

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Family dissensions—Conduct of the war with France.—Suspensions of Lancaster.—Scots and Frenchmen cross the Border.—Projected invasion of England by France.—Disputes of the king and the parliament.—Commission of Regency.—Secret Council of the king.—Gloucester and other nobles take arms.—The King's advisers declared traitors.—Battle of Otterbourne.—Richard assumes the government.—Truce with France and Scotland.—Richard in Ireland.—His marriage with Isabella of France.—The king becomes despotic.—*Coup d'Etat*.—Murder of Gloucester.—Quarrel of Hereford and Norfolk.—Their banishment.—Wretched condition of the country.—Death of John of Gaunt.—Richard seizes his possessions.—The king goes to Ireland.—Henry of Lancaster lands at Ravenspur.—Betrayal of Richard by the Percies.—A Parliament called.—Richard's deposition.—Henry claims the kingdom.

THE political intrigues of the reign of Richard II. are so complicated, and have been so obscurely related, that, from the first days of his accession, when John of Gaunt, in parliament, indignantly repelled some vague accusations against himself of designs upon the throne, till, twenty-two years afterwards, the king was deposed by the son of the same John of Gaunt, we are walking in a labyrinth of family quarrels, accompanied with a more than usual amount of hatred and dissimulation. At the age of twelve Richard was placed on the throne. For ten years he had little share in the government, though he was put forward, as in the instance of the insurrection of 1381, to act in his personal character of king. In 1382 he married Anne of Bohemia, a prudent and amiable princess, who restrained many of the impulses of his levity and fitful passions. But he surrounded himself with favourite ministers, who evidently fomented the jealousy which he constantly felt of his uncles. John, the duke of Lancaster, appears to have possessed many of the high qualities of a statesman—prudent, but not an enemy to improvement—generous without prodigality—having great wealth and influence, but not employing his power in any proved disloyalty to his royal nephew. Thomas, the duke of Gloucester, was less scrupulous in the modes by which he controlled the immature king; and the early impatience of Richard under his stern tutelage, and the cherished hatreds of his adult age, were at last terminated by open hostility and secret murder. During the twenty-two years in which Richard bore the name of king, for

one-half of the period he was an unwilling puppet in the hands of austere guardians; and when he broke loose from their authority in the second half of his reign, he had been so long controlled by others that he had never acquired the power of self-control; and thus, with many qualities which might have made him respected in any other position, he became a tyrant without the force of character that makes tyranny successful, and perished through the consequences of his own violence and rashness.

The war with France was feebly conducted, previous to a short truce in 1384. Henry Spenser, the bishop of Norwich, led an expedition into Flanders in 1383, ostensibly for a crusade against the pretensions to the papacy of Clement, a Frenchman. The expedition was, in reality, to support the Flemings in that resistance to the government of their duke which, in the previous year, had received such a check by the intervention of France. The Italian Pope, Urban VI., was supported by England, and by the Flemings and German States. Part of the cost of this adventure was voted by parliament; part was raised by voluntary contributions. Had this expedition given assistance to the burghers of Bruges and Ghent and Ypres, before the fall of their great leader Philip Artevelde at the battle of Rosebecque, the democratic cause might have had a different issue. The martial bishop took Gravelines and Dunkirk, and defeated the forces of the count of Flanders; but the French again crossed the frontier, and the bishop fled to England, to be censured in parliament and fined, for having failed in this partisan warfare. In that year, Richard proposed a measure for the conclusion of the war with France, which gives to this great quarrel an air of the ludicrous, ill-assorting with the miseries which it brought upon both countries. The king of England was seventeen years of age. There is a letter in the public records from Richard to the duke of Lancaster, in which he gravely proposes that the quarrel between England and France should be determined by a single combat between himself and the French king, Charles VI., who was then in his fifteenth year. It does not appear that John of Gaunt gave any encouragement to this precocious heroism. He concluded the truce with France in 1384, in which Scotland was comprehended. But the Scots refused to desist from warfare, and the duke led an army across the border, burning towns and cutting down forests. On his return to England he was again assailed by suspicions of disloyalty. A Carmelite friar put into the hands of Richard a paper, professing to disclose a conspir-

acy to deprive him of his crown, and give the kingdom to his uncle, Lancaster maintained his innocence, and demanded that the slanderer should be committed to safe custody. Sir John Holland, the king's half-brother, undertook the charge; and the next day the friar was found dead—strangled, it was said, by his knightly keeper. Whether he was put out of the way to prevent disclosures against Lancaster, or to conceal the treachery which he had been suborned to make a false accusation, is one of the mysteries of this obscure period. The young king now began to exhibit that dissimulation which subsequently he was too ready to exercise. He professed his complete satisfaction; and Lancaster went abroad to obtain a prolongation of the truce with France. Preparations were made to arrest him on his return; but he secured himself in his castle of Pontefract. The storm blew over for a time. France had sent men-at-arms into Scotland, and had advanced a large sum of money to induce the Scots to invade England. In Froissart's relation of these circumstances there are many curious details of the state of Scotland. The French expedition was commanded by Sir John de Vienne. At Edinburgh the Frenchmen waited for the king of the Scots, who was in "the wyld Scottysche" (the Highlands). They were lodged about in the villages, for in the town there were not four thousand houses. Their aid was not popular, for the people cried, "We can do without their help. What devil has brought them here? They will rifle and eat us up." Nor were the Frenchmen more satisfied with Scotland. The barons and knights, who looked for goodly castles and tapestried halls, said to their admiral "What pleasure hath brought us hither? We never knew what poverty meant till now." Horses were scarce and extravagantly dear; bridles and saddles there were none. The pride of chivalry was at fault. At last king Robert came to Edinburgh; but he produced in the Frenchmen no great reverence, for he came "with a pair of red bleared eyen,—it seemed they were lined with sendal."* The united armies then marched into England, and had advanced towards Newcastle, when they learned that king Richard was coming with a large army. They then retreated; and Douglas took the French admiral to a mountain, and showed him the mighty force of the English, and how unequal the Scots were to fight with them. But while Richard advanced into Scotland, took Edinburgh, and marched towards Aberdeen, the French and Scots entered Cumberland and Westmoreland, burning and plundering on every side.

