

the Duke of Buckingham a traitor; and he was proclaimed as such at York, as appears by the municipal records of that city, "on the 16th October."* This same day, the lord chancellor continuing too ill to attend the king, he delivered up the great seal "at the Old Temple, London, in a great chamber near the garden."† It was intrusted to the keeping of one of the clerks in chancery, and was by him restored to the king himself‡ three days afterwards, "at Grantham, in a chamber called the kyng's chamber, in the Angel Inn, in the presence of the Earls of Northumberland and Huntingdon, and of Sir Thomas Stanley."§ From Grantham, where Richard is thus shown to have rested on the 19th inst., he proceeded to Melton Mowbray, leaving that town on the 21st for Leicester. By this time the greater part of the kingdom was in open rebellion. The Marquis of Dorset, escaping from sanctuary, had gathered together a formidable band of men in Yorkshire. The Bishop of Exeter, and his brother, Sir Edward Courtney, raised another army in Devonshire and Cornwall; in Kent, Sir Richard Guildford,|| heading a company of soldiers, had openly begun the war,¶ and Henry, Earl of Richmond, having collected "an army of 500 manly Bretons, and forty well-furnished ships," sailed from Brittany on the 12th inst., hoping to land at Plymouth, as instructed by the confederates, on the 18th of October.** But King Richard was by no means dismayed. Intrepid bravery was a leading feature in his character; nevertheless, his valour was always tempered with judgment. He met danger promptly, fearlessly, resolutely; yet he calmly revolved every auxiliary measure that might best secure to him final success; and with a singular mixture of energy and coolness, would, within the same hour, direct military movements and issue civil processes, and this with a rapidity of thought, keen foresight and calm deliberation that awed his opponents, and inspired confidence in his partisans.

Roust†† states that he forthwith hastened with a large army into the south: other cotemporary documents show how little he trusted to mere force of arms alone, and with what a master mind he grasped the extent of the evil with which he was so suddenly encompassed. During his stay at Leicester he put forth a proclamation,‡‡ offering 1000*l.*, or 100*l.* a-year for life, on the capture of the Duke of Buckingham; 1000 marks for the Marquis of Dorset, or his uncle Lionel, Bishop of Salisbury, the son and brother of the widowed queen; and 500 on the arrest of other leading insurgents, who are therein specified.§§ The following day a vice-constable||| was nominated, and invested

* Drake's Eborac., p. 119.

† *Fœdera*, vol. xii. p. 203.

‡ The king retained the great seal until the 26th November, and sealed with it numerous writs, commissions, &c., and on that day returned it to the chancellor.—*Fœdera*, vol. xii. p. 203.

§ This nobleman, who filled the most confidential situation about the person of the king, was the father-in-law of Henry, Earl of Richmond, having espoused Margaret, Countess of Richmond, whose exertions in behalf of her son have been recently described. The trust thus reposed in one so closely connected with the rebels, is perhaps one of the strongest instances that could be adduced of Richard's unsuspecting disposition; it also induces the belief that the Lady Margaret, whose wisdom and strength of mind were very remarkable, anxious for the restoration of her son, but unwilling to compromise the safety of her husband, had carefully concealed from him all knowledge of the league to which she was lending her aid.

|| The Guildfords were a distinguished family, seated at Hempsted in Kent. Sir Edward Guildford, son of the above-named Sir Richard, was father-in-law to the celebrated John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, whose son was united to Lady Jane Grey.

¶ Grafton, p. 171.

** *Ibid.*, p. 177.

†† Rous, p. 216.

‡‡ See Appendix HHH.

§§ *Fœdera*, vol. xii. p. 204.

||| This appointment was rendered necessary, because the Duke of Buckingham

with extraordinary powers to judge and execute, without delay, such of the rebels as were captured or betrayed into his hands.* The marches of Wales, the bridges, fords and ordinary passes,† were guarded by trusty bands of soldiers, well acquainted with that part of the country, as well as with the person of the Duke of Buckingham; men altogether opposed to his rebellious views, and well affected towards the king. Vessels of war were stationed in the channel to keep a careful watch, not alone on any ships that were advaucing to England, but also on all boats that approached the coast, or were observed departing from its shores.‡

Thus prepared at all points, the monarch quitted Leicester on the 23d of October, and arrived at Coventry on the 24th, proceeding thence to Salisbury, in consequence of information that the coalition sought to be effected between Buckingham and Richmond was to take place in the southern counties.

