

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 *Pan-tologia*, 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.*

It is, therefore, obvious that the testimony of one so prejudiced and so interested must be received with much caution.* Still greater doubt attaches itself to the relation of such as framed their description of King Richard upon mere hearsay evidence, and from reports which sprang up after his death, originating in the malice of his enemies.

Resuming the narrative at the point whence it diverged for this lengthened but necessary digression, viz., the nomination of Richard to the dukedom of Gloucester, and his investiture with lands and appointments fitting to support the dignity attached to a prince of the blood royal,† it may here assist the recollection of the order of events in a chronological abstract of his early life, to state that Richard had just attained his ninth year; his creation as Duke of Gloucester occurring November 4th, 1461, in the first parliament held by King Edward IV. after his coronation.‡

It will be apparent that at so tender an age the young prince could take no part in the turbulent proceedings which marked the opening years of his brother's reign. The character of the times, and the course of instruction then rigidly observed, would alone have restrained the exercise of talents even the most precocious, and neutralized the passions of the most depraved boyhood. The laws of chivalry§ were, during the dominion of the Plantagenet race, in full and undisputed vigour. One system of education prevailed, and the high-born and the high-bred, in every civilized court throughout Europe, submitted to the severe discipline which it imposed.|| The infant aspirant for knighthood, whether prince or peer, remained till he was seven years of age under the control and tutelage of his mother or female relatives; during which period he was carefully instructed in religious and moral, as well as in domestic duties, and taught also the limited scholastic acquirements of that period. After attaining his seventh year, the young noble was removed from maternal care, and admitted into the family of some renowned feudatory lord, who initiated the youthful claimant for military fame into the mysteries and hardships of a martial and chivalrous career.¶ There, inured by degrees to the mortifications, restraint, and disregard of danger imposed on the associates of the bold leaders of those rude times, and far removed from the enervating influence of the solicitude and anxiety of home, the future warrior, under the designation of a page, remained until the age of fourteen;** when, being invested with his first degree, that of squire, and having exchanged with much solemnity the short dagger of the page for the sword allotted to this second grade of chivalry,†† he became qualified to follow his gallant leader, either to the field of battle, or to be associated with him in the more peaceful joust and chivalric tournament, to lead his war-steed, to buckle on his armour, to furnish him with fresh horses and wea-

* Lord Bacon says, when summing up the character of Cardinal Morton: "Hee was a wise man, and an eloquent, but in his nature harsh and haughtie; much accepted by the king, but envied by the nobility and hated by the people. Hee wonne the king with secrecie and diligence, but chiefly because he was his old servant in his lesse fortunes; and also for that (in his affections) hee was not without an inveterate malice against the House of York, under whom he had been in trouble."—*Bacon's Hen. VII.*, p. 198.

† Whittak. *Hist. of Craven*, p. 67.

‡ Rot. Parl., vol. v. p. 461, and Sandford, book v. p. 405.

§ See Vertuous Precepts of Chivalry, in Boswell's "Concords of Honour," pp. 8, 10: printed An. Dom. 1597.

|| See "The Accedence of Armorie," by Master Gerard Leigh, pp. 70, 71: reprint of 1612.

¶ Essays on Chivalry, No. I. Graphic Illus., p. 25.

** Ibid.

†† Ibid.

pons, and himself to strive and win the spurs of knighthood, if happily opportunity presented itself for doing so. At the age of twenty-one, the honour of knighthood itself was conferred upon him, under circumstances of great solemnity,* accompanied with very impressive rites and ceremonies, the initiation being rendered still more solemn from its being hallowed by the church, and ushered in and accompanied by those pompous ecclesiastical processions and religious services which flung such a romantic colouring over the early days and scenes of our national history. It is true that instances are not wanting in which this final investiture was formally bestowed at a much earlier, and even at a very tender age, as in the case of infant monarchs and princely minors; two instances of which, viz., that of King Henry VI. and Richard, Duke of York, have been already mentioned in this memoir; nevertheless, even when from peculiar circumstances the dignity had been so prematurely given, the routine afterwards pursued was as similar as regal etiquette permitted;† and the age of twenty-one, apart from all previous ceremonial, established definitively and in effect as such the warrior knight of the middle ages.

In this manner, as it would appear from the few and brief memorials of his early years which are yet extant, Richard, Duke of Gloucester, was educated.

