

THE POCKET-MONEY OF A PRINCE

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I

“OUR rising sun is set ere scarcely he had shone, and with him all our glory lies buried.” It was with these words that in November, 1612, the then Earl of Dorset spoke of Henry, Prince of Wales, who had died a few days before at the age of eighteen. There never was a prince of whom England had greater hopes, and never one whose passing occasioned more grief in the nation.

Today in our libraries we find, as a monument to the sorrow that swept England at Prince Henry's passing, some thirty-two surviving works which proclaim the dead prince's virtues and lament his demise. Typical of them is John Taylor's *Great Britaine All in Blacke for The incomparable losse of Henry, our late worthy Prince*:

For hee that was the worlds admired Lampe,
The life of Peace, of War, of Court, of Campe,
Th' expected hope of blest ensuing time,
Fell in his spring, and died in golden prime.

In one way or another all the poets say the same thing. A phrase borrowed from Shakespeare would have said it better than most of their lengthy eulogies; Prince Henry was indeed “th' expectancy and rose of the fair state.” Men who had known the prince well sought to voice their feelings and the expectations that they had of him. It was Sir Charles Cornwallis, Treasurer of the Prince's household, who declared “He had a certaine kind of extraordinary, unspeakable excellency.” Extravagance of compliment was, of course, mandatory when the Jacobean wrote of royalty, but the tributes to Prince Henry pass far beyond mere convention.

Part of the young prince's fame sprang, no doubt, from the very contrast between himself and his father, James I. King James was a man of considerable gifts and talents. He was a scholar and, in his prime, a statesman of no mean ability; but his virtues were not the heroic ones. The title that he coveted for himself was “the peace-maker”, *rex pacificus*. He ended the long war with Spain which had dragged on under Elizabeth, and he sought to avoid entanglement in other foreign broils. His policy was wise no doubt, but as the years wore on and the Jacobean court assumed its habitual lax, uninspired aspect, Englishmen began to look back regretfully to the more heroic

days under Elizabeth. Then, in the person of James' elder son, they found a prince born to bring back heroism. If it was notorious that King James shrank from the very sight of bare steel, it was equally remarked that Prince Henry even as a little boy gave:

. . . infallible tokens of a *Noble and Heroick Spirit*, no musick being so pleasant in his eares as the sounding of the Trumpet, the beating of the Drumme, the roaring of the Canon, no sight so acceptable as that of Pieces, Pistols, or any sort of Armour. . . .

While the King, his father, was closeted with bishops and chaplains preparing treatises on the divine right of kings, or lolled away his time with handsome favourites, or abandoned matters of state to hunt at Royston or Newmarket, the young prince was exercising himself at "his martial sports of tilt, tourney, and barriers which he followed so earnestly he was every day five or sixe howres in armor." Little wonder that admiring Englishmen saw in Henry another Black Prince, another Henry V. He particularly endeared himself to the seamen by his interest in the Royal Navy. As a young boy he went sailing on the Thames in his little yacht "Disdain"; in later years he repeatedly visited the royal dockyards, took a keen interest in the building of the great "Prince Royal", and declared that if war came again with Spain he would himself sail with a British fleet against the West Indies. For all his martial spirit, Prince Henry was in no way deficient in learning. Among the men of letters who benefited from his patronage one notes George Chapman, the translator of Homer. When Prince Henry was fourteen his New Year's gift to his father was a Latin oration of his own composition to show that learning is more necessary to kings and princes than to other men.

In other ways Prince Henry showed himself a paragon among princes. Whereas the King his father was notorious for his occasional outbursts of profanity, Prince Henry would tolerate no swearing in his presence and kept a box for the poor into which any member of his entourage who uttered an oath must pay his fine. While duels and affrays in plenty occurred in the royal court, the prince's household was remarkable for its sobriety and good conduct, all quarrels being referred to the arbitration of one of the prince's senior officers. Henry's piety was exemplary; three times a day he retired for private devotions. His sympathies were believed to be toward the extreme Protestant party and, whereas the Puritans were later to depose and

then behead his brother, Charles I, they looked forward eagerly to the accession of Henry. A jingle went around during the Prince's lifetime:

Henry the 8. pulld down abbeys and cells,
But Henry the 9. shall pull down Bishops and bells.

