

CHAPTER III.

Richard born at Fotheringay.—Youngest son of the Duke of York and the Lady Cecily Neville.—The high lineage, accomplishments and rare beauty of his mother.—The Duke of York, the ward of her father.—Their early marriage.—Numerous offspring.—Lawless period when Richard was born.—Superior education of the young Plantagenets.—Their aspiring views inherited from their mother.—Monstrous tales relative to Richard's birth disproved.—The civil wars at their height during the childhood of Richard.—Attainder of his father and brothers.—His capture with his mother at Ludlow, and concealment.—The Yorkists regain the ascendancy.—Henry VI. made prisoner.—Claims of the Duke of York to the crown.—Conceded by the peers.—Ratified by the king.—Opposition of the queen and Lancastrian party.—Death of the Duke of York.

RICHARD PLANTAGENET, usually designated as Richard of Gloucester, was born at Fotheringay the 2d of October, 1452.* He was the youngest son and the eleventh child† of the illustrious warrior whose busy and turbulent life closed so tragically at the battle of Wakefield, on the 31st December, 1460. Of the consort of the Duke of York, the parent of his numerous offspring, no mention has hitherto been made, because it was desirable that the brief sketch of that prince's political career should be uninterrupted by domestic details. But the mother of Richard III. was no common character. Although her actions are not absolutely interwoven with the public records of the land as were those of her husband, she was nevertheless fully as remarkable for the varied fortunes that marked her troubled life, and for the vicissitudes to which she was exposed in consequence of her political connection. She is therefore entitled to a distinct and especial notice, not merely as one of the most eminent women of the age in which she flourished, but because Cecily, Duchess of York, will be found a most important personage, and to have occupied a very prominent position in the eventful life of her youngest son, Richard III.

Of high birth, superior attainments, and such rare and exquisite beauty that she obtained in childhood, throughout the district adjoining her father's abode, the appellation of the "Rose of Raby,"‡ she yet evinced a greatness of mind during periods of unexampled trial, and displayed a zeal and rectitude of purpose in the active performance of conjugal and maternal duties of no ordinary description, that render her even more an object of respect and admiration than of sympathy for the poignant sorrows which marked her sad and eventful career. This distinguished lady was the youngest of twenty-two children§ of Ralph Neville, Earl of Westmoreland, nine of whom were by his first wife, the daughter of Hugh, Earl of Stafford, and thirteen the issue of his second marriage with the Princess Joane Beaufort, the illegitimate daughter of John of Gaunt and Dame Katharine Swynford before mentioned. Though by birth a Lancastrian,—her mother being half-sister to the usurper Henry, of Bolingbroke,—yet, from very early childhood, the Lady Cecily was the companion of the attainted heir of the House

* W. Wyr., p. 477.

† Strickland's Queens of England, vol. iii. p. 317.

§ Blore's Monumental Remains, part iii.

‡ Vincent on Brooke, p. 621.

of York, who was brought up and educated in her father's house; the wardship* of the young Plantagenet, her future husband, having been bestowed by Henry V. upon the Earl of Westmoreland,† shortly after the execution of Richard's father, the Earl of Cambridge.‡ This, it was hoped, would afford security to the reigning family against future rebellion from that source; as principles of loyalty would naturally be infused into the youthful mind of Richard Plantagenet by the House of Neville, bound as they were by ties of consanguinity to the ruling House of Lancaster.

Of the place, or the precise period, at which the marriage of the Duke of York with the Lady Cecily was solemnized, no record has been found, but it probably occurred before the expiration of his wardship, and when the parties were mere children; the guardians of rich minors at this early period having the privilege of marrying their wards to whomsoever, and on what terms they pleased:§ and this arbitrary power was generally used, and, indeed, granted, for the purpose of enriching the family of him on whom the boon was conferred.¶ The Lady Cecily was about two years younger than her noble consort, having been born on the 3d of May, 1415;¶ and the loyalty of the young couple, and their entire submission to King Henry VI., who was first cousin, once removed, to Neville's daughter, as also the interest and attachment felt by that monarch for them, is evinced by the fact of his standing godfather** to their eldest son, who was thence named Henry, in deference to his royal sponsor and kinsman.