Decisive and ably concerted as had been the king's arrangements, yet these were so evenly balanced by the vigilant and determined measures of the conspirators,§ that the issue would probably have been doubtful, had not a series of misadventures brought to a speedy close the turbulent and undisciplined career of the capricious Buckingham. On the 18th of October,|| in conformity with his pledge to the Earl of Richmond, the duke assumed the command of the Welsh rebels, proceeding from Brecknock Castle to Weobly, the seat of Walter Devereux, Lord Ferrers,¶ enlisting on his route, either by violence or bribery, a strong addition to his force. He thence marched rapidly through the Forest of Dean, and reached the confines of the city of Gloucester by the time the king had advanced within two days' journey of Salisbury,** intending to cross the Severn at the former city, and thence to march southward and form a junction with the army raised in the west by the Courtneys;†† which "if he had done," says Grafton, "no doubt but King Richard had been in great jeopardy, either of privation of his realm, or loss of his life, or both."‡‡

But during the duke's progress through Wales, violent storms and a continual rain of ten days had caused the Severn to rise and overflow its banks,§§ producing a sudden inundation so extensive, that the bridges were broken down, the fords impassable; and the cattle being drowned in their pastures, a scarcity of provisions ensued, which increased the privations that his followers had already endured from the inclemency of the weather during their toilsome march to Gloucester. Unable to join his confederates, or to communicate with them, and destitute of the means of appeasing the soldiery, who murmured at being "without money, victual, or wages,"||| Buckingham

filled the office of constable of England, to which, it will be remembered, that he preferred an hereditary claim, and to which high office he was nominated immediately after King Richard's coronation.—*Edmondson's Heraldry*, p. 30.

* *Fœdera*, vol. xii. p. 205.

† *Chron. Croy.*, p. 568.

‡ *Chron. Croy.*, p. 568.

§ Grafton, p. 169.

|| *Rot. Parl.*, vi. p. 245.

¶ *Chron. Croy.*, p. 568.

** Grafton, p. 172.

†† "So great was the influence of the Courtney family at this period, that the inhabitants both of Devon and Cornwall flocked to their standard."—*Jenkins' Hist. of Exeter*, p. 88.

‡‡ Grafton, p. 172.

§§ "Insomuch that men were drowned in their beds, and houses with the extreme violence were overturned; children were carried about the fields swimming in cradles, beasts were drowned on hills; which rage of water lasted continually ten days, insomuch that in the country adjoining they call it to this day the Great Water, or the Duke of Buckingham's Great Water."—*Grafton*, p. 173.

||| *Ibid.*, p. 173.

was reluctantly compelled to yield to their clamours, and return back to Weobly.* Dispirited at the failure of the enterprise, which they superstitiously viewed as an ill omen, the Welshmen dispersed, and departed to their homes; and for all the duke's fair promises, threatenings and enforcements, they would "in no wise neither go farther nor abide."

Thus deserted by his followers, the peril of the Duke of Buckingham became extreme. His own castle was in the hands of the Vaughans, who immediately after he had departed from Brecknock, seized and plundered it, making captive his daughters† and their attendant gentlewomen.‡

The proclamation issued by the king, offering so large a reward for his apprehension, and threatening such severe penalties for his concealment, completed the measure of his misfortune, and rendered his situation so desperate that, finding himself closely watched, even by his own kindred, and that he could "on no side make his egress with safety,"§ he suddenly quitted his associates, and departed from Weobly in disguise; first, however, providing with fond affection for the concealment of his infant heir, the Lord Stafford, whose preservation and wonderful escape from captivity form a fitting companion to the romantic history of Lord Clifford's son, "the shepherd lord."|| The duke having effected his flight in so secret a manner, that few or none of his household suspected his design,¶ he sought shelter in the dwelling of Humphrey Banastre, at Lacon near Shrewsbury, hoping to find a sure but temporary asylum with a follower "whom he, above all men, loved, favoured and trusted."** But the search after the "proscribed traitor" had become too active and unceasing to leave any probability of Buckingham's escape. "One thousand pounds, or one hundred a-year for life," was a stimulus that urged numbers to the most unwearied efforts to discover his retreat: "whereof hearing," states Fabyan, "the foresaid Banastre, were it for need of the same reward, or fear of losing of his life and goods, discovered the duke unto the sheriffs of the shire, and caused him to be taken, and so brought unto Salisbury, where the king then laid."††

How far Banastre merits the obloquy which has attached to his memory, as the treacherous and mercenary betrayer of a kind and indulgent master, it is hard to say; certainly the accounts transmitted by the chronicler of Croyland, whose cotemporary authority on all points is so greatly esteemed, render it doubtful whether, at least, in the first instance, he was accessory to the capture of his patron: "The duke," as that historian states, "was at

* Chron. Croy., p. 568.

† The Duke of Buckingham had two daughters, both older than his sons. Grafton states (p. 65.), that a compact was made during the brief reign of Edward V., that Buckingham should aid Richard's elevation to the throne, on condition that he pledged himself to ally his only son, Edward, Earl of Salisbury, to one of the duke's daughters. Buck farther asserts, that the Duke of Buckingham felt himself aggrieved at the breach of promise in the king for not joining the prince his son in marriage with the Lady Ann Stafford, his daughter.—*Buck*, lib. i. p. 35. If this was the case, Buckingham's jealousy must have been aroused by the favourable reception given by Richard to the Spanish ambassador, at Warwick, who sought an alliance with the youthful heir of the English crown and the eldest of the princesses of Spain; but it must not be forgotten that Buckingham left the king in anger at Gloucester, which was previous to and altogether unconnected with the monarch's visit to Warwick.

‡ "Or ever my Lord of Buckingham departed out of Weobley, Brecknock was robbed, and [the assailants] fetched out the younger ladies and gentlewomen, and brought them to Sir Thomas Vaughan's place, the traitor which was captain of the said robbing."—From the *Stafford MSS.*, published in *Blakeway's Shrewsbury*, vol. i. p. 241.

