

## CHAPTER VI.

Edward IV. resolves on again contesting the crown.—He returns to England with the Duke of Gloucester.—They effect a landing in Yorkshire.—Perjury of King Edward.—Success of his scheme.—Clarence repents his desertion of his family.—Gloucester chiefly instrumental in effecting a final reconciliation between his brothers.—King Edward recovers the throne.—Henry VI. again a captive.—Battle of Barnet.—The Earl of Warwick is slain.—Battle of Tewkesbury.—Death of Edward, Prince of Wales.—Queen Margaret captured—committed to the Tower.—Insurrection of Falconbridge.—Sudden dissolution of Henry VI.—The Duke of Gloucester unjustly accused of his murder, tested by reference to cotemporaries.—Origin of the imputation.—Gloucester receives the thanks of the Houses of Parliament.—His fidelity to the king rewarded by high honours and important trusts.

THE return to England of Queen Margaret and her son Edward, Prince of Wales, with additional troops and subsidies from France, seemed alone wanting to complete and render decisive the extraordinary revolution which has been above alluded to.

In consequence of conflicting interests at the Burgundian and French courts, which it is unnecessary here to discuss, the disastrous position of Edward IV. seemed fully as deplorable out of England as his precipitate flight proved it to have been in his own dominions; and few other than minds so vigorously constituted as were those of the warlike sons of York, but would have sunk under the difficulties which from every quarter seemed to threaten the founder of that royal line with death or imprisonment. But the deposed king and his brother of Gloucester were not of dispositions tamely to submit to a reverse of fortune as sudden as it was severe. They were young, active, courageous, and strongly imbued with the chivalric and daring spirit of the times. All the strong and violent passions of their irascible race were kindled by the treachery that had been practised towards them, and their education had fitted them rather for desperate deeds than the quiet virtues of domestic life. A combination, too, of those trivial events which, apparently unimportant in themselves, so frequently tend either to frustrate or ensure the accomplishment of the most important schemes, so favoured the success of their project, that it almost seemed as if the sun of York was never to be more than partially eclipsed, however dense the clouds or ominous the darkness that dimmed for a while its beams, and seemed to threaten the total extinction of its splendour. Although Margaret of Anjou and her noble son were supported by the entire power of Louis XI., yet the advanced season of the year, added to perpetual storms, and an accumulation of the most untoward casualties, retarded them month after month from landing.

Warwick was in despair. Clarence in the interval had time for reflection,\* and also for communication with those true friends, who, in all its degradation,

\* "When the king was in Holland, the Duke of Clarence, the king's second brother, considering the great inconvenience whereunto as well his brother the king, he, and his brother the Duke of Gloucester were fallen unto, through and by the division that was between them, whereunto, by the subtle compassing of the Earl of Warwick and his complices, they were brought and reduced."—*Fleet. Chron.*, p. 9.

endeavoured to bring home to him the humiliating position in which he had placed himself, as the tool of his father-in-law and the betrayer of his brothers. Thus, by a variety of incidents, so remarkable and complicated that it would require too much space to enter here into a more particular examination of the details, Edward of York and his faithful companions had rallied their forces sufficiently to contemplate a return to England through the private aid of Charles of Burgundy, and before the heroic but ill-fated Margaret could complete her arrangements or fulfil any portion of her contract with the Earl of Warwick.

The promptitude and zeal of the Yorkists compensating for the superior advantages that were rendered futile to the Lancastrians by delays and disasters of various kinds,\* a counter-revolution was speedily brought about; and in a very brief period the rival sovereigns were again found fiercely contesting for the oft-disputed crown. With so small a body of troops, that they were more than once deterred from landing on the coasts, which Warwick's vigilance had so well guarded,† King Edward at length effected his design at Ravenspur, in Yorkshire;‡ and the perjury there practised by the usurping Henry of Lancaster in the previous century,§ probably instigated the Yorkist monarch to attempt a like deception. Profiting by the example of Bolingbroke, and its heinousness being palliated by the baneful precedent of his father's duplicity at Ludlow,|| he approached the gates of York, not ostensibly as a sovereign,¶ but merely a claimant, as he alleged, for his hereditary right of the duchy of York,\*\* bestowed on the Duke of Clarence after King Edward's attainder and expulsion from the throne. The means so cunningly devised were successful in their result, and the exiled representative of the House of York was, under these pretensions,†† welcomed to

\* "And Queen Margaret, and Prince Edward, her son, with other knights, squires, and other men of the King of France, had navy to bring them to England, which, when they were shipped in France, the wind was so contrary unto them xvij days and nights, that they might not come from Normandy with unto England, which with a wind might have sailed it in xij hours."—*Warkworth's Chron.*, p. 17.

† Paston Letters, vol. ii. p. 57; also Fleetwood's Chron., p. 2.

‡ "Upon the morn Wednesday and Thursday, the xiiij day of March, fell great storms, winds and tempests upon the sea, so that the said xiiij day, in great torment, he (Edward) came to Humberhede, where the other ships were dissevered from him. The king with his ship alone, wherein was the Lord Hastings, his chamberlain, and other, to the number of v<sup>c</sup> well-chosen men, landed within Humber, on Holderness side, at a place called Ravenspoure. The King's brother, Rich<sup>d</sup>, Duke of Gloucester, and in his company iij<sup>c</sup> men, landed at another place iij mile from thence."—*Fleetwood's Chron.*, pp. 2, 3.

§ "The same oath swore Henry of Bolingbrook, when, pretending to the duchy of Lancaster, he landed in the north, and armed against King Richard II.; which he broke, as Edward IV. after did, upon the like advantage."—*Habington's Edward IV.*, p. 75.

|| See Chapter III.