A numerous progeny was the result of their union, although it would appear from a passage in the ancient cotemporary roll before mentioned,†† that many years elapsed after their marriage before there was any prospect of perpetuating, in a direct line, the hereditary wealth and honours that had become centred in the young Duke of York.

The illustrious couple were, however, blest eventually with twelve children,‡‡ eight sons and four daughters. Of these, Henry, the eldest son,

* *Fœdera*, vol. x. p. 358.

† See Appendix K.

‡ The documents printed in the *Fœdera*, relative to the custody and wardship of Richard, Duke of York, enable this prince's career to be clearly traced from the period of his father's execution and attainder until he was restored to the family honours, both on the paternal and maternal side. This is not only interesting, but very important, as relates to various circumstances connected with his political career, and that of his offspring, Edward IV. and Richard III.

§ *Paston Letters*, vol. iii. p. 227.

¶ *Excerpta Historica*, p. 3.

** *Archæologia*, vol. xiii. p. 7.

¶ W. Wyr., p. 453.

†† Vincent, p. 621.

‡‡ The children of Richard, Duke of York, by the Lady Cecily Neville, his wife, were as follows:—

Ann of York, Duchess of Exeter, born at Fotheringay, 10th August, 1439; married first to Henry Holland, Duke of Exeter, secondly to Sir Thomas St. Leger, Knt.

Henry of York, born at Hatfield, 10th February, 1441.

Edward of York, born at Rouen, 28th April, 1442, afterwards Edward IV.

Edmonde of York, born at Rouen, 17th May, 1443, Earl of Rutland.

Elizabeth of York, born at Rouen, 22d April, 1444, married to John De la Pole, Duke of Suffolk.

Margaret of York, born at Fotheringay, 3d May, 1446, married to Charles, Duke of Burgundy.

William of York, born at Fotheringay, 7th July, 1447.

John of York, born at Neyte, near Worcester, 7th November, 1448.

George of York, born in Ireland, 21st October, 1449, afterwards Duke of Clarence.

Thomas of York, deceased in infancy, probably between the years 1450 and 1451.

Richard of York, born at Fotheringay, 2d October, 1452, afterwards Richard III.

Ursula of York, of whom no other mention is made than of her name, and that she died young.

Wm. of Worcester, apud *Hearne*, p. 461; *Sandford*, book v. p. 374; *Vincent on Brooke*, p. 621.

above mentioned, as also William, John and Thomas, their fourth, fifth and seventh sons, died in boyhood; Edmonde, the youthful Earl of Rutland, was slain on the same day with his illustrious parent; and Ursula, their youngest child, died in infancy.*

Thus, on the demise of the Duke of York, three sons and three daughters alone survived him. The former were Edward, the second son, Earl of March, his heir and successor, born at Rouen, 28th of April, 1442,† during his father's regency in France, who succeeded to the dignities of his house, and obtained that crown for which the life of his sire and his grandsire had been prematurely sacrificed; George, the sixth son, afterwards Duke of Clarence, born in 1449, at Dublin, during his parents' abode in Ireland; and Richard, the eighth son, the future monarch of England, born in the year 1452,‡ at the castle of Fotheringay, the patrimonial seat of his ancestors.§

Greater stress has been laid on the number and succession of the offspring of the Duke of York and the Lady Cecily,|| because inattention to the vast difference of age between Edward, Earl of March, their third, and Richard of Gloucester, their eleventh child, has been one leading cause of confusion as to dates, and also of many conflicting statements relative to important events, in which the latter prince is considered to have acted a prominent part, but which, it will be hereafter seen, was improbable, if not actually impossible, by reason of his extreme youth. From the odium attached to many of these, consequently, this simple but material fact in great measure exonerates him. Happily, on a point so conclusive, so essential towards a clear perception of the character of Richard III., there remains no room for doubt, or occasion for conjecture; as the ancient roll,¶ which has been already noticed on two occasions in this work,—and which was written evidently by an ecclesiastical partisan of the House of York,—after tracing the pedigree on which was founded the claim of that house to the crown, terminates in such minute particulars of the duke's immediate family, so distinctly and separately names each child in their order of birth, and narrates the whole domestic history with such a quaint minuteness, that were not many of the facts therein stated corroborated by graver records, the original style and tenour of this obsolete ballad would, of itself, sufficiently bespeak its genuineness and authenticity.**

