

Original Documents

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THE following documents are chiefly extracted from a valuable collection, comprised in a large folio volume, bound in vellum, and bearing the general title, " *Documens relatifs a l'Angleterre,*" by which a large number of volumes in the *Bibliothèque Nationale* at Paris are designated. The volume in question does not appear to have been noticed in any historical publication: it contains a numerous collection of original letters, principally addressed to the kings of France, in the times of Henry V., Henry VI., and Edward IV., including many letters from Henry VI., Queen Margaret, Edward IV., Richard, Duke of York, the Duke of Somerset, Richard, Earl of Warwick, the King-maker, and the "rare Jack Falstaff," of Shakesperian celebrity. It may be observed, that the autograph of this last-named worthy precisely corresponds with that engraved for the Paston Correspondence.

The first letter in the following selection, now laid before the readers of the *Journal*, is one addressed by Margaret of Anjou to Charles VII., king of France, not many months after her marriage with Henry VI. It was written in acknowledgment of letters by her received from the French sovereign, and is of considerable interest in connexion with the position of affairs between the two kingdoms at that critical period, the commencement of the disappointments and misfortunes of that ill-fated princess, whose alliance, in lieu of the advantages anticipated, was soon attended by disasters, loss of territory, and popular discontent. Not only was England deprived of Anjou and Maine, to the cession of which Margaret here alludes, but the immediate result was the entire loss of Normandy, whilst disaffection at home quickly broke out in open insurrection.

It is remarkable that not a single autograph of Queen Margaret appears to have been described as existing in any English collection. In France, not less than ten or twelve have come under the notice of Mrs. Green, some of them in the interesting volume before mentioned, and others in the Archives at the Hotel Soubise. The facsimile, which we are enabled by Mrs. Green's kindness to give, will not be unacceptable to our readers.

The autograph of Margaret, engraved for Miss Strickland's *Life of that Queen* (vol. iii., p. 304), was copied by the late Mr. Beltz, Lancaster herald, from a document in the *Heraldic Collection* at the *Bibliothèque*, entitled " *Recueil de tiltres scelléz,*" the same volume which contains the *Letters of Attorney* from the Duke of York here given. Her signature there occurs on a sealed receipt of the pension paid to her by the French king in 1481. The handwriting does not differ from that now produced, more materially than might be expected, considering that the latter is the autograph of a girl of sixteen, whilst that given by Miss Strickland is the writing of a woman of fifty-two, presuming that the date of 1429, stated as that of Margaret's birth, is correct.

The next in chronological order is a document by which Richard, Duke of York, who had succeeded the Duke of Bedford in 1435, in the regency of France, jointly with the Duke of Somerset, and four years later (18 Hen. VI.)

had been constituted Captain-General of all France, nominates a *procureur general*. It does not appear whether any special occasion had caused him to quit the scene of the important functions of that office. At no long interval after the date of the authority delegated to "Jehan Declay," treasurer of his household, the Duke of York was despatched by Henry VI. to another post of urgent moment, being sent to Ireland, then in a state of tumult, and constituted Lieutenant. (Pat. 26 Hen. VI.)

In the interesting letters relating to a subsequent period, for which we are indebted to the scrutinising researches of Mrs. Green, a sad picture is presented to us of the discord and adversity which had thrown a dark cloud over merry England and every class of the community. The bitterness of civil war had filled the land with calamity and disunion; the most noble and the most talented were driven to crave from the hospitality of other lands the shelter or repose which they sought in vain in the country of their birth. The violence of factious irritation had been aggravated by successive and sanguinary contests, and the best of English blood had been wantonly shed on the fields of St. Alban's, Wakefield, and Ludlow. After the fatal fight of Towton on Palm Sunday, 1461, Queen Margaret and Prince Edward took refuge in France, and many of the faithful partisans of Henry were scattered as exiles. It is to the period of their subsequent wanderings in foreign parts, that the following letters of the Prince and the venerable Lancastrian, Sir John Fortescue, Lord Chief Justice of England, have been assigned. He had been attainted of high treason in the Parliament held in November, 1 Edw. IV., 1461, with many others, amongst whom was "John Ormond, Knt.," here designated by the title of Earl of Ormond, whose brother, the fifth Earl, was attainted and beheaded for his adherence to the cause of Henry VI. It may be supposed that stress of weather, or eagerness to escape from England, had led Ormond to land in Portugal: had he been despatched thither as an envoy by Queen Margaret, he would doubtless have taken his credentials with him; but, being in that country, the Queen hoped to take advantage of the opportunity by interesting the King of Portugal in the cause of her ill-fated husband.

