

Dethroned Monarchs

FORTUNE never appears in a more extravagant humour than when she reduces monarchs to become mendicants. Half a century ago it was not imagined that our own times should have to record many such instances. After having contemplated *kings* raised into *divinities*, we see them now depressed as *beggars*. Our own times, in two opposite senses, may emphatically be distinguished as *the age of kings*.

In *Candide* or the Optimist, there is an admirable stroke of Voltaire's. Eight travellers meet in an obscure inn, and some of them with not sufficient money to pay for a scurvy dinner. In the course of conversation, they are discovered to be *eight monarchs* in Europe, who had been deprived of their crowns!

What added to this exquisite satire was, that there were eight living monarchs at that moment wanderers on the earth;—a circumstance which has since occurred!

Adelaide, the widow of Lothario, king of Italy, one of the most beautiful women in her age, was besieged in Pavia by Berenger, who resolved to constrain her to marry his son after Pavia was taken; she escaped from her prison with her almoner. The archbishop of Reggio had offered her an asylum: to reach it, she and her al-

moner travelled on foot through the country by night, concealing herself in the daytime among the corn, while the almoner begged for alms and food through the villages.

The Emperor Henry IV., after having been deposed and imprisoned by his son, Henry V., escaped from prison; poor, vagrant, and without aid, he entreated the bishop of Spire to grant him a lay prebend in his church. "I have studied," said he, "and have learned to sing, and may therefore be of some service to you." The request was denied, and he died miserably and obscurely at Liege, after having drawn the attention of Europe to his victories and his grandeur!

Mary of Medicis, the widow of Henry the Great, mother of Louis XIII., mother-in-law of three sovereigns, and regent of France, frequently wanted the necessaries of life, and died at Cologne in the utmost misery. The intrigues of Richelieu compelled her to exile herself, and live an unhappy fugitive. Her petition exists, with this supplicatory opening: "Supplie Marie, Reine de France et de Navarre, disant, que depuis le 23 Fevrier elle aurait été arretée prisonnière au château de Compiègne, sans être ni accusée ni soupçonnée," &c. Lilly, the astrologer, in his *Life and Death of King*

Charles the First, presents us with a melancholy picture of this unfortunate monarch. He has also described the person of the old queen-mother of France.

“In the month of August, 1641, I beheld the old queen mother of France departing from London, in company of Thomas earl of Arundel. A sad spectacle of mortality it was, and produced tears from mine eyes and many other beholders, to see an aged, lean, decrepit, poor queen ready for her grave, necessitated to depart hence, having no place of residence in this world left her, but where the courtesy of her hard fortune assigned it. She had been the only stately and magnificent woman of Europe: wife to the greatest king that ever lived in France; mother unto one king and unto two queens.”

In the year 1595, died at Paris, Antonio, king of Portugal. His body is interred at the Cordeliers, and his heart deposited at the Ave-Maria. Nothing on earth could compel this prince to renounce his crown. He passed over to England, and Elizabeth assisted him with troops; but at length he died in France in great poverty. This dethroned monarch was happy in one thing, which is indeed rare: in all his miseries he had a servant, who proved a tender and faithful friend, and who only desired to participate in his misfortunes, and to soften his miseries; and for the recompense of his

services he only wished to be buried at the feet of his dear master. This hero in loyalty, to whom the ancient Romans would have raised altars, was Don Diego Both-ei, one of the greatest lords of the court of Portugal, and who drew his origin from the kings of Bohemia.

Hume supplies me with an anecdote of singular royal distress. He informs us that the queen of England, with her son Charles, had “a moderate pension assigned her; but it was so ill paid, and her credit ran so low, that one morning when the Cardinal de Retz waited on her she informed him that her daughter, the princess Henrietta, was obliged to lie abed for want of a fire to warm her. To such a condition was reduced, in the midst of Paris, a queen of England, and daughter of Henry IV. of France!” We find another proof of her excessive poverty. Salmasius, after publishing his celebrated political book, in favour of Charles II., the *Defensio Regia*, was much blamed by a friend for not having sent a copy to the widowed queen of Charles, who, he writes, though poor, would yet have paid the bearer.

The daughter of James the First, who married the Elector Palatine, in her attempts to get her husband crowned, was reduced to the utmost distress, and wandered frequently in disguise as a mere vagant.

A strange anecdote is related of Charles VII. of France.

Our Henry V. had shrunk his kingdom into the town of Bourges. It is said, that having told a shoemaker, after he had just tried a pair of his boots, that he had no money to pay for them, Crispin had such callous feelings that he refused his majesty the boots! "It is for this reason," says Comines, "I praise those princes who are on good terms with the lowest of their people; for they know not at what hour they may want them."

Many monarchs of this day have probably experienced more than once the truth of the reflection of Comines.

We may add here, that in all conquered countries the descendants of royal families have been found among the dregs of the populace. An Irish prince has been discovered in the person of a miserable peasant; and in Mexico, its faithful historian Clavigero notices, that he has known a locksmith who was a descendant of its ancient kings, and a tailor the representative of one of its noblest families.