

his rival.* He it was who warned the Earl of Richmond to avoid a landing on the southern coasts, which were so carefully watched by sea, and vigilantly guarded on shore by the trusty Lovell.† He also advised him to direct his course to Wales,‡ and to "hasten his departure" while that portion of the kingdom was less rigidly watched, although most ripe for the furtherance of his scheme. It was Kydwelly who placed Richmond in possession of the names of those powerful chieftains§ who were disposed to abandon King Richard, and espouse the cause of his opponent; he who informed him that Reginald Bray awaited his landing, with vast sums of money collected for the payment of "his mariners and soldiers"¶ out of the rich possessions in England and Wales belonging to the earl's mother, the Countess of Richmond, which Richard generously forbore to confiscate¶ when applied to a similar purpose under Buckingham's rebellion. But the treacherous Kydwelly being unsuspected, caused his royal master no uneasiness. There was, however, one illustrious member of his household, high in his confidence, and possessing powerful influence in the west, whose ambiguous and suspicious conduct occasioned the king deep and unceasing anxiety, and that was the Lord Stanley.** Nor was this without reason, for as the head of one of the most powerful families in the west of England, his extensive connections, vast resources, and unbounded influence over his vassals and retainers could not but impress Richard with the conviction, that on his fidelity would greatly depend the probable issue of the approaching contest. Although decidedly opposed to him when lord protector, yet Richard as king had acted most generously to this nobleman. He had released him from prison, had pardoned his reputed connection with Lord Hastings' conspiracy, had advanced him to the highest offices in the government, as well as the most trustworthy places about his royal person; and on the discovery of the agency of his wife in fomenting the Duke of Buckingham's rebellion, had abstained from involving him in the consequences of her known dereliction of fidelity, nay, had even softened the severity of the sentence so justly her due, in consideration of her husband's integrity.†† It is but just to add, that, up to the present crisis, the Lord Stanley had continued faithful to the trust reposed in him; but whether in accordance with the dissembling policy of those degenerate times, he merely temporized until the fitting period arrived for a counter-revolution—whether the anticipated elevation to the throne of his son-in-law, joined to his proposed alliance with King Edward's daughter, had weakened his loyalty to King Richard—or that the influence of his illustrious consort, which is asserted by the cotemporary chronicler,‡‡ had overcome the nobler feelings inherent in his race, and tempted him to desert his post and swerve from the oath of allegiance twice vowed to the reigning sovereign, cannot of course be determined.

Thus much, however, is very certain, that King Richard for some time had entertained just reason to doubt the stability of this nobleman, the "lord steward of his household" and the "high constable of the realm;" and a request preferred at this momentous crisis for leave to quit the presence of his sovereign, and to return to "his country to visit his family and to recreate his spirits,"§§ not only confirmed his royal master in the belief of his wavering policy, but so convinced him that his departure was to the intent to be in perfect readiness to receive the Earl of Richmond,||| that although Richard

* Grafton, p. 209.

† Ibid.

‡ Grafton, p. 209.

** Grafton, p. 202.

†† Rot. Parl. vi. pp. 240. 251.

§§ Ibid.

† Ibid.; Pol. Virg., p. 559; Hall, p. 410.

§ Ibid.

¶ Rot. Parl., vi. p. 240. 251.

‡‡ Chron. Croy., p. 573.

||| Grafton, p. 203.

was too wise to accelerate disaffection by premature and possibly uncalled-for suspicion, he would in no wise suffer him to depart until he consented to send* as an hostage the Lord Strange, his "first begotten son and heir." The result proved the monarch's discretion on this point, and removes likewise all doubt as to the fact, that the attorney-general and the Lord Stanley were certainly leagued together—the one as the organ of communication with the rebels in France, and the other as carrying into effect the well-concerted plan that was to end in the junction of the exiles with their English supporters. For about the same period that the Lord Stanley left the court, the Earl of Richmond hoisted his standard at Harfleur, and was admonished by the crafty Kydwelly "to make quick expedition, and shape his course directly for Wales;" in the north part of which principality Sir William Stanley held the responsible situation of chamberlain;‡ and consequently, in virtue of his office, could leave any portion of the coast unguarded, and prevent even all hostile opposition to the invaders from the royal forces there stationed by King Richard, and which, in the preceding winter, had been placed by that monarch under the sole command of himself and his brother for the protection of the west country.‡ By no possibility, indeed, could Kydwelly otherwise have communicated to the earl matter so intimately connected with the domestic policy of the Stanleys, or have known the sums of money that awaited him from his mother (the Lord Stanley's consort), or have been in a position to have intimated the propitious moment for Richmond's departure, or the unsuspected point at which to direct his course. And equally, too, does the result prove, that this league was well understood and responded to by the earl; for, in strict conformity with the instructions sent, he made "all convenient haste," set forward and carried to his ships "armour, weapons, victual and all other ordinances expedient for war,"§ and exerted himself so strenuously, that he was in a position to embark on the 26th of July,|| and had actually sailed from Harfleur before King Richard could obtain any further knowledge of his movements than that his fleet had assembled at the mouth of the Seine. This information, however, was made known to the king within so brief a period after the departure of the Lord Stanley, that it added considerably to the misgivings which had been before excited by his absenting himself from the court at so critical a period. He therefore quickly dispatched fresh precautionary instructions to those who were engaged in guarding the sea-ports, and established relays of cavalry on all the high roads for the more rapid communication of intelligence.

He sent also to the lord chancellor "for the great seal," as on the previous insurrection of Buckingham; the which, in consequence of the king's mandate, "was surrendered to him by the Bishop of Lincoln in the Old Temple, London, on the 29th July."¶

But Richard's vigilance was vain! So prosperous was the wind,** so favourable the weather, that the earl reached the Welsh coast on the seventh day after his departure from France; and having been apprised that a garrison, which was unfavourable to his cause, and which had been awaiting him at Milford Haven throughout the winter, was removed, he made direct for that port,†† and there disembarked, without opposition, on the evening of the 1st August, 1485.‡‡ He forthwith commenced his march, and before sunrise the following day had reached the town of Haverfordwest, to the great

* Chron. Croy., p. 573.