In reply, therefore, to a request from the Earl for a safe-conduct which would enable him to pass through France, and rejoin the exiled Queen, Margaret wrote him a letter, requesting him to use his influence with the Portuguese monarch, to obtain some assistance for the failing Lancastrian cause. With this letter was sent one from her son, the young Prince of Wales, to the King of Portugal; another from him to the Earl of Ormond, which is printed, the third, in the following collection; a paper of formal instructions from the Queen to the Earl; and a letter to him from Sir John Fortescue, also printed. The packet seems to have been intercepted and detained by the King of France, as the papers are now found in the same collection with others addressed to that monarch.

The letter of the Prince of Wales to the Portuguese King is in Latin, recommending the Earl of Ormond, dilating upon the military prowess of the King, which he (the Prince) hoped to emulate in maturer years, and detailing the virtues and misfortunes of the House of Lancaster. It is signed thus,

"Walliæ Princeps, vester ad vota paratissimus consanguineus,

EDWARDUS."

The paper bears the endorsement in a somewhat later hand,—1461.

It must have been the expedition of Alphonso V., King of Portugal, against the Moors, in 1459, which excited the chivalrous emulation of the

young Prince ; though it seems strange that he should have heard of his prowess, and yet, as alluded to in Sir John Fortescue's letter, be ignorant of his name. The instructions sent by Margaret to the Earl of Ormond, and signed by herself, are preserved. They are to the same purport as those conveyed in Fortescue's letter, but are somewhat more full. The letter addressed by the Queen to the King of Portugal is unfortunately missing.

Prince Edward was born on Oct. 13, 1453, and was therefore, if the supposed date of this correspondence could be regarded as correctly stated, only eight years old when he subscribed his name (of which a facsimile is given), as he playfully wrote, "wt myn awn hand, that ye may se how gode a wrytare I ame." That unfortunate Prince has been, indeed, described as of singularly precocious talent ; and at that early age might even have acquired the rare art of penmanship ; but it is more probable that the real date of these letters is rather later than the year given in the endorsement above-mentioned, and may be assigned to the second occasion, when Margaret, after the failure of her expedition in Nov. 1462, returned to the Continent, accompanied by Fortescue, the Duke of Exeter, John Morton, subsequently Chancellor (Pat. 2 Hen. 7) and Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas, Bishop of St. Asaph, and numerous other persons of distinction of the Lancasterian party. They embarked with the Queen at Bamburg, in April, 1463, and landed in Flanders, whence, by the aid of the Duke of Burgundy, who received the exiled Margaret at Lisle, she was enabled to proceed with her suite into Lorraine, where her father then was, who assigned to her a castle as a residence in that pressing emergency. From that place, possibly, during the subsequent period of their exile from England, the correspondence, now brought to light, had been addressed.

LETTER FROM MARGARET, QUEEN OF HENRY VI., TO CHARLES VII., KING OF FRANCE, December 17, 1445. (Baluze MS. 9037, 7, Art. 37.)

A treshault et puissant prince, nostre treschier oncle de France, Marguerite, par la grace de Dieu royne de France et dangleterre, salut, avec toute affection et amour cordiale. Treshault et puissant prince, nostre treschier oncle, par maistre Guillaume Cousinot, maistre des requestes de vostre hostel, et Jehan Hanart escuier, vostre varlet trenchant, avons receu vos gracieuses lettres, du contenu esuelles, pour ce que nous tenons que auez fresche memoire ne vous en faisons a present long record, mais en tant que apperceuons la bonne amour et le vouloir entier que auez a monseigneur et a moy, le grant desir que auez de nous veoir et aussi la fructueuse disposicion et liberale inclination que cognoissons estre en vous, au regard de la paix et bonne concorde de entre vous deux, nous en louons nostre createur et vous en mercions de bon cuer, et si chierement que plus pouons. Car greigneur plaisir ne pourrions en ce monde auoir que de veoir appointment de paix final entre lui et vous, tant pour la prouchainete de lignage, en quoy attenez lun lautre, comme pour le relieuement et repos du peuple Chrestien, qui tant longuement par guerre a esté perturbé. Et en ce au plaisir de nostre seigneur tendrons de nostre part la main et nous y employrons effectuellement a nostre pouoir, telement que par raison vous et tous autres en deures estre contens. Et quant au fait de la delivrance que desirez auoir de la conté du Maine et autres choses contenues en vos dictes lettres, nous entendons que mon dit seigneur en escript deuers vous bien a plain, et neantmoins en ce ferons pour vostre plaisir au mielx que faire pouvrons, ainsi que tousiours auons fait comme de ce pouvez estre acertenez

par les dessusdiz Cousinot et Hanart, lesquels benignement vueillez oyr et adjoûter foy à ce que de nostre part par eulx vous sera exposé. Pour ceste foiz en nous faisant sauoir souuent de voz nouvelles et de vostre bonne prosperité et santé, et nous y prendrons bien grant plaisir et en aurons singuliere consolation. Treshault et puissant prince, nostre treschier oncle, nos priens le doulx Jesus Christ quil vous tiengne en sa benoïste garde. Donné à Shene, le xvij^e. jour de Decembre.

