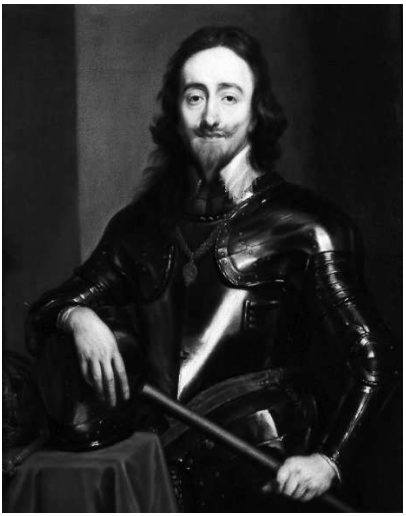
CHARLES I

[Illustrated & Engraved & Mapped]

JACOB ABBOTT



KING CHARLES I

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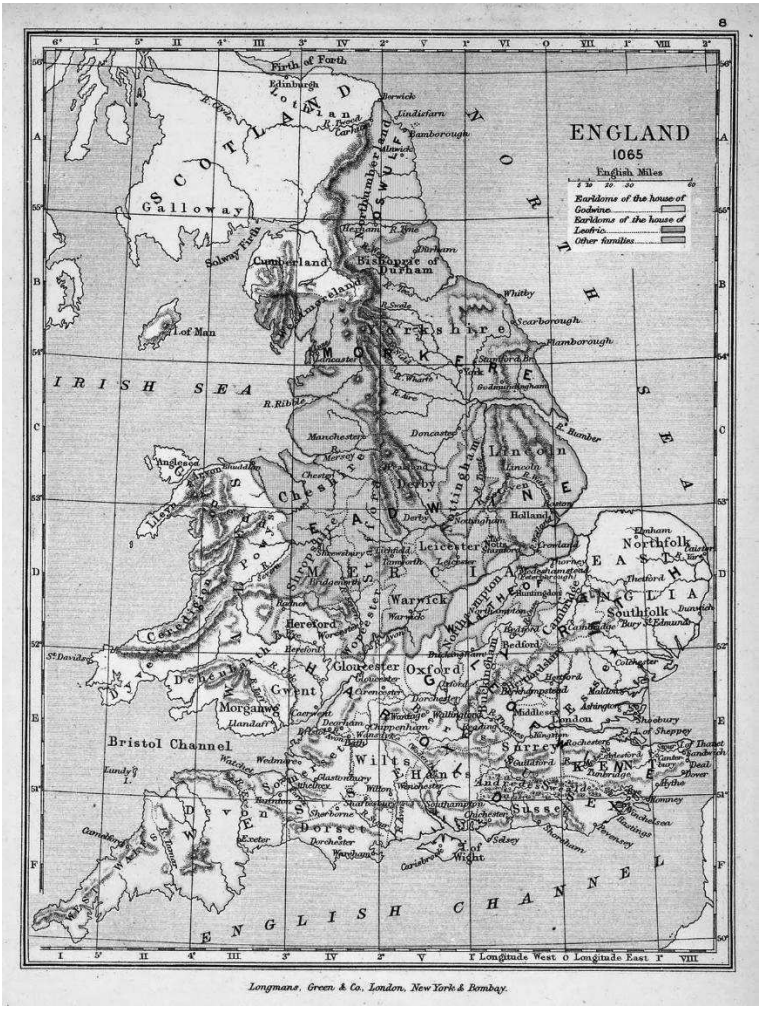

England in 1065.

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PREFACE

THE history of the life of every individual who has, for any reason, attracted extensively the attention of mankind, has been written in a great variety of ways

by a multitude of authors, and persons sometimes wonder why we should have so many different accounts of the same thing. The reason is, that each one of these accounts is intended for a different set of readers, who read with ideas and purposes widely dissimilar from each other. Among the twenty millions of people in the United States, there are perhaps two millions, between the ages of fifteen and twenty-five, who wish to become acquainted, in general, with the leading events in the history of the Old World, and of ancient times, but who, coming upon the stage in this land and at this period, have ideas and conceptions so widely different from those of other nations and of other times, that a mere republication of existing accounts is not what they require. The story must be told expressly for them. The things that are to be explained, the points that are to be brought out, the comparative degree of prominence to be given to the various particulars, will all be different, on account of the difference in the situation, the ideas, and the objects of these new readers, compared with those of the various other classes of readers which former authors have had in view. It is for this reason, and with this view, that the present series of historical narratives is presented to the public. The author, having had some opportunity to become acquainted with the position, the ideas, and the intellectual wants of those whom he addresses, presents the result of his labors to them, with the hope that it may be found successful in accomplishing its design.

