

and the next morning marched forward without the slightest molestation. Even Montacute, the brother of Warwick, allowed them to pass Pomfret Castle in safety. The servant of king Edward who writes this "Historie" of his arrival, says that "though all the king's fellowship at that season were not many in number, yet they were so habiled* and so well-picked men, and in their work they had on hand so willed, that it had been right hard to have put them to any distress." Onward they went, past Wakefield and Doncaster, to Nottingham, and thence to Leicester and Coventry. Here, on the 29th of March, Edward rested before Coventry, having received some accession of force on his march. Warwick was in the walled city, with six or seven thousand men. The deadly enemies were negotiating for three days, without avail; and then Edward marched to the town of Warwick, "where he was received as king, and so made his proclamation from that time forward." The secret compact with Clarence was now to be completed. The duke drew towards Edward with four thousand men; and in a fair field out of Warwick, towards Banbury, the two brothers met between their two hosts, "where was right kind and loving language betwixt them two, with perfect accord knit together for ever hereafter." Clarence then endeavoured to mediate between Warwick and his brother, but "all such treaty brake and took none effect." On the 6th of April the Yorkist army moved to Northampton, and keeping its straight course for the capital, on the 9th was at St. Alban's. Neville, the archbishop of York, assembled a force of six or seven thousand men in London, and "caused Henry, called king, to take a horse and ride from Paul's through Cheap, and so made a circuit about to Wallbrook." Fabyan, who knew the temper of the people, says, "the which rather withdrew men's hearts than otherwise." They saw the poor feeble king, a passive instrument of others, without any real power to carry out the kind impulses of his nature. They knew there was one at hand who had a strong will, wondrous energy, and best of all, invariable good fortune. Comines, with that touch of the sarcastic which belonged to his peculiar experience of the crooked ways of the world, says that the sums which Edward owed to the tradesmen of London made them rejoice at the prospect of his restoration; and that the ladies of quality and citizens' wives, who were proud of his gallantries, compelled their husbands to declare for him. There was no resistance. The archbishop obtained a conditional promise of pardon;

* Disciplined—made skilful.

and on the 11th, when Edward entered the city, and rode straight to Paul's, the prelate there delivered king Henry to his great enemy. The next day was Good Friday. On the Saturday Edward led his army out of London; for Warwick had rapidly followed him in his march, and had halted at Barnet. His hope was to have surprised Edward in London whilst he was occupied in the solemnities of the great festival of the Church. The energy of the king was ready for every emergency. On that Easter eve, the 13th of April, the advanced guard of the Yorkists have encountered the outposts of the Lancastrians, and have driven them out of the town of Barnet. Warwick's main force is encamped upon the high ground about half a mile beyond. In the dimness of nightfall, Edward's army is marching up the steep hill upon which the town is built; and in closed ranks and profound silence they pass through the narrow street, and past the ancient church, and so on to the open plain. "It was right dark," says the eye-witness, so that the king could not see where his enemies were embattled; and, therefore, took up a position much nearer to them than he had supposed. "But he took not his ground so even in front afore them as he would have done, if he might better have seen them; but somewhat a-sydenhand" [on one side]. The ground to the east suddenly declines from the elevated plain; and if Edward took his position "a-sydenhand" in this direction, he would have obtained an accidental advantage of some importance. Warwick had ordnance to defend his front; and as the tramp of men broke the silence "he shot guns almost all night;" but "it so fortun'd that they alway overshot the king's host." They were nearer than Warwick's gunners thought, and they were upon lower ground. There is something solemn in this array of two enemies, in darkness and deep silence, each ignorant of the exact position of the other—the darkness and the silence interrupted at long intervals by the flash and the boom of a single gun. The morning came, but the obscurity did not vanish. There was little light on Barnet Heath on that Easter morning, though peaceful thousands in other parts of England might have risen to see the sun dance, in the beautiful superstition that the firmament gave a token of gladness at this holy dawning. "The king, understanding that the day approached near, betwixt four and five of the clock, notwithstanding there was a great mist, and letted [hindered] the sight of either other," commenced the attack. In that mist English against English fought for three hours—madly blindly—the left wing of the Yorkists, under Hastings, beaten and

