

THE PORTRAITS OF MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS.



THE question of the personal appearance of the last Queen of the Scots is a matter of as much uncertainty to-day as is the greater question of her moral character. Scores of volumes have been written to prove her virtue or to proclaim her infamy, and hundreds of artists have endeavored to picture the face, a glimpse of which, it was said, would move even her enemies to forget her follies and forgive her faults. That she was the most beautiful princess, if not the most beautiful woman, of her time, tradition and history have declared for three hundred years; but wherein lay her loveliness of person, or how far, as a woman, she was worthy of respect, neither history nor art can positively assert.

Horace Walpole, author of "Anecdotes of Painting," and no mean authority upon the subject, to which he had given close attention, said in a letter to Sir Joseph Banks, first published in George Chalmers's "Life of Mary, Queen of Scots" (1822), that he never could ascertain the authenticity and originality of any of the so-called portraits of her, except that one which was in the possession of the Earl of Morton. "It agrees," he wrote, "with the figure on the tomb at Westminster; in both the nose rises a little toward the top, bends rather inward at the bottom, but it is true that the profile on her medal is rather full, too. Yet I should think that Lord Morton's portrait and the tomb are most to be depended on."

The picture known as the "Morton Portrait" was painted, according to generally accepted tradition, by Mary's own order in 1567, when the unfortunate queen was twenty-five years of age, and during the first year of her confinement at Loch Leven. It is on a panel, is of life size, and has been attributed to Lucas de Heere. The present Earl of Morton is descended from Sir William Douglas, Laird of Loch Leven, and the elder brother of George Douglas, to whom Mary is said to have presented the picture, because of his assistance in effecting her escape from the castle. The fact that it has been in the possession of this family for upward of three centuries is perhaps its strongest claim to originality. It has frequently been engraved.

The full-length, life-size, recumbent effigy in alabaster on the tomb in Westminster Abbey was placed there upon the removal of the remains of Mary from Peterborough in 1612. Its costume resembles in many respects that of the

Morton portrait, by which perhaps it was suggested. The name of the designer of this monument has never been clearly ascertained, although it would appear from certain of the records kept during the reign of the first Stuart king of England that "Cornelius Cure, Master-Mason to his Highness's Works," did receive, during the years 1606 and 1607, various sums of money "for the framing, making, erecting and finishing of a tomb for Queen Mary, late Queen of Scotland . . . according to a Plot thereof drawn"; and that "William Cure, his Majesty's Master-Mason, son and executor under Cornelius Cure," was paid other various sums in 1610, and again in 1613, for "making the Tomb to his Majesty's Dearest Mother."

From these it would naturally appear that the monument was begun six years before, and finished one year after, the final interment, in 1612. John de Critz, mentioned by Meres in his "Wit's Commonwealth" (1598), as "famous for his painting," is generally believed to have been the architect of the tomb to Elizabeth in the adjoining chapel; and as they are similar in design and of about the same date, it is not improbable that he was the author of the "Plot thereof drawn" for the tomb to Mary. The figure, at all events, was executed less than a quarter of a century after Mary's death, and when there must have been many persons still living in Great Britain who remembered her. Its correctness as a portrait does not seem to have been questioned then, and there is every reason to believe, with Walpole, that it is one of the best likenesses of her that have been handed down to us.

Without doubt the first attempt at portraiture of the Queen of Scots was made in her earliest infancy, for her little face was engraved upon the halfpennies issued from the Royal Scottish Mint at the time of her coronation in 1543, and when she was but nine months old. A number of these small coins are still preserved, and it is said that the name "bawbee," or baby, was originally given to that denomination of money because of its bearing the image and superscription of the baby queen. As a likeness, of course, this is of little value. Nor can much more credit be attached to the portrait of the bright, piquant little girl in the collection of Lord Napier; notwithstanding the fact that it bears a memorandum in the handwriting of Francis, seventh Lord Napier, dated 1790, to the effect that "this picture of Mary, Queen of Scots, supposed to have been painted when she was about twelve years of



THE "FRASER-TYTTLER PORTRAIT." (AFTER AN ENGRAVING BY HENRY SHAW, F. S. A.)

age, has ever been considered to be an original picture, and has been in the possession of the Napier family for many generations." It is on canvas, two feet three inches high, one foot ten inches wide; the complexion is fair, the

hair light brown, the roses in the head-dress are crimson, and the gown is red, with white stripes. It resembles so strongly in face and costume, however, a portrait in the collection of the Earl of Denbigh, which is known to be



MARY

THE "MORTON PORTRAIT."

that of an Infanta of Spain, who lived many years after Mary's time, and who was even suggested as a proper wife for her grandson Charles I., that there can be little ground for the belief that it was intended for the Queen of Scots at all.

