

Cavalier Children: Sentimental Histories and the Stuarts

This paper is a draft towards a chapter of my book on gender and domestic ideology in Victorian historical culture, which will consider the historical representations (in text and image) of children and the Civil War, such as W. F. Yeames, *And when did you last see your father?* (1878), C. M. Yonge's *The Pigeon Pie* (1860), Frederick Marryat's *The Children of the New Forest* (1847) and G.E. Evans's *Puritan and Cavalier* (1886). In this chapter, the tension between Whig historiographies which celebrate the defence of civil liberties and parliamentary government from the 'tyranny' of Charles I, and Tory Romantic appropriations of the Stuart royal family as an ideal domestic unit, destroyed by the Civil War, will be explored. In particular, attention will be paid to representations of the children of Charles I in, for instance, paintings such as C. W. Cope's *The Death of Princess Elizabeth* (1855) and texts such as F. T. Palgrave's poem, 'The Captive Child' in his *Visions of England* (1881).

Their construction of images of vulnerable and victimised children, deprived of their parents by political events, will be considered as a 'gendering' or 'domesticisation' of the historical text which questions overarching narratives of constitutional development. Drawing particularly on Greg Kucich's work on Romantic historiographies and 'the re-engendering of historical memory', the paper will suggest that such representations validate individual, personal, and emotional experience as a subject of historical exploration, and authorise sentimental and empathetic responses to them by their audiences.¹ In the particular case of the Victorian representation of the children of Charles I and other Cavaliers, the 'domestication' of the narrative could problematise the separation of private and public spheres, and critiqued the dominant Whig constitutional narrative by offering a literarily paternalistic riposte. This could become not only a Romantic, but a specifically Tory Romantic agenda. The royal or the Cavalier family served a metaphor for the English nation, with Charles I as the ideal father threatened by filial disobedience. Thus could Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha* (1680) be rewritten in a domestic idiom for the nineteenth century.

As a test case for this thesis, I will examine one painting and one text: C. W. Cope, *The Death of Princess Elizabeth* (1855), and F. T. Palgrave's poem, 'The Captive

Child' in his *Visions of England* (1881). Both depict the fate of Charles I's second daughter, Princess Elizabeth (1635-1650). Elizabeth was in many ways an appealing subject for a Victorian audience: tutored by the erudite Bathsua Makin, and learned in five languages including Hebrew, she enjoyed a reputation for biblical learning. But she combined it with the glamour of a victimised heroine, a young woman destroyed by political and military events beyond her control. She was one of the two children of Charles I who had a farewell interview with the king on the day before his execution – a popular subject for nineteenth-century history paintings and illustrations. Imprisoned in Carisbrooke Castle with her brother, Henry duke of Gloucester, she died at the tender age of fifteen, three days after the Commonwealth council of state had agreed to her release into exile.² The appearance of Charles Lucy's *The Parting of Charles I* with his two youngest children in the 1850 Royal Academy exhibition – a well-worn subject for painters by the mid-nineteenth century - may well have also influenced Cope's choice of subject.³

However, Cope was simultaneously embarking on a series of important public history paintings of Civil War subjects. The commission managing the Houses of Parliament fresco series had originally planned that the peers' corridor should display illustrations of the virtues and heroism of figures involved in the Civil – evenly balanced between four celebrating Royalist heroes and four celebrating Parliamentary idols. As no acceptable sketches had materialised by 1853, Cope was invited to submit a design, which – if satisfactory – would lead to a commission for the entire series. His *Embarkation of a Puritan Family* was approved, and over the next thirteen years, he produced eight frescoes, which included *The Burial of Charles I* (1857), *Basing House Defended by the Cavaliers* (1862), and *Speaker Lenthall asserting the Privileges of the House of Commons against Charles I* (1866).⁴ The apparently equal handed treatment of the two sides in the Civil War is, within the context of the entire building, not so quite so evident: one of the historical consultants on the commission for the decoration of the Houses of Parliament (1841-59) was the Whig constitutional historian, Henry Hallam, and the fresco cycles as a whole were necessarily celebratory of the development of the constitution and its laws and liberties. As Roy Strong perceptively points out, 'Walking down the Peers' Corridor past scenes of violent conflict gave the Victorian no feeling of unease, for these scenes reflected battles for basic liberties won long ago and inspired a calm

confidence in the destiny of this island and its ideal parliamentary democracy'.⁵ Cope's painting, then, functions as a sort of sub-text to a more public and Whiggish representation of the Civil War which focuses on battles and high political conflicts, offering – as Kucich would see it – a validation of emotional and sentimental responses which generate personal empathy with the losers and victims of the past. While it does indeed offer an episodic and emotive critique of the grand sweep of dominant politicised historiographies, perhaps the dominant Whiggish story of constitutional advance itself unexpectedly created the space for this sub-text, this coda to the national narrative. One of Cope's Houses of Parliament frescoes – *The Burial of Charles I* – allowed for an emotive and empathetic depiction which presents an interesting parallel with Cope's image of the death of Elizabeth, and possibly reflects the surprisingly conservative nature of Henry Hallam's Whig constitutional narrative.⁶

