

Loves And Sorrows Of Mary Queen Of Scots

Hapless Ruler Found Only Tragedy, Heartaches During Quests For Joy

By John Richard Finch

MYSTERY is a spur to creative imagination. Always, therefore, figures and events that are shrouded in mystery demand elucidation and stimulate the ingenuity of the artistic mind. Among historical problems that call unceasingly for solution, the tragedy of Mary Stuart ranks as a crucial instance. Surely of all the women who have made their mark in the world, no other has been the theme of so many dramas, novels, biographies, and discussions. Throughout four centuries she has allured poets and tortured the fancy of men of learning. Still, today her story has again and again to be retold. Because that which is confused craves for clarity, that which is in darkness strains toward the light.

Stefan Zweig, the eminent biographer, who gave the world perhaps the best portrayal of Marie Antoinette yet written, after years of research and study on the ill-fated Queen of the Scots, buried himself in a Vienna studio and turned out the most fascinating, intimate, and authentic story which has ever been given to the world on Mary Stuart. Published by the Viking Press, Incorporated, in New York recently, Zweig's "Mary, Queen of Scotland and the Isles," has captured the praise of the critics and is now one of the most popular biographies of the year.

The answers to the riddle of Mary's life and character are almost as contradictory as they are manifold. Some regard her as a murderess, others as a martyr; some as an intriguer, others as a saint. Stefan Zweig's book places a new light on the subject. The diversity of opinions about this woman is due, not to a shortage of material, but to the perplexing superabundance of contemporary records. In the thousands upon thousands of documents, reports, records of trials, letters, and the like, relating to her, the question of her guilt or innocence is continually being re-examined, and the re-trial has continued for three centuries. The more meticulously we scrutinize the documents, the more painfully do we become aware how dubious is the authenticity of historical evidence, and how untrustworthy therefore the conclusions of historians. For no matter how incontrovertibly genuine an ancient document may be, this genuineness does not provide any guarantee as to the human validity of its contents. In the case of Mary Queen of Scots more plainly perhaps than in any other, we become aware how diversely two or more observers may describe an incident which they have witnessed simultaneously. Every well-attested "Yes" is countered by an equally well-attested "No"; every charge by a rebuttal. Falsehood and truth, fact and fiction, are so confusingly mingled, that every possible view as to her guilt or innocence where this or that matter is concerned (and especially as to her complicity in Darnley's murder), seems equally supported by reliable testimony.

IN ANY case it is but natural for people to take sides where characters, ideas, and outlooks are contrasted one with another; so that few, if any, can avoid the temptation of calling one right and the other wrong, one guilty and the other innocent. If, as in the present instance, the witnesses belong to one or the other of the contending parties, religious, or philosophies, we may take bias to be a matter of course. Speaking generally, we find that Protestant writers ascribe the blame to Mary, and Catholic ones the blame to Elizabeth of England; that English historians tend to describe the former unhesitatingly as a murderess, while Scottish authorities incline to exonerate her and to speak of her as a victim of calumny. The members of one faction describe the Casket Letters (the thorniest problem of the period) as genuine; the members of the other faction are no less firmly convinced that these epistles must have been forgeries.

IN Stefan Zweig's book, translated from Austrian by Eden and Cedar Paul, he has scrupulously abstained from relying upon evidence obtained by torture, force, or fear. He has also been extremely cautious in the use of the reports of spies or ambassadors (the terms in those days were almost synonymous). Where there is a conflict of testimony, the possible political motives that might lead to distortion have been carefully weighed. In embracing the view that the sonnets and, for the most part, the Casket Letters, are genuine, the author has only done

so after the most exhaustive study and in the light of internal evidence which seems to him to warrant his conviction.

Mary Stuart was one of those rare and interesting women whose period of supreme activity is comparatively restricted in duration; one of those who have a brief though vigorous blossoming; one of those whose life is mainly lived during the short and glowing phase of a great passion, instead of being spread equably throughout the normal span of existence. Until her twenty-third year, her affective life was almost quiescent; so was it again after her twenty-fifth. During the two years that intervened, passion flamed up in her with elemental force, and what might have seemed an average destiny assumed the lineaments of a Greek tragedy as formidable as that of Orestes. It was during these two years that Mary underwent the supreme experiences which led in the end to her destruction, and thanks to which, likewise, her memory has become so noteworthy—for what destroyed her made her immortal in song and story.