CHARLES I AND ARMOR BEARER

QUEEN HENRIETTA MARIA

HIS CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH

KING CHARLES THE FIRST was born in Scotland. It may perhaps surprise the reader that an English king should be born in Scotland. The explanation is this:

They who have read the history of Mary Queen of Scots, will remember that it was the great end and aim of her life to unite the crowns of England and Scotland in her own family. Queen Elizabeth was then Queen of England. She lived and died unmarried. Queen Mary and a young man named Lord Darnley were the next heirs. It was uncertain which of the two had the strongest claim. To prevent a dispute, by uniting these claims, Mary made Darnley her husband. They had it son, who, after the death of his father and mother, was acknowledged to be the heir to the English throne, whenever Elizabeth's life should end. In the meantime he remained King of Scotland. His name was James. He married a princess of Denmark; and his child, who afterward was King Charles the First of England, was born before he left his native realm.

King Charles's mother was, as has been already said, a princess of Denmark. Her name was Anne. The circumstances of her marriage to King James were quite extraordinary, and attracted great attention at the time. It is, in some sense, a matter of principle among kings and queens, that they must only marry persons of royal rank, like themselves; and as they have very little opportunity of visiting each other, residing as they do in such distant capitals, they generally choose their consorts by the reports which come to them of the person and character of the different candidates. The choice, too, is very much influenced by political considerations, and is always more or less embarrassed by negotiations with other courts, whose ministers make objections to this or that alliance, on account of its supposed interference with some of their own political schemes.

As it is very inconvenient, moreover, for a king to leave his dominions, the marriage ceremony is usually performed at the court where the bride resides, without the presence of the bridegroom, he sending an embassador to act as his representative. This is called being married by proxy. The bride then comes to her royal husband's dominions, accompanied by a great escort. He meets her usually on the frontiers; and there she sees him for the first time, after having been married to him some weeks by proxy. It is true, indeed, that she has generally seen his *picture*, that being usually sent to her before the marriage contract is made. This, however, is not a matter of

much consequence, as the personal predilections of a princess have generally very little to do with the question of her marriage.

Now King James had concluded to propose for the oldest daughter of the King of Denmark and he entered into negotiations for this purpose. This plan, however, did not please the government of England, and Elizabeth, who was then the English queen, managed so to embarrass and interfere with the scheme, that the King of Denmark gave his daughter to another claimant. James was a man of very mild and quiet temperament, easily counteracted and thwarted in his plans; but this disappointment aroused his energies, and he sent a splendid embassy into Denmark to demand the king's second daughter, whose name was Anne. He prosecuted this suit so vigorously that the marriage articles were soon agreed to and signed. Anne embarked and set sail for Scotland. The king remained there, waiting for her arrival with great impatience. At length, instead of his bride, the news came that the fleet in which Anne had sailed had been dispersed and driven back by a storm, and that Anne herself had landed on the coast of Norway.

James immediately conceived the design of going himself in pursuit of her. But knowing very well that all his ministers and the officers of his government would make endless objections to his going out of the country on such an errand, he kept his plan a profound secret

from them all. He ordered some ships to be got ready privately, and provided a suitable train of attendants, and then embarked with out letting his people know where he was going. He sailed across the German Ocean to the town in Norway where his bride had landed. He found her there, and they were married. Her brother, who had just succeeded to the throne, having received intelligence of this, invited the young couple to come, and spend the winter at his capital of Copenhagen; and as the season was far advanced, and the sea stormy, King James concluded to accept the invitation. They were received in Copenhagen with great pomp and parade, and the winter was spent in festivities and rejoicings. In the spring he brought his bride to Scotland. The whole world were astonished at the performance of such an exploit by a king, especially one of so mild, quiet, and grave a character as that which James had the credit of possessing.