One thing is certain, the whole history of England would have been different had he lived to be king. But on November 6th, 1612, he died, apparently of typhoid fever; and with him died half the hopes of his country.

Today the person who wishes to know the ardent, frank and manly youth who was Prince Henry, he who "loved and did mightily strive to doe somewhat of everything and to excell in the most excellent", may turn to a rather inadequate biography compiled in the mid-eighteenth century by the industrious antiquary Thomas Birch, and to two little treatises written shortly after Henry's death by Sir Charles Cornwallis, *The Short Life and Most Lamented Death of That Magnanimous Prince, Henry, Prince of Wales* and *A Discourse on the Most Illustrious Prince, Henry, late Prince of Wales*. There are, of course, other sources for the historian. One of these is the particular concern of this essay. It is a little account book preserved for us among the manuscripts in the Public Records Office in London¹. Within its vellum covers we find carefully set forth by Sir David Murray, gentleman of the bed-chamber, the expenditures from the Prince's privy purse for the period from July 1, 1608, to September 30, 1609. The "privy purse" consisted of money for Henry's immediate personal use. Its funds were not intended to provide for the wages of the Prince's officers and retainers, for the cost of the Prince's apparel or food, for the livery and board of his servants, nor for the maintenance of his various estates and houses. All these charges were looked after by other means. The privy purse represents, rather, what one might call the pocket-money of the Prince. Listed in the Privy Purse Accounts we find his little casual expenses, dutifully set down day by day by Sir David. It is the record of the spending of the Prince's quarterly allowance, first of £250, later of £350 (but we must remember to multiply by eight to get modern values). Royalty of course did not soil its fingers by handing over money directly. Sir David both paid out the sums, at the Prince's directions, and kept the record.

(1) MS. E101/433/8.

At the time when these accounts begin, Prince Henry was only fourteen, with four more short years to live. Fourteen, however, was a fairly responsible age at a time when boys were known to go to university at twelve, and girls to wed at thirteen. Read with understanding, the accounts give us an insight into the character of the young Henry. Moreover, they open before us a fascinating view of the life of an English prince, of the routine and pattern of princely living at the opening of the seventeenth century. Because of this double interest, the picture deserves some attention as it unfolds.

II

The first thing that impresses one perusing Prince Henry's Privy Purse Accounts is the amazing number of giftshowered upon the young prince from almost every quarter. Custom and courtesy required the giving of "reward", a "tip" we would say, to any servant or groom who brought a gift from his master, and a great part of Prince Henry's expenditures went in just such payments to gift-bearers:

- To Sr Andrew Sinclars man with a dogge from Denmark £4
- To Sr. Hary Leys man who presented a sute of riche armes to his highnes £10
- To William Ramsayes man with a Barbarie horse to his highnes £3

Horses! From left and right came gifts of horses to His Highness. Prince Henry must have been presented with enough horses in a year to mount a troop of cavalry:

- To one that came from Monsr le grand with a horse to his highnes £3
- To my Lord Peters ryder with a great hors to his highnes £3 10s.
- To two groomes with two great horses from my lord Buckhurst £4
- To the Duke of Lennox man with a horse £4
- To the Spanish Ambassadors groom with a horse to his highnes £3

On and on it goes, horses, horses, and still more horses. The attachment of the English aristocracy to that noble animal is a matter of sufficient record over the centuries², and Prince Henry was an ardent horseman, but he must sometimes have reflected that his stable could hardly accommodate any more

(2) Note, for instance, the will of Giles Berkeley (1294) Lord of Cubberley, Gloucestershire: "My heart to be buried in the chancel of St. Giles Coberleye and near my heart my horse called Lombard."

