

9th August, 1737, that, according to the Duke of Rutland, Lovel's remains were found in a vault at Minster Lovel, whither he had gone after the battle, it being supposed he was starved to death through the treachery of a servant.

Swinbrook, with its curious tombs of the Fettiplaces, was visited, and then the party arrived at beautiful Burford, where they were joined by the Vicar, the Rev. W. Emeris, and Mr. Monk, who has written so much about the history of the town. After luncheon at The Lamb, they adjourned to the noble church, which was admirably described by the Vicar and the President, and then to the Priory, at one time owned by Lucius Carey, Lord Falkland, who fell at the Battle of Newbury, 20th September, 1643, fighting for the royal cause. At the Priory the party was received by the owner, Mr. Horniman, who conducted them over the chapel and through the grounds. The afternoon was spent in inspecting the churches of Brize Norton, Bampton and Buckland, where tea was served in the little village inn. After tea the President thanked Mr. Morley, the new Excursion Secretary, for the admirable arrangements he had made, and Mr. Ditchfield expressed the debt the Society owed the President for all his many services, for drawing up the programme, and his admirable descriptions of the churches they had seen.

King Edward IV. and his Queen Elizabeth Woodville, at Reading Abbey

A memorable scene was witnessed at Reading Abbey on Michaelmas Day, 1464, when the King, Edward IV, publicly proclaimed Elizabeth Woodville to be his wife and Queen of England.

Some months earlier the infatuated King had become betrothed to the beautiful Elizabeth in the royal forest of Wyckwood (Oxon), the marriage rite being celebrated secretly at Grafton Regis on May 1, 1464. The only witnesses of this romantic wedding were the officiating priest, the bride's mother,

the Duchess of Bedford, and three other spectators. That obscure wedding, however, has left deep foot-prints on the sands of time. Most of the sovereigns who have since ruled over this realm are descended from Edward IV and Queen Elizabeth Woodville.¹

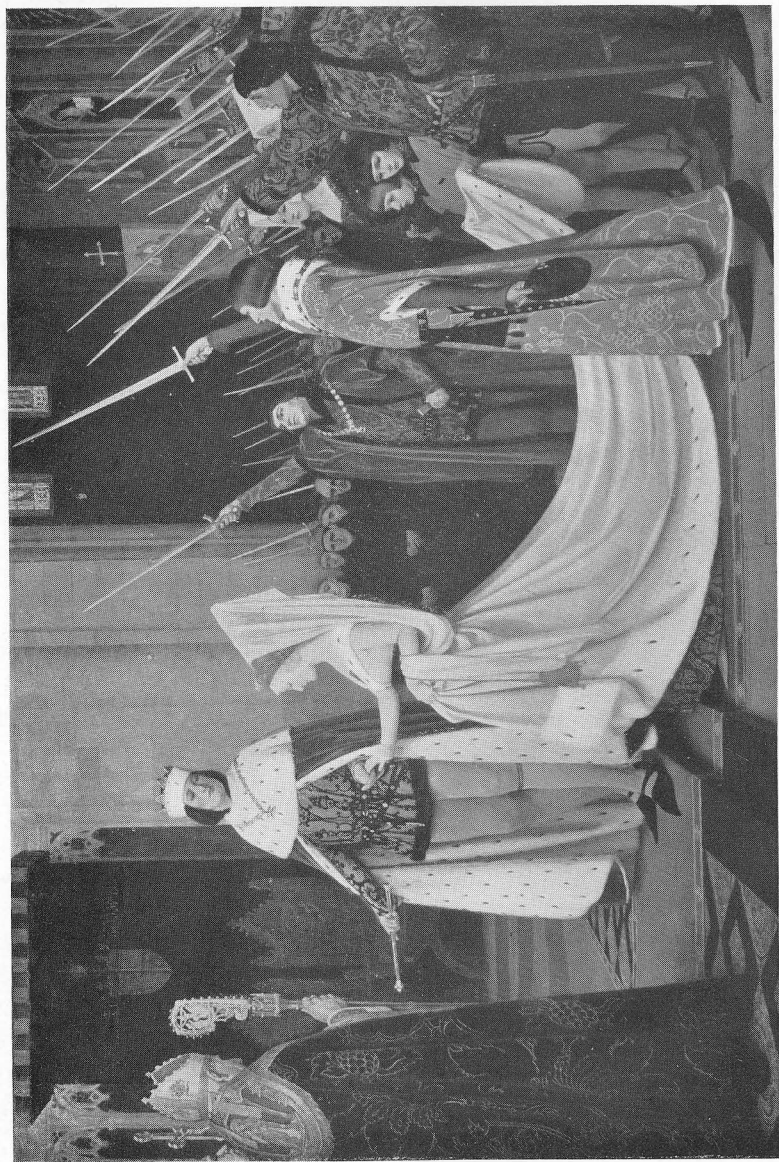
For several months this historic love-match was maintained a secret from the nation; only by stealth did the King and his bride enjoy their interviews.

Ever since Edward's coronation, however, the question of the royal succession had absorbed public interest, the eligibility of various princesses being discussed. Amongst them were Catherine of Bourbon niece of the Duke of Burgundy, Mary of Guelders the Queen Dowager of Scotland, Isabella of Castile sister of the King of Spain, and last but not least Bona the daughter of the Duke of Savoy and sister-in-law of King Louis XI. In regard to the latter indeed the Earl of Warwick 'the Kingmaker' had been over to France in order to carry on negotiations. As time went on the nation grew more and more urgent for a settlement, and more and more pressure was put on the King. Eventually matters came to a climax in the last week of September 1464, when the King paid a visit to Reading in order to attend a meeting of the Privy Council. The question of his marriage was again discussed, the Council wishing 'to know of his intent and to what house he would go.' In the words of an ancient chronicler: 'The Lords moved him and exhorted him to be wedded and to live under the law of God and Church.'

