

CHAPTER X.

Richard, Duke of Gloucester, occupies Barnard Castle.—He rebuilds a portion of that fortress.—His cognizance, the White Boar, still preserved in the ruins there.—Brackenbury attached to Gloucester's service, as the Lord of Barnard Castle.—The characters of Edward IV. and Richard of Gloucester at this era contrasted.—Fresh honours are bestowed upon the duke by the king.—Gloucester inherits the ancient mansion, "The Erber," and leases "Crosby Place."—Description of this prince's household, administration and economy.—James, King of Scotland, breaks his truce with England.—The Duke of Gloucester appointed lieutenant-general of the kingdom.—He besieges Berwick.—Marches to Edinburgh.—Agrees to a cessation of hostilities on the most honourable terms.—Louis XI. violates the treaty of Picquiny.—Indignation of Edward IV.—He resolves to invade France.—Preparations for war.—King Edward's illness.—His death.

AMONGST the very small portion of the Duke of Clarence's confiscated lands which were bestowed upon Richard of Gloucester, after the death of his brother, was the undivided possession of Barnard Castle,* in the county of Durham; a moiety of which rich demesne had been enjoyed by Clarence as the husband of Warwick's elder co-heiress; but, becoming vested in the crown after the attainder of this prince, the remaining part was given to Richard by the king, as the consort of the younger and sole surviving sister.

To this rich inheritance of the Beauchamps, which had been conveyed to the House of Neville at her marriage by the ill-fated Countess of Warwick,† the Duke of Gloucester appears to have removed immediately after it had become exclusively his own; and this superb building, the abode of the Lady Anne's maternal ancestors, seems henceforth to have shared with Middleham Castle the peculiar attention and interest of Gloucester, and is distinguished even above that favoured abode, or indeed any other of his dwelling places, for the variety and value of the personal memorials which connect it with his long residence there. The situation of the fortress was one of surpassing beauty, embracing as it did some of the finest points of view connected with the wild and picturesque vale of the Tees;‡ which river guarded one side of the high and precipitous rock on which the castellated mansion was erected, while the ancient town, which derived its name from the fortress, was situated at its base, on the southern acclivity of an eminence rising with a steep ascent from the river; its old market cross and antiquated buildings, together with its romantic situation, harmonizing well

* Surtees, vol. iv. p. 66.

† Anne, Countess of Warwick, was the sole heir of the noble Beauchamps, and Barnard Castle, their occasional abode, formed a portion of her rich dower. King Henry VII., on his accession to the throne, took immediate possession of the castle, "having a mind himself thereto;" but as the hapless countess had survived both her daughters, and also her sons-in-law, the monarch caused an act to be passed restoring to her all her hereditary estates, that she might convey the fee to the king; who coveted her rich possessions of which she had been so cruelly deprived, and restored them only to appropriate them to himself with greater show of legality.—See *Dugdale*, vol. i. p. 166.

‡ Surtees, p. 90.

with the rich scenery commanded from all parts of the castle across the river and along the bishopric of Durham.

It was a truly royal abode, and well suited to the immense power which, as lieutenant of the north, Gloucester enjoyed, being second only in authority to the sovereign* himself, as is rendered apparent by documents yet preserved in the archives of the palatinate of Durham; while the taste and judgment which he displayed in such parts of the building as were exclusively his own architecture, exhibited the same delicacy and refinement, united to boldness and grandeur of design, which so peculiarly characterized every work undertaken by the magnificent Plantagenets.

