

## Original Documents.

### WARRANTS TO THE KEEPERS OF THE GREAT WARDROBE, IN THE REIGNS OF HENRY VII. AND HENRY VIII.

COMMUNICATED BY THE HON. ROBERT CURZON, JUN.

THE following documents, for which we are indebted to the kindness of Mr. Curzon, are preserved amongst his extensive collections at Parham. Although of a class less attractive to the general reader, than some of those original illustrations of ancient usages and manners, brought from time to time before the readers of the *Journal*, these documents merit attention, as connected with the private life of persons highly distinguished in their times; and not less so, as illustrative of the manners of the age, and of formalities of ancient state, extending to the most trivial details. It is scarcely needful to remind our readers, that to such forms, connected with the periodical delivery of garments or other gifts, in royal and stately households,—to the *liberata* and the writ of *liberate*, of which examples are here brought under their notice, the origin of the livery, a term now associated only with menial service, may be traced.

The information which documents of this nature convey, regarding costume, domestic habits, and the manners of olden times, is not the only ground upon which they may be commended to the attention of the antiquary. They may serve, as has been often shown, as collateral aids in ascertaining with precision the more minute details connected with historical enquiry. One of the documents communicated by Mr. Curzon presents an example of this, in the question which it suggests, relating to a distinguished personage of the House of Tudor. Sandford, in his *Genealogical History*, and various later writers, trusting possibly to his authority, have fixed 1498 as the year of the birth of the third daughter of Henry VII. The Lady Mary was married first to Lewis XII. of France, and after his death to Charles Brandon. The assertion of Sandford, for which no authority is given, does not appear to have been questioned; and one of our most acute historical enquirers, the late Sir Harris Nicolas, in his *Memoir of Elizabeth of York*, prefixed to his publication of her "*Privy Purse Expenses*," p. lxxxvi., citing Sandford's statement, adds the conjectural remark, that a payment to the Queen's Surgeon, on May 27, 1498, may tend to fix the precise date of the birth of the Lady Mary as having occurred about that time.

But the question naturally suggests itself, in perusing the warrant before us, bearing date June 18, in that year, that the black satin kirtle, the velvet gown, and other articles of dress, which the keeper of the wardrobe was charged to deliver for the use of the Lady Mary, were little suited to an infant of a few weeks old. And although we may seek in vain for distinct contemporary evidence regarding the birth of this distinguished lady, it appears clear from the narrative of Erasmus, when relating his

visit to the royal children, (probably at Eltham,) that the statement of Sandford, as to her birth, must be erroneous. The incident described by Erasmus occurred between the earlier part of the year 1499 and the spring of 1500; as shown by his description of the Prince Edmund, an infant in arms at the time of this visit. The Prince was born Feb. 21, 1498-9, and died in April, 1500. The other royal children present were, Prince Henry, described as nine years of age (he was born in 1491); Margaret, on his right hand, aged about eleven (having been born Nov. 29, 1489), and Mary, at her brother's left, aged four years. ("A sinistris Maria lusitans, annos nata quatuor.") It is therefore evident that her birth took place about 1495, or 1496; and unless it may be supposed that the reward of 3*l.*, given by Henry VII. on Dec. 19, 1494, "to a curreur that brought the tidings,"<sup>1</sup> was a largess on the news of the birth of the Princess, it seems probable that the costly preparations at Shene, towards the close of the following year, may have been preparatory to the state ceremony, when the Queen "took her chamber," previously to her confinement on occasion of the birth of the Lady Mary. On Dec. 17, 1495, no less a sum than 15*8l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* was paid "for browdryng of two chambres with a bedd at Shene."<sup>2</sup> The description of the magnificent ceremonial on such occasions, as observed previously to the birth of the Lady Margaret, in 1489, may be seen in Leland's *Collectanea*, vol. iv., p. 249.

The interesting description given by Erasmus of his visit to the Royal Nursery, accompanied by his friend Thomas More, then a student at law, subsequently eminent in the annals of our country, has been given by Dr. Knight, and the original presents a graphic sketch, worthy of the masterly hand which indited the "Colloquia."<sup>3</sup> Whilst we read the narrative, some portraiture, faithful although austere expressed, such as that at Hampton Court, which represents the children of Henry VII. and Elizabeth of York at a somewhat earlier time, seems present to our view.

The documents, here subjoined, are printed *in extenso*.

By the King.

H. R.<sup>4</sup>

We wol and charge you, that for thuse of our derrest seconde sonne, the Duc of York, and oure Right Dere and right entierly welbelouede doughtiers, the ladyes Margrete and Marie his Susters, ye deliuer thies percelx ensuing. Furst, for our said Sonne, twoo Cootes, oone of blak dammask, and thoder of blak saten, with suffisant lynyng to the same. Item, a gowne of blak veluet lyned with blak sarcenet. Item, a bonet of crimsin veluet. Item, a paylet Cace of Canvas. Item, a federbed and a bolster. Item, a paire fustians. Item, a Countrepoynt and asmoche blak Sarcenet as shal suffice for the lynyng of a gowne of crimsin veluet. Item,

<sup>1</sup> Privy Purse Expenses of Hen. VII., *Excerpta Historica*, p. 100.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106. The gift of 27*l.* "to the Queenes Grace" on Feb. 1, following, may have been connected with her recent confinement. The palace at Shene was a favourite resort of Henry VII. and his Queen.