But to what degree does Cope's image embody more than a wistful coda, to what extent does it offer a full-blown Tory Romantic alternative to the dominant Whiggish constitutional narrative? Exploring Cope's sources, actual and potential, for the image might well illuminate this issue. It seems not unlikely that Cope's decision to paint the scene of Elizabeth's death was inspired by the recent appearance of her biography in Mary Ann Everett Green's *Lives of the Princesses of England* (1849-1855), although Agnes Strickland's *Historic Scenes and Poetic Fancies* (1850) has also been suggested as a source.⁷ While Green's account necessarily validates the experience of the individual – it appears in a collection of biographies, after all, and offers a sympathetic and moving account of Elizabeth's life which stresses her piety, learning, and filial and sisterly affection⁸ – Green does not favour a pro-royalist reading: her own Protestant (Methodist) background perhaps explains the Whiggish emphasis apparent in her biographies of Charles I's sister, Elizabeth of Bohemia and his daughter, Mary of Orange.⁹ The sub-text to her life of Elizabeth is the classical tale of Electra, the fiercely loyal daughter of Agamemnon, who facilitates her brother's vengeful murder of their father's killers: their mother Clytemnestra and her lover. Green includes a two page description of the classical scholar Christopher Wase's dedication of his translation of Sophocles's play *Electra* to Elizabeth, as well as utilising the portrait of the princess which appeared in that publication as a frontispiece to volume 6 of her *Lives*.¹⁰ However – while Wase himself undoubtedly

put a royalist construction on the classical play,¹¹ it seems likely that this sub-text appeals to Green – not because its potentially pro-royalist suggestion that the killers of kings can and will be justifiably extinguished – but because Electra helps her brother Orestes escape from danger in the back story to the play - just as the princess does for her brother James, duke of York, an escape which Green attributes to ‘Elizabeth’s ingenuity’¹² – and exhibits exemplary grief for her slaughtered father.

However, the more likely textual source is probably Agnes Strickland’s much less monumental publication, *Historic Scenes and Poetic Fancies* (1850). Strickland’s account is a Romantic one, far more profoundly emotive in its language than Green’s life. It is also an explicitly Tory Romantic one: the ‘pitiless persecutor’, Cromwell, is excoriated for his treatment of the two orphaned children, Elizabeth and Henry. His failure in empathy is highlighted: when describing the farewell scene between father and children, Strickland deplores Cromwell’s ‘indelicacy in intruding himself on the sacred privacy of this touching scene’, and she comments several times on the fact that the Protector – although himself a ‘fond father’ – fails to treat the royal orphans with any compassion.¹³ In fact, the implication of the text is that Cromwell – aware of the likely public revulsion which would be provoked by the spectacle of ‘a virgin victim of her tender age on the scaffold’ – chose to kill Elizabeth by indirect means, imprisoning her in a damp castle, and denying her exercise, air, and appropriate and timely medical attendance. Her comments on Macaulay’s defence of Cromwell against the charge of having her poisoned uses word-play to encourage the reader to suspect he was guilty.¹⁴ She concludes her account by making a direct comparison between the experience of Charles I’s and Louis XVI’s children, which explicitly challenges the dominant Whiggish interpretation by an appeal to the reader’s emotions:

The murder of Charles I, as a political question, has its apologists, but there are few persons, with English hearts, who would venture to defend the treatment of his orphan children, the barbarity of which has only been exceeded by the conduct of the leaders of the French Revolution to the son and daughter of Louis XVI, for which it formed a disgraceful precedent.¹⁵

The comparison drawn between the seventeenth-century English Revolution and the more recent French Revolution is clearly intended to mobilise middle-class Victorian anxieties about ‘The Terror’ in the service of a conservative and monarchist agenda, even while Strickland pretends to shelf the ‘political question’ in favour of a sentimental response.¹⁶ The overall pro-royalist message of the life of Elizabeth is further strengthened by its context. The other events which Strickland treats in poetry and prose in *Historic Scenes* construct a Tory Romantic historical narrative via episodic explorations of (for instance): the escape of Mary, Queen of Scots, from Lochleven Castle; the funeral of Charles I, attended by his loyal servants, Herbert and Juxon; the escape of Charles II after the Battle of Worcester; and (inevitably) the parting of Louis XVI. These subjects all allow the reiteration of the same themes – the persecution of royalty, the bravery and self-sacrifice of loyal royalists, and the fortunate survival and/or restoration (despite all calamities) of the throne. Accordingly, *Historic Scenes* embodies the key elements of Kucich’s Romantic historiography, validating the personal and private experience of individuals and demanding a highly emotional and sentimental response from the reader. The fact that the individuals in question are royalty, and the deliberate problematisation of the public and private spheres – Strickland adroitly demands that we not only empathise with Charles I as a father and (implicitly) reconsider him as a ruler, but that we condemn Cromwell’s failure to practise paternal sensitivity into the public sphere of his political actions – makes it also a Tory Romantic text. Even it is not Cope’s source – his reminiscences of his life rarely mention any books at all – *Historic Scenes* might well have been read by his viewers, who would interpret his painting accordingly.

Cope’s most obvious and evident source for the painting, however, is unsurprisingly an artistic one: Carlo Marochetti’s monument to Princess Elizabeth, 1854-6, at the church of St Thomas, on the Isle of Wight, as suggested by Philip Ward-Jackson.¹⁷ Ward-Jackson argues that certain of Marochetti’s British commissions – including this monument and his three life-size figures for Joseph Banks’ loggia at Kingston Lacy – should be seen as a reworking of French artworks which were ‘explicit displays of penitence’ encouraged by the Restoration Bourbon monarchy of 1815-1830.¹⁸ This loyalist artistic tradition memorialised the members of the French royal family who had been executed and their ancestors whose remains had been desecrated

during the French Revolution.¹⁹ It can be seen to have been exported to Britain by Paul Delaroche as well as Marochetti, and applied to the family of Charles I and the events of the English Civil War. Delaroche's paintings are better known than Marochetti's sculptures, and clearly constructed Charles I as the Christ-like victim of political Revolution, drawing a clear parallel for French audiences with the events of the French Revolution of 1789, not to mention the sequel of 1830, which saw the restored Bourbons once again dethroned. As Stephen Bann has pointed out, in *Cromwell gazing down on the body of Charles I* (1831) and *The Mocking of Charles I* (1837), Delaroche – though not a monarchist himself, but rather an artist adapting the traditional religious iconography of the Passion of Christ and the martyrdom of his saints – nevertheless represents the 'universal victim'.²⁰ Beth S. Wright sees the works, however, as rather more politicised, suggesting that the spiritualisation of Charles's suffering actually makes it into a political message with contemporary relevance: in Delaroche's seventeenth-century canvases, she argues, 'the sufferings of a king-martyr takes on symbolic meaning ... it is released from its own time, because its saintly self-abnegation will result in the restoration of divine monarchy'.²¹