Young Charles was very weak and feeble in his infancy. It was feared that he would not live many hours. The rite of baptism was immediately performed, as it was, in those days, considered essential to the salvation of a child dying in infancy that it should be baptized before it died.

Notwithstanding the fears that were at first felt, Charles lingered along for some days, and gradually began to acquire a little strength. His feebleness was a cause of great anxiety and concern to those around him; but the

degree of interest felt in the little sufferer's fate was very much less than it would have been if he had been the oldest son. He had a brother, Prince Henry, who was older than he, and, consequently, heir to his father's crown. It was not probable, therefore, that Charles would ever be king; and the importance of every thing connected with his birth and his welfare was very much diminished on that account.

It was only about two years after Charles's birth that Queen Elizabeth died, and King James succeeded to the English throne. A messenger came with all speed to Scotland to announce the fact. He rode night and day. He arrived at the king's palace in the night. He gained admission to the king's chamber, and, kneeling at his bedside, proclaimed him King of England. James immediately prepared to bid his Scotch subjects farewell, and to proceed to England to take possession of his new realm. Queen Anne was to follow him in a week or two, and the other children, Henry and Elizabeth; but Charles was too feeble to go.

In those early days there was a prevailing belief in Scotland, and, in fact, the opinion still lingers there, that certain persons among the old Highlanders had what they called the gift of the second sight—that is, the power of foreseeing futurity in some mysterious and incomprehensible way. An incident is related in the old histories connected with Charles's infancy, which is a good illustration of this. While King James was preparing to

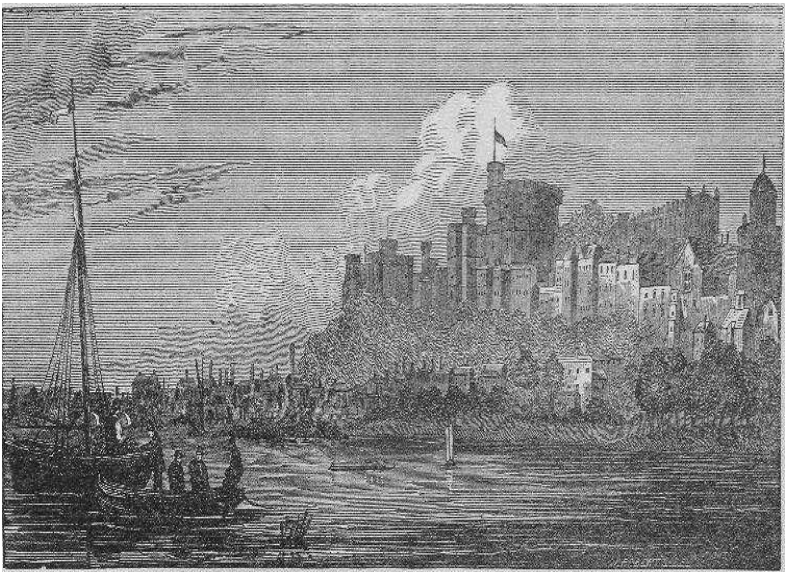
leave Scotland, to take possession of the English throne, an old Highland laird came to bid him farewell. He gave the king many parting counsels and good wishes, and then, overlooking the older brother, Prince Henry, he went directly to Charles, who was then about two years old, and bowed before him, and kissed his hand with the greatest appearance of regard and veneration. King James undertook to correct his supposed mistake, by telling him that that was his second son, and that the other boy was the heir to the crown. "No," said the old laird, "I am not mistaken. I know to whom I am speaking. This child, now in his nurse's arms, will be greater than his brother. This is the one who is to convey his father's name and titles to succeeding generations." This prediction was fulfilled; for the robust and healthy Henry died, and the feeble and sickly-looking Charles lived and grew, and succeeded, in due time, to his father's throne.

Now inasmuch as, at the time when this prediction was uttered, there seemed to be little human probability of its fulfillment, it attracted attention; its unexpected and startling character made every one notice and remember it; and the old laird was at once an object of interest and wonder. It is probable that this desire to excite the admiration of the auditors, mingled insensibly with a sort of poetic enthusiasm, which a rude age and mountainous scenery always inspire, was the origin of a great many such predictions as these; and then, in the

end, those only which turned out to be true were remembered, while the rest were forgotten; and this was the way that the reality of such prophetic powers came to be generally believed in.