§ Chron. Croy., p. 568.

|| See Appendix III.

** Grafton, p. 173.

¶ Fabyan, p. 517.

†† Fabyan, p. 517.

length discovered in a cottager's hut, in consequence of provisions of a superior kind being conveyed to him;”—a cause of suspicion so natural that it contrasts strikingly with the marvellous tales which characterize the relations of later chroniclers.‡ Without discussing a point which is so replete with contradictions,† that it adds another instance to the many already adduced in this memoir, showing how little confidence can be placed in the reports of a period§ that, beyond all others in our national history, abounds in subjects of mysterious and romantic interest: it must suffice here to attest to the fact of Buckingham's speedy capture by Thomas Mytton, the sheriff of Shropshire,|| and to his delivery into Richard's hands¶ by Sir James Tyler,** at Salisbury, on All Souls Day, the 2d November, 1483.

Whatever commiseration may be excited for the duke, arising from calamities which he could neither foresee nor control, yet his heartless and unfaithful conduct to the widowed queen, his sister-in-law, to his nephew Edward V., and to his friend and kinsman Richard III., proves him to have been so utterly bereft of principle, and so strongly actuated by feelings of wild and selfish ambition, that few will hesitate to admit that his premature death was well merited, and altogether of his own seeking. If any doubt prevails on this subject, the last act contemplated by Buckingham would suf-

* Chron. Croy., p. 568.

† "Whether this Banister betrayed the duke more for fear than covetousness, many men do doubt; but sure it is, that shortly after he had betrayed the duke his master, his son and heir waxed mad, and so died in a boar's sty; his eldest daughter, of excellent beauty, was suddenly stricken with a foul leprosy; his second son very marvellously deformed of his limbs and made lame; his younger son in a small puddle was strangled and drowned; and he, being of extreme old age, arraigned and found guilty of a murder, and by his clergy saved."—*Grafton*, p. 176.

‡ *Blakeway's Shrewsbury*, vol. i. p. 256.

§ Ralph, or Humphrey Banastre, as he is variously termed, was not, as generally supposed, a humble servitor of the Duke of Buckingham, but a gentleman of ancient family and plentiful estate, who had been brought up in the duke's house, (see *Grafton*, p. 173.) in accordance with the usage of those times; and to whom his patron presented himself as a guest, although an unhappy fugitive.

The Rev. J. B. Blakeway, in his valuable history of Shrewsbury, (vol. i. p. 236.) has entered minutely into the details of this interesting topic, and after proving that Banastre merited at first (and possibly as long as it was in his power) the confidence reposed in him, refutes the long-received tradition of retribution having speedily followed his treachery; arising from the fulfilment of curses reputed to have been invoked upon the traitor by the unhappy duke upon his knees, in the orchard in which he had placed him at work the better to ensure his betrayal. He also adds—after pointing out the contradictory and erroneous statements of the early chroniclers—"that no one has remembered the extreme peril of sheltering a traitor, which would have been punished in that age by loss of life." There can, indeed, be little doubt, after a careful review of the whole matter, that Buckingham sought Banastre's protection too late for any human being to shelter him; and that Banastre, to save himself and his family from destruction, was compelled eventually to sanction the capture of one too well known to admit of long concealment, and whose retreat, according to the chronicler of Croyland, was already tracked, owing to the hospitality of the individual whose life the duke had periled to save his own.

|| Fabyan, p. 517; Hall, p. 395; Grafton, p. 175.

¶ *Stafford MSS.*, (in *Blakeway*), p. 241.

** From the large share of the Duke of Buckingham's wealth bestowed upon Sir James Tyrrel so immediately after the execution of the illustrious captive, it is probable that he was the individual who delivered him into the king's hands; and that the carelessness of the early writers, who misrepresented the Christian names both of Banastre and the sheriff, occasioned Sir James Tyrrel's name to be misspelt Tyler, and that he was one "of the two knights of our lord the king" who were deputed to receive the rebel from the authorities at Shrewsbury, as shown by the bailiff's accounts for that year, extracted from the town records by its reverend historian.

ficiently expose the deadly malice and spirit of revenge which influenced his conduct to the king. He reached Salisbury on a Sunday; notwithstanding which, Richard, in conformity with the usage of those times, commanded his immediate execution. The duke earnestly besought, as his dying request, a personal interview with his royal master,* who has been condemned in no measured terms for denying to his captive this last earnest desire. But Richard knew Buckingham too well to doubt that some sinister motive existed for a boon so strenuously urged; and his apparent severity was amply justified by the result, it being admitted in after years by the duke's own son, that his father had secreted a knife about his person, and that he had sought this conference with the king, intending to spring upon his victim† when in the act of prostrating himself to sue for pardon, and thus to deprive him by assassination of a crown which he had failed to effect by conspiracy and rebellion. From this act of vindictive deliberate treachery King Richard's sagacity protected him, and Henry of Buckingham, within a few hours of his arrival at Salisbury,‡ was beheaded without trial, and "without speech or sight of the king," on a new scaffold erected for the purpose,§ in the market-place of that city. His remains, deprived of the head and right arm, the customary sentence of rebellion at that period, are said to have been recently

* Fabyan, p. 517.

