committed by Henry VI. to that of her sister of Buckingham, when almost similarly situated after the sacking of Ludlow. There is no doubt that she was included in the attainder that was issued against Queen Margaret and her own mother, the Countess of Warwick, together with other leading personages connected with the Lancastrian faction; and she appears to have remained a state prisoner under the charge of the Lady Isabel and Clarence during the absence of King Edward with his brother of Gloucester, when occupied in quelling the insurrection of Falconbridge.

Whatever were the sentiments entertained by Richard towards his youthful companion, and however keenly his former affection for his cousin may have revived when she was no longer withheld from him as the affianced of another, yet was he too much occupied by his military duties, too much pledged in honour to aid the king, when summoned to accompany him against the insurgents in Kent, to have either means or opportunity of making known his intentions. But the result affords fair inference for surmising that the desolate position of his orphan kinswoman was not unobserved or unheeded by Gloucester, and warrants also the supposition that his early attachment to the Lady Anne was well known to the Duke of Clarence: for, before Richard returned from Kent, and clearly in anticipation of his brother's probable conduct towards his sister-in-law, he adopted the most strenuous but extraordinary means of frustrating all communication between them—that of concealing her under the disguise of a kitchen maid. This point, however, equally with that which invalidates the previous marriage of the Lady Anne with Prince Edward of Lancaster, is better narrated in the words of cotemporary writers; because they confine themselves chiefly to such facts as come within their own knowledge and observation, and which are so indispensable towards forming a right judgment of the actual position of Richard of Gloucester and his youthful consort. "Let us now insert that dispute," says the Croyland chronicler,* "with difficulty to be appeased which happened during this Michaelmas term (1471) between the king's two brothers; for after, as is aforesaid, the son of King Henry, to whom the Lady Anne, younger daughter of the Earl of Warwick, was *betrothed*, fell in the battle of Tewkesbury, Richard, Duke of Gloucester besought that the said Anne should be given to him *to wife*, which request was repugnant to the views of his brother, the Duke of Clarence, who had previously married the earl's eldest daughter. He therefore caused the damsel to be concealed, lest it should become known to his brother where she was; fearing the division of the inheritance, which he wished to enjoy alone in right of his wife rather than undergo portion with any one. But the cunning of the said Duke of Gloucester so far prevailed, that, having discovered the maiden in the attire of a kitchen girl, in London, he caused her to be placed in the sanctuary of St. Martin's; which having been done, great discord arose between the brothers."

Concise as is this account, it embraces innumerable points that cannot be misinterpreted, excepting indeed by the prejudiced, or by such warm advocates for tradition that even truth itself fails to induce conviction in their minds. Richard must have sought his persecuted kinswoman immediately he was released from his military duties, because it appears he "had discovered her retreat" before the Michaelmas term following the battle of Tewkesbury; that is to say, between the 4th of May and the beginning of the following October. Again, he besought that the said Anne should "be given to him to wife." No merely selfish motives could have induced this request, for the Lady Anne and her mother, the Countess of Warwick, together with

* Chron. Croy., p. 557.

her deceased father, were all under a bill of attainder;* and, consequently, the riches to which she would have been entitled by birth as their co-heiress were now altogether in the gift of the king.