¶ "And he said to the mayor and alderman, that he never would claim no title, nor take upon hande to be King of England, nor would have done afore that time, but by the exciting of the Earl of Warwick; and thereto before all people he cried, 'A King Henry! A King and Prince Edward!' and wearied an ostrich feather, Prince Edward's livery; and after this, he was suffered to pass the city, and so held his way southward; and no man let him nor hurt him."—*Warkworth's Chron.*, p. 14.

\*\* "The Duke of Clarence, that greater hopes might not invite him to return to his brother, was possess of the duchy of York."—*Habington's Edward IV.*, p. 71.

†† "All began to exclaim against the injustice of the last parliament in conferring the duchy of York, which by right of primogeniture belonged to Edward, upon his second brother, George, Duke of Clarence; which act could not be imagined freely granted by the Parliament, but extorted by the over great sway of Warwick."—*Habington*, p. 74.



the city, and permitted to depart from it to his own lordship and demesnes, by many who would otherwise have disputed his re-assumption of the regal prerogative, from the indignation which had been felt at his injudicious exercise of the kingly power. The leading cause, however, of that success which enabled King Edward to throw off the mask which he had assumed, and to avail himself of the good fortune which attended his promptitude and judicious measures after landing, was the indication given by the Duke of Clarence of defection from the rebellious standard of Warwick. It has been before stated, that great unanimity and strong affection for each other was a leading trait in the children of the family of York, the fickle and unsteady Clarence forming the only exception to this their peculiar and brightest characteristic. With him it appears to have been merely weakened, but not subdued, by the more overwhelming passions of jealousy and ambition; jealousy at the ill-judged elevation of the Wydville family; ambition at the prospect of being king, instead of the brother by whom he had felt himself injured and aggrieved.

So long as these exciting causes were fomented by his father-in-law, Warwick,\* so long did Clarence continue at enmity with his family; but when, by a depth and versatility of policy unsuspected, and, indeed, incomprehensible to a mind so ill formed for penetration as was that of the unreflecting Clarence, he found that the rival of his house, the monarch of Lancaster, was to be substituted for his exiled brother,—that he had been the tool of Warwick, and that, in grasping at a vain shadow, he had, in reality, removed himself one degree farther from the possible possession of a crown which he had so laboured and so degraded himself for the purpose of attaining,—the now-repentant duke lamented his defection, and saw, in its broad light, the folly and weakness of his conduct. The shallow policy which he had pursued, in becoming the dupe of Warwick, when fancying himself protesting solely against the undue influence of Edward's queen, was now apparent; and this conviction was brought more home to him by the remonstrance of the female portion of his family,† whose kindly influence revived all the softer and better feelings of his nature. The Duchess of York, indeed, must have beheld with grief unutterable the ruin to their house which resulted from such unnatural rebellion in her son; and, co-operating with her daughters, the Duchesses of Exeter, Suffolk and Burgundy, they commenced the most strenuous exertions to heal so disgraceful a rupture, and laboured unceasingly to win back the misguided Clarence to his family and his faction.

This prince was the peculiarly beloved brother of his sister, the Princess of Burgundy; and by her untiring zeal, and by solemn promises of pardon and oblivion of the past, previously extorted by her‡ from Edward IV., Clarence, inconsistent and restless, ever hasty in action but weak in purpose, again changed sides, and secretly promised, if his royal brother could land and effect a junction with him, that he would aid him with his support towards his re-establishment on that throne from which he had been so active an agent in expelling him a few months previously.

\* See Appendix X.

† "By right covert ways and means, were good mediators and mediatrix, the high and mighty princess my Lady their mother, my Lady of Exeter, my Lady Suffolk, their sisters, but most specially my Lady of Burgundy."—*Fleet. Chron.*, p. 9.

‡ "Great and diligent labour with all effect was continually made by the high and mighty princess the Duchess of Burgundy, which at no time ceased to send her servants and messengers to the king where he was, and to my said Lord of Clarence into England."—*Fleet. Chron.*, p. 9.

By the most consummate generalship, and movements so well devised and ably executed, that Warwick himself was paralyzed at the boldness of an undertaking which had baffled even his foresight and penetration, King Edward reached within three miles of the Duke of Clarence's encampment without a single conflict, or the slightest opposition being offered to his progress. The fate of the brothers, nay, of the kingdom at large, now hung on the final decision of this latter wavering prince; and Gloucester, the much-defamed but consistent Gloucester, firm in his allegiance to the one, yet feelingly alive to the degradation of the other, was the chief agent in finally effecting that reconciliation—that re-union of interests which, in a few hours, overthrew the deep policy of France, the long-laboured schemes of Warwick, and the sanguine hopes of the Lancastrian queen, founded, as they were, on the apparent annihilation of the Yorkist dynasty. The Duke of Gloucester, "and other lords, past often formally between the brothers, and urged them, in all respects, both religious and politic, to prevent a quarrel so ruinous and so scandalous to both, wherein the triumph could not be but almost destruction to the conqueror."\* Surely this fact must invalidate the unmitigated charge of fraternal hatred and jealous malignity so universally ascribed to Richard of Gloucester; surely this anxious desire to restore one brother to the crown and to reclaim the other from dishonour, must at least serve to qualify the opposing statements of a subsequent age, and throw discredit on the tradition that makes him destitute of every kindly sentiment.†

Satisfactorily, too, does it explain the nature of "the gratuitous, laudable, and honourable services," "the innate probity and other virtues," which King Edward publicly recorded in the letters patent which perpetuated alike the merits and the rewards which he considered it fitting to bestow on the Duke of Gloucester.