Marochetti's work still more clearly seems to translate the Bourbon-sponsored expiatory culture of the French Restoration into an English idiom. Ward-Jackson analyses a significant commission, the loggia which Marochetti designed for the Bankes family at Kingston Lacy. This contained not only a statue of Charles I, but also effigies of Sir Joseph Bankes and his wife Mary, the latter of whom who resisted a Parliamentary siege at Corfe Castle: together, the three sculptures embodied a celebration of the Tory Romantic tradition within the context of a loyalist family's heritage.²² A major project for Marochetti, the Kingston Lacy loggia probably resulted in the commission from Queen Victoria for the monument to Princess Elizabeth. Ward-Jackson suggests that Marochetti himself would have preferred a more allegorical and aggressively monarchist *mis-en-scene*, but that his royal patrons preferred a more muted and less political presentation of the princess. Accordingly, Marochetti's suggestion that a dagger and an axe should be included – to remind the viewer of the assassination of Elizabeth's grandfather, Henry IV of France, and the execution of her own father – was rejected. He also suggested the inclusion of chains and fetters, but the monument itself featured only a discreet reminder of her captivity: the bars on the background behind the effigy itself.²³ This allowed Queen Victoria

herself to interpret the monument as a ‘tardy tribute to her birth, youth, virtues and misfortunes’ rather than a piece of pro-monarchist propaganda. Ward-Jackson rightly comments that ‘a work capable of inspiring such an agreeable sentimental frisson ... [is] very far indeed from the heavy, institutionalised displays of penitence of post-Revolutionary France’. However, he adds, ‘the expiatory idea is still present’, suggesting ‘how customary a part of national consciousness’ these feelings had become.²⁴ This suggests that the representation of Cavalier children cannot be entirely viewed as apolitical: Kucich’s contention that such constructions question and interpret overarching national narratives, validate the individual suffering of the victims of history, and authorise emotional responses to it seems justified.

Is Kucich’s analysis equally illuminating in the case of Cope’s *The Death of Princess Elizabeth*? There can be little doubt that Marochetti’s monument was the key source for Cope’s image, given the similarities of composition. Indeed, Cope must have known about Marochetti’s Kingston Lacy project (1853-55) as well. For, in 1854, while on holiday in Swanage, the painter and his wife met ‘young Mr Bankes, of Studland, fresh from Cambridge’ and were invited to visit Kingston Lacy to see his uncle’s ‘fine collection of pictures’. Cope subsequently recommended which of the paintings from the Dorset mansion should be sent to an exhibition of ‘Old Masters’ at the Royal Academy.²⁵ But while Marochetti’s effigy of Princess Elizabeth is clearly the major source for the painter’s image, it was not the only one and it is interesting to see how Cope has adapted a second potential source to construct a sentimental royalist narrative. This secondary source is Alfred Rethel’s print *Death as a Friend* (1851), one of a series of prints called *Another Dance of Death*, which the German Romantic artist produced in the wake of the 1848 Revolutions. Cope’s involvement with the Palace of Westminster frescoes, not to mention his friendship with William Dyce, would no doubt have made him aware of developments in German Romantic art; there is also evidence of a visit to Munich, during which he met the artist Peter Hess, in the early to mid-1840s.²⁶

Rethel’s prints offer a conservative political and social perspective on the contemporary German scene, although the chronological setting of this particular print is uncertain: it could potentially depict any period from the medieval to the modern. It shares clear compositional similarities with the Cope painting: the use of

the window to provide a dramatic lighting effect, and the placing of the companion figures to the left, for instance. Note, for instance, how the vertical trajectory of Death's right arm – with which he rings the bell – is echoed by the spear in the hand of the parliamentary soldier. But it is both the similarity and the dissimilarity in the use of symbolic details which shows how Cope has adapted Rethel's image to a potentially Tory Romantic agenda. For instance, note the smaller open window in Rethel's print, which represents the departing soul making its transition into another life: in Cope's painting, this becomes a bird cage, the open door of which symbolises both the transition from life to death *and* the liberation of the prisoner from her captivity. For the Victorian viewer, the bird cage may well have added an additional gendered nuance to Cope's image, as it was often used as a symbol of the curtailment of female liberties by social and cultural conventions.²⁷ Similarly Cope reworks other elements of Rethel's image: the crucifix is echoed in the more acceptably Protestant Bible on which Elizabeth's head rests in Cope's painting – but it is also paralleled by what appears to be an image of her father. This is probably derived from the frontispiece to a 1648 edition of the *Eikon Basilike*, the collection of Charles I's prayers, a work which constructs him as a Christian martyr: Elizabeth is thus presented as the model subject, as well as the model Christian. Most notably of all, of course, is the obvious dissonance between the image of an old man reaching the end of the pilgrimage of life and moving on to the celestial city (note the pilgrim's hat in the foreground of Rethel's image) and the more untimely and unnatural death of a young girl. Death comes as a friend to the one, but the corresponding figure in Cope's image – the soldier bearing a spear – hints at the devastating consequences of the Civil War for the royal families, and indeed all families.