† "The duke being, by certain of the king's counsel diligently upon interrogatories examined, what things he knew prejudicial to the king's person, opened and declared frankly and freely the conjuration, without dissimulating or glozing, trusting, because he had truly and plainly revealed and confessed all things that were of him required, that he should have license to speak to the king; which, whether it were to sue for pardon or grace, or whether he, being brought to his presence, would have stuck him with a dagger, as men then judged, he sore desired and required."—*Grafton*, p. 176. This prevalent belief was fully confirmed in a subsequent reign, by the voluntary admission of Buckingham's heir and successor, the Lord Stafford,—whom, when an infant, his father had so strenuously exerted himself to save from his own perilous position; for this nobleman, having contemplated similar treachery towards Henry VIII., confessed to the Duke of Buckingham's design, before he, like his unworthy sire, perished in the prime of his days by the hand of the public executioner.—*Herbert's Henry VIII.*, 110.

‡ The oft-disputed point as to whether the Duke of Buckingham was executed at Salisbury or Shrewsbury, is set at rest by two important entries in the archives of the latter place, connected with the capture of the rebel, viz., "Money paid for divers costs and expenses incurred, touching the custody of the Duke of Buckingham when he was taken and brought to the town, 6s. 4d. and for reward." Also, "Money paid for wine given to two knights of our lord the king, and to other gentlemen by command of the king, at the delivery of the said duke from the town, 16s. 6d." "These entries prove," observes the historian of Shrewsbury, (who has published a literal transcript from the original entries,) "that the duke was brought hither, but sent away to some other place for execution;" and he farther adds, (after adducing other items from the same roll of accounts, together with strong facts stated in the Stafford MS.,) "as it is thus certain that Shrewsbury was not, it is equally certain that Salisbury was, the scene of this execution."—*Blakeway's Shrewsbury*, vol. i. p. 240. The venerable topographer of Wiltshire states, that the similarity of the names of Salisbury and Shrewsbury has led to many historical errors; and after citing several examples, he traces the origin of the supposition of Buckingham having suffered death at Shrewsbury, to Grafton, who says that King Richard kept his court at that town when the duke was captured. As this chronicler, however,—together with Polydore Virgil and Hall,—agrees with the earlier writers, the Croyland annalist, and Fabyan, in placing his execution at Salisbury, the above statement was probably accidental, the one town being inserted by mistake for the other; nevertheless it served to mislead Holinshed; and, after him, Echard and Rapin were induced to represent the execution as having occurred, not at Salisbury, but at Shrewsbury.—*Sir R. C. Hoare's Hist. of Wiltshire*, p. 207.

§ "Without arraignment or judgment, he was, in the open market-place, on a new scaffold, beheaded and put to death."—*Hall*, p. 395.

discovered in digging to some depth on the site of a very ancient inn, which tradition has handed down was built on the spot where the execution took place.*

The defeat, capture and summary punishment of their chief leader inspired the other insurgents with terror and dismay, the more so as the fearful storms which had led to his destruction had proved equally disastrous to Henry of Richmond. Scarcely had he sailed from Brittany, ere his fleet was scattered and threatened with destruction, and after being himself exposed for many days to the fury of the waves, and narrowly escaping capture from the emissaries of King Richard, he was compelled to seek refuge in France, carrying with him the appalling news of Buckingham's death, and the total defeat of his adherents.† But although the rebellion had thus received so severe a check, yet Richard felt that the league itself was by no means broken.‡ Remaining, therefore, at Salisbury only sufficiently long to fulfil his pledges to those individuals who had aided him in capturing the deceased Duke of Buckingham,§ and to divide among such of his followers as had most faithfully and zealously supported him in the late perilous emergency, the vast riches of the attainted rebel,|| he broke up his camp, and proceeded towards Exeter, hoping to encounter Richmond if he had effected a landing at Plymouth, or to intercept the numerous detachments which were marching thither to assemble under his banner.

The monarch reached Exeter on the 10th of November, at which city he

* Sir Richard Colt Hoare, in his *History of Wiltshire*, says, "that a stone is still pointed out in the city of Salisbury as that on which Buckingham suffered. It is in the yard adjoining the house which formerly belonged to the Blue Boar inn." This eminent antiquary and topographer adds, with reference to this subject, "The most remarkable circumstance connected with this locality is the recent discovery of a skeleton, found under the pavement in making some alterations in a kind of kitchen or out-house belonging to the Saracen's Head, which is close to the site of the Blue Boar. It was that of a person apparently above the middle size, and had been deprived of the head and right arm. The workmen by whom it was found omitted to notice whether or not the bones of the neck had been separated by a sharp instrument, but could remember that the bone of the arm appeared to have been cut off, just below the shoulder, as if with a saw. These remains were destroyed without proper examination. Of itself the discovery would prove nothing: but if the fact of Buckingham's execution at Salisbury be considered as indisputably established, we shall not be guilty of too great a stretch of imagination in supposing that these were his mutilated remains, interred clandestinely, or at least without ceremony, near the spot where he suffered."—*Sir R. C. Hoare's Hist. of Wiltshire*, p. 207.

† *Chron. Croy.*, p. 570.

‡ Fabyan, p. 517.

§ King Richard was so well satisfied with the conduct of the burgesses of Shrewsbury on this critical occasion, that he pardoned, remitted, and released for ever twenty marks of the fee-farm yearly.—*Blakeway*, vol. i. p. 239.

|| To the Lord Stanley he granted "the castle and lordship of Kimbolton, late belonging to the great rebel and traitor, Henry Stafford, Duke of Buckingham," on the very day of his execution, being given "at Sarum the 2nd day of November, anno. 1^{mo}."—*Harl. MSS.*, No. 433, p. 120. At the same city, and bearing a corresponding date, is a "commission to the Earl of Huntingdon, Sir James Tyrrel (who is in this instrument styled "the king's full trusty knight for his body"), and Morgan Kidwelly, to enter into all the castles of the Duke of Buckingham and other traitors in North Wales, South Wales, and in the marches, and to seize all his goods."—*Ibid.*, p. 121. Corresponding commissions were directed for other counties; and in addition to these, a warrant was issued, commanding all rents belonging to such rebels and traitors as were therein named to be paid "to the king's full trusty squire, Thomas Fowler, gentleman usher of his chamber," whom he appoints to seize, for his use, certain castles, manors, &c. forfeited to the crown, "with the proceeds of which, Richard most bountifully remunerated all who had served him faithfully in this conspiracy."—*Ibid.*, p. 121.

learnt the extent of his own good fortune, and of the calamities which had befallen his opponents. The recent tragedy at Salisbury, and the disastrous dispersion of Richmond's fleet and auxiliaries, had utterly dismayed even the most sanguine of his friends; but these dismal tidings being followed up by reports of the rapid advance of the king, supported by a powerful force, and holding out great rewards for the apprehension of the other chief confederates,* so utterly dispirited them, that ere Richard entered the metropolis of the west, the conspiracy was altogether at an end, its leaders being either in sanctuary, in concealment, or escaped in vessels bound for the Continent.† The few that were captured experienced no mercy. Richard felt that the stability of his throne depended upon the firmness of his present proceedings. He was in consequence unrelenting and inexorable, sparing no one who had instigated or headed the revolt; not even the husband of his own sister, who was one of the most violent of his opponents, and for whose life great sums of money were tendered.‡

Little commiseration, however, can be felt for Sir Thomas St. Leger, in the just retribution which had overtaken him for the ungenerous part he had acted towards the high-minded Henry Holland, Duke of Exeter; whose miseries, when outlawed and proscribed for his fidelity to his lawful sovereign and kinsman, Henry VI., were bitterly aggravated by a divorce being sued for and granted to Anne, his unfeeling wife, that she might be united to Sir Thomas St. Leger. She lived not to lament the violent death of her second husband; but King Richard, as shown by a subsequent instrument,§ was no stranger to the heartless depravity of the man who now sought that mercy from him, which, without even a shadow of offence, he had denied to his noble but unfortunate brother-in-law. The most influential of the rebels fled to Brittany,|| amongst whom were the Bishops of Exeter and Salisbury, the Marquis of Dorset, Sir Edward Courtenay, the Lord Wells, and many other noblemen of distinction; but several individuals of high reputation were apprehended in London, Kent,¶ Surrey, and other counties implicated in the revolt, all of whom were immediately executed, as were, likewise, some of the king's household,** whom Buckingham perfidiously denounced,†† before his death, as traitors to their royal master.‡‡ The anxiety experienced by Richard, from the extent of this formidable league, was pleasingly softened by the manner in which his prerogative was upheld at

* A proclamation was issued on the king's departure from Salisbury for the taking of Sir John Guildford and several other of the king's rebels and traitors, offering 300 marks, or 10*l.* of land, for capturing any of the six first mentioned in the proclamation, and a proportionate reward for any of the remaining individuals there specified; showing the king's intent to administer strict justice to all his subjects, the same instrument forbidding several evil practices under pain of death and other penalties.—*Harl. MSS.*, No. 433, p. 128.

† "Then all such gentlemen as had appointed to meet with the said duke were so dismayed, that they knew not what to do, but they that might fled the land, and some took sanctuary places, as they might win unto them."—*Fabyan*, p. 517.

‡ *Chron. Croy.*, p. 569.

§ See Appendix KKK.

|| *Chron. Croy.*, p. 569.

** *Fabyan*, p. 517.

¶ *Grafton*, p. 182.

‡‡ *Pol. Vir.*, p. 554.

‡‡ It is somewhat remarkable, that, circumstantial as are the details of the Duke of Buckingham's confession, when he hoped by that means to procure an interview with King Richard, and indignant as he is reported to have been after the failure of his dark design, yet he is accused by no chronicler, or even by report, much more on authority, of having certified to the death of the princes, or implicated their uncle of the murder, although preparing to suffer death upon the scaffold for striving to dethrone him.