flying, whilst the king was rushing on in the centre, unconscious of the discomfiture—the right wing under Gloucester, successfully attacking Warwick, whose men, as Oxford returned from his pursuit of Hastings' flying Yorkists, mistook him for an enemy, and received him with a terrible discharge of arrows. All became confusion. Warwick fell fighting on foot; and so his brother Montacute. The king-maker had the advantage of numbers and of position. The mist, which even in these days of cultivation and drainage rises from the clay lands below Barnet, probably saved Edward from defeat. His random attack, on that dark April morning, was successful in its impetuosity, through the obscurity which prevented any combined movement of assault on his part, or of resistance on the part of his enemy. Edward fought hopefully, in the ignorance that a third of his army had sustained a defeat. Warwick fought desperately without the animating conviction that in another part of the field he had been victorious. Seldom has such a great result been produced out of blind chance and confusion. Edward was completely master of the field where seven thousand Lancastrians fell.* On the afternoon of that Easter day, the king marched back to London, and rode straight to Paul's; and there was thanksgiving and gratulation, and the steeples gave forth their merry peals, and the people shouted for the young victorious king; and the poor dethroned Henry, who had been led out to Barnet, was led back to the Tower. Many an unhappy wretch who had fought against Edward now crept into some hiding-place in London. One Lancastrian who was wounded thus writes to his mother to beg her alms, "for by my troth my leechcraft and physic and rewards to them that have kept me and conducted me to London, have cost me since Easter-day more than five pounds, and now I have neither meat, drink, clothes, leechcraft, nor money. †

The great struggle was not yet over. Queen Margaret had gathered a large army of foreigners and exiles; and she landed at Weymouth, on the very day that Warwick had fallen at Barnet. This force had embarked at Honfleur on the 24th of March, and had again and again been driven back by stress of weather. There soon gathered around the queen Somerset, and Devonshire, and

* A column was erected in 1740, with this inscription: "Here was fought the famous battle between Edward the 4th and the Earl of Warwick, April the 14th, anno 1471, in which the Earl was defeated and slain."

† Paston Letters, vol. v., 4to. p. 3.

other staunch friends. On Easter Monday the news was brought of the battle of Barnet. "She was right heavy and sorry," says Edward's official account. "She like a woman all dismayed for fear fell to the ground," writes Hall. They marched to Exeter, gathering the men of Devonshire and Cornwall as they proceeded; and then took the direct way to Bath. Edward supplied the place of the killed and wounded of his men, and assembled his forces around him at Windsor, where he kept the feast of St. George on the 23rd of April. On the 24th he marched forth, seeking his enemies in the west. By weary marches, "in a foul country, all in lanes and stony ways, betwixt woods, without any good refreshing," the Lancastrians reached Tewkesbury, and there determined to make a stand. They took up a strong position "in a close even at the town's end; the town and the abbey at their backs; afore them, and upon every hand of them, foul lanes and deep dikes, and many hedges, and hills and valleys, a right-evil place to approach." Edward had followed them, by forced marches, finding little provision on his way, and on the 3rd of May "lodged himself and all his host within three miles of them." They met on Saturday the 4th of May. Strong in their positions, the Lancastrians repulsed the attacking army; but Somerset boldly led his men into the open field by bye-paths, and fiercely attacked Edward's flank. He was unsupported by Lord Wenlock, who was to have followed Somerset; was soon overpowered and driven back to his intrenchments, with great slaughter; and in the frenzy of despair he killed his companion in arms, whose treachery or fear had betrayed him in the hour of need. The king and his brother Richard pursued their advantage with their wonted impetuosity; and the unfortunate remnant of the adherents of the Red Rose "took them to flight,"—some "into lanes and dykes, where they best hoped to escape the danger;"—many were drowned at a mill-stream, "in the meadow fast by the town"—many ran towards the town, many to the church, to the abbey, and elsewhere, as they best might. The kingdom was won.