In fact, the implicit message of a domestic idyll shattered by war was probably highlighted for the Victorian viewer familiar with Cope's wider oeuvre. This often celebrated the middle-class Victorian family and, in particular, the relationship of mother and child: in 1853, for instance, Cope's Royal Academy paintings had included *Mother and Child* and the life-size *Mother's Kiss*, while in 1854 his exhibits included *Baby's Turn*.²⁸ But the choice of *Death as a Friend* as a source ultimately means that Cope's image does not actively promote a polemical and aggressive message of royalist outrage – death still comes gently and kindly for this princess, despite the dissonances between the original image and Cope's adaptation of it. In

just the same way, the incorporation of Marochetti's edited effigy did not invest Cope's image with the full weight of the penitential pro-monarchist culture of Restoration France. In fact, the coded message of the painting may have concerned the destructive impact of war *per se* on the family unit, rather than the particular effect of the English Civil War on the Stuart royal family. It was, of course, exhibited during the Crimean War, and Cope's other Royal Academy works in that year included *Consolation*, which featured a child wiping away the tears of its mother, while a map of Sebastopol lies on the table.²⁹

However, the artist's apparently deliberate muting of criticism of the Whig constitutional narrative which celebrates the Civil War as a defence of English liberties does not mean that the artist either could or would wish to resolve the tension between a Romantic reflection on the child-victim, and a more Whiggish celebration of constitutional progress. Nor does it mean that there was not the potential for a Tory Romantic reading of Cope's image by its viewers. Loyalty and fidelity are at the heart of the painting, not only in the clear construction of Elizabeth herself as the obedient daughter of both Church and King, but also in the symbolic form of the dog. Iconographically, dogs have traditionally symbolised fidelity as well as domesticity – and this particular one, which appears to be a King Charles spaniel, could be seen to carry a still more specific message about loyalty to a particular royal family to the viewer. A sentimental response to the image of a young and pious girl dying as the indirect victim of the Civil War – a Romantic reception – could generate an *implicitly* Tory Romantic reading if the viewer preferred. The obvious question then arises: just how far did the viewer read and react to such a message? As I have earlier suggested, some of his viewers may well have been readers of Strickland's *Historic Scenes* or similar Tory Romantic works which would facilitate such a reading. Unfortunately, there are few reviews with much to say about Cope's painting, which makes this a difficult question to answer – Ruskin, for instance, whom one might expect to offer a symbolic and sophisticated reading, merely comments unoblingly that it was 'a very beautiful and well-chosen subject, not ill painted': his main concern was with the unsightly intrusion of the guard's helmet, which 'projects into the light like the beak of a canoe, and appears, for a moment to be the principal subject'.³⁰ However, the reviewer of the *Athenaeum* did discuss the painting at some length, and his consideration to the possibility of the potential for a Tory Romantic reading is

particularly relevant. Having reiterated Ruskin's criticism of the overlarge and intrusive helmet, and added to it the comment that there was 'something almost ludicrous about the way in which the doll-like body is stretched on the window-sill', the critic turns to the subject-matter. He opines that, because of poor painting, Cope:

... has thrown away a partizan [sic] subject, capable of having been treated with pathos, if – as is always the case with partizan painting – the Puritan cruelty was highly over-coloured. In this child, we ourselves see no guillotine victim of mob ferocity, but, as it were, a flower that, growing up some summer morning between the chink of a street pavement, is trod down by the first rush of life when the city awakes and begins to move and stir.³¹

As the quotation reveals, the critic certainly viewed the painting with the intention of attempting a Tory Romantic reading, which not only called for sympathetic identification with the Stuart cause, but connected it to the plight of the Bourbons (obviously Elizabeth herself was neither the victim of mob ferocity nor of the guillotine). However, clearly he found the painting resistant to this interpretation, so instead, he privileges a contemporary and everyday image, which merely views Elizabeth as a girl too innately fragile to survive in the rough and rapidly changing environment of history, a casualty of the inevitable advance of time who was simply in the wrong place, at the wrong time. Compared to – for instance – Strickland's undoubtedly partisan, emotive, and historically-specific account, which puts the blame for Elizabeth's death squarely on the shoulders of Cromwell, this reading breathes a philosophical resignation to the inevitable, representing the generic course of history as the agent of her demise.

So While a Cavalier agenda could be read in, or read into, the image, this message was muted – and could be ignored. It is interesting to discover that Cope's painting was the subject of a series of *tableaux vivantes*, performed by members of the court and the royal family, before the ageing Queen Victoria on January 1893, appropriately enough at Osborne House on the Isle of Wight. The other tableaux included Alfred and the burning of the cakes, and a reconstruction of Paul Delaroche's *The Princes in the Tower* (1830), which depicts the young king Edward V and his brother just before their murder.³² This painting has clear parallels with Cope's *Death of Princess*

Elizabeth: both images present emotively children who suffer death as a consequence of political conflict and division. In other words, they validate the individual and personal experiences of victimised individuals, evoke sentimental and emotional responses from the audience, and embody the episodic puncturing of overarching political narratives: the criteria which Kucich establishes for his ‘domesticised’ and ‘engendered’ alternative Romantic historiographies. However, noticeably, the account in *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper* of the tableaux – like the tableaux themselves, no doubt – depoliticises Elizabeth’s death, describing it as the result of a cold caught ‘during a heavy shower’, and praising the way in which the young actor impersonating Henry of Gloucester – the young Prince Arthur - ‘admirably expressed’ his timidity. There is no hint here of the political and historical context which has led to the princess’s demise. If Cope’s image was potentially a Tory Romantic one, its audience at Osborne seem – predictably – to have stripped it of this agenda.

