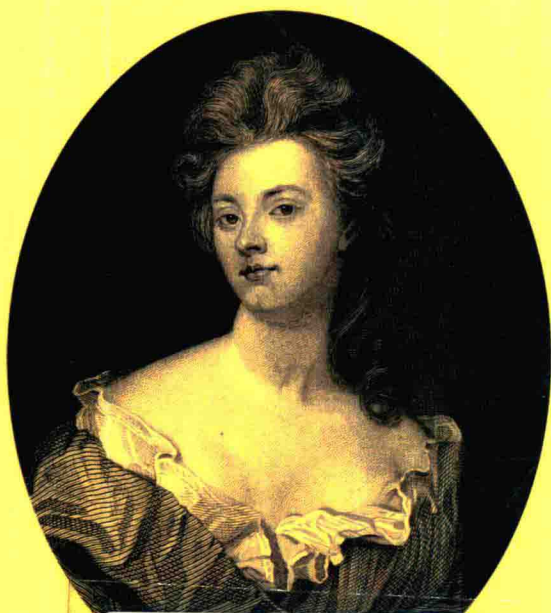


CAMBRIDGE LIBRARY COLLECTION

MEMOIRS OF EMINENT ENGLISHWOMEN

VOLUME 4

LOUISA STUART COSTELLO



CAMBRIDGE

Memoirs of Eminent Englishwomen

VOLUME 4

LOUISA STUART COSTELLO



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore,
São Paulo, Delhi, Dubai, Tokyo

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108019910

© in this compilation Cambridge University Press 2010

This edition first published 1844
This digitally printed version 2010

ISBN 978-1-108-01991-0 Paperback

This book reproduces the text of the original edition. The content and language reflect the beliefs, practices and terminology of their time, and have not been updated.

Cambridge University Press wishes to make clear that the book, unless originally published by Cambridge, is not being republished by, in association or collaboration with, or with the endorsement or approval of, the original publisher or its successors in title.



CAMBRIDGE LIBRARY COLLECTION

Books of enduring scholarly value

Women's Writing

The later twentieth century saw a huge wave of academic interest in women's writing, which led to the rediscovery of neglected works from a wide range of genres, periods and languages. Many books that were immensely popular and influential in their own day are now studied again, both for their own sake and for what they reveal about the social, political and cultural conditions of their time. A pioneering resource in this area is Orlando: Women's Writing in the British Isles from the Beginnings to the Present (<http://orlando.cambridge.org>), which provides entries on authors' lives and writing careers, contextual material, timelines, sets of internal links, and bibliographies. Its editors have made a major contribution to the selection of the works reissued in this series within the Cambridge Library Collection, which focuses on non-fiction publications by women on a wide range of subjects from astronomy to biography, music to political economy, and education to prison reform.

Memoirs of Eminent Englishwomen

Louisa Stuart Costello (1799–1870) was a poet and artist who supported her family with her paintings. As well as writing a number of historical novels, Costello researched and wrote the biographies of many prominent women, using their letters and diaries to tell their extraordinary stories. This fourth volume chronicles the lives of two women; politician and courtier Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, and poet and satirist Lady Mary Montagu Wortley. Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, was the close confidante of Queen Anne, and her memoirs offer a detailed picture of the rise and decline of the long friendship between two women at the centre of political life. Lady Mary was an intrepid traveller, an early advocate of inoculation for smallpox, and a feminist poet who had a bitter feud with Alexander Pope. For more information on this author, see http://orlando.cambridge.org/public/svPeople?person_id=costlo

Cambridge University Press has long been a pioneer in the reissuing of out-of-print titles from its own backlist, producing digital reprints of books that are still sought after by scholars and students but could not be reprinted economically using traditional technology. The Cambridge Library Collection extends this activity to a wider range of books which are still of importance to researchers and professionals, either for the source material they contain, or as landmarks in the history of their academic discipline.

Drawing from the world-renowned collections in the Cambridge University Library, and guided by the advice of experts in each subject area, Cambridge University Press is using state-of-the-art scanning machines in its own Printing House to capture the content of each book selected for inclusion. The files are processed to give a consistently clear, crisp image, and the books finished to the high quality standard for which the Press is recognised around the world. The latest print-on-demand technology ensures that the books will remain available indefinitely, and that orders for single or multiple copies can quickly be supplied.