If, therefore, Warwick's forfeited and enormous possessions are supposed to have been the object which Gloucester alone coveted, they could have been bestowed by the monarch upon that prince, without any necessity for his taking the Lady Anne to wife; in the same manner as the lands of the attainted Cliffords† had in early boyhood been made over to him. Of this there is ample proof, for Richard had actually been already invested by his royal brother with a portion of the identical lands which he is made so exclusively to desire; as it appears "by patent, 11th July, 1471, the king, especially considering the gratuitous, laudable and honourable services rendered to him by his most dear brother, Richard, Duke of Gloucester, and wishing to confer upon him some reward and remuneration for the same, granted to him the castles, manors,‡ and lordships of Sheriff-Hutton, county of York, which lately belonged to Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick." Neither must it be forgotten that the Duke of Gloucester was now in the fulness of power, and had so distinguished himself by his gallant bearing, and was in so high a position at King Edward's court, that so far from any advantage accruing to him from a union with his impoverished and persecuted cousin, alliances must have been open to him at foreign courts, as well as with the most wealthy subjects in his brother's kingdom; the more so as he was but in the spring time of life, and that he was already endowed with princely possessions, dignified by the highest appointments that could be bestowed upon him, and invested with almost regal authority. Moreover, let it be asked, why did Clarence "cause the damsel to be concealed," unless he suspected that the affection which had been early formed for her by Gloucester would lead him immediately to renew his vows of attachment, and incline her to listen to them? He evidently anticipated the fact, and acted upon it; for no mention is made by the chronicler of the Lady Anne's desire to be so concealed; no intimation is given of her repugnance to her cousin, or of her flying to avoid his overtures; but positive assertion is made by him that avarice—the coveting her share of riches that were her birthright, and which he trusted, perhaps, from her attainder, he should exclusively possess in right of her elder sister—alone influenced the unworthy prince, whose greedy desire for power and riches led him first to rebel against and dethrone his elder brother, and even to deprive him in his adversity of his patrimonial inheritance; and now instigated him to separate from his younger brother the object of his choice, and cruelly to persecute and degrade the unhappy victim whom he was bound by consanguinity and misfortune to protect, because as distinctly alleged by the chronicler, "he feared the division of the inheritance he wished to enjoy alone."§

What, however, was the part pursued by Richard of Gloucester—that prince who for three generations has been held up to scorn and contempt for every base, unmanly, treacherous and vindictive feeling? Let his conduct be once more contrasted with that of Clarence, who had betrayed and per-

* Anne, Countess of Warwick, sole heir to the honours and possessions of the noble Beauchamps, after the battle of Barnet, took sanctuary in Beaulieu Abbey, in Hampshire, "where she continued some time in a very mean condition, and thence privately got into the north, where she abode in great streight."—*Dugdale's Baronage*, vol. i. p. 307.

† "Much of the Cliffords' land, after the attainder of John Lord Clifford, was held by Gloucester."—*Whitaker's Craven*, p. 67.

‡ Cott. MSS., Julius B. xiii. fol. 111.

§ Chron. Croy., p. 557.

fidiously deceived every near relative and connection, and who was indebted to the very brother whom he was now injuring for his reconciliation with the king, and for his restoration to his own forfeited honours and possessions. Gloucester, says the Croyland narrator, "discovered the maiden in the attire of a kitchen girl in London;" instead of conveying her secretly from her concealment, instead of compelling her by force or by stratagem to become his wife, instead of outraging her already wounded feelings and taking advantage of her powerless situation, he removes her immediately from the degrading garb under which Clarence had concealed her, and with the respect due to his mother's niece and to his own near kinswoman, "caused her to be placed in the sanctuary of St. Martin," while he openly and honourably seeks from the king his assent to their marriage.

The most imaginative mind could scarcely have desired a hero of romance to act a nobler and more chivalrous part, one more dignified towards the object of his attachment, one more honourable to himself, more straightforward, more worthy of his hitherto irreproachable career. The Lady Anne, in her prosperity, had been the playmate of his childhood, the companion of his boyish days, the object of his youthful affections. Before either party had passed the age of minority, she had drunk to the very dregs of the cup of adversity; from being the affianced bride of the heir apparent to the throne, and receiving homage at the French court as Princess of Wales, she was degraded to assume the disguise of a kitchen girl in London, reduced to utter poverty by the attainder of herself and parents,—a desolate orphan, discarded by the relatives who should have protected her, and debased and persecuted by those to whom the law had consigned the custody of her life and person.