† Harl. MSS., No. 433, fol. 200.

‡ Grafton, p. 209.

¶ Fœdera, xii. p. 271.

†† Ibid.

† Ibid., p. 575.

|| Blakeway's Shrewsbury, vol. i. p. 242.

** Grafton, p. 209.

‡‡ Chron. Croy., p. 573.

astonishment of the inhabitants. They welcomed him with joy, his descent from their native princes seeming to realize a prediction that had long prevailed, and was superstitiously believed, viz., that the sceptre which had been usurped from the ancient British kings by the Saxons, the Danes and the Normans, would be restored to them by a native of Wales, a descendant of the renowned Prince Arthur.* Availing himself of a tradition so well calculated to advance his interests, he caused a banner, displaying the insignia of Cadwallader, the last of their kings, to be carried in front of his troops; and marching direct to Cardigan, he passed through Wales by rough and indirect paths.† Choosing the most unfrequented tracks, and the wildest mountain passes, he bent his course to the northern part of the province, hoping to increase his strength by winning to his cause many of the Welsh chieftains, and to join Sir William Stanley before the fact of his landing became generally known. Thus the Earl of Richmond was in the heart of the kingdom before Richard knew of his having sailed from Harfleur; and his landing being effected at a point where no regular communication had been established with the court, he had made considerable progress before the fact even of his disembarkation could be known to the king. His central position, however, as he had foreseen, was singularly favourable to the promptitude which had ever characterized his movements. The Duke of Norfolk, who had been guarding the eastern counties, was commanded forthwith to join the monarch with his full strength at Nottingham.‡ The Earl of Northumberland was summoned from the north, and the Lord Lovell and the Lord Stanley from the south and from the west, were also required to repair to his presence with their respective forces.§

Mandates were sent to the Tower, enjoining the attendance of the faithful Brackenbury,|| and placing under his command "divers other knights and esquires, in whom the king placed less confidence;"¶ while letters were dispatched to every county, "forbidding all who were born to any inheritance in the realm to withdraw from the ensuing conflict on pain of forfeiture of life, and goods, and possessions."***

Prompt was the obedience of the Lords of Norfolk, Northumberland and Lovell, but not such that of Lord Stanley; he excused himself on the plea of sickness;†† but the pretence was too shallow, too customary at this era, not to confirm the king in his conviction that, like the excuses of the faithless Buckingham, the illness of Lord Stanley was merely a feint to conceal his traitorous designs. This was soon confirmed by an attempt at escape made by the Lord Strange. He was arrested, and when in danger of his life, confessed his guilt, and acknowledged that his uncle, Sir William Stanley, as also Sir John Savage and other members of his family, were leagued with the Earl of Richmond, and intended to join him with their forces.‡‡ He exculpated his father, however, from all participation in their disloyalty; pledging himself, that if his life were spared, the Lord Stanley would prove his fidelity by speedily joining the king. In accordance with this compact, he sent letters to his father explaining the peril he was in, and beseeching him to hasten to his relief.§§ He thus saved himself from the death which his perfidious conduct had merited. It is difficult to tell whether he spoke the truth as regards his parent, or whether his assertion was a mere subterfuge, arising from the desperate position in which his treasonable practices had placed him; certain

* Baker's Chron., p. 252.

† Grafton, p. 204.

‡ Ibid.

§ Chron. Croy., 573.

¶ Ibid.

† Chron. Croy., p. 573.

§ Ibid.

¶ Ibid.

†† Ibid.

§§ Ibid.

it is that the Lord Stanley never again returned to Richard's court to bear out the truth of his son's declaration by his subsequent conduct.

The king appears, in this instance, to have acted with great moderation, as although Sir William Stanley and Sir John Savage were immediately denounced as traitors at Coventry and elsewhere,* neither the Lord Stanley nor the Lord Strange was included in the denunciation. Richard's faithful and attached partisans at York, ever foremost in testifying their love for their patron and benefactor, were not behind hand at this crisis in displaying their zeal in his cause. Immediately the citizens heard that the earl had landed, they dispatched their sergeant of mace to Nottingham, to inquire of the king what aid their city should send,† and in obedience to his command six hundred men in harness were required in all haste to join the royal standard.‡ The councils, indeed, that were convened by the mayor, and the strong resolutions unanimously agreed to by the authorities at York,§ sufficiently evince their devotion to their sovereign, and their determination to support his prerogative. Nor does this appear to have been a solitary instance, for even the Tudor chronicler admits that immense multitudes thronged to Richard's standard, "he having continual repair of his subjects to him;"|| a fact that proves, beyond all dispute, that the country was not opposed to his government, although it suited the views of his political opponents to impute his downfall to that source rather than avow the systematic perjury and falsehood by which it was in reality effected.