The meeting between the brothers—so important to the future destinies of England—is thus simply, but feelingly, narrated by an eye-witness, in a MS. preserved in the Harleian collection, little known until within the last few years:—"The king, upon an afternoon, issued out of Warwick with all his fellowship, by the space of three miles, into a fair field, towards Banbury, where he saw the duke, his brother, in fair array, come towards him with a great fellowship; and when they were together within less than half a mile, the king set his people in array, the banners displayed, and left them standing still, taking with him his *brother of Gloucester*, the Lord Rivers, Lord Hastings, and a few others, and went towards his brother of Clarence. And in likewise the duke, for his part, taking with him a few noblemen and leaving his host in good order, departed from them towards the king: and so they met betwixt both hosts, where was right kind and loving language betwixt them two." . . . "And then in likewise spake together the two Dukes of Clarence and Gloucester, and after the other noblemen being there with them, whereof all the people there that loved them were right glad and joyous, and thanked God highly of that joyous meeting, unity and accord, hoping that thereby should grow unto them prosperous fortune in all that they should after that have to do." . . . "And so with great gladness both

\* Habington, *Life of Edward IV.* Bishop Kennet speaks in very high terms of Dr. Habington's biography of Edward IV., in the preface affixed to his valuable work, the "Complete History of England."—See vol. i.

† "I have no brother, I am like no brother:  
And this word—love, which greybeards call divine,  
Be resident in men like one another,  
And not in me;—I am myself alone."

*Shakspeare's Hen. VI.*, 3d Part, Act V., Sc. VI.



hosts, with their princes, together went to Warwick (city), and there lodged, and in the country near adjoining."\*

Strong efforts were made to induce the rebellious Neville, Earl of Warwick, to return to his allegiance, but in vain. King Edward, therefore, by the advice of his brethren, Clarence and Gloucester, and accompanied by them, continued his march to London with all possible despatch, where he was joyfully received by the citizens; and, taking possession of the Tower and of the person of the unhappy Henry VI., he found himself once more established on the English throne, exactly six months after his abdication and expulsion and within one month of his landing at Ravenspur, under circumstances the most unfavourable and unpropitious that could well be conceived.

King Edward's queen, with her infant daughters, had fled to the Sanctuary at Westminster for refuge, immediately on her husband's expulsion from the throne; and in that melancholy abode, as if to render still more striking the important events that were crowded into the brief period of her royal consort's absence, she gave birth to their eldest son, afterwards Edward V.; a circumstance, there is little doubt, that added weight to his royal parent's restoration, as giving promise of legitimate succession in the line of York, without reason to fear the evils attendant upon a minority, King Edward being in the prime of life and naturally of a robust constitution. Edward IV. reached London the 9th April, 1471; and on the 11th, having entire possession of the city, he proceeded first to St. Paul's, to render thanks to Heaven for his triumph, and thence to the Sanctuary at Westminster, to "comfort" his queen, who "presentyd hym at his comyne," with a "fayre son a prince, to his hert's singular comforte and gladness."† Releasing the royal Elizabeth from her gloomy asylum, the king returned the same evening to London; and carrying her to Baynard's Castle, "they lodged at the lodgyng of my ladye his mother, where they heard divine service that night and upon the morn, Good Friday."‡ Once more, then, were the members of the House of York, in the fulness of prosperity, re-assembled under the roof of the Lady Cecily; once more that severely tried princess had the happiness of seeing her offspring reunited in peace and in joy: for that she was herself present to welcome the exiles, to bless the reunion of the brothers, and to join in the religious services that hallowed a reconciliation she had so earnestly and devoutly laboured to effect, is apparent from the peculiar wording of the passage quoted, "at the lodgyng of my ladye his mother." Under her maternal charge, too, there is little doubt that the king left his royal consort and infant progeny when following up the triumph which he had so unexpectedly obtained; for the Earl of Warwick, though at first paralyzed at Edward's rapid movements, and subsequently dismayed at the desertion of Clarence, was too firmly pledged to Queen Margaret, and his honour was altogether too deeply involved, to desert a cause which he had so warmly and strenuously undertaken. In the midst of his domestic rejoicing, tidings were communicated to Edward IV. of his opponent's approach to the capital. The partisans of the House of York, who had emerged from their sanctuaries,§ were speedily assembled, and, after resting in the metropolis for the remainder of the above-named sacred

\* Collected from a MS. in the Harleian Library, entitled "Historie of the Arrivall of Edward IV. in England, and final Recoverye of his Kingdom," sometimes entitled "Fleetwood's Chronicle," and recently edited and published by J. Bruce, Esq., for the Camden Society, p. 11.

† Fleet. Chron., p. 17.

‡ Chron. Croyl., p. 554.

§ Ibid.

day, to refresh\* his wearied troops, he placed himself the following morning at the head of his army, and quitting London, met the Lancastrian leaders on a plain near Barnet, about ten miles north of the capital, where, on Easter even, the hostile forces encamped, preparatory to the approaching conflict, which took place on Easter Sunday, 14th April, 1471.† No battle on our warlike annals was more terrible,‡ more characterized by the worst passions of humanity, than that which in this year marked a festival peculiarly consecrated throughout the Christian world, to advocating the heavenly doctrines of the holy Founder of our religion, and designed to commemorate "on earth peace, good-will towards men." No hosannas ushered in the dawn of this most holy day; but, on the contrary, vows of extermination, of hatred, of revenge. Oh how truly may it be said that there are no battles like the battles of the hearth—no conflicts so fierce, so devoid of all that can soften man's savage nature, as those which arm "the father against the son, the son against the father," and which quench all natural affection in every relation of life.§

