady blue hat, though her pretty mamma boasts an uptilted hat nodding with plumes and a tight-waisted gown encumbered with vast panniers. The Augustan girl-child, as painted by the great artists of the time, is a real child, with her locks unfripped, with a loose frock, usually white, and no finery more gorgeous than an azure ribbon or a pair of coral-coloured shoes. Sometimes she wore a prim little cape of black silk, as Princess Sophia does in Hoppner's por-



THE FRUIT BARROW

"The engaging child . . . wears a simple white dress with a  
shady blue hat."

Henry Walton

*By courtesy of Mr Osbert Sitwell, from the original in his possession*



MARY ANN FLAXMAN

At the age of three. Modelled in wax by her elder brother John.  
Victoria and Albert Museum

trait of her; sometimes she had a fur-trimmed tippet and muff, like the small daughter of the Duke of Buccleuch, whose portrait by Reynolds charmed Horace Walpole so much. She looked, said Walpole, "red and blue with cold," but so good-humoured that one longed "to catch her up in one's arms and kiss her."

Low though the level of feminine education may have been in the England of Queen Anne and the earlier Georges, voices were raised here and there during that period to protest that girls should be taught something besides pastry-making, needlework, and dancing. Steele would have liked to see them taking exercise in the fresh air on horseback and reading serious, edifying books at home; but Mary Astell went further, and drew up a scheme for a sort of ladies' college on a large scale. Queen Anne is said to have been so much impressed by the arguments advanced in Miss Astell's *Serious Proposal to Ladies* that she promised to give £10,000 towards the project; but Bishop Burnet, scenting 'Popery' in this suggestion that so many unmarried women should live and study in a convent-like community, interposed to discourage the royal impulse, and the *Serious Proposal* came to naught. The world was not yet ready for such ideas; it was not quite ready for them a hundred and fifty years later when Tennyson wrote *The Princess*. It is true that before the Augustan Age merged into the Age of Steam, the Blue-stockings, those English 'opposite numbers' of the *Précieuses*, had made learning, a rather superficial and showy sort of learning, fashionable in their own circle; but their influence upon the general level of girls' education was not very great, and in any case did not make itself felt immediately.

There were a few great ladies who desired that their children should grow up something better than unlettered puppets

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

or dancing dolls, and one of these was Prior's "noble, lovely little Peggy," Margaret, Duchess of Portland. Through the intervention of Mrs Delaney she secured the services of Elizabeth Elstob, who had been eking out a meagre livelihood teaching the ABC and the multiplication table to the small daughters of Evesham tradespeople. Poor Miss Elstob's unusual accomplishment—she was an authority on what she called "the English-Saxon language"—had not brought her much material reward; indeed, "one of the most eminent physicians in Bath" told her that she would earn more by teaching people to make artificial flowers or "a bit of tapestry" than "by instilling the Principles of Religion and Virtue or improving the Minds of Young Ladies, for those things are little regarded."

A home at Welbeck and a salary of thirty pounds a year must have seemed "Paradise enow" to Elizabeth Elstob, and she was soon on excellent terms with the three small children, two girls and a boy, confided to her care. Of the elder girl, Lady Betty, her governess wrote when she was five years old, "She learns exceedingly well and loves her book and me entirely; nor is she more happy than when she is with me, and we study together, even to candle-light, like two old folks."

From what we hear of them in the journals and correspondence of Fanny Burney and Mary Hamilton the numerous daughters of George III and Queen Charlotte had no such advantages. Music and French seem to have been the only subjects which were taught with anything like thoroughness, though the very real talent of the Princess Elizabeth for drawing was cultivated, and some of her sketches, perhaps after discreet retouching, were engraved by Bartolozzi. These

<sup>1</sup> Ballard MSS., British Museum; quoted by Mrs Graham Wallas in *Before the Bluestackings*.

## IN AUGUSTAN ENGLAND

“royal lassies dainty,” as Burns called them, must have made a charming picture on the terrace of the castle, when the loyal citizens of Windsor were permitted to contemplate the royal family ‘taking the air.’ There might be nothing particularly decorative about the tall, ruddy-faced King, with his goggling pale eyes, his receding chin, his blue and red Windsor uniform,<sup>1</sup> or about the meagre little Queen, with her ugly, kindly face, her crimped cap of white gauze, her hooped gown of dingy-coloured silk, but the golden-haired, muslin-clad princesses who fluttered round them like a cloud of white butterflies were as pretty a vision as ever those grey walls beheld. To the princesses these promenades were not, however, an un-mixed pleasure, for Augusta Sophia wrote to Mary Hamilton in July 1780, “We are now come to Windsor and for our sins are forced on Sunday evenings to walk on the Terrace.”

They were engaging children, these little daughters of George III, and the notes the two eldest, the Princess Royal and the Princess Augusta, wrote to Miss Hamilton show them in a most attractive light. The twelve-year-old Princess Royal thus delivered herself on January 13, 1778:

MADAM,—I am very very sorry that you did not sleep well last Night, I beg you will lay down & then not think of anything but of a flock of Sheep, & if you do not do that I shall Not love you in the least & I know you will be very sorry for that, & if you do what I desire I will love you very much, Madam

Your Friend

CHARLOTTE AUGUSTA MATILDA

Sophia was another warm-hearted child. At the age of nine she was warned by the Queen her mother that she must not

<sup>1</sup> “. . . the King’s Windsor uniform, which is blue and gold, turned up with red, and worn by all the men who belong to his Majesty and come into his presence at Windsor.”—FANNY BURNEY.

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

laugh or stare at the disconcertingly large nose of her new music-master, Mr Webb. This warning she bore faithfully in mind; and one day when Lady Cremorne, who had not seen the poor man, was with her at the moment of his arrival Sophia "coloured very red and ran up to Lady Cremorne, and said to her in a whisper, 'Lady Cremorne, Mr Webb has got a very great nose, but that is only to be pitied—so mind you don't laugh!'"

The darling of the King's heart was the baby, Amelia, whose cradle, with its delightful embroidered counterpane of fringed pinks and streaked tulips, is now in the London Museum. Fanny Burney gives us a glimpse of this child walking on the Terrace at Windsor on her third birthday, "in a robe coat covered with fine muslin, a dressed close cap, white gloves and a fan." Miss Burney was standing with Mrs Delaney, to whom, as an honoured friend of the royal family, the baby-princess behaved "like a little angel." Then, catching sight of the modest Fanny, Amelia, "with a look of inquiry and recollection," slowly came behind the elder lady to examine the younger more closely. "I am afraid," whispered Fanny, stooping down, "your Royal Highness does not remember me?" Amelia's answer was "an arch little smile, and a nearer approach, with her lips pouted out," proffering a kiss. "She then," records Miss Burney, "took my fan, and, having looked at it on both sides, gravely returned it to me, saying, 'O! a brown fan!'"

Meanwhile what of the little girls born in the humble ranks of life, the girls whom in old prints we see gathering sticks, or binding sheaves, or cutting withies for baskets, the town-bred girls who went out early to domestic service, or were apprenticed to some trade, or sold "lily-white vinegar," primroses, cherries, mussels, or turnips in the clamorous cob-





PRINCESS SOPHIA  
"Another warm hearted child."  
J. Hoppner



COTTAGE CHILDREN  
Thomas Gainsborough

## IN AUGUSTAN ENGLAND

bled streets? There was little, if anything, to choose between their lot and that of their forerunners in Tudor and Plantagenet days. Indeed, there were many respects in which they were definitely worse off, for the blight of industrialism had already begun to creep over the land, and that ugly thing, the exploitation of child-labour, had come into being. Spiritually, the condition of the poor was very different from what it had been before the Reformation, when the most abject serf was instructed in the elements of his faith. Wesley's Journals bear witness to the darkness into which great multitudes of English men, women, and children had fallen. Even where some enlightened parson or some bountiful lady of the manor maintained a village school the curriculum was very meagre, and the children were apt to be taken away to work in the fields or, later, in the mills.

This school would be conducted either by the parish clerk or by an old dame of the type of Shenstone's "Schoolmistress," who plied her spinning-wheel while keeping an eye on her "fairy throng," and gathered up for the benefit of her hens any crumbs left by careless scholars on the ground. The alphabet was conned from horn-books, Sternhold's metrical versions of the Psalms were chanted in a droning sing-song, and the catechism was committed to memory. The girls also learned to "sew a fine seam." But in many quarters there was a stubborn prejudice against any young "'ooman"—as she was then called—who had been "educated above her station," and employers feared that a maidservant who could handle a pen must inevitably be slack in the handling of a broom.

Strange was the lot of the two little girls, one an orphan from Shrewsbury, the other a foundling from London, adopted by that eccentric though likeable philanthropist

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

Thomas Day, the author of *Sandford and Merton*. He christened them Sabrina and Lucretia, and proceeded to train them, upon principles of his own, with the design of taking as his wife her who should respond the more satisfactorily to his methods. Lucretia soon disappointed him, and he got rid of her in an entirely honourable manner by apprenticing her to a milliner on Ludgate Hill. With Sabrina he persevered longer. In order to develop the virtue of fortitude in her he was wont to fire off pistols at her petticoats and drop hot sealing-wax on her arm; he tried to instil a plain taste in dress; and to teach her fidelity he imparted imaginary secrets to her under strict vows of confidence. But poor Sabrina always screamed when the pistols went off and flinched when the wax dropped; she persisted in wearing fashionably fine and thin sleeves; and imparted Mr Day's 'secrets' to the rest of the household. Discouraged, her benefactor gave up the unequal struggle. Sabrina was sent to a boarding-school at his expense, and when finally she was married to a barrister he gave her a wedding-portion of five hundred pounds. Thus did fact come near outdoing the fiction of Mr Samuel Richardson, whose pretty demure maidservant-heroine, Pamela Andrews, exchanged her "round-eared cap" and "grey russet gown" for a bridal garment of white and silver when she became the wife of her former mistress's son, "Mr B."

CHAPTER XI  
FROM THE AGE OF REASON TO THE  
AGE OF STEAM

THE three pillars supporting the education of 'young females' in the eighteenth century were embroidery, cookery, and dancing. Either of the first two might have been a decidedly practical and useful form of activity, but in reality neither was, for most of the needlework was devoted to samplers, and most of the cooking to "raising pastry." It was not until the second half of the century that the influence of various learned ladies and enterprising philosophers introduced new ideas, and then England lagged behind France, where Madame de Genlis, 'governor' to the sons of the Duke of Orleans, taught history with the aid of a magic lantern, and botany by practical demonstration during country walks. Elsewhere the ideas of parents and preceptors were very much like the ideas of St Clement of Alexandria and St Jerome. There is, however, this difference. The Fathers of the Early Christian church and the preachers of the Middle Ages seem to have regarded girl-children, the Daughters of Eve, as more prone to sin than their brothers, the sons of Adam, whereas in the Age of Reason, especially in England, *all* children were regarded as standing in equal and imminent danger of hell-fire.

