

## CHAPTER X.

Richmond crowned in the battle-field.—Henry VII. crowned at Westminster.—His parliamentary title.—Marriage with Elizabeth of York.—Henry VII. suited to his times.—Imposture of Lambert Simnel.—Battle of Stoke.—Alleged harsh treatment of the widow of Edward IV.—The earl of Warwick exhibited to the people.—Unreal war and real taxation.—An English army in France.—A hurried peace concluded at Estaples.—Its motives.

RICHARD III. lies covered with wounds in the marsh of Redland. It was a part of the policy of the victors to heap insult and degradation upon the poor remains of the man who chose rather to perish than to save himself by flight; and thus his body, "naked and despoiled, was trussed behind a poursuivant of arms, like a hog or a calf, the head and the arms hanging on the one side of the horse, and the legs on the other side, and all besprinkled with mire and blood was brought to the Gray-friars church at Leicester." Thus writes Grafton, one of the meanest of the eulogists of Henry VII. The earl of Richmond, he says, ascended to the top of a little mountain, and there rendered thanks to his soldiers and friends. "Then the people rejoiced and clapped their hands, crying up to heaven, King Henry, king Henry. When the lord Stanley saw the good will and gladness of the people, he took the crown of king Richard which was found amongst the spoil in the field, and set it on the earl's head, as though he had been elected king by the voice of the people, as in ancient times past in divers realms it hath been accustomed." In the evening the camp of Richmond, now king Henry VII., was removed to Leicester; and, two days after, the conqueror went forward to London. He chose to consider himself to have won the crown of England by conquest; and he held to the delusion in his latter years, providing by his last will, "that our executors cause to be made an image of a king, representing our own person, the same to be of timber, covered and wrought with plates of fine gold, in manner of an armed man; and upon the same armour a coat-armour of our arms of England and France, enamelled, with a sword and spurs accordingly; and the said image to kneel upon a table of silver and gilt, and holding betwixt his

hands the crown which it pleased God to give us, with the victory of our enemy at our first field."\* Henry, earl of Richmond, who came to put down an usurper, was himself an usurper in every sense. Bacon has clearly stated the dilemma in which the new king was placed. He had been engaged to marry the lady Elizabeth, under the compact by which he was to be supported in his pretensions. This claim, through the daughter of Edward IV., was most likely to content the people, who had become attached to the house of York, and were satisfied of the clearness of their title to the throne. But relying upon the title to be obtained by this marriage, he would only have been a king by courtesy. "Neither," adds his historian, "wanted there even at that time secret rumours and whisperings,—which afterwards gathered strength and turned to great troubles—that the two young sons of king Edward IV., or one of them, which sons were said to be destroyed in the Tower, were not indeed murdered, but were conveyed secretly away, and were yet living: which, if it had been true, had prevented the title of the lady Elizabeth."† As to his own title, as the representative of the house of Lancaster, "he knew it was a title condemned by parliament, and generally prejudged in the common opinion of the realm."‡ As to the third title, that of conqueror, he felt that it would provoke terror, and that even William I. forbore to use that claim in the beginning. He put on the name and state of a king, therefore, without proclaiming any title, in the first instance; and thus, the needy adventurer of August, 1485, was crowned king of England and France, on the 30th of October. But a parliament being held on the 7th of November, when the speaker was presented to the king,—who had received his crown on the battle-field, from his Norman vagabonds, as Comines describes his soldiers, and from the deserters of Richard, "as though he had been elected by the voice of the people,"—he spoke of his accession, "as well by just hereditary title as by the sure judgment of God, which was manifested by giving him the victory in the field over his enemy."§ But the parliament would not accept the vain pretension of an hereditary title, nor the insolent one of a title by conquest. The desire for tranquillity and a peaceful succession was paramount; and a title was made for Henry VII. as king de facto. By the Act of Settlement it is ordained, "in avoiding all ambiguities

\* Sir N. H. Nicolas, "Memoirs of Elizabeth of York," p. lxiil.