A treshault et puissant prince, nostre treschier oncle de France.

Endorsed in a contemporaneous hand—"De la royne dangleterre, receus le xv^e jour de Feurier, mcccc xlv."

LETTERS OF ATTORNEY FROM RICHARD, DUKE OF YORK, LIEUTENANT AND GOVERNOR OF FRANCE, May 3, 1446. (Recueil de Tiltres originaux scelléz. Sceaux, vol. v., p. 181.)

Richard, due de York, Conte de la Marche et de Wluestre,¹ lieutenant general et gouverneur de France et Normendie, A tous ceulx qui ces presentes lettres verront, salut. Sauoir faisons que pour la grant confidence que auons en la personne de notre chier et bienamé seruiteur, Jehan Declay, escuier, tresorier de notre hostel, Nous icelui auons aujourdui fait, commis, ordonné, institué, et estably, et par ces presentes faisons, commettons, ordonnons, instituons et établissons, notre procureur general et certain messagier especial. Et lui auons donné et donnons plain pouoir et auctorité par ce dites presentes de poursuivre, pourchasser, requerir et demander pour nous et en notre nom, partout ou il verra que faire apartendra et besoing sera, tout ce qui nous est et pourra estre deu, tant a cause de notre pension et estat de lieutenant, dessusdit, du temps passé, et a venir, comme autrement en quelque manière et pour quelconque cause que ce soit ou puisse estre. Et den recevoir et prendre le paiement, et detout ce quil aura receu et recevra baillons quictances ou quictances (*sic*) bonnes et loyalles soubz son seel et segne manuel, et en notre nom, comme dit est. Et generalement auons donné et donnons a notre dit procureur auctorité et puissance de faire en ce que dit est, et es circonstances et dependences, tout autant comme nous mesmes ferions et faire pourrions, se present en notre personne y estoyons. Promettans de bonne foy les dits quictances et tout ce que par icelui notre procureur y sera fait, procure et besongné auoyr agreable, ferme et estable a tousiours, sans aucunement aler ou faire aler ou dire au contraire, en aucune maniere. En tesmoing de ce nous auons fait mettre a ces presentes notre seel. Donné en labbaye de Waltham, le tiers jour de May, lan mil, cccc. quarante six.

Signed in the margin,—R. YORK.

Endorsed,—“Par monseigneur le duc, lieutenant general et gouverneur de France et Normandie.”

(A large fragment of the seal still remains.²)

¹ Ulster; he is styled “Comitis Marchie et Ultonie” on his seal.

² See the description of the seal used by the Duke of York, as Lieutenant-General of France; Sandford, Book v., chap. iv. (represented at p. 384.)

LETTER FROM EDWARD, PRINCE OF WALES, SON OF HENRY VI., TO THE EARL OF ORMOND, *circa* 1463. (Baluze MS., 9037, 7, art. 173, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Holograph.)

Cousin Ormond, I grete you hertly well, acerteynyng yow that I have herde the gode and honorable report of your sad, wise, and manly gyding agevnt my lordis rebellis and your aduersaries, in the witche ye have purchesed unto yow perpetuall lawd and wosship. And I thank God, and so do ye also, that ye at all tymes vnder his proteccionne haue escaped the cruell malise of your sayd aduersaries; and for as motch as I vnderstand that ye ar nowe in portingale, I pray yow to put yow in the vttermost of your deuoir to labore vnto the kyng of the sayd royalm, for the forderance and setyng forthe of my lord, in the recuvering of his ryght, and subduing of his rebellis. Wherin, yf ye so do, as I haue for vndowted that ye wyll, I trust sume frute thall folue, w^t godis mercy, witche spede yow well in all your workes. Writen at seynt mychael, in bare, w^t myn awn hand, that ye may se how gode a wrytare I ame.

To my Cousyn, the
erle of Ormond.

LETTER OF SIR JOHN FORTESCUE, ADDRESSED — TO THE RIGHT WORSHIP-FULL AND SINGULERLY BELOVID LORD, THE ERLE OF ORMOND. (Biblioth. Nationale, Paris, Baluze MS., 9047, 7, art. 175, Holograph.)

