

Queen Caroline - Victim of Royal Torture

Wedded to a Prince Who Did Not Love Her

(Continued from page one.)
pounding, her eyes shining with excitement. It was really true! She was going to London to be married in pomp to the "first gentleman in Europe," the dashing, ardent, impetuous Prince George; she would be the princess of Wales and some day, God willing, queen of all England!

Late that night she stole into her mother's room. "Tell me everything," she coaxed eagerly. "Does the prince really want me? How did it all happen? What message did he send?"

The reigning duchess, Augusta of Brunswick, looked at her daughter's radiant face and glowing eyes. Should she tell her the truth? "The prince sent no message," she said evasively. "The offer came from your uncle, the king. My brother seems bent on the marriage and urges that you leave for London as soon as possible."

"The sooner the better, since it is all settled," replied Caroline. "I can't wait to be off. Just think what it means, my precious!"

She was dancing around the room in her glee. "I'll be princess of Wales, live at Carlton house, and have the gayest, handsomest prince in all the world for a husband!"

Her mother smiled doubtfully. "Yes, George is handsome and gay," she admitted, "but he is dreadfully extravagant. His debts are enormous and he pours out money like water on racing and gambling and drinking and women. His father is sick with worry over his excesses; even parliament has rebelled. It will pay his debts, which amount to nearly a million pounds, on one condition only. That is, that he marry some nice little princess and settle down to sensible living."

Caroline stopped dancing and shrugged her impertinent shoulders. "So I've been chosen to reform him!" she laughed. "I can do it. He must want me a little for he has seen my picture, and when he knows me he will like me a lot." She shook her head naively. "I'll show the prince such a jolly time that he will forget all about his gambling and drinking and his horrid painted ladies. We will dine and dance and attend the theaters and ride the fastest horses and then—very soon—we'll have dozens and dozens of little princes and princesses tagging at our heels. Picture that, precious," she cooed, giving her mother an ecstatic hug.

"Caroline!" The ageing Augusta was shocked. Her daughter had been shocking her for a number of years. Caroline meant well but she was wilful and heedless of decorum. She gave no thought to appearances, and there were times when her reckless disregard of what people might think frightened her mother. "You say such outrageous things!"

Caroline promised to be a model of propriety, and the duchess at once set about ordering a quite gorgeous wardrobe for her somewhat difficult and hoydenish daughter. Every one worked at break-neck speed to get Caroline smartly fitted out, so she was ready to leave for England by the end of December.

The trip to London took longer than planned, but Caroline enjoyed every minute. She thrilled at the enthusiasm of the people when she and her party reached London, in the early dusk of an April day. The milling hordes of Britishers were friendly and cordial like her Brunswick throngs. Cannon roared their welcome from the tower and the city blazed with lights from a million tapers.

Men and women alike looked on Caroline in the light of a rescuing angel. Unfortunately for the princess, however, her future husband had no desire or intention of being rescued from those excesses upon which he had thrived and fattened for ten years. He had only consented to the marriage after violent opposition, remarking as he put his name on the dotted line that he'd marry her and desert her in his damned short time. Now that he realized she was actually on English soil and that his doom was uncomfortably close, he flew into one of those unpleasant tantrums for which he was famed. "I'm not going to marry her!"

he shouted and began breaking the furniture about him. "I want no stupid Brunswick for a wife. I'll pick my own wife. Tell parliament that! I'll pick my own lady friends. Tell parliament that!"

He raved on for some time, but Lord Malmesbury eventually managed to calm him, get him into his Hussar outfit, and over to St. James's to be presented formally to his betrothed. The meeting was not propitious.

King George was furious at his son and at the way he was acting, but there was nothing he could do about it, except to express himself hotly to his wife when he found her alone.

Queen Charlotte was quite as upset as her husband but, as usual, she took her son's part.

"I have not approved of this marriage from the start," she said coldly. "Caroline may mean well enough but she's no woman to reform George. Parliament takes too much on itself when it tries to reg-



King George IV's royal banquet on coronation day in 1821, with noblemen approaching the banquet table ahead of the first course of the feast.



Mrs. Maria Fitzherbert, whom George IV, as prince of Wales secretly married in 1785. Their relations were treated by their intimates on the footing of amorganatic marriage.

ulate his life. Now, in addition to Mrs. Fitzherbert (the prince's secret wife) and all of George's other lady friends to worry about, we have Caroline on our hands.

"Well, see to it that some one keeps close to the boy or there won't be any wedding tonight," King George retorted and turned on his heel.

Queen Charlotte took his advice and ordered the faithful Lord Malmesbury to keep George in sight. "Don't let him run away from his own ceremony," she said in despair.