† "History of Henry VII.," p. 4.

‡ Rolls of Parliament.

§ *Ibid.*

and questions, that the inheritance of the crowns of the realms of England and of France," &c., shall "be, rest, remain, and abide, in the most royal person of our now sovereign lord king Henry VII., and in the heirs of his body, lawfully coming, perpetually, with the grace of God so to endure, and in none other."\* The parliament, however, would not bestow the crown upon this branch of the house of Lancaster without a regard to the condition which was likely to prevent future disputes. Before its prorogation in December, the speaker of the Commons prayed the king, "that in consideration of the right to the realms of England and France being vested in his person and the heirs of his body by the authority of the said parliament, he would be pleased to espouse the lady Elizabeth, daughter of king Edward IV., which marriage they hoped God would bless with a progeny of the race of kings." The Lords rose, and bowing to the throne, intimated that they assented to this desire. Henry expressed his willingness to comply with the request; and the marriage took place on the following 18th of January. In consequence of their relationship, a dispensation was necessary; but it appears that no efforts had been made to obtain it, until after this parliamentary declaration.

The mode in which the question of Henry's title was determined by the parliament is some evidence that the ancient spirit of the great council of the realm was not extinct. The Lords and Commons would not allow themselves to be considered the representatives of a conquered people; nor would they admit a claim of lineal descent which would be resisted by a powerful party, if not by a majority of the nation. The accident, for it was scarcely more, of the victory of Bosworth Field, had left the way clear for the adherents of the house of Lancaster to regain their lost position; and a qualified submission to the favoured of fortune was the most prudent and honest course. There could have been no enthusiasm for the personal qualities of Henry; which were not of a nature to command the admiration of an age in which the military virtues were still held as the proudest adornment of a ruler of men. The new king was essentially different in character from any one of the Plantagenet race. He was not intellectually weak, as Henry VI.; nor incapable of self-government, as Edward II. and Richard II. But he had none of the heroic qualities—the thirst for glory, the pride, the high courage, the resolute will, which were the attributes of the first, the third, and the fourth Edward—of Henry IV. and

\* Statutes, by Authority, vol. ii. p. 492.

Henry V.—of Richard III. The spirit of the feudal ages had no longer a representative. But Henry VII. brought to the throne a character which was eminently fitted to the requirements of a new state of society. The work which he had to carry forward had been partially accomplished in the wars of York and Lancaster, by the outpouring of the blood, the waste of the resources, the attainders and forfeitures of the dominant nobility. The new king was to build up the monarchy upon the complete subjection of the aristocracy as a caste separate from the people; and he was to do this, not by force but by sagacity—not by terror but by subtlety—not by lavish expenditure but by ever-grasping acquisition. If this first sovereign of the house of Tudor had carried forward his policy, which was essentially arbitrary, amongst a people without that reverence for ancestral freedom which was almost an instinct, he and his successors might have established a despotism as severe as that which in some other European countries followed a similar triumph of the regal prerogative. But Henry VII.—although indifferent enough to the rights of the people, and always ready to increase his hoarded riches by cunning extortion rather than by parliamentary taxation,—preserved the country in order and tranquillity; and thus the practical liberties of the people were constantly advancing with their industrial prosperity. We shall have occasion to relate a succession of attempts to disturb the rule of this king; but the indifference with which the bulk of the English community regarded them is the best proof that the policy of this man was fitted for his time. The period of Henry VII. was that of the invention of printing, and the discovery of America. The spread of knowledge and the extension of commerce were soon to work mighty changes in all nations; and England was in a great degree fortunate to have passed under the rule of a king who would not retard the progress of improvement by clinging to the worn-out systems of the middle ages.