Such was the condition of Warwick's proud but destitute child—the ill-fated co-heiress of the Nevilles, the Beauchamps, the Despencers, and in whose veins flowed the blood of the highest and noblest in the land—when she was affectionately and unceasingly sought for by Richard, Duke of Gloucester, at a time, too, when the sun of prosperity shone upon him so resplendently, and with such a cloudless aspect, that, had his actions been alone influenced by that all-engrossing ambition which has been imputed to him in after years, he would assuredly rather have coveted the daughter of some illustrious prince, or the hand of an heiress to a crown, than have exerted his well-earned influence with his sovereign to rescue his dejected kinswoman from her humiliating situation, and to restore her as his bride to the proud position which she had lost, and to which his own prosperous career now enabled him to elevate her. He placed her in the only asylum where she could feel secure from compulsion, and safe alike from his own importunities or his brother's persecution.

It is worthy of remark, that throughout the entire narrative of the Croyland historian, he not only speaks most explicitly of the "betrothment" as such, but designates the Lady Anne as "the damsel," "the maiden,"—which terms, by confirming his previous account of the qualified treaty made respecting her destined marriage with the Prince of Wales, exonerates Richard of Gloucester from the unfounded charge of seeking the affection of "young Edward's bride," before the tears of "widowhood" had ceased to flow, and equally so of his outraging a custom most religiously and strictly observed in the fifteenth century, which rendered it an offence against the church and society at large, for "a widow" to espouse a second time before the first year of mourning had expired.* As to the precise time or under what circumstances the cousins were at length united, there exists no document or

* See Appendix DD.

satisfactory proof; but great and strenuous exertions appear to have been made by the Duke of Clarence to frustrate the wishes of Gloucester even after his appeal to the king. In consequence of this prince having placed the Lady Anne in sanctuary, "great discord arose," says the chronicler, "between the brothers," and "so many reasons were acutely alleged on both sides, in presence of the king sitting as umpire in the council chamber, that all bystanders, even those learned in the law, wondered that the said princes possessed so much talent in arguing their own cause." It is much to be regretted that the learned ecclesiastic who has recorded this dispute should not have more particularly narrated the points of contention. On this matter, however, he is altogether silent; but as an unmitigated charge of avarice against Clarence pervades his detail, while he advances nothing against Gloucester, it is probable that as Warwick settled upon the Lady Isabel half of her mother's rich inheritance as a dower* on her union with Clarence, this latter prince considered that she was entitled to possess the remaining half by inheritance upon the decease of one parent, and the attainder of the survivor. Be this as it may, it is very clear that no just cause of opposition could be brought against the application of his younger brother, for the chronicler proceeds to say, that, "at length, by the mediation of the king, it was finally agreed that on Gloucester's marriage he should have such lands as should be decided upon by arbitrators, and that Clarence should have the remainder;" leaving little or nothing to the true heiress, the Countess of Warwick, to whom the noble inheritance of the Warwicks and Despencers rightly belonged, and at whose disposal it was altogether left. Hence it would appear that the act of attainder was not withdrawn from Warwick's ill-fated widow,† although Gloucester must necessarily, to enable this arbitration to have been carried into effect, have procured its legal annulment as regards the case of his youthful daughter, his now affianced bride. The narrative of the Croyland historian is dated 1471; and by the expression, "it was finally agreed that on Gloucester's marriage he should have such lands as should be decided on by arbitrators," it is most probable that his marriage was solemnized within a few months of this decision; because the clause evidently implies that the arbitrators could not commence the proceedings on which they were to adjudicate until the young couple were indissolubly united in marriage. This decision, however, did not receive the sanction of Parliament until the 14th Edw. IV. (1474),‡ when it appears the co-heiresses were adjudged to equal divisions of their parent's enormous possessions, reserving to both princes a life interest in such division: "If the said Isabel or Anne died, leaving her husband surviving, he was to enjoy her moiety during his life."§

A special and very remarkable clause, however, is contained in this act of Parliament, that decided the long-contested question; it being provided "that if the Duke of Gloucester and Anne should be divorced, and afterwards marry again, the act should be as available as though no such divorce had taken place;" or, in case they should be divorced, and "after that he do his effectual diligence and continual devoir by all convenient and lawful means

* "In 9th Edward IV., the Earl of Warwick allured Clarence to his party, and the more firmly to knit him to his interest, offered him the Lady Isabel, his elder daughter, in marriage, with the one half of her mother's rich inheritance."—*Dugdale's Baronage*, vol. ii. p. 162.