* Sendal was a thin silk, of a reddish colour.

The duke of Lancaster knew the advantage which this inroad had given to the English army, and how surely the retreat of the Scots and French might be cut off. But the young king's favourite, De la Pole, filled his mind with the suspicion that his uncle, in advising a return to the borders, intended to expose him to the dangers of a winter campaign in a mountainous region, from which he would never escape alive. Richard refused to march into Cumberlana with the duke; and returned with his army to England through Northumberland. The campaign of 1385 terminated without any trial of strength in battle. The Scots and French wasted England, and the English wasted Scotland. When the ill-assorted allies returned to Edinburgh, the Scots required to be paid the expenses of the campaign; for they said that the war was made for the profit of France and not for themselves; and they kept the admiral in pledge till their demands were satisfied. On his return from this expedition, the parliament ratified the honours which Richard had conferred on his favourites. Michael de la Pole was created earl of Suffolk, and Robert de Vere earl of Oxford. To neutralise the jealousy of his own relations, his uncles were created dukes of York and Gloucester; Henry, the son of the duke of Lancaster, was made earl of Derby; and Edward the son of the duke of York, earl of Rutland. At the same time Roger, earl of March, was declared presumptive heir to the throne. He was the grandson of Lionel, the second son of Edward III., who died in 1368; and whose daughter, Philippa, married Mortimer, earl of March.

In 1386 the dreaded duke of Lancaster left England to assert his claim to the crown of Castile, in right of his second wife, Constantia, daughter of Peter the Cruel. The duke was more successful in his negotiations than permanently fortunate in his wars. He married his eldest daughter, by his first wife, to John, king of Portugal: and his daughter Catherine, who had succeeded to his mother's claims, was espoused, in 1387, by Henry III. of Castile. The quarrel of the rival families was terminated by this union; and thus the issue of John of Gaunt bore sovereignty in Spain for many generations. In the absence of Lancaster, enormous preparations were made by France for the invasion of England. The insurrections of Flanders had been put down; and the time seemed most opportune for revenging the injuries which France had received in the invasions of Edward III. and the Black Prince. In September, 1386, a larger fleet was collected than had ever before been seen in Christendom. In the port of Sluys were twelve hun-

dred and eighty-seven vessels. Another fleet was assembled at Tréguier, in Brittany. The great lords of France and Burgundy rivalled each other in the magnificent decorations of the ships which were to bear them to the devoted English shores. If painted and gilded masts, emblazoned sails, and silken banners, could have insured success, no fleet was ever more grandly appointed. From all parts knights were arriving, for several months, in the towns of Flanders and Artois. They collected immense stores, as if they were about to found some distant colony. The young king of France set out from Paris with great pomp, and joined the duke of Burgundy at Arras. The lords and knights were full of gladness. They were going against the hated English, to avenge the blood of their fathers and their brethren. As they had traversed France the whole country had been stripped by them. Little had been left to the cultivators to give, for an enormous tax had been levied for this war. The lords and the knights seized upon everything that remained. "We have no money," they said, "but we will pay you when we return." The unhappy people muttered "Go, and may you never come back." But they did not go. The king came to Sluys. He thought he should make a good sailor. He was ready to sail. But his uncle, the duke de Berri, still lingered at Paris. The vast army was eating up everything. The season was becoming cold and stormy. The soldiers and the people of the towns were quarrelling; and a general revolt of the bold Flemings was again apprehended. At length the duke de Berri arrived. He found the season too far advanced for the attempt, and the great enterprise was postponed till the next year. The furious lords and knights dispersed homewards. The next year came, and the invasion was again postponed. The leaders quarrelled; and, instead of England being subject to invasion, the French coast was assailed, and the French and Flemish fleets destroyed, from Brest to Sluys.

Richard in 1386 was twenty years of age. A contest is coming on between the king and the parliament, which, partly the result of the family jealousies, and partly the desire of a self-willed youth to free himself from constitutional control, appears to threaten a political revolution. It is really of small consequence to us, at the present time, to think, according to one set of partisan historians, that Richard was an innocent and oppressed sovereign, and Thomas of Woodstock a most unprincipled usurper of the royal functions; or with another set, that the young king was engaged