The desire for the union of the houses of York and Lancaster was a popular sentiment to which Henry gave little encouragement when he had the reins of power in his hands. "His aversion to the house of York was so predominant in him," says Bacon, "as it found place, not only in his wars and councils, but in his chamber and bed."\* He had sworn at Vannes to marry Elizabeth of York; but he showed no alacrity in performing his oath. Although the marriage was solemnised in January, 1486, the public honour of the

queen's coronation was deferred till late in the year 1487. The chief adherents of Richard III. had been attainted, in the usual course of such revolutions. But Henry also held the property of a great body of Yorkists within his grasp, by revoking, on his own authority, all grants of the crown made since 1454-5, when the influence of Richard, duke of York, began to preponderate. There was one representative of that house, whom he held in dread, even in the moment of his victory at Bosworth. Edward, earl of Warwick, the son of the duke of Clarence, had been placed by Edward IV. at the castle of Sheriff Hutton, from the time of his father's death in 1478. The young prince remained there during the reign of Richard III. The first exercise of authority by Henry was to remove the earl of Warwick to the Tower, out of whose dreary walls he never passed. The temper of the king towards the Yorkists produced an injudicious rising in 1486, under lord Lovel and Thomas and Humphrey Stafford. This was soon quelled. In Ireland, the partisans of the house of York had filled the chief offices, under the earls of Kildare, since the accession of Edward IV. The love for that house was still the prevailing feeling; and, in reliance upon this fidelity, two remarkable attempts to shake the power of Henry VII. had their first manifestations in Ireland.

Henry, after the insurgents under Lovel and the Staffords had dispersed, continued his progress through the midland and northern counties. The queen remained at Winchester. Here, in September, she gave birth to a son, who received the name of Arthur. The partisans of the house of York chose this period for the development of a plot, apparently most wild and purposeless, founded upon a reliance upon popular credulity almost beyond belief. In the spring of 1487 a youth appeared in Ireland, calling himself Edward Plantagenet, earl of Warwick. The son of Clarence when committed to the Tower was about fifteen years of age. The youth who presented himself to the earl of Kildare, the lord deputy, at Dublin, was accompanied by a priest of the name of Simons, and he represented himself as the earl of Warwick, who had escaped from his confinement in the Tower. Either his pretensions were implicitly believed by Kildare, or he was a party to the scheme, which had evidently been promoted by persons of influence. In a letter written by king Henry, four years after, he says, "not forgetting the great malice that the lady Margaret of Burgoigne beareth continually against us; as she shewed lately in sending hither of a feigned boy, surmising him to have been the

son of the duke of Clarence, and caused him to be accompanied with the earl of Lincoln, the lord Lovel, and with a great multitude of Irishmen and of Almaines."\* The hostility of Margaret of Burgundy to Richmond, the husband of her niece, was possibly the result of his neglect of that niece, and of his general oppression of the Yorkists. But her countenance of an imposture, which could be so readily exposed by producing the real son of Clarence, who was well known, and the subsequent adherence of persons of high position to the conspiracy, can scarcely be explained upon any rational principles of human conduct, except we believe that the pretended earl of Warwick was set up as a feeler of public opinion. Bacon, speaking of Margaret of Burgundy, says, "it was not her meaning, nor no more was it the meaning of any of the better and sager sort that favoured this enterprise and knew the secret, that this disguised idol should possess the crown; but at his peril to make way to the overthrow of the king; and that done they had their several hopes and ways."† The earl of Lincoln and lord Lovel were of these "better and sager sort;" and they, with two thousand troops, under an experienced captain, Martin Swartz, set sail from Flanders in March, and landing at Dublin, the pupil of Simons the priest was proclaimed king as Edward VI. Lincoln, the son of the eldest sister of Edward IV., had been nominated as his heir by Richard III.; but in taking up the cause of the simulated king, in whose name writs had been issued, and a parliament convoked, at Dublin, he made no assertion of his own pretensions. With "a great multitude of Irishmen and Almaines," Lincoln and Lovel landed on the Lancashire coast, encamped near Ulverstone, and marched through Yorkshire towards Newark. Very few joined the band who proclaimed Edward VI. the head of the house of York. The number of the insurgents, and their foreign auxiliaries, amounted to eight thousand men. At Stoke-upon-Trent, on the 4th of June, the vanguard of Henry's army, under the earl of Oxford, was attacked by this ill-appointed force, of which few understood regular warfare except the Germans. The cavalry of the earl of Oxford soon obtained a victory, in which one-half of the insurgents were slaughtered. The earl of Lincoln, lords Thomas and Maurice Fitzgerald, Sir Thomas Broughton, and the brave Martin Swartz, fell in the field. Lord Lovel escaped; but was no more heard of. The seat of this family was Minster-Lovel in Oxfordshire, and that