That he remained under his mother's especial care up to the usual age of seven, has been already shown by the fact of his being seized with her, and associated in her imprisonment, after the sacking of Ludlow Castle; and it is made still further evident by her dispatching him so promptly to Utrecht, on the occasion of his father's death. But from this period the young prince's name is no longer mentioned in connection with the Lady Cecily. His royal brother sent messengers to bring him to England, and provided both him and Clarence, on their arrival, with instructors suited to their age and high station; but there is no mention made of Gloucester's rejoining his widowed parent, or sharing her retirement at Berkhamstead. Whether the wardship of Richard was granted as a reward to one of the powerful supporters of the crown, as was customary in these times with minors so richly endowed, or whether Edward IV. retained in his own hands this vast source of wealth and power,‡ cannot now be ascertained; but as Sir George Buck states that the king, "when he called home his two brothers, entered them into the practice of arms,"§ it appears most probable that on his return from Flanders, Gloucester was forthwith submitted to the prescribed probation of the succeeding seven years, in the abode of some powerful baron, which, as above shown, was then usual with such as were destined to perform the duties of a warrior knight, and to be well tutored in the chivalrous accomplishments of the age. This surmise appears to be the more certain as regards this prince, because,

* James's *Hist. of Chivalry*, p. 22.

† A very interesting example, in illustration of this, is given by Froissart in his *Chronicle*, when detailing the leading incidents relative to the battle of Cressy, shortly before which memorable engagement Edward, Prince of Wales, surnamed "the Black Prince," was knighted by his royal parent, King Edward III., at the early age of sixteen. Perceiving the prince in danger of being overpowered by numbers, the nobles who surrounded him sent a message to the monarch, who was "on a little windmill hill" adjoining, soliciting assistance. "Then the king said, 'Is my son dead, or hurt, or felled to the earth?' 'No, sir,' quoth the knight; 'but he is hard matched, wherefore he hath need of your aid.' 'Well,' said the king, 'return to him and to them that sent you, and desire them to send no more to me on any account while my son is alive; and also say to them, that they suffer him this day to win his spurs; for, if God be pleased, I wish the honour of this engagement to be his and theirs who are about him.'"—*Berner's Froissart*, vol. i. p. 289.

‡ Hutton's *Bosworth*, p. xxii.

§ Buck, lib. i. p. 8.

with the exception of letters from King Edward, conferring on his young brother, in addition to the honours and possessions before enumerated, the castles, manors, lands, &c. which had been forfeited by the attainder of Henry Beaufort, late Duke of Somerset, (anno 3d Edw. IV.)* and the grant of Caister† in Norfolk, and Weardale forest in the palatinate of Durham,‡ no other public document relating to him is on record, until the fifth year of his royal brother's reign, when, by an entry on the issue roll of the Exchequer,§ it is recorded that money was "paid to Richard, Earl of Warwick for costs and expenses incurred by him on behalf of the Duke of Gloucester, the king's brother." This entry is very valuable, not merely as a guide to the probable nature of Richard's mode of life after his emancipation from childhood, but it will be found also highly important in explaining much that has hitherto appeared mysterious in his after years; it proving how early he was domesticated in the family of the Earl of Warwick, who, if not actually his guardian, and as such laying the foundation of views that were remarkable in their final accomplishment, was, it is most clear, invested with some charge respecting him personally, that led to the grant of money now under consideration.

Of the nature of this power, however, at least in a modified sense, there can exist no doubt; for the usage of the times reconciles the fact of the military guardianship, if considered in that light alone; and though its full extent as a wardship may be disputed, yet the conjecture, even to this extreme point, seems reasonable, from the tenour of this entry agreeing so entirely with that of petitions in the *Fœdera*, presented by guardians for similar payment relative to wards.

The age of Richard, Duke of Gloucester, at the time of this entry (1465) was fourteen years: now this corresponds precisely with the intermediate probationary term exacted by the laws of chivalry for the knightly instruction of noble youths at that period. This fact, taken in conjunction with the omission of all mention of this prince's name in political affairs during the intervening years, and the particular wording of the document, "for costs and expenses incurred by him on behalf of the Duke of Gloucester," seems to warrant the conclusion that Richard, the renowned Earl of Warwick, the "king maker" and the king dethroner, was the warrior lord selected by King Edward IV. for initiating his young brother into the noble practice of arms.

