

picted by him in the character of Innocence, without a single ornament to enhance her natural charms, such as she was when she came to England, in the early ripeness of sweet fifteen, as the reluctant bride of the duke of York. We recognise her in her youthful matron dignity among "the 'light-o'-love' beauties," in the Hampton-Court gallery, but distinguished from them by the vestal-like expression of her face. Her portraits, at a more advanced period of life, as queen of England, are among the finest specimens of sir Godfrey Kneller's art. Every one of these transcripts of the royal beauty tells its progressive tale of melancholy interest to the few who are intimately acquainted with the events of her life. Little, however, is now remembered in England of this queen beyond the bare outline facts, that she was a princess of Modena, the consort of a dethroned and most unpopular sovereign, and the mother of the disinherited prince to whom the world applied the contemptuous epithet of "the Pretender." The conjugal tenderness of Matilda of Boulogne, of Eleanor of Castile, and of Philippa, is deservedly appreciated; the maternal devotion of Margaret of Anjou, the patience of the long-suffering Katharine of Arragon, have received their due meed of praise, for they have become matter of history; but the personal annals of Mary of Modena, for obvious reasons, has never been given to the world. Bold, indeed, would have been any writer of the last century, who should have ventured to call attention to the sufferings of the faithful consort of the last and most unfortunate of the Stuart kings.

Among the princesses who have worn the crown-matrimonial of England, many have been born in a more elevated rank than Mary Beatrice of Modena, but few could boast of a more illustrious descent than she claimed as the daughter of the house of Este. That family, so famous in the page of history, derives its name from the city of Esté, near the Euganean hills, between Verona and Padua, and surely no name is associated with nobler themes of interest than the line of heroes, of whom Tasso, Ariosto, and Dante have sung: more than once did they repel the progress of the

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¹ History of the