Another response to Cope’s image appeared rather earlier, in a collection of poems entitled *Visions of England* (1881) by Francis Turner Palgrave, the son of the medieval historian, Sir Francis Palgrave (1788-1861). Palgrave is, of course, much better known for his editorship of *The Golden Treasury* (1861), a highly popular anthology of British poetry. However, Palgrave also wrote his own poems, and the *Visions of England* was an ambitious attempt to reflect his father’s historical interests and perspectives in a series of poems stretching from the Roman occupation to the Victorian period.³³ In his preface, Palgrave was careful to stress that it was not his intention to offer ‘a continuous narrative’, but rather ‘single lyrical pictures of such leading or typical characters and scenes in English history ... as have seemed amenable to a strictly poetical treatment’. However, the collection was dedicated to his father and – notably – Henry Hallam, and although Palgrave declared his wish to present ‘our island story exorcised ... from the seducing demon of party-spirit’, he nevertheless admitted that ‘this line of endeavour has conducted and constrained me, especially when the seventeenth century is concerned, to judgements’. Like many Whiggish constitutional historians, he viewed the English past as a unified history, albeit one with ‘varied lessons of defeat and victory’, and he hoped for ‘prosperous and healthy progress in the Future ... true Advance’.³⁴ But despite his belief in the extension of constitutional liberties which the Civil War had secured, like Hallam he

could be ambivalent about individual parliamentarians: in particular, he disliked Cromwell, and seems to have quarrelled about him with Carlyle, whose edition of Cromwell's letters presented an energetic defence of the Protector.³⁵

Thus Palgrave's history seems to be poised between a progressive and Whiggish narrative, and more episodic, empathetic, and nostalgic perspective on the English past, close to the Romantic historiography described by Kucich. As Herbert F. Tucker has suggested, Palgrave engages in a 'complex maneuver of disownment': seeing the past very much through presentist eyes, yet partially concealing the 'totalizing vision' of the epic tale by producing a series of separate and sentimental lyrics, achieving a 'fleeting yet recurrent convergence between zeitgeist and sensibility'. Tucker suggests that Palgrave's lyrics rarely 'stand alone in pure feeling', and that one of these rare examples is 'A Ballad of Queen Catherine: January, 1536', in which 'the figure of the abandoned woman remained available to represent those discards of history whose casualties epic in its late triumphalist phase seldom paused to consider'.³⁶ I would suggest that 'The Captive Child', which focuses on Princess Elizabeth and seems to have been written before Palgrave planned the great narrative of *Visions of England*, is another such example of a poem which destabilises the narrative of progress and prosperity. The opening verse of the poem suggests strongly both that Palgrave had seen Cope's image, and that he intended to evoke the same sentimental and empathetic response as the artist:

Child in girlhood's early grace,
Pale white rose of royal race,
Flower of France, and England's flower,
What dost here at twilight hour
Captive bird in castle-hold,
Picture-fair and calm and cold,
Cold and still as marble stone
In gray Carisbrook alone?
—Fold thy limbs and take thy rest,
Nestling of the silent nest!³⁷

Clearly the image of the captive bird – although obviously a common one in Victorian culture – is most likely inspired by the bird cage included in Cope's image, while the use of imagery relating to both painting and sculpture may be a conscious or subconscious allusion to Cope's image and/or Marochetti's effigy.³⁸ The rest of the lyric (as you can see) references other elements of the painting – for instance, the

Bible and the image of Charles I, which is here rendered as a retrospective vision of their final interview and his execution. Even the ‘sullen foe’ – the soldier, who, with Henry of Gloucester, acts as the shocked audience in Cope’s image – appears as an onlooker in the penultimate verse, moved to ‘bless/That pale utter gentleness’.³⁹

Palgrave’s ‘The Captive Child’ clearly presents the image of a female historical victim, traumatised by the death of her father and persecuted by the ‘coarse fanatic rage’ of his enemies; equally evidently, it elicits the sentimental and empathetic response of the reader. As such, the lyric clearly represents an example of Kucich’s Romantic historiography. However – like Cope’s image and Marochetti’s sculpture – there is a possible further Tory Romantic dimension to it, a muted message of political expiation. Consider the second and third lines of the first verse: ‘Pale white rose of royal race/Flower of France and England’s flower’. White roses, of course, symbolised for the Victorians youth, purity and innocence, and as such are an almost inevitable choice of flower image for a teenaged girl who died a virgin. But a Victorian audience might well have been reminded also of the White Rose of York, and by a natural association, the young princes who had died in the Tower. The fact that Delaroche’s image was coupled with Cope’s in the royal *tableaux vivants* demonstrates that these paintings, and their subjects, could easily be linked in the imagination of a Victorian audience. Moreover, John Everett Millais’s interpretation of the same subject – which recapitulated key elements of Delaroche’s image - had enjoyed considerable popular success only three years before Palgrave’s poem was published.⁴⁰ This association would situate Elizabeth as one of a number of royal children and adolescents who were perceived as the innocent victims of historical events – Prince Arthur, the nephew of King John, and Lady Jane Grey were others – and all of whom were subjects of sentimental cults of varying degrees of success.