Thus loyally supported, and having taken every precaution to repel the invaders, it is by no means astonishing that Richard received with pleasure¶ rather than dismay, the intelligence of Richmond having effected a landing; or that, after having been kept in a state of suspense and watchfulness for so long a period, he should express satisfaction that "the day had at length arrived, when, having easily triumphed over the exiled faction, his subjects would from thenceforth enjoy undoubted peace."*** And he was justified in that impression, for no simultaneous rising in the southern counties took place, as was the case when the Duke of Buckingham commenced his march; no part of England betrayed symptoms of riot or insurrection; even in Wales, the land of Richmond's birth, no popular ebullition characterized his appearance. Stealthily and cautiously he pursued his course, keeping along the sea-coast, that in case of a reverse he might be within reach of his shipping,†† subject to a toilsome march in a wild and half-populated country, obliged to contest the mountain passes, and to assault many places opposed to his progress,‡‡ while his slender band of 3000 French and 2000 Bretons was only increased by a few native chieftains, whose small addition to his foreign mercenaries might well lead Richard to despise the insignificant force and inadequate means with which his rival was come to contest the crown. Richmond himself had ample cause to tremble for the result, many circumstances having occurred to damp his ardour before he could join his kindred. Sir Walter Herbert, on whose aid he had reckoned, remained so true to the cause of the king,§§ that the messengers dispatched to him with the earl's proposals for the hand of his sister dared not risk their probable apprehension by venturing within the limits of his territory.||| The Earl of Northumberland, too, was with the king, and on reaching Shrewsbury, the place fixed upon for the insurgents to cross the Severn, they were denied access into the town.¶¶ Hap-

* Chron. Croy., p. 573.

† Ibid.

‡ Chron. Croy., p. 573.

§ Blakeway's Shrewsbury, vol. i. p. 244.

§§ Ibid.

¶¶ Blakeway's Shrewsbury, vol. i. p. 245.

† Drake's Ebor., p. 120.

‡ Grafton, p. 215.

*** Ibid.

†† Grafton, p. 211.

||| Leland's Itin., vi. p. 30.

pily for Richmond the messengers whom he had prudently dispatched on his route to apprise the high sheriff of Shropshire, Sir Gilbert Talbot, as also the Lord Stanley, the Countess of Richmond, and others of his supporters of his approach, and whom he had appointed to meet him at Shrewsbury,* returned so laden with rewards, and so elated with promises,† that their report, there can be little doubt, operated favourably with the authorities,‡ and induced them, after a brief delay, to permit the earl to pass through, on his pledge that he would do so peaceably, and without hurt to the town. Here he was met by Sir Rice Ap-Thomas,§ one of the most powerful of the Welsh chieftains, who, under the promise of being made governor of Wales,|| in the event of the earl gaining the throne, betrayed the confidence which Richard had reposed in him in consequence of the protestations of fidelity which he had made, and the oath¶ of allegiance he had solemnly sworn when nominated to the command of the royal forces in the south of Wales.** At Newport, where the rebels encamped the following night, they were joined by Sir Gilbert Talbot, “with the whole power of the young Earl of Shrewsbury, then being in ward,†† which were accounted to the number of 2000 men;”‡‡ and at Stafford§§ he was met by Sir William Stanley, with whom he had a confidential interview, and by whose advice he proceeded direct to Lichfield, where “he was received like a prince,”||| his father-in-law, the Lord Stanley, having paved the way for his favourable reception there, although he purposely departed from the city¶¶ on learning the approach of the earl, that he might not sacrifice the life of his son, who had been left with the king as an hostage for his fidelity.

Richard having ascertained that the object of the Earl of Richmond was to proceed direct to London,*** resolved to intercept his progress; but so much time had been lost before he knew of his having landed, or was sufficiently well informed of his movements to regulate his own actions, that notwithstanding the precautionary measures which he had adopted in anticipation of the invasion, he found his opponent was hastening to the capital with a rapidity for which he was unprepared, and was directing his way “day and night right in his face.”††† It became necessary, therefore, to move from Nottingham in all haste, although his army was not yet fully mustered, the time not having permitted many of his most trusty commanders to reach the castle as instructed. The king’s indignation was greatly kindled†††† at the defection

* Grafton, p. 211.

† Ibid.
‡ The chief magistrate who first opposed and subsequently opened the gates of Shrewsbury to the rebels, was Thomas Mytton, who, when sheriff of the county, had captured and delivered up the Duke of Buckingham to King Richard.—*Blakeway*, vol. i. p. 245.

§ *Blakeway’s Shrewsbury*, vol. i. p. 245.

|| *Pol. Virg.*, p. 560.
¶ For “the oath Rice Ap-Thomas stood not upon.”—See note to *Turner’s Middle Ages*, vol. iv. p. 33.

** “On his way from Cardigan, Richmond was joined by an eminent Welshman, who had been dispatched to oppose him, Sir Rice Ap-Thomas, and having settled to meet him at Shrewsbury, Sir Rice diverged to the eastward, and advanced through the heart of the country by Carmarthen and Brecon, collecting on the road his tenantry and partisans, among whom the vassals of the late Duke of Buckingham would not be the least numerous.”—*Blakeway*, vol. i. p. 244.

†† This incident affords a striking example of the abuse of wardships at this period; for notwithstanding that the young Earl of Shrewsbury remained true to his sovereign (see *Harl. MSS.*, No. 542, fol. 34) and joined King Richard’s banner, yet as a minor he had no command over his tenantry, the whole of whom were carried over to Richmond’s army by his uncle and guardian Sir Gilbert Talbot.—*Grafton*, p. 213.

‡‡ *Grafton*, p. 213.

§§ *Ibid.*

¶¶ *Chron. Croy.*, p. 573.

|| *Ibid.*

||| *Ibid.*

*** *Ibid.*

††† *Grafton*, p. 215.

of the Talbots, the perfidy of Ap-Thomas and the welcome given to Richmond at Lichfield; and as his spies* made known to him the private interview which had taken place between Sir William Stanley and the earl, as also the departure of the Lord Stanley for Atherstone the day before the rebels had entered Lichfield, Richard resolved on removing to Leicester, to prevent, if possible, a junction between the earl and his father-in-law, and give battle to his rival before his forces were farther augmented.

