

of the stern discipline to which she had been subjected in childhood, with the observation, "that she liked not to keep her children at so awful a distance from her as she had been kept by her mother, as she wished her daughter to regard her as a friend and companion, one to whom she could confide every thought of her heart."

The mode of life pursued by Mary Beatrice in the convent, the peculiar style of reading, and the enthusiastic interest that was excited among the cloistered votaresses by dwelling on the lives of female saints and royal virgins who consecrated themselves in the morning flower of life to the service of God, had the natural effect of imbuing her youthful mind with mysticism and spiritual romance. There was an aunt of Mary Beatrice, scarcely fifteen years older than herself, in the same convent, to whom she was very tenderly attached. This princess, who was her father's youngest sister by a second marriage, was preparing herself to take the veil, and Mary Beatrice was desirous of professing herself at the same time. Very rarely, however, does it happen that a princess is privileged to choose her own path in life: the death of Anne Hyde, duchess of York, proved the leading cause of linking the destiny of this young innocent recluse, who thought of nothing but veils and rosaries, with that of the most ill-fated prince of the luckless house of Stuart, James duke of York, afterwards the second king of Great Britain of that name. The youthful career of this prince, though by no means so familiar to the general reader as that of his brother, Charles II., is scarcely less replete with events and situations of stirring interest.¹ He was born at St. James's-palace, October 14, 1633, at midnight. When only nine years old, he marched by his royal father's side in the front of the line of battle at Edgehill, and stood the opening volley of the rebels' cannon as boldly as any gentleman there. He was not thirteen when he fell into the hands of the parliamentary forces at the surrender of Oxford, in June 1646. The next day sir Thomas

¹ As it is perfectly impossible to compress these within the limits of the few pages that could be devoted to a closely abridged summary of the leading events of his life before he became the husband of Mary of Modena, I have decided on publishing a separate volume, to be entitled *The Early Days of James II.*

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