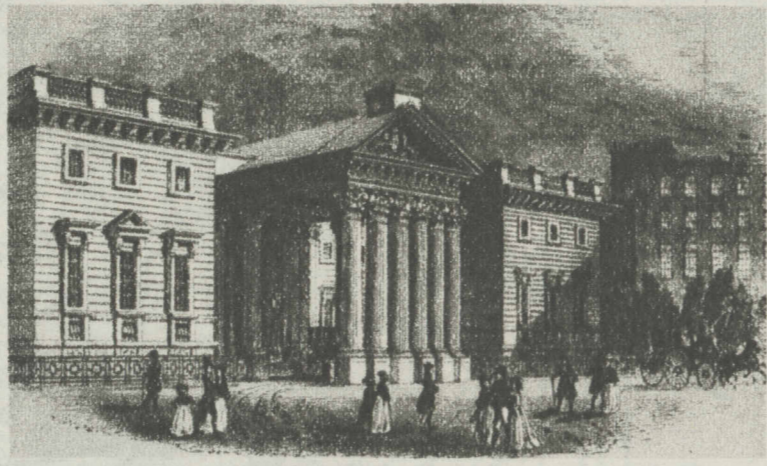
The prince, however, took to brandy instead of flight and continued to consume alarming quantities of the choicest royal liquor. Outside the crowds were yelling and hurrahing and demanding to see the happy bride and bridegroom. Caroline stepped out onto the balcony and waved with as much gaiety as she could muster. George was propelled as far as the balcony railing, supported by the dutiful Malmesbury and the equally loyal duke of York. He managed to mutter a few words of thanks to the crowd.

At the ceremony in the Chapel Royal in St. James's, every one held his breath. At the supper which followed, in Buckingham house, the prince retired to a chair in a corner where he sat and glowered fiercely at any one who came near him and refused to utter a sound. By midnight every one felt as if he had stood as much as human endurance could take, and the bride and bridegroom were hustled into the royal equipage and driven off to Carlton house.

Of this memorable wedding night, April 8, 1795, Caroline wrote: "When we reached Carlton house I was actually a little scared, for the prince was in a dreadful state. He had begun to swear and mutter to himself in the carriage. He was terrible! He never once looked at me, but when we reached our rooms he began drinking brandy again. I did

not know what to do so I just sat and listened to his oaths and watched him drink one glass after another. Finally he lurched forward and fell across the fireplace, his head in the grate. I left him then. I couldn't really see any reason for staying around."

Caroline found plenty to write to her mother about from this time on. Some of her letters fell into



Carlton house, to which Caroline was taken as a bride by her husband, Prince George.

the hands of Queen Charlotte and increased her unfriendly feeling for her new daughter-in-law. Caroline referred to the queen as "snuffy." Once she wrote:

"Snuffy doesn't care much for me and snubs me whenever she gets a chance. So do the princesses. King George is the only polite and human person around St. James's that I have discovered. He likes me and he shows it. Every one else seems to think that I have shoved myself into London court life and should be shoved out again."

A few months later she wrote in a happier vein:

"I am so pleased to tell you, my precious, that I am going to have a baby some time in January. Isn't that wonderful?"

The princess very soon learned that something mysterious was

brewing and she did not have to wait very long to discover what ill winds were blowing her way. A few months after the birth of her little girl, Charlotte Augusta, Queen Charlotte asked to see her, and with her customary brusqueness, plunged at once into what she had to say.

"My son is frankly tired of you, she began in her crisp, composed voice. "He is very anxious for you to leave Carlton house. He feels that he cannot stand you under the same roof with him any longer, and that you must go away."

Caroline's blue eyes smoldered and her face flushed, but she managed to keep control.

"Where does he want me to go?" Her tone was as cool as the queen's.

"I have decided all that. I have had Montague house at Blackheath freshly decorated. It is a very attractive place. You may have plenty of servants and an adequate allowance for all your needs. Your Brunswick lady-in-waiting, Charlotte Sanders, is to accompany you and you are also to have full control of your baby, Charlotte—for a while, at least."

Early the next day Caroline received a brief note from the prince. Repeating what his mother had said, he added:

"We are not responsible for our affections, and our inclinations are not in our power. Nature has not made us suited. I shall never treat you as my wife again. I intend to live my life as if I were a free man and I extend to you the same privilege. Please act accordingly."

Caroline wept when she read the letter. It was not long, however, before she resolutely dried her



Caroline of Brunswick-Wolfenbuettel, legal wife of George IV, and uncrowned queen of England.

lady-in-waiting she had brought with her from Brunswick.

