

of Austria, and the Princess of Burgundy; which alliance, chiefly through his means,\* was at length successfully accomplished.

The anger of the Duke of Clarence against his royal brother now exceeded all bounds. He was no less rash and intemperate than violent and misjudging, and, within a brief period, under the plea of exculpating two of his retainers, who had been condemned to death on frivolous pretences, he proceeded to the council-chamber, and before the Lords there assembled in conference, publicly accused the king of injustice, and upbraided the conduct both of himself and his ministers.

The king, who was at Windsor, on receiving information of this outrage, commanded the prince to be arrested and committed to the Tower; his proceedings having been previously denounced by the monarch "as subversive of the law of the realm, and perilous to judges and juries."†

Most interesting are the minute details given by the cotemporary chronicler respecting the termination of an event which has for ever disgraced the memory and tarnished the lustre of the reign of King Edward IV. With the exception, however, of the appalling result, they are altogether irrelevant to this memoir, in which it is unnecessary to say more than that the imprisonment of Clarence was shortly followed by his trial, that the king himself appeared as a witness against his oft-offending and oft-forgiven brother, who, being attainted‡ and convicted of high treason,§ was sentenced to suffer death. "The duke was placed in confinement, and from that time never recovered his freedom," says the Croyland historian.|| "What followed in the next parliament," he adds, "the mind shuns to relate, so sad seemed the dispute between two brothers of so great ability; for no one argued against the duke but the king, no one answered the king but the duke."

The accusations being deemed sufficient,¶ sentence of death was pronounced against him. The king, however, appears to have hesitated in ordering his brother's execution, for the chronicler states that "judgment was deferred." But the Commons, headed by their speaker, appeared at the bar of the House of Lords and prayed that the sentence might be carried into effect; which was delivered to the prince by Henry, Duke of Buckingham, he being specially appointed, for the time being, to the office of high steward of England, to the intent that he might not only pass upon him the awful judgment of the Peers, but superintend the accomplishment of the sentence. Accordingly, "within ten days of his condemnation, Clarence was executed, whatever was the mode of death, secretly within the Tower of London, on the 18th of February, 1478."\*\*\*

How or in what manner this death was effected will probably ever remain a mystery; nor would it require notice in these pages, were it not that the act itself forms one of the many accusations brought against Richard, Duke of Gloucester, although he was resident in the north during the entire period of the fatal dispute that terminated in his brother's death; and although the most explicit statement is given by the cotemporary narrator, that the trial of Clarence was public, his condemnation desired and sought for by the king, and that his execution was not only sanctioned by the peers of the realm, but also demanded by the speaker of the House of Commons.

\* Chron. Croy., p. 561.

† Ibid., p. 561.

‡ The bill of attainder, so illustrative of the rude state of society at that period, and of the bitter feelings entertained by the king towards his erring brother, may be seen at length in Rot. Parl., vol. vi. p. 193; but the defence of the duke has not been preserved, although he is reported to have replied with great determination to the charges brought against him.

§ Rot. Parl., vol. vi. p. 193.

¶ See Appendix II.

|| Chron. Croy., p. 561.

\*\*\* Chron. Croy., p. 561.

There is, indeed, no single document existing that connects Gloucester with the quarrel,\* whether in taking part with Edward, or in extenuating the conduct of Clarence, although the bill of attainder is still preserved; and that the Croyland writer appears himself to have been present at the trial. The differences that gradually increased between the two brothers had resolved themselves finally into a state question; consequently, the warrant for Clarence's death was delivered to that prince in all due form, by the lord high steward of England.