<sup>3</sup> Knight's *Life of Erasmus*, p. 68, citing

the prefatory discourse by Erasmus, in the first edition of his works, Basil, 1540.

<sup>4</sup> *Sign Manual of Henry VII.*, given in the *Autographs of Royal and Noble Personages*, by C. J. Smith, and John Gough Nichols, from Cott. MS. Calig. B. VI. fol. 20. This sovereign occasionally used the signature—*Henry R.* as engraved in the same series.

for the lady Margrete, a kirtel of blak Saten with suffisant lynying to the same. Item, a gowne of blak veluet with an edge of crimsin veluet, and suffisant lynying therto. Item, three elnes Riban for girdelles, at v. d. thelne. Item, twoo vnces laces for hir kirtelle. Item, oone thousand pynnes. Item, for a paylet for hir women, a Federbed, a bolster, twoo paire sheetes, of iij. bredes, at viij. d. thelne, a paire fustians, and a countrepoynt. Item, for the lady Mary, a kirtel of blak Saten, with suffisaunt lynying to the same. Item, a gowne of blak veluet edged with crimsin veluet, and suffisant lynying therto. Item, three elnes Ryban for gyrdelles, at v. d. thelne. Item, twoo vnces laces for hir kirtel. Item, a bed for the same lady Marie, a Sparver<sup>5</sup> of grene sarcenet, a paylet Cace of Canvas, a federbed, a bolster, twoo paire shetes, of three bredes, at xvj. d. thelne, a paire fustians, a Countrepoynt, twoo pilowes of downe, and two pilowburys<sup>6</sup> to the same, at xx. d. thelne. And thies oure lettres shalbee your waraunt in this behalue. Yeuen vndre oure signet, at oure Palois of Westm<sup>r</sup>, the xvij.th day of Juyn, the xij.th yere of our Reyne. [A.D. 1498.]

To oure trusty and right Welbeloued knight and counsaillour, Ser Robert Lytton, oure vndre Treasurer of England, keper of oure great Warderobe.

By the kinge.

Henry R.<sup>7</sup>

We wooll and commaunde you that vnto the lorde Kursone ye delyuer xiiij. yerdes of Crimson veluett for A gowne, and asmoche blacke boogi<sup>8</sup> as schall suffice for furringe of the same gowne. Ande thes our lettres schalbe your sufficient warant and dyscharge in this behalf. Yeuene vnder our Signet, at our Castell of Wyndesore, the ii<sup>de</sup> daye of Januarij, the fyft yere of our Reigne. [A.D. 1514.]

To our trusty and welbelouede Ser Andrew Wyndesor, knyght, keper of our great wardrope.

<sup>5</sup> See Archdeacon Nares' explanation of this term, and the detailed note by Sir N. H. Nicolas, *Privy Purse Expenses of Elizabeth of York*, p. 256. The *Sparver* is there explained as being the framework of a bed, to which the curtains, valances, &c., were attached, and not the canopy or tester only, as Naves supposed. The explanation given by that able glossarist is however confirmed by the following passage in Horman's *Vulgaria*.—"Some have curteynes, some sparuers aboute the bedde to kepe away gnattis; *conopeum lecto circumspargunt*." W. Thomas, in 1548, renders the Italian term *Padiglione*, as—"a pavilion, or the Sparviour of a bedde."

<sup>6</sup> These were apparently pillow-cases. Amongst the *Pertinencia mulieribus*, in a Vocabulary, Harl. MS. 1002, is found,—"Cervicall", a pyilwere;" and, in the *Ortus Vocabulorum*,—"Pulvinar, cervical

*dicitur apluma, &c.: Anglice, a pelowbere."* Palsgrave explains the term with greater precision; "Pyllowbere, *taye d'oreillier*." John Hollibusk, in the Appendix to Turner's Herbal, 1561, gives the following remedy for him that hath his legs cold by reason of long sickness,—seeth oats with wine, and put them "into a soft sack, or pilow bier, halfe an elle longe and broade, and wrappe his legges therein." Chaucer's Pardoner, it will be remembered, carried about "a pillow bere," which he said was Our Lady's vail.

<sup>7</sup> The sign manual of Henry VIII. has repeatedly been engraved. See the Autographs of Royal and Noble Personages, pl. vi. *Privy Purse Expenses of Henry VIII.*, edited by Sir Nicholas H. Nicolas, p. 7, &c.

<sup>8</sup> See Sir N. H. Nicolas's note on this word, Index to *Privy Purse Expenses of Elizabeth of York*, p. 237.