It is now for the first time that we find Richard of Gloucester a conspicuous personage in our historical relations. He has been the companion of his brother in his short exile, and has returned with him to fight by his side in his great victories. He is now under twenty years of age. If we may believe the description furnished by one who, in after years, was his bitter enemy, he was "little of stature, ill-featured of limbs, crook-backed, his left

shoulder much higher than his right, hard favoured of visage.* From a less suspicious source—that of John Stow the antiquary, who was born about 1525—we learn that Stow “had spoken with some ancient men, who from their own sight and knowledge affirmed that he was of bodily shape comely enough, only of low stature.”† In his conduct at the decisive day of Tewkesbury, the gallantry of the knight is held to have been tarnished by the cruelty of the assassin. The usual account is derived from Polydore Vergil, whose History was written in Latin in the reign of Henry VII. He says, “Edward, the prince, and excellent youth, being brought a little after [the battle] to the speech of king Edward, and demanded how he durst be so bold as to enter and make war in his realm, made answer, with bold mind, that he came to recover his ancient inheritance: hereunto king Edward gave no answer, only thrusting the young man from him with his hand; whom, forthwith, those that were present, George, duke of Clarence, Richard, duke of Gloucester, and William, lord Hastings, cruelly murdered.”‡ On the other hand there is the contemporary account of the servant of Edward IV., who says, “In the winning of the field, such as abode hand-strokes were slain incontinent: Edward, called prince, was taken fleeing to the townwards, and slain in the field.”§ Another early record, that of Warkworth, a Lancastrian, gives the same account of young Edward’s death in the field, with a circumstantial variation: “And there was slain in the field prince Edward, which cried for succour to his brother-in-law, the duke of Clarence.”|| The victory of Tewkesbury was followed by the executions of the duke of Somerset and other Lancastrian leaders who, “divers times,” were brought before the king’s brother, the duke of Gloucester: and constable of England, and the duke of Norfolk, marshal of England, their judges, and so were judged, to death.”¶ The judicial slaughters were rendered more atrocious than the ordinary ferocities of both parties after victory, by the circumstance that their fallen enemies were dragged from the sanctuary of the abbey of Tewkesbury, in spite of the promise of Edward that those who had there taken refuge should be pardoned.

On the 7th of May, king Edward marched from Tewkesbury to

* “History of King Richard the Third,” attributed to Sir Thomas More, but if written by him, compiled from the statements of Cardinal Morton.

† Stuype. Life of Stow, prefixed to “Survey of London,” 1720.

‡ Early Translation, p. 152.—Camden Society.

§ History of the Arrival, &c., p. 30.

¶ History of the Arrival, &c., p. 31.

|| Chronicle, p. 18.

Worcester. On the 11th, he was at Coventry, where queen Margaret, who had been discovered in a small house of religion, where she had taken refuge, was brought to him, and went on to London in the train of the victor. The movements of the king were quickened by the news of an attack upon London by William Falconbridge, who had kept the Channel as admiral by Warwick’s appointment. He is described as “a man of much audacity, and factious withal, whom evil life especially stirred up to disturb the commonwealth.”* He gathered a great power of the Kentish people about him, who advanced to London, proclaiming that they were come to deliver king Henry. But when the news of Edward’s victory arrived, the citizens gave no encouragement to this enterprise, and shut their gates against the adventurer, who had an evil reputation as a pirate who had been spoiling on the coast whilst the country was in commotion. He made a desperate assault on the city with a land force and with ships; set fire to the houses in three places; but being bravely repulsed by the armed citizens, retired to Blackheath, and afterwards to Sandwich, which he fortified. This daring resistance to the victorious government was not to be disregarded. Edward arrived in London, with thirty thousand men, on the 21st of May. On the 22nd, he was on his march towards Canterbury, accompanied by his brother Richard, who, within a few days, received the submission of Falconbridge. There is the following circumstantial record of an event which took place on the 21st of May, in which the duke of Gloucester is held to have again manifested “the despiteous and cruel” nature which is ascribed to him: “The same night that king Edward came to London, king Henry, being inward in prison in the Tower of London, was put to death, on the 21st day of May, on a Tuesday night, between eleven and twelve of the clock, being then at the Tower the duke of Gloucester, brother to king Edward, and many other. And on the morrow he was chested and brought to Paul’s, and his face was open that every one might see him; and in his lying he bled on the pavement there.”† Opposed to this statement of the murder is the Yorkist account, that when Henry came to have knowledge of the fatal reverses of his friends and the death of his son, “he took it to so great despite, ire, and indignation, that, of pure displeasure and melancholy, he died, the 23rd day of the month of May.”‡ The circumstance that Richard was in the Tower, “with other,” on that

* Polydore Vergil, p. 153.