in a constant struggle for despotic power, and that all the parliamentary enactments by which he was opposed were just and sagacious assertions of the liberties of the country. We may seek our way through this maze of suspicion and accusation—of stern control and passionate resistance—without adopting the prejudices with which all such historical questions were regarded in the last century, from one point of view or from its opposite. The Statutes and Rolls of parliament are but imperfect expounders of the real causes of the shifting events of this reign; and the contemporary historians were necessarily possessed of very limited information. In one thing the State records and the Chroniclers are agreed—that Richard was unbounded in his personal expense. In 1386 the Commons petitioned the king "that the state of his household might be looked into and examined every year, by the chancellor, treasurer, and clerk of the privy-seal, and what was amiss, to be amended at their discretion." The answer was, "The king will order it when he pleaseth." Harding, the chronicler, says that Richard's household consisted of ten thousand persons; that he had three hundred in his kitchen; and that all his offices were furnished in like proportion. If we trust these accounts, we may well believe that there was a perpetual conflict between the royal demands for taxes, and the indignation of the Commons, who felt that their supplies were spent in folly and favouritism, and that little was done in foreign warfare, upon which the honour of the country was held to depend. The king's private counsellors were the encouragers of his extravagance, and his inciters against those whom he supposed to be his enemies. Knyghton, a contemporary, affirms that when the Commons resolved upon the impeachment of the earl of Suffolk, and communicated their resolution to the king, he replied that he would not, at their instance, remove the meanest scullion in his kitchen. The earl of Suffolk was impeached, and the king was compelled to part with one for whom he would probably have sacrificed the whole ten thousand of his household. But the Commons went farther. They petitioned the king to appoint a Commission of Regency for one year, with very large powers; the most formidable of which was that those who advised a revocation of their authority should incur the penalties of treason. Richard unwillingly complied. "The king," says Hume, "was in reality dethroned; the aristocracy was rendered supreme." He adds, "the intentions of the party were to render it perpetual." Mr. Hallam replies to the his

torian "with a Tory bias,"—"that nothing less than an extraordinary remedy could preserve the still unstable liberties of England."* In the summer of 1387 Richard made progresses in Cheshire and Yorkshire, and received marks of popular favour. In August he held a council at Nottingham, consisting of the archbishop of York; De Vere, now created duke of Ireland; the earl of Suffolk; the chief justice, Tresilian; and Sir Nicholas Brember, lord mayor of London. They tried to tamper with the sheriffs of the adjacent counties, to induce them to return no knights and burgesses to the next parliament but such as the king should nominate. This plan was unsuccessful. The judges were then summoned; and the king procured from them a declaration in answer to questions drawn up by the chief justice, that the Commission to which he had reluctantly assented was illegal; and that those who interfered with his rights in procuring it to be passed, or enforcing his consent to it, were traitors; with other assertions tending to the upholding of his unlimited prerogative. Of these opinions, given under an obligation of secrecy, the duke of Gloucester was soon apprised. Richard, meanwhile, was concerting measures for the arrest and indictment of those who had been designated as traitors by judicial opinions, extorted, as was asserted by the majority of the judges, under menace. On the 10th of November, nine days before the Commission was to expire, Richard entered London, and was received with acclamations. Sir Nicholas Brember had influenced the voice of the citizens. On the next day it was known that an army of forty thousand men was advancing to the capital, under the command of the duke of Gloucester, and the earls of Arundel and Nottingham, the constable, admiral, and mareschal of England. The earls of Derby and Warwick joined them the next day. These noblemen, lords appellants as they were called, on the 17th of November, accused of treason before the king at Westminster those five of his obnoxious counsellors who had assembled at Nottingham. The earl of Suffolk fled to France; the archbishop of York eventually found refuge in Flanders; De Vere raised an army by authority of royal letters; but was defeated at Radcot Bridge, and escaped to Ireland. The other two who were denounced by the appellants,—Tresilian, the chief justice, and Sir Nicholas Brember,—were executed as traitors. There were other executions, with banishments and confiscations, and these penalties were all enforced under the authority

* "Middle Ages," part iii. chap. viii.

of parliament. For about a year the government appears to have been in the hands of the parliamentary council, without any intervention on the part of the humiliated king.

In 1388, on the 10th of August, was fought the famous battle of Otterbourne, upon which is founded the ballad of "Chevy Chase." That ballad, and the earlier one called "The Battle of Otterbourne," treat this remarkable conflict as a border-feud. Froissart has a most minute description of this great fight between the Percy and the Douglas, which also shows that it was essentially an affair of the feudal lords, and not of the Scotch and English governments. Lord Henry Percy was appointed by the Council to keep the frontier of Northumberland against the Scots; and the Scotch lords and knights, seeing "the Englishmen were not all of one accord," gathered together at Aberdeen, and concerted a plan for meeting near the border. With a large army they crossed the Tyne, and went on to Durham, but soon retreated. At Newcastle they were encountered by the younger Percies, with their host; their father, the earl of Northumberland, keeping the pass of Alnwick. The leaders appear to have met as if at a tournament. Earl Douglas and Lord Henry Percy fought hand to hand, and Douglas won Percy's pennon, and told him that "he would set it on high on his castle of Dalkeith;" and Percy said Douglas should not carry it out of England. After the skirmish, the Scots, the next day, marched to Otterbourne, about thirty miles from Newcastle. The castle has perished which Douglas assailed; but there we may trace the marshy valley and the little mountain where the Scots fixed their camp, and where Harry Percy came on, with the moon shining as bright as day, to win back his pennon. It was no skirmish now. Douglas was killed on one side, and Percy and his brother taken prisoners on the other, the victory being to the Scots. Douglas was buried at Melrose. Percy was soon ransomed. Froissart says of this battle,—“Englishmen on the one part, and Scots on the other part, are good men of war; for when they meet there is hard fighting without sparring. There is no love between them, as long as spears, swords, axes, or daggers will endure; but they lay on each upon the other, and when they be well beaten, and that the one part hath obtained the victory, then they glorify so in their deeds of arms, and are so joyful, that such as be taken they shall be ransomed ere they go out of the field, so that shortly each of them is so content with the other that, at their departing courteously, they will say—God thank you.” The long but graphic nar-

rative by Froissart of this border-feud is suggestive of striking contrasts of mediæval and modern times. While the Scots had marched on beyond the Tyne, "all the English knights and squires of the county of York and bishopric of Durham were assembled at Newcastle." Froissart adds, "the town was so full of people, that they wist not where to lodge." Little is left in that town to remind us how often it was crowded with the chivalry of England, going to or returning from the Scottish wars. Nearly all its ancient buildings have been destroyed. The railway-train sweeps over the Tyne, and over the steep streets, at a prodigious elevation. Trim edifices, fresh and monotonous, have obliterated the traces of the past. One relic, the Black Gate, and its dungeon-looking houses, show how the Percies, and Mowbrays, and Greys lodged, when they filled Newcastle with their men-at-arms.