\* Ellis, "Original Letters," Series I., vol. i. p. 19.

† "History of Henry VII.," p. 21.

house being pulled down early in the eighteenth century, "in a vault was found the person of a man, in very rich clothing, seated in a chair, with a table and a mass-book before him, the body of whom was yet entire when the workmen entered, but upon admission of the air soon fell to dust; from whence we may reasonably conclude that it was the fate of this unhappy nobleman to have retired to his own house after the battle before mentioned, and there to have trusted himself to some servant, by whom he was there immured, and afterwards neglected, either through treachery or fear, or some accident which befel that person."\*

The pretended earl of Warwick, and Simons the priest, were captured at the battle of Stoke. The youth, who was named Lambert Simnel, was treated by the king "as an image of wax that others had tempered and moulded," and was taken into a mean office in Henry's kitchen. "He turned a broach that had worn a crown." The priest was committed to prison, and was never more heard of; "the king loving to seal up his own dangers." Thus Bacon describes the issue of this mysterious imposture. But he also says that when Henry knew that the earl of Lincoln was slain, he declared to some of his council that "he was sorry for the earl's death, because, by him, he said, he might have known the bottom of his danger." The historian of Henry VII. relates, as every chronicler had related before him, that, in consequence of this attempt to set up a representative, although a false one, of the house of York, "it was one of the king's first acts to cloister the queen-dowager in the nunnery of Bermondsey, and to take away all her lands and estate; and this by a close counsel, without any legal proceeding, upon far-fetched pretences that she had delivered her two daughters out of sanctuary to king Richard, contrary to promise." Recent investigations have been held to render this alleged persecution of the widow of Edward IV. more than doubtful. Before Lincoln's rebellion she was chosen to be the god-mother of Henry's first-born son. After the battle of Stoke, it was proposed by the king that she should marry the king of Scotland. She might have been confined, it is admitted, when Lincoln's attempt became serious; as the earl of Dorset, her son, was also confined. He was released at the coronation of Henry's queen, in November, 1487. The actions of this king were so inscrutable, and he was so accustomed to walk in crooked paths, that it is very

\* "Genealogical History of the House of Yvery," quoted in preface to "Liber de Antiquis Legibus," p. cccxxiii.

difficult in his case, as we believe, to set up a few isolated facts against a general testimony. Thus, when we find the queen-dowager attending her daughter, in 1489, when ambassadors from France were received at Court, we are furnished with no absolute disproof, as alleged, of her enforced seclusion at Bermondsey. Nor is the mere proposal that she should marry the king of Scotland any evidence that Henry did not regard her with suspicion, and treat her with harshness.\* She might be paraded for state purposes before the ambassadors; and her name might be used in a negotiation with Scotland for some covert purpose, never intended to be realised. The hypothesis of some modern historians as to the cause of her alleged confinement at Bermondsey—having "no worldly goods," as appears by her will, wherewith to reward any of her children according to her heart and mind—is, that she was kept in poverty and durance, to prevent her revealing the existence, and taking measures for establishing the rights, of one of the sons of king Edward IV., who was still living. Bacon says that the proceedings against the dowager-queen, being even at that time [1487] taxed as rigorous and undue, "make it very probable there was some greater matter against her, which the king, upon reason of policy, and to avoid envy, would not publish." In judging of this question of the forced seclusion of the mother of Henry's wife, we must bear in mind that there are two recorded facts which appear to contradict the less precise statements of historical writers. But these are scarcely enough to justify the antiquarian contempt with which, in this instance, the ordinary relations are regarded: "Such, however," says Sir N. H. Nicolas, "is history as it is represented by chroniclers, and such are the effects of historians repeating the statements of their predecessors."† Let us have all due respect for records; but let not such solitary notices of uncorroborated circumstances be held sufficient to turn aside the whole current of ordinary testimony. When such testimony is evidently coloured for a particular object—as the unmeasured vituperation of Richard III. evidently was by those who wrote in the interests of him whose succession had a shadow of justice arising out of Richard's alleged crimes—it may reasonably be suspected. But it can scarcely be imputed to "the ignorance or the prejudices of writers to whom implicit credence has been generally given"—