The Cambridge Library Collection will bring back to life books of enduring scholarly value (including out-of-copyright works originally issued by other publishers) across a wide range of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences and in science and technology.



G. Cooke sculp.

SARAH,
Duchess of Marlborough.

FROM AN ORIGINAL PORTRAIT BY SIR GODFREY KNELLER. IN THE GALLERY AT ALTHORP

MEMOIRS
OF
EMINENT ENGLISHWOMEN.

BY
LOUISA STUART COSTELLO,

AUTHOR OF

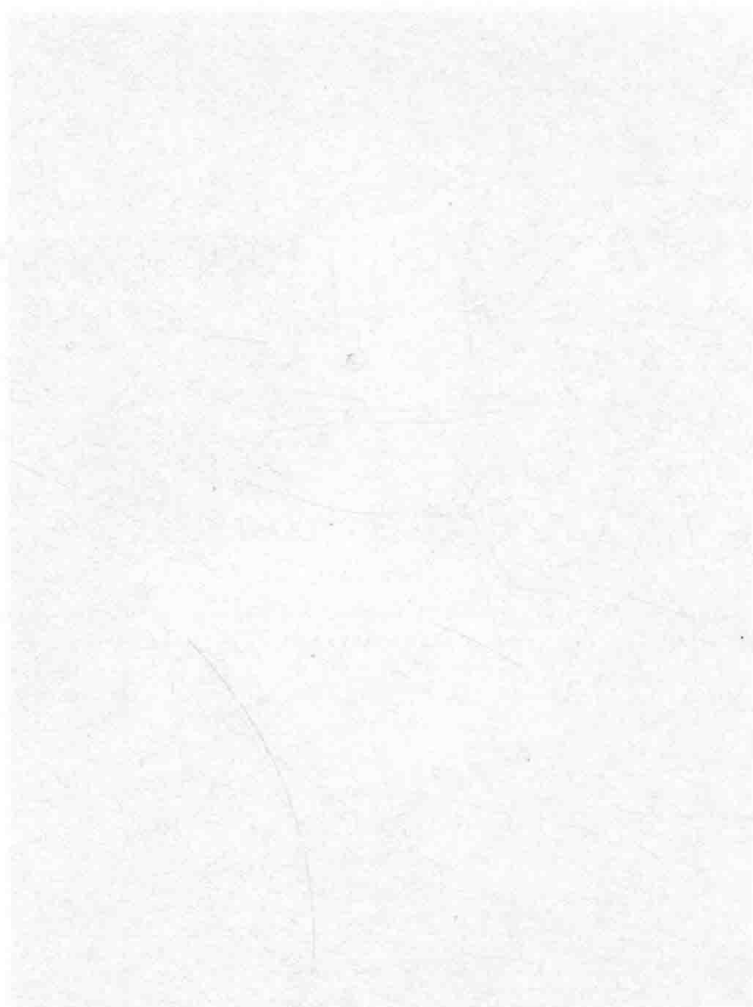
"SPECIMENS OF THE EARLY POETRY OF FRANCE," "A SUMMER AMONGST THE BOCAGES
AND THE VINES," "A PILGRIMAGE TO AUVERGNE," "THE QUEEN MOTHER,"
ETC. ETC. ETC.

VOL. IV.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET,
Publisher in Ordinary to Her Majesty.

1844.

MEMOIR



LONDON:

R. CLAY, PRINTER, BREAD STREET HILL.

CONTENTS OF THE FOURTH VOLUME.

	PAGE
SARAH, DUCHESS OF MARLBOROUGH	1
LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU	231

LIST OF PORTRAITS.

SARAH, DUCHESS OF MARLBOROUGH	<i>to face Title.</i>
LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU	231

MEMOIRS
OF
EMINENT ENGLISHWOMEN.

SARAH, DUCHESS OF MARLBOROUGH.