However, the Tory Romantic reader might have chosen to read a potentially more politicised message in Palgrave’s poem, a sort of royalist residuum. Elizabeth is explicitly identified as a ‘Flower of France’ as well as England’s flower – this would bring to mind the fleur de lys, the iris or lily, the traditional heraldic symbol of France (not to mention the Prince of Wales). The fleur de lys, and indeed the colour white, had been the symbols of the White army of the Vendee, the royalist and clerical

opposition to the French Revolution. This connection is however, obviously, tenuous, and Palgrave would not have intended to facilitate such an association: indeed, what is far more evident in the poem as a whole is the use of the parallel clearly drawn between the execution of Charles I and the Passion of Christ. This seems to reference such works as Delaroche's *The Mocking of Charles I*, constructing the king as a sacrificial victim (although not entirely exonerating him of blame: note the somewhat ambiguous and Macbeth-inspired elegy in verse 5). But while it appropriates the expiatory artistic tradition nurtured during the French Restoration, Palgrave's poem does not openly encourage a Tory Romantic reading of the English past. Like Cope's painting, which utilised Rethel's *Death as a Friend* to offer a spiritual closure to its pathetic narrative, Palgrave's poem also presents a transcendent happy ending which necessarily takes place beyond the bounds of history:

—Eyes of heaven, that pass and peep,
Do not question, if she sleep!
She has no abiding here,
She is past the starry sphere;
Kneeling with the children sweet
At the palm-wreathed altar's feet;
—Innocents who died like thee,
Heaven-ward through man's cruelty,
To the love-smiles of their Lord
Borne through pain and fire and sword.⁴¹

Here Elizabeth is not aligned with fellow royal children who are sentimentalised victims of history, but with the Biblical victims of Herod, the Holy Innocents. The account of Charles I's death may counterpoise the private sphere of the family circle – where Elizabeth as a small reads her Bible under her loving father's gaze – with the public sphere in which the king acts 'his part', with a final performance on the scaffold. But it does not explicitly invite a pro-monarchist critique of the execution of the king as an unnatural challenge to the authority of a father-like monarch: 'home' is being reconstituted in heaven, not in England, in this poem. Like the *tableaux vivants*, Palgrave's re-interpretation of Cope's image seems to have been stripped it of its Tory Romantic potential, depoliticising it by further spiritualising and sentimentalising its message.

However, we should perhaps not ignore the impact that *Visions of England* had on some of its readers, who certainly discern its Tory Romantic potential. They did not comment on the representation of Princess Elizabeth, so much as that of Mary, Queen

of Scots – traditionally a key icon for Stuart sympathisers. Palgrave’s ‘Crossing Solway’ is a notably generous treatment of the Scottish queen, which presents her opponents, the Lords of the Congregation as greedy and fanatical.⁴² Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff, for instance, wrote to Palgrave on 24 January 1890, commenting with some surprise on his evident sympathy for the queen: ‘I have never read up the controversy’, Duff remarked, ‘but in Scotland the partisans of the Queen are now few even amongst those who learn strongly against the policy and practices of her opponents – many of whom were undoubtedly ruffians of the first water’.⁴³ Lord Hatherley praises the ‘spirit’ of Palgrave’s poems about battles such as Hastings and Evesham, but perceptively identifies the undercutting pathos of the ‘Ballad of Queen Catherine’ and the ‘deep tragic undertone of poor Mary of Scotland’s life’.⁴⁴ These comments should be set alongside the praise of William Stubbs, the constitutional historian, who remarked on Palgrave’s ‘intelligent love of England’.⁴⁵ Stubbs can be seen as a later nineteenth-century Hallam: a historian who articulated a distinctively conservative version of the national historical narrative, one which owed much to Burkean conservatism, but he was undoubtedly a Butterfieldian Whig in approach.⁴⁶

The image and poem – both depicting the death of Princess Elizabeth – can certainly be placed in Kucich’s category of Romantic ‘engendered’ and ‘domesticised’ historiography. They construct the figure of a victimised child, validating her suffering at the expense of an overarching Constitutional narrative of Whig political achievement, and structuring and evoking a sentimentalised and religious response from the audience. Cope’s direct reference to Marochetti’s effigy shows that such Civil War imagery was influenced by the expiatory artistic culture of the French Restoration court, although even Marochetti’s own more politicised interpretation was muted by the intervention of his royal patron. Cope’s image carried the potential for not only a Romantic, but a Tory Romantic reading, implicitly presenting Elizabeth as the embodiment of the loyalist Cavalier losers of the Civil War, the other symbolic ‘children’ of Charles I who recognised his paternalistic rule by divine rights. However, this narrative was at best a sub-text for Cope (if not his viewers), as his contribution to the Houses of Parliament constitutional narrative showed. In the royal *tableaux vivants* and in Palgrave’s poem, the potential for Tory Romanticism in Cope’s image seems diffused, although some of Palgrave’s readers clearly found that his sympathies for the (largely female) victims of history served to destabilise his

overarching narrative and to suggest Stuart sympathies. But – in the final analysis - Cope's own exploitation of Rethel's *Death as a Friend* suggests that he – like Palgrave – preferred to offer a form of spiritual and transcendental closure to the plight of Princess Elizabeth, offering a wistful coda rather than a more formidable challenge to the Whig constitutional narrative.

Cavalier Children: Sentimental Histories and the Stuarts

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Fig. 1: Carlo Marochetti's monument to Princess Elizabeth, 1854-6, St Thomas's Church, IofW (www.newportparish.org.uk)

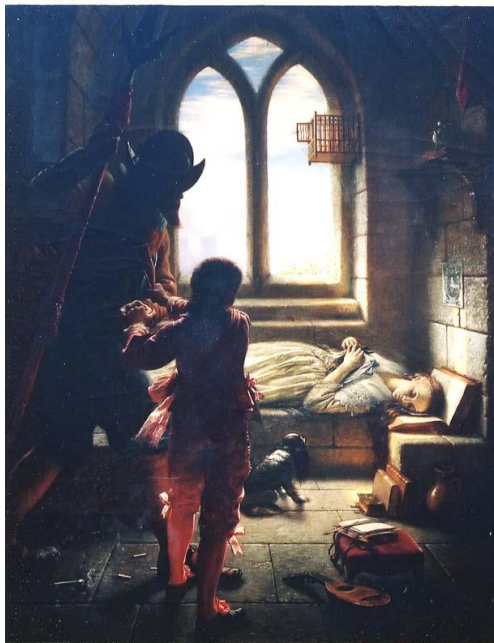


Figure 2: Charles West Cope, *Royal Prisoners (The Death of Princess Elizabeth)*, exhibited in the Royal Academy, 1855. Now at Carisbrooke Castle, IofW



