

PRINCESS BRIDGET

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Princess Bridget, the youngest child and seventh daughter of Edward IV and Elizabeth Wydville, was born November 10th, 1480. Not a great deal is known about her, and so a particularly interesting document, an account of her christening, apparently rediscovered by "F.M." in 1831¹ is here reprinted, with some additional matter:—

"*M^d that in the yere of our lord Mⁱ iiij^e iiij^{xx} And the xxth yere of the Reigne of Kinge Edwarde the iiijth on Sainte Martyns even² was Borne the lady Brigette, And Cristened on the morne on Sainte Martyns daye³ In the Chappell' of Eltham, by the Busshope of Chichester⁴ in order As ensuethe.*

Furst C Torches borne by Knightes, Esquiers, and other honneste Parsonnes. The Lorde Matreuers, Beringe the Basen, Havinge A Towell' aboute his necke.⁵

Therle of Northumberlande beringe A Taper not light'.⁶

Therle of Lincolne the Salte.⁷

The Canapee borne by iij Knightes and A Baron.

My lady Matrauers dyd bere A Ryche Crysom Pynned Ouer her lefte breste.⁸

The Countess of Rychemond did Bere The Princesse.⁹

My lorde Marques Dorsette Assisted her.¹⁰

My lady the Kinges Mother, and my lady Elizabeth, werè godmothers at the Fonte.¹¹

The Busshope of Winchester Godfather.¹²

And in the Tyme of the christeninge, The officers of Armes caste on their cotes.

And then were light' all' the forsayde Torches.

Presente, these noble men ensuenge.

The Duke of Yorke.¹³

The Lorde Hastings, the Kinges chamberlayne.¹⁴

The Lorde Stanley, Stewarde of the Kinges House.¹⁵

The lorde Dacres the quenes chamberlain, and many other astates.¹⁶

And when the sayde Princesse was Christened, A Squier helde the Basens to the gossypes, and even by the Fonte my lady Matravers was godmother to the conformacion.

And from thens she was borne before the high aulter, And that Solempritee doon she was Borne eftesonys into her Parclosse, Accompenyd w' the Astates Aforesayde.

And the Lorde of Sainte Joanes brought thither A Spice plate.¹⁷

And at the sayde Parclose the godfather and the godmother gave greate gyfste to the sayde princesse.

Which gyfste were borne by Knightes and esquiers before the sayde Princesse, turneng to the quenes chamber Againe, well' Accompanied As y' Apperteyneth, and after the custume of this Realme.

Deo gr'as."

The next notice we have of her is in Richard III's-Wardrobe Accounts (April 9th, 1483-February 2nd, 1484)¹⁸:—

"To the Lady Brygitt, one of the daughters of K. Edward IIIth, being

sick in the said Wardrobe for to have for her use at that time two long pillows of fustian, stuffed with down, and two pillow beres of Holland cloth unto them."

In March of 1484, at the age of three, she was included in the invitation of her Uncle Richard to her mother and sisters, to come out of sanctuary and place herself in his care, "to be guided, ruled and demeaned after me, then I shall see that they be in surety of their lives. . . and to have all things requisite and necessary for their exhibitions and findings as my kinswomen".¹⁹

Whether she had been destined from an early age, or even from birth, for the cloister, or was sent into religious seclusion by her brother-in-law, Henry Tydder, who had a "settled disposition to depress all eminent persons of the line of York"²⁰ is not clear, but by 1502 she is figuring as a charge on her eldest sister, Elizabeth, the Queen.²¹ In that year there are two entries.

"Item, the vijth day of July delivered to Thabbasse of Dartford by thandes of John Weredon towards suche money as the said Abbasse hath layed out towards the charges of my Lady Brigit there. . . . lxxj s. viij d."

"Item the xxvijth day of Septembre to John Weredon . . . for his costes riding from Windsore to Dartford to my Lady Brigget by the space of twoo dayes at xij d. the day ij s."

The final entry is in a "Wages" list in March 1503:

"Item to my Lady Brygette . . . lxxj s. viij d."

According to Weever:²²

"And in the said place (the Priory of Dartford) lieth buried the Lady Bridget, daughter to King Edward the Fourth, a religious woman in the same place. . . . She took the habit of religion when she was young and so spent her life in contemplation unto the day of her death: which happened about the year 1517, the eight of King Henry the Eight."

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Gentleman's Magazine, Vol. 101 (1831), p. 25 (from British Museum Additional Manuscript 6113, f. 73).
2. St. Martin's Eve—November 10th.
3. St. Martin's Day—November 11th.
4. Bishop of Chichester—Edward Story.
5. Thomas FitzAlan, Lord Maltravers, later 16th Earl of Arundel. He was the princess's uncle by marriage. See Note 8.
6. Henry Percy, 4th Earl of Northumberland.
7. John, son of Elizabeth the King's sister and John de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk. He married Margaret FitzAlan, daughter of Lord and Lady Maltravers.
8. Lady Maltravers—Margaret Wydville the Queen's sister. The chrisom was the square of material given by the godparent to the priest to be put round the infant's head.
9. Margaret Beaufort-Tudor-Stafford-Stanley, wife of Thomas, Lord Stanley.
10. Thomas Grey, the Queen's elder son by her first husband, and thus half-brother to the princess.
11. Cecily Neville, Duchess of York, the King's mother, and Elizabeth the princess's sister.
12. The Bishop of Winchester—William Waynesflete.
13. The princess's second brother. Her other brother, the Prince of Wales, presumably was at Ludlow.
14. William, Lord Hastings.
15. Thomas, Lord Stanley, later created Earl of Derby by Henry VII.
16. Lord Daures—Sir Richard Fiennes, Lord Daure of the South.
17. Probably John St. John, son and heir of Margaret Beauchamp by her first husband, Sir Oliver St. John. By her second husband, John Beaufort, Duke of Somerset, she was mother of the Countess of Richmond, and by her third, Lionel, Lord Welles, of John, created Viscount Welles by Henry VII, and married to Cecily, daughter of Edward IV.
18. Antiquarian Repertory, Vol. I (1807), p. 51.
19. Henry Ellis Original Letters, Second Series (1827), Vol. I, p. 149.
20. Francis Bacon History of the Reign of Henry VII, edited by R. Lockyer (1971), p. 41
21. N. H. Nicolas (editor) Privy Purse Expenses of Elizabeth of York (1830), pp. 29, 30, 99.
22. John Weever Ancient Funeral Monuments (1631), p. 338.