Exeter, and the loyalty with which he was greeted on entering that city; the authorities of which met him arrayed in their official robes, the recorder congratulating him in an eloquent oration, and the mayor presenting him with a purse containing 200 gold nobles.* The maces and keys of the city gates were then delivered to him, and he was conducted with great pomp to the bishop's palace, where he lodged during his stay, and where he was sumptuously entertained at the cost of the city, as were, also, the chief personages of the royal suite in the dwelling-houses of the principal citizens.†

A special commission, under Lord Scrope, having been held at Great Torrington, in the north of Devon, such rebels as were captured were executed, and all such as had found means to escape, to the number of 500, were outlawed, including the bishop of the diocese, and his brothers, Sir Edward and Walter Courtney. Thus satisfied that all present danger was at an end, the monarch disbanded, at Exeter, a great portion of his army,‡ and sending home those who had been summoned from the north, with substantial recompense for their service, he quitted the west country in triumph, to pursue in peace through the southern counties his regal progress to the metropolis, where he purposed celebrating the Christmas festivities with marked solemnity, in gratitude for the success which had attended his late proceedings.

He reached Winchester on the 26th of November, as is shown by two remarkable instruments§ which received his signature in that city, and which evince the principle of justice which influenced his actions even to the humblest of his subjects; it being a warrant to discharge a chief clerk from the office of the privy seal, who, by bribery, had been placed in that position, to the great discouragement of the under clerks, which, adds the record, "have long continued therein to have the experience of the same," and who were greatly mortified to see a stranger "never brought up in the said office put them by of their promotion."|| The vacancy which accrued from this mandate was awarded by the king to the oldest and most diligent of the subordinate clerks "for his experience and long continuance in the same."¶ Original memorials such as these, affording, as they do, incontestable proofs of King Richard's genuine sentiments and actions, are invaluable, considering how little cotemporary evidence exists to refute the mass of fable and misstatements, from which hasty and wrong conclusions have so long been drawn to the disadvantage of this monarch.** Certain it is, that the odium in which he is reputed to have been held, is not borne out by the few well-

* *Jenkins' Hist. of Exeter*, p. 88.

† *Ibid.*

‡ King Richard visited the chief places of this city, and was greatly struck with the beauty of its situation, as well as with the strength and elevated site of the castle. Chroniclers relate, that on the king's inquiring the name of this fortress, he was answered "Rougemont." This greatly alarmed him, as he had been warned by a soothsayer that his days would not be long after he had seen Richmond; and, mistaking the similarity of sound in the names, he hastily left Exeter on his return to London: but 'tis likely, adds the local historian, that this story was invented after his death.—*Jenkins' Exeter*, p. 88.

§ See Appendix LLL.

|| *Harl. MSS.*, 433, fol. 123.

¶ *Ibid.*

** Amongst other accusations, Richard is upbraided with cruelty by the early chroniclers, (see *Holinshed*, p. 746,) and stigmatized as a tyrant for his summary execution of the Duke of Buckingham and other of the rebels, and for the long list of such as are proscribed as outlaws. A very brief review of the reigns of his immediate predecessors will show how unfounded is this charge. In executing the chief conspirators without trial, Richard acted only in accordance with the practice of those times, and the very small number who really suffered the penalty of death contrasts strikingly with the sanguinary proceedings both of Edward IV. and Margaret of Anjou on similar occasions.

attested facts which have descended to posterity. Wherever he went he was welcome, and the marked respect and affection which were shown him by the municipal authorities at York, at Exeter, at Gloucester and in London, cannot but lead to the conclusion, either that the dark deeds imputed to him in after years were not laid to his charge during his lifetime, or, if charged, were not credited by the respectable portion of his subjects. As he approached the metropolis, "the mayor and citizens having knowledge thereof,"* made great preparations for receiving him. A body of horsemen, gorgeously attired in "violet clothing,"† were dispatched to meet and conduct him in triumph to the city, which he entered on the 1st of December, amidst such cordial acclamations as effectually set at rest all apprehension of danger to himself or his crown.

Much, however, remained to be done, before Richard could carry out the wise measures which he had contemplated upon his accession to the throne. One of his first acts, during this present period of repose, was to convene a Parliament; and, on the 9th of December, the chancellor issued writs of summons for its meeting at Westminster on the 23d of January "next ensuing."‡ Active measures were taken for ensuring domestic tranquillity, by largely recompensing all those who had been chiefly instrumental in terminating the recent disturbance, and crushing the remaining power of such of the exiled leaders as yet retained wealth or authority in England. The temporalities of the bishopric of Ely, "now in the king's disposition," together with the vast possessions of many others who had fled, were bestowed by Richard on the firmest of his supporters. To Sir Thomas Mytton, the high sheriff of Shropshire, who had captured the Duke of Buckingham, was awarded "to him and his heirs for ever," one of the princely fortresses appertaining to that peer on the confines of Wales;§ and the manor and lordship of Ealding, in Kent, was granted to Ralph Banastre, Esq.,|| "in consideration of the true and faithful service which the said Ralph hath lately done for and about the taking and bringing the said rebel unto the king's hands." This entry effectually implicates Banastre as accessory to the delivering up to the authorities the person of the Duke of Buckingham, although the fact of his having previously conveyed him to many and distant estates which he enjoyed, for greater concealment, favours the belief that circumstances alone led to his being the unwilling agent of an unavoidable result.¶

But measures of stern severity to his enemies, or those which common

* Fabyan, p. 517.