In 1389 the government of England appears to be acquiring some consistency, under the more immediate rule of the king. At a great council in May, he suddenly asked the duke of Gloucester—"How old am I?" His uncle replied, "Your highness is in your twenty-second year." Upon this Richard declared his opinion that he was old enough to manage his own affairs. There was no resistance, and he dismissed the chancellor and the treasurer. Gloucester retired into the country. Lancaster returned to England. The struggle of parties seemed to be at an end. A truce was concluded with France, which, several times renewed, lasted through this reign, and Scotland was included in the pacification. William of Wykeham was appointed chancellor, although he had been one of the council of 1388; and the duke of York and the earl of Derby, although active in the proceedings of that year regained their influence under the king. In the parliament of 1399, the chancellor declared the king to be of full age, and that he intended to govern his people in peace and quiet; to do justice to all men; and that clergy and laity should enjoy all their liberties. In 1394 the queen died. She was called "the good queen Anne" by the people. In that year Richard went to Ireland, with a large army. He took with him four thousand knights, and thirty thousand archers, and he remained there nine months. There had been revolt of the native chiefs and discontent of the colonists; but the mere demonstration of the English force prevented any battle. The king was thoroughly in his element—giving sumptuous entertainments, and displaying his regal magnificence to a wondering people. Four of the principal kings of Ireland, as they were called,

came to Dublin, and submitted themselves to him without constraint. Of the quality of these kings Froissart had a curious account from Sir Henry Cristall, an Englishman, who had been a captive amongst the native Irish, and having been kindly treated, married and long resided with them. He was appointed to attend on the four kings who submitted themselves to Richard. It was Richard's wish that in manners and apparel they should conform to the usages of England. It was his purpose to create them knights. But they were wedded to their ancient customs. They would sit at the same table as their minstrels and servants, eating out of the same dish and drinking out of the same cup. They were ill at ease with gowns of silk furred with minever, and disdained the linen breeches that the good Cristall provided for them. They perhaps showed their sense in despising the absurd costume of the court of Richard. At last they were properly attired, and were made knights by the king, with all solemnities of the church; and sate with him at the banquets, and "were regarded of many folks, because their behaving was strange to the manner of England."

In 1396 Richard took a step which was unpopular. He resolved upon an intimate alliance with France, by seeking in marriage Isabella, the daughter of Charles VI., a child of eight years old. A magnificent embassy was sent to Paris, and the French court was willing to secure a pacification through this alliance. The earl marshal of England knelt to the little girl, and said, "Fair lady, by the grace of God ye shall be our lady and queen of England," and Isabella answered, without counsel of any person, "Sir, an it please God and my lord my father that I shall be queen of England, I shall be glad thereof, for it is showed me that I shall then be a great lady." The negotiations were at length concluded. Froissart relates a remarkable conversation between Richard and the count of St. Pol, who came to England to make arrangements on the part of the French king, which in some degree throws a little light upon the mysterious events of the next three years. The king said that his two uncles, Lancaster and York, were inclined to the alliance, but that his uncle Gloucester was opposed to it; that he did all he could to draw the Londoners to his opinion; that if he stirred the people to rebellion the crown were lost. St. Pol answered Richard that he must dissimulate: win Gloucester with sweet words and great gifts, till the peace was made, and his bride was come to England. "That done," said the

wily politician, "ye may take other counsel. Ye shall then be of puissance to oppress all your rebels; for the French king, if need be, shall aid you: of this ye may be sure." The king answered, "Thus shall I do." It was a fatal resolve. The two kings, accompanied by hundreds of nobles and knights, with all the pomp of the gorgeous ceremonials of that age, met between Calais and Ardres, and there embraced, and drank spiced wine out of jewelled cups. Again they met on another day, at the boundary of the two camps; and then the child-queen arrived with a cavalcade of golden chariots and silken litters, with ladies wearing garlands of pearls and diamonds; and she was conducted by her uncles to Richard, who promised to cherish her as his wife. The duchesses of Lancaster and Gloucester received her; and she set forward to Calais, where the marriage was celebrated on the fourth of November.

The dangerous advice of the count St. Pol seems to have sunk deeply into Richard's heart. He had conducted himself with moderation since 1389; there were no plots to diminish his lawful power, and no attempt on his part to go beyond the authority of a constitutional king. In January, 1397, a parliament was called. On the 1st of February the Commons desired a conference with the king's officers; when, amongst other matters, they asked for a bill for avoiding the extravagant expenses of the king's household, complaining that many bishops, who had lordships, and many ladies, with their servants, were supported at the king's expense. Richard was indignant, and demanded the name of the member who had introduced the bill, and thus dared to interfere with his prerogative. It was Sir Thomas Haxey, a clergyman. On the 3rd of February, the Commons came most humbly before the king, and declared that they only intended to request him to consider the matter himself, and make what regulations he should think proper. Two days afterwards a law was made, that whoever moved, or should move, the Commons of parliament, or any others, to make remedy or reformation of any kind appertaining to the king's person, rule, or royalty, should be held for a traitor. Under this ex-post-facto law, Haxey was condemned to die; but his life was spared, and he was subsequently pardoned. The vessel of the state was now drifting fast upon the quicksands of arbitrary government.