Such a weighty appeal convinced the King that he could no longer defer the disclosure of his marriage. Accordingly he informed the Privy Council 'in right merry guise' that he was willing to marry but that perchance his choice might not be to the liking of all present.² As a matter of fact his choice had already fallen on Elizabeth Woodville, otherwise Dame Elizabeth Grey, widow of Sir John Grey; she was the daughter of a simple knight, Sir Richard Woodville, who had married the Duchess of Bedford. The Council protested that such a bride was no fit match for a King, however good and fair she might

¹ Cf. *The Genealogical Table of the English Sovereigns*. Green, *History of the English People*: Illustrated Ed., pp. 1873-4.

² Wavrin, *Recueil des Chroniques d'Angleterre* (Rolls Series), ed. by Hardy, Vol. V, p. 455.



* The enthronement at Reading Abbey of Elizabeth Woodville as Queen of Edward IV.



THE ELECTION OF THOMAS CLERKE TO BE MAYOR OF READING BY THE ABBOT JOHN THORNE I., A.D. 1460.

This picture was described in detail in Vol. XXIII (1923) of the *Journal* (p. 199), and it is intended to illustrate the procedure of the election of the Mayor of Reading in the Middle Ages. On the Feast of St. Michael three burgesses, who had been selected by the Guild Merchant were presented to the Mayor of Reading, who designated the one, who was to be Mayor.

be, and none but a princess could be a suitable wife for so high a prince as himself, while Elizabeth was not even the daughter of a duke or earl.

When the King heard these sayings of 'the Lords of his blood and his Council' he felt that the whole truth must be revealed. Accordingly he informed them that he had already espoused Elizabeth Woodville, a startling announcement that was at first greeted with incredulity. Surely witchcraft or love philtres must have been used to entrap the young King. The great Earl of Warwick was especially furious at the mortifying news, since all his negotiations for the hand of the Lady Bona of Savoy had been wasted; in fact his mission to France had been on a fool's errand. Eventually, however, as the marriage was a *fait accompli*, Warwick decided to swallow his wrath and accept the situation.

On St. Michael's day, Sept. 29th, the Dame Elizabeth was introduced to the Privy Council and acknowledged by all present as Queen of England.

'It was at the ancient palace of Reading, on Michaelmas Day, 1464, that Edward IV finally declared Elizabeth to be his wedded wife. A council of the peers was convoked there, when the King took Elizabeth by the hand, and presented her to them as his rightful queen. She was then led by the young Duke of Clarence, in solemn pomp, to the stately Abbey Church of Reading, where she was publicly declared Queen; and having made her offering, received the congratulations of all the nobility assembled there, among whom, some authorities declare, was the Earl of Warwick.'³

From that time forward the Queen took her place openly at Court, and was eventually crowned at Westminster Abbey on May 26th, 1465.

THE PICTURE.

In the Picture, painted by Mr. E. Board, may be seen four historic figures in the foreground.

King Edward IV is seen in the act of greeting his wife, the Dame Elizabeth, before placing her in the state chair in the

³ A. Strickland, *Lives of the Queens of England*, 1875, Vol. II, p. 10. William of Worcester states definitely that the Earl of Warwick was present. *Annales Rerum Anglicarum*, ed. by Stevenson, p. 783.

chancel of the Abbey Church at Reading. Facing the King is his beautiful Queen, whose train-bearers are her two boys, Richard and Thomas Grey, by a former marriage.

Behind the Queen stands the famous Earl of Warwick 'the Kingmaker,' cousin to the King and one of the most powerful Barons of England.⁴ On his left is seen the Duke of Clarence,⁵ the King's younger brother.

In the right-hand corner is Anthony Woodville, father of the Queen, afterwards Lord Rivers; beyond him are seen two of her sisters. On the extreme left stands the Abbot, John Thorne.

THE COSTUMES.

Edward IV is wearing a coronet over a cap of ermine and crimson velvet, and a robe of the same coloured velvet lined with ermine and with ermine cape. Under the royal robe is a tunic of rich brocade, and long hose with a garter on the left leg. Round his neck is a collar of suns and roses, the badge of the House of York; in his right hand is a sceptre.

Elizabeth Woodville is dressed in a lemon-coloured robe with a long train trimmed with ermine. On her head is the fashionable 'steeple' head-dress; hanging from the head-dress is a white veil which she carries over her left arm. Over her left wrist hangs an alms bag with an offering for the Altar. She is wearing buff-coloured long pointed shoes, and a rich brocaded under-skirt.

The Earl of Warwick is arrayed in a golden brown velvet robe, edged with dark fur with long hanging sleeves. His short tunic underneath is of green stamped velvet edged with fur; round his waist runs an ornamental belt from which hang scabbard and wallet. Round the neck is a collar of suns and roses.

The Duke of Clarence is wearing a salmon-coloured velvet robe with hanging sleeves ornamented with a gilt pattern. His black velvet shoes have the characteristic long pointed form; at his sword-belt hang a tasselled wallet and a scabbard.

⁴ Cf. Lytton's *The Last of the Barons*.

⁵ This is Shakespeare's 'false, fleeting, perjured Clarence.' *King Richard III*, Act I. Sc. i, l. 55.