\* Sir N. H. Nicolas and Dr. Lingard consider these facts as conclusive against the statements of Bacon and the previous chroniclers, Polydore, Hall, and Grafton.

† "Memoirs of Elizabeth of York," p. lxxx.

chroniclers who wrote with a similar bias towards Henry VII — that they all agree in relating some actions highly discreditable to him, such as his severity towards the mother of his queen, his prejudice against the queen herself, and his unrelenting hostility to the great body of the supporters of the house of York.

There was one straitforward proceeding connected with the insurrection of 1487, which was a remarkable deviation from Henry's ambiguous policy. He publicly exhibited the real earl of Warwick to the people, in a procession from the Tower to St. Paul's; and he allowed him, for a short time, to be seen at his palace of Shene. The serious nature of the insurrection, however ridiculous its pretence, convinced him also that it was necessary to pursue a course of more outward respect for the feelings of those who thought that the union of the two houses was a better foundation for security and peace, than his own pretensions of hereditary right. After the long-delayed coronation of his queen, a due provision was made for her maintenance, and she appeared with proper state upon public occasions.

The period had arrived when the foreign policy of England was to assume a very different character from that of the feudal times. It was no longer a question whether provinces of France should belong to the English crown; and costly wars be undertaken that English nobles should be lords in Normandy and Poitou. But England could not separate herself from the affairs of the continent; and her internal administration had still an almost inevitable relation to foreign alliances and foreign quarrels. The principal European monarchies having become, to a great extent, consolidated, the policy of each government was conducted upon a broader scale than that of disturbing a nation by stimulating a revolt of petty princes against their suzerain. The contests for dominion were now to be between kingdom and kingdom. The schemes of rival princes for accessions of territory, or preponderance of influence through inter-marriages, were to raise up political combinations amongst other states, whose sovereigns, armed with the powers of war and peace, would carry on their diplomacy, chiefly according to their own personal views of what was necessary for aggrandisement or security. In England, where the ambition of the monarch was limited by the power of parliament to give or withhold supplies, the disposition to rush into distant quarrels was in some degree regulated and restrained. King Henry pursued a cautious and almost timid policy in his foreign relations. It was

fortunate for the material progress of the country that, in the complicated questions of European supremacy which were arising, he followed the direction of his own subtlety, rather than the promptings of the national spirit. He taxed his people for the ostentation of war, and then put their subsidies into his own purse. He was a benefactor to this land, however, in his anxiety to preserve peace between England and Scotland, at a period when the internal troubles of Scotland, and the death of James III. in battle with his rebellious nobles, might have tempted a more warlike ruler into new projects of conquest and concentration of power.