King Edward showed, in the arrangement of his forces, the different opinions which he entertained of the good faith and fidelity of his two brothers: the "vaward" was commanded by the Duke of Gloucester; the rear, by the Lord Hastings; the main battle, by himself; but George, Duke of Clarence, commanded not in any way in chief that day:¶—so difficult was it for the king to banish suspicion, so expedient to guard against treachery or the possibility of defection to the enemy. Perhaps, too, he may have had more cogent reasons for such precaution than have been made apparent; for it is very clear that the heart of the wavering duke was divided in affection between his noble father-in-law and his royal brother.¶ Prior to the battle, he is said to have most earnestly desired a reconciliation, and would gladly have lent his services as a pacificator; but Warwick was no mere time-server, he was no agent to second the views of others, but the powerful machine which influenced the workings of humbler operations. "Go, tell your master," he said, in reply to Clarence's emissaries, "that Warwick, true to his word, is a better man than the false and perjured Clarence."\*\*\*

From the hour of four in the morning until ten in the forenoon,†† both parties fought with a fury almost unexampled; prodigies of valour were performed, but by none more than the young Duke of Gloucester, who, by an accidental circumstance in the arrangement of the contending army, was immediately opposed to the Earl of Warwick himself.‡‡ If any presumptive proof could invalidate the fabulous traditions of this prince's mis-shapen form and nerveless arm, his conduct in this battle may well be considered an adequate test. It was the first in which he had been engaged; but though he numbered but eighteen years, he bore down all before him, and "entred so farre and boldly into the enemies' army, that two of his esquires,§§ Thomas Parr and John Milewater, being nearest to him, were slain; yet by his owne

\* Warkworth's Chron., p. 15.

† Fleetwood's Chron., p. 18.

‡ Most touchingly has our great dramatist portrayed this, in the bitter lamentation of the unhappy parent who slew his only child in one of these direful feuds:—

"What stratagems, how fell, how butcherly,  
Erroneous, mutinous, and unnatural,  
This deadly quarrel daily doth beget!"

*Third Part of Henry VI., Act II. Sc. V.*

§ Habington's Edw. IV., p. 81.

¶ Fleetwood's Chron., p. 12.

‡‡ Warkworth, p. 16.

§§ Buck's Life of Rich. III., lib. i. p. 9.

\*\*\* Lingard, vol. v. p. 208.

†† Turner's Middle Ages, vol. iii. p. 319.



valour he quit himself, and put most part of the enemies to flight." The Earl of Warwick, after a time, dismounted and fought on foot. He urged on his followers with the determination of his character, and with all the energy of desperation; but in vain. Surrounded by his enemies, and prevented by a thick mist from discerning the situation of his friends, he fell—a victim to his misplaced zeal, to his ungovernable pride and fatal ambition. The death of their valiant leader decided the fate of the day. King Edward's foes fled in all directions, and many, who had remained neuter until then, joined his victorious banner, willing to share in the triumph which attended their sovereign's return to the metropolis, and to participate in the acclamations which greeted his final re-assumption of the throne, as he offered up at St. Paul's, "at even song the same day, his own standard and that of the Earl of Warwick," trophies alike of his signal victory, and of the utter discomfiture of his enemies. The hapless Henry VI., from infancy the sport of fortune, once more a captive, was again consigned to his apartments in the Tower, whence he had been withdrawn two days previously, not as a few months back, to be arrayed "in purple,"\* and with "great reverence" brought to his palace at Westminster as a king, but, in outrage of those strong religious feelings with which he was innately imbued, to be taken on Easter event to meet the hostile armies, and to be placed on Easter Sunday† in front of the battle, as a mark "to be shot at." The arrows, however, that decided the fate of Warwick and his brother, the Lord Montague, fell harmless round the Lancastrian monarch—the political victim, in fighting for whose cause the mighty Nevilles were numbered with the illustrious dead.

"King Henry, being in the forward during the battle, was not hurt, but he was brought again to the Tower of London, there to be kept."‡ He was, indeed, too meek, too powerless an adversary to be dreaded as such, or to occasion either anxiety or alarm in King Edward's mind: other and far more formidable opponents were yet living to stimulate the valour and to excite the energies of the royal House of York. Margaret of Anjou, and her young son, the Prince of Wales, were rallying points for many who had fled from the field of Barnet; and the restored king felt that he must not risk the scattering of his faithful followers, so long as his rivals had footing in his dominions.

Dispersing, therefore, small bands in various directions to watch their movements, but keeping himself close to the metropolis, where his cause was most popular, Edward wisely devoted his attention to conciliate the mass of the people; and his good feeling as well as policy was evinced by innumerable proclamations of amnesty to all such as would voluntarily submit to him.

The respectful love and tender affection cherished in early days for his kinsmen, Warwick and Montague,|| which not even their treachery and defalcation in after time could utterly efface, are forcibly displayed by his conduct observed towards them after their decease. In accordance with the usage of the times, the bodies of the illustrious dead were exposed to public view "two

\* Bayley's Hist. of the Tower, vol. ii. p. 324.

† Warkworth's Chron., p. 15.

‡ Warkworth's Chron., p. 17.

§ The author of the cotemporary Fragment, published by Hearne, in speaking of the Marquis Montague, states that Edward "entirely loved him;" and the writer of the coeval work, which has been so frequently referred to in these pages under the designation of "Fleetwood's Chronicle," testifies that during King Edward's march toward the metropolis, after he had effected a landing at Ravenspur, "the Marquis Montague in no wise troubled him, ne none of his fellowship, but suffered him to pass in peaceable wise."—See *Hearne's Fragment*, p. 306; *Bruce's Arrival of King Edward IV.*, p. 6.

¶ Fleetwood's Chron., p. 18.

or three days barefaced in St. Paul's Church,"\* that all who beheld them might be satisfied of their death,† and none make their pretended escape a deceptive plea for re-union; after which "they were carried down to the priory of Bisham,‡ where, among their ancestors by the mother's side, Earls of Salisbury, the two unquiet brothers rest in one tombe."