MARY STUART was but six days old when she became Queen of Scotland, thus obeying in spite of herself what appears to have been the law of her life: to receive too soon and without conscious joy what fate had to give her. From her earliest youth, Mary Stuart was perhaps the most courted damsel of her day. Whoever in Europe happened to be heir to a throne, or kind and wedded, sent an official wooer to her, the houses of Hapsburg and Bourbon, Philip II of Spain, his son Don Carlos, the Archduke of Austria, together with the Kings of Sweden and of Denmark—old men and young, dotards, and striplings, became aspirants for her hand.

Mary Stuart lived for herself. Her mind was stuffed with romance, and she accepted her queenly estate as a gift of God, and as exacting no duties on her part. The Queen of Scots was wholly a woman, first, last, and always, so that the greatest decisions forced upon her during her brief span took their shape from this deepest spring-head of her being. Yet it would be far from true to say that impulse invariably governed her reason, or that she allowed herself to be driven unresistingly hither and thither by her passions. Quite the reverse. In early youth Mary proved amazingly reserved in all that appertained to the exercise of feminine charm.

Year followed year and the life of feeling still slumbered quietly within her. What portraits have come down to us show a friendly, gentle, rather weak and indolent face, a slightly disdainful pair of eyes, an almost childish, smiling mouth. It was not until her twenty-third year that she was to discover her real depths, her real strength, in a passion of love that was to be the only true passion of a lifetime.

Mary Stuart's first husband, the youthful and sickly Francis II, was little more than a passionless experiment. His death she mourned, perhaps, genuinely because he was a gentle, docile companion. She was still half a child when she became a widow. Her first love was Henry Darnley, son of the Earl of Lennox who had been banished from Scotland as an enemy of the Stuarts. Darnley had nothing but his looks—a handsome, voluptuous face and body—which, after a long period of dormant emotions, Mary Stuart found intriguing. After objections on every side, most of all from Queen Elizabeth, who took delight in making Mary feel that she was subject to the wishes of the court of England, Mary took unto herself young Darnley as her second venture in matrimony. Elizabeth also was probably annoyed with the fact that Mary was getting a handsome, virile youth for a consort, and not one of the doddering, fops whom she had recommended.

BUT Mary's affection for her young husband hardly survived their honeymoon. The moment it became known that an heir to the throne had been conceived, the Queen repulsed all advances of her husband. She found him soft and with no more backbone than a jelly fish. Her disappointment in Darnley was political as well as the disappointment of a loving woman. She had hoped that, with the aid of a husband who would be devoted to her body and soul, she would at length be able to shake off the tutelage of the Scottish lords; she had dreamed of ruling Scotland jointly with her beloved. But these

illusions, likewise, had vanished with the honeymoon.

Darnley, smarting under the slights of his wife, plotted to overthrow her regime, placing himself in full power. With a group of conspirator-henchmen, he took over the castle. But his henchmen were murderers as well as conspirators. Before the eyes of Darnley and the Queen, they stabbed to death Rizzio, Mary's chamberlain. Darnley excused their crime by declaring publicly that the Italian secretary was slain because he had been detected in an intrigue with the Pope, the King of Spain, and other foreign potentates for the purpose of destroying evangelism, and introducing popery again into Scotland. Mary was kept under guard in her room. The court ladies were barred from entry; a strong guard was posted at the gates and doors of the palace, and Mary Stuart for the first time in her life became a prisoner.

The conspiracy had been completely successful. In the courtyard lay the mangled corpse of her most trusted advisor; at the head of her enemies was her own husband; his were to be the royal rights, while she herself was not even allowed to leave her room. At one blow she had been dragged down from her high position, was powerless, forsaken, without friends or helpers, and the object of scorn. In this dreadful moment she seemed to have lost everything, but a strong heart is hardened beneath the hammer of destiny. Always when her liberty, her honor, her queenship, were at stake, Mary Stuart found more vitality within herself than in all her assistants or servants.

DURING this night of her first great humiliation, her character became transformed once and for all. In the fiery forge of a most terrible experience, when



Mary Queen of Scots lived a life of disillusionments. She was scorned and even betrayed by the men she loved and trusted.

she saw that her unduly ready confidence in her husband, her friends, and her subjects had been misplaced, this otherwise extremely feminine and soft-hearted wo-

man grew hard as steel, acquiring the resilience and tenacity of metal that has been properly treated in the fire. But, being double-edged like a rapier, her

character became ambiguous after that dreadful night, which was the beginning of her disasters. The curtain had risen on the bloody tragedy of her life.