The birth-place of Richard of Gloucester has been variously stated by different authors, some having fixed it at Berkhamstead Castle, others at Fotheringay, both which domains, however, at the time he was born, were the occasional abode of his illustrious parents; but the authority of William of Worcester,†† a cotemporary historian of credit, places the scene of his

* Vincent on Brooke, p. 621.

† W. Wyr., p. 462.

‡ Fotheringay Castle was erected by Edmund Langley, first Duke of York, the fifth son of Edward III., and the great grandsire of Richard of Gloucester.—W. Wyr., p. 473.

|| See some pointed remarks on this subject in the "Excerpta Historica," wherein it is stated, that "a history of the royal family, with a correct account of their births, marriages and deaths, is still a desideratum in historical literature."—Adden. et Corrig., p. 427.

¶ Vincent on Brooke, p. 622.

** Authority so unimpeachable as that of Vincent and Sandford, both members of the College of Arms and writers of undoubted veracity, united to that of Weever, the indefatigable antiquary and obituary, are sufficient to warrant the genuineness of the rhythmical lines referred to in the text (chap. ii), and inserted in Appendix G.

†† William Botoner, called Worcester, was born on or about the year 1415, 3d Hen. V., and died in 1490. Many of his letters are preserved in the Paston Collection,

birth beyond dispute, establishing the fact from his own knowledge of its having occurred at Fotheringay, on Monday the 2d of October, 1452.* This likewise marks the exact age of the young prince at the period of his father's decease; which event happening on the 31st of December, 1460, it will be seen that he had just attained his eighth year, and was, consequently, about ten years younger than his royal brother at the time that Edward IV., in the eighteenth year of his age, ascended the throne of England.

But the personal history of Richard III. must be commenced at a period long antecedent either to the death of his illustrious parent or the elevation of his royal brother to the throne; for few as were the years which he had numbered, and child as he was at that awful crisis, he may more truly be considered then to have entered upon his political rather than his individual career.

The fearful events that so unhappily called him into notice, and which have transmitted his name with such ignominy to posterity, together with the vicissitudes that marked his turbulent life, must be traced to causes that were in operation at a far earlier period of his existence than that which placed the crown of England on the brow of King Edward IV.

From the very hour of his birth, this ill-omened prince may be said to have inhaled the noxious vapours of that poisoned atmosphere which afterwards teemed with murder, treachery and rebellion; and ere reason or mature judgment could be exercised, the germs of that fatal ambition, which proved the bane of his after life, as it had previously led to the destruction of his immediate ancestors, were sown too deeply in his opening mind ever after to be eradicated.

Richard of Gloucester was the victim of circumstances resulting from the unhappy times in which he lived; and as his character derived its tone from the scenes of violence and bloodshed which deprived him so prematurely of a father's guidance and affection, it will be necessary, in justice to his redeeming qualities, to go back a few years, and examine into the state and domestic habits of the family of the Duke of York, at the birth of this his youngest surviving child. Out of eight sons it was reserved for him, the last born, to perpetuate the name of his illustrious parent; and it seemed as if this fatal appellation was destined to be an ominous heirloom to all of his race who bore it,† and that with the name of Richard was to be transferred a portion of that evil fortune which led to the violent death of Richard II., and entailed such disastrous results on the divided House of Plantagenet.