† Warkworth’s Chronicle, p. 21.

‡ History of the Arrival, &c., p. 38.

one night when he rested in London, is a slight foundation upon which to build the charge of the murder of Henry. Polydore Vergil, writing at a time when it was convenient to lay the chief sins of the house of York upon him who had lost a crown, says, "the continual report is that Richard, duke of Gloucester, killed him with a sword." Fabyan writes, "of the death of this prince [Henry VI.] divers tales were told: but the most common fame went that he was sticked with a dagger by the hands of the duke of Gloucester."* In the same hearsay style we find in More's "History,"—"He slew with his own hands king Henry the Sixth, being prisoner in the Tower, as men constantly say, and that without commandment or knowledge of the king, which would undoubtedly, if he had intended that thing, have appointed that butcherly office to some other than his own born brother." What immediate good the "born brother" would have derived in setting himself "that butcherly office" is not shown. Let us not load this youth with more burthens of evil than he will have to bear in his riper years of guilty ambition. If Henry was put to death, which is more than probable, it was politic in cardinal Morton to give such a colour to the event in his relations to More, as would transfer the guilt from the father of the wife of Henry VII., whose devoted minister the cardinal was, and fix it upon the uncle of that wife, whose memory could be safely assailed when there was no one left to care for him or defend him.

* Chronicle, p. 66a.

CHAPTER VIII.

Total depression of the enemies of the house of York.—The Court of Edward IV., its splendour and ceremony.—Patronage of the new art of printing.—Disputes of Clarence and Gloucester as to Gloucester's marriage.—Invasion of France.—Adroitness of Lewis XI.—Death of the duke of Burgundy.—Trial and condemnation of Clarence.—Scotland.—Death of Edward IV.—Accession of Edward V.—Jealousy of the family of Woodville by the great nobles.—Arrest of Rivers, Vaughan, and Grey.—Gloucester and Buckingham enter London with the king.—The queen flies to Sanctuary.—Gloucester appointed Protector.—His friends obtain important posts.—Coronation of Edward V. fixed.—Arrest and execution of Hastings.—Gloucester proclaims that his life is threatened.—The duke of York removed to the Tower.—Alleged marriage of Edward IV. previous to his union with Elizabeth Woodville.—Sermon at Paul's Cross.—The duke of Buckingham harangues the citizens at Guildhall.—The illegitimacy of Edward's children declared.—Gloucester takes the crown.—Execution of Rivers and others.—Coronation of Richard III.—Examination of the evidence that Richard III. caused the sons of Edward IV. to be murdered.

ALL the enemies of the house of York are swept away by the sword or the axe, or are in prison or in exile. Margaret of Anjou is a captive in the Tower, with a small allowance. The duke of Exeter, who had escaped from Barnet to the sanctuary of Westminster, perishes at sea the next year. Vere, the earl of Oxford, after having kept the coast of the Channel in alarm with a little fleet, and taken Mount St. Michael, in Cornwall, surrenders upon condition that his life should be spared, and is confined for eleven years in the castle of Ham, a prison that in future history will have far more importance than in connection with the wars of the Roses. The earl of Pembroke, with his nephew, the young earl of Richmond, have been cast by a storm on the coast of Brittany, and remain there during the reign of Edward. Some who have been hostile to the Yorkists, such as Dr. Morton, who will rise to great power, and Sir John Fortescue, have submitted to the favourite of fortune. Many persons, who, as Fuller somewhere says, in playing their cards could scarcely know which was the trump, easily obtained their pardons; the course being that some friend of the successful party should procure the seal of the king, and that the chancellor should confirm "the bill."* For a while the Court of Edward is one of the most gay and magnificent in Europe, as in-

* See Paston Letters, vol. v. p. 7.