The Statute of the 21st year of Richard II., 1397-8, is a solemn record of the establishment of a despotic power, under the sanction of parliamentary forms. This remarkable document takes an his-

torical view of the events of 1387-8, when the Council of Regency was triumphant, and exhibits to us the first remarkable example of the aid which tyranny derives from a corrupt and cowardly exercise of the sanctions of popular representation. Richard and his advisers appear to have discovered how effectually a subservient parliament may render despotism more easy and secure than through its own unconcealed workings. The Statute recites, with great minuteness, the commission granted to the duke of Gloucester and others, ten years before; and then, at the desire of the Commons, repeals the same, as a thing done traitorously, and against the king's crown and dignity. The Statute then describes, with equal minuteness, the questions put to the judges regarding that Commission, with their answers. These answers not only affirmed the procurers of the Commission to be traitors, but declared that all who attempted in parliament to proceed in other business than that limited by the king were traitors; and that parliamentary impeachments of the king's officers were treasonable. These answers were now declared "good and lawful," by the subservient Lords and Commons. The king then gives a general pardon for all offences, in consideration of a subsidy having been granted him for life; and sweeps away the small remaining power of the Lords and Commons, by nominating certain nobles and commoners to legislate upon "all petitions, and matters contained in the same, as they shall think best by their good advice and discretion." Thereupon the king, by the assent of eight lords and three commoners, makes certain ordinances and statutes upon matters of general import to the safety of the realm and the good of the people.* Nothing further could be desired to render Richard the king absolute. The junta thus created superseded parliamentary government altogether.

The mode in which this revolution was accomplished was by such a proceeding as we know in modern times as a *coup-d'état*. With consummate duplicity, Richard, on the 10th of July, 1397, had the earl of Warwick to dine with him, and the same evening Warwick was arrested and sent to Tintagel Castle, in Cornwall. The archbishop of Canterbury was solicited to bring his brother, the earl of Arundel, to a conference with the king. The earl was seized at this conference, and was hurried away to Carisbrook Castle, Richard having promised, upon oath, that he should not be injured in person or property. The great blow was still to be struck. The Rolls of parliament say that the duke of Gloucester

* "Statutes of the Realm, from Original Records," &c., vol. ii. p. 94.

was arrested at his castle of Plashy, when he came forth in procession, humbly to meet the king. The account which Froissart gives of the duke's arrest is somewhat different; but is very consonant with the sudden boldness and habitual cunning which belonged to the character of Richard. The king set out from London, as if he were going to hunt. He rode to Havering Bower in Essex; and after dinner again went forward, with a small company, till he came to Plashy, about five o'clock in the afternoon. The duke of Gloucester had supped; and when he heard of the king's coming he went forth, with his duchess and his children, to meet him in the court and welcome him. The king entered into the hall, and then into a chamber, where a supper was laid for him. But he sate not long, but said, "Fair uncle, cause five or six horses of yours to be saddled, for I will pray you to ride with me to London, for to-morrow the Londoners will be before us, and upon their requests I will be ordered by your counsel." On the way, the king rode on a great pace, when he came to a place where he had placed his earl marshal in ambush. The duke was arrested in the king's name on that July night. "He cried after the king, yet the king made a deaf ear, and rode on before." Richard lodged that night in the Tower of London. Gloucester was hurried to a barge in the Thames, and then into a ship, and the next night was in safe keeping at Calais.

The proceedings of the king appear to have struck terror into the hearts of those who were bound to Gloucester by the ties of the nearest relationship, and of those who had to dread the king's revenge upon themselves for the proceedings of 1387. By constraint or artifice they put their seals to an instrument appealing Gloucester, Arundel, and Warwick of treason. On the 17th of September Richard met his subservient parliament. The assembly, according to an anonymous authority, was surrounded by the king's troops.* The Commons impeached the archbishop of Canterbury of high treason, and he was banished for life. The earl of Arundel was condemned and beheaded. The earl of Warwick was condemned, but his life was spared. A writ was issued on the 21st of September to the earl marshal, governor of Calais, commanding him to bring his prisoner, the duke of Gloucester, before the king in parliament. On the 24th—a wonderfully short interval for an answer to be returned in those days—a letter was read from the

* "Life of Richard II.," published by Hearne. See Hallam, "Middle Ages," chap. viii. part iii.

earl marshal, who wrote that he could not produce the duke, for that he had died in the king's prison. No inquiry was made; no surprise expressed. Lancaster and York, his brothers—Derby, his nephew,—appear to have yielded without resistance to the overpassing tyranny. The lords, who were so ready to condemn—the traitors of ten years previous, themselves having participated in the publicly pardoned treason—were rewarded by new honours. Derby was created duke of Hereford; and Nottingham duke of Norfolk. A confession of Gloucester was read, which had reference to the proceedings which procured the commission of regency, and to those solely. And yet his own brothers joined in pronouncing his attainder of treason. There is no solution of these inconsistencies but the fact that Richard "kept in his wages ten thousand archers." Shakspeare truly makes the widowed duchess of Gloucester attribute the "patience" of Lancaster and York to "despair."

Richard is now supreme. He wants no parliament to grant him subsidies. He is provided with taxes for the term of his life. He has no dread of remonstrances against his profligate expenditure. It is treason of any person to suggest the necessity of control. Some of those whom he most dreads have been executed, or murdered, or banished. One more act of bold tyranny was necessary for the quiet of his suspicions,—"imaginative prince as he was." "The king kept still in his wages ten thousand archers, night and day that waited on him;" and "there was none so great in England that durst speak against anything that the king did or would do." But although "the people durst not speak," there were "many great lords who would speak and murmur when they were together."† Of such were Hereford and Norfolk. They were the only two who remained of the lords appellant, who had given such dire offence in the eleventh year of Richard. They were riding between Brentford and London, when they began to speak in whispered inuendoes. What they said was divulged to Richard. Of this treachery Hereford has been suspected. Norfolk was sent for by the king, and commanded to declare before the council what had passed. The obsequious parliament had been adjourned to Shrewsbury, where they met in January, 1398. Hereford was now called upon to declare what was the talk between Norfolk and himself. Norfolk did not attend. According to Hereford's written account, as given in the Rolls of parliament, the following was the discourse in that ride between Brentford and London:

* Froissart.