Feeble and uncertain of life as the infant Charles appeared to be, they conferred upon him, as is customary in the case of young princes, various titles of nobility. He was made a duke, a marquis, an earl, and a baron, before he had strength enough to lift up his head in his nurse's arms. His title as duke was Duke of Albany; and as this was the highest of his nominal honors, he was generally known under that designation while he remained in Scotland.

When his father left him, in order to go to England and take possession of his new throne, he appointed a governess to take charge of the health and education of the young duke. This governess was Lady Cary. The reason why she was appointed was, not because of her possessing any peculiar qualifications for such a charge, but because her husband, Sir Robert Cary, had been the messenger employed by the English government to communicate to James the death of Elizabeth, and to announce to him his accession to the throne. The bearer of good news to a monarch must always be rewarded, and James recompensed Sir Robert for his service by appointing his wife to the post of governess of his infant son. The office undoubtedly had its honors and emoluments, with very little of responsibility or care.



WINDSOR CASTLE

One of the chief residences of the English monarchs is Windsor Castle. It is situated above London, on the Thames, on the southern shore. It is on an eminence overlooking the river and the delightful valley through which the river here meanders. In the rear is a very extensive park or forest, which is penetrated in every direction by rides and walks almost innumerable. It has been for a long time the chief country residence of the British kings. It is very spacious, containing within its walls many courts and quadrangles, with various buildings surrounding them, some ancient and some modern. Here King James held his court after his arrival in England, and in about a year he sent for the little Charles to join him.

The child traveled very slowly, and by very easy stages, his nurses and attendants watching over him with great solicitude all the way. The journey was made in the month of October. His mother watched his arrival with great interest. Being so feeble and helpless, he was, of course, her favorite child. By an instinct which very strongly evinces the wisdom and goodness which implanted it, a mother always bestows a double portion of her love upon the frail, the helpless, and the suffering. Instead of being wearied out with protracted and incessant calls for watchfulness and care, she feels only a deeper sympathy and love, in proportion to the infirmities which call for them, and thus finds her highest happiness in what we might expect would be a weariness and a toil.

Little Charles was four years old when he reached Windsor Castle. They celebrated his arrival with great rejoicings, and a day or two afterward they invested him with the title of Duke of York, a still higher distinction than he had before attained. Soon after this, when he was perhaps five or six years of age, a gentleman was appointed to take the charge of his education. His health gradually improved, though he still continued helpless and feeble. It was a long time before he could walk, on account of some malformation of his limbs. He learned to talk, too, very late and very slowly. Besides the general feebleness of his constitution, which kept him back in all these things, there was an impediment in his speech,

which affected him very much in childhood, and which, in fact, never entirely disappeared.

As soon, however, as he commenced his studies under his new tutor, he made much greater progress than had been expected. It was soon observed that the feebleness which had attached to him pertained more to the body than to the mind. He advanced with considerable rapidity in his learning. His progress was, in fact, in some degree, promoted by his bodily infirmities, which kept him from playing with the other boys of the court, and led him to like to be still, and to retire from scenes of sport and pleasure which he could not share.

The same cause operated to make him not agreeable as a companion, and he was not a favorite among those around him. They called him *Baby* Charley. His temper seemed to be in some sense soured by the feeling of his inferiority, and by the jealousy he would naturally experience in finding himself, the son of a king, so outstripped in athletic sports by those whom he regarded as his inferiors in rank and station.

The lapse of a few years, however, after this time, made a total change in Charles's position and prospects. His health improved, and his constitution began to be confirmed and established. When he was about twelve years of age, too, his brother Henry died. This circumstance made an entire change in all his prospects of life. The eyes of the whole kingdom, and, in fact, of all Eu-

rope, were now upon him as the future sovereign of England. His sister Elizabeth, who was a few years older than himself, was, about this time, married to a German prince, with great pomp and ceremony, young Charles acting the part of brideman. In consequence of his new position as heir-apparent to the throne, he was advanced to new honors, and had new titles conferred upon him, until at last, when he was sixteen years of age, he was made Prince of Wales, and certain revenues were appropriated to support a court for him, that he might be surrounded with external circumstances and insignia of rank and power, corresponding with his prospective greatness.

