

WAS QUEEN ELIZABETH A "FAMOUS IMPOSTOR"?

Mr. Bram Stoker Brings Together Some of the Notable "Frauds" of History in Proof of His Theory That "Good Queen Bess" Was a Man.

Mary Howard Duchess of Richmond, Supposititious Mother of Queen Elizabeth. Arthur Orton, Illiterate Son of a Butcher, Who Claimed to be the Heir to the Tichborne Millions.



Chevalier D'Eon, Noted French Diplomat and Soldier of the 18th Century, Who Frequently Donned Feminine Garb.

THAT "Good Queen Bess" was not of the blood royal, that bluff King Henry and his ill-fated Queen Anne Boleyn had no part in her, that she was a chameleon, and more startling than all—that "she" was not a woman but "a great big lubberly boy," is the latest historical theory, as propounded by Mr. Bram Stoker in his new book, "Famous Impostors," which will be published shortly by the Sturgis & Walton Company. Moreover, in elaborating this theory Mr. Stoker is not indulging—consciously at least—in any mere romance; he is not giving us a new "Dracula," but a serious interpretation of certain historical facts, backed up by documents and "evidence," of a sort, from all of which it appears that, whether his readers follow him or not, Mr. Stoker, for one, believes that Elizabeth, in spite of her little flirtations with Leicester, Essex, and the rest of them, was a man forced by a cruel fate to masquerade as a woman.

To this grand imposture of history Mr. Stoker leads up dramatically by recounting authentic cases of other impostors, some of them similar to that of Elizabeth, others having been something more susceptible of proof. One of these possibilities is that this "boy" was the acknowledged son of Henry Fitzroy, Duke of Richmond and natural son of Henry VIII. Had that been the case this masculine Elizabeth would have still been the direct descendant of her supposed father. And a further development of this theory is that the mother of this Elizabeth was Mary Howard, afterward Duchess of Richmond, the child being the fruit of "some ante-matrimonial liaison of which, as yet, we know nothing."

Mr. Stoker does not claim that there is proof of this parentage of his "Bisley boy," but advances it merely as a possibility, there having been something "mysterious" apparently in the marital relations of the Duke and Duchess of Richmond. Such a descent, too, would explain some of the physical peculiarities of Elizabeth—her "being of distinctly blonde type (Anne Boleyn was a brunette) her vigorous intellect and her imperious disposition—all of which might have come by descent from one or both of the Richmonds. Be that as it may, there is the tradition of the death of the real Elizabeth and of the substitution in her stead of a male child of unknown parentage. And if this tradition is not susceptible of positive proof, there are at least corroborating circumstances, according to Mr. Stoker, that bring it into the realm of the possible.

One of the most surprising cases in history of a man masquerading as a woman is that of the Chevalier D'Eon, a noted diplomat and favorite of King Louis XV. He spoke of himself as "citizen of the New Republic of France, and of the old Republic of Literature." He wrote to the Count de Maurepas, "although I detest changes of costume, yet they are hard at work at Mlle. Bertin's on my future and doleful dress, which, however, I shall cut in pieces at the first sound of the cannon shots."

The Chevalier lived to the age of 80, and although there is now no doubt as to his being a man, and a brave one at that, his periodical lapses into feminine apparel made him ever an object of controversy, and sometimes of obloquy, with his contemporaries.

King Edward IV. of England, Whose Strong Resemblance to Perkin Warbeck Helped the Latter's Claim to the Throne in Henry VIII's Reign.

fixed places in the great world and in the social life of their own neighborhood. As to the identity of the "boy" who passed through life as Queen Elizabeth, Mr. Stoker advances several possibilities, none of which, however, are "as yet" susceptible of proof. One of these possibilities is that this "boy" was the acknowledged son of Henry Fitzroy, Duke of Richmond and natural son of Henry VIII. Had that been the case this masculine Elizabeth would have still been the direct descendant of her supposed father. And a further development of this theory is that the mother of this Elizabeth was Mary Howard, afterward Duchess of Richmond, the child being the fruit of "some ante-matrimonial liaison of which, as yet, we know nothing."

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(Photographs from "Famous Impostors," by Courtesy of Sturgis & Walton Co.)



"Count" Cagliostro, the Famous "Wonder-Worker" of the 18th Century.