Dr Watts, whose *Divine and Moral Songs for Children* appeared in 1715, found it almost impossible to write many lines unenlivened by some allusion to everlasting torment, and

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

quite at the other end of the same century Mrs Barbould, Mrs Sherwood, Miss Hannah More, and other equally good-hearted people had hardly advanced beyond that spiritual stage. Even upon samplers, pretty pieces of stitchery adorned with garlands of rosebuds, cherries, and honeysuckle, with prim houses, clipped trees, stiff little men and women, and disproportionately large birds and beasts, room was often found for some such lugubrious lines as these:

Our days, alas, our mortal days  
Are short and wretched too;  
Evil and few the psalmist says,  
And well the psalmist knew!

The original purpose of the sampler, or 'exemplar,' was to provide patterns of stitchery in times when printed pattern-books were both costly and hard to come by. It was only by degrees that this strip of needlework became the inevitable employment of every little girl, whether she were a foundling in a charity school or a child of high degree, serving at once as a testimony to her industry and an incitement to virtue. The earliest type, the Tudor 'exemplar,' was usually uncoloured, and consisted of drawn-thread, 'cut-work,' quilting, and fine, close stitching in geometrical designs. Then came the seventeenth-century type, the long, narrow strip gay with coloured silks and golden threads, with flowers and figures, occasionally with ornamental alphabets, but not as yet embellished with edifying fragments of prose and verse. Of this kind would be the pieces of embroidery presented to Anne of Denmark by her two god-daughters at the Ladies' Hall, Deptford. There is in existence an uncoloured linen sampler with drawn-thread and cut-work patterns worked by Elizabeth Priest in 1677; was she the daughter of Mr Priest, the dancing-master of Chelsea? It is at least possible.

## TO THE AGE OF STEAM

Charity children were given elaborate samplers to sew, as witness the fine one made when she was only six years old by Elizabeth Clements, a foundling in the care of the parish of St Clement Danes in 1712. Elizabeth proudly records at the foot of this monument of her industry:

This have I done, I thank my God,  
Without correction of the rod.

With the eighteenth century came the sampler graced with pious inscriptions, mostly of a gloomy cast. The design seems to have been to fix the thoughts of the little needlewoman firmly upon such cheerful subjects as the brevity and uncertainty of life, and the dreadful fate in store for sinners when life should be past.

The Lord delights in them that speak  
The words of truth, but every liar  
Must have his portion in the lake  
That burns with brimstone and with fire.

So did Elizabeth Hincks proclaim in beautiful small stitches when she was of tender years and the eighteenth century was near its close. Texts from the Bible sometimes took the place of pious rhymes, and Elizabeth Holiday at the age of nine depicted a deep pink-coloured Adam and Eve on either side of a tree laden with rich yellow fruit. American girls were busy making samplers both before and after the American War of Independence. Sometimes their handiwork was less exquisite than that of their cousins in England, sometimes their choice of subjects was more vigorous and free, but no English child was ever responsible for a more elegantly worked or pompously worded sampler than was Lucy Symonds<sup>1</sup> of Hoxford, Massachusetts, who completed her

<sup>1</sup> Her sampler is in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

task a few weeks after the Declaration of Independence was signed at Philadelphia.

Next to a garland or a bouquet of flowers the favourite English design was a square red house with a steep blue roof over which exaggeratedly big birds were seen to hover. The initials of all the brothers and sisters of the youthful needlewoman were sometimes given, and if she happened to be the youngest of a large family a great part of the available space was thus accounted for. In a sampler worked on canvas by an eight-year-old ancestress of the present writer the initials of the father and mother are given in crimson silk with a heart of the same between them, while the initials of their numerous sons and daughters follow in green and red wool. Ornamental alphabets come next, and Arabic numerals up to 10; below is a symmetrical brick house flanked by two marvellous trees resembling monkey-puzzles which have suddenly burst into crimson bloom. A pink bird and a blue fly overhead; at one side is a little man in a blue coat; at the other a black-and-white dog slightly larger than he.

In George Morland's charming picture *The Visit to the Boarding-school* the schoolmistress, wearing a mob-cap, is showing to the plumed and gloved lady visitor the sampler upon which one of the children is engaged. A governess leads in by the hand a girl of about thirteen with unpowdered, loosely curling hair and a pretty frock of striped stuff with a frilled fichu, while two other little girls peep shyly through the garden door. Samplers were often 'framed and glazed' to adorn the schoolroom walls. The "chenille pieces representing tombs and weeping willows" which hung round the wainscoted parlour of the Abbey School at Reading where Mary Martha Butt, afterwards Mrs Sher-





ELISABETH HOLIDAY'S SAMPLER

"A deep pink-coloured Adam and Eve on either side of a tree laden with rich yellow fruit."



THE VISIT TO THE BOARDING-SCHOOL

George Morland

*Photo Mansell*

wood, received her education were probably the productions of the young ladies of the school.

Ideas about education differed, but it was always to the good that any ideas upon the subject were held by anybody of importance. The excellent Mrs Barbauld, authoress of many engaging works in verse and prose for the improvement of the young, did not believe that little girls should receive systematic instruction. "The best way," she said, "for a woman to acquire knowledge is from conversation with father, brother, or friend." Hannah More's sisters, who kept a select and highly successful girls' school in Bath during the second half of the eighteenth century, were more broad-minded: French and Italian were taught to their pupils, whose English style was formed by a close study of the works of Addison and Steele. Hannah herself came to be regarded as one of the leading authorities upon the training of children, and was invited to draw up a plan for the guidance of the governesses to whom the young Princess Charlotte, then regarded as the future Queen of England, was confided. Miss More's ideas upon these and most other topics were clear-cut and well-defined, and she liked few things better than giving expression to them in print. In 1799 she published her *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education*, in which, incidentally, she draws a lifelike picture of the conditions under which the little girls painted by Reynolds, Gainsborough, and Lawrence were being brought up.

Looking around her, Miss More was disquieted by what she saw. What she calls "the phrenzy of accomplishments" has set in. No longer is a girl confined to her sampler, her pastry-board, her spelling-book; no longer do the services of one or two governesses suffice.

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

The science of music, which used to be communicated in so competent a degree to a young lady by one able instructor is now distributed among a whole band. She now requires not a master but an orchestra. And my country readers would accuse me of exaggeration were I to hazard enumerating the variety of musical teachers who attend at the same time in the same family, the daughters of which are summoned by at least as many musical instruments as the subjects of Nebuchadnezzar to worship the idol which fashion has set up.

It was the same with dancing. "A military serjeant" is engaged to teach the girl "the *feminine* art of marching"; she has a professor for "the Scotch steps" and another for the French, "each probably receiving a stipend which would make the pious curate or the learned chaplain rich and happy." Miss More regrets "that profusion of little, amusing, sentimental books with which the youthful library overflows"; the sort of books upon which Lucy, Emily, and Henry Fairchild spent their pennies without incurring any parental rebuke; she deplores, with greater reason, "the superficial *question-and-answer* way" in which children often learn history; she would like to see her little friends tussling with "some parts of Mr Locke's *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, or Bishop Butler's *Analogy*"; particularly does she condemn the fashion of giving 'baby-balls,' frequented by little girls flounced and plumed like little women, who come home languid, pale-cheeked, and cross from the hot air, the excitement and fatigue, and the unaccustomed wine. So little had the unwisdom of indulgent parents been altered by the flight of years since Chaucer wrote his "Doctour of Phisik's Tale."

Miss More concedes that it is not necessary to debar "elegantly-educated young persons" from "the discriminated,

## TO THE AGE OF STEAM

the guarded, the qualified perusal of such an author as Shakespeare," but her contemporary, the great Mrs Chapone, author of *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind*, considered that "fictitious stories" were only to be read with great caution, "since they tend to inflame the passions of youth whilst the chief purposes of education should be to moderate and restrain them." Point is added to Mrs Chapone's opinion by the fact that she herself at the age of nine had written a romantic tale entitled *The Loves of Amoret and Melissa*. By the time that she reached years of maturity and was an acknowledged oracle upon educational subjects she had forgotten or obliterated all the pretty fancies that had thronged her infant mind. She now plumped for "patience, propriety, and neatness," and would have nothing to do with romance. In justice to the good lady it must be remembered that blood-curdling and over-coloured 'thrillers' of the type written by Mrs Radcliffe had a deplorable effect upon the imaginations of certain foolish schoolgirls, as witness Catherine Morland and her friend in *Northanger Abbey*, who were always on the look-out for dark mysteries, and descried the most sinister suggestions in a document as innocent as a washing-list!

Mrs Chapone, one feels sure, would dearly have loved to lay down rules for the guidance of those to whom the upbringing of the Princess Charlotte was confided, but she died when that child of many hopes was five years old, and the honourable (and responsible) duty devolved upon Hannah More. Another person who offered advice—and very excellent advice—was the Duchess of Württemberg, whom as Princess Royal, the eldest of George III's charming daughters, we met in the preceding chapter. This kind aunt hoped especially that "by dint of pains and patience" the child's

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

English master would be able to cure her of her tendency to stammer, inherited from her Brunswick ancestors; she hoped also that Charlotte might prove a means of reconciliation between her estranged parents, but this aspiration remained unfulfilled.

Hannah More first saw the little princess when she was three years old, heard her recite "How doth the little busy bee" and sing "God save the King," watched her dancing, and summed her up as "wild and natural, but sensible, lively, and civil." She was an attractive child, impulsive, warm-hearted, with a sense of humour which showed itself betimes in her gift of mimicry. "She tears her caps," wrote one of her governesses, "with showing me how Mr Canning takes off his hat as he rides in the park." Several of Charlotte's dolls are now in the London Museum, including the one she called her "great doll," a waxen-faced beauty who had a baby-doll of her own. They are larger and more impressive than the playthings which beguiled her little cousin Victoria at Kensington Palace some years later. Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries dolls tended to be rather stately and 'grown-up,' and the chubby baby-doll was seen less frequently than the tight-waisted lady with stiff brocade skirts and a formal wig. Early in the nineteenth century wooden dolls with painted hair and jointed limbs were in favour.