At the period under consideration, when Barnard Castle was at the height of its grandeur, it must have been a place of vast magnitude and importance, for even at the close of the last century its ruins were reputed to cover nearly seven acres of ground. Its foundation was coeval with the Norman conquest,† but its renovation and embellishment were the work of Richard of Gloucester.‡ Here may be found the earliest trace, and, perhaps, the best preserved specimen of his badge, "the silver boar."§ Here this prince's name in the antiquated letters of the period is still preserved, which, united to the frequent recurrence of his cognizance in the town, attests his popularity there; and by perpetuating the work of his own hands, transmits almost the only actual memento of Richard's private life, and portrays the nature of his peaceful occupations. Here, too, commenced that connection with Brackenbury, whose faithful and devoted attachment to the duke, even unto death,|| has been the probable means of darkening that warrior's fame, and of associating his name with revolting acts and fearful traditions, which, when separated from mere hearsay reports, and impartially traced to the times in which the individuals themselves flourished, will be found to have as little solid foundation as the many other unjustly imputed crimes which it became a sort of fashion, after Richard's death, to attach both to his memory and that of his warmest friends and supporters. Surtees, in speaking of Barnard Castle, says, "The walls of the two inner areas are still most magnificent;" and such, indeed, his elaborate description portrays them to be. "Further northwards," he adds, "a beautiful mullioned window, hung on projecting corbels, still exhibits within on the soffit of its arch the boar of Richard, with some elegant tracery, plainly marking the latest portion of the castle to be the work of Gloucester;"¶ and perhaps no better exemplification of this prince's badge, in which a fanciful analogy may be traced to the savage disposition unjustly fixed upon him, can be selected than a copy of the remarkable specimen, coeval with Richard himself, which ornamented his state chamber; the oriel window from which he may be supposed so often to have gazed, and with which the historian of Durham illustrates his most valuable and interesting description.

* Commissions of array were three times issued under Bishop Dudley, for calling out the armed force of the palatinate of Durham, to join the royal troops under the Duke of Gloucester against the Scots; and it is observable that one of these commissions is directed by the king to the duke himself, as lieutenant of the north, without reference to the episcopal authority.—*Surtees*, p. ix.

† Barnard Castle received its name from Barnard de Baliol, who came into England with the Conqueror, and whose great grandson was afterwards King of Scotland. Edward I. having dethroned him, he seized the manor and castle, and retained possession of them until his death.

‡ Surtees, p. 67.

§ See Gray's Ode on "The Bard."

|| "Sir Robert Brackenbury adhered faithfully to Richard, and died with his sovereign on Bosworth Field."—*Surtees*, p. 71.

¶ Ibid., p. 90.

The badge, impress, or cognizance, as certain heraldic figures in general use at this period of English history were indifferently styled, "was an emblematical device adopted," says Camden, "by noble and learned personages to notify some particular conceit of their own,"* and were altogether distinct from coats of arms, "which were used to distinguish families, and usual among the nobility in wars, tilts or tournaments;"† or from the crest, the highest armorial distinction, which was worn in the helmet by the knight himself, as an especial mark of nobility. The badge, in short, was the household or livery cognizance‡ worn by the retainers of princes and powerful barons, to declare visibly the liege lord to whose service they were attached, and it consisted of an emblematic figure sewn or fastened to the shoulders, breast, or some other prominent portion of the dress, in the same manner that the badge of watermen is fixed to their sleeves in the present day; which humble illustration constitutes almost the only existing trace of this once important symbol of fealty and of vassalage.

Many of the most remarkable associations relating to the feudal times are connected with this ancient appendage,§—the very name of Plantagenet, itself, for example,—distinguishing, as it did, that chivalrous race of English monarchs, the last of whom is the subject of this memoir, being derived from the cognizance of their progenitor, a sprig of the *Planta-genista* (the yellow broom), adopted by him as a symbol of humility when performing a pilgrimage to the Holy Land.¶

King Edward IV. bore his white rose and the fetterlock as the particular device of the House of York; and after the battle of Mortimer Cross, he adopted the white rose en soleil‡ as his *especial* cognizance, from the parhelion that preceded that important battle, "in which three suns were seen immediately conjoyning in one." The cognizance of Richard, Duke of Gloucester, was a rose supported on the dexter side by a bull, a badge of the House of Clare, and on the sinister side by a boar, which boar he had found among the badges of the House of York. This latter device was the one he selected as his own personal badge,** the cognizance of his retainers and household, and its preservation at his mansion of Barnard Castle is the more valuable from being sculptured under his own direction and associated with a portion of his life, of which so little notice has hitherto been taken, and on which the breath of slander could attach neither stain nor censure.

* Camden's Remains, p. 447.

† Ibid.

‡ In the reign of Edward III. family badges were used with profusion to decorate the dresses, caparisons, furniture and utensils; and although the tournament sometimes presented a device fancifully adapted for the particular ceremony, still the principal houses, in imitation of the royal family, had a distinctive mark for their retainers, which secondary and menial tokens of family distinction were no doubt at that time better known to their dependents than the personal arms or crest of their liege lord. There are now very few of our nobility who continue the use of the badge distinctly; but they are still retained by some charitable foundations, and the yeomen of the guard wear them as in the time of Henry VIII.—*Collectanea Topog. et Geneal.*, vol. iii. p. 50. See also *Edmondson's Heraldry*, p. 189.

§ Appendix LL.

¶ Buck's Richard III., p. 6.

‡ Camden's Remains, p. 454.

** "The white boar was the badge of Richard, Duke of Gloucester, and was retained by him after he ascended the throne. His arms were sometimes supported by two of them. In Sandford's time, there remained over the library gate at Cambridge, carved in stone, a rose, supported on the sinister side by a boar; which boar, the same author informs us, Richard had found among the badges of the House of York, being of silver, with tusks and bristles of gold, inscribed 'Ex Honore de Windsor.' The badge of the white boar is said to have been derived from the honour of Windsor."—*Retros. Review*, 2d Series, vol. ii. p. 156.

Hutchinson, in his account of the borough of Barnard Castle, observes that the cognizance of Richard is scattered all over the town in houses built of the stones obtained from the ruins of the castle; and Surtees, in bearing similar testimony, says, "In the wall of a low ancient dwelling, with mulioned windows, is a stone inscribed *Richardus* in a bold raised letter; and on a house at a little distance is a stone coarsely sculptured with the boar passant."*

But in this favourite abode, as well as at Middleham Castle, Gloucester bestowed not his attention exclusively in embellishing his own dwelling-house, but exerted himself strenuously, as he had previously done at the former place, to obtain a license for founding a corresponding collegiate church for a dean, twelve secular priests, ten chaplains and six choristers, in honour of the Virgin, to be called "The College of Richard, Duke of Gloucester, at Barnard Castle;"† and that he succeeded in his praiseworthy and munificent design is made apparent by letters patent‡ still extant, in which the king grants license to Richard, Duke of Gloucester, "to found and incorporate a college at Barnard Castle."§

What a contrast do these domestic and commendable occupations present to those usually ascribed to this prince! How singular does it appear, that for three centuries one unqualified charge of depravity, in its most appalling sense, should have been affixed to the memory of a British monarch, commencing from the moment of his birth, and continued up to the very period of his decease, when so many documents actually existed, both legislative and local, that of themselves, and without requiring either comment or observation, negative the utterly incredible tales which have so long disgraced our regal annals, proving, beyond all power of contradiction, how bountiful, peaceably disposed, and well conducted was Richard, as Duke of Gloucester, at the identical period when his name has been branded with crimes and deep-laid schemes, which only the most depraved of human beings could have conceived, and the most heartless have put in execution.

Yet such is the case; and so deep-rooted, so firmly fixed are the prejudices entertained against Richard of Gloucester, from the impression having been conveyed in childhood, and confirmed both by dramatic exhibitions and graver studies in after years, that, in all probability, no proof, however strong, could wholly eradicate, in the present generation at least, the stain, the traditional imputation of Richard's guilt:—no; not even though the records of the land prove them unworthy of credit, and cotemporary evidence completely invalidates the fables of a later and credulous period.

Grievous, indeed, as affecting the truth of our national history, was the error, so long pursued by historical writers, of consulting and copying only such statements as had been already printed, and thus perpetuating and too frequently exaggerating, the misrepresentations and erroneous impressions of the early chroniclers. It is true that the extreme difficulty attendant upon the examination of original documents, arising equally from their obsolete character and from their wild dispersion, affords ample explanation, if not sufficient excuse, for the first compilers of so laborious a work as a complete national history for adopting the testimony of such writers who preceded them as were renowned for learning and estimated for integrity; still the misinterpretation, by an individual, however erudite of a single fact, much more of a continuous series of events, may for ever destroy the character and unde-

* Surtees, p. 79.

† Tanner's Notitia, p. 117.

‡ Cal. Rot. Pat., p. 322.

§ "A license appears for such a foundation in 1477, but the design was probably left incomplete, or perished with its founder."—*Surtees*, vol. iv. p. 67.

servedly blight the reputation of a monarch, who, the victim of misconception in the first instance, becomes eventually the object of positive calumny to future generations and to all ages.

Nor does this unhappy result imply either, in the writers themselves, a wilful or deliberate perversion of truth. Far from it: but it is human nature to judge of persons and things by preconceived notions, and to be biassed by personal feelings; and there is nothing more remarkable in the study of history than the fact so constantly made apparent to such as are engaged in the pursuit, that the sincerity of even the most impartial writers becomes affected when their prejudices, whether religious or political,* are called into play, or how completely the false colouring thus given by them to persons or things perverts the truth which they seek to establish, and from which, indeed, they have no intention of departing.

Unless the motives that led to certain actions are taken into consideration,—unless the moral condition of society at a given period forms the standard by which individuals who then flourished are judged,—unless the religion, laws, customs and manners of the country and the times are carefully weighed and properly estimated,—the truth can never become known. All views, opinions and conclusions, therefore, should be cautiously received, unless they are derived from the accounts of cotemporary writers; because these latter, from being acquainted with the causes that produced unforeseen results, and comprehending, in a great measure, the agency by which such results were brought about, are more likely to come to a right conclusion than those who have to canvass the motives of human actions, and to form an estimate of individual character, at a remote period, and under a state of things altogether distinct from the more civilized age in which the modern historian writes, and under the influence of which he is called upon to pronounce, at least, his own judgment.

There is no part of English history to which these observations are more applicable than that portion which comprises the brief career of Richard, Duke of Gloucester. Almost every matter in which he was concerned is enveloped in mystery; the most important events, as well as the most unimportant persons, all, if connected with him, partake of the same uncertainty, the same shadowing out of evil, with no more solid foundation than the ignis fatuus that deceives the unwary traveller, and defies all approach, all tangibility, because based only on delusion.

Amongst the number of those followers who have shared in the posthumous odium which for three centuries has been attached to the Duke of Gloucester, is Sir Robert Brackenbury, whose name, from its association with Barnard Castle, requires especial notice here; and the more so, because he appears to have been fully as much the victim of unfounded aspersion as the prince to whose service he was probably first attached by military tenure at this period of his history.

* Richard III. is not the only instance in our regal annals that could be adduced in corroboration of this fact. Queen Mary, melancholy as was her reign, resulting from the bigotry of her ministers and the fury of religious persecution at that period, was far from being the cruel and unfeminine character usually described. On the contrary, she was mild and amiable in private life, and her letters and literary productions which are yet extant (see *Hearne's Syllogi Epistolarium*, and *Strype's Hist. Memorials*) prove her to have been not only a right-minded as well as a very learned woman, but altogether the victim of the unhappy times in which she flourished, rather than the willing agent of those savage deeds which procured for her in after years the opprobrious term of "Bloody Queen Mary,"—an epithet resulting from the same factious spirit which bestowed on Gloucester the epithet of "Crook-backed Richard."

The family of Brackenbury was one of great respectability, and of very ancient date,* having been settled at Selaby, in the immediate vicinity of Barnard Castle, from the end of the twelfth century. One of the main bulwarks of this latter fortress was called, and indeed is still designated as "Brackenbury's Tower," probably, says Surtees,† "from the tenure of lands held by castle-ward;" or, it may be, from some distinguished warrior of the family having earned the distinction by his brave defence of the portion so named, during its siege under Edward I. The Robert Brackenbury, whose name is as inseparably interwoven with that of Richard of Gloucester, as

"Brackenbury's gloomy, weed-capt Tower,"‡

is with the fortress in which that prince so long sojourned, and on which his cognizance remains carved on buttress and window within sight of the ruined tower itself, was a junior member of this ancient family.§

When, therefore, the custom of the time is taken into consideration, of young men of high descent being invariably attached to the household and retinue of the great feudal lords in their neighbourhood, it is a fair inference, that upon Gloucester fixing his abode at Barnard Castle, a cadet of the Brackenbury family should be numbered among his retainers, as the vassal of his princely superior; even were he not compelled to do him service by some military tenure, binding his race to the fortunes of the lord of Barnard Castle, whoever he might be; and which it is more than probable was the case in this instance, by the name of his ancestors being attached to a portion of the fabric itself.

Richard of Gloucester appears to have possessed qualities that won the greatest confidence from such as surrounded him, and inspired the most devoted attachment in those on whom he bestowed his friendship. He distinguished Brackenbury with marks of the highest favour, and there is no existing document, or even tradition, to prove him undeserving of the prince's regard; while the firmness and fidelity with which that faithful knight followed Gloucester's fortunes to the very close of his life, even at the sacrifice of his own, as has been before observed, sufficiently explain the length and nature of their military connection, and account for Brackenbury's name suffering from being so intimately associated with a prince whose testimonies of regard were interpreted into bribery for crime, and whose rewards for faithful services were considered as designating only his co-partners in guilt.

It would be premature to follow up this subject farther at present; but in describing an abode so peculiarly associated with Richard's memory, and that of Brackenbury, as was Barnard Castle, it becomes essential to notice the simple and natural cause which probably led to the connection of the latter with the prince when sojourning there, and which was so likely to produce the friendship that has been the means of coupling their names in unenviable celebrity even to the present day.

For some years Richard appears to have pursued the same even and tranquil career; for although many local notices are extant, which, as regards

* Amongst the metrical legends of the county of Durham is one that perpetuates the ancient descent of the Brackenburys:—

"The black lion under the oaken tree
Made the Saxons fight, and the Normans flee."

This distich is one of the oldest of those which Sir Cuthbert Sharpe has collected in his pleasing little work on the traditions of this county. He explains its meaning by the crest of the family, which was a tree vert, under which is a lion couchant sable.

—See *Bishoprick Garland*, p. 4.

† *Hist. of Durham*, p. 71.

‡ *Layton's Poem of Castle Barnard*.

§ *Surtees*, p. 91.

data, serve to keep him from year to year alive in public remembrance, and prevent his ever being entirely lost sight of, yet they chiefly relate to matters of the same import as those already described, viz., the preservation of peace in the northern counties by his promptness and energy in checking the inroads of the border chiefs, and allaying the first indication of discontent evinced in the extensive district intrusted to his charge; and, when not thus actively employed in a military capacity, bestowing his undivided attention towards beautifying or repairing various religious edifices in the north, and keeping in order the important fortresses requisite for guarding King Edward's English dominions against any sudden irruption from the Scottish frontier. In the Issue Roll of the Exchequer upwards of a thousand marks are assigned to Gloucester,* at this period, in payment of repairs to the walls of Carlisle, besides a farther grant of fifty marks allotted to him for the same purpose;† other sums, too, are awarded to Richard "as keeper of the marches of England near Scotland for the safe custody thereof." Penrith, where he frequently resided, and which, in their young age, had been the favourite abode of his parents,‡ was greatly indebted to him for its repair and restoration:§ and it is by no means improbable that the ancient portraits in stained glass of the Duke of York and the Lady Cecily, which are still to be seen in the south window of the chancel of Penrith church, were there placed through the filial affection of their youngest son. To the chapel at Pontefract, and the parish churches of Skipton, Coverham, Middleham and others, he was a great benefactor; and he bestowed considerable sums in embellishing and renovating the monastery of Carlisle.||

It is scarcely possible to imagine a stronger contrast to the active and praiseworthy career pursued by Richard, Duke of Gloucester, than was afforded by the inert and luxurious life led by King Edward IV. His indolence increased with his years, and his love of pleasure and personal gratification gained strength by excessive and unlawful indulgence. The tribute-money, which continued to be regularly paid by Louis XI. after the treaty of Picquiny, afforded him ample means for indulging to satiety those enervating habits which weakened his talents for government fully as much as they paralyzed his naturally active and energetic character. His passion for dress was so unbounded, that he would constantly appear in a variety of the most costly robes;¶ some made of a form altogether new, but such, as he thought, would display to the greatest advantage the singular beauty of his person; while the splendour and luxury which marked the festivities of his court were more in accordance with eastern customs than the more rational and sober enjoyments of an English sovereign.** The sole object which called off his attention from himself and his vain pursuits was an inordinate ambition in regard to the aggrandizement of his offspring by marriage. In this he succeeded to his entire satisfaction; for independent of the betrothment of the Princess Elizabeth and Cecily to the heirs of the French and the Scottish

* Issue Roll of Exchequer, p. 501.

† Surtees, p. 67.

‡ Harl. MSS., 433, fol. 191.

¶ Cont. Croy., p. 563.

** Philip de Comines, who knew him well, and was frequently employed on missions to the English court, says, that he indulged himself in a greater share of ease and luxury than any prince of his time. His thoughts were wholly absorbed by hunting, dress and licentious pleasures. And so devoted was he to the fair sex, that even in hunting his custom was to have tents erected for ladies, whom he entertained with unparalleled splendour and magnificence.—See *Phil. de Comines*, p. 252; *Sharon Turner*, vol. iii. p. 363.

† Ibid., p. 499.

§ Ibid.

crowns, he had arranged for his other children* alliances equally advantageous, whether considered with reference to connection or riches.†

Secure, then, in the peaceful possession of his own dominions, and undisturbed by foreign enemies, King Edward yielded himself wholly to a life of frivolous amusements, to the celebration of feasts and pageants, and the unrestrained indulgence of the most dissolute habits,‡ leaving the entire charge of the kingdom, as relates to its military affairs, to Richard, Duke of Gloucester.§ "The king," observes that monarch's biographer, "desired to live to the best advantage of his pleasure; Gloucester, of his honour:"|| and most just was this observation; for the wise, prudent, but firm government of this prince in the north preserved the whole of that part of the kingdom tranquil; while his well-known military prowess awed the malcontents in other parts of the realm.

His increasing importance throughout the country at large, as the only prince of the House of York capable, by age or by inclination, for active exertion, kept pace with his popularity in the north: while his unblemished reputation in public life, together with the submissive and consistent deportment to King Edward which had ever characterized his actions, increased his influence with that monarch, and strengthened the attachment which had ever bound the brothers to each other. As a natural result, Richard perpetually received fresh proofs of the king's confidence and affection.

In the 17th Edward IV. he was reappointed great chamberlain of England for life,¶ which office, it will be remembered, he had relinquished in favour of the Duke of Clarence,** by whose death it became vacant, and was again in the gift of the crown. In the 18th Edward IV. he was constituted admiral of England, Ireland and Aquitaine,†† having previously been invested with the maritime command of England. And in the 20th of Edward IV. he was nominated lieutenant-general of the kingdom,‡‡ in consequence of threatened hostilities with Scotland.

He was likewise appointed (to quote the quaint language of the times) "one of the triers of petitions" for England, Ireland and Scotland, in the Parliament which met in the painted chamber at Westminster, 16th of January, 1478;§§ an appointment which attests his judgment and integrity, and is proof, also, that he was accustomed to give his attention to the actual business of the state. In addition to these and many other honours of less

* Habington, p. 106.

† The princess royal was contracted to the Dauphin of France; the Princess Cecily to the heir of the King of Scotland; the Princess Anne was destined for the son of Maximilian, Archduke of Austria; and the Princess Katherine for the Infanta of Spain; Edward, Prince of Wales, was betrothed to the eldest daughter of the Duke of Bretagne; and Richard, Duke of York, in his fifth year, as already shown, was united to the heiress of the Duke of Norfolk, by which alliance he succeeded to the immense estates and enormous riches of that princely house.

‡ Habington, p. 177.

§ Habington, p. 202.

¶ Rymer's Add. MSS., 4615, art. 16.

†† Cal. Rot. Pat., p. 323.

‡‡ Rot. Parl., vol. vi. p. 167. "In the beginning of the existence of the House of Commons, bills were presented to the king under the form of petitions. Those to which the king assented were registered among the rolls of Parliament, with his answer to them; and at the end of each parliament the judges formed them into statutes. Several abuses having crept into that method of proceeding, it was ordained that the judges should in future make the statute before the end of every session. Lastly, as even that became in process of time insufficient, the present method of framing bills was established; that is to say, both Houses now frame the statutes in the very form and words in which they are to stand when they have received the royal assent."—*De Lolme's Constitution of England*, p. 234.

§§ Ibid., 4614, art. 70.

¶ Ibid., p. 325.

§ Lingard, p. 234.

note, he was appointed high sheriff of Cumberland and of Cornwall, the latter for "term of his life."^{*}

As the number and importance of Richard's high offices accumulated, his occasional presence in the metropolis became necessary; the more so, as the king's increasing indolence rendered the judicious advice and active assistance of his brother not merely essential to his own individual ease, but important to the kingdom as regarded its internal government. Up to this period, however, no fixed abode in the capital appears to have been appointed to the Duke of Gloucester. Nor was this by any means remarkable, for his extreme youth, before the expulsion of King Edward from the throne, rendered it probable that he then dwelt at Baynard's Castle, the metropolitan abode of his widowed parent,—that renowned mansion in which the Lady Cecily, on all momentous occasions, assembled her offspring around her; and from the time of his royal brother's restoration to the throne, his life, as before noticed, was passed altogether in the north. There was his home; for, at this early period of English history, the abiding place of the great feudal lords was their baronial halls. They rarely visited the metropolis, and when they did so, it was with a great retinue, and purely on matters of business, to attend the great councils of the nation, to assist at the coronation of their monarchs, to take part in allaying civil commotions, and to afford support or offer opposition to the reigning sovereign and his ministers. The princely mansions in London of such lordly peers as chanced to possess them by inheritance, were denominated hostels or inns; and when attention is directed to the fact that the Earls of Salisbury and of Warwick, with retainers to the amount of 500, lodged at the ancient habitation of the Nevilles on Dowgate Hill, in 1458,† (within twenty years of the period under consideration,) some faint and general idea may be formed of the enormous size and accommodations of these city palaces. This celebrated abode of the Nevilles was termed "the Erber," or "Herber," an abridgment, it has been considered, of the French word "auberge," or lodging-house; but more probably it was a corruption of its locality, "the Harbour," from being situated on a hill overlooking the ancient port of the city of London, and immediately adjoining the water-gate,‡ or ferry. After the death of the Earl of Warwick, King Edward bestowed this mansion on the Duke of Clarence,§ at the same period that he invested him with the titles of his attainted stepfather, to whom it had belonged; and upon the execution of this latter prince, this hereditary abode of the race of Neville appears have formed one amongst the few portions of Clarence's confiscated lands that were conferred on Gloucester, arising from his union with the surviving co-heiress of the Lord of Warwick. The Erber, however, would seem to have been in a dilapidated state, and was probably, at this time, become altogether uninhabitable; for not only is Richard's name associated with repairs, commenced after the decease of the Duke of Clarence, but he is also at this time found occupying a newly-erected mansion in its immediate vicinity, late belonging to Sir John Crosby, an alderman of London, from whose widow the prince probably leased it, while the ancestral abode of his

* Anglo. Spect., pp. 128. 140.

† Pennant's London, p. 334.

‡ In very early periods of British history, vessels discharged their cargoes at Walbrook, then a considerable stream, passing through the most populous part of the city, and affording means of water conveyance to the merchants who dwelt in the vicinity. Dow-gate, a corruption of the ancient term "Dwr," signifying *water-gate*, on an eminence overlooking which, "the Erber" was built, was contiguous to a ferry, which continued in use for foot passengers up to a late period of history.

§ Dugdale, vol. ii. p. 162.

duchess in the capital was undergoing a similar renovation to that which Richard had bestowed on the castellated dwellings attached to her northern patrimony, and which, on his accession to the throne, procured, in after years, for this her metropolitan possession, the appellation of the "king's palace."^{**}

Of the precise year in which the Duke of Gloucester took possession of Crosby Place, no certain record exists; but its original owner, the wealthy merchant who constructed it, and whose name it still perpetuates, died in the year 1475, as appears by the massive tabular monument which yet attests the fact in the adjoining priory church of great St. Helen's.

The subject of this memoir is recorded as its next possessor,† and it was an abode in all respects befitting the sovereign's brother.

Erected in a style of princely grandeur, it was completed both within and without with that gorgeous splendour which peculiarly characterized the buildings of the 15th century; and Crosby Place, with its embowered oriels, its superb hall and matchless roof, so famed as perpetuating, in this present day, the only specimen now remaining in the metropolis of the domestic architecture of the middle ages,‡ is as interesting from its association with the last monarch of the Plantagenet race as is Barnard Castle, the abode of Richard of Gloucester in early and less troubled times, from the preservation there of his household cognizance, "the bristled boar."

These habitations, together with provincial records of his laudable proceedings in the northern counties above related, constitute almost the only traces of Richard's private life after his marriage. His public acts, however, are most numerous. They are registered in the archives of the land, and establish his high reputation as a warrior, and yet more his character as a patriot, and his dignified conduct as a prince of the blood royal of England. Still in the prime of life, for he had not attained his twenty-sixth year on the death of Clarence, and surrounded as he was by temptations, such as to one of his aspiring nature can scarcely be understood, in the existing order of things, Richard of Gloucester merited, in its fullest sense, the eulogium extorted by a sense of justice, even from the prejudiced pen of Lord Bacon: "a prince in military virtue approved, jealous of the honour of the English nation; and likewise a good law-maker for the ease and solace of the common people."§ Such, indeed, was the character which he bore universally in the extensive district in which his career as Duke of Gloucester must chiefly be sought for and judged,|| and where so many records yet exist¶ to bear testimony of his bounty, his generosity and his justice. A trifling memorial connected with his private life affords evidence, likewise, that this latter qualification was considered by his kindred to influence his conduct in all situations; for the Lady Elizabeth Latimer,** by her will dated 28th of September, 20th Ed. IV., appointed "the high and mighty prince, Richard, Duke of Gloucester," one of the "surveyors" of her will;†† thus evincing her confidence in his integrity, and giving a manifest proof of the sense generally entertained of his rectitude and ability.

* Pennant, p. 334.

† Carl. Hist. Crosby Hall, p. 14.

‡ Carl. Hist. Crosby Hall, p. 26.

§ Bacon's Hen. VII., p. 2.

|| "The northern parts were not only affectionate to the House of York, but particularly had been devoted to King Richard III."—*Bacon's Life of Hen. VII.*, p. 17.

¶ Drake's Ebor., p. 117.

** The Lady Elizabeth Latimer was aunt by marriage to Richard, Duke of Gloucester, having espoused George, Lord Latimer, brother to Cecily, Duchess of York, and third son of Ralph Neville, Earl of Westmoreland, by the Lancastrian princess, Joan Beaufort.

†† Testamenta Vetusta, vol. i. p. 359.