† The Countess of Warwick, in her own and her husband's right, was possessed of 114 manors; her husband being killed at Barnet, all her land, by act of Parliament, was settled on her two daughters.—*Ang. Spec.*, p. 569.

‡ See Appendix EE.

§ Rot. Parl., vol. vi. p. 100.

to be lawfully married to the said Anne the daughter, and during the lyfe of the same Anne be not married ne wedded to any other woman," he should have as much "of the premises as pertained to her during his lifetime."

The necessity of this singular passage may be explained in various ways. In the first place, the Duke of Gloucester and Warwick's daughter were related within the forbidden degree of consanguinity; for at the marriage of the Duke of Clarence with her sister, the Lady Isabel, it is expressly stated that a dispensation from the pope was necessary to ensure the validity of their marriage.* Secondly, the Lady Anne had been solemnly betrothed to Prince Edward of Lancaster; and although her affianced husband was slain before she was united to him, yet marriage contracts at that age were so binding, that she equally required a dispensation to render any subsequent union valid in the sight of the ecclesiastical law.† Now, as it is quite evident that there could not have been time to procure from Rome these dispensations, arising from the peculiar position of Richard of Gloucester and his orphan cousin,‡ it became essential that the arbitrators, in adjudging the division of property, should, for the sake of their offspring, guard against any informality of marriage. But no such clause was needful as regards Clarence, because, in the one instance, the dispensation had been obtained, and in the other none was required, as the Lady Isabel had been united to that prince for some years, and their offspring were richly provided for by that "half of the inheritance" which constituted her dowry. Nevertheless, although the portion of the remaining half thus awarded to Gloucester and the Lady Anne was secured to them against any captious legal disputation in future, it appears from the words of the act that immediately followed the clause, that the umpires considered the possibility of such separation likely to arise from impediments advanced by others rather than from any probability of change in the affections of the cousins themselves: "if the Duke of Gloucester and Anne should be divorced and afterwards marry again, the act should be as available as though no such divorce had taken place." In the ordinary acceptation of the term divorce, nothing could be more improbable, or less to be desired, than the parties marrying again; but if the possessions awarded to the Duke of Gloucester, in right of the Lady Anne, were untenable by themselves or their progeny, without such renewal of the marriage ceremony, arising from unavoidable irregularity in their nuptials, some protecting clause was not merely just, but absolutely imperative on the part of the umpires. Nothing can well be more clear than that such was the meaning of the judges, for the final words of the act state that even if a divorce is considered requisite, yet if Gloucester does his utmost "by all convenient and lawful means to be lawfully married again to the Lady Anne," he shall still enjoy her possessions for life; thus showing there was some unavoidable impediment to their alliance, either ecclesiastical or civil; but most clearly and explicitly inferring that no diminution of regard was anticipated, no division of interests foreseen, although the property was justly and wisely secured against the contingency of another marriage later in life, if obstacles were brought forward to invalidate their first union.

* "The Duke of Clarence accordingly married her, in the church of Notre Dame, having obtained a dispensation from the pope, Paul III., by reason they stood allied in the second, third and fourth degrees of consanguinity, as also in respect that the mother of the duke was godmother to her."—*Dugdale*, vol. ii. p. 162.

† See Appendix FF.

‡ The time required for such instruments may be judged from the legal dispensations requisite for the Duke of Clarence and the Lady Isabel having been applied for and dated in 1468, although they were not received by or available to him until the following year, 1469.