If Miss More's scheme for the education of the might-have-been-Queen Regnant of England had been carried out in its entirety Charlotte would have received a training almost equal to that of Lady Jane Grey. Greek, it is true, was not included, but Latin was 'indispensable'; the princess was to apply herself to ancient history, including that of Egypt and Persia; and she was to strive after popularity, since "when the means used to obtain it are strictly just, it is highly laud-



MORNING TOILET

J.-B.-S. Chardin

*Photo Mansell*



*"Don't tease me Henry" said Lucy  
"don't you see Sam reading." Page 47*

A PICTURE FROM "THE HISTORY OF THE  
FAIRCHILD FAMILY"



## TO THE AGE OF STEAM

able." There was at this time a great vogue for ancient history, though only in its most austere and colourless outlines, and Miss Richmal Mangnall, the Yorkshire schoolmistress whose *Historical and Miscellaneous Questions for the Use of Young People* appeared in 1800, did not neglect this branch of study: the pupil, bidden to "name some of the most Ancient Kingdoms," replies, "Chaldea, Babylonia, Assyria, China in Asia, and Egypt in Africa." She also bore in mind the prevailing thirst for "useful knowledge," and imparted information concerning such matters as the habits of ducks and the place of origin of nutmegs. A *Key to Knowledge* of the same period mentions among "Things in Common Use" beaver-hats, brandy, gunpowder, glue, hair-powder, snuff, and salt-petre, and the child had to memorize facts relating to these and many others.

Thanks to the lucky chance which has preserved the diary kept by one of Miss Mangnall's own pupils in the years 1812-1813 we can transport ourselves in imagination to the famous seminary near Wakefield where the authoress of the *Questions*, the original of Thackeray's Miss Pinkerton, held sway. The tone of the diary is decidedly prim and formal; the girls are referred to as "the ladies," the seniors as the "great ladies," the juniors as the "little ladies." Thus on April 30 Miss Frith, the youthful diarist, records: "Several of the Ladies were sent to bed for losing at spelling. I was one of them." Christian names are seldom given, and we read with pain an entry on August 4 to the effect that "Miss Marshall and Miss Dixon fought." Bed seems to have been the usual penalty for misdemeanours. One day Miss Outhwaite was consigned to her couch "for having her feet within the fender"; another day the same fate overtook the whole school "for making a noise in the writing-room." Miss Frith herself

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

was given "10 verses" for a "slop" at breakfast, but graver faults were met with sterner measures, as when "Miss M'Cumming was whipped and sent to Coventry for telling a fib." Little treats, such as gooseberries for "the great ladies" and apples for "the little ladies," rewarded deserving pupils, and walks in the meadows were the recompense of those who "did not lose at spelling or dictionary." Early in March 1813 the diarist's own educational progress seems to have been suddenly accelerated, for the entries run:

*March 6.* I began to learn ancient geography.

*March 7.* I read thoughts on Education.

*March 8.* I began of reading ancient History.

There is a curious charm, as of old colour prints or the patterns on old nursery tea-cups, in these visions of the girls' school under the Regency or in the reign of the Sailor-King. Tom Hood gives us another, one year after the accession of Victoria, in a satirical story called *Love and Lunacy*, wherein he describes such an establishment as follows:

'Twas called 'The Grove,'—a name that always  
means

Two poplars stand like sentries at the gate—

Each window had its close Venetian screens  
And Holland blind, to keep in a cool state  
The twenty-four Young Ladies of Miss Bate.

But when the screens were left unclosed by chance

The blinds not down, as if Miss B. were dead,

Each upper window to a passing glance

Revealed a little dimity white bed;

Each lower one a cropped or curly head;

And thrice a week, for soul's and health's economies,

Along the road the twenty-four were led,

Like coupled hounds, whipped in by two she-dominies

With faces rather graver than Melpomene's.

## TO THE AGE OF STEAM

And thus their studies they pursued:—on Sunday,  
Beef, collects, batter, texts from Dr Price;  
Mutton, French, pancakes, grammar—of a Monday;  
Tuesday—hard dumplings, globes, Chapone's Advice;  
Wednesday—fancy-work, rice-milk (no spice);  
Thursday—pork, dancing, currant-bolsters, reading;  
Friday—beef, Mr Butler,<sup>1</sup> and plain rice;  
Saturday—scraps, short lessons and short feeding,  
Stocks, back-boards, hash, steel collars, and good breeding.

This sounds as if “the twenty-four Young Ladies of Miss Bate” had been subjected only on Saturdays to the discipline of the stocks, the backboard, and the steel collar, but other evidence proves that most girls were constrained to pass several hours daily with their spines artificially straightened, their toes artificially turned out, and their chins artificially tilted up in order to correct any natural tendencies on their part to stand, walk, or sit inelegantly. The allusion to the “cropped or curly head” is a reminder that in the first two decades of the nineteenth century girl-children were frequently, as we should now say, ‘bobbed’ and ‘shingled.’ Both Lucy and Emily Fairchild had short hair, and so had the charming little girls represented in illustrations to “The Cowslip” and “The Daisy.”

Mangnall's *Questions* became a standard work almost as soon as it was published, and was crystallized by allusion in the novels of Jane Austen and Thackeray, in the correspondence of Jane Welsh Carlyle, and elsewhere. Less famous, less comprehensive, but not less characteristic of the period, was *Mentoria; or, The Young Ladies' Instructor*, first published in 1778 with a dedication to the Princess Royal. The author, Ann Murry, seems to have kept a school at Tottenham High Cross, the same scholastic neighbourhood where

<sup>1</sup> Charles Butler, author of *The Guide to Useful Knowledge*.

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

Bathsua Makin had pitched her tent a hundred years before, and she mentions that these dialogues were written for the use of her pupils. Mentoria, presumably Miss Murry herself, is represented as imparting information to two docile and appreciative little girls of high degree, Lady Mary and Lady Louisa, whom she addresses severally as "Your Ladyship" and collectively as "my dear Ladies." She inculcates virtues as well as sciences, politeness as well as grammar, gratitude as well as geography, cheerfulness and complacency as well as the first principles of geometry, astronomy, and logic. A whole chapter is devoted to the Spartan form of government, and the code of laws devised by Lycurgus. Lady Mary hears with much concern how the lawgiver lost an eye as the result of his unlucky encounter with Alexander. "I am very sorry," she observes, "my dear Mentoria, that Lycurgus met with such an accident, as he was so good a man." Lady Louisa, painfully impressed by a long account of Spartan austerities, exclaims: "I am very glad there are not such laws in England, as I should not like to live as the Spartans did."

The dialogue "On the Sciences" begins with this impressive exchange of courtesies:

MENTORIA. Lady Mary, you once requested me to inform you of the nature of the Sciences, which I then declined; if your curiosity is not abated by delay, we will now examine them with the attention they deserve.

LADY MARY. My desire to be acquainted with their different qualities is not in the least diminished; therefore I shall attend to your instructions on that subject with the greatest pleasure.

Mentoria indulges in some fine flights of rhetoric, and inserts from time to time edifying verse of her own concoction. Her remarks upon astronomy are particularly good,



THE 'CARVED PARLOUR' OF CAMPDEN HOUSE SCHOOL, KENSINGTON

From a rare coloured lithograph in the Kensington Public Library.

*By courtesy of the Libraries Committee*



PORTRAIT OF A LITTLE GIRL CALLED 'MARY'

Sir W. Beechey

*Photo Mansell*

## TO THE AGE OF STEAM

though she cautiously interpolates a warning that the subject "requires a more diffusive explanation" than it is *at present* in her power to bestow. Upon Lady Louisa inquiring to whom this science is particularly useful, she replies:

To mariners, philosophers, and mathematicians. It is also necessary for persons of education to pay some attention to this study, as it enlarges the ideas and enables them to form a just conception of the Deity.

Occasionally Mentoria condescends to enliven her discourse with an anecdote derived from personal experience, as when she is pointing out the inadvisability of 'showing off' and parading one's knowledge before one's friends. In order to impress this upon the minds of the Ladies Mary and Louisa she says:

I once was acquainted with a gentleman who was a great mathematician. Whenever I was in company with him he always used the same expressions, which differed very little from geometrical problems. When he was asked if he chose cream in his tea, this was his constant answer: "Yes, Ma'am: because the globular particles of the cream render the acute angles of the tea more obtuse." This reply might be tolerably well received for the first time; but from the repetition, and being often ill-timed, disgusted.

Examples now begin to occur of young girls whose acquirements recall those of the Renaissance ladies, and whose minds soar above samplers and "Scottish steps." Among these was the short-lived Elizabeth Smith (1776-1806), who "with scarcely any assistance taught herself the French, Spanish, German, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew languages," who had "no inconsiderable knowledge of Arabic and Persic," and was "well acquainted with Geometry, Algebra, and other

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

branches of the Mathematics." One of her most admiring friends was Mrs Bowdler, the wife of the gentleman who by publishing an edition of Shakespeare which "could safely be read aloud in the Family Circle," enriched the English language with the verb to 'bowdlerize.' At the age of fifteen years and some months Elizabeth was engaged in a friendly controversy with the elder Miss Bowdler over the respective merits of Homer and Ossian. Needless to explain that the young enthusiast believed firmly in the authenticity of Macpherson's Celtic epics! "Milton," Miss Smith concedes, "must stand alone," but she adds,

Surely Ossian is *in some respects* superior to Homer. . . . I would rather read the description of one of his ghosts than of all Homer's gods. One of my greatest reasons for admiring him is that all his heroes are so *good*. Besides, there are no vulgar descriptions, but every word is poetry.

Miss Smith was a voluminous letter-writer, but she needed no assistance from any stereotyped models, such as those provided for the use of the young or the imperfectly educated in the little books so popular at that time. In one such little book there are two letters from a schoolgirl to her mother, beginning "Most honoured Madam," and ending "Your most dutiful daughter." The first describes the routine of the day, and suggests that piety was inculcated with more care than grammar in that particular seminary:

When I have properly discharged my duty to that Divine Being to whom I am indebted for my existence, I repair to my toilet; but not with that intent to clothe my body (which I know must sooner or later fall into corruption) with vain attire but such as are decent and innocent, regarding fine robes as the badges of pride and vanity.



## TO THE AGE OF STEAM

The second contains a request to be allowed to invite a schoolfellow to spend the 'holydays' with the writer, "when all of us young ladies are to pay our several personal respects and duties to our parents except one." That one is in a sad plight: her parents are dead; her friends live far away; and if they were to send for her "the expense attending her journey would be placed to her account and deducted out of the small fortune left her by her parents." We can only hope that the request thus pompously proffered was granted, for we are told that "the young lady's affability, sense, and good nature have gained her the esteem of the whole school."

There is a great deal in all these things that is reminiscent of perhaps the most famous girls' school in English literature Miss Pinkerton's at Chiswick Mall, in *Vanity Fair*. There too was a stately schoolmistress who wrote the purest and most ponderous Johnsonese: there too orthography, embroidery, and deportment were taught, and the backboard was in use; there too was an orphan pupil whom a kindhearted schoolfellow invited "home for the holidays."