The ex-queen and her son, the youthful heir of his father's contested crown, landed at Weymouth§ on the very day that Warwick's fate was sealed on Barnet field. Sad, indeed, was the disastrous intelligence conveyed to the royal fugitives; but though, from sudden terror and on the impulse of the moment, they fled for safety to the sanctuary|| of Beaulieu Abbey¶ in Hants, yet were their spirits not altogether broken. King Henry still lived, although again a captive; and Edward of York filled a throne which they felt to be theirs by right, and by the inheritance of three generations. Each party consequently prepared for another trial of strength. Hope on the one side, desperation on the other, induced the most determined efforts; and a fortnight was spent in untiring zeal and strenuous exertions suited to the great cause which they had at stake.

At the termination of this brief period, a considerable army had assembled near the town of Tewkesbury. All the chivalry of England were there arrayed, either under the banner of the Red Rose, again unfurled by the intrepid queen and her princely son, or drawn thither to uphold the restoration of the gallant monarch who had made the paler Rose so much more popular by his persuasive manners and the brilliancy that characterized his court.

Only twenty days elapsed before the antagonists of Barnet were once more placed in hostile position against each other; and the disastrous events of that recent contest stimulated almost to frenzy the passions of the contending parties, feeling as did each that this battle would be the great climax of their fate, and would decide the destiny of England as well as of its rival monarchs.

One circumstance rendered this action more than ordinarily important, which was, that Edward of Lancaster, the young Prince of Wales, then in his eighteenth year,—about a twelvemonth younger than Richard of Gloucester,—took the command of his father's army; and after personally addressing the soldiery, and animating their zeal in conjunction with and aided by his mother, the persevering Margaret,\*\* he himself headed those faithful adherents†† which at the last fatal conflict had been led on to battle by the desperate and exasperated Warwick.

\* Bayley's Hist. of the Tower, vol. ii. p. 333.

† Fleetwood's Chron., p. 21.

‡ Habington's Edw. IV., p. 88.

§ Warkworth's Chron., p. 17.

|| "Desperation forced her (Queen Margaret) to the common poor refuge of sanctuary. And in Bewlye, in Hampshire, a monastery of Cistercian monks, she registered herself, her son and followers, for persons privileged. To her, in this agonie of soul, came Edmond, Duke of Somerset, with his brother John Lord Beaufort, John Courtney, Earl of Devonshire, Jasper, Earl of Pembroke, John, Lord Prior of St. John's, and John Lord Wenlock. These noble personages laboured what they could by their comfort and presence to raise up the queen, sunk with the weight of her misfortunes."—*Habington*, p. 89.

¶ The small round tower said to have been appropriated to the use of Margaret of Anjou and Edward, Prince of Wales, is still in perfect preservation, and Beaulieu Abbey itself, to which the tradition of this tower affords so great an object of interest; although no longer realizing the description in Fleetwood's Chronicle, (p. 22,) of being as "ample and as large as the franchise of Westminster, or of St. Martin's at London," is, in point of situation, extent of ruin, and romantic scenery, one of the most attractive spots of the innumerable sites in the New Forest hallowed by historical associations.

\*\* Harl. MSS., No. 543.

†† "In the main battle was the prince, under the direction of the Lord Prior and the Lord Wenlock."—*Habington's Edw. IV.*, p. 93.



No better fortune, however, awaited the promising heir of the line of Lancaster than had attended the mighty "king maker" before. Equal prodigies of valour were performed, equal efforts made to ensure success; but a spell seemed to be set over the House of Lancaster, and an almost supernatural fortune to attend that of York. King Edward again intrusted the post of honour and of peril to his young brother, the Duke of Gloucester. Animated by former success, Richard aimed at this distinguished position; and the monarch, in placing his "vaward in the rule of the Duke of Gloucester,"\* and in directing this gallant prince to commence the attack, evinced alike the confidence he felt in his fidelity, his zeal and his military skill. He was immediately opposed to the Duke of Somerset, the chief of the Lancastrian leaders, to whom had been assigned the "vaward" of King Henry's forces. The trust reposed in Richard was not misplaced, and Edward's judicious arrangement was demonstrated by the result: for it is generally acknowledged, that to the cool determination and able generalship of Gloucester may, in a great measure, be ascribed the success of the battle of Tewkesbury.

In addition to the courage which was displayed by him at Barnet, he, on this occasion, manifested that keen foresight which formed so prominent a feature in his character. By a feigned retreat,† which only a mature policy could have suggested, he withdrew his adversaries from their strongest position,‡ and availed himself of the confusion which followed—when the latter too late discovered their error—to follow up his success, and reap the full measure of his acute penetration and bravery. This, together with the rash and precipitate conduct of the Lancastrian leaders,§ decided the fate of the day, and together with it that of their hapless cause.

The queen's army was entirely routed, and the Yorkist monarch gained a complete victory. No conquest, indeed, could be more decisive: thousands were left dead on the field; Queen Margaret herself was captured within a few days; and Edward, Prince of Wales, the young, the noble and the brave, forfeited his life in the first battle in which he had unsheathed the sword in defence of his royal parents, his inheritance and his crown. He was "taken fleeinge to the townwards, and slain in the field;"|| but whether in the heat of battle or in cold blood as a prisoner, it seems almost impossible at this distant period to decide, so ambiguous and conflicting are the cotemporary accounts.

As the mode of his death, however, involves one of the most serious accusations which tradition has imputed to Richard, Duke of Gloucester, a minute examination of the circumstances, as far as this prince is concerned, is indispensable in these pages. Nearly the whole of what may be termed

\* Fleetwood's Chron., p. 30.

† "The Duke of Somerset, seeing Gloucester retire with some appearance of flight (an appearance, indeed, it was, only to betray the enemy,) ran after so farre in the pursute, that there was no safety in the retreat. Then did Gloucester on the sudden turne backe upon him, and having by this deceit enticed him from his trenches, hee cut all the vanguard in pieces."—*Habington's Edw. IV.*, p. 94.