Despite, then, of all opposition, and in defiance of every impediment, either as regards the present or the future, the Duke of Gloucester and the Lady Anne Neville, within a brief period of the discussion above narrated, were irrevocably united; nor can any reasonable doubts be entertained respecting the unanimity which, on both sides, led to the alliance; for no letters are extant, as in the case of King Edward, expressing the disapprobation of his venerable mother; no clandestine measures were resorted to by Gloucester, as in the case of the Duke of Clarence and the Lady Isabel; no protest is made by the Lady Anne herself, which, had such been entertained, she could have followed up from being protected by the church in the holiness of sanctuary, and of which protest Clarence would gladly have availed himself in support of his unjust and unbrother-like opposition. But having no such plea to advance, no reasonable objection to make,* against a marriage equally consonant with the spirit of the times as with the warm affection that seems ever to have subsisted between the closely-allied Houses of York and Neville,† Clarence unblushingly avowed even to the monarch himself, his unworthy and avaricious motives, when Edward personally appealed to him in behalf of Richard; for, to quote the words of a cotemporary writer, "the King entreateth my Lord of Clarence for my Lord of Gloucester, and he saith he may well have my lady, his sister-in-law, but they shall part no livelihood."‡ This threat, however, was rendered void by the fact of the king himself sitting as umpire in the case, and by his justice not only in leaving to his privy council, who were competent arbitrators, the final division of property, but also in securing the validity of their decision by a decree of Parliament.

Some historians consider that the marriage of Richard and the Lady Anne was not solemnized until the year 1473; and others have even given a later date, being influenced probably by the act of Parliament above cited, which ratified the award of Lady Anne's possession; not taking into consideration the fact stated by the Croyland writer, that the solemnization of the marriage was to precede such award. It is, however, apparent that the cousins must have been united in the spring of 1472; first, because Sandford§ expressly states that their eldest son was born in 1473, and, likewise, from its being affirmed by competent authority that the young prince was ten years of age when he walked in procession at his parent's coronation at York, in September, 1483. This view of the case is still farther confirmed by two letters contained in the Paston Correspondence; the one‖ from Sir John Paston to his brother, proving that the prince was not married on the 17th February, 1472; the other,¶ bearing date the 15th April, 1473,** in which, though speaking of "their late marriage," the writer by no means seems to imply that it was a recent event.

* "The slightest knowledge in the laws of equity," observes Hutton, when considering this quarrel, "will convince us that justice was on the side of Richard. If the ladies were joint heiresses, they were each entitled to a joint share; besides which, Warwick's promise of half might have convinced Clarence he had no right to more."—*Hutton's Preface to Bosworth*, p. lxv.

† Paston Letters, vol. iv.

‡ Ibid., vol. ii. p. 92.

§ Geneal. Hist., book v. p. 410.

‖ Paston Letters, vol. ii. p. 90.

¶ Ibid., vol. ii. p. 131.

** Sir John Fenn, in a note appended to the above letter, says, "These brothers had been for some time at variance, and most probably their disputes were heightened at this time by the late marriage of the latter [Richard] with Anne, the widow of Prince Edward, Henry the Sixth's son, daughter and co-heir of the Earl of Warwick, sister to the Duchess of Clarence, whose possessions the duke was unwilling to divide with his sister, now his brother's wife."—*Paston Letters*, vol. ii. p. 131.

The youngcouple are said to have been married at Westminster,* and the ceremony was most probably performed by the Archbishop of York, since it appears that after Gloucester had publicly sought the king's sanction to the alliance, the Lady Anne was removed from her sanctuary at St. Martin's le Grand and placed under the care of her only surviving uncle, George Neville,† the prelate of that see.