† *Ibid.*

Norfolk. "We are on the point of being undone."

Hereford. "Why so?"

Norf. "On account of the affair of Radcotbridge."

Heref. "How can that be, since he has granted us pardon, and has declared in parliament that we behaved as good and loyal subjects."

Norf. "Nevertheless, our fate will be like that of others before us. He will annul that record."

Heref. "It will be marvellous indeed, if the king, after having said so before the people, should cause it to be annulled."

Norf. "It is a marvellous and false world that we live in."

Norfolk then related a plot of certain of the king's council to undo six other lords, amongst whom were Lancaster, Hereford, and himself.

Heref. "God forbid! It will be a wonder, if the king should assent to such designs. He appears to make me good cheer, and has promised to be my good lord. Indeed, he has sworn by St. Edward to be a good lord to me and the others."

Norf. "So has he often sworn to me by God's body: but I do not trust him the more for that."

After this, Norfolk surrendered. The two dukes knelt before the king, and Norfolk said, "My dear lord, with your leave, if I may answer your cousin, I say Henry of Lancaster is a liar; and in what he has said, and would say, of me, lies like a false traitor as he is." Both were ordered into custody; and it was resolved that the dispute should be referred to a Court of Chivalry. The Court sat at Windsor. Hereford would not withdraw his statement. Norfolk persisted in his peremptory denial. Wager of battle could alone determine the quarrel; and the judgment of God was to be appealed to, in the lists of Coventry, on the 16th of September.

To that ancient city, the favourite seat of the Black Prince, comes his son, with all the magnificent retinue which exhibited the feudal pomp without its ancient prowess. The silken pavilions are bright with the gaudiest colours. The king, surrounded by nobles, and guarded by thousands of men in harness, sits on an elevated stage. Henry of Lancaster makes the sign of the cross on his forehead; and entering the lists, alights from his horse, and takes his velvet chair. Thomas Mowbray hovers about the lists, and then enters crying—God aid him that hath the right. They have each previously sworn that this quarrel is just and true. The heralds make proclamation. The champions are mounted. The

neavers are closed, and the spears are in rest. But the king casts down his warder, and the heralds shout, Ho! Ho! Hereford and Norfolk will not fight that day. The king affects to consult his council; and the dangerous combatants are each banished, Hereford for ten years, Norfolk for life.*

Upon the departure of Hereford and Norfolk from the kingdom, Richard appears to have pursued the most reckless course. In the face of his declared amnesty for all offences, he extorted fines from seventeen counties, to whose population he imputed crimes connected with the levying arms in 1387. Under forced confessions of treason done at that period, he compelled rich individuals to give blank obligations, which his officers filled up with large sums, having no limitation but their despotic caprice. The ordinary course of justice was interrupted. Robbers in great companies kept the fields and highways, despoiling merchants, and plundering the cultivators of their produce. The people said—"In the days of good king Edward III. there was no man so hardy in England to take a hen, or a chicken, or a sheep, without he had paid truly for it; and now-a-days all that we have is taken from us, and yet we dare not speak." They complained that they had a king who attended to nothing but his own pleasure; and cared not how things went as long as he had his will. Thus writes Froissart, who is generally more tender towards Richard than other contemporary chroniclers. But it was not only the common people who complained;—the nobles showed their displeasure by ominous avoidance of the regal pageantries. At this juncture, John of Gaunt, the duke of Lancaster, died. He did not survive the banishment of his son more than three months. The king was perfectly aware of the deep love which the Londoners and the nation generally bore towards Hereford, whose popular demeanour had won their hearts. Thousands waited on him weeping when he rode out of London. And yet Richard chose this time to seize upon the property of that powerful house; and to decree that the banishment of Hereford had rendered him incapable of succeeding by attorney to the estates of his father, revoking the letters-patent which had been granted to enable the son to claim livery of his inheritance, should his father die during the period of his banishment. No crime had been imputed to Hereford. He was banished by the arbitrary will of the king, who, first decreeing his exile for a term of ten years, had subsequently revoked the sentence to an exile of

* See the pompous description of the Lists of Coventry, in Hall's Chronicle.

six years. In the spring of 1399 Richard suddenly determined to go to Ireland, to avenge the loss of the earl of March, who had been surprised and slain by a party of the natives. He previously proclaimed a great tournament at Windsor, of forty knights and forty esquires against all comers. The king and his child-queen sat there in more than wonted splendour; but few came to the feast, whether "lords, or knights, or other men, for they had the king in such hatred." Then Richard appointed his uncle, the duke of York, regent; and he parted with Isabella at the door of St. George's chapel, where they had heard mass; lifting her up in his arms, and kissing her, and saying, "Adieu, madam, adieu, till we meet again." The Londoners were prophetic. They said, "Now goeth Richard of Bordeaux the way to Bristow, and so into Ireland, which will be to his destruction. He shall never return again with joy, no more than did king Edward the Second his great grandfather, who was foolishly governed by too much believing of the Spensers. In like wise, Richard of Bordeaux hath believed so much evil counsel, that it cannot be holden nor suffered any longer."*