Henry VII. had the strongest obligations of gratitude to the duke of Brittany, who had sheltered him in his period of exile and poverty. The duke Francis was advanced in years. Charles VIII. of France was in the flush of youth, with a sort of rash chivalrous spirit, which was mixed up with the same love of secret policies as belonged to his intriguing father. During the period of his tutelage under a regency, a quarrel had arisen between the governments of Brittany and France, and war was declared against Brittany. That country was distracted by rival parties, the chief object of contention being who should marry Anne, the rich heiress of Francis, and thus be ruler of the duchy after his death. There were several candidates for this prize. The French government thought it a favourable time to enter upon a war, for the real purpose of preventing the marriage of the Breton heiress to either of her suitors, and for the annexation of Brittany to France. Henry VII. was appealed to for assistance by both parties in the contest. The sympathies of England went with the weaker state in this struggle. Henry would declare for neither, but offered himself as a mediator. Charles VIII. was now of an age to act for himself; and he carried war into Brittany, and besieged the duke in his capital of Rennes. Henry, meanwhile, had been employed in his natural vocation of state-craft; promising assistance to the friend of his adversity, but never rendering it; asking his parliament for means to resist the dangerous aggrandisement of France; and having obtained a grant of two-fifteenths, concluding an armistice with Charles. By the end of 1488, when Francis of Brittany had died, his country was overrun by the French. Henry was now compelled to do something. He promised an English army to the orphan princess Anne; and at the same time he contrived to let Charles understand that if the English people compelled him into war, his troops should act only on the defensive. At the beginning

of 1489 he again went to parliament, and demanded an aid of a hundred thousand pounds. Seventy-five thousand were granted to him. He raised a force of six thousand archers and sent them to Brittany, according to his engagement with Anne that this force should serve in her cause for six months. The French king knew precisely what this meant; avoided any engagement with the English, who as carefully kept out of his way; and at the end of six months the little army returned home. Meanwhile the crafty king learnt that it was somewhat unsafe to play these tricks of cunning with the English people; for a violent insurrection had broken out in the northern counties, to resist the payment of the tax raised for this mockery of war. "This, no doubt," says Bacon, "proceeded not simply of any present necessity, but much by reason of the old humour of these countries, where the memory of king Richard was so strong, that it lay like lees in the bottom of men's hearts, and if the vessel was but stirred it would come up." Henry Percy, earl of Northumberland, who had betrayed Richard on Bosworth Field, enforced the payment of the subsidy. "A harsh business was fallen into the hands of a harsh man;" and the revolted people murdered him. As a general movement, the insurrection was soon suppressed by the earl of Surrey. The tax had not yielded what was expected; and in 1490, the king again went to parliament for further aid to carry on the pretended war. He was again at his favourite work of diplomacy; entering into alliances with Ferdinand of Spain, and Maximilian, king of the Romans, for the alleged purpose of restraining the growing power of France, but each having a private and special object. Maximilian wanted the princess Anne and the duchy of Brittany; Ferdinand aimed at the restitution of Rousillon; all that Henry sought was to get money wherever he could, either as a bribe from France, or as a repayment of expenses from Anne. Maximilian was the most open of these royal schemers. He gave manful assistance to the oppressed Bretons, and the princess entered into a contract of marriage with him. Charles of France now put forward his pretensions to the hand of the lady. The contract was void, he said, because Brittany was a fief of France, and the lord could control the marriage of an heiress who was his vassal. This argument was supported by the emphatic presence of a French army; and the princess, who resisted till resistance was no longer possible, was forced into a marriage which she hated, and into the conclusion of a treaty which placed the province, so long independent, under the French

dominion. Whilst these events were ripening, Henry had been employing the pretence of war as a reason for extorting money under the system of "Benevolences," which had been annulled by the parliament of Richard. In October, 1491, he proclaimed his intention of punishing the French king. He again obtained a large grant from his faithful Lords and Commons, and procured several laws to be passed which gave encouragement to the prosecution of a war, which had become a national object. But, having got the money, and encouraged many knights and nobles in raising men, he still delayed any active measures of apparent hostility through the spring, summer, and autumn of 1492. At length, in October, he landed at Calais with a well-appointed army, and invested Boulogne with twenty-five thousand infantry and sixteen hundred cavalry. The old military spirit of England was again predominant. But, for three months previous to this costly parade, the wily king had been negotiating a peace with Charles of France; and it appears in the highest degree probable that the treaty was actually signed when the English forces landed. Henry called a council within a week after his landing, and laid before them a rough draft of a treaty offered by France, which his subservient ministers advised him to sign. This was a public instrument, by which peace was concluded between the two crowns. There was another document, a private one, by which Charles was to pay a hundred and forty-nine thousand pounds to the money-making king of England. The advisers of Henry were handsomely bribed, as well as their master. The half-ruined chiefs of the expedition had no course but that of venting useless execrations on their dissembling and rapacious sovereign, "who did but traffic in that war to make his return in money."\* Henry, however, had a motive for pacification, which was even more imperative than his avarice. Charles of France had a guest at his court, who, if the king of England were really to become an enemy in earnest, might be let loose to work more damage to the house of Tudor than any failure in open warfare. One who called himself Richard, duke of York, was in France acknowledged as the rightful heir to the English throne, and surrounded with a guard of honour and other demonstrations of confidence and respect. When Henry had concluded the pacification, the French king commanded this Richard to leave his dominions. The peace was welcome to both kings, says Bacon: "to Henry, for that it filled his coffers, and that he foresaw, at that