On the 29th February, in the same year, 1472, the Duke of Gloucester was a second time appointed to the important office of high constable of England,‡ which had become vacant by the death of Tiptoft, Earl of Worcester, who had been beheaded during the brief restoration of King Henry VI.;§ and this was followed shortly after by his royal brother nominating him to the lucrative situation of "keeper of all the king's forests beyond Trent for life," and justiciary of North Wales.‖

From this period the Duke of Gloucester seems to have retired from the court and to have altogether fixed his abode in the north of England; for, on the 20th of May, it appears that he resigned the office of great chamberlain into his brother's hands;¶ and he is shown by cotemporary papers in the Plumpton Correspondence to have been resident in great state at Pomfret about the same time, in virtue of his office as chief seneschal** of the duchy of Lancaster in the northern parts. Amongst other valuable documents contained in the above-named very curious collection of papers is an official letter†† from Richard, Duke of Gloucester, to Sir William Plumpton, dated "at Pomfret, 13th October, anno. circ. 1472;"‡‡ and the almost regal power which he evidently possessed and exercised by virtue of his high offices in the north, may be gathered from the same cotemporary records, by the style in which he is designated in certain legal claims, which were referred to his arbitration; viz., that they should "abide the award of the pre-potent prince and lord, the Lord Richard, Duke of Gloucester."§§

Thus, after a season of severe trial and reverses almost unparelleled, considering the youthful ages of the respective parties, did Richard and his young bride find that repose which had so long and so painfully been denied to them. Although he was now scarcely nineteen years of age, while his cousin had but just entered her seventeenth year,—for only four years had elapsed since their youthful companionship at York,—yet during that interval their lives had been forfeited by attainder, and liberty only preserved to the

* Hearne's Frag., p. 283.
† Strickland's Queens, vol. iii. p. 366.
‡ Sandford, book v. p. 406.
§ Fœdera, vol. xi. p. 654.
‖ Pat. 12 Ed. IV., p. 1. m. 10; Cal. Rot. Pat., p. 317.
¶ In the first volume of "Collections made by Rymer for the reign of King Edward IV.," it is stated, that the king, by patent 20th May, 12 Ed. IV., had, on the 18th May in the preceding year, granted to his brother, Richard, Duke of Gloucester, the office of great chamberlain of England for life; that he had resigned the office, and that his majesty had conferred the same on the Duke of Clarence.—*Rymer, Add. MSS.*, fo. 4614, art. 70.
** The Duke of Gloucester was made high constable of England 29th February, 1472; and resided at Pomfret, as chief seneschal of the duchy of Lancaster in the north parts.—See *Plumpton Correspondence*, published by the Camden Society, 4to. 1839.
†† Plumpton Papers, p. 26.
‡‡ Entitled "Letter from Richard, Duke of Gloucester, to Sir William Plumpton, Stewart of the Lordship of Spofford, directing him to restore certain stolen cattle to the owener;" or rather to aid in effecting its restoration as bailiff of the borough of Knaresborough. By virtue of his high office, this prince leased certain farms to Sir William Plumpton, together with the office of bailiff of Knaresborough. The stewardship of Spofford he derived from the Earl of Northumberland, Lord of Spofford, in which parish Plumpton lay.
§§ Plumpton Corresp., p. lxxxix.

one by flight to a distant land and to the other by the privilege of sanctuary in her own country. Both had been exiles, both had been outlawed; the one for fidelity to his brother and sovereign, the other as the passive instrument of a rebellious and ambitious parent. Both, within the short space of two years, had been reduced to utter penury by confiscation of lands and possessions; and both, from being houseless wanderers, had, though widely separated and under far different circumstances, experienced also the highest degree of prosperity which could be contrasted with adversity equally poignant and unmitigated.

The Lady Anne, during the period, had received the homage of peers and peeresses at the court of France as the affianced of King Henry's son, and the instrument of restoring the line of Lancaster to the throne; and Richard, the thanks of the English Houses of Parliament as the faithful and best-beloved brother of Edward of York, whom he had effectually aided to restore to his kingdom and his crown. Both had lost their natural protectors by a violent and premature death in the miserable feuds that numbered their fathers amongst the illustrious dead; and both had suffered the most severe persecution in the eyes of the whole land, when seeking to unite their destinies in marriage; arising from the avarice and cupidity which made Clarence desire the entire possession of the young heiresses' wealth, and even to threaten them by hostile preparations,* after the sovereign, in gratitude to Richard for his services, had waived in his behalf his undeniable right to the lands and lordships of Warwick's bereaved and friendless child forfeited to the crown. But fortune upheld them throughout their trials and smiled favourably on their attachment. To a district endeared to them both by the unfading recollections of childhood,† did Richard convey his young bride, when their destinies were at length indissolubly interwoven; and amidst the bold and wild scenery of the home of their ancestors,‡ did the Lady Anne and her princely consort pass the early days of their married life, when, young in age, although experienced in trial, they were thus enabled to share in those halcyon days of peace that once more dawned upon the land of their birth.