The offspring of the Duke of York and the Lady Cecily, whatever were the names bestowed upon them, were, at the period under present consideration, both numerous and flourishing. Although Henry, the eldest son, like his gentle and amiable godsire, was destined to leave no issue to perpetuate the name; and instead of contesting with his royal sponsor the crown of mortality, as says the old roll,

"My Lord Herry

God chosen hath to enherite heaven's bliss,"‡

while others of their progeny were early taken from their parents, and, consequently, spared the trials which awaited their surviving children; yet, judging from the attainments for which the remaining sons and daughters of

vol. i. Dr. Lingard terms him "a cotemporary and well-informed writer," (vol. v. p. 190;) and Worcester, in his own Annals, says, that on many occasions he "spoke from knowledge and not hearsay."

* W. Wyr., p. 477.

† See Appendix L.

‡ Vincent, p. 621.

the House of York were so pre-eminently conspicuous, they must have been not only highly endowed by nature with an excellent capacity, but also have been more than usually accomplished for the early period at which they flourished.

To the Lady Cecily, in great measure, may be attributed the superior acquirements of her family, who, it is evident, from various sources, were most carefully educated by her; for the instruction of the high-born youth in the middle ages was chiefly intrusted to maternal superintendence, owing to the warlike claims which personal or feudal engagements continually imposed upon the nobles of the land. That the Duchess of York was the companion of her husband in all his varied fortunes is evident from the different birth-places of their offspring, which show her to have been with him in France during his regency in that kingdom, in Ireland during his disturbed command in that country, and in all the several districts in England where public or private duty called him. But she selected for the immediate tuition of her progeny a preceptress so in every way worthy of the important trust, that it exemplifies, in a striking manner, not merely her maternal solicitude but the superior judgment exercised by the Lady Cecily in all the duties of life. The lady governess to the young princes was the daughter of Sir Edward Cornwall, Baron of Burford, and the widow of Sir Hugh Mortimer, a collateral branch of the House of York;* and from whom, in the absence of their natural parents, the young Plantagenets evidently received the most careful instruction, and an education very superior to that which was ordinarily bestowed in the era in which they lived.

Of the uniform manner in which the household of the Duchess of York was probably conducted, of the religious and moral sentiments there inculcated, we have substantial proof in a valuable and highly interesting document which has been preserved to the present day;† narrating the order, rules and regulations observed in her establishment,‡ and evincing the sound principles and strict discipline enforced by its noble mistress.

"She useth to arise at seven of the clock, and hath readye her chapleyne to saye with her mattins of the daye, and mattins of our lady, and when she is fully readye she hath a lowe mass in her chambre; and after masse she taketh something to recreate nature and soe goeth to the chapelle, hearinge the divine service and two lowe masses. From thence to dynner, duringe the tyme whereof she hath a lecture of holy matter, either 'Hilton of Contemplative and Active Life,' or other spiritual and instructive works. After dinner she giveth audyence to all such as hath any matter to shewe unto her by the space of one hower, and then sleepeth one quarter of an hower, and after she hath slepte she contynueth in prayer unto the first peale of even-songe. In the tyme of supper she recyeth the lecture that was had at dinner to those that be in her presence. After supper she disposeth herself to be familiar with her gentlewomen, to the seeac'on§ of honest myrthe; and one houre before her going to bed she taketh a cuppe of wyne, and after that, goeth to her pryvie closette and taketh her leave of God for all nighte, makinge end of her prayers for that daye, and by eighte of the clocke is in bedde."¶

* Ancient Charters in the British Museum, vol. xiv. p. 3.

† In a collection of papers now at the Board of Green Cloth, St. James's.

‡ See Appendix M.

§ Probably, seasoning, or encouraging.

¶ In the curious document above alluded to, the hours observed for the serving of meals are specified in the rules for the household arrangements: they are interesting, as illustrative of the manners and customs of that early period.

Rules of the House.

Upon eating days. At dinner by eleven of the clocke.