Figure 3: Alfred Rethel's print 'Death as a Friend' (1851), later addition to *Another Dance of Death* (1849) (www.picslivejournals.com)

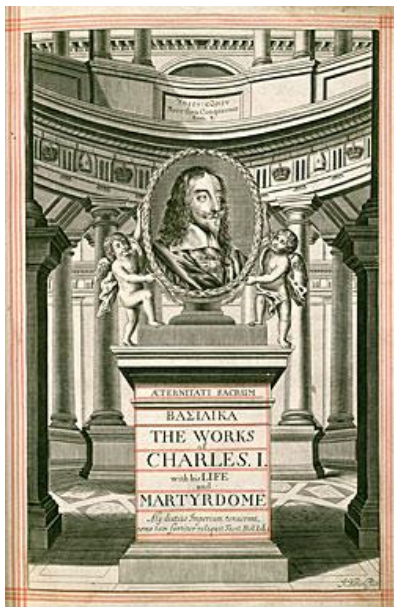


Figure 4: The frontispiece of a 1648 edition of *Eikon Basilike*, allegedly written by Charles I (<http://sherlockholmes.stanford.edu>).

The Captive Child

September 8: 1650

Child in girlhood's early grace,
Pale white rose of royal race,
Flower of France, and England's flower,
What dost here at twilight hour
Captive bird in castle-hold,
Picture-fair and calm and cold,
Cold and still as marble stone
In gray Carisbrook alone?
—Fold thy limbs and take thy rest,
Nestling of the silent nest!

Ah fair girl! So still and meek,
One wan hand beneath her cheek,
One on the holy texts that tell
Of God's love ineffable;—
Last dear gift her father gave
When, before to-morrow's grave,
By no unmanly grief unmann'd,
To his little orphan band
In that stress of anguish sore
He bade farewell evermore.

Doom'd, unhappy King! Had he
Known the pangs in store for thee,
Known the coarse fanatic rage
That,—despite her flower-soft age,
Maidenhood's first blooming fair,—
Fever-struck in the imprison'd air
As rosebud on the dust-hill thrown
Cast a child to die alone,—
He had shed, with his last breath,
Bitterer tears than tears of death!

As in her infant hour she took
In her hand the pictured book
Where Christ beneath the scourger bow'd,
Crying 'O poor man!' aloud,
And in baby tender pain
Kiss'd the page, and kiss'd again,
While the happy father smiled
On his sweet warm-hearted child;
—So now to him, in Carisbrook lone,
All her tenderness has flown.

Oft with a child's faithful heart
She has seen him act his part;

Nothing in his life so well
Gracing him as when he fell;
Seen him greet his bitter doom
As the mercy-message Home;
Seen the scaffold and the shame,
The red shower that fell like flame;
Till the whole heart within her died,
Dying in fancy by his side.

—Statue-still and statue-fair
Now the low wind may lift her hair,
Motionless in lip and limb;
E'en the fearful mouse may skim
O'er the window-sill, nor stir
From the crumb at sight of her;
Through the lattice unheard float
Summer blackbird's evening note;—
E'en the sullen foe would bless
That pale utter gentleness.

—Eyes of heaven, that pass and peep,
Do not question, if she sleep!
She has no abiding here,
She is past the starry sphere;
Kneeling with the children sweet
At the palm-wreathed altar's feet;
—Innocents who died like thee,
Heaven-ward through man's cruelty,
To the love-smiles of their Lord
Borne through pain and fire and sword.

Notes:

Elizabeth, second daughter of Charles I. and Henrietta Maria, was born on Innocents' Day, 1635. The incident accounted in Stanza iv occurred in 1637. She had been taken on a visit to Hampton Court to her mother, who wished her to be present at her own vesper-service, when Elizabeth, not yet two years old, became very restless. To quiet her a book of devotion was shown to her. The King, when the Queen drew his attention, said, 'She begins young!'

This tale is told by Mrs. Green, in her excellent *Princesses of England*, (London, 1853),—a book deserving to be better known,—on the authority of the Envoy Con.

The first grief of a very happy and promising childhood may have been the loss of her sister Anne in 1640. But by 1642, the evils of the time began to press upon Princess Elizabeth; her mother's departure from England, followed by her own capture by order of the Parliament; her confinement under conditions of varying severity; and the final farewell to her father, Jan. 29, 1649.

From that time her life was overshadowed by the sadness of her father's death, her own isolation, and her increasing feebleness of health. She seems to have been a

singularly winning and intelligent girl, and she hence found or inspired affection in several of the guardians successively appointed to take charge of her. But if she had not been thus marked by beauty of nature, our indignant disgust would hardly be less at the brutal treatment inflicted by the Puritan-Independent authorities upon this child:—at the refusal of her prayer to be sent to her elder sister Mary, in Holland; at the captivity in Carisbrook; at the isolation in which she was left to die.—Yet it is not she who most merits pity!

In this poem, written before the plan of the book had been formed, I find that some slight deviation from the best authorities has been made. Elizabeth's young brother Henry, Duke of Gloster, shared her prison: and although her own physician, Mayerne, had been dismissed, yet some medical attendance was supplied.—Henry Vaughan has described the patience of the young sufferer in two lovely lines:

Thou didst not murmur, nor revile,
And drank'st thy wormwood with a smile.

—*Olor Iscanus*; 1651.