This heroic and most powerful chieftain was peculiarly fitted for so high a trust. His magnificent style of living and large possessions had procured for him the appellation of "the Great Earl of Warwick;"|| his fame had spread throughout Europe, and his authority in England was almost absolute:¶ independent, too, of his claims to the respect and gratitude of the king and his brother, from his devotion to their deceased parent, he was their mother's nephew,** their own near kinsman, and one of the most zealous and

* Rymer's Add. MSS. No. 4614., art. 91.

† Paston Letters, vol. iv. p. 59.

‡ Surtees's History of Durham, p. lx.

§ Anno 5 Edw. IV., p. 490, 8vo. 1837.

|| Paston Letters, vol. i. p. 91.

¶ At this time, observes Mr. Sharon Turner, (on the authority of an author living at that period,) none before Warwick had in England half the possessions which he then enjoyed. He had the entire earldom of Warwick, all the lands of the Spencers and the earldom of Salisbury. He was great chamberlain of England, the chief admiral, captain of Calais, and also lieutenant of Ireland; an accumulation of honours and power which made him inferior only to his sovereign. These possessions, exclusive of his own estates, amounted to 20,000 marks a year.—*Middle Ages*, vol. iii. p. 268.

** Richard Neville, Earl of Salisbury, was the eldest son of Ralph Neville, Earl of

firm supporters of their house. His father, the Earl of Salisbury, had been a principal promoter of the Duke of York's pretensions to the crown, and in advocating to the last what he considered to be his just cause, he fell a victim to his fidelity, being taken prisoner, as it will be remembered, and beheaded with the duke at the fatal encounter at Wakefield. The Earl of Warwick, his son, so created in right of his wife, the heiress of that house, devoted himself to advance the cause of his cousin, the young Earl of March, as strenuously as the Earl of Salisbury* had previously that of the Duke of York. Both these young nobles deplored the untimely death of their illustrious and noble parents; both became leagued in one common cause against their sanguinary opponents; and the ultimate advancement of King Edward IV. to the throne was, in a great measure, owing to the vigorous measures, decisive conduct, and vast influence of Richard, Earl of Warwick. This noble was, therefore, as before observed, the most fitting person, by consanguinity and chivalrous fame, that the sovereign could have selected "to season the forwardnesse"† and excite the emulation of the young prince; whether in preparing him for the honourable distinction of knighthood, or for acquiring the highest degree of excellence in the martial pursuits of the age. And these were of extreme importance to King Edward; for while the dethroned Henry of Lancaster remained alive, and was protected by other crowned heads, his seat on the English throne could scarcely be considered either firm or fixed. He needed, therefore, all possible support from his natural allies, and, consequently, (as Mr. Hutton observes,) "he initiated his brothers into the use of arms, as an additional strength to his house."‡ The military fame which distinguished Gloucester in after years, and which has been so highly extolled even by his enemies,§ bespeaks him to have been tutored by no ordinary person, and would have done full justice to lessons so ably inculcated, even if his instructor had been, as is surmised, the powerful and renowned Warwick himself. At the Castle of Middleham, then the hereditary demesne of his illustrious kinsman, did the young Richard of Gloucester, in all probability, pass his boyish days. There, in the domestic circle of England's proudest baron, he must have been associated with the flower of British chivalry; and at a time when, without reference to his extreme youth, and with a total disregard of all existing records, he is universally believed to have been concocting schemes fraught with destruction to his fellow men, he was, in all likelihood, practising with his youthful and noble compeers the manly exercises that marked the age; some bold and athletic, others sportive, with "hawk and hound, seasoned with ladies' smiles;" and forming those early friendships which lasted through life, and which, from their devotedness and durability, form a striking feature in

Westmoreland, K. G., by his second wife Joane, daughter of John of Gaunt. From marrying Alice, the daughter and heir of Thomas de Montacute, Earl of Salisbury, K. G., he was created Earl of Salisbury, and was appointed lord great chamberlain of England, 39 Henry VI., but was beheaded at York shortly afterwards. His eldest son, Richard, K. G., acquired the earldom of Warwick by marrying Ann, sister and heir to Henry, Duke of Warwick, and is celebrated in the history of England as the "king maker," from his great influence and power.—*Testamenta Vetusta*, p. 287.