Mary Stuart formed her plans with one of those lightning flashes of genius which, when the danger of death threatens, will often come ever to persons of a dull and indifferent temperament. Her situation, as she instantly perceived, was hopeless so long as Darnley and the conspirators hung together. Only one thing could save her now—to sow the seed of discord among her enemies. She resorted to cunning. Soon Darnley was exposed and, with her return to power, he left the palace smarting under his failure.

It was now that the great passion of Mary's life took root in the rugged, rough and ready, he-man soldier, James Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell. Her love, elemental in its fierce passion was one of the most notable in history. These devouring loves of classical antiquity that have become proverbial hardly excel it in frantic intensity. It shot skyward like a sheet of flame into ecstasy; its ardours spewed themselves forth into crime. When mental states are thus intensified, it is foolish to scrutinize for logic and rationality the actions of those in whom they rage, since it is the essence of uncontrollable impulses to be irrational. So Mary Stuart, a product of her epoch both in the mental and the moral sphere, must not be condemned out of hand, seeing that her actions were temporarily governed by something irrespective of her normal and hitherto moderate and sedate outlook on life. With eyes closed and ears stopped, drawn as it were by a magnet, she moved along her path toward disaster and crime.

And so with her fiercely satisfying lover, she plotted the death of Darnley, which was finally consummated when hired assassins blew up his house at Holyrood, killing him and his servant. Bothwell then became the third husband of the Queen of the Scots. This was the beginning of the

end. The Scottish lords as well as the populace objected to Bothwell so strenuously that for safety he and his Queen left Holyrood castle for a stronghold at Borthwick. But Mary had only been a plaything for Bothwell. His was not love and his passion soon cooled. The Queen became just like the other thousand "wenches" he had known. But Mary's passion remained unshaken. She followed him from place to place, until finally she was intercepted and taken by the Scottish lords back to Edinburgh, and Bothwell became a fugitive. Mary was imprisoned in Lochleven castle to remain a prisoner of state at one place or another until her death.

IT WAS sometime later, when Bothwell sent a secret emissary to the castle for his papers, that the Casket Letters were discovered. The man was apprehended, tortured and made to reveal the hiding place of the casket. It was here that her impassioned letters of love and promise were uncovered.

These letters, the intimate details of Mary Stuart's life, are brought to light and discussed in Stefan Zweig's book with an amazing clarity. His unbiased and carefully planned account of "Mary Stuart, Queen of Scotland and the Isles," gives the public a new and intimate picture of Mary Stuart. The long years of her imprisonment, and the political intrigue and puppetry, with the haughty, vengeful Elizabeth pulling the strings, are graphically unfolded. Details of her trial and defenseless conviction by the English court and her execution under the axe, are described with heretofore unwritten details. Indeed a new light is thrown upon the life of the great Scottish queen, who today, after four centuries, is still so popular a theme that her life is being portrayed on the motion picture screen. The part of Mary Stuart will be played by Katherine Hepburn, whose name strangely enough, is the same as the Earl of Bothwell's, which was James Hepburn. And so Mary Stuart, Queen of the Scots lives on in memory.

It's no use, men! We can't steal the FRESHNESS of Double-Mellow OLD GOLDS!



OUTWITTED AT LAST! Foiled by the O. G-Men! Those three "bad actors" ... Dryness, Dampness and Dust ... who steal the freshness and fragrance of cigarettes.

To protect those rich and rare prize

crop tobaccos in Double-Mellow Old Golds, the Old Gold folks have created a double Cellophane package; a package that's both weather-tight and dust-proof. TWO jackets of the finest moisture-proof Cellophane guard the

freshness of Old Gold's prize crop leaf ... like a miser guarding his gold.

It takes "next to no time" to open these two jackets. But, Boy! what a difference that extra jacket makes in the freshness of the cigarettes!

PRIZE CROP TOBACCOS

make them *Double-Mellow!*

2 JACKETS, DOUBLE "CELLOPHANE"

keep them *Factory Fresh!*

Copyright, 1936, by F. L. Stoddard Co., Inc.