Although the particular record whence the foregoing is extracted was drawn up at a much later period of her life than that now under consideration, yet the same spirit that influenced her conduct in after years, there can be little doubt, also animated this eminent lady in the regulation of her domestic circle, at a time when maternal solicitude would naturally infuse into her actions an energy and buoyancy of spirit, which had long and sorrowfully ceased, at the time when that well-devised and perfect system, which reflects such honour on her memory, was strictly observed in her abode at Berk-hampstead.*

This conclusion is warranted by similar ordinances having been framed for the regulation of the household of her son George, Duke of Clarence, long after he was emancipated from maternal influence:† and yet more, by corresponding rules having been afterwards drawn up by her eldest son, King Edward IV., for the observance of his own offspring;‡ in which many of the regulations so closely correspond with those pursued by his mother, that it may fairly be inferred he followed the same plans which had been strictly enforced in the education and conduct of himself and his brothers in their own youth at Ludlow.

The greatest affection towards their noble parents§ was the result of this judicious treatment; for though constant and severe discipline appears to have been observed, yet evidence is not wanting in proof also of the indulgence with which they were regarded, and the familiarity with which, when absent, they expressed their childless wishes to their father, and communicated to him all their imaginary grievances. This is instanced by an original letter|| preserved in the Cott. MSS.¶ from the young Earl of March to his father, the Duke of York, written when a mere stripling, petitioning for some "fyne bonetts" for himself and the Earl of Rutland, and complaining of the extreme severity, "the odieux rule and demeaning," of one "Richard Crofte and his brother," apparently their tutors**—a document which is the more interesting from its being (as Sir Henry Ellis, who first made it known to the public, observes) one of the earliest specimens extant of domestic and familiar Eng-

Upon fasting days. At dinner by twelve of the clocke.

At supper, upon eating dayes, (for the officers,) at four of the clocke.

My Lady and the household at five of the clocke at supper.

Livery of fires and candles, from the feast of All-hallows, unto Good Friday—then expireth the time of fire and candle.

Orders and rules of the Princess Cecill. Printed by the Society of Antiquaries.

* Archæologia, vol. xiii. p. 7.

† Entitled "Ordinances for the Household of George, Duke of Clarence, made the 9th of December, 1469." Published by the Society of Antiquaries, 1790.

‡ Sloane MSS., No. 3. p. 479.

§ Archæol., vol. xiii.

¶ Cott. MSS., vol. iii. fol. 9.

|| See Appendix N.

** This Richard Crofte was the celebrated warrior, whose name so frequently appears in the warlike annals of the reign of Edward IV. He was the grandson of Sir John de Crofte, and of Janet, daughter of the renowned Owen Glendower. He espoused the lady governess of the young Plantagenets; hence, it is presumed, from the above-named complaint, that the elder sons were at this time intrusted to the custody of himself and his brother. It is worthy of notice that, notwithstanding the juvenile complaint of "Crofte's odieux rule and demeaning," King Edward's attachment to his tutor in maturer years was evinced by the emoluments which he bestowed upon him after his accession to the crown. Sir Richard Crofte lived to a great age, and was one of the most distinguished soldiers of his time: he survived every member of the family in whose service he had so early been engaged, and had to mourn the premature and violent deaths of the whole of his princely pupils.—*Retrospective Review*, 2d Series, vol. i. p. 472.

lish correspondence.* Were any thing wanted to prove still more strongly the great care and pains bestowed on the education of the young Plantagenets, a second letter from the youthful princes, yet more confirmatory on this point, and by no means less pleasing from the dutiful feeling which pervades the whole, has been preserved in the same valuable collection of manuscripts.† As original letters most vividly portray the true and natural character of individuals, by depicting their inmost thoughts and feelings, the insertion of one of these letters at full length will afford evidence more conclusive than could have reasonably been expected at this distant period of the actual state of the Duke of York's family; of the filial affection entertained towards their parents,—a point the more worthy of regard, as this feeling has been disputed from the events which happened in after years, and of the actual mode in which their children were reared at the time of the birth of Richard of Gloucester and during his tenderest infancy.

The second letter, as the one least known, has been selected in illustration of these points: it is dated the 3d of June, and was written, as it would appear, in 1454, when the Earl of March was twelve, and the Earl of Rutland eleven years of age.

“Right high and mighty Prince, our most worshipful and greatly redoubted lord and father,—In as lowly wise as any sons can, or may, we recommend us unto your good lordship; and please it your highness to wit, that we have received your worshipful letters yesterday by your servant William Cleton, bearing date at York the 29th day of May.‡

“By the which William, and by the relation of John Milewater, we conceive your worshipful and victorious speed against your enemies; to their great shame, and to us the most comfortable things that we desired to hear. Whereof we thank Almighty God of his gifts; beseeching him heartily to give you that good and cotidian fortune, hereafter to know your enemies, and to have the victory of them. And if it please your highness to know of our welfare at the making of this letter, we were in good health of body, thanked be God; beseeching your good and gracious fatherhood of your daily blessing. And where ye command us by your said letters to attend specially to our learning in our young age, that should cause us to grow to honour and worship in our old age, please it your highness to wit, that we have attended our learning since we came hither,§ and shall hereafter, by the which we trust to God your gracious lordship and good fatherhood shall be pleased. Also we beseech your good lordship, that it may please you to send us Harry

* Previous to the reign of Henry V., specimens of English correspondence are rare. Letters before that time were usually written in French or Latin, and were the production chiefly of the great and learned. The letters of the learned were mere verbose treatises, mostly on express subjects; those of the great, who employed scribes, from their formality, resembled legal instruments. We have nothing earlier than the fifteenth century which can be called a familiar letter. The earliest royal signature known in this country is the signature of Richard II.—*Ellis's Original Letters*, 1st Series, p. 9.

† Cott. MSS. Vesp. F. xiii. fol. 35.

‡ Apparently acquainting them that he had triumphed over the Duke of Suffolk, and been appointed protector and defender of the realm. This conclusion is formed (for the year is not mentioned) from his son styling him “protector and defender of England,” to which office he was first appointed in April, 1454, and from there being proof that he was not at York subsequent to any fortunate event in his life after he bore those titles.—*Excerpta Historica*, p. 8.

§ This possibly may refer to the duke's expostulations in reply to their complaints respecting Richard Crofte and his brother, if, as is surmised, the young princes were at this period under their tutelage.

Lovedeyne, groom of your kitchen, whose service is to us right agreeable; and we will send you John Boyes to wait on your good lordship.

“Right high and mighty Prince, our most worshipful and greatly redoubted lord and father, we beseech Almighty God give you as good life and long, as your own princely heart can best desire.

“Written at your castle of Ludlow the 3d day of June.

“Your humble sons,

“E. MARCHE.

“E. RUTLAND.

“To the right high and mighty Prince, our most worshipful and greatly redoubted lord and father, the Duke of York, protector and defender of England.”*

These letters were both dated from Ludlow, at which castle, it appears, from the expression used by the young Earl of March “since we came hither,” that the household of the Duke of York had recently taken up their abode. His offspring are said to have been chiefly brought up in the north,† in the castles of Fotheringay, Middleham and Sendal; though they may also be occasionally found dwelling with their parents at Wigmore, Berkhamstead, Clare and other lordships in England, Ireland and Wales, which accrued to the Duke of York by birth or by marriage, from the princely houses of Mortimer Clarence, York and Westmoreland.‡ Baynard's Castle, too, one of the most imposing fabrics in the metropolis, was about this period bestowed upon him§ by King Henry VI.; and this ancient fortress is not only chronicled as the dwelling-place of himself and the Lady Cecily, on various important occasions, but it was the scene of some of the most striking political events connected with themselves and their children, especially Richard of Gloucester, with whose after career it is intimately associated.

And well was it for the mother of so numerous a family, born in such troubled times, the victims of hereditary feuds, and destined, like their parents, to be from infancy to the grave the sport of fortune, and exposed to all the extremes of vicissitude, that places of refuge, appertaining to them by inheritance, were so widely and numerously distributed; for, as may be gathered from the preceding pages, little security or peace could long be enjoyed by the kindred of so prominent, and to the reigning family and their

* The obsolete spelling has been modernized in the copy here inserted, but the letter is printed literally in the *Excerpta Historica*, p. 8.

† Buck's *Richard III.*, lib. i. p. 7.

‡ See Appendix O.

§ Baynard's Castle has been generally stated to have been given to the Duke of York by King Henry VI., on the decease of his uncle Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, in 1447. This is an error, for Polydore Virgil expressly states, that in 31 Hen. VI., Edmund of Hadham, that monarch's half brother, on his being created Earl of Richmond, “obtained a grant from the king in fee of that mansion-house called Baynard's Castle, situated near Paul's Wharf in London.” The earl possessed it but four years, as he died November 1, 1456; upon which the fortress again lapsed to the crown. The Duke of York was at that time protector and defender of the realm; and, as this mansion had usually been occupied by princes of the blood-royal, it was most probably taken possession of by the duke in right of his high office; or it may have been awarded to him by the council, and his occupation of it confirmed to him by King Henry, on his recovery and re-assumption of the regal power; for the earliest mention of the Duke of York, in conjunction with this fortress, is in January, 1458, when he is stated to have “taken up his abode at his mansion at Baynard's Castle within the city” during the important convocation of the nobles, when summoned by the king with the view of effecting a reconciliation and arresting the fierce contests of his turbulent subjects.—*Fabian*, p. 463; *Pennant*, p. 348; and *Dugdale*, vol. ii. p. 229.

partisans so obnoxious, a character as was the illustrious prince to whom, in her youth, the Lady Cecily Neville was allied.

Early imbued, however, as we have reason to believe their children were with honourable sentiments, severe as regards religion and morality,* and admirable in the culture and display of the domestic affections,† it is yet due to them to state, from the crimes which attach to their memories, and the calamities that marked their after-life, that the ambition, the pride, and unbending spirit which characterized alike the sons and the daughters of York,‡ were inherited from, and in all likelihood infused into their infant minds, from their birth, by their mother, in whose character these feelings formed a leading feature. She was a princess of "spotless character;"§ and as such was respected by her enemies and revered by all her contemporaries, whatever might be their political bias;|| but her natural temper was "so high and ambitious" that her name to this day is perpetuated as a proverb in the counties adjoining her abode, where pride and arrogance in a person are generally expressed by the significant term, "She is a proud Cis."¶ The duke, her consort, early subdued by misfortune, was mild, temperate and humane,** remarkable for his peaceable and submissive disposition, until goaded to anger and desperation by his enemies. Not so the Lady Cecily: the blood of the haughty Nevilles and the imperious Beauforts flowed in her veins; nine of her brothers were, by descent, marriage or creation, peers of the realm; and her sisters were matched with the most

* Of this, farther proof can scarcely be desired than the very perfect system drawn up for the service of the young Prince of Wales by King Edward IV. above referred to, which is still preserved in the Sloane MSS. No. 3479, and the admirable rules issued by Richard, Duke of Gloucester, for the use and regulation of his household before his elevation to the throne.—*Harleian MSS.* 433. fol. 269.

† The strong fraternal affection that existed between Margaret of York and George, Duke of Clarence, has formed the subject of cotemporary historical notice (see *Chronicle of Croyland*, p. 561), and the fidelity and devotion of Richard Plantagenet for his elder brother, King Edward IV., under the greatest possible reverses of fortune, as will be hereafter shown, formed a bright and beautiful feature in his character. A reference to Fleetwood's Narrative, p. 9, written by a personal attendant of the House of York, will still farther evince how strongly this feeling influenced every member of the family, and how religiously it was inculcated upon them all by their mother, the Lady Cecily.

‡ Sir Thomas More, in his *Life of Richard III.* (p. 8.) though speaking of the elder sons in terms of high encomium, says, "All three, as they were great states of birth, so were they great and stately of stomach, greedy and ambitious of authority and impatient of partners."

§ As regards the daughters, Ann the eldest, who married her first cousin, Henry Holland, Duke of Exeter, the faithful and firm friend of his ill-fated kinsman and godsire Henry VI., fully exemplified the same characteristics; unable to mould her husband to her own aspiring views and those of her family, she sacrificed him to her ambition; and instead of suing for pardon when the House of York condemned him as an exile and an outlaw, she heartlessly triumphed over the misery and wretchedness induced by his fidelity to his unhappy sovereign, and availing herself of his attainder and proscription, espoused in his lifetime Sir Thomas St. Leger.—See *Phil. de Comines*, lib. iii. p. 73; also *Stow's Annals*, temp. 12 Ed. IV. The Lady Margaret, her younger sister, though a much more amiable character in private life, was equally imbued with the same ambitious spirit, and indulged the same vindictive sentiments towards all who were opposed to the House of York. Her rich possessions in Burgundy she expended in projects tending to ruin the enemies of her race; and she was significantly termed "Juno," with reference to Henry VII., because, says Lord Bacon, "she was to him as Juno was to Æneas, stirring both heaven and hell to do him mischief."—*Bacon's Hen. VII.*, p. 113.

¶ *Historic Doubts*, p. 57.

|| Nichol's *Hist. and Antiq. of Fotheringay*.

** *Hume*, vol. iv. p. 168.

|| *Archæol.* xiii.

eminent and noble in the land.* When, therefore, she, the youngest of such highly-allied kindred, was placed in a yet more elevated position,† and that even the queenly diadem‡ was her probable destiny, by reason of her union with the legitimate heir of the crown, all her Lancastrian prepossessions were merged in the superior claims of the House of York, and her views henceforth were constantly fixed on those regal honours which she considered due to her husband and the lawful inheritance of her children. It has, indeed, been stated by some writers, that the Lady Cecily married the heir of York wholly with the hope of being a queen.§ Be it so, she was queen-like in all her actions, noble and dignified in her conduct and demeanour, and just even to severity in all her transactions. She was neither unduly elevated in days of prosperity, nor was she weakly subdued by calamity and peril: under all her afflictions she "carried a steady soul,"|| though she shared in common with her kindred that love of sovereign power, which led to their "making and unmaking kings,"¶ when they had no pretext for usurping the crown themselves. Nor does this lofty ambition, destructive as its seeds afterwards proved when it had ripened and yielded fruit in her offspring, seem at variance with the stern virtues ascribed to the Lady Cecily, if the times in which she lived are taken into consideration. Pride of birth to a degree almost incredible in later times, and disdain for all persons unconnected with ancient and noble descent, was the characteristic of the age in which she flourished.** The education of the high-born infant was based on these sentiments, and fostered by every external mark of sovereign and absolute power. Feudal despotism had then reached its climax; and although the abuse of that system, which at the period under consideration made the nobles of the land literally its rulers, led, in the next century, to the total destruction of the baronial ascendancy, and opened the path of freedom to the long enslaved land, yet the fact is nevertheless incontrovertible, that during the career of the Plantagenet race, personal courage and haughty independence were distinctive marks of the aristocratic noble; whilst arrogance and exacted homage, with few exceptions at least, characterized as a body the "lordly dame" of the fifteenth century. The De la Poles were the only instance on record of a family rising at this age of proud nobility from "trade to rank and splendour."†† The heir of its house, John de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk, was espoused to Elizabeth of York, second daughter of the Lady Cecily; and as if the evil destiny which marked the elder branch of the Plantagenets was ever to attach itself to those with whom they were allied, the De la Poles, as they exceeded the Nevilles, when in prosperity, in dignity and power, so did they also in the hour of adversity exceed them in misfortune and in the depth of calamity which extinguished their race.‡‡ Can it then be wondered at that Neville's proud daughter, sensible that her first-born would be the representative by right of primogeniture of Edward III. and Philippa of Hainault, that her consort was the rightful heir of a throne, wrested from his ancestors by usurpation, and then ruled ostensibly by an imbecile monarch, but virtually by an unworthy minister, allied to him by illegitimate descent, should, without considering

* Appendix P.

† — "the yengest,
And yet grace, hir fortun'd to be the byest."

Vincent, p. 622.

‡ *Ibid.*

§ *Anglo. Spec.*, p. 179.

** *Paston Letters*, vol. iv.

†† *Archæol.*, vol. xiii.

‡ Nichol's *Fotheringay*.

¶ *Archæol.*, vol. xiii.

†† *Heylin*, p. 368.