In the Victoria and Albert Museum there is a most fascinating model theatre used by the pupils of a girls' school towards the year 1800. The stage, about three feet wide and two feet deep, has many changes of scenery, each consisting of wings and 'back-cloth,' painted in water-colours on stiff paper by the children themselves. There are cascades spanned by rustic bridges, willow and cypress groves, cottages with leaded windows and thatched roofs, castles of dark-coloured masonry. The dolls by whom the performance was supposed to be given are little wax puppets about 2-2½ inches high, without wigs, dressed in odd scraps of silk, ribbon, gauze, and spangles, and mounted on wire supports. There is a strong family resemblance between them all, and only by their garments

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

can they be distinguished from each other. In the same glass case are the manuscripts of some of the plays and the programmes of other performances in which apparently the actors were real children, not dolls. To the second category belongs *The Happy Island*, adapted from the French of Madame de Genlis. At the end of the first act there was to be a reel, at the end of the play itself some little girls were to give poetical recitations, and four others were to carry on a conversation in French. No Christian names are mentioned: every child is 'Miss So-and-so.' One of the plays acted by the puppets was *Damon and Phillis*, and here the names of the midget players are obviously suggested by their attire—Mr Pink, Mrs Spotted Satin, Miss White, Mrs Blue. The exquisitely fine copper-plate hand in which the programmes and the texts of the plays are written reflects credit on the writing-master—it was probably a master—at the school.

Meanwhile the plight of the children both in the industrial and rural areas was getting steadily worse. The successive Enclosure Acts passed by Parliament during the eighteenth century had altered the face of the agricultural districts almost beyond recognition, and many smallholders, unable to compete with the owners of large farms, sold their little plots and either hired themselves out as labourers or drifted to the towns where the "dark Satanic Mills" abhorred by William Blake were now lifting their ugly heads. The Age of Reason was proud of itself and of its name; so was the Age of Steam. In one case there may have been some justification for this sense of pride, in the other there was not much. The industrialization of England brought into existence wrongs and evils such as men had not even imagined: overcrowded and insanitary slums, dingy, hideous streets, huge tracts of scarred and polluted countryside where no green thing might live;

it created a new working class existing under conditions infinitely more hard than the poorest of their forefathers had known; and it set countless scores of young children to hard and unsuitable tasks. Parents were not to blame if they sent their boys and girls to the mills almost as soon as they could walk and speak. The two or three shillings brought home each week by these infant operatives made a welcome addition to the family exchequer, and not for nearly half a century afterwards were any laws made to regulate child-labour. Many of the children were orphans or foundlings; others were recruited as if they had been soldiers, and housed in barrack-like buildings as if they had been soldiers. The terms of apprenticeship usually placed the boy or girl at the mercy of the employer from the age of seven to the age of twenty-one. If a girl survived the hardships of her earlier days she was still a mill-worker, with no hope of becoming anything better; if she married she was utterly unfit for her duties, ignorant of cooking, sewing, and housework, unable to prepare a meal for her family or make a garment for herself.

Robert Southey visited a cotton factory in Manchester in 1807, and while the proprietor was discoursing upon the advantages of the system to the children themselves the poet was

looking at the unnatural dexterity with which the fingers of these little creatures were playing in the machinery, half giddy myself with the noise and the endless motion; and when he told me there was no rest in these walls day or night, I thought that if Dante had peopled one of his hells with children here was a scene worthy to have supplied him with new images of torment.

Naturally the manufacturers themselves were eloquent in defence of a state of affairs which afforded them unlimited

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

supplies of cheap labour. Mr Andrew Ure wrote, in *The Philosophy of Manufactures* in 1835, that "the scene of industry" in one of these mills, "so far from exciting sad emotions" in his mind, was "always exhilarating." "The work of these lively elves," he observed, "seemed to resemble a sport in which habit gave them a pleasing dexterity."

Unfortunately the course of events on the Continent—the fall of the French monarchy, the horrors and excesses of the French Revolution, the spectacular rise and the arrogant anti-English policy of Napoleon—handicapped would-be reformers in England, for a man had only to express mild dissatisfaction with the state of the people in order to be labelled a Revolutionary, a Jacobin, a potential regicide.

Among the Frenchwomen associated with the household of the unhappy Queen of France who came near sharing her fate was Madame Campan, an intelligent and accomplished lady who had been appointed *lectrice* to the daughters of Louis XV when she herself was only fifteen. Madame Campan escaped with her life, but she found herself practically destitute when the Terror had spent its fury and the guillotine slowed down. Then, with great courage, she started a boarding-school for girls at Saint-Germain, where the pupils might "form good habits, develop their physical forces, cultivate the mind, polish their manners," and add to the education of the bygone *régime* "a well-considered love of their native land." Madame Campan cast her net wide, for moderate Republicans as well as crypto-Royalists were glad to confide their daughters to her care. The decree of the extreme Revolutionaries that the children of *ci-devant* noble families should be taught some craft soon became a dead-letter, though not before many boys and girls of gentle birth had begun a nominal apprenticeship. In 1795 Madame

## TO THE AGE OF STEAM

Campan received a twelve-year-old novice with dusky golden tresses who had embarked already on the career of a dress-maker, and whose brother, now a pupil at the Irish College at Saint-Germain, had mastered the first elements of the carpenter's calling. The brother and sister were Eugène and Hortense de Beauharnais, whose father, Alexandre de Beauharnais, had been guillotined in the previous year, and whose widowed mother, Josephine, was to be married a year later to a certain scraggy, sallow Corsican general, Napoleon Bonaparte by name. Madame Campan formed a living link between the vanished social order, with all its amenity, elegance, and grace, and the new order, with its vigour, its crudity, its well-dissembled self-distrust. Bonaparte was not slow to perceive that socially his Court as First Consul and then as Emperor had great need of the very qualities which his charming young step-daughter had acquired at Saint-Germain: he realized that to enter and leave a room without awkwardness, to sit and stand with grace, to say the right word in the right way, to eat and drink elegantly, to play the harp with a delicately curved wrist, to wear beautiful garments without self-consciousness, to avoid as if by a sixth sense the errors in taste which entangled the unwary at every turn, were matters of the highest importance where the ladies of his household were concerned. He sent two of his own young sisters, the headstrong Caroline and the lovely Pauline, to Madame Campan's *pension élégante*, and was well pleased with the result.

It was not enough, however, to ensure that Josephine's ladies and the wives and daughters of the Marshals of France should assume the gracious deportment of the *ancien régime*. More energetic proceedings were indicated, on a larger scale. With the model of Saint-Cyr before his eyes, Napoleon

### THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

founded in a fine old *château* at Écouen, near Pontoise, a school where the daughters of the members of the Legion of Honour should be educated in such a manner as to make them worthy of Napoleonic France. At the head of this school he placed Madame Campan, and during the years that she directed its activities he had no reason to regret his choice. He did not desire that she should turn out bluestockings: the "confused encyclopædism" of Madame de Genlis made no appeal to him. It was enough if the pupils emerged well-bred, sensible, and pleasing. *L'art de plaire* was one which Madame Campan could impart with extraordinary success; and the returned Bourbons surely did a foolish thing when they broke up the establishment at Écouen, and thus destroyed one of the few unquestionably great benefits which Napoleon had conferred upon France.

## CHAPTER XII

### IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

THE traditional plaid of the Scottish shepherd is sewn up at one end, thus forming a sort of pouch in which young lambs can be carried. Such a plaid was habitually worn by Sir Walter Scott, even in the august streets of Edinburgh; and the pouch was not always empty, for in it on a winter night he would carry Margaret (or Marjorie) Fleming, the brilliant little girl in whose society he took such keen delight. Marjorie, called by Sir Walter "Pet Marjorie," and by her own family "Maidie," was the niece of his friend Mrs William Keith, from whose house in North Charlotte Street he would bear the child off to his own in Castle Street, not far away.

Pet Marjorie's span of life was short: she was born in 1803, and died in 1811; yet into that short span she crowded as much perception, emotion, exaltation and abasement, ecstasy and despair, as might have sufficed a more phlegmatic and less intelligent creature for the demands of a normal lifetime—and more. She was indeed "a færy's child," this little friend of Sir Walter's, of whom he said to her aunt, "She's the most extraordinary creature I ever met with, and her repeating of Shakespeare overpowers me as nothing else does." It was the lament of Constance over Arthur in *King John* with which she used to 'overpower' him; but her repertory was large, including fragments of Burns, Swift, Gray, and—of course—Holy Scripture, and she herself had a lively and

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

vivid pen, both in verse and prose. The final couplet in her epitaph upon the untimely demise of three small turkeys, describing the imperturbability of the mother-bird, has attained the dignity of a standard allusion:

But she was more than usual calm,  
She did not give a single dam.

Was it the influence of Sir Walter which led her to embark betimes upon the perilous sea of narrative poetry? Her historical ideas are well-defined, her sympathies never waver, and as between Mary, Queen of Scots, and Queen Elizabeth her judgment is given without hesitation.

Queen Mary was much loved by all,  
Both by the great and by the small,  
But hark! her soul to heaven doth rise!  
And I suppose she has gained a prize—  
For I do think she would not go  
Into the *awful* place below;  
There is a thing that I must tell,  
Elizabeth went to fire and hell;  
He who would teach her to be civil,  
It must be her great friend the devil!

In some mysterious fashion all her own Marjorie Fleming contrived to be precocious without being priggish, introspective without being morbid, whimsical without being freakish. Her anxious wrestlings with Queen Elizabeth's "great friend the devil" are set down in her diary from day to day. On one occasion when her elder sister Isabella went upstairs to teach her "religion, and multiplication, and to be good, and all her other lessons," the diarist stamped with her foot, and threw her new hat on the ground; still worse, there was a Sabbath-day when she "behaved extremely ill in God's most holy church," not only by being inattentive herself, but also by



## IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

making it impossible for the much-enduring Isabella to 'attend.' Conscience-stricken, Marjorie reflects that, unlike herself, Job resisted Satan, "though he had boils, and many, many other misfortunes which I have escaped." She is vehement both in her affections and in her aversions, and delivers herself in these energetic terms on the subject of the multiplication tables:

I am now going to tell you the horrible and wretched plaegge that my multiplication givis me; you can't conceive it. The most devilish thing is 8 times 8 and 7 times 7; it is what nature itself can't endure.

It was probably concern at her precocity, and at the effect upon her sensitive and receptive character of all the petting she received from admiring elders, which induced Marjorie's parents to send her to a boarding-school at Kirkcaldy when she was eight years old. She seems to have been happy there, but it was there that she caught measles, and from that infection developed the meningitis of which she died. Her family had thought she was on the high road to convalescence, and she herself had written some verses "on the Author's Recovery," when the fatal complication came.

In one of her letters home Marjorie had set forth the timetable observed in her school: dancing at seven o'clock in the morning, then Bible reading and recitation; then an interval of play between ten and eleven, followed by music and 'accounts'; the little girls sewed from twelve till one, and the afternoon seems to have been devoted to grammar, while the evenings were spent either in knitting or dancing. No mention is made of outdoor exercise, though this was probably included under the term 'play.' Boarding-schools were then numerous both in England and Scotland, but towards the

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

forties and fifties of the nineteenth century the practice of sending quite young children away from home seems to have declined, and they were more frequently entrusted to the care of a resident governess. The 'finishing school' then came into favour, where the efforts of the governess were crowned with a hasty and possibly flimsy superstructure of graces and accomplishments.