\* Bacon.

time, a storm of inward troubles coming upon him, which presently after broke forth." These "inward troubles" form the subject of one of the most curious and controverted passages of English history,—the story commonly known as that of Perkin Warbeck. The story would not be worth relating in detail if we were to accept the dogmatic assertion that "the legitimacy of Perkin Warbeck is a mere freak of paradoxical ingenuity."\* We shall endeavour to put together a brief narrative of this remarkable claim to the crown as far as possible from authentic materials; not resting wholly on the common supposition that the two sons of Edward IV. were murdered, or confidently arguing that the younger escaped, and re-appeared to demand his inheritance; but rather accepting the more safe conclusion of Mr. Hallam, that "a very strong conviction either way is not readily attainable." †

\* Edinburgh Review," June, 1826, p. 2.

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

## CHAPTER XI.

A young man received at Cork as the second son of Edward IV.—Ex-parte accounts of Perkin Warbeck.—Letter from "Richard Plantagenet" to Isabella, queen of Spain.—Henry requires the surrender of Richard from the duke of Austria.—Arrests and executions in England.—Sir William Stanley impeached by Clifford, whom Henry had bribed.—Arrests in Ireland.—Statute regarding allegiance to a king de facto.—Richard, so-called, in Scotland.—Correspondence of Bothwell.—Difficulties of an imposture.—Invasion by the Scots.—The Cornish insurrection.—Captivity of the adventurer.—Alleged treason of the earl of Warwick.—Warwick and his fellow-prisoner executed.

It was about the beginning of 1492, when king Henry was busied in making a great show of preparation for war with France, that a small merchant-vessel from Lisbon entered the Cove of Cork, and landed a young man who was amongst the passengers. Bacon has described him as of fine countenance and shape; "but more than that, he had such a crafty and bewitching fashion, both to move pity and to induce belief, as was like a kind of fascination or enchantment to those that saw him or heard him." The rumour went through Cork that he was the second son of Edward IV.; and the citizens, encouraged by John Water, who had been their mayor, became enthusiastic in his behalf. The earl of Desmond, who had been devotedly attached to the house of York, declared in favour of this supposed representative of that house; and the earl of Kildare offered him some assistance. Bacon says that "he wrote his letters unto the earls of Desmond and Kildare to come in to his aid, and be of his party, the originals of which letters are yet extant." But the young man remained only a short time in Ireland; and then passed over to France, as we have before indicated.\* After the peace of Estaples, he left the court of Charles VIII., and proceeded to Flanders, where he claimed the protection of Margaret, duchess of Burgundy, the sister of Edward IV. To this princess, whom the friends of Henry called Juno, because they believed she was to him the cause of every mischief, as Juno was to Æneas, is assigned by all the chroniclers the scheme of raising

\* See ante, p. 201.