† Rymer's Add. MSS., 4616, art. 17.

‡ "Grant of the lordship and castle of Cawes, within the county of Salop and marches of Wales, to Thomas Mitton and his heirs male for ever. Given the 11th day of Decr. a^o primo."—*Harl. MSS.*, 433, fol. 130.

§ "Given at London the 14th day of Decr. a^o primo."—*Ibid.*, fol. 133.

¶ The above recorded grant affords convincing proof of the Lancastrian origin of many long-received imputations brought by the early chroniclers against King Richard, who is accused of having refused to Banastre the promised reward. "And as for his 1000*l.*, King Richard gave him not one farthing, saying that he which would be untrue to so good a master, would be false to all other; howbeit some say that he had a small office or a farm to stop his mouth withal."—*Hall*, p. 395; *Grafton*, p. 176. This small office or farm is shown by one entry in the *Harl. MSS.* (fol. 130) to have been a lordship and manor of value, part of the forfeited property of the late Duke of Buckingham; and by another entry in the *MSS.* the position in life and character of Banastre are rendered apparent by the terms on which he held the estate, viz., "To Ralph Banastre, Esq., the manor of Ealding, in the county of Kent, to hold by knight's service," (fol. 74.) So little dependence can be placed on chroniclers, who, influenced by party persecution, misrepresented every act of King Richard, to convert them into evidences of his injustice, his tyranny and his avarice!

† *Ibid.*

justice required at his hands, were not the only feelings which influenced King Richard at this momentous crisis of his fate. Gratitude for his recent delivery from imminent peril was demonstrated, conformably with the religious custom of his age;* and acts of generosity and mercy were mingled with the harsher decrees that were rendered imperative by the warlike spirit and the stern usage of the times.

On the 19th of December, scarcely six weeks after the Duke of Buckingham had sought openly to hurl him from the throne, and devised clandestinely to deprive him of his life, Richard awarded to the widow of this his treacherous kinsman an annuity of 200 marks;† and although she was the sister both of the dowager-queen and of Lionel, the outlawed Bishop of Salisbury, —the chief agents in fomenting the designs of the rebels,—he signed a warrant granting permission for herself, her children and her servants to come from Wales to London, where her royal sister was abiding in sanctuary.‡ To Florence Cheyney, whose husband and brother had "compassed and imagined the king's death at Salisbury," he evinced a tenderness and chivalrous compassion that contrast so strongly with the "spiteful, cruel and malicious feelings" so long imputed to him, that a literal copy of the record is added in justice to his memory. "Safeguard for Florence, wife of Alexander Cheyney, whom, for her good and virtuous disposition, the king hath taken into his protection, and granted to her the custody of her husband's lands, &c.; though, being of late confounded with certain rebels and traitors, he had intended and compassed th' utter destruction of his person, and the subversion of this realm."§ He paid the Duke of Buckingham's debts,|| gave considerable sums to the distressed families of many individuals who were outlawed, and settled annuities even on the relicts of others who had died openly opposing his regal prerogative.¶ He confirmed charitable grants that had been made by his father,** renewed others that had been conferred by his brother,†† and rewarded with the most princely munificence those nobles who had remained faithful to his cause, by bestowing upon them either important offices or valuable possessions, forfeited by the attainder of their former owners. The Lord Stanley, who, it would appear, had been kept in ignorance (or satisfied the monarch that such had been the case) of the coalition which existed between his illustrious consort and the conspirators, was appointed constable of England for life;‡‡ and to the Earl of Northumberland was awarded the great estate of Lord Powneys, who had joined the Earl of Richmond.§§ The Duke of Norfolk he nominated master forester, in the room of the Duke of Buckingham, deceased.¶¶ Sir James Tyrrel had the stewardship of Wales and the adjoining marches;¶¶¶ Sir Robert Brackenbury, who had loyally guarded the Tower during a period of such extreme importance, he appointed receiver-general of all demesnes in the king's hands by reason of attainder or forfeiture, being not by the king given;*** while the Lords

* On the 16th of December, 1st Richard III., (1483,) a writ was issued to the collectors of the customs of Southampton, stating that the king had granted an annuity of 10*l.* to John Bury, clerk, for performing divine service in the chapel of St. George, in the castle of Southampton, for the souls of the king, of Anne his consort, and of Prince Edward their son; and commanding them to pay the same.—*Rymer's Add. MSS.*, 4616, art. 37.

† *Harl. MSS.*, 433, fol. 77.

‡ *Ibid.*, fol. 126.

§ *Ibid.*; see various items from fol. 37 to 174.

** *Ibid.*, fol. 130.

†† *Fœdera*, xii. p. 209.

‡‡ *Ibid.*, fol. 52.

§§ *Ibid.*, fol. 74.

¶ *Ibid.*, fol. 135.