steeds, and have winced as still another groom from still another devoted admirer arrived with still another "great horse." One hopes that Henry appreciated the originality of the Earl of Orkeney:

To the Earl of Orkeneyes man with to Schetland naiges to his highnes £4

Dogs and hawks seem to have been almost as popular gifts as horses:

To my lord Dennys man with a cast of hawks £1

To Sr Christopher Hattons man with a goshawk £1

To one that broght halkes and earth dogges from the king of Denmarke (Henry's uncle) £8

To Sr Rot Riches man with a kennell of Begelles to his highnes £2

On the list goes—"earth dogges", water dogs, beagles, hounds from Yorkshire, goshawks, gersfalcons, merlins. The keeping of all these dogs and birds set its problems. Invaluable in this connection were such people as Master Young, a member of the guard, and one Henry West, and other underlings.

To Mr. Yong of the garde for keping and feeding the great Halk £3

To Mr. Yong of the garde for keping and feeding the princes halkes for six monethes and two weekes £5

To Harie West for feeding halkes and dogges £1 6s.

To one that kept a parrat 10 monethes and taught him to speik £5

Other gifts poured in upon Prince Henry. Almost every day brought a groom with a deer slain by some courtier in his hunting and sent with his compliments to the Prince. There were gifts of game, of fruit, of wine, of books, of hunting horns. Some of the presents plainly were intended to appeal to Prince Henry's known military interests—pikes and a shield, a cross-bow and hanger, two little cannon, a pair of pistols, armour.

It is instructive to look over the names of the donors. Some, of course, are close personal friends of the Prince and his family, like the kindly and noble old Lord Harington, in whose home Henry's sister, the Princess Elizabeth, was brought up. Others are great men in the king's court who must have thought it prudent to keep in well with his heir also. Thus we find the little hunch-backed Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, who was Lord Treasurer and the man who, next to James, exercised the greatest power in England, sending the boy a gift of a falcon. Five days

later a man arrives from the old Lord Admiral with a hound. Similarly the rising royal favourite, Sir Robert Carr, sends gifts. So does the Countess of Northumberland, no doubt hoping that some day the Prince will secure the release of her husband, "the wizard earl", for years immured in the Tower of London under royal displeasure. The Spanish ambassador sends a gift, while the agent of the United Provinces, the Dutch, makes a point of despatching frequent presents of fruit. The gifts come from men of every station. They come from the great and powerful:

To two frenche groomes with horses from the Duke of Lorayne
£6

They come from the low and humble:

To a poore man with a carved Cup of wood to his highnes £1
To a poore man with a hare to his highnes 5s.

Prince Henry gave as well as received. The gift of "a little naig (nag)" to his brother the Duke of York, the future Charles I, is noted and its price of three pounds recorded. The gift was a suitable one for the frail eight-year old brother, whose legs were so weak and crooked that he probably walked with some difficulty at this time. There are other, more expensive gifts. Master Hereat, or Hariot, the jeweller, is paid £100 for a ring "with 32 dyamants" presented by Henry to his best friend, the young and high-minded Sir John Harington. A lesser payment to Hereat for "some little ringes for toknes", apparently relates to token gifts for less intimate associates. Izaak Oliver, the painter, among others, is paid for portraits of Henry intended as gifts:

To Izak the paynter for his hig: picture to Sr Rot Dowglas
£5 10s.