By a cotemporary letter, yet extant, from the Duke of Norfolk,† it appears that he would have departed instantly, but it was the eve of the assumption of the Virgin Mary,‡ and the superstition of the age rendered Richard averse to marching on that day. This he communicated to such of his partisans as had been prevented joining him, appointing Leicester as the town to which they should direct their course; and on the day after the festival, he marshaled his troops in the market-place at Nottingham,§ and separating the foot-soldiers into two divisions, five abreast,|| and dividing his cavalry so as to form two wide spreading wings; he placed his ammunition and artillery in the centre,¶ taking up his own position in a space immediately behind it.** Gorgeously attired in the splendid armour for which the age was remarkable, and his helmet surmounted by the crown, King Richard riding upon a milk-white charger, superbly caparisoned,†† attended by his body guards, displaying the banner of England and innumerable pennons glittering with the “silver boar,”‡‡ with other insignia of his princely race, and surrounded by a gallant band of archers and picked men-at-arms, wended his way, on the morning of the 16th August, 1485, down the steep acclivity on which stood the noble pile where he had so long sojourned, and quitted the castle of Nottingham for ever! He was about to fight his last battle, but he knew it not. His lofty spirit was undaunted, for he dreamed not of the perfidy that was working his ruin, and his invincible courage led him to despise all danger which was openly and honourably incurred in the battle-field. His army, which was very considerable, was so imposingly arranged, that it covered the road for three miles, and must have been “more than an hour in marching out of Nottingham, and as long in entering Leicester.”††† He did not reach this latter town until sunset, when so prodigious did his force appear, and so formidable their array, that the ecclesiastical historian states there was found at that town “a greater number of men than was ever before seen in England fighting on one side.”§§ The castle of Leicester, the ancient demesne of John of Gaunt, hitherto the resting-place of royalty when sojourning in its vicinity, had become too ruinous for occupation at this momentous period; Richard therefore took up his abode at the chief hostelry in the town, then probably designated after the royal badge,||| although better known in subsequent ages by the appellation of the “Blue Boar.” On the 17th, he marched to Hinckley, and fixed his camp at the village of Elmsthorpe; but having ascertained that Richmond had not quitted Lichfield, he altered his route and took up his station on the 18th on some rising ground at Stableton, a situation admirably adapted either for observation or contest, as no enemy could

* “And in all haste he sent out espials to view and espy what way his enemies kept and passed. They diligently doing their duty, shortly after returned, declaring to the king that the earl was encamped at the town of Lichfield.”—*Grafton*, p. 215.

† See Appendix BBBB.

‡ Paston Letters, vol. ii. p. 334.

§ Hutton’s *Bosworth*, p. 46.

|| *Grafton*, p. 215.

¶ *Ibid.*

** *Ibid.*

†† *Ibid.*

††† Hutton, p. 47.

§§ *Chron. Croy.*, p. 574.

||| “The proud bragging white boar, which was his badge, was violently rased and plucked down, from every sign and place where it might be spied.”—*Grafton*, p. 255.

approach unseen.* Here it appears probable that he was joined by the Duke of Norfolk, the Earl of Surrey and Sir Robert Brackenbury; and at this period he seems, for the first time, to have become alive to the treachery which was shown towards him by many who, having been enriched by his liberality, now deserted his standard for that of his rival. At Stoney Stratford, Sir Walter Hungerford and Sir Thomas Bouchier, both "esquires of the body,"† left Brackenbury, under cover of the night, to join the enemy's ranks, and Sir John Savage, Sir Simon Digby, and very many other individuals, whom gratitude alone ought to have bound to their sovereign,‡ proclaimed themselves openly supporters of the rebels.

Still he was too strong to fear Richmond, unless disloyalty should farther weaken his force; but his suspicions were again painfully excited by learning that the earl had quitted Lichfield, and steadily pursued his course to Tamworth, where he arrived late on the evening of the 18th August,§ by which position not only did the troops commanded by the Lord Stanley and his brother, Sir William, separate the royal forces from the earl's army, but great facility was given by their contiguity to effect secret interviews between Richmond and his kindred. One of such interviews is known to have taken place at Atherstone,|| and of infinite importance it was. It put the earl in possession of the true sentiments and intentions of the Stanleys, and encouraged him to fall in with King Richard's design of forcing him to take the field before either of the brothers had openly joined his standard. The two following days, the 19th and 20th, appear to have been passed by all parties in collecting their utmost strength, in watching the movements of their opponents, and placing their camps as desirably as circumstances admitted, for by little and little the hostile armies had so closely approximated to each other, that an engagement had become inevitable. Richmond again following the footsteps of his father-in-law, quitted Tamworth and arrived at Atherstone shortly after the departure of the Lord Stanley, who, the better to deceive the king, had marched to within three-quarters of a mile of the royal troops. The Duke of Norfolk and the Earl of Northumberland, each with his powerful body of men, were also encamped on advantageous positions, and all parties felt that the fitting time had arrived for bringing to a crisis the long threatened and much desired combat.

A broad extent of uninclosed country separated the rival forces, and the scene of action eventually fixed upon was that portion of it entitled Redmore Plain,¶ since better known as Bosworth Field, from its near vicinity to the market-town which bears that name. Few spots could have been better suited for the desperate encounter that was to immortalize it for ever. It was then a wide, open, unculivated tract of land,** somewhat of an oval form, about two miles long and one mile broad, intersected by a thick wood, and bounded on the south side by a small river running through a low, swampy country; on the north side partly by rising ground and partly by a boggy flat, locally denominated "Amyon Lays."†† Such a field afforded advantages

* Hutton, p. 50.

† Harl. MSS., No. 433. pp. 16. 27. 142.

‡ For the grants bestowed on Sir John Savage, see Harl. MSS., No. 433. pp. 28. 102. 131 and 141.

§ Hutton, p. 195.

|| Grafton, p. 218; Pol. Virg., p. 562; Hall, 413.

¶ "Redmore, or Red-moor, so named from the colour of the soil, as the meadows in the west are called white-moors for the same reason."—Hutton, p. 68.