At the beginning of the year 1399, Henry of Lancaster is at the court of France. Although he has been banished by Richard, the son-in-law of the French king, he is in favour with Charles VI., and the princes and nobles. With the duke of Orleans he has entered into a compact for mutual support in all their undertakings. He seeks in marriage the widowed daughter of the duke de Berri; Mary de Bohun, the mother of Henry of Monmouth, and of five other children, being dead; and his pretensions are favourably received. The king of England grows jealous of his cousin's influence, and sends the earl of Salisbury to hinder the marriage, denouncing Henry as a traitor. The marriage is postponed. It is found that the son of John of Gaunt, although now duke of Lancaster, has nothing but his bare title to offer to a princess of France. At this juncture a pilgrim monk arrives in Paris, and obtains an interview with Henry. It is the banished Arundel, archbishop of Canterbury, who has travelled thus disguised from Cologne. He brings intelligence of great import from England. Richard is gone to Ireland. He has quarrelled with the Percies, and has decreed their banishment. Nobles and Commons are alike discontented. The duke and the ex-prelate unite their fortunes. They pass together into Brittany; hire three small ves-

* Froissart.

sels; and with no further aid than that of the son of the late earl of Arundel, and a few men-at-arms and servants, sail from Vannes, and land at Ravenspur, in Yorkshire, on the 4th of July.

At the midsummer of 1399, king Richard is leading a large army into the Irish bogs and thickets, to chastise the presumption of some of the chiefs. As he advances, they retreat; and draw him on till provisions fail, and the murmurs of his men compel him to march back. The usual accompaniments of the earlier feudal wars are not wanting. By command of the king every thing is set on fire. The pageantries of chivalry are also displayed in the Irish deserts. Henry of Monmouth, a boy of eleven years old, is with the army; and he, with others, is knighted by Richard. But the Irish chief, Mac-More, will submit to no terms; and the king, "pale with anger," swears by St. Edward that he would never depart from Ireland till he had Mac-More in his power, alive or dead. He marches to Dublin, having accomplished nothing by his expedition. Here the king and his retinue now live in great plenty and magnificence for six weeks. No news has arrived from England, for the winds have been contrary. At last, as an eye-witness tells us, "a barge arrived, which was the occasion of much sorrow."* Henry of Lancaster is in England. The people are in insurrection. Towns and castles have been yielded to the invader. Richard again grows "pale with anger;" and exclaims, "Good Lord, this man designs to deprive me of my country." A council is held, and the earl of Salisbury is dispatched to raise the Welsh. He landed at Conway; and soon collected a considerable force. Richard, irresolute, remained eighteen days longer at Dublin. When he put his foot upon Wales the revolution was nearly accomplished.

When the duke of York had knowledge of the landing of Henry at Ravenspur, he assembled the retainers of the crown, and raised a numerous force. But he found a general disaffection, instead of a willingness to oppose the duke of Lancaster. The signs of approaching change were so alarming, that three members of the committee of parliament, who had been most obnoxious to the people—the earl of Wiltshire, Bussy, and Green—fled to Bristol. York led his doubtful army westward. The road to London was open from the north. Lancaster, when he arrived at the capital,

* "Histoire du Roy d'Angleterre Richard. Composée par un gentleman François de marque, qui fut à la suite du dict Roy." This manuscript of the French knight, which bears the date of 1399, is published in the "Archæolog." vol. xx., with a translation.

had sixty thousand followers. "The people of London," says Froissart, "were so joyful at the earl's coming, that there was no more working in London that day than an it had been Easter-day." Lancaster tarried not for feasts and gratulations. He marched rapidly into the west; and at Berkeley met the duke of York. Either the force of Henry was so overpowering, or his professions so plausible, that resistance or argument were unavailing; for the interview ended in the regent espousing his cause. Together they marched to Bristol, the castle of which was surrendered to the duke of York. The next morning the earl of Wiltshire, Bussy, and Green, were executed without a trial. York remained at Bristol. Henry marched on to Chester. Richard, meanwhile had landed somewhere in Wales. But the troops which he brought with him quickly abandoned him. The army which the earl of Salisbury had raised had dispersed, there being "no tidings of the king." With a few followers Richard wandered from castle to castle; and at length found a resting-place at Conway. His brothers, Exeter and Surrey, were dispatched to Chester, to ascertain Lancaster's resolves. He prevented their return, having obtained a knowledge of the place where the king was to be found. The earl of Northumberland undertook to secure him. He marched from Chester with men-at-arms and archers; took possession of the castles of Flint and Rhuddlan as he advanced; and, approaching Conway, concealed his forces behind a rock, and rode forward with a few attendants. Admitted into the castle, he proposed certain conditions to the king, which were willingly agreed to, as they impaired not his royal authority; and to the observance of these Northumberland swore. It was promised that Lancaster should come to Flint, and having asked pardon on his knees, should be restored to the estates and honours of his family. The earl left Conway to prepare for this interview at Flint, and the king followed him. Descending a steep hill, Richard suddenly exclaimed, "I am betrayed. Do you not see banners and pennons in that valley!" Northumberland then came up, and seized the king's bridle. In the evening the prisoner and his escort reached Flint castle. The next morning Richard went upon a tower to watch for the arrival of Lancaster; and when he saw him coming along the sea-shore, with his mighty host, he shuddered and wept. Lancaster entered the castle. The French knight who was present, has recorded what then took place. "Then they made the king, who had dined in the donjon, come down to meet duke Henry,

who, as soon as he perceived him at a distance, bowed very low to the ground; and, as they approached each other, he bowed a second time, with his cap in his hand; and then the king took off his bonnet, and spake first, in this manner; 'Fair cousin of Lancaster, you are right welcome.' Then duke Henry replied, bowing very low to the ground—'My lord, I am come sooner than you sent for me; the reason wherefore I will tell you. The common report of your people is such, that you have, for the space of twenty or two-and-twenty years, governed them very badly and very rigorously, and in so much that they are not well contented therewith. But, if it please our Lord, I will help you to govern them better than they have been governed in time past.' King Richard then answered him, 'Fair cousin, since it pleaseth you, it pleaseth us well.' And be assured that these are the very words that they two spake together, without taking away or adding anything: for I heard and understood them very well."