The record of the prince's pastimes and sports lies in the account book. There is, for instance, a monthly entry for "tennys balles". From other sources we know that Henry was passionately addicted to the old game of "court tennis". Indeed, Sir Charles Cornwallis found his addiction to the sport the one flaw in his otherwise faultless master:

...most of all (he exercised himself) at tennis-play, wherein, to speak the truth, which in all things I especially affect, he neither observed moderation, nor what appertained to his dignity and person, continuing oftentimes his play for the space of three or four hours, and the same in his shirt, rather becoming an artisan, than a prince; who, in all things of that nature, is only to affect comeliness, or rather a kind of care-

lessness in shew, to make their activities seem the more natural, than a laborious and toiling industry.³

Even at that, in view of the value of money in those days, one is a bit taken aback to find the monthly charge for tennis balls running as high as eight or nine pounds. We find references to other active recreations. The Prince had still two years to wait before he was first to ride in tilt in public, but meanwhile, as various entries testify, he was already preparing himself for future feats in arms:

For a quyntaine to runne at tilt for his highnes to practise
£4 10s.
For 40 lances £2

Other entries refer to running at the ring, the old sport in which a rider, galloping down the course, sought to bear away a ring on his lance; while there are charges for bows and arrows for the young prince's archery. There are less strenuous sports too:

For a Chessbord with the men £3 10s.
Lost at playing at goose £1

"Goose" was a game played with counters upon a board. It is mentioned infrequently; more often we find notations of money lost at cards and at dice, but the sums hardly ever exceed two pounds, probably a limit set by the Prince for himself in his play, a modest enough amount when one recalls that some nights at the royal court no man was admitted to the play who did not bring £1000.

One of the things which impresses a twentieth century reader about the Jacobean court was how constantly it was on the move. Sometimes the King was at Whitehall, sometimes at Hampton Court, sometimes at Richmond, sometimes at Non-such or Greenwich, at Theobalds, or at the royal hunting-lodges at Royston and Newmarket. Every summer the king was on "progress," making a leisurely tour through the shires, attended by a gigantic retinue. Prince Henry sometimes accompanied his father, but at other times he was off on travels of his own. Clues to his itineraries are not lacking in the privy purse accounts. Sometimes we find him stopping at the great houses of lords eager, no doubt, to entertain him. Then we find "rewards" being paid to the servants. August 1608, for example, found the Prince staying with the Lord Petre:

(3) *A Discourse of the Most Illustrious Prince Henry, Late Prince of Wales*, London, 1641, reprinted in *The Harleian Miscellany*, London, 1809, Vol. III, p. 525.

To my Lord Peters parkepar £2
 To the officers of my Lord Peters house £20
 To the chamberkepar there £1

A year later His Highness travelled down through the pleasant green Hampshire countryside to Titchfield Place (or Palace), the abbey which had been transformed into a great mansion by the Earls of Southampton:

To my lord Southamptons man with cheese and oysters 10s.
 Lost at Dyce at Titchfield £3
 To the officers there £20
 To the chamber kepar there £1
 To two pypers there 10s.

Occasionally on his trips the Prince would have to put up for the night at an inn. The English inns were famous over Europe for their excellence at this time. In any event special preparations would be made for his coming, and the Prince no doubt lodged comfortably:

Given to the man of the house where his highnes lay at thetford £3
 To the maide of the house 12s.

It needs only a modicum of imagination to picture the scene—the stir at the inn as the princely guest and his gentlemen arrive; the pretty blushing serving-maid attempting a curtsy as they depart, and Sir David giving her the twelve shillings (about five pounds today) as her gift from Prince Henry. Sometimes imagination can fill out the scene for us, at other times it cannot. What alarm or excursion, what sudden excitement, lies behind such an entry as the following?

To Mr Gib be comand for riding post to and from Woodstock £4

There are, of course, expenses along the way when the Prince is travelling:

For the crossing of ferreis in our journey to and from portsmouth £1

There are gifts, too, for entertainers along the route. Thus at Salisbury, when the Prince came to see the cathedral with its spire, the tallest and loveliest in England, there was a brave soul to give the Prince an added spectacle:

To one that went to the top of the steple in Salisberrie £1

Moves by the Prince always entailed special payments to his

pages to cover their expenses in travelling. The adult members of the prince's company could be expected to look after such charges themselves, but with the boys it was different:

To the pages of the bedchamber in thre removes 15s.
To the pages for four removes £1

There is, besides, another recurring expenditure where the pages are concerned:

To the pages for stra 5s.

