

ART. IX.—*William de Parr. King's Knight to Henry IV*  
(c. 1350-1404). By MARJORIE A. ROWLING, B.A.

*Read at Penrith, July 3rd, 1956.*

THE object of this study is to trace the causes of the rise and fall in family fortunes as exemplified by that of the Parrs of Kendal Castle through a period of great political upheaval and transition. Three main factors affected the social and economic status of families at this time. The first, that of patronage, demonstrates how closely the Parr fortunes were affected by those of the patron on whose vessel they were privileged to embark upon the perilous political seas of the 14th and 15th centuries. Marriage alliances, too, were of supreme importance, carrying the family to its zenith when Katherine Parr became the consort of Henry VIII, and to its nadir through the failure of William, her brother, to leave legitimate heirs. The third factor was the ability of the head of the house to avail himself of those opportunities for advancement offered in his day and age, and to avoid the dangers inherent in the unstable political situation, leaning when necessary on both sides of the stairs to get up, as the earl of Pembroke, husband of Ann Parr, unblushingly confessed to doing.<sup>1</sup>

William de Parr, founder of the Westmorland branch of that name, pursued a military career which, in the 14th century was as good a road as that of the Church or Law for an enterprising man to follow in search of success. Accounts of his origin are confused and obscure. He was born about 1350,<sup>2</sup> and one authority states he was the son of Sir John de Parr of Parr in the parish of

<sup>1</sup> Lloyd, *State Worthies*, 552.

<sup>2</sup> Assuming that he was about 18 when he killed Robert Haghe in 1369 (see *infra*).

Prescot, Lancashire, his mother being Matilda, daughter of Sir Richard Leyburne.<sup>3</sup>

An inquisition of 1385 on the possessions of Thomas de Lathom states he was seised of "the homage and service of Sir John de Parr, of Robert, son of Henry de Parr and of William, who held their tenements in Parr by knight's service and by rendering 6s. 3d. yearly. Also of the service of Robert, son of Alan Parr, who held of him tenements in socage by rendering yearly 3s. 9d."<sup>4</sup>

William who held an eighth part of the vill of Parr, seems to have inherited it from Richard, son of another Richard who died about 1350. William was in possession about 1370.<sup>5</sup> A crime opens his recorded career. With a Roger Haukese<sup>6</sup> he was accused of killing Robert Haghe or Hawe some time before 1 March 1369.<sup>7</sup> But Sir Walter Huet, veteran of the Hundred Years' War, and one of the heroes of Froissart, came to Parr's aid. The renewal of hostilities with France in 1369, and the commissioning of John of Gaunt to take out a strong force to Gascony, gaining for Parr—as well as for others—through Huet's petitions in May 1370, a pardon

"for good service to be rendered by William de Par in the company of the said Walter in parts beyond the sea, to William of the King's suit for the death of Roger Hawe, alias Haghe . . . whereof he is indicted or appealed of any consequent outlawry."<sup>8</sup>

From 1 April to 1 June, however, Huet and his men were kept in London

"awaiting payment of their wages and the pleasure of the Lord King and his Council."<sup>9</sup>

Small wonder that many recruits grew tired and de-camped, among them

"two chivalers and twenty one men (named) who were to have

<sup>3</sup> Harleian MSS. nos. 1187, 1196, 2109.

<sup>4</sup> *VCH. Lancs.* III, 377, n. 6.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 379.

<sup>6</sup> *Calendar of Patent Rolls* (afterwards referred to as *C.P.R.*) 1367/70, 450.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 416.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 1367/70, 416.

<sup>9</sup> *Issue Roll of Thomas of Brantingham*, ed. Devon, 1370, 141 *seq.*

gone beyond seas in the company of Walter Huet but have not gone, as the said Walter has certified."<sup>10</sup>

These had their pardons revoked. By some mischance, as it transpired later, Parr seems to have been included by those in authority among these deserters.

Huet's contingent, as part of Gaunt's great fleet, sailed from Plymouth to Gascony.<sup>11</sup> Their arrival in Bordeaux was sadly damped by news of the fall of Limoges. It is unlikely that William was at the siege and sack of the city, for Froissart, who always appears to include Huet's name whenever he took part in an engagement, does not mention him as being at Limoges, but states that Huet and his company had been sent to strengthen and hold the frontiers of Poitou, where he commanded a contingent in the attack on the fortress of Moncontours;<sup>12</sup> here therefore, presumably, Parr first saw action in France.