up an impostor, and preparing him for his part before his appearance in Ireland. Hall says, "she kept him a certain space with her privily, and him with such diligence instructed, both of the secrets and common affairs of the realm of England, and of the lineage, descent, and order of the house of York, that he, like a good scholar not forgetting his lesson, could tell all that was taught him promptly."\* Bacon is more minute, stating that the duchess described to him, whom "she kept by her a great while, but with extreme secrecy," whatever related to the person of Richard, duke of York; and made him have an accurate impression of the features and manners of Edward, and his queen, their family, and all those who would have been about the princes in their childhood. To these statements it has been objected that the duchess of Burgundy was married out of England seven years before Richard of York was born, and having never returned was little capable of entering into minute circumstances connected with the English court.† But the "Wardrobe Accounts of Edward IV." show that this sister of Edward was in England for six weeks, in 1480, and thus could have acquired the intimate knowledge with which she formed her apt scholar.‡ The circumstances which the chroniclers relate of the life of this young man, before his alleged instruction at the court of the duchess of Burgundy, are in many respects inconsistent with what is certain in his subsequent career, especially when they attempt any great exactness. Hall's notice of his early years, in its vague generalisation, is less suspicious. He says that this youth, "travelling many countries, could speak English and many other languages, and from the baseness of his birth was known to none almost; and, only for the gain of his living, from his childhood, was of necessity compelled to seek and frequent divers realms and regions." When the young man's adherents had been sacrificed to the vengeance of Henry, and he was reduced to the condition of a degraded captive, he is related to have "read openly his own confession written with his own hand."§ Bacon calls this document, which he says was printed and dispersed abroad, "an extract" of such parts of the confession "as were fit to be divulged;" and he truly describes it as "a laboured tale of particulars of Perkin's father, and mother, and grandsire, and grandmother, and

\* Chronicle, 7th year of Henry VII.

† "Historic Doubts."

‡ Sir N. H. Nicolas.

§ This confession is given by Hall, as "the very copy." Fabian and Polydore Vergil offer no account of such a document.

uncles, and cousins, and from what places he travelled up and down." In this "confession" there is not a word of the duchess of Burgundy; and the whole period of the young man's life, from his birth "in the town of Tournay in Flanders" to his coming from Portugal to Cork, is attempted to be accounted for, by relating his various services under Flemish, Portuguese, and Breton masters, especially his service for a whole year with a knight that dwelt in Lisbon, "which said knight had but one eye." This narrative might readily excite Bacon's contempt, however strong his conviction of the so-called Perkin being an impostor, were it only for the absurd statement that when the young man landed in Cork, the people of the town, because he was arrayed in some of his master's fine silken clothes, laid hold of him; and maintained, first, that he was the son of the duke of Clarence; next, that he was the illegitimate son of Richard III.; and lastly, called him duke of York, "and so against my will made me to learn English, and taught me what I should do and say." This confession sets out with declaring that his father's name was John Osbeck, who was comptroller of the town of Tournay. King Henry, in instructions which he gave, in 1494, to a herald employed as his confidential envoy, says, "It is notorious that the said garçon is of no consanguinity or kin to the late king Edward, but is a native of the town of Tournay, and son of a boatman who is named Warbec; as the king is certainly assured, as well by those who are acquainted with his life and habits, as by some others his companions, who are at present with the king; and others still are beyond the sea, who have been brought up with him in their youth."\* Bernard André, the poet laureat of Henry VII., states in his MS. life of his patron, that Perkin, when a boy, was "servant in England to a Jew named Edward, who was baptised, and adopted as godson by Edward IV., and was on terms of intimacy with the king and his family."† Speed, mistranslating André's words, makes Perkin the son of the Jew, instead of the servant; and Bacon amplifies the error, and transforms John Osbeck into the convert Jew, who, having a handsome wife, it might be surmised why the licentious king "should become gossip in so mean a house." Hume adds, "people thence accounted for that resemblance which was afterwards remarked between young Perkin and that monarch." The surmise of Bacon,

\* From the very valuable collection of "Documents relating to Perkin Warbeck." published by Sir Frederic Madden in "Archæologia," vol. xxvii. p. 165.

† *Ibid.*, p. 163.