She did not suspect that spies had been craftily planted around her, nor picture the welter of scandal into which she was to be plunged.

She confided to Charlotte Sanders at last she was going to carry out some long cherished dreams. "I've got to keep busy," she said. "I was never made for an idle life. I'm going to start by adopting small boys."

She proceeded to carry out this plan and it was only a few years before she had some ten or twelve half-adopted little boys and was bringing them up carefully and affectionately, as if they were her own children.

It was this passion of Caroline's for children which gave George his bright idea.

"I've some news for you which I think you'll relish," the duke of Sussex said to him one day when they were resting after a particularly exciting chase. "I was talking with a Lady Douglas the other day. She is a former neighbor and friend of your wife. She regaled me with bits of amazing gossip." He nudged George slyly.

"About Caroline?" George's eyes brightened. He had been much put out of late with his servants at Blackheath. Either they had been stupidly blind and unable to detect signs of any secret amours, or Caroline was somehow managing to live along without any men in her life. This he doubted.

"About Caroline," grinned the duke. "Here it is, as I recall it. Lady Douglas will be delighted to refresh my memory, if you wish. In 1802 your princess adopted a baby, William Austin, she calls him. It is her own baby. Lady Douglas is sure of that. Caroline practically told her as much upon several occasions. She appears to idolize the child and won't let him out of her sight."

"Will this Lady Douglas testify

Cast Aside and Made a Target for Plots

to that?" roared the prince, jumping to his feet and pacing excitedly up and down the turf. "Will she swear to that?"

"She will," the duke assured him. "More than that, her husband will tell the same story."

"Does Lady Douglas know anything else that might prove of value to us?" George asked.

"Plenty," chuckled the duke. "The things which go on under cover of darkness at Blackheath are positively shocking. All you need do is to ask your men, Bidgood and Cole. Make them tell you what they know of the painter, Thomas Lawrence, who spends days and nights at Montague house, presumably painting your wife's portrait." He laughed significantly. "Ask them about Sir Sidney Smith, who steals across the park on moonless nights in his great black coat. Have them tell you what they know of Captain Manby, whom she keeps close to her on the pretext of helping her

Sir Sidney and Captain Manby.

Caroline was dumfounded by all this and aroused to the point of trying to obtain an audience with the king. She was told by Queen Charlotte that the king was too indisposed to see anyone. Caroline was denied admittance to his rooms. She sat down and wrote him a long and passionate letter of protest, declaring her innocence and begging his protection. If the case came to trial, the letter was never delivered to him.

Weeks passed and Caroline's apprehension deepened. She did learn that the prince was assembling his witnesses and sparing no cost.

For some time little Charlotte had been living at Shrewsbury, for better education and training than Caroline could give her—at least such had been the queen's alleged reasons for removing the child from under her mother's roof. Caroline had been seeing the child, however, several times a week. Now she received a letter saying that, until certain matters were decided, it was deemed best for every one that Charlotte discontinue her visits to Blackheath, and that the princess refrain from any visits to Shrewsbury. Caroline was at last keenly aware of the danger of her position.

With Charlotte Sanders she checked over the people who surely must testify in her defense. "There's Mary Ann Austin. She won't desert me. 'Twas she who brought little William to Montague house when he was only three weeks old. She knows Sophia Austin, his real mother, very well." She paused thoughtfully.

"There's Thomas Stikeman; he's been my page since the day I reached London. He was the first person at Blackheath to set eyes on little William. . . ."

Another pause, then: "They will convince the judges that I'm not the lad's mother. And they will deny those other charges, too—that I have had affairs with half a hundred men who have visited me in my home. . . ."

"I will make a good impression on the judges when I talk to them. They are clever men and will be able to detect who is lying and who is telling the truth."

More weeks passed and still the investigation was delayed.

It was not until June 6, 1806, the day before the investigation was to start in the private chambers at Windsor castle, that the princess received her deadliest blow.

She was not to be allowed to testify in her own defense! She was not even to be permitted to attend the trial!

Caroline staggered under this last stroke, and for the first time in her life her Brunswick courage almost deserted her. Only now did she understand fully what schemes were afoot and what the penalties if the charges against her were proved.

She was to be tried for high treason! Should she be convicted of high treason, in the crime of adultery, there was no limit to the punishment George might demand.

But aside from that, a thousand times worse than any manner of revenge he might select, was the horrifying thought of her child. If George had his way and the verdict went against her, she would never be allowed to see her child again!

In next week's instalment is told the story of Caroline's trial, and the astounding verdict.



George IV, while he still was the prince of Wales.