

Classic Poetry Series

Elizabeth Carew
- poems -

Publication Date:
2012

Publisher:
Poemhunter.com - The World's Poetry Archive

Elizabeth Carew(1500 - ?)

Elizabeth, Lady Carew (born around 1500) was an English courtier during the reign of Henry VIII. Her husband was Henry VIII's close friend Sir Nicholas Carew, an influential statesman who was eventually executed for criticising the king. She was possibly a mistress of Henry VIII.

Biography

Lady Carew had been raised at court because her parents, Sir Thomas and Lady Margaret Bryan, both held offices in the royal household. Her brother, Sir Francis, was a member of the Privy Chamber and one of the king's closest friends. In the early, halcyon days of the reign, Elizabeth and her future husband were members of the king's inner social circle and performed regularly in the masques and dances that were among his favorite pastimes. Henry almost certainly arranged their marriage: he attended their wedding and endowed them with a gift of 50 marks' worth of land. In those years, the king showered Lady Carew with "beautiful diamonds and pearls and innumerable jewels."

She was a second cousin of both Anne Boleyn and Jane Seymour, which increased her standing at court. Her only brother was Sir Francis Bryan, called "the Vicar of Hell" for his lack of principles. She is said to have been friends with Bessie Blount, Henry's mistress who produced an illegitimate son in 1519.

In 1514, there were rumors that Elizabeth Carew was the mistress of Henry VIII, although it may have been his brother-in-law, Charles Brandon, 1st Duke of Suffolk who was the object of her affection. The king made huge presents to her over the years, including royal jewels.

Her children with Nicholas Carew were:

- * Anne Carew (about 1520 – 1581)
 - o Married the diplomat Nicholas Throckmorton.
 - o Their daughter Elizabeth married Sir Walter Raleigh.

- * Sir Francis Carew of Beddington (1530 – 1611)
 - o Was restored to Nicholas' estates, though he preferred to stay out of politics.
 - o Unmarried. Adopted his nephew, Nicholas Throckmorton, who adopted his name.

- * Mary Carew (born about 1520)
 - o Married Sir Arthur Darcy.
 - o They had ten sons and five daughters.

* Elizabeth Carew

- * Isabel Carew (born about 1530)
 - o Married Nicholas Saunders. They had three sons and four daughters.

Sir Nicholas was executed for his alleged involvement in the Exeter Conspiracy in 1540, leaving Elizabeth and the children destitute.

Revenge Of Injuries

The fairest action of our human life
Is scorning to revenge an injury;
For who forgives without a further strife,
His adversary's heart to him doth tie.
And 'tis a firmer conquest truly said,
To win the heart, than overthrow the head.

If we a worthy enemy do find,
To yield to worth it must be nobly done;
But if of baser metal be his mind,
In base revenge there is no honour won.
Who would a worthy courage overthrow?
And who would wrestle with a worthless foe?

We say our hearts are great, and cannot yield;
Because they cannot yield, it proves them poor:
Great hearts are task'd beyond their power but seld
The weakest lion will the loudest roar.
Truth's school for certain doth this same allow,
High-heartedness doth sometimes teach to bow.

A noble heart doth teach a virtuous scorn -
To scorn to owe a duty over long;
To scorn to lie, to scorn to do a wrong;
To scorn to bear an injury in mind;
To scorn a freeborn heart slave-like to bind.

But if for wrongs we needs revenge must have,
Then be our vengeance of the noblest kind;
Do we his body from our fury save,
And let our hate prevail against our mind:
What can 'gainst him a greater vengeance be,
Than make his foe more worthy far than he?

Elizabeth Carew