The French knight then relates the progress of the captive and his enemy from Flint to Chester, and from Chester to London. At Chester Henry dismissed many of his followers. At Litchfield Richard attempted to escape by night, letting himself down through a window of the tower where he lodged. The knight then records, what Froissart also mentions as having previously occurred, that Henry told a deputation of Londoners, who demanded the head of the king, that the king should be judged by the parliament. Slowly the cavalcade advanced by the north road, till, on the 1st of September, they came within six miles of London. Here they were met by the mayor and principal citizens; and as they went on the people shouted, "Long live the duke of Lancaster." They entered the city at the hour of vespers; and Henry alighted at St. Paul's, and went all armed before the high altar to make his orisons. He wept much at the tomb of his father. The king was lodged in the Tower.

During a sojourn of three days at Chester, writs had been issued in the king's name to summon a parliament on the 30th of September. A month of captivity had to be passed by the unhappy Richard. There is a manuscript in the Royal Library of France which details an interview between the king and Lancaster in the Tower, at which York and Aumerle were present, when Richard in a violent rage exclaimed, "I am king, and will still continue king in spite of my enemies." But this passionate and irresolute nature was quickly subdued. On the 29th of September,

according to an entry on the Rolls of Parliament, Richard, in the presence of nobles and prelates, knights and justices, subscribed a deed of resignation of the crown, absolving his subjects from their allegiance; and adding that if he had the will he would choose his son, the duke of Lancaster as his successor. Froissart thus describes the surrender. "On a day the duke of Lancaster, accompanied with lords, dukes, prelates, earls, barons, and knights, and of the noblest men of London, and of other good towns, rode to the Tower, and there alighted. Then king Richard was brought into the hall, appareled like a king in his robes of estate, his sceptre in his hand, and his crown on his head. Then he stood up alone, not holden nor stayed by no man, and said aloud, 'I have been king of England, duke of Aquitaine, and lord of Ireland, about twenty-two years, which signiory, royalty, sceptre, crown, and heritage, I clearly resign here to my cousin, Henry of Lancaster; and I desire him here, in this open presence, in entering of the same possession, to take this sceptre;' and so delivered it to the duke, who took it." The parliamentary record most suspiciously adverts to the cheerfulness with which Richard made this surrender. Henry, a few years afterwards was denounced by Northumberland as having compelled the king thus to abdicate under threats of death. The parliament met on the 30th of September, in Westminster Hall, which was crowded by people of all ranks. The throne was empty. The duke of Lancaster sat in his place as a peer. The resignation of the king was read; and each member expressed aloud his acceptance of it, amidst the shouts of the multitude. The act of deposition was next read. The articles of impeachment were thirty-three in number. All the circumstances connected with the events of 1387-8 were now objected to the king. The murder of the duke of Gloucester was imputed to him, as well as the convictions of Arundel, Warwick, and others,—the banishment of Henry, and the seizure of his estates. His despotic tendencies were affirmed, for that when he was asked to do justice according to the laws, he would say, that "his laws were in his mouth,"—that "the laws were in his breast,"—that "he himself alone could make and change the laws of his kingdom" and that he maintained that the life of every one of his subjects, and his lands and goods, were at his will and pleasure, without any forfeiture. It was added that he was "so variable and dissembling in his words and writings, that no man living, who knew his conditions, could or would confide in him;" and that his unfaithfulness and inconstancy were scanda-

lous to himself and to the kingdom, especially amongst foreigners. After the reading of this voluminous document, the Act of deposition was solemnly pronounced by eight commissioners. Henry then approached the throne; and, having crossed himself, in the language of England thus said: "In the name of Fader, Son, and Holy Ghost, I, Henry of Lancaster, chalenge this rewme of Ynglonde, and the crown with all the members, and the appurtenances, als I that am descendit, be right line of the blode, comyng fro the gude lord king Henry therde, and thorghe that right that God of his grace hath sent mee, with helpe of my kyn, and of my frendes to recover it; the which rewme was in poynt to be ondone for defaut of governance, and undoyng of the gude laws."* Henry of Lancaster was then led by the archbishops of Canterbury and York to the royal chair of state, "all the people wonderfully shouting for joy."

In his prison of the Tower the deposed Richard had to go through one more humiliation. On the day after his deposition, Sir William Thirnyng, one of the justices, with other procurators, came before him, and said, that in an assembly of all the States at Westminster, they declared and decreed and judged him to be deprived of the estate of king, and of all the dignity and worship, and of all the administration that belonged thereto. The broken-down man mildly answered that, after all this, he hoped that his cousin would be good lord to him. The murder of Thomas of Woodstock is now avenged. But in that hour of retribution the grave closes over the evil fortunes of that house. Humphrey, the only son of the duke of Gloucester, was with Richard in Ireland, in companionship with Henry of Monmouth. Upon the news of Henry's landing they were both shut up in the castle of Trym. Henry was released to become Prince of Wales; Humphrey died before he reached England. Eleanor Bohun, his desolate mother, sank under her accumulated sorrows, four days after her husband's avenger ascended the throne.

* Parliamentary History, vol. i. p. 267.