In the mean time his health and strength rapidly improved, and with the improvement came a taste for manly and athletic sports, and the attainment of excellence in them. He gradually acquired great skill in all the exploits and performances of the young men of those days, such as shooting, riding, vaulting, and tilting at tournaments. From being a weak, sickly, and almost helpless child, he became, at twenty, an active, athletic young man, full of life and spirit, and ready for any romantic enterprise. In fact, when he was twenty-three years old, he embarked in a romantic enterprise which attracted the attention of all the world. This enterprise will presently be described.

There was at this time, in the court of King James, a man who became very famous afterward as a favorite and follower of Charles. He is known in history under the

name of the Duke of Buckingham. His name was originally George Villiers. He was a very handsome young man, and he seems to have attracted King James's attention at first on this account. James found him a convenient attendant, and made him, at last, his principal favorite. He raised him to a high rank, and conferred upon him, among other titles, that of Duke of Buckingham. The other persons about the court were very envious and jealous of his influence and power; but they were obliged to submit to it. He lived in great state and splendor, and for many years was looked up to by the whole kingdom as one of the greatest personages in the realm. We shall learn hereafter how he came to his end.

If the reader imagines, from the accounts which have been given thus far in this chapter of the pomp and parade of royalty, of the castles and the ceremonies, the titles of nobility, and the various insignia of rank and power, which we have alluded to so often, that the mode of life which royalty led in those days was lofty, dignified, and truly great, he will be very greatly deceived. All these things were merely for show—things put on for public display, to gratify pride and impress the people, who never looked behind the scenes, with high ideas of the grandeur of those who, as they were taught, ruled over them by a divine right. It would be hard to find, in any class of society except those reputed infamous, more low, gross, vulgar modes of life than have been exhibited generally in the royal palaces of Europe the last five

hundred years. King James the First has, among English sovereigns, rather a high character for sobriety and gravity of deportment, and purity of morals; but the glimpses we get of the real, everyday routine of his domestic life, are such as to show that the pomp and parade of royalty is mere glittering tinsel, after all.

The historians of the day tell such stories as these. The king was at one time very dejected and melancholy, when Buckingham contrived this plan to amuse him. In the first place, however, we ought to say, in order to illustrate the terms on which he and Buckingham lived together, that the king always called Buckingham *Steeny*, which was a contraction of Stephen. St. Stephen was always represented, in the Catholic pictures of the saints, as a very handsome man, and Buckingham being handsome too, James called him Steeny by way of compliment. Steeny called the king *his dad*, and used to sign himself, in his letters, "your slave and dog Steeny." There are extant some letters which passed between the king and his favorite, written, on the part of the king, in a style of grossness and indecency such that the chroniclers of those days said that they were not fit to be printed. They would not "blot their pages" with them, they said. King Charles's letters were more properly expressed.

To return, then, to our story. The king was very much dejected and melancholy. Steeny, in order to divert him, had a pig dressed up in the clothes of an infant child.

Buckingham's mother, who was a countess, personated the nurse, dressed also carefully for the occasion. Another person put on a bishop's robes, satin gown, lawn sleeves, and the other pontifical ornaments. They also provided a baptismal font, a prayer-book, and other things necessary for a religious ceremony, and then invited the king to come in to attend a baptism. The king came, and the pretended bishop began to read the service, the assistants looking gravely on, until the squealing of the pig brought all gravity to an end. The king was *not* pleased; but the historian thinks the reason was, not any objection which he had to such a profanation, but to his not happening to be in a mood for it at that time.

There was a negotiation going on for a long time for a marriage between one of the king's sons, first Henry, and afterward Charles, and a princess of Spain. At one time the king lost some of the papers, and was storming about the palace in a great rage because he could not find them. At last he chanced to meet a certain Scotchman, a servant of his, named Gib, and, like a vexed and impatient child, who lays the charge of a lost plaything upon any body who happens to be at hand to receive it, he put the responsibility of the loss of the papers upon Gib. "I remember," said he, "I gave them to you to take care of. What have you done with them?" The faithful servant fell upon his knees, and protested that he had not received them. The king was only made the more