** "Bosworth Field, which was one piece of unculivated land without hedge or timber, is now so altered with both, that nothing remains of its former appearance but the shape of the ground."—*Ibid.*, p. 71.

†† Hutton, pp. 245. 248.

seldom combined for the distribution of hostile troops. An acclivity designated Amyon Hill, which generally rose to the northward from the centre of the plain, not only gave unusual facility for the disposal of an army, but, as the result proved, its more elevated portion afforded certain opportunities for observation to encampments stationed on the high grounds which in various points overlooked the valley, and who could thus communicate by signal,* without seeming to act in concert with each other. These points were speedily occupied by the great commanders most deeply interested in the result, for it was soon perceived that in the plain below the battle would inevitably occur. Richard's camp consisted of two lines. It is stated to have covered about eighteen acres,† and to have been fortified by breast-works of considerable skill and labour, 300 yards long and about 50 broad.‡ Richmond was equally indefatigable, for although seven acres sufficed for the disposition of his small band, yet the experience of the Earl of Oxford, Sir James Blount, and other renowned warriors who undertook to direct his movements, fully compensated for the insignificant force he ostensibly brought to the field. Lord Stanley and his brother had so craftily placed themselves on two of the eminences just named, the one to the extreme left, a little in advance, and the other to the extreme right, but somewhat to the rear of the royal camp, that though seemingly attached to King Richard, by reason of their contiguity to his forces, they were in the best position for accelerating his downfall when the fitting moment arrived for joining the enemy's ranks. During the night of the 20th§ the celebrated interview|| between the Earl of Richmond and the two Stanleys is said to have taken place, in which they made known to him their intentions, and also, as it would appear by the result, intimated to him the probable defection of the Earl of Northumberland. On the 21st instant, at day-break, Richmond broke up his camp at Atherstone, and marching thence crossed the Tweed, the small rivulet before named, and encamped on the confines of Bosworth Field. The same day King Richard, receiving intelligence of the earl's movements, advanced to meet him; for although he had sent away his army, and had well and judiciously encamped his forces so as to preclude Richmond's farther advance towards London, he appears to have made Leicester his head-quarters.

Accompanied by the Duke of Norfolk, the gallant Earl of Surrey, the Lord of Lincoln, the Lord Lovell, and most of his personal friends, as well as by a vast concourse of people, he rode out of Leicester in the same royal state in which he made his entry into that town. With his regal crown upon his helmet, and borne on a noble war-steed of uncommon size, whose costly trappings accorded with the rich suit of polished steel armour, worn by its accomplished rider fourteen years before at the battle of Tewkesbury,¶ Richard presented himself before his soldiers as became a conquering prince, a defied and insulted monarch, omitting none of those external attributes of royalty, for the conservation of which he was on the eve of engaging in deadly strife—a strife which, although he knew it not, was to effect so wondrous a change in the constitution of England, and in the habits, position and policy of its people. Both armies were in view of each other the greater part of the 21st; but it was the Sabbath,** and as if by mutual

* Hutton, pp. 245. 248.

† *Ibid.*, p. 50.

‡ Hutton, in his "Battle of Bosworth," (p. 62.) states that, on his first visit to the scene of this memorable conflict, the vestiges of the camps were yet visible.

§ Hutton, p. 57.

|| Grafton, p. 218.

¶ Hutton, p. 82.

** "Upon Sunday they heard mass; and to a fair field took the way."—Harl. MSS., No. 542. fol. 34.

consent, each party remained inactive until towards evening, when the king broke up his encampment, and removing to the brow of the hill overlooking Bosworth plain, there he took up his position for the night, that his soldiers might be refreshed and ready for the morning's conflict. That rest, however, which the monarch desired for his troops, and which was even more requisite for himself as their leader, was incompatible with the conflicting feelings that agitated his mind. His temperament was too sensitive not to be deeply afflicted at the faithlessness already evinced by many whom he had trusted, and from whom he had merited a more generous requital;* but open defalcation was more easy to be borne than the perfidy which his keen foresight and acute penetration could not help anticipating from the powerful but dissimulating Stanley. Sir William had already been proclaimed a traitor; still he had not, like many others, arrayed himself publicly under Richmond's banner; so that doubts were created as to his ultimate intention more harassing than if he had pursued a less neutral course. The Lord Stanley had been so wary in his conduct that, disposed as the king must have been to resent his contemptuous disregard of his summons, yet he could not in justice lay treason to his charge, when possibly the real cause of his mysterious conduct was a natural desire to preserve a neutrality between the conflicting claims of his son-in-law and sovereign.

He had headed his trusty band of Lancashire men, and commenced his march toward the royal forces immediately it was reported that the rebels had crossed the Severn. He had neither avowedly allied himself with Richmond, as did Sir Gilbert Talbot and Sir Price-ap-Thomas, nor had his movements implied designs that corresponded with theirs; on the contrary, he had seemed to avoid the earl, and scrupulously to evade a junction although still pleading severe illness† as his excuse for not appearing at the court of his sovereign.

And now, on the eve of the battle, he had encamped near to Richard's station, and at a considerable distance from that of his opponent. Sir William, too, observing the same policy, and although ranged on the same side of the field occupied by Richard, had intentionally allowed the whole of the royal army to separate his band from that of his brother. Under such circumstances to have concluded perfidy, and to have denounced these chiefs, would, perhaps, accelerate the very evil it was the monarch's wish to prevent. King Richard, however was a keen reader of human character: he had from his very birth been nurtured in the insidious dealings which so peculiarly characterized his era, and been inured to the stealthy proceedings that were unblushingly adopted to accelerate party views. By nature endowed with unusual sagacity, he was, moreover, gifted with a degree of forethought that enabled him to arrive at a conclusion less from the actions than the probable motives of the parties prejudged. The Lord Stanley had espoused the mother of Henry of Richmond. Sir William had been admitted to be faithless even by his own nephew! The events of the last few months had taught the king how transient was popular favour; and those even of the last few days had brought still more painfully home to his conviction the little dependence to be placed on vows of fealty, which were as easily broken as they had been enthusiastically proffered. Perplexed, harassed, scarcely knowing whom to trust and whom to suspect, Richard became a prey to those excitable feelings—that distressing restlessness

* The king "was sore moved and broiled with melancholy and dolour, and cried out, asking vengeance of them that, contrary to their oath and promise, had so deceived him."—*Grafton*, p. 215.