Six months or so later, when Lancaster returned to England, William accompanied him. By this time he was so far advanced in the duke's favour that he could beg him to petition the king, his father, on his behalf, for it appears that, in spite of the pardon Huet had gained for Parr in May 1370, he was still accounted an outlaw and it was necessary to prove that he had taken part in the Gascon campaign. Accordingly, in 1371, Lancaster himself petitioned Edward III that William might be pardoned, certifying and making known to the king that "he (William) was occupied in the war and service of our lord and father aforesaid in our company and that of the said Sir Walter from the time of our passage towards the said parts of Guienne until our return to England."<sup>13</sup>

So that, instead of re-entering England as a fugitive from justice, Parr returned under the patronage and protection of the great Lancaster himself, for although no bond of contract between the duke and him has sur-

<sup>10</sup> *C.P.R.* 1367/70, 450.

<sup>11</sup> *Issue Roll ut supra.*

<sup>12</sup> *Froissart* (ed. Luce) viii, 20.

<sup>13</sup> *John of Gaunt's Register* (afterwards referred to as *Reg.*) 1372/76, I. No. 2.

vived, yet some short while later William was established as one of the regular members of the Lancastrian retinue.<sup>14</sup>

The disastrous course of the French war soon drew Gaunt back into the front line and with him, presumably, went William since he, in company with many others, received the sum of £4. 11s. 4d. from the Lancastrian exchequer before March 1372 in part payment of £9. 11s. 4d. due to him as wages and fees of war.<sup>15</sup>

Edward III had determined to save Thouars, which was being sorely pressed. Orders for ships to be collected in the harbours of Portsmouth and Sandwich had been sent out on 6 and 7 February 1372,<sup>16</sup> but the fleet did not sail until the end of August when fierce gales prevented it from making headway. Meanwhile Thouars was lost, and Gaunt and his army returned ignominiously home.

Parr now seems to have returned to his Lancastrian manor, for in November 1372 Gaunt sent an order from Hertford to his

“parker de Tokstat et Crokstat . . . to deliver to William Par a buck from one of the said parks.”<sup>17</sup>

By the spring of 1373 William received from the duke letters of protection to go on the king's service on the next voyage in Gaunt's company;<sup>18</sup> he was presumably, therefore, among the bands of fighting men who passed through the towns and villages of the West Country on their way to Plymouth to join Lancaster. By 4 August the great march from Calais towards the south of France had begun, as disastrous a campaign for invader as ever was waged. To Parr it brought what must surely have been a personal tragedy.

At Ouchy, Sir Walter Huet and his men were passing the night. Huet had already gone to his lodging to rest and had taken off his armour.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 10.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 1372/76, II, no. 968, p. 47; no. 969, p. 49.

<sup>16</sup> *Foedera*, VI, 708/9; 715/16 (Original edition).

<sup>17</sup> *Reg.* 1372/76, II, 1060.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 50.

"Then, suddenly, one hundred and twenty French men-at-arms . . . commanded by Jean de Vienne, surprised at dawn the outposts of the English army and Walter Huet, one of the most illustrious veterans of the army was killed while trying—when only half armed—to repulse a completely unexpected attack . . . the English, deeply affected by the loss of one of their most valiant knights then began the march towards Rheims."<sup>19</sup>

Yet before that gruelling march in mid-winter was ended; Parr and his comrades may well have envied Huet his earlier death, for out of 15,000 picked men, all originally mounted, only 8,000, and half of these unmounted, passed finally through the gates of Bordeaux.<sup>20</sup>

Parr returned home with his patron. From Hertford where Gaunt retired to shun publicity and the animosity with which he was now widely regarded, he directed his clerk of the Great Wardrobe to make a settlement with his "well loved esquire, William de Par," who had not been paid the five marks of his annuity for the term of St. Michael 1373, nor the other five marks for the following Easter term owed to him by the duchy of Lancaster.<sup>21</sup>

During his retirement the direction of the duke's ambition changed. As husband of the heiress of Castile, Gaunt determined to claim and conquer this country with which Parr was to be connected at intervals until practically the end of his life. Gaunt's first task was to make peace with France and from the evidence it seems that Parr accompanied his patron to Bruges to parley for the truce which was arranged on 27 June, for on 24 July, immediately on his return to England, the duke sent to his chief forester at Needwood orders to deliver to William another fat buck from the chace;<sup>22</sup> an acceptable reward for services rendered, presumably, in Bruges.