Few people realize that Gaudier's "Mademoiselle de Maupin" had a real person for a heroine, an opera singer in Paris, married at an early age to a man named Maupin, at the end of the seventeenth century. From her lover, for she acquired a lover, who was a notable fencer, soon after her marriage she learned proficiency as a swordsman, and apparently from this circumstance, conceived the idea of passing through life thenceforth as a man. In this assumed rôle she gained the affections of the daughter of a rich Marseilles merchant and ran away with her. Upon their being pursued, she sought refuge in a convent, where they remained in safety for a few days. While they were there one of the nuns died. In order to get the girl with whom she had run away out of the convent without detection, La Maupin substituted her for the dead body of the nun, which was then awaiting burial, and by this means eluded the pursuit of the irate father and succeeded in landing her victim in a neighboring village, first setting fire to the convent in order to cover up her departure. She was captured several weeks after, not without displaying her skill as a swordsman to good effect, killing and wounding several of her pursuers. La Maupin was condemned, to the stake, as a result of this escapade, but succeeded, by practicing various feminine wiles, in making her escape and returned to Paris in 1695. There she "entered on a course of violence which became a habit."

For some years she flourished and exercised all the tyrannies of her own sex, and in addition those habitual to men, which came from expert use of the sword. Thus, she went attired as a man to a ball given by a Prince of the blood, in that garb she treated a fellow-guest, a woman, with indecency; and she was

challenged by three different men—each of whom, when the consequent fight came, she ran through the body, after which she returned to the ball. Shortly afterward she fought and wounded a man, M. de Servan, who had affronted a woman. For these escapades she was again pardoned.



Mrs. ("Princess") Olive Serres, Who Claimed the British Throne on the Ground of Her Alleged Descent from the Duke of Cumberland, King George III's Brother.

herents, among them King James IV. of Scotland, who married him to his kinswoman. He was finally defeated by King Henry VII. in his attempted rebellion and was hung at Tyburn in 1499.

One of the most famous impostors of modern times cited at length by Mr. Stoker occurred in the last century—the Tichborne case, in which Arthur Orton, who died only twelve years ago—the illiterate son of a butcher, was the central figure. The story reads like the veriest romance of the professional maker of fiction, and at this day it seems hard to believe that so unpromising a man as Orton could have "divided England for years into two great parties"—those who believed in him and those who did not.

On the 21st of March, 1853, Roger Tichborne, heir to the ancient house of Tichborne, set sail from Havre for Valparaiso. For over a year he traveled in South America, and then, on the 20th of April, 1854, he sailed on the "Bella for Jamaica. But from the day that the Bella left port "no one ever set eyes upon her—excepting that six days after she left harbor a ship traversing her path found, amongst other ominous tokens of a wreck, a capsize longboat bearing the name "Bella, Liverpool." Search was made by the Tichbornes in the desperate hope that Roger might have been picked up by some passing vessel, but no hint of any such rescue could be discovered and Roger's relatives gave him up for lost—except his mother, who persisted in the belief that her son was living and would sooner or later be brought back to her.

After the death of Roger's father, Sir James Tichborne, Lady Tichborne advertised for the lost heir. This was eleven years after the wreck of the Bella, and as a result of her efforts she learned through a Sydney agency that a man answering to Roger's description had been found in New South Wales. This man proved to be Arthur Orton, who finding Lady Tichborne eager to identify him as her son, left New South Wales, having first mastered many of the details of the Tichborne family history, from an old negro retainer of the latter with whom he came in contact.



"The Bisley Boy," Known to History as Queen Elizabeth.

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He met Lady Tichborne in Paris. Their first interview took place in his hotel bedroom, on a dark January afternoon, Orton being ill at the time. "The deluded woman professed to recognize him at once, and although he confessed everything in their subsequent conversation, she accepted him as her son and allowed him £1,000 a year for the support of himself, his wife and children. "It did not weigh with her that the rest of the family unanimously declared him to be an impostor, nor that he failed to recognize them, or to recall any incident in Roger's life."

Four years after this Orton brought suit to eject Sir Alfred Tichborne, the positivist son of Roger's younger brother, and at the first trial succeeded in producing over one hundred witnesses "who, on oath, identified him as Roger Tichborne; while there were only seventeen witnesses who appeared against him. The trial, lasting 102 days, was lost, to Orton who declared afterward that "he would have won if only he could have kept his mouth shut."

It was not until a subsequent trial, lasting 188 days, in 1874, that a final verdict was brought against Orton, who was sentenced to fourteen years' penal servitude for the fraud he had perpetrated.