SARAH JENNINGS, wife of the great captain and hero of the time of Queen Anne, was the most remarkable woman of her own, or perhaps of any, age : for a series of years, by her wisdom, spirit, promptness, and genius, her fearlessness and acuteness, she directed the affairs of state, and conducted to the prosperity of the kingdom, which she might, in fact, be said to govern, as she was assuredly more queen than the weak sovereign who sat on the throne, and who, as long as she depended on her illustrious favourite, was crowned, through her means, with fame and glory. Queen Anne is only another instance of the caprice and ingratitude of princes ; for, after a life of obligation to that chosen friend of her youth, she cast her off for a contemptible parasite,

merely to indulge her mean propensity for gossip and scandal, and thus escape the thralldom which good sense and judgment oppose to obstinacy and imbecility: careless of her kingdom's weal, and selfishly bent on her own childish gratification, which could be content to

“Hide from the radiant sun, and solace
I' the dungeon by a snuff.”

The Duchess of Marlborough's family, though not noble, were of gentle lineage, and though her numerous enemies meanly endeavoured to throw contempt upon her birth, there is no doubt of the respectable position in which both her father and mother stood. Her grandfather, Sir John Jennings, received the order of the Bath at the same time as the Prince of Wales, afterwards Charles I., and his family were held in much esteem by the Stuarts. Her father was a country gentleman of good estate at Sandridge, in Hertfordshire, near St. Albans: her mother was Frances Thornhurst, daughter of Sir Gifford Thornhurst, of Agnes Court, in Kent, and his heiress.

Sarah,* the future political heroine of her age, (the “viceroy,” as she was called,) was born on the 29th May, 1660, at Holywell, a suburb of St. Albans, in a small house not far from the spot where

* See Mrs. Thomson's admirable *Memoirs of the Duchess of Marlborough*, which has furnished many particulars of this biography.

the Duke of Marlborough afterwards built a splendid seat. Of the five children of her parents she survived all except the Duchess of Tyrconnel, her sister. It was this sister whom she succeeded in the post of lady of honour to the Duchess of York, or rather she remained about the court as an attendant and playmate of the young Princess Anne, between whom and herself there sprung up an intimacy and friendship which lasted many years, and which, it is to be regretted, did not continue to the end.

When John Churchill, afterwards Duke of Marlborough, was appointed gentleman of the bed-chamber to the Duke of York, he was esteemed one of the handsomest, most attractive gentlemen of the day—amiable, interesting, and refined. He had entered the army at sixteen, and was already distinguished for his gallantry in the field at the time he became a member of the duke's household, when he had reached his twenty-fourth year. The famous Marshal Turenne had been attracted by his courage, and was in the habit of naming him the "handsome Englishman." The marshal is said to have laid a wager, which he won, on the subject of Churchill's gallantry, on the occasion of a station of importance having been abandoned by one of his own officers. "I will bet a supper and a dozen of claret," said he, "that my handsome Englishman will recover the post with half the number of men commanded by the officer who has lost it." The event justified

the general's opinion. Lord Chesterfield, no mean judge, declared that the grace and fascination of manner of young Churchill was such that he was "irresistible either by man or woman."

That arbiter of elegance and good-breeding also adds, that so dignified was his deportment, that no one ever said a pert thing to him. But, at the same time, it is somewhat startling to learn, from this source, that this charming personage was "eminently illiterate, wrote very bad English, and spelt it worse; had no share in what is commonly called parts, had no brightness, and nothing shining in his genius."

This was by no means unlikely to be the case either in France or England at this period, when young men entered the army at almost a childish age, having been allowed no time for education, and elegance of manners amply supplying, in the opinion of the court, all more solid acquirements. It might have been supposed that a woman possessing such a superior mind as Sarah Jennings, would have, however, required in a suitor something more than mere external accomplishments; but she was, at the time they first met, very young, and probably her own education had been conducted upon a plan rather calculated for display than otherwise, although it is recorded that her mother bestowed great care on her early instruction. However this might be,

"Beauty has such resistless power,"

that the young soldier, who in the dances and revels

of the court was said so much to excel that "every step he took carried death with it," eclipsed in the heart of the youthful Sarah all other gallants, and for him she rejected "the star and ornament of the court," the admired Earl of Lindsay, afterwards Marquis of Ancaster.