The earliest painted portraits of Mary are probably those executed in France before her marriage to the dauphin in 1558, for it is an established fact that François Clouet, otherwise Jehanet or Janet, who was court painter successively to Francis I., Henry II., Francis II., Charles IX., and Henry III., made a portrait of her about the year 1555, which was sent to the queen regent of Scotland, Mary of Guise, but of which there is no trace now. In the collection of "Drawings of the Principal Personages of the Court of Henry II. of France," purchased by the Earl of Carlisle in Florence about a hundred years ago, and now at Castle

Howard, there is a portrait of Mary ascribed to Janet, and, perhaps, the first sketch of the picture sent to her mother. It resembles the portrait in colored crayons in the library of St. Geneviève, in Paris, which has been reproduced by engraving in P. G. J. Neil's "Portraits des Personages Français," although they both suggest a woman of twenty or more, rather than a child of thirteen, and neither of them resembles in any way the subject of the Napier portrait described above. In the crayon drawing the eyes and hair are light brown. Janet is known to have painted another portrait of Mary during her first widowhood, and when she was known as "*La Reine Blanche*," and the picture now at Hampton Court is believed to be the original of this. It is faded, and has every appearance of having been retouched and restored. It certainly belonged

to Charles I., for it bears his monogram, "C. R.," surmounted by a crown, and has attached to it a note by the keeper of the king's pictures testifying that "it is Queen Marye of Scotland, appointed by his Majesty for the Cabinet Room, 1631. By Janet." Its history before it came into the possession of Charles has never been traced to the satisfaction of the antiquarians. The eyes are dark brown, the widow's white cap

Patrick Fraser-Tytler, the historian of Scotland, published in 1845, for private circulation only, a monograph in which he attempted to prove that the picture now known as the "Fraser-Tytler Portrait" was the identical likeness painted in 1560 shortly before the death of Francis II., and sent by Mary, through Lord Seton, to Elizabeth. It belonged to an artist named Stewart, was bought by



From the Original Portrait in possession of the Lord Napier

*Vostretreshumble et tresobeis ante fille
marie*

pressing on the forehead is opened at the sides to show the dark brown hair, and joins a veil which passes around the cheeks and conceals the ears. The face is that of a decidedly elderly woman, and the expression is very sad. If by Janet, and of Mary, it could only have been painted when the queen was in her nineteenth or twentieth year. An old copy of it is in the National Portrait Gallery at South Kensington, whence it was taken from the British Museum some years ago; and several pictures of the same type are to be found at Versailles and elsewhere.

Fraser-Tytler from a dealer, and is now the property of the trustees of South Kensington. It is three feet one and a half inches long, and two feet three inches wide. The painter is unknown, although it has been ascribed to Zuccaro, who was only a lad during Mary's residence at the French court, and who did not go to Paris until the reign of Charles IX., ten or twelve years after Mary's return to Scotland. It is hardly probable that she sat to Zuccaro at any time. His only visit to England was during her long captivity, and when she was



FROM MONUMENT IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY. (AFTER AN ENGRAVING BY R. C. BELL OF THE ORIGINAL DRAWING BY GEORGE SCHARF, JR., F. S. A.)

kept under the closest surveillance. Walpole believed that Zuccaro could never have seen her, and Labanof included him in a long list of artists who painted purely imaginative portraits of her, or who, for various reasons, could never have been the authors of the pictures of her which have since been attributed to them. The portrait of Mary and James VI., on one canvas, ascribed to Zuccaro, now in the Drapers' Hall, London, must of necessity be false as an historical if not as an artistic work; for the little prince, who was taken from his mother before he was a year old, never to see her again, is represented as a lad of five or six, standing by his mother's side. Curious stories are told of this painting, and of the manner of its coming into the possession of its present owners. There is a tradition that it was thrown over the walls of the Drapers' Garden for safety during the great fire by persons now unknown, and never reclaimed; another that Sir Anthony Babington left it with the Drapers'

Company for safe keeping, and could not get it back; still another that it was stolen from some of the royal palaces by Sir William Boreman in the reign of Charles II.; and it is even insinuated that it is a portrait of Lady Dulcibella Boreman, Sir William's wife. It was cleaned at the instigation of Mr. Alderman Boydell towards the close of the last century, and it has been engraved by Bartolozzi.

Another portrait of Mary with a romantic history is that which was bequeathed by Elizabeth Curle, an attendant and faithful friend of the queen, to the Scot's college at Douai, where it remained until the end of the French Revolution. During the Reign of Terror it was concealed by the priests of the college in the flue of a disused chimney, and lay there, forgotten, for more than twenty years. It hung for some time after that on the walls of the Scottish Benedictine Convent at Paris, but in 1830 it was carried to the Roman Catholic establishment at Blair, near Aberdeen, where

Agnes Strickland saw it, accepted its authenticity, and had it engraved as a frontispiece for one of her published works. The artist, as usual, is unknown, although it has been attributed, with slight authority, to Amyas Carwood, whose name appears upon the painting of the

of Barbara, carrying the portrait with them, or perhaps painting it from memory during their exile. On the death of the last survivor of them it was left, as has been shown above, to the college at Douai. Their bodies were buried in the south transept of the church at



HEAD OF THE MONUMENT IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY. (FROM A PLASTER CAST IN THE COLLECTION OF THE AUTHOR.)

decapitated head of Mary which belonged to Sir Walter Scott, and with which all visitors to Abbotsford are familiar. That the Curle portrait was a posthumous work there can be no question, as the scene of the execution is introduced in the background. A poor copy of it is in her Majesty's collection at Windsor, which is said by the different authorities to have been made in the reigns of Charles I., James II., and even as late as that of George III. Barbara and Elizabeth Curle were devoted servants of the queen, and were present at the last scene of all at Fotheringay, in 1587. They escaped to the Continent with Gilbert Curle, the brother of Elizabeth and husband

Antwerp, which is dedicated to the patron saint of Scotland; and above the mural tablet erected to their memory, and supported by two carved angels, is a portrait of their queen, copied — the head and bust only — from the original work which they so dearly prized.

Still another picture of the Scottish queen, with a strange, eventful history, is that which is known as the "Oxford Portrait" in the Bodleian Library. Sir David Wilkie discovered that there were two portraits of the same person — although unlike in costume and not very like in face — upon the same canvas; and after the outer picture had been carefully copied it was removed, leaving the portrait as the visitor to Ox-



JANET'S "LA REINE BLANCHE."

ford sees it to-day. The reason for painting this second picture over the first, and the period or the artist of either picture, no man now can tell.

The portrait of Queen Mary most familiar to the world, because most frequently reproduced, and upon which the popular idea of her personal appearance is based, is that known as the "Orkney Portrait," belonging to the Duke of Sutherland. This painter also is unknown. The nearly effaced date, 1556, and the name Farini, or Furini, are said to be visible upon it; but it bears every evidence of being much more modern than the middle of the sixteenth century. It is said to have belonged to Robert Stuart, one of the many natural sons of James V. who fretted Mary's reign, and who was created Earl of Orkney by James VI. How this picture came into his possession tradition does not say. A well-known copy of it by Watson Gordon hangs in Queen Mary's room in the castle of Edinburgh.

Of the very many other existing portraits of Mary, or of their claims to authenticity, it is hardly possible or necessary to speak here. Nearly fifty paintings of all sizes, generally believed to be "originals" by their owners, were exhibited at Peterborough, at the Tercentenary of Queen Mary's death, in 1887, and hundreds of engraved portraits, no two of which are exactly alike, are in the different private collections on both sides of the Atlantic, nearly all of which may be marked "doubtful." Vertue himself confessed that he did not believe "the fine head in a black hat, by Isaac Oliver, in the king's collection," engraved by him, to be a portrait of Mary, and that he also questioned the authenticity of the picture known as the "Carleton Portrait," which he engraved for Lord Burleigh. Holbein died before he could possibly have painted her; Vandyck was not born until twelve years after her execution; Parise Bordone may have seen

her, although there is no certainty of his having been in Paris after the reign of Francis I.; Zuccaro probably did not paint her, and yet to all of these artists "original" portraits are positively ascribed.

It is a remarkable fact that the more beautiful is the face which is painted or engraved the less reason is there for believing it to be the face of Mary. A glance at the fullest col-

in expression and in color. Her head is to be found upon Scottish silver coins of 1553 and 1561, and upon a Scottish gold coin of 1555. There is a cast of a medallion at South Kensington, by Jacopo Primevra, which is very clear, and the medals containing her head and that of the dauphin struck in honor of their marriage are still to be seen in their original state at Versailles and in other French gal-



PORTRAIT BY P. G. J. NEIL.

lection of "Mariana," in which are prints good and bad, authentic, posthumous, apocryphal, ancient and modern, will convince the observer that no woman, no matter how varied her expression, could possibly have looked like them all. The coins and medals struck during her lifetime to commemorate interesting events in her career, and still in existence in France and in Great Britain, so far as that style of portraiture is to be depended upon, may give a better and more reliable idea of her face in profile than any of the paintings which vary so much

in expression and in color. Her head is to be found upon Scottish silver coins of 1553 and 1561, and upon a Scottish gold coin of 1555. There is a cast of a medallion at South Kensington, by Jacopo Primevra, which is very clear, and the medals containing her head and that of the dauphin struck in honor of their marriage are still to be seen in their original state at Versailles and in other French gal-

eries; but how correct any of these may be as portraits, is not possible now to say. After careful inspection of all of the so-called "original portraits" of Mary Stuart, and after conscientious reading of much of the voluminous literature, contemporaneous and otherwise, in which she figures, it is not possible to accept any picture of her, either by painter or by writer, as absolutely correct. While the lock of her hair, found in a cabinet which was inherited by Charles I. from his father and carefully preserved by the present Queen,

"is of the loveliest golden hue and very fine," Nicholas Whyte, Burleigh's emissary, wrote to his chief in 1569, on the strength of information received from Mary's attendants, that her hair was "black, or almost so." In the "Fraser-Tytler Portrait" the face is pale, the eyebrows of a pale yellow tint, the hair yellow rather than brown, and the eyes blue. In the picture supposed to have been presented by Mary to the Earl of Cassillis, one of the Scottish commissioners sent to act as a witness at her marriage to the dauphin, the hair is of a rich chestnut tint, almost black, the eyes and eyebrows are dark, and the complexion

ful "Mistress Mary Seton, the finest busker, that is to say the finest dresser of a woman's head of hair that is to be seen in any country," says, "And among the pretty devices she did set such a curled hair upon the Queen, that was said to be perewyke that shewed very delicately. And every other day she hath a new device of head-dressing, without any cost, and yet setting forth a woman gaylic well." This variety and eccentricity of coiffure naturally adds to the confusion, and makes greater the difficulty in identifying positively any of the portraits or descriptions of her. Historians say that her mother was tall and



MEDAL STRUCK AT PARIS COMMEMORATIVE OF THE DAUPHIN AND MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS. (BY PERMISSION OF DUNCAN ANDERSON, KEEPER OF ROYAL CHAPEL, HOLYROOD PALACE.)

is that of a delicate brunette. In a miniature, dated 1579, with the monogram "M. R." in the corner, and sold in the Neville Holt collection in 1848 as "a reliable, original portrait of Mary Stuart," the hair is brown and the eyes gray. Janet painted her with light brown eyes and hair. Melville, in comparing the rival queens, said that Elizabeth's hair was more red than yellow, while Mary's was "light auburn, her eyes of chestnut color." Winkfield, an eye-witness of Mary's execution, described her eyes as hazel. Ledyard, in one of his poems, speaks of her *yeux un peu brunets*; and they all seem to agree that she had a slight but perceptible squint.

That Mary wore false hair, and of many different colors, there is every reason to believe. Elizabeth is known to have had a collection of eighty wigs, and her dear cousin, with the unusual advantages of so many seasons in Paris, is not likely to have been far behind her. Among the statements of the accounts of her personal expenditure are numerous items of *perruques de cheveux*, and Sir Francis Knollis, writing to Burleigh of the ever faith-

beautiful, that her father was dignified, having a fair complexion and light hair; and other and contemporaneous historians say that she inherited most of the characteristics of her parents, "being about the ordinary size, with fair complexion and Grecian features, and a nose somewhat longer than a painter would care to perpetuate; . . . her face was oval, her forehead high and fine." Froude, in later days, pictures her as graceful alike in person and in intellect, and as possessing that peculiar beauty in which the form is lost in the expression, and which every painter has represented differently; and Brantôme, one of the ancient chroniclers, summing it all up in one fine sentence, describes her at her marriage to the dauphin as being "more beautiful and charming than a celestial goddess."

"An angel is like you, Kate; and you are like an angel," was a very pretty speech for Shakspeare's Henry V. to make to the French king's daughter, but it gives us of to-day no better notion of Katherine's beauty than do all the composite portraits by painters and historians of the wondrous loveliness of the Queen of Scots.