Right worshipfull and myne especially belovyd lord, I recommande me to you, and it is so that in feste of the conception of oure lady, I resceyved at Seynte Mighel³ in Barroys frome you a lettre writyne at porto in portingale, on monday nexte before the feste of seynte Mighel, to my right singuler comfort, god knowith, of whiche lettere the quene, my lord prince and all there servants were full gladd, and namely of your welfare and (?)⁴ escapyng the pouer of youre enymies. And it is so that the quene nowe desireth you to do certayne message frome here to the Kyng of portingale, of whiche ye mowe clerely understande here entente by an instruction, and also by here letteres, whiche here highnesse nowe sendeth to you by the berer thereof. Wherefore I writhe nowe nothyng to you of tho (*sic*) maters. And as touchyng the sauf-conducte whiche ye desire to have of the kyng of Fraunce, it were god that ye hadde it, and yet yf his highnesse do to us nothyng but right, the quenes certificat, whiche we sende to you herewith, shall be to you siwerte sufficient. Northelesse I counseille you not to truste fermely thereuppone, and therby to aventure you to passe thorgh' his lande. For he has made many appoyntementes with oure rebelles, by whiche it semyth he hath not alway intended to kepe the peace and triwes, whiche he made with us, but yet I knawe no cause that he hathe to breke

³ Now called St. Mihiel (Dept. de la Meuse) part of the ancient Lorraine.

⁴ The reading of this word is questionable. It may be—"in escapyng."

it, nor hetherto he hath not taken or inprisoned any man of oure partie by any soche occasion. And Thomas Scales hathe sente me worde that he hopithe to mowe gete by the meanes of my lord senyeshall a sauf conducte for you, and elles my lord of Kendale canne fynde the meanes howe ye mowe passe soche parties of Gyawne, Langdok and other where, as most (in parte ?) is as ye shull be in no perille : my lord of Somerset that nowe is and his brother come frome Britayne by Parys through Fraunce unto the quene with xvj horses, and no man rescuyded (?) ham in there way. And so didde I frome Paris into Barroys, but yet this is no verrey surete to you. Wherefore youre aune wysdome most gyde you in this case, not trustinge myne advise that knawe not the manner of this countrey as ye do. But yet I wote welle that a bille, signed withe my lord senyschall is hand, shalle be sufficient unto you to passe thorough oute alle Fraunce. My lord, here buthe withe the quene the dukes of Excestre and Somerset, and his brother, whiche and also sir Johne Courtenay buthe discended of the house of Lancastre. Also here buthe my lord prive seale, M(aster) John Morton, the bischop of Seynte asse,⁵ Sire Edmond Mountford, Sir Henry Roos, Sir Edmond Hampdene, Sir William Vane, Sir Robert Whityngham and I, Knyghtes; my maistre, youre brother, William Grinmesby, William Josep', Squiers for the body, and many other worshipfull squiers, and also clerqcs. We both all in grete poverte, but yet the quene susteyneth vs in mete and drinke, so as we both not in extreme necessite. Wherefore I counsaill you to spende sparely soche money as ye have, for whanne ye come hether, ye shall have nede of hit. And also here both maney that nede and woll desire to parte with you of youre awne money and in all this contrey is no man that woll or may lene you any money haue ye neuer so grete nede. We have here none other tithyngs but soche as both in youre instruccion. Item, yf ye fynde the kyng of Portingale entretable in oure materes, sparith not to tarie longe with hym, and yf ye fynde hym all estraunge, dispendith not youre money in that contrey in idill, for after that ye come hither, hit is like that ye shull be putte to grete costes sone upon, and peradventure not longe tarie there. Item, my lord prince sendith to you nowe a letter writyn with his awne hande, and another letter directed to the kyng of Portingale, of whiche I sende nowe to you the double enclosed hereyn. I write at seynte Mighel in Barroys, the xiiij. daye of Decembre.—Your servant, J. FORTESCU.

(*Postscript.*)

My lord, bycause we knewe not verrely the kyng of Portingale is name, the Quene is letter hath no superscripteon, nor the letter fro my lord prince, but ye mowe knawe ham also well by the scales as by this, that in the syde where the seale is sette of the Quene's letre is writyn these words—pro regina, and in like weyse in my lord's letre is writyn—pro principe. And I sende to you hereyn soche words of superscription as ye shall sette upon both lettres; which wordes both writyn w^t the hande of the clerke that hath writyn both lettres.

Item, the berer hereof hadde of vs but iij. Scuts,⁶ for all his costs towards you, by cause wee hadde no more money.

⁵ Of Thomas, Bishop of St. Asaph, who succeeded Reginald Peacock in 1450, little is said by Godwin. His adhesion to the cause of Henry VI. caused him to be deprived of his see, which appears to have been vacant, Jan.

28, 1462, and the temporalities, on account of his rebellion, were committed to the Bishop of Rochester. Rymer, xi. p. 539.

⁶ French crowns,—*ecus*, in Latin *scuta* or *scuti*.