But the lovers, though rich in beauty and affection, were poor in the world's goods, and their union held out little prospect which prudence should have induced them to seek.

The young Duchess of York, who was made the confidant of the attachment, stood their friend on this occasion, and offered her powerful assistance. Their engagement lasted three years, and its progress was not without those shades of vexation which usual attend on the "course of true love." The young lady, whose temper and disposition were always somewhat decided and imperious, was occasionally visited with fits of spleen and jealousy, and once had nearly broken off the connexion, on hearing that Churchill's parents desired that he should form a marriage with a richer rival. She wrote a severe letter to her lover, and entreated him "to renounce an attachment which militated against his worldly prospects;" and professed her intention to quit England and reside with the Countess of Hamilton, her sister, in Paris, and endeavour to forget that she had ever desired to be his wife. As is usual in these cases, where real regard exists, an outburst of this nature only cemented the attach-

ment closer, and the lovers were reconciled, to become more resolved than ever to live for each other alone.

They were married in 1678, but in secret, none but the Duchess of York being privy to the fact. A letter is preserved from the Duke of Marlborough of this date, from Brussels, which he addressed to her as Miss Jennings, and on it she has herself written :

“I believe I was married when this was written, but it was not known to any but the duchess.”

A few months afterwards, however, they avowed the truth ; but their prospects of domestic happiness were, in consequence of the troubled state of the times, not likely to be good : frequent and necessary absences divided the young soldier from his bride, and she had only the consolation of receiving such letters as the following, which assured her of his constant affection :—

“Brussels, April 12.

“I writ to you from Antwerp, which I hope you have received before now, for I should be glad you should hear from me by every post. I met with some difficulties in my business with the Prince of Orange, so that I was forced to write to England, which will cause me to be two or three days longer abroad than I should have been. But because I would lose no time, I despatch all other things in the mean time, for I do, with all my heart

and soul, long to be with you, you being dearer to me than my own life. On Sunday morning I shall leave this place, so that on Monday night I shall be at Breda, where the Prince and Princess of Orange are, and from hence you shall be sure to hear from me again ; till then, my soul's soul, farewell."

After a period of some anxiety, occasioned by unavoidable separation, Mrs. Churchill and her husband, both attached to the service of the Duke and Duchess of York, accompanied the royal pair to the Hague and to Brussels. No great political events had at this time called forth the power of character which lay dormant in the bosom of the future directress of her Queen, the young princess, whose life glided on at this epoch with little to mark its importance. Colonel and Mrs. Churchill followed for some years the fortunes of the little less than exiled brother of Charles II., who, for a variety of reasons, he did not desire to see in England ; but it was on the return of the Duchess of York, in 1681, to London, that Mrs. Churchill's first daughter was born, an event which is thus alluded to in a letter from her absent husband :—

"I writ to you last night by the express, and since that I have no good news to send you * * * the only comfort I had here was hearing from you ; and now, if we should be stopped by contrary winds, and not hear from you, you may guess with what satisfaction I should pass my time : therefore,

as you love me, you will pray for fair winds, that we may not stay here, nor be long at sea.

“I hope all the red spots of our child will be gone against I see her, and her nose strait: so that I may fancy it to be like the mother, for she has your coloured hair. I would have her to be like you in all things else.”

The aspirations of Colonel, now Baron Churchill, of retiring with his wife from public life, and enjoying in retirement the domestic felicity which always seemed to be the object of his desire, were not destined to be realized, and, much to his vexation, he was compelled to continue in a career which his patron, the Duke of York, felt to be so necessary for his interests. What the wish of his young, beautiful, and ambitious wife might be at this juncture does not appear; for, with her sagacity, it does not seem unlikely that she foresaw the probability of her friend and companion, the Princess Anne, becoming hereafter the object of her country's hope; and, at any rate, of her holding a position in the kingdom which would enable her to advance those who had really served and been attached to her. Not that selfish motives in general actuated the mind of Lady Churchill: she was ambitious of her country's glory, and, it was likely, felt little inclination to desert a post from whence she could watch interests dear to her. Her friendship for the Princess Anne grew with their growth: