CHAPTER IV.

The widowed Duchess of York secretly conveys her younger sons to Utrecht.—Advantages derived from their exile.—Strength of mind displayed by their mother.—Accession and coronation of Edward IV.—He dispatches messengers to Burgundy for his brothers.—Invests Prince George with the Duchy of Clarence.—Creates Richard Duke of Gloucester.—Richard's domestic education, martial instruction.—Absence of all foundation for his reputed deformity.—His general appearance deduced from the testimony of cotemporary writers and original portraits.—His probable domestication in the family of the Earl of Warwick, and early companionship with the Lady Anne Neville, his future wife.—King Edward's affection for Gloucester.—He is created a Knight of the Garter.

The widowed Duchess of York, overwhelmed at the disastrous intelligence of her husband's defeat and death and the murder of the unoffending Rutland, and fearing, from the cruelty exercised towards them, the total overthrow of her house and destruction of her remaining offspring, promptly took measures for secretly conveying out of the kingdom her two young sons, George and Richard Plantagenet.*

Her nephew, the famed Earl of Warwick, as admiral of the Channel,† was at this time master of the sea; and from his being resident in the metropolis as governor of the Tower,‡ when the sad tidings were communicated to the Lady Cecily, she was enabled, without delay, or dread of her children being intercepted, to convey them, by the co-operation of her kinsman, in safety to Holland. There she earnestly besought from Philip, Duke of Burgundy, an asylum and security for the youthful exiles; and that illustrious prince, having given them a friendly reception, they were forthwith speedily established, with suitable governors, in the city of Utrecht,§ where, it is asserted, they had princely and liberal education.‖ They continued to abide there until the House of York regained the ascendancy, and King Edward IV. was established permanently on the throne.

The Low Countries being at this crisis the seat of chivalry, renowned for its knightly spirit, and distinguished throughout Europe by its patronage of learning and encouragement of the fine arts,¶ the young princes benefited

* Hearne's Frag., p. 283.

† Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, was made captain of Calais in 1455, and subsequently admiral of the Channel; and the Paston letter which notifies these appointments adds, "The Duke of Exeter taketh a great displeasure that my Lord Warwick occupieth his office and taketh the charge of the keeping of the sea upon him." After the battle of Northampton, and when King Henry was in the custody of Warwick, he was reinstated in these high commands, and made governor of the Tower.—*Paston Letters*, vol. i. pp. 103, 201; *Stow's Annals; Fabian*, vol. i. p. 469.

‡ Whethamstede, p. 496.

§ Dugdale, vol. ii. p. 162. ‖ Buck, p. 8.

¶ Philip, Duke of Burgundy, was the most magnificent prince of his age, his court one of the most polished, and his fondness for the expiring customs of chivalry, and efforts for the advancement of literature, were equally great and influential. He instituted the order of the Knights of the Golden Fleece. He died 1467, and was succeeded by his son Charles, between whom and the Lady Margaret, sister to the orphan princes, (and their associate in their recent concealment in the Temple,) a marriage was afterwards negotiated; and, although interrupted for a time by the sudden demise of Duke Philip, was eventually solemnized, and proved the occasion of a second asylum to Richard of Gloucester, when, in after years, he was again an exile, and again compelled to flee from his country and his home.—*Life of Caxton*, p. 23.

materially by an event which, apparently fraught with such evil to their house, thus proved to themselves individually productive of singular advantage. It gave them opportunity for mental culture, and altogether a more accomplished education than the distracted state of England would have admitted of at that period.

The Duchess of York, who was a woman of great strength of mind and firmness of character, did not fly with them; but remained with her unmarried daughter, the Lady Margaret, in the metropolis,* calmly awaiting the result of the Earl of March's efforts to avenge his father's death. Though but eighteen years of age, the military talents of this young prince were of a very high order, excelling those even of the deceased duke.† The knowledge of this, no doubt, encouraged his mother with hope as to the final result of his energy and zeal in reviving the fallen state of their cause; but, experienced as she was in the trying scenes of those disastrous times, and gifted herself with a vigorous understanding, she could scarcely fail to be acquainted with the rash and thoughtless indiscretion which formed so marked a feature in the character of her eldest son. This knowledge justifiably determined her to remain at all risks in England, rather than to leave him, the sole prop of their ill-fated house, to his own unaided judgment and guidance at a juncture so critical and so fraught with danger.

Her influence over him, and her wise decision in this matter, are made apparent from a fact which strongly attests the respectful affection paid to her by the young monarch almost immediately after his accession, and when he may naturally be supposed to have been flushed by his success, and elated by the acquisition of a regal diadem. While London was in a state of the greatest excitement‡ previous to the decisive battle of Towton,§—the final contest between the rival factions,—which occurred within a month following the proclamation of Edward IV., the populace were calmed, and the minds of the citizens set at rest, by letters from the king to his mother; to whom he first made known the full particulars of an event which effectually secured to him that sovereignty to which he had so recently been elected. It was at her dwelling-place, and under her roof, that the possibility of that election was first made known to him; and there, also, in her presence, was it confirmed by the prelates and nobles of the realm.

It was in Baynard's Castle that the youthful representative of the House of York, the founder of that dynasty and first of his race, assumed the title and dignity of king;‖ and it was in that famed metropolitan abode of the late "good Duke Richard,"¶ that Cecily, his bereaved widow, reassembled around

* Excerpt. Hist., p. 223. † S. Turner, vol. iii. p. 226.

‡ Hearne's Frag., p. 287.

§ A letter from William Paston to his brother John gives a very curious and authentic account of the battle of Towton (a village about ten miles south-west of York), which was fought on Palm Sunday, the 29th March, 1461, within a month after Edward's possessing himself of the crown, and upon the fate of which his future hopes of retaining it depended. It commences thus:—"Please you to know and to wit of such tidings, as my Lady of York hath by a letter of credence under the sign-manual of our Sovereign Lord, King Edward, which letter came unto our said Lady this same day, Easter Eve, and was seen and read by me, William Paston."—*Paston Letters*, vol. i. p. 217.

‖ Baker's Chron., p. 198. ¶ Hume, vol. iv. p. 194.

her the scattered remnant of her family;* and after witnessing the triumphant return of her son, and beholding, in due time, his accession and coronation, continued at intervals to reside, whenever circumstances obliged her to quit for a brief period the privacy at Berkhampstead, into which she immediately retired upon the death of her husband, and after her son's establishment upon the throne.†

By this unconstrained act the Lady Cecily evinced that true nobleness of character for which she was so remarkable. As a counterpoise to the severity of her recent loss, she might, as the surviving parent of the victorious sovereign, have continued to occupy that high position which the spirit of the times rendered so enviable, and which her ambitious temperament must have made it so hard to relinquish; but in her husband's grave the widow of the noble York appears to have buried all her aspiring views. Forthwith retiring from public life, she voluntarily relinquished all pomp and power; and although possessed, too, of considerable personal attractions, she withdrew from the fascinations of the court,‡ and devoted herself to the tranquil duties of life in scenes which had so recently witnessed her prosperous days, and which were now hallowed by the sorrows that had numbered their duration.

Tranquillity at length being somewhat restored to the desolated kingdom, Edward IV. dispatched trusty messengers to Burgundy to bring home his young brothers; and on their return to England, he suitably provided for their instruction in the practice of arms§ preparatory to their being of age, in accordance with the usage of those times, and experience sufficient to receive the honour of knighthood.

In his first parliament, King Edward amply endowed his widowed parent,‖ and afterwards strictly enforced the regular payment of the annuities settled upon her.¶ He invested Prince George, his eldest surviving brother, with the Duchy of Clarence; and Prince Richard, the youngest, he created Duke of Gloucester.** In the February following he further constituted Clarence lieutenant of Ireland; and, for the better support of his dignity as first prince of the blood royal, awarded him divers lands and manors in various counties, and also residences in the metropolis,†† in the parishes of St. Catherine Colman and St. Anne Aldersgate, both of which had lapsed to the crown by the attainder of the Duke of Northumberland.‡‡

Richard of Gloucester, whom the king had likewise made admiral of the sea,§§ was speedily nominated to even greater honours;‖‖ and the preamble of the patent conveying them to him, viz., "The king, in consideration of the sincere fraternal affection which he entertained towards his right well-beloved brother Richard, Duke of Gloucester, and admiral of the sea,"¶¶

* Pennant, p. 348. † Archæologia, vol. xiii. p. 7.

‡ In her widowhood, the Duchess of York, on all matters of import used the arms of France and England quarterly, thus implying that of right she was queen.—*Sandford*, book v. p. 369.

§ Buck's Rich. III., p. 8. ‖ Rot. Parl., p. 484.

¶ In Rymer's Fœdera will be found a mandate to the sheriff of York, commanding him to pay to Cecily, Duchess of York, the king's mother, the arrears of an annuity of 100*l.* which had been granted to her by the king, commencing on the 10th of June preceding. Dated 30th January, 1 Ed. IV., 1462.—Vol. xi. p. 483.

** Hearne's Frag., p. 285.

†† Dugdale's Baronage, vol. ii. p. 162. ‡‡ Ibid.

§§ Pat. 2d Ed. IV., p. 2. ‖‖ See Appendix Q.

¶¶ "And that he might the better and more honourably maintain the ducal rank, and the costs and charges incumbent thereon," King Edward granted to him "the castle and fee farm of the town of Gloucester, the constableship of Corfe Castle, and the manor of Kingston Lacy, county Dorset, parcel of the Duchy of Lancaster, the castle,

strongly marks, even at this early period, the peculiar interest and attachment entertained for the subject of this memoir by his royal brother.

Up to the present time, the fortunes of the three brothers have been so closely connected, that to consider the career of the younger apart from that of the elder would have been impracticable, or, if possible, would rather have baffled than aided an impartial review of the early days of Richard III. Moreover, viewing him in connection with his family, it is apparent that a prince fondly cherished by his kindred, early endowed with immense wealth, distinguished, too, by marks of singular favour, and testimonies, openly expressed, of strong affection from his sovereign and elder brother, could not have been the monster of depravity which posterity has been taught to believe him,—"malicious, wrathful, envious from his birth,"*—or have given indication, during infancy and boyhood, of that fiend-like temperament which hitherto has been generally considered the characteristic of the Duke of Gloucester. The desire of power and the ambition to possess a crown, were, as has been already stated, the predominant passions of his race; and, as far as the arrogance and insubordination of the great mass of the feudal lords could extenuate the same feelings in the kingly competitors of this era, they might, in some measure, be pardoned for their ferocious and appalling acts,—acts which, there can exist no doubt, infected with their baneful influence a mind but too early inured to the worst passions of human nature.

But every co-existent record and all the verified details of his youth, afford substantial cause to warrant the assumption that the vices imputed in maturer years to Richard of Gloucester were more the result of the evil times on which he fell than the development of the germs of vice which had remained concealed in his mind from childhood. If, however, the alleged depravity of this young prince is proved to be so erroneous, at least in his youthful days, far more decided is the absence of all foundation for the distorted figure and repulsive lineaments so universally ascribed to him in after ages. As it was observed in the opening of this memoir, the attestation of eye-witnesses or coeval authorities can alone be deemed conclusive on such points; it cannot, therefore, but be considered a very startling circumstance, that all the writers to whom the Duke of Gloucester could have been personally known, and from whose remarks the only genuine accounts of him can at the present day be obtained, are either silent on the subject,—thus tacitly proving that there was no such deformity to note,—or, otherwise, they disprove the assertion by direct and opposing statements. The chronicler of Croyland, Whethamstede, abbot of St. Alban's, the author of Fleetwood's Chronicle, the correspondents of the Paston family, and many other writers of more or less repute, lived at the same period with Richard, Duke of Gloucester; William of Wyrcester for example, who, when detailing the enthusiasm of the populace at the election of Edward IV. in St. John's Fields, says, "I was there, I heard them, and I returned with them into the city;"† and the author of the fragment relating to that monarch published by Hearne,‡ proves his intimate acquaintance with the House of York, by stating "My purpose is, and shall be, as touching the life of Edward IV., to write and show such things as I have heard of his own mouth; and also impart of such things in the

earldom, honour and lordship of Richmond, which had previously belonged to Edmund, late Earl of Richmond; also numerous manors, forty-six in number, in the counties of Oxford, Cambridge, Cornwall, Suffolk, Essex, Bedford, Rutland and Kent, which came to the crown by the attainder of John de Vere, Earl of Oxford."—*Rot. Parl.*, vol. vi. p. 227.

* More's Rycharde III., p. 8. † Ann. W. Wyr., p. 489.

‡ In Sprotti Cronica, apud Hearne, p. 299.

which I have been personally present, as well within the royaulme as without, during a certain space, more especial from 1468 to 1482."* This period embraces a most important part of Richard of Gloucester's life: a period when he was, on all public occasions, associated with his royal brother, yet this writer nowhere mentions any deformity. Neither is it noticed, or in any way alluded to, by any one of the other writers above quoted, though each and all must have known the fact had it existed. The Abbot of St. Alban's lived within a few miles of Berkhampstead, at which place much of Richard's childhood was passed, and where his mother mostly resided. Sir John Paston was attached to the household of the Princess Margaret,† his sister, and travelled as part of her retinue, in company with Gloucester, when in progress to solemnize her marriage.

The Fleetwood chronicler, on his own acknowledgment,‡ was a personal attendant on this prince and his royal brother at a later period of their lives; and the continuator of the History of Croyland (to quote the words of a modern writer§ well versed in these early narratives) "is one of the best of our English historians of the class to which he belongs. He was one of Edward the Fourth's councillors, and being connected with the House of York, but not writing until after the battle of Bosworth, he holds the balance pretty evenly between the rival parties." In these writers we have extant a series of connecting links extending from Gloucester's infancy to his decease; yet nowhere, in any one of them, is there to be found a foundation even for the report of a deformity so remarkable. Were it true, it is opposed to all reason to believe it could have escaped comment or mention by writers who narrated so minutely the passing events of their day. Honest Philip de Comines‖ (as he has been termed), a Flemish historian of undoubted veracity, and uninfluenced by party views—a foreigner, who only noticed the reigning sovereigns of England and their court, either as being cotemporaries or as politically connected with the French monarchs whose history he wrote,¶ neither asserts nor insinuates any thing remarkable in the external appearance of Richard of Gloucester. This historian twice mentions in his work, "that Edward IV. was the most beautiful prince that he had ever seen, or of his time."** He gives very many and most interesting accounts, from personal observation,†† of this king's habits and manners, yet animadverts with equal

* The writer of the brief narrative published by Hearne, and which contains so much important matter relative to the events of this period, appears to have held a responsible situation in the office of the lord high treasurer of England, Thomas, Duke of Norfolk, and also to have been high in the confidence of that nobleman; for he frequently appeals to him with earnestness in confirmation of the truth of his statements, which are given with such clearness and precision as fully to establish his assertion that he narrated from personal knowledge.

† Sir John Paston was knighted by Edward IV. at his coronation, perhaps in requital of the shelter he afforded to the Duchess of York and her young children, at his apartments in the Temple; this seems probable from his being afterwards so favourably distinguished by the Princess Margaret, who was associated with her brothers in their concealment.—*Paston Letters*, vol. ii. p. 3.

‡ History of the Arrival of Edward IV. in England, p. 1.

§ J. Bruce, Esq., editor of several of the publications of the Camden Society.

‖ Philip de Comines, who was formed as a writer more from experience than learning, is esteemed one of the most sagacious historians of his own or any other age. He penetrated deeply into men and things, and knew and exemplified the insignificancy of human grandeur.—*Granger, Biog. Hist. Eng.*, vol. i. p. 73.

¶ Lewis XI. and Charles VIII.

** Phil. de Comines, pp. 225. 246.

†† Louis XI. employed Philip de Comines in embassies to almost every court of Europe. He tells us himself, in his memoirs, that he was sent to that of England in the reign of Edward IV.—*Granger*, vol. i. p. 73.

freedom and honesty on his foibles and indiscretion. He was well known to the three brothers, and frequently saw them all. Can there, then, exist any doubt that the extraordinary beauty of form and feature which distinguished Edward IV. and the Duke of Clarence, and which called forth such encomiums from the historians, would not have also elicited from De Comines some allusion, in the way of comparison, with respect to the deformity of their young brother, had there been the slightest foundation for that revolting aspect with which after writers have invested him?

No record, indeed, has been found, cotemporary with Richard III., that affords even a shadow of foundation for the fables so long imposed on posterity, except the single authority of John Rous, the recluse of Warwick, whose history in Latin of the kings of England was dedicated, it will be remembered, to Henry VII. But, though an avowed Lancastrian and a bitter enemy of the line of York, this historian simply alleges, as regards Gloucester's person, that "he was small of stature, having a short face and uneven shoulders, the left being lower than the right."* Moreover, it is also deserving of notice, that one of the most rancorous passages in this author's narrative effectually controverts, at all events, the distorted features which are also reported to have marked King Richard's face: "At whose birth," says Rous, "Scorpion was in the ascendant,† which sign is the House of Mars; and as a scorpion, mild in countenance, stinging in the tail, so he showed himself to all." No positive assertion, from any friend or partisan, of the actual beauty of Richard's features, could better have substantiated the fact, than this indirect acknowledgment from one of the most malignant and bitter enemies of himself and his family, of the insinuating and bland expression which he possessed when his countenance was unruffled.

Polydore Virgil, author of the "Anglica Historica,"‡ an erudite writer of the period immediately succeeding that in which King Richard flourished, describes him as "slight in figure, in face short and compact, like his father."§

Sir George Buck,‖ the first historian who had sufficient hardihood to attempt the defence of this prince, and who appears to have had access to documents no longer extant, though quoted by him as then in Sir Robert Cotton's manuscript library, not only warmly defends Richard against the current accusation of moral guilt, but confesses himself unable to find any evidence whatever warranting the imputation of personal deformity. So likewise Horace Walpole, Lord Orford,¶ an elegant scholar and ingenious historian,

* Rous, Hist. Regum Ang. (apud Hearne), p. 215.

† Ibid.

‡ "From what source Polydore Virgil derived his account of the events contained in his Anglica Historica," observes the editor of Fleetwood's Chronicle (p. iv.), "is unknown; but he has given an excellent narrative, superior in style, abundant in facts and copious in description.—It of course strongly favours the House of Lancaster, and may, indeed, be considered as the account which that party was desirous should be believed. It is also stated in the Introduction to the Plumpton Correspondence, (p. xxiii.,) 'that many of his details are evidently founded upon authentic documents which have not survived the lapse of time, or which he may have wilfully destroyed—a practice imputed to this foreigner.'"

§ Polyd. Virg., p. 544.

‖ Sir George Buck was master of the revels, and one of the gentlemen of the privy chamber, to King James I. Lord Orford says, "Buck agrees with Philip de Comines, and with the Rolls of Parliament;" also that "Buck gains new credit the deeper the dark scene is fathomed."—*Historic Doubts*, p. 20.

¶ Granger, in enumerating the different portraits of this monarch, says, "Mr. Walpole, who is well known to have struck new light into some of the darkest passages of English history, has brought various presumptive proofs, unknown to Buck, that

and who, though as the avowed champion of Richard, open to controversy and dispute respecting his own interpretation of facts adduced, has never been accused or even suspected of inventing the facts which he advances,—yet he, who bestowed the most unwearied pains in searching for the source of the extraordinary reports connected with Gloucester's alleged misshapen appearance, and tested the value of the original authority by disproving or substantiating their authenticity, could find no corroboration of rumours so long believed; on the contrary, in his "Historic Doubts," this able writer produces coexistent statements, not merely to prove the beauty of Richard's features, but also to establish the fact of his generally prepossessing appearance.*

The purport of this memoir, however, is not unduly to exalt Richard of Gloucester, either in mind or person, still less to invest him with qualifications and personalities more fitted to embellish a romance than to find a place in the plain, unvarnished statements of historical research: its design is simply to rescue his memory from unfounded aspersions, and to vindicate him, whenever undeniable proof exists, from positive misstatement. The question of his personal deformity, however wide-spread the belief, may, to the philosophical reader, seem unimportant, when placed in comparison with his moral character; but in tracing the life of this prince, it is expedient that minor details should be considered, as well as matter of more importance; for it is the summing up the whole that constitutes the monstrous picture of this monarch that has been so long presented to our view.

After the most attentive examination of cotemporary evidence, whether gleaned from native chroniclers or foreign writers, the evidence in reference to the personal appearance of Richard, Duke of Gloucester, will be found to amount to this: that he was "slight in figure,† and short of stature;"‡ that his features were "compact§ and handsome,‖ though his face was always thin;"¶ that the expression of his countenance was "mild"** and pleasing;†† but when excited, it at times assumed a character of fierce impetuosity‡‡

Richard was neither that deformed person nor that monster of cruelty and impiety which he has been represented by our historians."—*Granger's Biog. Hist. of England*, vol. i. p. 24.

* In Walpole's "Historic Doubts" it is narrated that the old Countess of Desmond, who had danced with Richard, declared he "was the handsomest man in the room except his brother Edward, and was very well made."—*Historic Doubts*, p. 102. This anecdote has been doubtingly received, and never fairly treated, on account of the prejudices that had prevailed before Lord Walpole narrated it, relative to the Duke of Gloucester's deformity. Yet, even admitting that the description was over-wrought and highly-coloured, it can scarcely be supposed that any cotemporary would have ventured to pronounce as positively handsome a prince reputed to be as repulsive in feature as he was distorted in figure. This statement was, in all probability, much nearer the truth than those hideous and revolting descriptions to which it has been opposed.

† "In figure slight."—*Polydore Virgil*, p. 544.

‡ "Small of stature."—*Rous*, p. 215. "Of low stature."—*John Stow*, p. xiii.

§ "Like his father's, short and compact."—*Polydore Virgil*, p. 544.

‖ "His face was handsome."—*Turner's Middle Ages*, vol. iii. p. 476. "Thy face worthy of the highest empire and command."—*Oration of the Scotch Ambassador, in Buck*, lib. v. p. 140.

¶ "His face always thin."—*Cont. Croy.*, p. 574.

** "Mild in countenance."—*John Rous*, p. 215.

†† "Lowlye of countenance."—*More.*

‡‡ "Such as is in states (persons of high birth), called *warlye*, in other menne otherwise."—*More, Ibid.* (This word Grafton renders warlike, which was its literal signification as shown by a corresponding expression in letters patent coeval with that period: "aid of archers and other warrelye men."—*Fœdera*, vol. xii. p. 173. Various definitions have been given by the early chroniclers to this expressive look which left so strong an impression on the beholder, but they all imply resolution and firm

peculiarly its own. He does not seem to have been deficient in activity; rather, indeed, does the contrary appear to have been the case,* both in his youthful exercises and manly appointments; but he was fragile and slightly built, and his whole frame indicated from childhood a constitutional weakness,† and afforded undeniable evidence of great delicacy of health.‡ That the singular and very extraordinary beauty of his elder brothers,§ their unusual height and finely-proportioned limbs, rendered Richard's appearance, in itself, by no means sufficiently remarkable to induce comment or observation, yet homely-looking and insignificant by comparison, when opposed to the princely demeanour and robust aspect of Edward the Fourth and the noble George of Clarence. There appears little doubt that illness and bodily suffering enfeebled the childhood of the young prince, because, independent of this fact being positively vouched‖ for by a living historian, of whom it has been justly said, that his¶ "endeavours to discover manuscript historical authorities cannot be too highly praised," the metrical narrative** written during his boyhood after detailing the death of two brothers who preceded, and of a younger sister who succeeded him in the order of birth, says,—

"Richard liveth yet;"—

thus implying that his survival was considered as doubtful as those of his infantine relatives who had so prematurely passed to the tomb.

Constitutional debility of any kind would induce a pallid and puny appearance; this is brought daily within the most ordinary observation; but it by no means imposes, as a natural consequence, deformity of the most distressing kind, still less features revolting to all with whom the unhappy individual may be associated. That this description was not applicable to Richard, Duke of Gloucester, is yet further evinced by testimony scarcely less conclusive than that of cotemporary writers, whose positive or tacit disavowal of this calumny is amply confirmed by every original portrait and painting of this prince. Of these, many more are extant than is usually believed; several, wholly unknown to the public generally, having descended to ancient and noble families in this kingdom, where they may yet be found preserved among their valuable private collections.††

determination of purpose. That Sir Thomas More intended the phrase to convey the idea of a haughty, majestic or martial air, is beyond dispute, by the distinction he draws in the application of the word, between persons of high and low estate.)

* "The judgment and courage of his sword actions rendered him of a full honour and experience, which fortune gratified with many victories."—*Buck*, lib. v. p. 148.

† "Small in body and weak in strength."—*John Rous*, p. 217.

‡ "Weak in body, afflicted by sickness, but powerful in mind."—*Sharon Turner*, vol. iv. p. 92.

§ Sir Thomas More, in describing Edward IV., says, "he was very princely to behold, of visage lovely, of bodye myghtie, strong and clean made;" and in eulogizing the personal appearance of George, Duke of Clarence, he states that "he was a goodly noble prince, and at all pointes fortunate."—*Hist. Rychd. III.*, pp. 3. 7.

‖ Sharon Turner, vol. iii. p. 477.

¶ Introd. Fleet. Chron., p. xiv.

** Vincent on Brooke, p. 622.

†† Through the kindness of Sir Henry Ellis, who has compiled a list of royal English portraits, the author has been furnished with the following list of those of King Richard:—

1. In the royal collection at Windsor, formerly at Kensington Palace, with three rings on the right hand, one of which he is putting on the little finger with his left hand.
2. At Costessy Park, on panel; in the act of placing a ring on the little finger of the left hand, the thumb and third finger of which are also ornamented with rings.
3. At Hatfield House. A head.
4. At Charlecote House, Warwickshire.

The assertion of Rous, the antiquary of Warwick, that Richard's left shoulder was lower than the right, was, nevertheless, very probably a fact, though wholly unconnected with any inherent deformity. It would, indeed, be a natural result to one who, from his infancy, had been inured to warlike exercises, but was not endowed by nature with a frame of sufficient strength to support, without injury, the severe discipline consequent on the martial education of that period.* The love of dress, nay, the absolute mania for it, which prevailed in the middle ages, is well known, though its extravagance would almost surpass belief but for the acts of Parliament† which were passed for the purpose of repressing its excess and absurdity.‡ To individuals trained in military pursuits, the highly-wrought armour of those times would become the chief object of attraction; and at no period of our national history was this defensive accoutrement more attentively studied, both with reference to personal safety and costliness of material, than towards the close of the fifteenth century. Even that of the most heavy construction was finished with an attention to ornament, elegance and taste, that dazzled the youthful aspirant fully as much as it charmed the older and more experienced warrior. "No higher degree of perfection was ever attained in armour,"

5. At Thornedon House, Essex.

6. In the possession (1822) of George Hornby, Esq., of Brasennose College, Oxford.

7, 8. Two portraits in the Society of Antiquaries' apartments, Somerset House. In one of these the right hand is engaged in placing a ring upon the third finger of the left hand; in the other, which is a very ancient picture, half-length, the king is represented with a dagger or short sword in his right hand.

In addition to these paintings, there is extant an illuminated MS. roll, now in the College of Arms, containing full-length portraits of King Richard, Queen Anne and their son, the Earl of Salisbury, "laboured and finished by Master John Rous, of Warwick," the cotemporary historian and antiquary. Engravings from this roll will be found in the *Paston Letters*, vol. v., likewise in *Lord Orford's Works*, vol. ii. p. 215, who has also given, in his "Historic Doubts," two full-length portraits of King Richard and Queen Anne, believed to have been taken from a window in a priory at Little Malvern that was destroyed by a storm. See *Supplement to Historic Doubts*. Half-length portraits of Richard, his queen and his son are preserved in the *Cottonian MSS.* Julius E. IV. fol. 223, appended to a series of excellent delineations, illustrative of the life of Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick. This very curious MS. was also written and illuminated by John Rous, the antiquary of Warwick, and the portraits in it were published by Strutt in his *Regal and Eccles. Antiq.*, No. xlviii.

The royal portrait at Kensington, No. 1, in the above list, was engraved by Vertue, and is the authority for most of the ordinary engraved portraits of this monarch. The very fine original portrait at Costessy Park, No. 2, is that prefixed to vol. i. of this work, which, by the favour of Lord Stafford, the author has been enabled to present to the public now engraved for the first time. The subject selected for the frontispiece of the 2d vol., are the full-length figures of King Richard, Queen Anne and Edward, Prince of Wales, taken from the originals drawn by the hand of their cotemporary "John Rous, the historian," in the illuminated roll yet preserved, as above stated, in the College of Arms. It may be satisfactory to state, on the authority of the late Mr. Seguir, keeper of the Royal paintings and of the National Gallery, that these illuminated drawings, having attained their highest perfection during the 15th century, are considered superior even to oil paintings, as faithful illustrations, in consequence of the latter art being at that era yet in its infancy. The portrait in the possession of the Society of Antiquaries, No. 7, in the above list, was lithographed for the 5th vol. of the "Paston Letters." It was presented to the Society by the Rev. Thomas Kerrich. —*Archæologia*, vol. xxii. p. 448.

* See Appendix R.

† Rot. Parl. vol. v. p. 504; also Stow, p. 459.

‡ In addition to the statutes passed in the 3d and 22d years of Edward IV., Stow states, in his *Chroniele*, (p. 419,) that "cursing by the clergy," and heavy fines to the laity, were the consequence of exceeding the prescribed rules and ordinances.—*Stow*, p. 429.

observes Dr. Meyrick, in his valuable Treatise upon Ancient Armour, "than during the times of Richard III."* Nothing, indeed, can exceed its beauty and the elaborate nature of the workmanship, as displayed in the monumental effigies of that period; though its ponderous weight, encasing, as it did, the entire person with plates of metal,† could only have been endured by early habit or very constant practice. The great mart for this species of workmanship, the emporium, indeed, where its manufacture was most cultivated, and where the newest fashion met with the most ready sale, was the Low Countries, in which Richard Plantagenet, just springing into youth, was first trained to the practice of arms, and taught the rudiments of the noble arts connected with chivalry and knighthood. A dauntless spirit and a proud ambition were inherent in him; he was associated in his exercises with the robust and muscular Clarence; the same knightly harness appropriated to one brother would be bestowed on the other; and to the early adoption of the ponderous armour then in use, especially the heavy casquetal, or steel cap, with its large oval ear-pieces, the hausse-col, or gorget of steel, together with the huge fan-shaped elbow-pieces, and the immense pauldrons, or shoulder-plates, rising perpendicularly to defend the neck, will sufficiently account, apart from all other cause, for the inequality in Richard's shoulders,‡ without his being "crook-backed" by nature, or otherwise of a figure which would altogether negative the gallant bearing so universally ascribed to him on the field of battle§ by writers of both parties. It must also be remembered, that Rous, the only cotemporary who names this inequality, spoke of it, not as characterizing Gloucester in his youth and manhood, but as an inelegance attached to his form much later in life, when the effect of a very active martial career would most probably be indicated by some such contortion, on a form naturally fragile; but as the same writer has also plainly and explicitly stated the exact nature and extent of Richard's alleged deformity, and this, not from report only, or mere hearsay, but from actual personal observation,‖ it not only satisfactorily accounts for the silence of other writers on a defect which was not apparent at the early period in which they wrote; but it also fully justifies the statement of Mr. Sharon Turner, who has devoted great attention towards investigating this long-disputed point, that "for the humpback and crooked form there is adequate authority."¶

But it may naturally be asked, whence, then, arose an idea, so firmly be-

* Richard, in a letter from York, at a later period of his history, orders "three coats of arms beaten with gold, for our own person."—*Hist. of British Costume*, vol. ii. p. 215.

† Archæologia, vol. xxi.

‡ This probable cause for Richard's alleged ungraceful form is borne out by an historical fact, that has strong reference to an almost parallel circumstance. Edmund, Earl of Lancaster, the favourite son of Henry III., and from whom the monarchs of that line derive their descent, one of the most distinguished warriors of the age, whose exploits have immortalized his name, and whose gallant bearing has been a fertile theme for cotemporary annalists, (*Walsingham*, p. 483,) was surnamed "Crouchback," since corrupted to "Crook-back," (*Biondi*, p. 45,) it is stated, from "the bowing of his back;" but no historian of his time ascribes deformity to this prince, neither was he so depicted on his monument in Westminster Abbey, though he is there represented on horseback, and in his coat of mail.—*Sandford*, book iii. p. 103. Another writer, indeed, has remarked, that so little authority is there for his being crook-backed, that it even appears doubtful whether the appellation was bestowed from his rounded shoulders, or from his wearing a "crouch" or cross on his back, as customary with those who vowed a pilgrimage to the Holy Land.—*Baker's Chronicle*, p. 90.

§ "Sundrye victories hadd hee, and sometime overthrows, but never in defaulte as for his own parsone, either of hardinesse or polytike order."—*More*, p. 8.

‖ Rous saw Richard at Warwick, after his accession to the throne.—*Walpole's Historic Doubts*, pp. 104. 109.

¶ Turner, Middle Ages, vol. iii. p. 477.

lieved, that it has stood the test of ages, and been transferred for three centuries from the graver pages of history to the simplest elementary tales connected with our national biography? That it was unsupported by the testimony of writers immediately succeeding the period in which those that have been quoted flourished, is apparent; not merely from Polydore Virgil and the authorities above named, but also from Stow, whose writings have always been esteemed for their honest, clear and correct details;* and whose strong evidence against the misshapen appearance, just beginning in his time to be imputed to King Richard, was cited in the introductory chapter of this memoir. It will there be seen that he asserts, "he had spoken by word of mouth with some ancient men, who, from their own sight and knowledge, affirmed that he was of bodily shape comely enough, only of low stature," and, likewise, "that in all his inquiries" (and it must be remembered that he was born within forty years of Richard's death) "he could find no such note of deformity as historians commonly relate." This note of deformity, and other rumours equally unfair to King Richard, and at first only suggested, but afterwards speedily asserted as fact by succeeding chroniclers, to flatter the reigning sovereign of the new dynasty, emanated exclusively, there can be little doubt, from the writings of Sir Thomas More. He flourished during Stow's childhood, at a period when historical research was little considered, and when biographical memoirs were rare and indifferently cared for; so that the beauty of his composition, his estimable character, and his profound erudition, obtained for his work at the time it appeared a credence on all points which an impartial review of it in the present day will prove that it by no means deserved; both on account of its inaccurate detail of many well-known facts, and also from the glaring errors and inconsistencies into which the author was betrayed by the most inveterate and deep-rooted prejudices. Yet even Sir Thomas More, violent as he was against Richard of Gloucester, by no means vouches for the truth of the startling assertions which he was the means of promulgating. "Richard was deformed," he says, "as the fame ranne of those that hated him."† What stronger language can be adduced than this? What contradiction more efficient, than his own few quaint words, "as menne of hatred reporte?"‡ It at once proves that the work which was productive of such mischievous results, was founded only upon tradition and its authority, not derived from actual observation:§ it at once shows whence may be traced rumours that receive no corroboration from any cotemporary source, but evidently proceeded from

* John Stow, the celebrated antiquary, was born in Cornhill, somewhere about the year 1525. He early began to study the antiquities of his country, and whatever was illustrative of its history was the object of his researches. "To the merits of an able historian and indefatigable antiquary, Stow united all the virtues of a private life. He wrote for the public, he adhered to truth, and recorded nothing either through fear, or envy, or favour;" and it is to be regretted that a man to whom the world of letters is so much indebted was reduced to such poverty, that, in addition to the infirmities of old age, he died suffering all the horrors of indigence.—*Stow's Life by Strype;* also *Pantologia*, vol. xi.

† Buck's Richard III., lib. ii. p. 80.

‡ More's Rycharde III., p. 8.

§ In Mr. Bayley's valuable history of eminent persons connected with the Tower, compiled from state papers and original MSS., (that gentleman being himself officially employed in the examination of the public records,) he says, when controverting an unfounded statement against King Richard:—"The forwardness of More to impute this and other crimes, for which there is not a shadow of reason, to the Duke of Gloucester, shows how bitterly his mind was prejudiced, and how little credit is therefore due to all his narrative concerning him."—*Bayley's Hist. and Antiq. of the Tower*, vol. ii. p. 337.

the hatred, prejudice and malignity of those who judged of Richard from his imputed crimes, and from the report of his enemies, and not from any real and personal knowledge, either of his true character or his external appearance. Nevertheless, the life of this prince, written by Sir Thomas More,* is the acknowledged origin of the preposterous tales alluded to by Stow, and so speedily refuted by that historian, though afterwards revived and exaggerated by the Tudor chroniclers, and, through them, indelibly perpetuated by the master-hand of their copyist, the immortal Shakspeare: for it will be found, that in many of the great dramatist's most striking passages connected with this period, that he has merely versified the language of those early historians, who based their authority on Sir Thomas More, the graphic descriptions derived from that writer affording subject especially suited for displaying the peculiar power possessed by the "Bard of Avon" in the delineation of character, and in that deep and extensive knowledge of the workings of the human heart, for which he was so pre-eminently distinguished. One conclusive and very remarkable fact presents itself for consideration; viz., that no writer, except Rous, describes the person of Richard during his lifetime, and this is the fitting place for drawing attention to so strong an argument in his favour. It is, however, but justice to those writers who have been alluded to, as also to the excellent and learned chancellor himself,† to consider one very important point connected with his narrative. Sir Thomas More, with a view to his education, was a resident, in early years, in the house of Bishop Morton,‡ who predicted great things from his precocious talents,§ and always bestowed on him marks of distinguished favour and affection. Now Morton was the bitter enemy of Gloucester, by whom he had been arrested and imprisoned when lord protector,‖ a circumstance of itself sufficient to explain the antipathy which was entertained by the prelate towards him. Moreover, Morton was a personal friend, a companion in exile and an agent in establishing Henry VII. on the throne; and by this monarch, the rival and successor of Richard III., he was loaded with honours, made one of his privy council, and was successively created by him Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord High Chancellor of England.¶

The very work in question has even been ascribed to this ecclesiastic, though apparently without foundation;** nevertheless, it is quite clear, from the testimony of More's biographer,†† that "the mistakes, discrepancies and falsifications" of the history that bears his name, together with the "hideous portrait of Richard" contained in it, were derived from details and conversations in boyhood from Morton, his avowed enemy and bitter persecutor, who sought that monarch's destruction on every occasion, and by whose death, at length accomplished, this prelate was placed by his royal master in the most elevated position; the favour of his sovereign, Henry VII., being further evinced by his obtaining for him his elevation to the dignity of a cardinal.‡‡

* "The Historie of King Rycharde the Thirde, written by Master Thomas More, then one of the Under Sheriffes of London; about the yeare of our Lord 1513." This history was first printed in Grafton's continuation of the Metrical Chronicle of John Hardyng, in 1543. It was again printed in the Chronicles of Grafton, Hall and Holinshed.—See *Singer's Reprint of More's Richard III.*, pp. x. xii.

† Sir Thomas More succeeded Wolsey as Lord High Chancellor of England in 1530.

‡ Biog. Britt.

§ Cardinal Morton was wont to say, "More will one day prove a marvellous man."—*Biog. Dict.*

‖ Cont. Croy., p. 566.

¶ Bacon's Hen. VII., pp. 16—51.

†† Singer's reprint of More, pp. viii. ix.

** See Appendix S.

‡‡ Bentham, Hist. of Ely.