Few places were better in accordance with the vice-regal powers intrusted to Gloucester in the northern districts, than was the noble pile in which their bridal days were most probably passed.

Rearing its embattled towers among scenes fraught with the most stirring national associations; built on a rock whose rugged surface seemed fully in keeping with the impregnable stronghold that crowned its summit, the Castle of Pontefract, or Pomfret, as it is usually called, the patrimonial inheritance of the royal House of Lancaster, soared high above the surrounding lands; a fitting abode for the princely seneschals and hereditary high stewards of England.§

* Paston Letters, vol. ii. p. 127.
† Richard's father and brother were both buried at Pontefract, and so likewise was the Lady Anne's grandfather, the Earl of Salisbury, who shared the fate of his above-named illustrious kinsmen after the battle of Wakefield.
‡ Pontefract Castle was in the same county with Middleham, Warwick's baronial hall, and it also adjoined the patrimonial inheritance of Richard's ancestors; it being in the immediate vicinity of Sendal Castle and the town of Wakefield, both of which lordships appertained to his father, the Duke of York, whose unhappy fate was perpetuated by a beautiful little chapel erected by Edward IV. on the bridge of Wakefield; while a stone cross, raised on the green sward between this latter town and Sendal Castle, marked the precise spot where the battle was fought in which the Duke of York, the Earl of Salisbury, and the unoffending Rutland met a violent death.
§ King Henry III. bestowed the earldom of Leicester, with the seneschalcy or

Though dating its origin from the Norman conquest, it had been from time to time enlarged and beautified by the powerful and magnificent Earls of Lancaster,* in those palmy days of feudal splendour, when each lordly chief played the part of sovereign in his extensive demesnes, and each proud baron was, in truth, a petty prince in his innumerable lordships and estates.

In this celebrated fortress, then—scarcely more remarkable for its imposing appearance, its strength and baronial splendour, than for the dark and terrible deeds inseparably interwoven with its name†—Gloucester and his gentle consort, the Lady Anne, appear, as far at least as can be gathered from the brief historical and local records of the period, to have enjoyed a peaceful termination to their recent persecutions;‡ and here, in the spring-time of their lives, and in the fulness of their happiness, they sought, and for a brief interval enjoyed, that rest and tranquillity which Richard had fully earned by his fidelity and zeal, and which Warwick's daughter must have been well contented to find, after her sad reverses, and the calamitous scenes in which she had lately been called upon to participate.

stewardship of England, upon Edmond, Earl of Lancaster, his second son, on the attainder of Simon Montfort, Earl of Leicester, slain at the battle of Evesham, in the year 1264. Thomas, Earl of Lancaster, his heir, beheaded at Pontefract in 1322, bore upon his seal the superscription:—"Sigillum Thome Comitis Lancastrie et Leicestrie, Senescalli Anglie." The same high office was enjoyed successively by the Earl and Dukes of Lancaster (for so were they created 25 Edward III.) until the county palatine of Lancaster, with all the lands and honours belonging to the duchy of Lancaster, was carried to the crown in the person of Henry IV.; during whose reign, however, as well as under all the monarchs of that race, it still continued to be governed as a separate estate by its proper officers. On the accession of the House of York, King Edward IV. dissolved the former government; but although he appropriated the revenue exclusively to the crown, yet under certain modifications he sanctioned both the privileges and appointments which rendered it an estate apart from ordinary jurisdiction. The superintendence of these offices and powers were those that were now entrusted to Richard, Duke of Gloucester.