† Harl. MSS., 542, fol. 34.

which so often results from the union of two vigorous mental powers with a corporeal frame of little bodily strength. Weak in constitution, and subject to that nervous irritability which is its invariable accompaniment,* with so much, too, of real anxiety to distract his thoughts, so much of paramount importance to absorb the attention of a mind peculiarly susceptible and anxious, it is no marvel that, as the monarch sought repose upon his couch on the eve of the approaching contest, fearful dreams and harrowing thoughts should have interrupted a rest which, under the most favourable auspices, could scarcely have been tranquil and unbroken. He awoke agitated, dispirited, unrefreshed, "before the chaplains were ready to officiate, or the breakfast was prepared."† Prostrated in mind and body, bemoaning the direful consequences which must result to the realm from the approaching struggle, whichever party might gain the victory,‡ and acting under the influence of that morbid feeling which results from over-wrought nervous excitement, he unhesitatingly communicated to his trusty attendants, who, on entering his tent, found him agitated, pale§ and depressed, the simple cause of that lassitude which superstition quickly exaggerated into the appearance of supernatural visions, and subsequent chroniclers, with more indulgence of their imagination than became the simplicity of their task, recorded as a visitation of ghastly forms, forerunners of his death, or evil spirits sent to reproach him with curses for his alleged crimes.¶ The only effect which, in reality, sleeplessness appears to have had upon the mind or intentions of the king, judging from the statement of cotemporary writers, was his determination to ascertain beyond doubt the sentiments of the Lord Stanley, whose personal attendance at his camp he forthwith required by a special message, sent by the trusty Brackenbury.

To this determined measure he was further actuated by a warning which had been affixed during the night to the Lord of Norfolk's tent; a warning ambiguously worded, but which confirmed King Richard in his misgivings that he was, indeed, as the distich pronounced, perfidiously "bought and sold."‡ That the nefarious plot, although it had baffled his utmost power to penetrate, was suspected by him is clear, and that suspicion must have opened his mind to a danger greater than any that could arise from Rich-

* That such was the fact is made apparent by Sir Thomas More, who states that "he took ill rest a-nights, lay long waking and musing, sore wearied with care and watch, rather slumbered than slept, troubled with fearful dreams."—*More*, p. 134.

† Chron. Croy., p. 573.

‡ Ibid.

§ Grafton, p. 209; Pol. Virg., p. 562; Hall, p. 414.

¶ John Howard, Duke of Norfolk, was warned by divers to refrain from the field, inasmuch that, the night before he should set forward toward the king, one wrote on his gate:

"Jocke of Norfolk, be not too bold,
For Dickon thy master is bought and sold."

Grafton, p. 230.

There can be little doubt that what Grafton ambiguously terms "the gate" signified the door-way or entrance to the duke's tent; for that nobleman did not rest at his own house "the night before he should set forward toward the king," but at Bury, where, by appointment, he was joined by his entire force. (See *Paston Letters*, vol. ii. p. 334.) His encampment prior to the battle of Bosworth was far removed from that of the monarch, being on a heath considerably to the rear of the royal troops, and about midway between the camps of Lord Stanley and his brother. This fact sufficiently explains the meaning of Grafton's expression—"the night before he should set forward toward the king," which he did on the morning of the battle, and thus afforded a marked contrast to the part pursued by the two Stanleys; it also justifies the view taken by Mr. Sharon Turner (vol. iv. p. 31) and other writers, that the warning was fixed to the Duke of Norfolk's tent on the eve of the engagement.

mond's trivial band of 7000 men, the very utmost which has ever been asserted to have been openly arrayed against his own powerful force of more than double that number. In his midnight survey of his outposts, too, he had found a sentinel asleep* (or feigning to be so); and that this was not a solitary instance of negligence was evident by the warning hand that vainly strove to shake the honour of the noble Norfolk; and was afterwards more effectually proved, from the fact of Sir Simon Digby penetrating as a spy into the centre of the royal camp,† and communicating to Richmond much valuable intelligence, obtained by so perilous and dangerous a step.

Fable and misrepresentation have added greatly to the horrors of Bosworth Field; but the sole point which may be relied upon is this, that on Stanley's refusal to obey the royal summons, the king commanded the immediate execution of the Lord Strange, his life having been given as a surety for his father's fidelity.‡ But the day had long dawned, both armies were on the alert, and Richard was again prevailed upon§ to spare his illustrious captive, or at least to suspend his execution until the battle was terminated.¶ Recovering his ordinary self-possession, he arranged his forces with the military skill and precision for which he had ever been remarkable. His entire force appears to have amounted to about 16,000 men; these he spread out so as to make them appear to the greatest advantage, occupying and covering entirely the eminence which rose from the centre of the plain from its base to its summit.¶¶ The earl's troops were ranged in the valley beneath, his small band being protected by the wood, and the marshy swamp which intervened between that and the rivulet.** The two Stanleys had so placed their companies—the one consisting of five, the other three thousand men—that the four bands may be considered to have formed an irregular square, although those of the Stanleys ranged more immediately on the side of Richard than on that of his rival. Both armies were drawn up in similar order of battle, each in two lines, the archers in the front, the bill-men in the rear, and the horse forming the wings.†† King Richard entrusted his front line to his faithful friend the Duke of Norfolk, to whom was united the aid of the chivalrous Earl of Surrey.‡‡ The second line appears to have been commanded by the Lord Ferrers, in conjunction with the Earl of Northumberland. The centre, composed of a dense square of "seven score of sergeants, that were chained and locked in a row, and as many bombards and thousands of morrisespikes, harquebusses, &c. &c.,"§§ the king commanded in person. The Earl of Richmond's front was under the entire charge of the Earl of Oxford, supported on his right by Sir Gilbert Talbot, on the left by Sir John Savage, while his second line, although ostensibly apportioned to himself, was in effect commanded by his uncle, the Earl of Pembroke, a veteran warrior of great wisdom, experience and skill.¶¶¶