From 1375 to June 1378 there is a gap in our evidence regarding Parr, but in the spring of 1378 Lancaster was given command of a naval force to put an end to French

<sup>19</sup> *Froissart*, 8, xci.

<sup>20</sup> *John of Gaunt*, S. Armitage Smith (afterwards referred to as *J. of G.*) 114.

<sup>21</sup> *Reg.* 1372/6, II, 1596.

<sup>22</sup> *Reg.* 1372/6, II, 1710.

aggression, and on 1 June Parr was granted a letter of attorney because he was going to Brittany with the duke.<sup>23</sup> Unfortunately the attack on St. Malo was a fiasco, largely owing to Arundel's incompetence,<sup>24</sup> and once again Parr returned to England under the shadow of his patron's failure. Nevertheless, Parr's personal influence continues to increase through the years as is shown by the fact that at least four felons appealed to him to gain them pardons for their crimes.<sup>25</sup>

As one of Gaunt's personal attendants, it seems likely that Parr would accompany him to Scotland in 1380 to treat with the Scots, for warrants were sent out from Leicester on 26 August to the receivers of Lancaster and York to call out the knights and esquires of the duke's retinue to meet him at Newcastle upon Tyne, arrayed for war.<sup>26</sup>

But it was around the year 1382 that Parr took his second great step forward along the road of advancement. He was probably now in his early thirties, and his service with Lancaster had brought him not only experience in war but enhanced social prestige: he must also have benefited immeasurably from his contact with the brilliant courts of Bordeaux and the art filled treasurehouse of the Savoy Palace in London, to which the duke's presence attracted many of the leading figures in the political and cultural life of Europe; here Parr continued his vicarious lessons in diplomacy, talked, presumably, with Chaucer and Froissart, listened to the songs and music of Gaunt's well-paid minstrels and absorbed willy-nilly some at least of the European culture of the 14th century.

Nevertheless, Parr was still only a paid mercenary, possessed of an insignificant estate worth but a mere 15d. per annum in rent,<sup>27</sup> his social standing and influence dependent in the main on his retention of his great patron's

<sup>23</sup> *Treaty Roll*, I, Rich. II, pt. ii, m i (P.R.O.).

<sup>24</sup> *J. of G.* 233.

<sup>25</sup> *C.P.R.* 1377/81, 485; 1388/92, 256; 1391/96, 221, 450.

<sup>26</sup> *Reg.* 1379/83, I, 357, 358.

<sup>27</sup> *VCH. Lancs.* III, 377 (Note 6).

favour. Then he married,<sup>28</sup> and at once, through his wife the way was opened for his future acquisition of independence and security, of a Norman stronghold in the north—small, it is true, but yet a castle with wide acres—of manors, mills and rents with the added social prestige which went with their possession. His bride was Elizabeth de Ros, daughter of John de Ros (died 1358)<sup>29</sup> and heiress to her grandfather, Sir Thomas de Ros of Kendal Castle, Westmorland. She was 17 years and upwards in 1382.<sup>30</sup>

Elizabeth was of royal Scottish descent, since her ancestor Robert, Lord Roos of Helmsley had married Isabel, illegitimate daughter of William the Lion of Scotland.<sup>31</sup> Robert de Ros of Werk, a younger grandson of Robert and Isabel, married Margaret de Brus, heiress to Kendal Castle.<sup>32</sup> Sir Thomas de Ros was the grandson of this marriage.

Parr's marriage was possibly arranged through Peter de Ros, the bride's uncle who had become one of Gaunt's retainers in 1382.<sup>33</sup> In any case, Parr must have been well known to Sir Thomas—a firebrand of a man and a typical Borderer—as Ros had served in the earl of Arundel's retinue under Lancaster, in 1378.<sup>34</sup> A son, named John, was born to William and Elizabeth during or before 1382.<sup>35</sup>

There is no evidence to show whether William took part in Lancaster's campaign against the Scots in 1384 or in King Richard's expedition during the summer of the following year, but by 1386 Parr was being drawn into the orbit of his patron's ambition, centering on Castile, for we find that, on 12 January:

<sup>28</sup> *Lancs.*, E. Baines, V, 20 gives the date as 1383, but the Inq.p.m. on Wm. Parr of 16 October 1404 states that his son John was 22 years and over on that date. John must therefore have been born before October 1382. Chancery: Inq.p.m. 6 Hen. IV, n. 37.