- ¹ G. Kucich, 'Romanticism and the Re-gendering of Historical Memory', in J. M. Labbe (ed), *Memory and Memorials, 1789-1914: Literary and Cultural Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2000), 1-29.
- ² G. Goodwin, rev. S. Kelsey, 'Princess Elizabeth (1635-1650)', in H.C. G. Mathew and B. Harrison, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). Hereafter, *ODNB*.
- ³ R. Strong, *And When Did You Last See Your Father? The Victorian Painter and British History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1978), 165.
- ⁴ D. Robertson, 'Charles West Cope (1811-1890)', *ODNB*.
- ⁵ Strong, *And When Did You Last See Your Father?*, 141-43.
- ⁶ Timothy Lang convincingly argues that Henry Hallam articulated a particularly conservative and aristocratic Whig defence of the constitution, one which fell considerably short of the more radical interpretation of seventeenth-century history voiced by Macaulay. He sees Hallam as a Foxite Whig influenced by Burkean conservatism, who harks back to the eighteenth-century constitution and distrusts electoral reform, while Macaulay builds on the radical and nonconformist tradition of the 1780s and 1790s, reflected in Catherine Macaulay's histories. T. Lang, *The Victorians and the Stuart Heritage: Interpretations of a Discordant Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 23-52.
- ⁷ E. Morris and F. Milner, *And When Did You Last See Your Father?* (National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside, 1992), 45.
- ⁸ M.A.E. Green, *Lives of the Princesses of England* (London: Henry Colburn, 1849-55), vol. 6, 335-93.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 5, 145-573, vol. 6, 1-87; vol. 6, 100-334.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. 6, 378-80 and frontispiece.
- ¹¹ See Richard E. Hodge, 'Christopher Wase (1627-1690)', *ODNB*, for Wase's royalist sympathies. His 1649 translation of *Electra* included 'an epilogue shewing the parallel in two poems, the Return and the Restauration'. It also included a portrait of the young Charles II as well as his sister.
- ¹² Green, *Lives*, vol. 6, 364.
- ¹³ A. Strickland, *Historic Scenes and Poetic Fancies* (London: Henry Colburn, 1850), 105-06, 113.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 114-15.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 116.
- ¹⁶ See eg B. Melman, *The Culture of History: English Uses of the Past, 1800-1953* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 29-113, for recent exploration of the way in which the French Revolution was represented within the British historical consciousness.
- ¹⁷ P. Ward-Jackson, 'Expiatory Monuments by Carlo Marochetti in Dorset and the Isle of Wight', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 53 (1990), 277. Ward-Jackson and Morris and Milner are both tentative about whether the artist imitated the sculptor, or the sculptor the artist (Morris and Milner, *And when did you last see your Father?*, 45): what seems undeniable in the light of compositional similarities is that the two were aware of each other's work.
- ¹⁸ Ward-Jackson, 'Expiatory Monuments', 266.
- ¹⁹ See Beth S. Wright, *Painting and History during the French Restoration: Abandoned by the Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) explores this tradition in a thorough and sophisticated analysis. See particularly 31-76, which considers the 'Troubadour' paintings of the 1820s, and 92-112, which considers the appropriation of episodes from Stuart history to achieve a 'temporal doubling' of the Bourbon experience of catastrophe via the spectacular 'dramatization of private anecdotes that conveyed dynastic and national implications' and mediated a 'corporal conservatism', a literally embodied pro-royalist message (96).
- ²⁰ S. Bann, *Paul Delaroche: History Painted* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 1997), 152-54.
- ²¹ Wright, *Painting and History*, 111.
- ²² Ward-Jackson, 'Expiatory Monuments', 267-275.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, 275-77.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, 277-78.
- ²⁵ C.H. Cope, *Reminiscences of Charles West Cope* (London: Richard Bentley and Co., 1891), 205.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, 151.
- ²⁷ E. Shefer, 'Deverell, Rossetti, Siddal, and 'The Bird in the Cage'', *The Art Bulletin*, 67/3 (Sept., 1985), 437-448, for an interesting discussion of adaptations of this emblematic image.
- ²⁸ Cope, *Reminiscences*, 281-2.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, 282.

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- ³⁰ J. Ruskin, *Notes on some of the Principal Pictures exhibited in the Rooms of the Royal Academy* (1855), in E.T. Cook and A. Wedderburn, eds., *The Works of John Ruskin* (London: George Allen, 1904), vol. 14, 19.
- ³¹ *Athenaeum*, no. 1437 (12 May, 1855), 559.
- ³² ‘The Royal Tableaux’, *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper*, 15 January 1893.
- ³³ M. Nelson Otton, ‘Francis Turner Palgrave (1824-1897)’, *ODNB*.
- ³⁴ F. T. Palgrave, *Visions of England: Lyrics of the Leading Men and Events in English History* (1881; this edition, Cassell and Company, 1889, ed. H. Morley), preface, 10-11.
- ³⁵ G.F. Palgrave, *Francis Turner Palgrave: His Journals and Memories of his Life* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1899), 37, 41.
- ³⁶ H. F. Tucker, *Epic: Britain’s Heroic Muse, 1790-1910* (Oxford University Press, 2008), 488-90.
- ³⁷ Palgrave, *Visions*, 111.
- ³⁸ As a close friend of Tennyson (or so he saw himself), Palgrave would certainly have visited the poet on the Isle of Wight and may well have seen the Marochetti effigy during such an excursion.
- ³⁹ Palgrave, *Visions*, 113.
- ⁴⁰ P. Barlow, *Time Present and Time Past: the Art of John Everett Millais* (Ashgate, 2005), 157-58.
- ⁴¹ Palgrave, *Visions*, 113.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*, 83-86.
- ⁴³ Palgrave, *FTP*, 162-63.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 61-62.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 162.
- ⁴⁶ J. Campbell, ‘William Stubbs, 1825-1901’, *ODNB*. See also J. Burrow, *A Liberal Descent: Victorian Historians and the English Past* (Cambridge and New York, Cambridge University Press, 1981)