Disdaining the slender pretensions of "Henry Tudor," and spurning his insignificant force—outrageous at the duplicity of the Stanleys, and still more at the base and avowed defection of many persons whom his former bounty had fed—Richard advanced to the battle with that fierce and fearless deportment which characterized his undaunted race, and marked his own conduct at Barnet, at Tewksbury and at Berwick.

* Issuing from his tent by twilight, he observed a sentinel asleep, and is said to have stabbed him, with this remark: "I found him asleep, and have left him as I found him"—*Hutton's Bosworth*, p. 78.

† Hutton, p. 79.

‡ Grafton, p. 283.

¶ Hutton, pp. 87, 88.

¶¶ Hutton, p. 81.

¶¶¶ Harl. MSS., 542, fol. 34.

‡ Chron. Croy., p. 574.

¶ Ibid., 284.

** Ibid.

†† Grafton, p. 220.

¶¶ Grafton, p. 220.

Previous to the battle, according to subsequent writers, each of the princely leaders is said to have addressed an energetic and powerful oration to his forces, although no mention is made of the circumstance by either of the cotemporary historians,* neither is it named in the manuscript detail of the battle, preserved in the Harleian Library, and which appears to have been written by some person present at the conflict.†

Eloquent appeals, there can be little doubt, were made on both sides to rouse those vigorous efforts which each commander felt himself called upon to require when the crown of England was at stake; and its ultimate possession was the stimulus and the reward of his own individual prowess: but the speeches‡ attributed to the rival princes are clearly the compositions of a writer long subsequent to the period—some person ignorant of the situation and feelings of the monarchs, and swayed by prejudices which were confirmed by subsequent events, if they did not originate in them. The Earl of Richmond occupied a less prominent position in the field than that which King Richard apportioned to himself. Rendered yet more conspicuous by the regal diadem,§ which, as in the instance of the Lancastrian hero, Henry V., when he headed his troops at Agincourt, surmounted his helmet, he led on his army as became a monarch of England, a prince who scornfully repelled the invader of his realm. As Richmond's army slowly advanced, the royal archers bent their bows, and, from the moment that the trumpets sounded, and the strife of actual conflict commenced, the most daring heroism marked King Richard's course. Alternately he encouraged his troops by appeals to their fidelity, and stimulated them by the example of his own invincible courage.

Had he been adequately supported, Henry of Richmond, and not Richard III., would probably have fallen on Bosworth Field:¶ but in the heat of the battle the Lord Stanley passed over to the earl,¶¶ and thus neutralized the advantage which the devoted and magnanimous Norfolk had obtained over the Earl of Oxford. The monarch, still and ever undismayed, strove to counteract the ascendancy thus gained by his rival, who, invigorated by fresh troops, made a desperate attack upon the yet unbroken front of the royal forces; but the Earl of Northumberland, commanding the second line, instead of supporting his sovereign—with feelings more despicable than open revolt—stood aloof: with a stoicism past comprehension, in one who had been the

* The chronicler of Croyland, the historian Rous, and Fabyan, the city annalist.

† Harl. MSS., 542, fol. 34.

‡ These speeches rest solely on the authority of Grafton and Hall; and, considering that these chroniclers wrote their works many years after the battle occurred, and that they frankly admit that the lengthened addresses which they give, occupying "150 lines in folio," were "in these or like words following," there can be no doubt that they were the composition of the earlier of these writers. This is rendered clear by the circumstance that Richard is made to admit the fact of the murder of his nephews, and to have expressed contrition for the deed; a fact so important, if true, that it must have become known to his cotemporaries, who have so minutely described the battle and its results. But who can believe that, at such a moment, Richard would have so stultified himself, and ruined his own cause! This circumstance, united to the little probability of true or faithful versions being reported of verbal addresses made on the field, together with their evident partisanship to the Tudor monarch, incontestably lead to the conclusion that they form a portion of those unauthenticated rumours, fabricated for political purposes, which have so miserably defamed the character of Richard III.

§ Chron. Croy., p. 574.

¶ Where between them was fought a sharp battle, and sharper should have been if the king's party had been fast to him. But many toward the field refused him, and rode unto that other party; and some stood harrying afar off till they saw to which party the victory fell.—*Fabyan*, p. 518.