* Pomfret Castle was the ancestral abode of the Earls of Lancaster, who shine so conspicuously in the early annals of English history. In the reign of Edward II. this splendid fortress became the property of the crown, on the attainder and execution of Thomas, Earl of Lancaster, after the celebrated battle of Burrough-Brigg, 15 Edward II. It was, however, restored to his heir by that ill-fated monarch, and continued to be occupied by his descendants until conveyed to the crown, with the rest of the duchy of Lancaster, by Henry IV., the founder of that royal line. The above-named Thomas, as stated in a note at an earlier period of these memoirs, was the first peer of England who was executed on the scaffold. King Edward himself sat in judgment upon this princely noble, who was sentenced to be "hanged, drawn and quartered; but in regard of his regal blood, the extreme rigour of his doom was softened," and he was publicly beheaded, "before his own castle," of Pomfract, in the year 1322.—*Sandford*, book iii. p. 148.

† The miserable fate of the unhappy Richard II., said to have been murdered at Pomfret Castle, 1399, where, says the old chronicler, (*Walsingham*, p. 363,) "he was served with costly meats, but not suffered to eate, and dyed of forced famine in the 34th year of his age," is too well known to need recapitulation.

‡ The Duke of Gloucester evinced his attachment to Pontefract in after years, by granting to the town the charter of incorporation immediately after his elevation to the throne.—*Rous*, p. 215.

CHAPTER VIII.

The character of Richard, Duke of Gloucester, considered with reference to Shakspeare's tragedy of Richard III.—Gloucester's career, as dramatically represented, contrasted with historical records.—Shakspeare misled by the corrupt authorities of his age.—The fables of the early chroniclers furnished him with his descriptions.—The greater part of the charges brought against Richard of Gloucester by the dramatist disproved by the actual career of that prince, as verified by cotemporary documents.

The marriage of Richard, Duke of Gloucester, with the affianced bride of Prince Edward of Lancaster appears the most appropriate time that could be selected for contrasting their relative positions; as also for considering the character of the duke, as it is ordinarily received through the works of the immortal Shakspeare, with that of the less attractive but less erring evidence of historical records.

With great justice has it been observed by the learned author of the History of Durham*—a county in which, from his long residence, the Duke of Gloucester was judged by his own actions, rather than by the perverted statements of later times—that the "magic powers of Shakspeare have struck more terror to the soul of Richard than fifty Mores or Bacons armed in proof."†

No individual who has bestowed attention on the subject can doubt the accuracy of this assertion; for the human mind is so constituted that pictorial representations, whether conveyed through the medium of the pen or the pencil, remain indelibly impressed on the imagination, to the utter exclusion of graver details, if chronology and antiquarian lore are essential to test their validity, and to displace the more pleasing impressions which have been received in childhood through the medium of dramatic scenes.

A few years since, it would have been thought little less than sacrilege to impugn the statements of England's mighty dramatist, although truth itself had presided at the inquiry. Even now, when the spirit of research has so weakened the influence of mere tradition as to afford encouragement to the humblest votary of historical studies to seek and elucidate facts, whatever may be the consequences of their publication, yet is the lofty position of the Bard of Avon so inseparably interwoven with national pride and national affection, that the necessity of making apparent how much his masterly pen was misled by corrupt authorities is a task from which a daring hand might shrink, and the delicacy and difficulty of which cannot but be felt by the author of these memoirs.

The hardihood of the undertaking, however, has been considerably lessened by the researches of those able commentators who have lately bestowed attention and labour upon the subject; while it should also be borne in mind that the beauty and power of Shakspeare's dramas are wholly independent of the perverted statements of which he availed himself in their composition.

* Surtees's Hist. of Durham, p. lx.

† Sir Thomas More and Francis Bacon, Lord Verulam, wrote the history of the reigns of Richard III. and of his successor, Henry VII.