* King Edward IV., in his speech from the throne at the first parliament held after his accession, couples the Earl of Salisbury's name with that of the Duke of York: after thanking the Commons for their "true hearts and great assistance" in restoring him to the throne of his ancestors, he adds, "also, in that ye have tenderly had in remembrance the correction of the horrible murder and cruel death of my lord and father, my brother Rutland, and my cousin of Salisbury and other, I thank you heartily."—*Rot. Parl.*, v. p. 487.

† Buck, lib. i. p. 8.

‡ Hutton's *Bosworth*, p. xviii.

§ Rous, p. 215, and More, p. 9.

Gloucester's chequered career. There, too, in all probability, it may be inferred that Richard first bestowed his affections* on his gentle cousin Anne, Warwick's youngest and most lovely daughter;† who, treading in the footsteps of his mother, the Lady Cecily, from being the companion in childhood of the orphan prince, and then perchance the "ladye love" of his chivalrous probation, acquired an influence over him, that led in after years, to his selecting her as his consort when she was in adversity, and he in the zenith of his greatness. Very many historical notices and chance local details afford strong presumptive evidence to warrant this conclusion. "The partiality of Richard for Middleham through life is," says its historian, "well known;‡ and Sir George Buck, speaking of his childhood, states "that this Richard Plantagenet lived for the most part in the castle of Middleham;§ which could not have been the case during his father's lifetime, because Middleham was the baronial hall of Warwick,|| and not that of York. A yet more important link in the chain of evidence is afforded by the association of Gloucester's name with the young heir of the house of Lovell,¶ in the identical entry that connects this prince in boyhood with the Earl of Warwick. After the words in the exchequer roll, above quoted, viz.: "Paid to Richard, Earl of Warwick, for costs and expenses incurred by him on behalf of the Duke of Gloucester, the king's brother," there follows immediately this additional clause: "and for the exhibition and marriage of the son and heir of the Lord Lovell."** Now the custody and wardship of minors at this period, as there has been before occasion to notice, were a source both of immense profit to the barons and of unlimited patronage to the crown; and it may be reckoned among the many serious grievances which the corruption of the feudal system brought upon the country, especially as relates to marriage.†† The circumstance, therefore, of the association of these two noble youths with Warwick in one public document, together with their corresponding ages, and the devoted attachment which induced such marks of favour through life from the prince, and devotion to him even to death from the Lord Lovell,‡‡ is, to say

* Buck, lib. i. p. 81.

† Ibid., p. 8.

‡ Whitaker's Hist. of Richmondshire, vol. i. p. 335.

§ Buck, lib. i. p. 7.

|| Paston Letters, vol. i. p. 185.

¶ Francis Lovell, son and heir to John Lord Lovell, married Anne, daughter of Henry Lord Fitz Hugh. He very soon succeeded his father as Lord Lovell, and was afterwards created Viscount Lovell.—*Paston Letters*, vol. iv.

** Issue Rolls of the Excheq., p. 409.

†† The feudal lord exercised the privilege of receiving the lands and person of the minor, and retaining them till the male ward arrived at the age of twenty-one years, and the female of fourteen years; during which interval the rents and profits of the estates belonged entirely to the guardian. The right of marriage was still more opposite to reason and justice, since by this the guardian in chivalry might dispose of his charge in wedlock to any one he chose; or, what is more, might sell the disposition of him to another, without troubling himself at all about the inclination or affections of the unfortunate ward.—*Blackstone's Commentaries*, vols. ii. and iv.

‡‡ The life of this young nobleman, and the vicissitudes that marked his singular career, arising chiefly from his devotion to Richard of Gloucester, constitute one of the most remarkable narratives connected with these tragical times. The Lord Lovell accompanied the prince in most of his military campaigns; and on Richard's being appointed to the protectorate, he procured for the companion of his youth the lucrative office of chief butler of England.—*Harl. MS.* 433, fol. 223. At this monarch's coronation he walked on the king's left hand, bearing one of the swords of justice, (*Excerpt. Hist.* p. 380;) and after attending him to the battle of Bosworth, and opposing with determined zeal the accession of his rival, Henry VII., he is supposed to have been starved to death in a subterraneous chamber at his own seat, Minster Lovell, in Oxfordshire, the skeleton of a man seated in a chair, with his head reclining on a table, being accidentally discovered there in a chamber under ground, towards the close of