‡ "The Duke of Somerset entrencht his camp round so high and so strong, that the enemy could on no side force it."—*Ibid.*, p. 92.

§ "The Duke of Somerset, enraged with his discomfiture, and having Lord Wenlock's faith in some jealousie, upon his escape backe obrayded him with the most ignominious termes of cowardize and treason; and, transported by the heat of passion, with an axe hee had in his hand strooke out his braines. This outrage begot nothing but disorder in the queen's camp; and so great grew the confusion, that no man knew whom to obey, or how or where to make resistance against the assaulting enemy."—*Ibid.*, p. 94.

|| Fleetwood's Chron., p. 30.

the popular and standard histories of England, from the earliest printed chronicles of the sixteenth to the abler productions that closed the eighteenth century, represent the Lancastrian prince as brought before Edward IV. after the battle a prisoner, and as incurring the resentment of that king by his bold and dauntless assumption to his face of right to the throne; and after stating this, and that he was struck by the irritated monarch with his gauntlet, as a signal of defiance, it is farther represented that he was finally dispatched by the sword of Richard of Gloucester. Whence, however, is this information obtained? and from what source springs the accusation? Not, certainly, from eye-witnesses of the event, neither from cotemporary chroniclers. These reports emanated from the annalists of the Tudor times; and in tracing the authority on which were based the statements of our great historian Hume, as also the immortal dramatist, Shakspeare, both of which centre in Holinshed,\* the most popular writer of that period, it affords but one out of innumerable instances which might be adduced of the prejudiced and corrupt source whence accusations of such weighty import to the character and reputation of Richard III. were originally derived, and have been since perpetuated.

Sir George Buck, as previously observed, was the first who ventured, by reference to early and cotemporary writers, to dispute the legendary tales of a subsequent period; and he, though adopting the view of the prince being slain in cold blood, most expressly asserts, on the testimony of a "faithful MS. chronicle of those times,"† that the Duke of Gloucester "only, of all the great persons present, stood still and drew not his sword."‡

Lord Orford, in after years, though admitting that the style of Buck's writing laid him open to criticism, yet most ably and philosophically follows up his views when based on well-attested facts;§ and, by reference to the earlier historical records of this battle, he gives force to Sir George's assertions by pointing out how each succeeding chronicler added to the report, and how "much the story had gained from the time of Fabyan," the oldest historian|| subsequent to the age of printing, who simply states, that the prince "was by the king's servants incontinently slain;" to the later Tudor annalists,¶ who, by substituting for the king's "servants" the names of his royal brothers, have been the means of fixing the entire odium, with still greater injustice, on Richard, Duke of Gloucester.\*\* Much difference of opinion has, notwithstanding, ever prevailed on this point, arising chiefly from the contradictory accounts of the above-named chroniclers, and the manner in which they qualify their statements, by imputing them "to reporte;" but recent researches have at length proved how tenable were the grounds of objection taken by the apologists of Richard III., and how well founded were the "doubts" which they entertained, arising from the evi-

\* "Shakspeare follows Holinshed," (see *Courtenay's Commentaries on Shakspeare's Historical Plays*, vol. ii. p. 27;) so also did Hume, and most implicitly; it being reserved for later times to that in which the philosophical historian penned his imperishable work to seek from the original documents the events narrated by him. It is, however, a well-known and admitted fact, that Holinshed copied Hall, and Hall (with his own additions) Polydore Virgil, who was not only a staunch Lancastrian, but virtually employed by Henry VII. to compile the history and the reports of his period.

† "Chron. in quarto, MS. apud Dom. Regis. Rob. Cotton."

‡ Buck, lib. iii. p. 81.

§ *Historic Doubts*, p. 20.

¶ Polydore Virgil, p. 336; Hall, p. 301.

\*\* See Guthrie, p. 314. "Whom Edward's brother, the Duke of Gloucester, murdered in cold blood, as he is said (though with no great show of probability) to have done his father, Henry VI."

|| Fabyan, p. 662.



dently corrupt source whence the charges were originally derived and afterwards propagated. It must be admitted by all who are in any degree conversant with the early literature of this country, that the documents of the fifteenth century are most deficient and meagre in detail: this resulted from the large portion of official records which were sacrificed to the jealous rivalry of the Roses, as each faction gained the ascendancy and destroyed the edicts of his predecessor. The long-lamented deficiency is now, however, being almost daily supplied by the keen search after truth which at the present time so laudably prevails, and which has led to the publication of a number of interesting manuscripts and diaries written by men who themselves lived in those troubled times, and, in some instances, witnessed the things which they detailed.\*

Of this description are two very remarkable narratives, as regards the subject now under discussion; because they were both penned about the same period, and, without doubt, by cotemporary writers;† although a broad distinction separates their views, inasmuch as one author was on the side of the House of York,—a servant who personally attended upon Edward IV. during his exile and on his restoration; the other, a staunch and violent Lancastrian, who, in his party zeal, minutely enumerates every evil trait that could in any degree sully the fame of the enemies of his own faction. These brief chronicles, which have been frequently quoted in these pages, were carelessly written; and, moreover, from the rapidity with which events of vast national import followed on each other, there can be no doubt they are often chronologically incorrect, certainly at all times compiled with partiality or prejudice to the cause which they espouse; yet, when they can be tested with other and standard authors, or with cotemporaries of undoubted credit, the corroborating evidence which they afford, as living writers and eye-witnesses, is most valuable ‡

In the point now under consideration, these two coeval diaries may truly

\* Amongst the most valuable of these may be enumerated the Paston Letters, the Plumpton Correspondence, the manuscript papers published in the *Archæologia*, together with Sir Harris Nicolas's *Testamenta Vetusta* and *Privy-purse Expenses*; Sir Henry Ellis's *Original Letters*, and the publication of the *Record Commissioners*. These, and very many more of great value, local, municipal and collegiate, furnished by members of the Camden, Percy and Antiquarian Societies, have materially aided to dispel the mystery and ambiguity which so long prevailed, arising from the borrowed details of early and incompetent writers.