The fees were certainly not high in the early nineteenth-century schools. Thirty guineas a year, only ten guineas more than Mr Wackford Squeers demanded "per annum," were charged in 1830 at a "highly respectable seminary at Brixton" where young ladies were "liberally Boarded and Instructed in the French and Italian languages, music, drawing, geography, with the use of globes, writing, arithmetic, and dancing." An encouraging postscript says: "Masters of Eminence attend." Indeed, many subjects were then taught by men which both at earlier and at later periods were largely the province of women—dancing, drawing, writing, and music among them. When Kate Nickleby was at school, presumably in the second decade of the century, she wrote "a delightful letter every half-year," telling her parents that she was "the first pupil in the establishment."

"The girls wrote all the letters themselves," added Mrs Nickleby,

and the writing-master touched them up afterwards with a magnifying glass and a silver pen: at least, I think they wrote them, though Kate was never quite certain about that, because she didn't know the handwriting of hers again; but anyway, I know it was a circular which they all copied, and of course it was a very gratifying thing—very gratifying.

The old files of *The Times* form a happy hunting-ground

## IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

for the student of English social history, and during the first half of the nineteenth century they abound in advertisements of seminaries, schools, governesses, tutors, whence we may reconstruct a fairly complete background for the little girl with the long, frilly trousers showing beneath her flounced skirt, the little girl to whom a demure, somewhat down-trodden governess imparted "geography, with the use of the globes," and whose copies were set by a writing-master in a high stock and low-cut pumps, with whom the demure governess aforesaid may or may not have been mildly in love. (This last reflection is suggested by Miss Briggs, in *Vanity Fair*, who in her youth had been sentimentally attached to "a hectic young writing-master" with whom she shared a psalm-book in church.) By way of variety there appeared from time to time announcements inserted by irregular skirmishers on the flanks of the great army of professional school-proprietors. Here is one belonging to the early part of William IV's reign:

The Lady of a Field Officer, residing in one of the most open and salubrious situations near London, having formed a private establishment for the education of some Young Relatives with her own Daughters, is desirous, for the sake of exciting laudable emulation, to receive into her family some Young Ladies of tender years who will experience the same Maternal Solitude as her own Children.

Nothing so vulgar and commercial as remuneration is mentioned by this advertiser, and we can only hope that the Field Officer whose home was thus to be invaded by "Young Ladies of tender years" was a good-humoured hero. Perhaps absence from England on military duties may have offered him a way of escape from this invasion!

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

Meanwhile a certain "Young Lady of tender years" was passing a secluded childhood in Dutch William's red-brick palace at Kensington. This was Alexandrina Victoria, the daughter of the widowed Duchess of Kent and the heiress-presumptive to the throne of England. She seems to have been a friendly child, for gushing newspaper-men recorded that she was wont to smile and wave her hand to the loyal crowds which assembled to watch her toddling unsteadily on the turf of Palace Green or riding in a pannier on the back of a fat grey donkey. "*Le roi Georges en jupons*," one observant lady had called her; but with the prominent blue eyes and the sharply receding chin of George III little Victoria had inherited none of his eccentricities. A good deal of sympathy—perhaps too much—has been poured forth lately upon this princess, because her mother and her governess, the Baroness Lehzen, allowed her no liberty of thought or action, and kept her in a sort of perpetual ward, a mild form of captivity from which she escaped only at her accession to the throne. Yet the Duchess of Kent was a wise woman, if something of a despot as well; she recognized the greatness of her child's future destiny, and it may be that her excess of vigilance and severity helped to prepare that very temper of prudence and decorum which gave the Victorian Age its characteristic colour and form. Victoria herself indulged in twinges of self-pity when she looked back at the time of her bondage. She spoke of her "sad and unhappy childhood," and her half-sister, Princess Féodore, who had been her companion for a great part of that time, wrote of their "dismal existence" and their "years of imprisonment." Certainly the British public had no inkling of the reserves of strength which lay behind that apparently colourless, docile, and diffident personality.

## IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Little girls were now beginning to emerge from their long literary obscurity, and to find a place among the characters in 'grown-up' novels and poems. The Lake Poets were fond of children: Wordsworth in his own somewhat aloof and ponderous way, Southey more actively, as witness his charming letters to his small daughters. Readers of *Lyrical Ballads* found themselves introduced to Lucy Gray, the maiden whom there were "none to praise and very few to love," to say nothing of the obtuse and stubborn little cottage girl who "was eight years old, she said," and who to all the poet's searching questions about her family would only answer, "We are seven." Byron, also in his own way—how different a way from Wordsworth's and Southey's!—loved, or believed that he loved, or affected to love, girl-children. Incurable *poseur* though he was, it is difficult to believe that the opening and closing stanzas of the third canto of *Childe Harold*, both addressed to his baby-daughter Ada, are wholly artificial and insincere. He had succeeded in forgetting, or pretending to forget, that it was owing to his own faults of character and conduct that he was cut off from her for ever, and he turned to her in imagination with a wistful tenderness and regret that break through all his 'play-acting':

My daughter! with thy name this song begun;  
My daughter! with thy name thus much shall end;  
I see thee not, I hear thee not, but none  
Can be so wrapt in thee; thou art the friend  
To whom the shadows of far years extend.  
Albeit my brow thou never shouldst behold,  
My voice shall with thy future visions blend  
And reach into thy heart when mine is cold,  
A token and a tone, even from thy father's mould.

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

To aid thy mind's development, to watch  
Thy dawn of little joys, to sit and see  
Almost thy very growth, to view thee catch  
Knowledge of objects—wonders yet to thee!  
To hold thee lightly on a gentle knee,  
And print on thy soft cheek a parent's kiss—  
This, it should seem, was not reserved for me;  
Yet this was in my nature: as it is,  
I know not what is there, yet something like to this.

Both Dickens and Thackeray had small daughters of their own, though neither novelist seems to have taken one of his children as a sitter for a portrait of a little girl. Little Nell, the heroine of *The Old Curiosity Shop*, whose untimely death dissolved stern men into helpless tears, is said to have been drawn from Dickens's youthful sister-in-law, Mary Hogarth. It is not easy for us to-day to understand the enthusiasm aroused by the colourless picture of perfection; but there is excellent material in the schoolmistress, Miss Monflathers, for whose edification Mrs Jarley changed the waxwork of Grimaldi the clown into "Mr Lindley Murray as he appeared when engaged in the composition of his English Grammar," and made other equally remarkable transformations of identity. We are permitted a bright glimpse of Miss Monflathers herself, armed with a lilac parasol, shepherding her pupils on promenade, "all with open books in their hands and some with parasols likewise."

Miss Monflathers' views upon the question of child-labour were in close accord with those of Mr Andrew Ure,<sup>1</sup> for she addressed Little Nell in these impressive terms:

"Don't you feel how naughty it is of you . . . to be a wax-work child when you might have the proud consciousness of

<sup>1</sup> See page 236

## IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

assisting, to the extent of your infant powers, the manufactures of your country; of improving your mind by the constant contemplation of the steam-engine; and of earning a comfortable and independent subsistence of from two-and-ninepence to three shillings per week? ”



MISS MONFLATHERS AND LITTLE NELL

From the drawing by Pliz.

The little daughters of Mr Dickens and Mr Thackeray were acquainted with each other, and Lady Ritchie, *née* Anne Thackeray, has recorded how on one occasion she and her sister went to a children's party at the Dickens's house wearing—with reluctance—brilliant tartan sashes, an offering from one of their father's Edinburgh admirers, and austere black shoes, while their youthful hostesses, more fortunate than they, were shod with white satin and flounced with white silk.

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

As the century advanced the little girls who appeared in stories and poems intended for children gradually became more lifelike and convincing. There had, of course, been examples before, as witness Lucy and Emily Fairchild, who, except when they quote Scripture at inordinate length, giving chapter and verse as they go, are quite childish and engaging, and some of Miss Edgeworth's youthful heroines, not forgetting poor Rosamund, who longed to possess the purple jar shimmering in the chemist's window, and found, when her prayer was granted, that it had been the fluid within which was purple, and that the jar itself was of plain white glass; but on the whole the little girls of early nineteenth-century literature inclined to be wooden, conventional, and uninteresting.

England led the way in the matter of children's books, for when in 1874 Dr Heinrich Hoffman of Frankfort produced the immortal *Struwwelpeter* he was led to do so by the almost complete dearth of simple and amusing literature in German suited to the needs of small boys and girls. There is only one girl in his artless pages, and she is the one christened 'Harriet' by his English translator. Quite a decorative little person is Harriet, with her long, frilly trousers, her bright green frock, her dangling plaits each tied with a ribbon matching the "little scarlet shoes" which were all that remained of her after she had been consumed by fire. The lesson she is sacrificed to inculcate is that little girls should not strike matches when they have been strictly forbidden by their elders so to do. This lesson had already been impressed upon English children by Jane and Ann Taylor, whose *Original Poems* appeared in 1804, and contained such classics as "Twinkle, twinkle, little star" and "Meddlesome Matty."

France, although not ahead of England in these things,



## IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

was in the field far sooner than Germany. Already in 1782 Arnaud Berquin had published *L'Ami des enfants*, which, translated into English as *A Looking-glass for the Mind*, enjoyed great popularity here, and was a favourite with at least two children destined to achieve renown—Dante Gabriel and Christina Georgina Rossetti; and towards the middle years of the nineteenth century two French ladies, Madame de Ségur and Madame de Pressensé, were writing delightful stories in which little girls loomed large.

The Comtesse de Ségur was a Russian by birth, and never forgot to write “*née Rostopchine*” after her married name when signing the dedicatory epistles at the beginning of her stories. Many of these were dedicated to the grandsons and granddaughters, whom she exhorted affectionately to imitate the virtues of her little heroes and heroines. Two generations of English children were made to follow the misadventures of Madame de Ségur’s Sophie through *Les Malheurs de Sophie*, perhaps the best known of all her books, though certainly not the best. Sophie’s early *malheurs* proceed mostly from her own blunders, as when, hearing that flowers grow fast if they are well watered, and desiring to add cubits to her own stature, she goes and stands under a gushing spout; but more formidable troubles overtake her: she is shipwrecked, loses her mother, acquires a most unamiable stepmother, loses her father, and undergoes a dreary sequence of tribulations before kind friends come to her rescue and happier days dawn. It cannot be denied that Madame de Ségur’s boy-characters are more lifelike and amusing than are her girls. Sophie, in spite of her inveterate tendency to get into scrapes, is a colourless child, and Geneviève in *Après la pluie le beau temps* is not much better.

By the time that Madame de Ségur wrote the story of which

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

Geneviève is the heroine she had advanced beyond the ingenuousness of the Sophie adventures, and was striving after plot and character. So here we have a cruel uncle, a criminal cousin, a faithful black servant, a grotesque elderly lady who defies the uncle, unmasks the cousin, protects the black servant, and befriends the hapless Geneviève. This lady, Mademoiselle Cunégonde Primerose, who is related to M. Dormère, the cruel uncle, invades his home and takes charge of his small niece almost by main force. She insists upon acting as governess to Geneviève, and exasperates the poor man almost beyond endurance by the long catalogue of studies and accomplishments which she proposes to impart: history, music, geography, drawing. "*Oui, oui, trois fois oui, ma cousine,*" exclaims M. Dormère at last, "*tout ce que vous voudrez; le chinois si vous voulez.*" But Mademoiselle Cunégonde Primerose takes this suggestion quite seriously, and points out its impracticability with such vehemence that he is forced to explain that it was "*une plaisanterie.*" Where to she rejoins, reproachfully, "*Il ne faut jamais plaisanter sur l'éducation. C'est une chose très sérieuse que l'enseignement.*"

The illustrations of these old story-books give one a vivid idea of the outward appearance of little French girls in the middle years of the nineteenth century. Demure and rather charming little girls they look, with their symmetrical ringlets, their elastic-sided, high-heeled boots, their crinolines, their small, shallow hats cocked perilously on their heads. It seems a pity that Madame de Pressensé's *Rosa* was not *ornée de gravures*, for that engaging and lifelike child would have made a charming picture, and her adventures were as varied as, if less catastrophic than, those of Sophie. How many writers of children's stories have begun by killing the parents of their heroine, or sending them relentlessly to India



QUEEN VICTORIA AT THE AGE OF FOUR

“With the prominent blue eyes and sharply receding chin of George III little Victoria had inherited none of his eccentricities.”

S. P. Denning

*Photo Mansell*



TWO LITTLE GIRLS OF THE EIGHTEEN-SEVENTIES

George du Maurier

*By courtesy of the proprietors of "Punch"*

## IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

or America, in order that a little girl may be 'dumped' upon a disconcerted elderly guardian? This is what happens to Rosa, who when her widowed Papa goes to the United States to repair his suddenly shattered fortunes is confided to an aged and invalidical great-aunt, who lives with a trusty but outwardly grumpy old servant in a remote country cottage.

Rosa has far less to endure from Madame Darcy and Martha than Geneviève had to endure from M. Dormère and his graceless son Georges, but our sympathies are with her, because instead of being a type of incredible perfection she is a very human little girl, who climbs an apple-tree only to tumble from it, introduces the cat into the poultry-yard, runs away and gets lost, and is brought home in a jolting, two-wheeled cart by a kindly pedlar of rabbit-skins.

Fortunately we possess the autobiography of a French lady who was born in 1850, and was a real little girl at the very period when Madame de Pressensé was writing the story of the imaginary Rosa. The souvenirs of Gabrielle, Comtesse de Martel de Janville, well known to novel readers of the nineties by her pseudonym of "Gyp," began with her removal from the cottage of her foster-mother in Brittany to the house of her grandparents in Nancy, and the efforts made by her white-whiskered grandpapa, her grandmamma of the beautiful hands, and her pink-skirted, white-capped *bonne* to persuade her to speak. She was three years old, and could have spoken had she wished, but a curious reluctance deterred her. This reluctance was finally overcome by her great-grandmother, who, divining the child's whimsical objection to breaking silence, snatched her out of her tub, laid her all dripping across her knee, and gave her a hearty spanking. There was, however, consternation when the long-awaited

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

first words were in the *patois* of Brittany—*Ma Doué* instead of *Mon Dieu*!

Always an original little person, Gabrielle—called Sibylle by her family—insisted that her grandfather, a veteran of the Napoleonic campaigns, should teach her to read, instead of summoning a master for that purpose. Her rapid progress was rewarded with various gifts, La Fontaine's fables and the *Contes* of Perrault from one relative, manuals of ancient history and mythology from another; from her mother a pair of earrings, which Sibylle eyed with dismay, since the idea of having her ears pierced *pour faire comme tout le monde* appalled her. With loathing almost as great she submitted to having her naturally straight hair twisted every night into a porcupine-crop of curl-papers. From the affliction of the heavy ringlets which came forth every morning she was delivered by a boy cousin, who snipped them all off, and informed her delightedly, "*Maintenant tu as une bonne bille de crapaud heureux!*" But the poor little *crapaud* was anything but *heureux* in the elaborate dresses and hats which she was made to wear, dresses so encumbered with frills that she felt like a performing poodle in a circus, hats laden with knots of ribbon—and then the detested earrings! For church she had at one time a voluminous frock of red-and-blue tartan with a deep hem of blue velvet, and it is hardly surprising that her one consolation was to register silent vows that when she was grown up, and could do as she pleased, she would wear *des petites robes simples, sans cochonneries d'ornements*.

Madame de Martel de Janville does not tell us the title of the French history-book which she used as a child, but it may well have been that written by Le Ragois in the 'question-and-answer' style condemned by Hannah More. The little girl's precocious sense of humour would certainly have

## IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

rejoiced in the pomposity of this work, and in the portraits of the kings, *gravés par le célèbre Thompson*, which bear so strong a resemblance to each other and so little to the actual monarchs whom they are intended to represent. An appendix such as would have delighted Miss Mangnall gives a solemn summary of ancient history. The pupil is required to state the cause and the result of the Trojan War, and does it in eight lines; asked what she has to say about the origin of the people of India, she is permitted to answer cautiously, *Rien de précis*. Mythology also receives some attention, because *sans cette étude il nous serait impossible d'entendre les poètes tant anciens que modernes*; and the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid are compressed into short space, each with an appropriate moral lesson attached to it. Hundreds of little French girls under the Second Empire must have conned the sententious pages of M. le Ragois, and studied the engravings of *le célèbre Thompson* with which those pages are enlivened; there was nothing quite so rich within the reach of English children at that period. Even the elements of geography are to be found within the modest limits of that deservedly popular work.

One does not hear so much about "the use of the globes" on the French side of the Channel, but in Victorian England geography and astronomy continued to be taught with their aid until the second half of the nineteenth century. Tennyson's brother, Charles Tennyson Turner, provided his infant daughter with a terrestrial globe almost as soon as she could speak, and wrote a charming sonnet about her—and it:

When Letty scarce had passed her third glad year,  
And her young artless words began to flow,  
One day we gave the child a coloured sphere  
Of the wide earth, that she might mark and know  
By tint and outline all its sea and land.

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

She patted all the world; old empires peeped  
Between her baby fingers; her soft hand  
Was welcome at all frontiers. How she leaped  
And laughed, and prattled in her world-wide bliss!  
But when we turned her sweet, unlearnèd eye  
On our own isle, she raised a joyous cry—  
“ Oh, yes, I see it, Letty's home is there! ”  
And while she hid all England with a kiss,  
Bright over Europe fell her golden hair.

The younger and more famous of the Tennyson brothers also wrote verses for and about little girls, but nothing in that kind to compare with *Letty's Globe* in delicate grace. He had no daughters of his own, and there is a faintly condescending tone, as of a Victorian gentleman stooping to bring his head to a child's level, in his

Minnie and Winnie  
Slept in a shell.  
Sleep, little ladies!  
And they slept well.

Nor is the little Aglaia, “ her maiden babe, a double April old,” in *The Princess* a very lifelike babe. It was in 1847 that Tennyson published *The Princess: A Medley*. Seven years later Cheltenham College was founded; twenty-two years later the ladies' college by the Severn had its complement in Girton, the ladies' university by the Cam, and the poet's vision attained something like fulfilment, though neither of these admirable centres of higher education for women bore any striking resemblance to the academe imagined by him, with its plashing fountains, its strutting peacocks, its court

Compact of lucid marbles, boss'd with lengths  
Of classic frieze, with ample awnings gay  
Betwixt the pillars, and with great urns of flowers.





MID-VICTORIAN  
"The quintessence of pramness."

## IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Nor did the serious-minded and purposeful girls who persuaded their parents to send them to Cheltenham, or Girton, or Newnham, or Queen's College, go about in hooded gowns of lilac silk "zoned with gold." As late as 1884, when Gilbert and Sullivan produced *Princess Ida; or, Castle Adamant, A Respectful Operatic Perversion of Tennyson's "Princess,"* there was still something fantastic about the idea of a community of young girls dedicated to the pursuit of the sciences.

It is curious that the mid-Victorian little girl in whom all her contemporaries always seem to be incarnate should have been the creation of an elderly bachelor, parson, and mathematician. In the illustrations which he made for Lewis Carroll's two masterpieces Sir John Tenniel suggested this symbolic quality in Alice. He shod her with ankle-strap slippers; over her crinoline he gave her a frock with many tucks—no doubt for 'letting down'—and an apron with two fascinating pockets; he left the beholder in no doubt as to the vigour with which her nurse had plaited her fair hair the night before and brushed it out the same morning; and he invested her with all the virtues and graces of her age and kind. Other little girls of the eighteen-sixties, as we see them in old photographs and in book-illustrations, appeared in short-sleeved, many-frilled dresses, their hair twisted into sausage-curls, their feet encased in elastic-sided boots, their shallow sailor-hats girt with ribbons which dangled behind, and looked the quintessence of primness; but by the middle of the eighteen-seventies another type had emerged, the type depicted by George Du Maurier in *Punch*. These children, with their 'pony-clip' fringes, their trim buttoned boots, their fur-edged caps outdoors, their neat pinafores indoors, have still a touch of mid-Victorian demureness; yet new influences are making themselves felt already: they hold opinions, they form

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

theories, they have a more frank, more confident bearing with their once-dreaded elders. Effie and Edith, Mabel and Maud, 'did lessons' usually with a governess at home, while their brothers were absent at preparatory or public schools, and then when the summer holidays came the whole family would transport itself to the seaside or to some Continental *plage*, where girls bathed in voluminous bathing-costumes or played on the sands wearing fishermen's caps and fish-wife dresses with striped underskirts and navy blue tops. At home Kate Greenaway frocks, almost touching the ground, might be their portion, if the fashionable whim attracted their mamma.

Globes had all but vanished from well-equipped school-rooms now, their place being taken by embossed maps, as witness the remark of the child in *Punch* who hadn't been to Switzerland, but had seen it on the map, and "didn't like the look of it at all." In the matter of music tastes had changed. The harp was no longer in favour, and as an alternative to the pianoforte the violin, or even the violoncello, might be studied. A little later the older girls were permitted to play the more frivolous and jocund banjo. No longer were time and money expended upon the modelling of wax fruits, the embroidering of woolwork slippers, the production of hand-screens in a kind of embossed stitchery known as *flosculo relieve*. Poker-work, leather-work, wood-carving, the painting of sunflowers upon door-panels which looked far better without them, now occupied English girls during the years which immediately preceded and followed their 'coming out.' The two periods seem to have overlapped in America, for one of the four March sisters in Miss Alcott's *Little Women* embroiders slippers, while another nearly sets the house on fire endeavouring to produce works of art with the aid of a red-hot poker.

## IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Meanwhile, though hours and conditions in mills and work-rooms still left much to be desired, the passage of successive Acts of Parliament had delivered children of both sexes in England from the cruel bondage of premature labour.

A new branch of literature—if 'literature' it can be called—was growing up, the branch labelled "Books for Girls." Some of these books were delightful—all were strictly innocuous. Many in both categories throw light upon the sort of lives led by gently nurtured girls during the middle and later Victorian period. It was still a comparatively secluded life, hedged round with prohibitions, but there were signs here and there that an epoch of greater freedom and wider opportunity was not far away, and that the wings of the modern girls were beginning to stir within the tightly folded chrysalis. It is true that as late as 1856 one of the girl characters in Charlotte M. Yonge's *Daisy Chain* thus apostrophizes her infant sister, "Oh, lucky baby, to have so many years to come before you are plagued with troublesome propriety!" but as early as 1875 *Punch* represented an orchestra composed entirely of young ladies performing on string and wind instruments of formidable proportions, while an audience composed entirely of young men listens admiringly; and only a few years later Mrs Lynn Linton's articles in the *Saturday Review* drew a perturbing picture of "The Girl of the Period." "It was all very well," wrote this lady,

in old-fashioned times, when fathers and mothers had some authority and were treated with respect, to be tutored and made to obey . . . but she is far too fast and flourishing to be stopped in mid-career by these old morals.

"Patience, propriety, and neatness"—Mrs Chapone's ideal

### *THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES*

was not yet quite obsolete in England when Queen Victoria had reigned for forty years; but during the decades which followed the continuity that had run on uninterruptedly from early Christian times was to be broken: a new world, peopled by parents and children with new points of view, was to come into being; time-hallowed standards were to be abandoned; time-honoured relationships were to be readjusted; traditions that had persisted for nearly two thousand years were to fade out. Here, then, while yet the old ways were remembered and the old things endured, let us end this history.

## INDEX

- ACHILLES, 39 *sqq.*  
 Æschylus, 42, 46  
 Æthelfled, 89  
 Agamemnon, 31, 39 *sqq.*  
*Agamemnon*, of Æschylus, 42 *sqq.*  
 Agnes of Anjou, 93  
 Ailred, Abbot of Rievaulx, 102, 104  
 Akhnaten (Amenhotep IV), 25, 29  
 Akkad, 17  
 Aicuin, 87  
 Alexander VI, Pope, 144 *sqq.*  
 Alfred, King, 88 *sqq.*  
 Alice, 255  
 Amelia, Princess, 216  
*Ami des enfans*, L', 249  
*Ancren Riwele*, 104  
 Andrewes, Lancelot, 190  
 Ankh-es-en-pa-Aten, 28-30  
 Anne of Denmark, 178 *sqq.*, 220  
 Anne, Princess, daughter of Charles I,  
 190 *sqq.*  
 Anne, Queen, 204, 213  
 Anne, St, 97 *sqq.*  
 Antigone, 43 *sqq.*  
 Antulla, 65 *sqq.*  
 Apprenticeship, 126, 128, 195, 216, 235  
 Apsley, Lucy—*see* Hutchinson, Mrs  
 Aristotle, 74  
 Artemis, 39, 41  
 Ascham, Roger, 166 *sqq.*  
 Astell, Mary, 213  
 Athene, 52  
 Athens, girl-life in, 46 *sqq.*  
 Aubrey, John, 184  
*Aucassin and Nicolette*, 110 *sqq.*  
 Augusta, Princess, 215  
 Augustine, St, of Canterbury, 79  
 Aylmer, John, Bishop of London, 167  
 BABYLONIA, 15-20  
 Barbauld, Mrs, 220, 223  
 Barbosus, 99  
 Bartholomew the Englishman, 103-104,  
 127  
 Beatrice, Dante's, 114  
 Beauharnais, Hortense de, 237  
 Becket, Thomas, 103  
 Bede, the Venerable, 82, 83  
 Bergamo, Jacopo di, 142  
 Bertha, Queen, 79  
 Bertha of Roussillon, 93  
*Bevis of Hampton*, 108  
 Black Death, the, 125, 126  
 Black Prince, the, 122, 126  
 Boarding-schools, 169, 180, 183, 184,  
 191 *sqq.*, 199, 203, 227-229, 242 *sqq.*  
 Boleyn, Anne, 161  
 Bologna, University of, 142  
 Boniface V, Pope, 82  
 Borgia, Lucrezia, 144 *sqq.*  
 Boswell, Veronica, 208-209  
 Brantôme, Pierre de, 155  
 Burghley, Lord, 174  
 Burney, Fanny, 214, 216  
 Byron, Lord, 245  
 CÆSAR, AUGUSTUS, 56  
 Cæsar, Julius, 56  
 Calvin, 146, 147  
 Campan, Madame de, 236 *sqq.*  
 Canace, 55, 65, 66  
 Carroll, Lewis, 255  
 Carter, Howard, 30  
 Cassandra, 31, 42  
 Castiglione, Baldassare, 143 *sqq.*  
 Cato the Younger, 57  
 Caxton, William, 128, 135

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

- Cecily, daughter of William the Conqueror, 97
- Cesarius, St, Bishop of Arles, 78
- Cesarius of Heisterbach, 120
- Chapone, Mrs, 225, 257
- Charity schools, 195, 221
- Charlemagne, 86 *sqq.*
- Charles I (of England), 180, 188, 190
- Charles II (of England), 187
- Charles VI (of France), 131
- Charles VIII (of France), 141, 148
- Charles V, Emperor, 148, 149
- Charlotte, Princess, 223, 225 *sqq.*
- Chaucer, Geoffrey, 110, 120, 121, 129, 156
- Chelsea, girls' schools at, 182, 192 *sqq.*
- Child-labour, 195, 216 *sqq.*, 234 *sqq.*, 257
- Christianity, 68 *sqq.*
- Chryseis, 31
- Cicero, 139, 146, 147
- Clement of Alexandria, St, 69-70, 71, 144, 219
- Clement VII, Pope, 148 *sqq.*
- Clytemnestra, 38 *sqq.*, 42, 50
- Constance, 109 *sqq.*
- Conway, Anne Seymour, 211
- Corinna, 51
- Costume, 19, 21 *sqq.*, 48, 70, 79, 106, 142, 212, 243, 255
- Crete, 37
- Cromwell, Oliver, 190
- Cuneiform script, 15
- Cupid's Banishment* (masque), 180 *sqq.*
- Cyprian, St, 70 *sqq.*, 158
- Cyr, St, 196, 237
- D'ANDREA, GIOVANNI, daughter of, 142
- Dante, 114, 119 *n.*, 145
- Day, Thomas, 218
- De Claris Muliebribus*, 142
- Delany, Mrs, as Mary Granville, 203 *sqq.*; as Mrs Delany, 203, 214, 216
- Denis, St, 93
- Denton, Anne (Nancy), 184 *sqq.*
- Dickens, Charles, 246 *sqq.*
- Dido and Æneas*, of Purcell, 193
- Dubois, Pierre, 115
- Dunstan, St, 93
- D'Urfey, Tom, 193 *sqq.*, 198
- EADBERGA, 92
- Eanflod, 82, 83-84
- Edgeworth, Maria, 207, 248
- Editha, 92-93
- Edward the Elder, 90
- Edward I, 117, 118
- Edward II, 117
- Edward III, 121 *sqq.*, 126, 127, 131, 135
- Edward VI, 151, 161, 163, 178
- Edwin, King of Northumbria, 79 *sqq.*
- Egypt, 20-30, 47
- Eleanor, daughter of Edward I, 117-118
- Electra, 43
- Elfida, 84 *sqq.*
- Elizabeth, Princess, daughter of Charles I, 188 *sqq.*
- Elizabeth, Princess, daughter of George III, 214
- Elizabeth, Princess, daughter of James I and VI, 178 *sqq.*
- Elizabeth, daughter of Henri II of France, 153, 154
- Elizabeth, Queen, 149, 161, 162 *sqq.*, 170, 172, 240
- Elstob, Elizabeth, 214
- Erasmus, 163, 165
- Ergastinai*, the, 52
- Erinna, 51
- Erotion, 55, 66-67
- Esther*, of Racine, 197
- Ethelberga, 79 *sqq.*
- Ethelwold, St, 92
- Ethilda, 91
- Eumenides*, *The*, of Æschylus, 42
- Euripides, 39, 42, 46
- Euripides the younger, 42
- Evelyn, John, 180, 189
- FAIRCHILD, LUCY AND EMILY, 248
- Feltre, Vittorino da, 140
- Ferrara, 138 *sqq.*

## INDEX

- Ferrara, Alfonso, Duke of, 145  
 Ferrara, Ercole d'Este, Duke of, 138  
 Ferrara, Renée, Duchess of, 146 *sqq.*  
 Fitzpatrick, Lady Anne, 211 *sqq.*  
*Floris and Blancheflour*, 111 *sqq.*, 159  
 François I, 148 *sqq.*  
 Freind, Mrs, 182  
 Froissart, 121  
 Fuller, John, 168, 190-191
- GALERAN, tale of, 107  
 Games, 32, 49, 107, 208  
 Genlis, Madame de, 219, 234, 238  
 George III, 215 *sqq.*, 244  
 Gertrude, St, 86  
*Gestes des dames*, the, 106  
 Giggs, Margaret, 163, 165, 168-169  
 Gollancz, Sir Israel, 129  
 Gonzaga, family of, 138, 140 *sqq.*  
 Gonzaga, Elizabetha, Duchess of Urbino,  
 140, 141, 142 *sqq.*  
 Governesses, 123, 141, 162, 183, 188,  
 203, 214, 219, 226, 230, 242, 243, 244,  
 256  
 Gower, John, 127  
 Gray, Thomas, 63  
 Greece, ancient, 31-53  
 Greenhill, William, 189  
 Grey, Lady Catherine, 171  
 Grey, Lady Jane, 166 *sqq.*, 226  
 Guise, Mary of, 151, 152  
*Guy of Warwick*, 108, 109  
 "Gyp," 251
- HACKNEY, girls' schools at, 182, 184  
 Halifax, George Savile, Marquis of, 198  
 Handel, George Frederick, 203 *sqq.*  
 Harley, Lady Margaret Cavendish  
 (Prior's "Peggy"), 202-203, 214  
 Harrison, the Rev. William, 170  
 Hawkins, Sir John, 193  
 Heloise, 99  
 Hengist, the daughter of, 78  
 Henri II (of France), 153, 154  
 Henry I (Beauclerc), 100, 103  
 Henry II, 103, 118  
 Henry III, 116, 117  
 Henry IV, 131  
 Henry VI, 132  
 Henry VII, 157, 174  
 Henry VIII, 151, 158, 166, 171, 178  
 Henry, Prince of Wales, 179  
 Herodotus, 22  
 Hilda, St, 84 *sqq.*  
 Hoby, Sir Thomas, 143  
 Holbein, Hans, 164  
 Homer, 33, 36, 42, 114  
 Hood, Thomas, 228  
 Horace, 55, 56, 58, 62, 160  
*How the Good Wife taught her Daughter*, 133  
 Hroswitha, 95 *sqq.*  
 Hugh, Count of Paris, 91  
 Hutchinson, Mrs Lucy, 186 *sqq.*
- Iliad*, the, 31, 38  
 Ionia, 51  
 Iphigenia, 38-42  
*Iphigenia in Aulis*, 38-41  
 Isabella of Castile, 157  
 Isabella, daughter of Edward III, 122,  
 123  
 Isabella d'Este, 138 *sqq.*  
 Iseult of Ireland, 107
- JAMES I (of Scotland), 130 *sqq.*  
 James V (of Scotland), 151  
 James I and VI, 174, 178, 181, 182  
 Jeanne d'Arc, 133  
 Jerome, St, 72 *sqq.*, 77, 158, 219  
 Joanna, daughter of Edward III, 122,  
 123  
 Johnson, Dr, 206, 208, 210  
 Josyan, 108  
 Julia, daughter of Augustus Cæsar, 56  
 Juliet, 175
- KANIS, supposed college for girls at, 18  
 Katharine, daughter of Henry III, 117  
 Katharine of Aragon, 157 *sqq.*  
 Katharine Parr, 161  
 Keith, Sir Arthur, 14 *sqq.*



## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

- Kingis Quhair, The*, 131  
 Kingston, Lord, 198  
 Kit-Cat Club, the, 198 *sqq.*  
 Knossos, 38  
  
 LADIES' HALL, the, at Deptford, 188 *sqq.*,  
     220  
 Læta, 72 *sqq.*, 158  
 Landry, the Knight of La Tour, 135  
 Leo X, Pope, 149  
 Lesbos, 51  
 Letter-writing, 165, 169, 202, 209, 215,  
     232, 242  
*Letty's Globe*, 254  
*Libation-bearers, The*, of Æschylus, 42  
     *sqq.*  
 Lister, Jane, 194  
*Little Women*, 256  
 Lorenzo the Magnificent, 138  
 Louis of Bavaria, 125  
 Louis XI, 136  
 Louis XIV, 195 *sqq.*  
*Love for Money; or, The Boarding-*  
     *school*, 193 *sqq.*, 198  
 Lynn Linton, Mrs, 257  
  
 MAHMOUD II, 137  
 Maintenon, Madame de, 196 *sqq.*  
 Makin, Bathsua, 188 *sqq.*, 191  
*Malheurs de Sophie, Les*, 249  
 Mangnall, Miss Richmal, 227, 229  
 Mantua, Giovanni Francesco Gongaza,  
     Marquis of, 138  
 Margaret, St, 100  
 Margaret of Brabant, 118  
 Margaret, Princess, of Scotland, 136  
 Marjorie, Pet, 239 *sqq.*  
 Martial, 55, 62, 65-66  
 Mary, daughter of Edward I, 118-119  
 Mary, daughter of James I and VI, 181  
     *sqq.*  
 Mary, Queen of Scots, 151 *sqq.*, 240  
 Mary Tudor, Queen, 158 *sqq.*  
 Matilda, the Empress, 101 *sqq.*, 103  
 Matilda, Queen of Henry I, 100 *sqq.*  
 Maurier, George du, 255  
  
 Medici, Catherine de', 148 *sqq.*, 154  
 Medici, the, house of, 138, 149  
 Menelaus, 31, 39  
 Mentone, girl's bones discovered at, 13  
*Mentoria; or, The Young Ladies' Instruc-*  
     *tor*, 209 *sqq.*  
*Merry Wives of Windsor, The*, 176  
*Midsummer Night's Dream, A*, 175  
 Milton, John, 191  
 Miranda, 176-177  
 Molière, J. B. P., 195  
 Monflathers, Miss, 246  
 Montagu, Lady Mary Wortley, 198 *sqq.*  
 Morata, Olympia, 146 *sqq.*, 151  
 More, Hannah, 220, 223, 226, 252  
 More, Margaret—*see* Roper  
 More, Sir Thomas, 159, 160, 163-166  
 Morland, George, 222  
 Moses, 16, 21  
  
 NAPOLEON I, 237 *sqq.*  
 Nausicaa, 31-36, 176  
 Nefertiti, Queen, 26 *sqq.*  
 Nell, Little, 246  
 Newcastle, Margaret, Duchess of, 186  
     *sqq.*  
 Nicholas, Sir Edward, 182  
 Nickleby, Kate, 242  
 Nogent, Gilbert de, 102, 104  
*Northanger Abbey*, 225  
  
 ODYSSEUS, 32-36, 39  
*Odyssey, the*, 31, 38  
 Œdipus, King of Thebes, 43 *sqq.*, 47  
*Œdipus Coloneus*, of Sophocles, 43 *sqq.*  
*Œdipus Rex*, of Sophocles, 43 *sqq.*  
 O'Mailley, Grainne, 170  
 Orestes, 39, 43  
  
*Pædagogus*, of Clement of Alexandria,  
     69 *sqq.*  
 Page, Anne, 176  
 Panathenaic procession, the, 52 *sqq.*  
 Paston letters, the, 133-134  
 Paula, *protégée* of St Jerome, 72 *sqq.*, 77  
 Paulinus, Bishop, 79, 81, 82, 83

## INDEX

- Pearl*, 129 *sqq.*  
 Pedro the Cruel, 125  
 Pepys, Samuel, 192  
 Perdita, 175, 176  
 Pericles, 50  
 Phædra, 50  
 Philippa of Hainault, 122  
 Philips, Katherine (the "Matchless Orinda"), 184  
*Phœnician Women, The*, of Euripides, 43  
 Pilkington, Letitia, 200 *sqq.*  
 Pindar, 51  
 Pinkerton, Miss, 227, 233  
 Pisan, Christine de, 131  
 Plato, 47, 50, 99, 116  
 Plympton, Dorythe, 169  
 Pontifex Maximus, the, 60  
 Poore, Richard, Bishop of Salisbury, 104  
 Porcia, 57  
*Précieuses*, the, 195  
 Prehistoric girls, 13-15  
 Priest, John, 192, 220  
*Princess, The*, 213, 254 *sqq.*  
*Princess Ida*, 255  
 Prior, Matthew, 202  
*Punch*, 255, 257  
 Purcell, Henry, 193  
  
*Questions*, of Mangnall, 227, 229  
  
 RACINE, JEAN, 197  
 Radegonde, Queen, 77  
 Raleigh, Sir Walter, 174  
 Red Maids, the, of Bristol, 194 *sqq.*  
*Republic*, of Plato, 50  
 Ritchie, Lady, 247  
 Roman Empire, the, 54 *sqq.*  
 Roper, Margaret (*née* More), 163, 164, 165  
*Rosa*, 250  
*Rosamund*, Miss Edgeworth's, 248  
 Rossetti, Christina, 249  
  
 SALMON, MRS, 184  
  
 Samplers, 220 *sqq.*  
 Sappho, 51  
*Schoolmistress, The*, of Shenstone, 217  
 Schools, 18, 50, 76, 95, 102, 104, 111, 120, 126, 131, 140, 169, 180, 182, 183, 191, 192 *sqq.*, 203, 217, 255. *See also* Boarding-schools  
 Scott, Sir Walter, 86, 201, 239  
 Ségur, Madame de, 249  
 Seward, Anna, 205 *sqq.*  
 Sforza, Ippolita, 141  
 Shakespeare, girls in plays of, 175 *sqq.*  
 Sherwood, Mrs, 220, 222  
*Shorthand*, 184 *sqq.*  
 Shrewsbury, Elizabeth, Countess of, 172 *sqq.*  
 Shub-Ad, Queen, 19  
 Sluys, battle of, 123  
 Smith, Elizabeth, 231-232  
 Socrates, 50  
 Solari, Margherita Scavarelli, 141  
 Sophia, Princess, daughter of James I and VI, 181  
 Sophia, Princess, daughter of George III, 212, 215 *sqq.*  
 Sophocles, 43 *sqq.*, 46  
 Southey, Robert, 235  
 Sparta, 50  
 Squire, W. Barclay, 193 *n.*  
 Steele, Sir Richard, 199 *sqq.*  
 Stella, 201 *sqq.*  
 Strozzi, Marietta, 140  
*Struwwelpeter*, 248  
 Stuart, Arbella, 171 *sqq.*, 179  
 Stuart, Lady Louisa, 199  
 Sumer, 17 *sqq.*  
 Swift, Dean, 201 *sqq.*  
  
*Tatler, The*, 199  
 Taylor, Jane and Ann, 248  
 Teazle, Lady, 204  
 Tell-el-Amarna, 26 *sqq.*  
*Tempest, The*, 176  
 Tennyson, Lord, 213, 254  
 Thackeray, W. M., 229, 246  
 Theatre, toy, 233

## THE GIRL THROUGH THE AGES

- Theodosius, Emperor, 61  
Theophrastus, 198  
Thomas of Canterbury, St—*see* Becket  
Thomas of Chantimpré, 104  
Thrale, Hester Maria, 209 *sqq.*  
Tottenham High Cross, schools at, 189, 229  
Toys, 21, 48, 55 *sqq.*, 226, 233  
Tristan, 107  
Trivet, Nicholas, 109, 119  
Troy, 31, 38, 41  
Turner, Charles Tennyson, 253  
Tut-ankh-Amen, 28-30
- UR, 18, 19-20  
Urbino, Elizabetta Gonzaga, Duchess of, 140, 142 *sqq.*  
Ure, Andrew, 236, 246  
*Utopia*, of More, 160
- VARNO, COSTANZA, 141  
Vaughan, Henry, 188  
Verney, Edmund, 192  
Verney, Sir Ralph, 184 *sqq.*
- Vestal Virgins, the, 60 *sqq.*  
Victoria, Queen, 244, 257  
Virgil, 63, 139  
Virgin, cult of the Blessed, 96, 103  
Virginia, Chaucer's, 121  
Vives, Juan Luis, 158, 163  
Vortigern, 78
- WALPOLE, HORACE, 210, 213  
Watts, Dr, 219  
Wesley, John, 217  
Whitby, Synod of, 85  
Whitson, Alderman, 194, 195  
Wilfrid, St, 85  
William the Conqueror, 97  
Woolley, Hannah, 183 *sqq.*  
Woolley, Leonard, 19-20  
Wordsworth, William, 245
- XENOPHON, 47
- YOLANZ, BELE, 107  
Yonge, Charlotte M., 257  
York, tomb of Roman legionary's baby daughter at, 67