¶¶ Grafton, p. 227.

chief instrument, conjointly with Buckingham, in inciting Richard to aspire to the crown, he calmly viewed the distressing position of his royal master, the personal friend who had loaded him with benefits. Richard was thus deprived of aid from the quarter on which he had most relied for support.* Stung to the quick by such base, unmerited perfidy, and furious at witnessing the death of the valiant Norfolk, the capture of the Earl of Surrey, and the slaughter of several other trusty commanders who hastened to their rescue, Richard, in an unguarded moment, quitting the central position in which he was so well protected, rushed down the hill† and made towards the enemy's ranks, determined to seek out Henry of Richmond, and, by challenging him to single combat, at once to terminate the fearful strife.‡ He was followed by the Lord Lovell, Lord Ferrers, Sir Gervoise Clifton, by Brackenbury, Ratcliffe, Catesby, and many other devoted friends, who, seeing their royal master's danger, followed him to victory or to death. As they passed a spring which intervened between them and the enemy's lines, tradition states that the king momentarily checked his steed, and slaked his thirst from that fountain, which yet retains the name of "King Richard's Well." Refreshed by the cooling draught, he re-closed his helmet, and again rushed impetuously towards the spot where Richmond had been pointed out to him, standing, but indifferently guarded.§ He dashed into the midst of the enemy's ranks with a vehemence that nothing could withstand, followed by the chosen band who were about to seal with their lives their devotion to their sovereign, and their zeal for his cause. In spite of opposition the king made his way almost to the spot occupied by his rival before his intention even had become apparent to the earl or his supporters. By almost superhuman strength he maintained his perilous position, slaying with his own hand Sir William Brandon,|| the earl's standard-bearer, and unhorsing Sir John Cheyney, one of the most powerful men of his time, who had advanced to Sir William's succour.¶ Thus carrying terror, and dealing destruction into the very heart of his enemies' ranks, the king now called upon the earl to meet him in single combat, and so stop a conflict rendered appalling by the numbers of the slain, and the desperate spirit which actuated both armies.

But Richmond's friends knew that he was no match for Richard III., the most accomplished warrior of his age; and, as he advanced to meet his foe, numbers interposed to separate them. They stood, however, no chance against the undaunted prowess of the defied monarch and his devoted followers. He gained so sensibly upon his opponents, and so fearfully diminished the gallant band that opposed his progress, that Richmond's flight or destruction seemed inevitable, and the success of King Richard certain. Sir William Stanley, who, up to this crisis, had remained neuter, observing the peril of the earl,** and aware of the king's invincible bravery, quitted the position whence he had watched the conflict,†† and speedily joining Richmond with 3000 fresh soldiers, he surrounded the king, and enclosing him as in a net, at once cut him off from his own army, or the possibility of flight, and thus decided the fortune of the day.

At this crisis a knight, reputed to be Catesby, who saw Stanley approaching, and comprehended the evident destruction which must follow his move-

* Grafton, p. 251; Hall, p. 419.

† "Being inflamed with ire, and vexed with outrageous malice, he put his spurs to his horse, and rode out of the side of the range of his battle, leaving the avant-guards fighting."—Grafton, p. 218.

‡ Hutton, p. 108.

§ Ibid., p. 229.

** Grafton, p. 229.

§ Grafton, p. 228.

¶ Ibid.

†† Hutton, p. 112.

ment, brought the monarch a fresh steed, beseeching him to save himself by flight,* while escape was yet practicable: but the race of York were never cravens; to them death on the field of battle was glorious—flight came not within their comprehension. "Not one foot will I fly," was his answer, "so long as breath bides within my breast; for by him that shaped both sea and land, this day shall end my battles or my life; I will die king of England."†

Betrayed, over-reached, vanquished by treachery alone, Richard continued to fight with the desperation induced by his perilous situation. All his friends, all his followers, one by one, were numbered with the dead; his standard bearer alone remained, and he waved the royal banner on high until both his legs "were cut him from, yet to the ground he would not let it go"‡ till life was quite extinct! Still Richard remained undaunted, unsubdued, slaying all who approached within his sword's length, and performing prodigies of valour. At last, overpowered by numbers, weakened by loss of blood, his strength exhausted although his courage was unabated, "in battle and not in flight," states the Croyland historian,§ "the said king, stricken with many mortal wounds, fell on the field like a courageous and most daring prince.

Thus perished Richard III. ! thus terminated the Yorkist dynasty! The death of its last monarch on Redmore plain, like that of its founder, his noble and gallant sire at Wakefield Green, being effected by treachery so base, by a compact so perfidious, that it was less honourable to those who conquered than to those who fell under its ignoble influence.

King Richard died the victim of ingratitude and of hypocrisy, so opposed to the English character, that happily no corresponding parallel disgraces our national annals. His death was not occasioned, as it pleased the chroniclers of his rival to insinuate in after years, by open insurrection,|| by a revolution produced by popular feeling arising from the reputed murder of his nephews; neither was he overcome by generous efforts to restore the sceptre to its lawful owner, or to inflict upon a tyrant that just retribution which is often resorted to by an enslaved people, to extirpate the despot whose savage deeds have driven his subjects to desperation: on the contrary, the last of the Plantagenet monarchs was accompanied to the field, as had been his predecessors, by the flower of the English chivalry; and the list of those gallant knights¶ who on the eve of the combat "swore that Richard should wear the crown," together with the affecting manner in which the intelligence of his death was entered at the time in the register of the city of York**—he "was piteously slain and murdered, to the great heaviness

* "Then to King Richard there came a knight and said, 'I hold it time for ye to fly; yonder Stanley his dynts be so sore, gainst them may no man stand. Here is thy horse, another day ye may worship again.'—*Harl. MSS.*, 542, fol. 34.

† *Harl. MSS.*, 542, fol. 34.

‡ Ibid.

§ *Chron. Croy.*, p. 574.

|| "The nation had no share in the conflict, notwithstanding all that is said about the king's unpopularity; it was an ambush of a few perfidious and disaffected noblemen against the crown, which succeeded by their hypocrisy: and Richard perished by one of those factions in his aristocracy from which, by taking the crown, it seemed likely that he had rescued himself."—*Sharon Turner*, vol. iv. p. 53.

¶ See Appendix CCCC.

** The sentiments expressed by the historian of York on this point are very important to King Richard, founded as they are upon the examination of cotemporary municipal records, and from the convincing evidence resulting therefrom. "These sketches of history," states that learned writer, after giving copies from the original documents, "I bring to light as a taste of those times, rendered dark enough by the writers of the Lancastrian party. Here is subject for an historian to expatiate largely