

NOTES AND QUERIES
HIGH WYCOMBE,
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(pages 31-32)

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Margaret Nicholson (clvi. 388, 431, 450).—In *The New Wonderful Magazine*, Vol. ii. P. 478 (ca. 1850), there is a longish account of this unfortunate's attempt upon the life of George III. The narrative begins: —

On the morning of the day above mentioned [Aug. 2nd, 1786], as the King was alighting from his carriage, at the gate of St. James's Palace, a woman who had been waiting about for some time, under pretence of presenting a petition, struck at his majesty with a knife, but without doing any positive injury. As she was making a second thrust, she was seized by one of the attendant yeomen, and at the same instant one of the King's footmen wrenched the knife from her grasp. The King, with great firmness and with little or no hesitation, exclaimed "I am not hurt—take care of the poor woman; do not hurt her!"

There follows her examination, which of course, conclusively proved her insanity; her madness being a compound of paranoia and megalomania. The narrative concludes: —

The result was an order to confine the prisoner for life; to be supported and taken care of, in case of sickness, but while in health to be kept at work, or whatever employment she might be found capable of, in order to earn her own subsistence.

The prisoner was at once taken to Bethlehem, accompanied by Mrs. Coates, [wife of the King's Messenger, at whose house she was lodged after the attempt], another lady, and a nurse. The coach in which she was to be taken, having been driven up to the door, she was informed that they were going out on a party of pleasure, and asked to accompany them, to which she at once assented.

He talked cheerfully enough on the road, but upon arriving against the wall of Bethlehem, she at

once became thoughtful, and observed, that she knew where they were carrying her. After she had entered the place, she promised Mr. Coates that she would make herself as contented as she could. She was taken into a cell that had been previously fitted up for her, and there a chain was put round her leg, and fastened to the floor, an operation to which she submitted without murmuring. She remained an inmate of this place, until the 28th of May, 1826, on which day she died, nearly 100 years of age. She had been confined for 42 years.

Something is wrong here, clearly, as to dates, for the time of her imprisonment, according to the account, was just under forty years.

There is a wood-engraving at the close of the history, showing poor Margaret in the act of attempting to stab His Majesty, who stands dignified and argumentatively unconcerned, as though asking his assailant, who is being restrained by an attendant, not to be so violent.

It was artistically (if unconsciously) appropriate of the juvenile Shelley to call his second pamphlet of verse (1810), which belongs to the Monk Lewis-Rattletrap school of art, 'Posthumous Fragments of Margaret Nicholson.'

Victor B. Neuburg.

Two Epitaphs By Dean Swift (clvi. 442). —Neither of the epitaphs quoted by Mr. J. B. McGovern "tastes" to me like genuine Swift, and neither can I find in that author's works. I feel certain that their attribution to the versatile Dean is unjustified.

The second epitaph is given by H. E. Norfolk on p. 70 of his 'Gleanings in Graveyards' (London, 1861); it is said to be in the Church of St. Dunstan, Middlesex, presumably meaning St. Dunstan's, Stepney. Norfolk's version runs thus: —

Here lies Dame Dorothy Peg.
Who never had issue except in her leg.
So great was her art, and so deep was her cunning.
Whilst one leg stood still the other kept running.

No date is given.

V. B. Neuburg.