† "Historie of the Arrivall of Edward IV. in England, and finall Recoverage of his Kingdome from Henry VI., A. D. 1471." Printed by the Camden Society from the Harl. MSS., No. 543; and "A Chronicle of the first thirteen Years of Edward IV.," by John Warkworth, D.D., Master of St. Peter's College, Cambridge, published by the same society from the MS. now in the library of that college.

‡ Particularly Fleetwood's Chronicle, which appears to have been written with the express view of making known to foreign countries the incidents of King Edward's restoration: for three days only after the termination of that narrative so designated, Edward IV., being then at Canterbury, addressed a letter in French to the nobles and burgomasters of Bruges, thanking them for the courteous hospitality which he had received from them during his exile, apprising them of the great success which had attended his expedition, and referring them to the bearer of the letter for further particulars of his victories. Those "further particulars" were contained in a very brief French abridgment of Fleetwood's Chronicle; and in the public library at Ghent there is a quarto MS. volume in vellum, which contains a cotemporary MS. of the abridgment, and of the king's letter, all written with great care and ornamented with four illuminations representing the battles of Barnet and Tewkesbury, the execution of the Duke of Somerset, and the attack of the bastard Falconbridge upon London. The identity of the Ghent MS. (see *Archæologia*, vol. xxi., p. 11) as an abridgment of the narrative recently published by the Camden Society, is unquestionable.—See *Bruce's Introduction*, pp. vi. vii.

be said to invalidate, if not to absolutely refute, the charge of Gloucester's participation in the murder of the young Prince of Wales; and they add force to the neutral position, if such a term may be permitted, of later writers,\* who, uninfluenced by party feeling, were silent upon an accusation for which there appears no solid or sufficient foundation, and which took its rise a full century after the battle of Tewkesbury, and long subsequent to the decease of those who were present, or who narrated at the time the events of that fearful day.

The Yorkist narrative above alluded to, and commonly termed "Fleetwood's Chronicle," simply states that "Edward, called Prince, was taken fleeing to the townwards, and slain in the field,"† and "there was also slain Thos. the Earl of Devon, with many others." Warkworth, the Lancastrian authority, says, "and there was slain in the field Prince Edward, which cried for succour to his brother-in-law, the Duke of Clarence."‡

This latter testimony adds great weight to the assertion of the Yorkist chronicler, because not only do both use precisely the same expression, "slain in the field," but the latter writer, when adding the sentence "crying for help to Clarence," couples with the name of the Lancastrian prince, as does the other writer also, that of Courtney, Earl of Devon, who is well known to have been, in its most literal sense, "slain in the battle-field."§ But the circumstance that speaks most forcibly for the truth of the above statements is, that though emanating from the pen of men who were violently opposed to each other, from the respective parties which they espoused, yet is their account nevertheless substantially supported by the chronicler of Croyland; a man of education, high in the church, learned in the law, and, without any exception, the most impartial and able authority of the times. He says, "At last King Edward gained a signal victory, there being slain on the part of the queen, as well in the field as afterwards, by the revengeful hands of certain persons, the Prince Edward, the only son of King Henry, the defeated Duke of Somerset, the Earl of Devon, and other lords universally well remembered."|| Here he corroborates, as much as could be expected from authors who did not mutually compare their writings, the statements contained in the diaries above quoted, viz., that Prince Edward and the Earl of Devon were slain in the field; and there can be little doubt, from certain well-attested facts afterwards occurring, that the somewhat ambiguously worded sentence which followed had reference to the revengeful execution of Somerset and others, whom King Edward by perjury withdrew from a sanctuary and most unworthily caused to be publicly beheaded a few days after the battle.¶

In addition to the above positive exculpation, perhaps the next most valuable evidence in defence of Gloucester is that of a wholly negative character; namely, the striking fact, that Sir Thomas More and Lord Bacon,\*\* both violently opposed to Richard III., although recounting with bitterness his alleged vices and reputed crimes, make no mention whatever of the death of Edward, Prince of Wales, or even hint at any report having implicated the Duke of Gloucester in an event that there can be little doubt resulted from the fearful carnage of the battle, and not from the vindictive and unmanly indulgence of vengeance exercised on a powerless captive.

\* See Rapin's *Hist. of England*, p. 615; also Carte, Henry, Sharon Turner and others; all of whom have doubted or impugned the veracity of the Lancastrian tales.

† Fleetwood's *Chron.*, p. 30.

‡ Warkworth's *Chron.*, p. 18.

§ Leland's *Collect.*, p. 506.

|| *Chron. Croy.*, p. 555.

¶ Warkworth, p. 18.

\*\* See More's *Rycharde III.*, p. 9; and Bacon's *Hen. VII.*, p. 2.



But, admitting the truth of the long-received tradition, that Edward of Lancaster was taken a prisoner; nay, even more, that he was brought into the king's tent, and therefore, if massacred, may still be said, by a flower of speech, to have been "slain in the field;" there yet remains not a shadow of proof for fixing so foul an act on the young Richard of Gloucester.

Fabyan, the earliest authority for the young prince being assassinated, makes no mention of the perpetrator of the crime being Richard of Gloucester. His version of the tale is, that the king "there strake him with his gauntlet upon the face, after which stroke by him received, he was by the king's servants incontinently slain."\* Neither of the royal dukes is named by him even as present at the time, although the monarch would of course be surrounded by his military retinue. If the vanquished and unhappy prince boldly defied and proudly rebuked the king, Edward the Fourth's well-known impetuosity of temper and vindictive conduct to his enemies would most probably induce the stroke in the fury of the moment, and the king's servants would as promptly obey the signal it implied for dispatching so formidable a rival; but there is no pretence for making either of the royal dukes the agent of so murderous a deed, and least of all Richard, Duke of Gloucester. The chivalric education of the times, although it did not inculcate the sparing the life of an opponent, most undoubtedly made it a blot on a knightly escutcheon to dispatch a fallen and unarmed foe; and up to this period Richard's conduct had been singularly consistent and noble; nor was it likely that he would tarnish the renown he had so recently sought and won, by slaying in cold blood a prostrate and defenceless enemy.