¶¶ *Harl. MSS.*, 433, fol. 136. 200.

¶¶¶ *Ibid.*, fol. 205.

§§§ *Harl. MSS.*, 433, fol. 127.

¶¶¶ *Ibid.*

Dudley,* Lincoln,† Surrey,‡ Huntingdon,§ and others of high birth, together with Sir Richard Ratcliffe¶ and Sir William Catesby,¶ were proportionably rewarded for their zeal; and Kendale,** who had been King Richard's private secretary throughout this important period, was made keeper of the princes' wardrobe within the city of London.

It would not be practicable, in the brief limits of this memoir, to enumerate separately the various edicts, grants, warrants and rewards which are comprised in the valuable diary that records so circumstantially King Richard's transactions at this period. Sufficient has been adduced to demonstrate the energy, decision and judgment which characterized this monarch's proceedings. So evenly, indeed, did he balance the claims of justice and friendship, so judiciously mingle acts of clemency with a rigid observance of the laws, that brief as was the period since half the kingdom had been openly arrayed in rebellion against him, yet, on the arrival of Christmas, which festival he celebrated with extraordinary pomp and ceremony, Philip de Comines states, "that he was reigning in greater splendour and authority than any king of England for the last hundred years."††

So terminated the eventful year 1483! which had dawned upon Richard as Duke of Gloucester, and whose changeful seasons—a fitting emblem of his own varied career—had successively marked his progress from the position of lord protector to that of monarch of the realm. Its brief cycle chronicles three sovereigns of England, two princes of Wales, two queen-consorts, and a double coronation! The same fleeting period commemorates the summary execution of the lordly Hastings, the gifted Rivers, "the deep, revolving, witty" Buckingham, the base and despicable St. Leger! A year so fraught with stirring scenes, with events of wondrous import, can scarcely be paralleled in the life of any individual, or in the regal annals of this or any other land.

* Harl. MSS., 433, fol. 60.

† Ibid., fol. 61.

‡ Ibid., fol. 66.

§ Ibid., fol. 74.

¶ Philip de Comines, vol. i. p. 514.

‡ Ibid., fol. 72.

§ Ibid., fol. 72.

** Ibid., fol. 133.

CHAPTER XVI.

King Richard opens his first Parliament.—Confirmation of his title to the throne, and settlement of the crown on his heir, Edward, Prince of Wales.—Bill of attainder.—Strong measures adopted by Parliament to preserve the peace of the realm.—Convocation of the clergy, and their eulogium of Richard III.—Richard's humane conduct to the female relatives of his opponents.—He prevails on the queen of Edward IV. to quit the sanctuary with her daughters.—The princesses are honourably received at court.—Further proceedings of Parliament.—King Richard's beneficial and politic laws.—He founds the Heralds' College.—His character as a sovereign.—Threatening aspect of affairs in Scotland.—The king quits London to quell the disturbances in the north.—He visits the University of Cambridge.—Sudden death of the Prince of Wales.—Grief of his royal parents.—Edward, Earl of Warwick, declared heir-apparent.—The king continues in the north.—The Earl of Lincoln displaces the Earl of Warwick as successor to the crown.—Causes that led to this change.—Richard's embassies to Bretagne.—Negotiation with Scotland.—Letter from the king to his mother.—Other letters from this monarch.

THE opening of 1484 was serene in proportion to the tranquillity which had characterized the close of the eventful preceding year; and King Richard was in consequence enabled to meet the Lords and Commons of his realm on the day appointed for the assembling of the Parliament, well prepared for any discussion bearing on his remarkable position, or having reference to past scenes; whether connected with his deposed nephew, his deceased brother, or the formidable league which had brought forward Henry of Richmond as a competitor for the throne. The brief interval which elapsed before the time appointed for the assembly of the legislature was passed by the king in making a progress into Kent. He was at Canterbury on the 10th of January,* and at Sandwich on the 16th; and with a celerity of movement for which he was remarkable, had returned to London by the 22d instant. The Parliament, which had been convened for that day, met at Westminster, and King Richard opened it in person.† The Bishop of Lincoln, as lord chancellor, made the customary oration, exhorting the assembly to unity and peace, temperance and moderation: allusion was made by him to the many distinguished persons who had perished from evil counsellors, and the recent fall of the Duke of Buckingham was held up as a warning against further incitement to rebellion.‡ On the following day the Commons elected Sir William Catesby as their speaker,§ and an act was forthwith passed for the settlement of the crown upon the king and his heirs, with a recapitulation of his title. It recites that, previously to his coronation, a roll containing certain articles was presented to

* Harl. MSS., 433, fol. 141.

† Rot. Parl., vol. vi. p. 237.

‡ "It is too heavy to think and see what care and dangers, by some one person, lately a right and great member of this body, many other noble members of the same have been brought to. The example of his fall and righteous punishment should not be forgotten. Whoso taketh upon him, being a member under the head, with that to which his office and fidelity appertaineth not, setting the people into rebellion or commotion against the prince, he never is great or noble in his estate; he is, as it were, a rotten member of the body."—*Cott. MSS.*, Vitell. E. x. p. 139.

§ Rot. Parl., vi. p. 237.