One is at a loss as to why the pages needed money for straw until one notes in the regulations for the prince's household that the pages are "to lie nightly in the nether end of the presence chamber".⁴ In other words, after the Prince withdrew for the night, the little pages made for themselves couches of straw at the far end of the ante-chamber so as to be ready at any time for a call from their master.

As one looks over the privy purse expenses, one finds the eye lingering over this item or that as indicative of the young Prince's interests. It may be the study of science:

For a case of Compasses and other instruments £6 4s.

It may be the Royal Navy:

To the shipworkers at Wollage be command £5

It may be the profession of arms:

To a gunmaker for mending and making cleane all the princes pieces and for making some necessarie thinges for them
£4

It may be falconry or the chase:

For ten sute of halk belles curiouslie wrought £5

As a Renaissance prince, Henry was expected to be a patron of letters and learning. We know from other sources that he was a generous patron. Some passages in the accounts have their relevance here:

To Mr Silvester yearlie be his highnes comand £20

Master Silvester was Joshua Sylvester, a minor poet, for whom Prince Henry, with the uncritical taste of fourteen, entertained an enormous regard. Thomas Lydiat, the writer of Latin

(4) Thomas Birch, *The Life of Henry, Prince of Wales*, London, 1760, p. 431.

treatises on astronomy, chronology, and mathematics, was another who found a good patron in Prince Henry:

To Mr Lidgate Chronicler at his highness comand £12 13s. 4d.

Other recipients of the prince's bounty include the musicians and other entertainers who performed before him. We find a variety of entries here:

To a Jugler £1

To a blind harper be comand £1 10s.

To Moreiss dancers be comand 10s.

To thre Welsche Musitians £1 10s.

And there is at least one entry in which the prince's sense of *noblesse oblige* signals itself:

To a poore woman for spoyling her wares 16s.

How did it happen? One wonders. It was the custom, we know, for vendors to set up their booths along the roads leading up to the gates of the royal palaces. It is not hard to imagine the high-spirited young prince and his courtiers racing their horses along a muddy stretch of road. They round the bend, and a spatter of mud and water spoils the poor woman's wares. Most lordlings would have gone on unheeding, but Prince Henry says the word and Sir David drops behind to assess the damage and give the distressed woman her sixteen shillings.

Finally we note entries which represent the Prince's benefactions, charity pure and simple:

To a sicke man for the recoverie of his health £3

To a poore laimed man 5s.

To a poore man 10s.

To a poor shipbroken man £2

With the prince's special interest in arms and feats of war, distressed soldiers had a special call on his bounty:

To a poore Irish gentelman a soldier £3

To a poore Irish Soldiere £1 10s.

To a strange gentleman, an old Soldiere £10

To a poore soldier going to Ireland £1

and so the list continues.

Also singled out for Prince Henry's charity were impoverished scholars. There were many of these at this time. The universities were graduating considerably more men than there were openings for. A few years earlier at Cambridge, in a student play at St. John's College, an undergraduate playwright

had lamented that "schollers unregarded walke like threadbare impecunious animals." A few of the threadbare impecunious animals found a friend in the Prince:

To a poore schollar be comand £1

To a poore schollar with a booke to his highnes £3

To James Murray to holde him at schoole be comand £10

The accounts for the fifteen months finally close. At the end, Sir David notes the balance—receipts £1650, expenditures £1719 17s. 6d. "So there is dew to me over and above the receipt £69 17s. 4d." There follows the Prince's signature, a bold "Henry P.", accepting and approving the account. The finances of the Jacobean court were incredibly mismanaged, wild extravagance alternating with sudden penury. At times English ambassadors abroad went unpaid for months and months, the royal guard itself grew restive at mounting arrears in pay, while the debts of the court offices went for years unpaid. Knowing Prince Henry, however, one is confident that he saw to it that Sir David did not have to wait too long for his sixty-nine pounds.