the least, strong presumptive proof that both were associated in boyhood under the roof of the illustrious "king maker," the Earl of Warwick, and both, perhaps, connected in wardship with that almost sovereign chief. No decisive authority, indeed, appears extant to warrant the positive assumption of so important a fact; but as the historical traditions of distant periods are often verified by official records, so the document now quoted affords the strongest ground for believing that Gloucester was, for some years, under the entire charge of the great "Warwick," either in a civil or warlike capacity. The inference thus drawn merits deep consideration, arising from the value that attaches to every particular that can throw light on the early days of a monarch whose life is so wrapt in mystery as that of Richard III.

Whatever degree of probability may be attached to this surmise, one thing at least remains undisputed, as connected with the youth of this prince; and it is a matter of extreme importance to his character and his disposition; namely, that evidence is afforded by the very next public notice of repute respecting Gloucester, of King Edward's strong and unabated affection for him, and of his anxious desire to promote his young brother's advancement to the highest and most honourable posts. If the written memorials of his history then are few, yet on this one point at least they are authentic and valuable; nor could any more convincing proof be desired than that afforded by his being elected, in the fourteenth year of his age, to the high honour of a knight of the most noble order of the Garter, an institution which made England the centre of chivalry,* it being one of the most ancient lay orders in the world, and at that time limited to twenty-six companions.† The rarity of the distinction is evinced by its not having been bestowed by the founder, Edward III., even upon his own son, Thomas, Duke of Gloucester; for, although that prince sat in Parliament as constable of England,‡ he was not created a knight of the Garter until after his nephew had ascended the throne.§ Conclusive evidence is thus afforded of the progress that Richard must have made in the martial accomplishments of the times; since it appears that being of the blood royal|| did not necessarily, at this early period, suffice for enrolment as a member of a fraternity, the qualifications professedly required for which were military ardour and princely and gallant deportment.¶ "On the 4th of February, 1466, directions were given for delivering the sword and helmet of the sovereign's brother, Richard, Duke of Gloucester,

the seventeenth century. The Lord Lovell probably took refuge in this place of concealment after his defeat at the battle of Stoke, a large reward being offered for his apprehension; and his melancholy end is supposed to have occurred from neglect on the part of those who were intrusted with the secret.—*Lingard*, vol. v. p. 290.

* Noble's Hist. of Col. of Arms, p. 20.

† The first names enrolled by Edward III., its royal founder, on the most noble order of the Garter, were the young and gallant Edward, his eldest son, (surnamed the Black Prince,) and the most heroic of his brave companions at Cressy. On the king's return from his triumphant expedition into France, he rewarded other valiant knights who had faithfully served him there by investing them also with this noble and chivalrous order, which then consisted of twenty-six brethren in arms; of this number the monarch himself formed one; the remainder were all persons of choice endowments, and acknowledged military reputation.—*Art of Heraldry*, p. 99.

‡ Sandford's Geneal. Hist., book iii. p. 227.

§ Edmondson's Heraldry, art. Orders of Knighthood.

|| The Duke of Gloucester himself, when monarch of England, exemplified this remark, inasmuch as, after his accession to the throne, he neither created his only son, Edward, Prince of Wales, a knight of the Garter, nor did he bestow this much-esteemed dignity either upon Edward, Earl of Warwick, or John, Earl of Lincoln, although he nominated each of these princes, his nephews, at different periods, successors to the throne.

¶ See Appendix T.

to be placed in St. George's Chapel." And in the March following, we read "of the badge of his order being paid for, though he did not take possession of his stall until after the month of April."* This emancipation from the trammels of boyhood and installation at so early an age to the highest dignity which could be awarded to prince or subject, and the insignia of which, since its first institution, the greatest monarchs in all succeeding ages have thought it an honour to wear, appear to mark the point whence Richard's true entrance into public and political life may be dated. The more so, as a passage in the Paston Letters† intimates, that in the following month (30th of April, 1466) this prince was employed on some special mission, either of a warlike or confidential import; viz., "Item: as for tidings, the Earl of Northumberland is home into the North, and my Lord of Gloucester shall after, as to-morrow men say."

If, then, but little of actual importance remains on record, connected with the early youth of Richard III., and if his domestic habits and pursuits at that important period of his life must be rather implied from circumstances than actually illustrated by existing records, yet it cannot but be considered an indication of his peaceable and tranquil career, that up to this period no verified tale of horror, no accusation, however forcible, reported by the rancour of his enemies, associates itself with his memory, or can be fairly and unequivocally brought home to him. King Edward might, from a selfish feeling, have endowed his young brother with manors and lordships, that the stream of such vast wealth should flow into and enrich his own coffers, or be the means of cementing in wardship the aid and alliance of some discontented baron. He might have loaded him with high-sounding titles and ancient dignities, to gratify personal or family pride; or have nominated him to important offices and appointments, as the means of preventing the power thus nominally bestowed from being turned against himself by treachery or rebellion: but, unless this monarch had considered Gloucester as worthy to bear and fitting to adorn one of the most distinguished positions to which it was in the sovereign's power to advance him,—one exclusively of honour,‡ instituted to stimulate and reward military prowess, wholly unconnected with emolument, and productive of no personal advantage to himself,—he would scarcely have been induced, at the early age of fourteen, to invest the young Richard with so high a distinction as was that of the order of the Garter in those days of true chivalry and gallant knighthood.

* Sir Harris Nicolas's Order of British Knighthood, p. 92.

† Paston Letters, vol. i. p. 289.

‡ Rot. Turris Lond. ap. Anst. Reg. Gart., vol. i. p. 131.

CHAPTER V.

Re-interment of the Duke of York and the Earl of Rutland at Fotheringay.—Richard selected by the king to follow their remains in state.—Coolness between Edward IV. and his brother of Clarence.—Character of King Edward, of George of Clarence, of Richard of Gloucester.—Superior mental qualifications of Gloucester.—Absence of all foundation for his alleged depravity.—Marriage of Edward IV.—Mortification of Warwick.—Jealousy of Clarence.—Warwick essays to tamper with Clarence and Gloucester.—Marriage of Clarence.—Indignation of the king.—Open rupture between Edward, Warwick and Clarence.—Gloucester continues faithful to the king.—Honours awarded to him.—He is created lord high admiral, and chief constable of England.—Unsettled state of the kingdom.—Open insurrection.—Edward IV. abdicates the throne.—Escapes into Burgundy.—Richard shares his exile.—Restoration of Henry VI.—Attainder of Edward IV. and of Richard, Duke of Gloucester.

RICHARD of Gloucester was but a stripling in age when he entered the arena of political life. As stated at the conclusion of the last chapter, this entrance may be dated from the period when he was created a knight of the Garter, shortly after attaining his fourteenth year: and most active was his public career from that early period. The first document concerning him, which next presents itself to notice, is, perhaps, the most pleasing of any that are associated with his memory. It was a tribute of filial affection;—one of those scenes of domestic tenderness which form so redeeming a feature in the life and history of the House of York,—a resting place, amidst the harrowing scenes of rapine, murder and rebellion, which associate themselves on most occasions with the striking events of this turbulent period.

Almost the first act of Edward IV., after his accession to the crown, was to remove the head of his illustrious parent from its ignominious elevation over the gates of York, and honourably to inter his remains beside those of the young Earl of Rutland, at Pontefract. When firmly established on the throne, and after a few years of tranquillity had somewhat replenished the impoverished coffers of the kingdom, the young monarch farther evinced his strong affection for the memory of his deceased parent and brother, by deciding on the removal of their remains to the burial-place appertaining to their family, in the chancel of the collegiate church founded by their ancestor at Fotheringay.* Richard of Gloucester, on this important occasion, was selected by his sovereign to transport the remains of their father, and to accompany them in state the whole way, following next after the corpse,† supported by the chief of the nobility and officers, whose attendance was commanded on this interesting and solemn occasion.

The funeral was one of the most splendid and sumptuous on record, little less than regal;‡ and while admiration is elicited by this dutiful testimony of

* Edward Plantagenet, second Duke of York, founded a magnificent college at Fotheringay, for which he was obliged to mortgage great part of his estate. Being slain at Agincourt, his body was brought to England and buried in the choir of his collegiate church, under a marble slab, with his figure inlaid in brass, according to his will.—*Nichol's Royal Wills*, p. 223.

† Sandford, book v. p. 373.

‡ See Appendix U.