Other and valuable modern testimony might be adduced to demonstrate the groundless nature of the charge which has been so long associated with Gloucester's memory; but reference to his own times, to the precise period when the calumnies arose, and to the cause that led to an accusation so wholly unsupported by cotemporaneous accounts, whether Yorkists or Lancastrian, is of itself the best and most substantial proof that the odium incurred by King Richard III. towards the close of his life, or rather the prejudices that prevailed against him after death, inclined the chroniclers of the succeeding age to associate his name indiscriminately with every unworthy act which was committed during his lifetime, rather than from having solid authority for such charges, or testimony to support them based on any valid source.

"There is little in reason," observes the late lamented Mr. Courtney, who, in his "Commentaries on Shakspeare's Historical Plays," has bestowed infinite labour and research in seeking the earliest original authorities, "for believing any part of the story."... "It is quite clear," he adds, "that there is nothing like evidence either of Prince Edward's smart reply to the king, or of his assassination by anybody; and there is not even the report of *one who lived near to the time*, of the participation of either of the king's brothers in the assassination, *if it occurred*." Truly, if the commentator of our great dramatic bard could afford to make this admission of the corrupt source whence the poet drew the material for one of his most admirable and striking scenes, and found sufficient cause to hazard an opinion so decided, arising from a conviction of its truth, the historian; professing to discard romance, and to be guided alone by plain, simple and well-authenticated facts, may well be content to divest his mind of long-received impressions, if they rest on no firmer basis than the legendary tales that reduce the important records of our country to the same level with the fables of early days and the traditions of later but even more dark and uncivilized times. How far King

\* Fabyan, p. 662.

Edward himself was concerned in the massacre of the Lancastrian prince, it is not essential to this memoir to inquire;\* but his revengeful conduct to his foes is unhappily made but too apparent in the occurrence which followed up his victory, and which not only darkened his own military fame, but casts a shade over that of his young brother, whom the king appointed his viceroy to carry into effect his faithless and cruel condemnation of those brave knights who had trusted to his royal pledge of safety and forgiveness.†

Such of the defeated Lancastrians as were enabled to effect their escape, sought refuge in a religious asylum at Tewkesbury, whither King Edward proceeded, sword in hand, to complete the fearful carnage of the day; but his progress was stayed by the abbot, at whose solemn intercession he was induced to respect the holy privilege of a sanctuary,‡ and to conclude his victory by promising that the lives should be spared of all such as were sheltered within the abbey: but, speedily repenting him of his lenity, he delegated the Duke of Gloucester, as high constable, in conjunction with the Duke of Norfolk, as lord marshal of England, a military tribunal;§ and commanding, as was ever his wont, that the soldiery should be spared, he enjoined the execution of their leaders,|| the Lord Somerset, the Prior of St. John's and fourteen other of the noble partisans and chief supporters of the ex-queen and her princely son; who were consequently beheaded in the market-place of Tewkesbury on the Monday following the battle. Tranquillity, however, was not yet insured to King Edward or the line of York. Leaving as competent judges two of the highest officers of the realm, in the persons of the Lords of Gloucester and Norfolk, to decide the doom of his victims at Tewkesbury, the monarch proceeded with speed to Coventry, in order to quell the farther progress of the insurgents in the north. There, Margaret of Anjou was delivered into his hands a prisoner, having been captured in a church adjoining Tewkesbury, with the ladies of her suite, shortly after the engagement;¶ but before she could be conveyed by Edward's command a captive to the Tower, such intelligence reached the victorious monarch as compelled him in all haste to proceed in person to the metropolis,\*\* whither the bereaved queen was conveyed in triumph as part of his train—alike the sport of fortune and the victim of the disastrous period in which she lived.

During the brief restoration of Henry VI., and upon the attainder of Richard, Duke of Gloucester, the Earl of Warwick had nominated as vice-

\* Amongst the most prevalent rumours connected with this mysterious and tragical event, is one, on the authority of Hall, (p. 301,) stating that Prince Edward was taken on the field by Sir Richard Croft, and delivered a prisoner to the king, in consequence of a proclamation offering a reward of 100*l.* per annum to whosoever should yield up the prince, dead or alive, accompanied by an assurance that his life should be spared.

Habington, who relates the same tale, adds, (p. 96,) that upon the assassination of the royal captive, "the good knight repented what he had done, and openly professed his service abused and his faith deluded."

This Sir Richard Croft was the same individual respecting whom King Edward wrote in his boyhood, complaining to his father of his "odious rule and governance." Certain it is, that the knight devoted himself to the interests of the House of York so long as they held the sceptre, and that his services were estimated and rewarded by the monarchs of that race; for after the accession of Edward IV. he was appointed general receiver of the earldom of March; and upon the elevation of King Richard to the throne, he granted "to Richard Croft, Knight, an annuity of 20*l.* of the lordships and manors of the earldom of March, within the county of Hereford."—*Retrospective Review*, second series, vol. i. p. 472; *Harl. MSS.*, 433, p. 665.

† Fleetwood's Chron., p. 31.

‡ Habington, p. 95.

§ Fleetwood's Chron., p. 31.

|| Warkworth's Chron., p. 65.

¶ Tewks. Chron., Harl. MS. 545, p. 102.

\*\* Habington, p. 94.