It was not until very many years after Richard's death that this serious crime was laid to his charge. Even the Tudor chroniclers, bitterly as they inveigh against him on most points, have not included this deadly act amongst the fearful crimes imputed to him: on the contrary, Hall, Holinshed and Stow unite in saying he openly denounced the extreme rigour of the sentence;† and Fabyan, Polydore Virgil, indeed all the older as well as cotemporary historians, are altogether silent as relates to Gloucester's participation in any manner in the dispute. Nearly the whole of these writers agree in ascribing the arraignment and execution of the misjudging prince to the instigation and influence of the queen and her aspiring and mercenary kindred: and of this fact there can exist little doubt, if consideration is duly bestowed not alone on the parties who at this time surrounded and possessed the greatest influence over the king, but on such as were most hostilely opposed to the ill-fated duke, and who were chiefly benefited by his death and attainder.‡ These were almost exclusively the queen and her connections.

So palpably, indeed, was the Lord Rivers enriched by his execution, that in the grant§ which conveyed to him such vast wealth, it was insinuated that Clarence had made a nuncupative will in his favour; while the wardship and marriage of the duke's heir, the infant Earl of Warwick, aged but three years, was granted to the queen's son, the Marquis of Dorset;|| it being one of the most lucrative gifts that the crown could bestow upon a subject. Neither must the fact be overlooked as completing the chain of evidence that links the untimely end of Clarence with the queen and her kindred, that Henry Stafford, Duke of Buckingham, he who, as temporary high steward, conveyed the sentence to the prince and was bound to see that it was carried into execution, was espoused to the Lady Katharine Wydeville, the queen's sister, and nominated to that important office expressly for the occasion that on him might devolve the task of pronouncing judgment of death upon the royal prisoner.¶

Sir Thomas More is the first writer who intimates that the Duke of Gloucester acted with subtlety to Clarence, although even he admits that he protested against his execution. "Some wise men," says this learned author, "also ween that his drift covertly conveyed, lacked not in helping

\* Dr. Lingard considers that the principal cause of Edward's jealousy against Clarence arose from his having been declared the next heir after Edward, the son of Henry VI., in which case, supposing the validity of that act, he was even then the rightful heir. The king was careful to have it repealed.—Rot. Parl., vol. vi. p. 191. See Lingard, vol. v. p. 229.

† Hist. Doubts, p. 13.

‡ Bayley's History of the Tower, Part III., p. 335.

§ The grant which conveyed to Lord Rivers the rich possessions which probably provoked the fate of the unfortunate prince, is preserved in the Fœdera, vol. xii. p. 95; and Laing, in his comments upon it, says, "The hypocritical language of this donation is curious, and seems to fasten the murder indisputably on Rivers. The grant insinuates that Clarence at his death made a nuncupative will in Rivers' favour; a proof that his conduct required exculpation."—Laing, Appen. Hen. Hist. Eng., vol. xii. p. 400.

|| Cal. Rot., p. 325.

¶ Rot. Parl., vol. vi. p. 195.

forth his brother of Clarence to his death, which he resisted openly, howbeit somewhat (as men deemed) more faintly than he that were heartily minded to his weal."\*

Who, however, after perusing this insidious accusation, can fail to be struck with the chancellor's personal comment upon the report? It is more conclusive, as regards the refutation of the charge, than the most laboured efforts, from a less virulent foe, to disprove it. "But of all this point," he adds, "is there no certainty; and whoso divineth upon conjecture, may as well shoot too far as too short." Yet upon this conjecture, upon the acknowledged uncertainty of this random accusation, has Richard of Gloucester been transmitted to posterity as the murderer of his brother; and this, too, in defiance of innumerable testimonies from his bitterest enemies, that he protested against so harsh a sentence, and likewise of positive proof that he benefited in no degree either by his brother's death or attainder.

But tales that savour of the marvellous or the horrible seldom lose by repetition; least of all can this be expected when they are founded in the first instance upon conjecture alone. The insinuation conveyed by Sir Thomas More, that Gloucester's efforts to save Clarence were but feeble and grounded on subtlety, were magnified by the Lord Chancellor Bacon into—"that prince being the contriver of his brother's death."† Shakspeare improves on the tradition, by representing him as the bearer of the warrant, nay, the associate of the murderers;‡ while Sandford, whose "Genealogical History of the Kings of England" has been considered a standard authority for nearly two centuries, completes the fearful picture by making Richard the actual perpetrator, in his own person, of the dark and terrible deed. "After he had offered his mass penny in the Tower of London," says the Lancastrian herald, "he was drowned in a butt of malmsey, his brother, the Duke of Gloucester, assisting thereat with his own proper hands."§

Thus has Richard's character been gradually defamed. Thus has the career of a young, energetic and highly-gifted prince, steering his own course in most troubled times with singular judgment and discretion, and prominent only amongst scenes of treachery and corruption by his acts of fidelity to his sovereign and of devotion to his country, been so distorted and misrepresented, to feed the malice of political rivals, that, to quote the words of Horace, Lord Walpole, the keen examiner into the traditions of this period, "the reign of Richard III. has so degraded our annals by an intrusion of childish impro-

\* More's Rych. III., p. 110.

† Lord Bacon's Hen. VII., p. 2.

‡

(Enter two Murderers.)

*Gloster.* But soft, here come my executioners.—  
How now, my hardy, stout resolved mates?

Are you now going to dispatch this thing?

*1st Mur.* We are, my lord; and come to have the warrant,  
That we may be admitted where he is.

*Gloster.* Well thought upon, I have it here about me.  
(Gives the warrant.)

When you have done, repair to Crosby Place.

But, sirs, be sudden in the execution,

Withal obdurate, do not hear him plead;

For Clarence is well spoken, and, perhaps,

May move your hearts to pity, if you mark him.

\* \* \* \* \*

I like you, lads;—about your business straight;

Go, go, dispatch.

*Richard III., Act I. Sc. III.*

§ Sandford, book v. p. 413.

babilities, that it places that reign on a level with the story of Jack the Giant-killer."\*

Foremost among these "childish improbabilities" (so designated by that sagacious writer) may most assuredly be placed the popular report that Clarence was drowned in a butt of malmsey wine.† Excepting from its connection with Gloucester's alleged participation in the unnatural deed, it would not be necessary here to allude to a tradition well-suited to the marvel-loving period of the 15th century, the age of necromancy‡ and of reputed miracles, but which can scarcely require serious refutation§ in these days of more enlightened inquiry. The king, it was evident, shrank from the public execution of his brother, which, setting aside all kindlier feelings, would, indeed, have been too bold a measure even for the daring and revengeful spirit of Edward IV., considering that Clarence was but twenty-eight years of age, much beloved in private life, and remarkable both for his accomplishments and for his personal attractions. It is also evident, however, that the king had firmly resolved upon his destruction: and looking to the custom of those times, in which death was perpetually hastened by or imputed to poison, there is nothing improbable in the belief, that the prince was doomed to suffer death in that form, or that the fatal drug was conveyed to him in a beverage so universal as was "Malvesie"|| or malmsey wine at the tables of the great and the opulent of that period.¶ But even this admission is, after all, but conjecture; for although the marvellous tale is reported by all the old chroniclers, yet no cotemporary record exists either for connecting the murder of Clarence with the popular belief of his having selected this singular mode of death, or for the still more idle and absurd tradition, that Gloucester in that manner participated in the execution of his brother. All that is positively known respecting the matter is simply this: that he was put to death "secretly within the Tower,"\*\* by command of Edward IV.; and that his body was afterwards removed for interment to Tewkesbury, there to be deposited beside the remains of his late deceased wife, the Lady Isabel, of Warwick.††

Richard, moreover, has been charged with not interceding for Clarence,

\* See Supplement to Historic Doubts, in Lord Orford's works, vol. ii. p. 184.

† Fabyan, p. 510, and Hall, p. 326.

‡ Of this there can scarcely be adduced a stronger example than the alleged cause of Clarence's condemnation, which forms a fitting companion to the mode in which his death for so many ages has been reputed to have been accomplished. "It is generally received among the vulgar," (says Habington, pp. 190, 191,) "and wants not the approbation of some chroniclers, that the chief ground of the king's assent to his death was the misinterpretation of a prophecy, which foretold that one, the first letter of whose name was 'G,' should usurp the kingdom, and dispossess King Edward's children. Of which there is much of probability; however, by his other actions, I should not judge the king easy to believe in such vanities. . . . Yet this served for the present, and carried a strong accusation against the duke: for this prophecy was alleged to be spoken by some of his servants, who by necromancy had understood this from the devil." Shakspeare avails himself of this popular report, and incorporates both that and the alleged mode of his death in those striking scenes which fix the murder of Clarence upon the much-calumniated Gloucester.—See *Rich. III., Act I. Scenes I. and IV.*

§ Dr. Lingard says, "The manner of his death has never been ascertained, but a silly report was circulated that he had been drowned in a butt of malmsey wine."—Vol. v. p. 229. Bayley observes, in his valuable *History of the Tower*, (Part II. p. 337,) "It was the vulgar report that he was drowned in a butt of malmsey; a tale which, in all probability, owed its origin to the duke's great partiality for that liquor." Mr. Sharon Turner and Mr. Laing merely report the popular opinion, without attempting to refute so utterly incredible a tale.

|| Chaucer.

\*\* Chron. Croy., p. 561.

† Leland's Collect., vol. vi. p. 5.

†† Vincent on Brooke.

and his reputed influence over the king has been made another source of accusation against him, from his not seeming by the result to have exerted that influence in extorting a pardon for his brother. But no proof warrants the assumption either that Gloucester did not strive to save Clarence, or interfere to prevent the monarch from staining his memory and name with so foul a blot as that of fratricide.

If conjecture is in any way to be admitted, let it be asked whether it was probable that the Lady Cecily, their venerable parent, would have remained callous when her son was threatened with an ignominious death? Was it likely that, when on a former occasion of contention between the brothers, their widowed mother and attached sisters united with Gloucester in striving to bring about a reconciliation at a time when Clarence's life was in danger only, they would all be passive now, when that prince was imprisoned as a state criminal, and actually condemned to death? The probability is rather that every exertion was privately made to save the unhappy prince; and contemporary authority infers this fact from the statement recorded, that "judgment was deferred." But Edward was by nature inexorable; and Clarence had fearfully provoked and goaded him to extremities.\* The queen, too, and her kindred,—the duke's bitter enemies,—were at hand to subdue in the king every kindly feeling of affection; and even the legislature, it appears, demanded his death. The private execution of his brother, however, and the secrecy with which the unnatural act was perpetrated all tend to warrant the supposition that efforts were made by the duke's kindred to save his life; while the expressive words of the Croyland chronicler, "the king, however, was (as I think) very often repentant of the deed,"† fix it exclusively on his mandate, and exonerates the Duke of Gloucester equally with the other members of the House of York, from tamely and inhumanly beholding the destruction of the ill-fated Clarence, who, it must also be remembered, though privately executed by command of his sovereign, was nevertheless openly condemned to death by the lords spiritual and temporal in Parliament assembled. There is not a single circumstance, moreover, whether founded on fact or based merely on tradition, that gives any ground to warrant the assumption that Richard was implicated in anywise with the dissensions that led to his brother's arrest, or that he was present even at the trial that ended in his death. A justifiable inference is, that he was far removed from the scene of so tragical an event; for, on the return of King Edward with his army from France, Gloucester proceeded direct to the north, and rejoined the Lady Anne and his infant son, at their chosen abode of Middleham Castle. From that period a variety of trivial local notices, either relative to the repair of fortresses under his charge, to the issuing of mandates in virtue of his appointments, or the payment of money, either in the way of debts, or for almsgiving, or the repair of churches, connect his name uninterruptedly with the northern counties; where he seems to have resided with little intermission during the three years that intervened between his return from France and the execution of the Duke of Clarence. Many of these documents—which, though in themselves and from their nature uninteresting, are valuable as establishing Richard's absence from the scene of strife, and fixing his residence in the

\* Not content with imputing the death of the Lady Isabel to sorcery practised by the reigning queen, the unwise and misjudging Clarence included his royal brother in the charge of "negromancie;" for it is stated in the indictment, amongst other accusations brought against Clarence, that he publicly reported "our Soverayne Lord wrought by nygromancie, and used craft to poison his subjects such as he pleased."  
—*Parl. Rolls*, vol. vi. p. 193.

† *Chron. Croy.*, p. 561.

north—are dated from Sheriff-Hutton Castle,\* one of the ancient strongholds of the powerful Nevilles, in whose family it had remained for 300 years, until forfeited to the king by Warwick's attainder after the battle of Barnet. It was then given by Edward as a reward to Gloucester in 1471,† and that prince bestowed so much attention in repairing and beautifying this magnificent structure, and in improving the demesne altogether, that the lordship and manor were within a brief period from the time now under consideration‡ purchased by the king from his brother for the sum of 500*l.*

The only well-attested fact that connects the Duke of Gloucester with the court of Edward IV. after that monarch's return from France, was one which is peculiarly characteristic of the fraternal affection which, on every occasion saving the one instance of the ignoble treaty with Louis XI., united the two brothers, and one which wholly acquits Richard of having participated in the offence at the act of resumption, which was so unwisely resented by Clarence. The public event now alluded to was the solemnization of the marriage of King Edward's second son, the infant Duke of York, with his cousin, the Lady Anne Mowbray,§ the heiress of the House of Norfolk; and the active part taken in the ceremony by Richard of Gloucester is quite consistent with the warmth of feeling and affectionate energy which he invariably testified upon all matters connected with the interests of his family. He attended as chief mourner the obsequies of his deceased father. He followed his brother into exile and poverty. He accompanied his young sister on her state progress, preparatory to her marriage. He was the chief mediator in reconciling his elder brothers when hostilely arrayed against each other. He attested the betrothment of his niece to the dauphin of France, although opposed to the treaty that led to the contract; and on this present occasion he is found supporting his infant nephew, in virtue of his near relationship, in a marriage sanctioned by the church|| and earnestly desired by the king.

This latter event—rendered remarkable from the great splendour of the ceremony, and yet more so from the youthful ages of the parties concerned, the bridegroom being but five, and the bride not three years of age—led to one of those domestic re-unions which, proclaiming as they do the unanimity and affection which—in all but one instance—bound the several members of the House of York to each other, contrast so singularly with the unnatural dissensions between the king and the Duke of Clarence, which embittered the whole of that monarch's reign, and terminated at length in his brother's untimely death. Every branch of this noble race was assembled on the joyful occasion, with the exception of the discontented Clarence; and he, as has been before stated, had withdrawn himself from court a few months previously, and was openly at this time displaying his ill-will against the king, and his rancorous feelings of malignity towards the queen; while the prominent part which, as the elder brother, was naturally to have been expected from him at the royal wedding, devolved, as on all previous occasions of domestic interest it had done, upon the Duke of Gloucester. "The Bishop of Norwich proceeded to the marriage, and

\* *Castellum Huttonicum*, pp. 2. 4.

† *Issue Rolls of the Exchequer*, p. 499.

‡ *Cott. MSS.*, Julius B. xii. fol. 111.

§ Anne, daughter and heir of John Mowbray, the last Duke of Norfolk of that name, was married in 1477 (being quite a child) to Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York, second son of Edward IV., who was on this marriage created Duke of Norfolk, &c. &c. This prince dying without issue, the great possessions and honours of this noble family came to Sir John Howard, knight, Lord Howard, whose mother was a sister and co-heir of Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk. Anne, Duchess of Norfolk, the infant bride of the royal duke, died in her early years.—*Paston Letters*, vol. ii. pp. 46. 187. 194.

|| *Appendix JJ.*

asked who would give the princess to the church and to him? and the king gave her.\* Then there was great number of gold and silver cast among the common people, brought in basins of gold, cast by the high and mighty prince, the DUKE OF GLOUCESTER; and from St. Stephen's Chappel the DUKE OF GLOUCESTER led the bride on the right hand." This marriage occurred on the 15th of January, 1477, about a month after the demise of the Lady Isabel,† and at the identical period when the inconsiderate Clarence had ascribed her death to sorcery practised by the queen consort. It also immediately preceded the time when the duke aspired to the hand of the Princess Mary of Burgundy;‡ the loss of whose principality, together with her rich inheritance, was the foundation of that open hostility to the king, which, pursued with equal violence as had been the duke's contention on an almost similar occasion with his brother of Gloucester, ended at length in his premature and violent death.

Richard appears to have returned to the north after the festive scene which induced his visit to the court of Edward IV.: for various important documents are extant which fix his residence at Middleham during the ensuing year; and his occupation there, which led to those documents, forms a striking contrast to the unnatural dissensions between his elder brothers, which reached their climax during the same period. This fact is invaluable, not only in disproving Richard's participation in the dispute, but in displaying also how different was the bent of his mind from that mischievous spirit with which it has so long been the fashion to invest him.

The strong attachment of this prince to Middleham has been before noticed; and this he evinced in the most laudable and praiseworthy manner when it became his own baronial hall,§ the great object which engaged his attention at the period under consideration being a desire to amplify the parish church of Middleham,|| and to found and incorporate a college there for a dean and twelve secular priests. The advowson of the rectory of Middleham, by his marriage with the heiress of the Nevilles, vested in himself; but as the additional expense of maintaining six chaplains and several clerks would bear heavy upon the incumbent, he sought to provide for this inconvenience by a license of mortmain, empowering the new foundation to acquire lands to the amount of 100 marks per annum.¶

Nothing can be couched in stronger language, or give a more generally amiable view of the motive which influenced Gloucester, or the light in which he was viewed by his northern partisans, than the manner in which the instrument conveying the rector's consent is worded;\*\* and the prince

\* Sandford's Geneal. Hist., book v. p. 394.

† Isabel, Duchess of Clarence, died on the 12th December, 1476.

‡ Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, was slain in battle, 5th January, 1477, leaving only one daughter, Mary, by his first wife. This princess, being heir of his opulent and extensive dominions, was courted by all the potentates in Christendom. She married Maximilian of Austria, son of the emperor Frederick.—*Paston Letters*, vol. ii. p. 121.

§ Leland says, "Middleham Castle joineth hard to the townside, and is the fairest castle of Richmondshire next Bolton;" and Whitaker, describing it after its glory had yielded to the ravages of time, says, "As it is, majestic in decay, Middleham Castle as an object is the noblest work of man in the county of Richmond."—*Hist. of Richmondshire*, pp. 341, 342.

|| *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 335.

¶ See Whitaker's *Hist. of Richmondshire*, vol. i. p. 335.

\*\* "Whereas, among other remedies, &c., the solemnities of mass are deservedly esteemed to be grateful to the Divine mercy manifested by the sacrifice of our Saviour for the salvation of the living and the repose of the dead; the petition lately exhibited to me on behalf of the most excellent prince, Richard, Duke of Gloucester, Lord of

appears to have followed up the matter with his accustomed zeal, until he succeeded in obtaining from Parliament a license to found and endow the college\* at his own expense and at his sole cost.† This first step towards the advancement of a project which he had so much laboured to effect, received the sanction of the legislature on the 16th January, 1478;‡ but as the step was not complete without the consent of the rector, William Beverley, the probability is, that Gloucester returned to Middleham to secure that consent; the more so, as the wording of the instrument displays such keen anxiety respecting the legality of the measure. "In witness of which," says the reverend incumbent, "as I have not an authentic seal, I have therefore procured the seal of the reverend the official of the court of York, to be put to these presents, January 20th, A. D. 1478."§ Now, this date is just one month previous to Clarence's murder, which took place on the 18th February, 1478: and as no mention is made by the cotemporary historian relative to Gloucester's connection with the trial, or to his having been present at it, or having spoken in Parliament on the subject, the probability is, that, finding all remonstrance ineffectual either towards subduing the violence of King Edward's indignation, or arresting the fate of Clarence, he remained absent from the painful scene; and returning to Middleham, pursued "the laudable and meritorious plan," and carried into effect "the pious desires" which, says the rector, "the said most excellent prince" had in view in his proposition.|| That he continued in favour with the king, notwithstanding, as asserted by Sir Thomas More, that he "resisted openly" the condemnation of his brother of Clarence, is evinced by a signal mark of favour conferred upon him within a few days of the duke's secret execution:—"Edward Plantagenet, eldest son of Richard, Duke of Gloucester," being "created Earl of Salisbury, to him and the heirs of his body," by patent dated 15th February, 1478.¶

Thus, by a singular coincidence, were the renowned titles of Earl of Salisbury and Earl of Warwick revived at the same period in the persons of the elder sons of Warwick's co-heiresses, and the grandsons of that Duke of York for whom the preceding occupants of those noble titles had so devotedly fought and bled; that of Salisbury\*\* being bestowed on Edward of Gloucester by

Middleham, contained that the said most excellent prince proposed and intended to amplify the said parish church of Middleham, to the praise of Almighty God, his most excellent mother, and all saints, and the continual increase of divine worship, and the same to endow with greater rights and possessions; and also to increase the number of ministers in the same, devoutly dwelling with God, if the said church were erected into a collegiate church, by the most reverend father in God, Laurence Booth, Archbishop of York, primate of England, &c."—See an Abstract of *Beverley's Consent*, in *Whitaker's Richmondshire*, vol. i. p. 335.

\* *Cal. Rot. Pat.*, p. 322.

† See Appendix KK.

‡ *Rot. Parl.*, vol. vi. p. 172.

§ *Whitaker's Richmondshire*, vol. i. p. 335.

|| "The Duke of Gloucester, not content with founding the college, by another deed, bearing date December 20, anno 19 Ed. IV., actually grants the dean and college the advowson of the church and parish of Middleham. Clouds and darkness rest on the remaining steps in the history of this foundation, which neither wholly took effect nor wholly fell to the ground. For as to the dean, his jurisdiction, privileges and exemption, they remain unimpeached and undiminished to this day; but though the college were never dissolved, the advowson never passed, according to the founder's grant, to the dean and chaplains. . . . A book of statutes was framed for the college, anno 18 Edw. IV.; yet we hear no more of them, and the probability is, that on the death of Richard III., and the annihilation of his interest, Beverley, as his successor, silently permitted the foundation to relapse into a rectory for his own emolument."—*Whitaker*, vol. i. p. 338.

¶ *Rymer*, Add. MSS., No. 4615, art. 5.

\*\* *Cal. Rot. Pat.*, p. 322.

favour of the king on the 15th instant, and that of Warwick\* inherited by Edward of Clarence upon the execution of his parent on the 18th of the same February, 1478. The titles seemed as ominous to the youthful possessors of these honours as was the more familiar appellation of EDWARD; a name borne by the elder sons of all three brothers, and probably bestowed in their baptism from the same motive—compliment to the reigning sovereign, the head of the House of York. Few tales of fiction, conceived in the very keenest spirit of romance, could depict more disastrous fortunes, or portray more fatal careers, than those of Edward, Prince of Wales, Edward, Earl of Warwick, and Edward, Earl of Salisbury, the eldest sons of Edward IV., George of Clarence, and Richard of Gloucester, and the last male heirs of the royal line of Plantagenet, the very name of which was destined to pass away with these ill-starred and unfortunate princes.

But the age in which their short but eventful lives were passed was one in which all the horrors of romance were realized in actual life; it was the era of the dark and the terrible—the epoch of mysterious and unhallowed deeds—the period in which conspiracy and murder were things of every day occurrence, and in which the most appalling acts were accomplished with such facility, that they excited comparatively little terror, and seldom elicited more than feeble inquiry.

The most turbulent and daring spirits, when called upon to account for their actions, if moving in an elevated station of life, found a ready shield in the prevalent belief of the influence of necromancy and magic; and if an early death or a violent end was supposed to be the result of prophecy, or to be accelerated by supernatural agency,† the whole multitude were excited and subdued by commiseration for the offender; while every previous misdeed in him was palliated or forgotten. On the other hand, those who were conscious of possessing qualities which lead to greatness, and had sufficient moral courage to resist the evil passions of those degenerate times, were viewed with jealousy, suspicion and mistrust; their actions were misconstrued, their motives calumniated, and the most generous intentions and wisest measures were attributed to hypocritical deception, to deep-laid schemes of personal aggrandizement, and little less than superhuman foresight as to the successful result of the wildest plots, and of wholesale plans of death and destruction to their fellow men.‡

\* Sandford, book v. p. 414.

† This fact is well exemplified in the current report already noticed, that the accelerating cause of the Duke of Clarence's death was his supposed connection with the obnoxious prophecy that related to the letter G. "And because there was a prophecy," says Rous, the cotemporary historian, "that after E., that is, after Edward IV., G. should reign, meaning thereby George, Duke of Clarence, he was on that account slain; and the other G., namely, Gloucester, preserved until the fulfilment of the prophecy."—*Hist. Regum Angliæ*, p. 215. Holinshed repeats the tale, but converts it into a romance by the addition of the after report that the hapless prince was drowned in malmsey wine. "Finally, the duke was cast into the Tower, and therewith adjudged for a traitor and privily drowned in a butt of malmsey." . . . "Some have reported," he proceeds to say, "that the cause of this nobleman's death rose of a foolish prophecy, which was, that after King Edward, one should reign whose first letter of his name should be a G."—*Holinshed*, p. 346.

‡ The application of the alleged prophecy to after events and after circumstances has reference equally to the undeserved stigma which it attached to Richard's name, as to the positive evil it brought upon Clarence; for Sandford, in his "Geneal. Hist. of the Kings of England," when reciting the many charges brought against this unhappy prince, says, that the belief of his ambitious designs against the reigning family was confirmed "by the misapplication of a certain prophecy, that a G. should reign after an E., to be meant of this George," when, adds the historian (who lived many years after both the brothers were laid at rest,) "Gloucester more craftily lay in wind for the game."—*Sandford, Geneal. Hist.*, book v. p. 413.

Such, in the year 1478, as may be gathered from the preceding details, was, in a degree, the position of King Edward's brothers. The one, rushing headlong to his own destruction by a series of misdeeds, embracing treachery, covetousness, rebellion and unjustifiable hostility to his sovereign and the laws of the realm, has ever been looked upon as a martyr and a political victim, on account of the supposed misapplication of a vague prophecy to his Christian name of George; while the other, although openly and honourably practising deeds of virtue and piety,\* and making himself conspicuous only by acts of fidelity and obedience to the constituted authorities, and of devotion to his sovereign and his family, has, in consequence of his title of Gloucester chancing to realize the same prognostic that accelerated his elder brother's destruction, been selected as the object on which to engraft every evil action either covertly or openly performed by Edward IV. and the Duke of Clarence, because he preceded in intelligence the corrupt times in which he lived; and, perceiving the dangers that characterized that period, was enabled to meet the difficulties by which he was surrounded, and by temperate and conciliating conduct to escape the misfortunes which befell his elder brothers when pursuing a less discreet and less creditable policy.

\* An indenture for the composition of tithes in the parish of Middleham, signed by "the right high and mighty prince Richard, Duke of Gloucester, great chamberlain, constable and admiral of England, and Lord of Middleham, on the one party; and Sir William Beverley, the dean and the chaplains of the college of Richard, Duke of Gloucester, of Middleham, on the other party," furnishes another relic of the praiseworthy transactions of Richard, Duke of Gloucester, with the dean and prebendaries at a very early period after the foundation.—*Whitaker's Richmond*, p. 348.