<sup>29</sup> *Scrope & Grosvenor Controversy*, ed. N. H. Nicolas, II, 334.

<sup>30</sup> *R. of K.*, I, 32, cit. Inq.p.m. Ric. II, n. 41

<sup>31</sup> *Yorks. Charters*, Farrer, II, 15, 16.

<sup>32</sup> *Complete Peerage*, sv. Roos.

<sup>33</sup> *Reg.* 1379/83, I, 23.

<sup>34</sup> *Gascon Rolls*, Carte, II, 123.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. note 28.

"William de Par, going on the King's service to Portugal, appoints Hugh de Ines and Richard de Assheton as his attornies."<sup>36</sup>

So, once more, in the spring of 1386, Parr rode along the London-Plymouth highway in attendance upon the duke and his Spanish "Queen." His view of the future must have been satisfactory for, in the event of his patron winning the throne of Castile, the rewards given to his closest followers were likely to be kingly.

Then followed the delay in Devon while ships were being collected, the relief of Brest, the surrender of Corunna and St. James de Compostella, capital of Galicia, where Parr presumably witnessed the arrival of the Castilian embassy with a secret offer of marriage for Lancaster's daughter Katherine with the heir of Castile. That he survived the disastrous campaign which followed, when English knights, esquires and archers died off in hundreds from plague and dysentery, speaks well for the strength of his constitution. It was probably to raise another army for the duke that Parr returned to England in the summer of 1387. By the end of 1388 William had gained the confidence of King Richard II himself and was acting as his agent in trying to secure the early return of Gaunt from Aquitaine to redress the balance of power which the Lords Appellant had weighted so heavily against the king.

It was through Parr's management of the affairs entrusted to him at this juncture that Lancaster seems to have become convinced of his abilities. Richard had already made one attempt to send envoys to Aquitaine, but this had been frustrated, possibly by Arundel, who held the post of High Admiral. Now using Parr as his agent, the king sent to

Richard earl of Arundel, the King's admiral or his lieutenant, the mayors and bailiffs of Plymouth and Dartmouth, and the keepers of the passages in the ports of Fowey and Barnstaple,

<sup>36</sup> *Deputy Keeper's Report* (afterwards referred to as *D.K.R.*) xl, App. 524, Par. 63.

strict order as they love the king and his honour, and would escape his wrath, with all speed to provide from the king's money another ship and barge furnished with seamen and gear and deliver them to William Parre for the voyage of certain envoys whom the king purposes to send to John Duke of Lancaster, to declare business which concerns the king and his commonweal, that by their default the business remain not undone which the king would impute to their neglect; as lately, by the advice and assent of the Council, a great ship and barge were arrested and suddenly departed for foreign parts at the will of the owners and possessors for their advantage, without advising the king, as his highness is informed. Dated Windsor, 4 December 1388.<sup>37</sup>

Nearly a year passed before the duke landed at Plymouth. The day following, 20 November, he granted by letters patent

"to William de Par, his bachelor, on his surrender of earlier letters patent—granting him 50 marks a year for life from the issues of the duchy of Lancaster—£50 a year therefrom."<sup>38</sup>

The bestowal of this grant and the fact that Parr was now a knight bachelor obviously betokens the performance of some outstanding service on his part. Possibly he accompanied the freightship sent out by the king in 1389 to bring back his uncle Gaunt from Aquitaine.<sup>39</sup> Parr may then have given his patron first hand information regarding the political situation in England, urging upon him the desirability of leaving affairs which, as its governor, had kept the duke in the French province, to deal with the serious state of emergency in England which Parr must have known would continue as long as Gloucester's lust for power remained unchecked, and the divided state of the Council continued to threaten the stability and peace of the realm.

The next seven years which marked for England and Lancaster a period of peace and prosperity, also brought further honours and wealth to Parr. In 1390 Sir Thomas de Ros—Lady Elizabeth Parr's grandfather—ended his

<sup>37</sup> *Calendar of Close Rolls* (afterwards referred to as *C.C.R.*) 1385/9, 548.

<sup>38</sup> *C.P.R.* 1396/9, 575.

<sup>39</sup> *Foedera* VII, 641.

long and turbulent life<sup>40</sup> and on 23 January 1391 Sir William and his wife were granted

“full seisin of all the lands which Thomas held of the king in chief in fee tail . . . on the day of his death, as the king has taken homage and fealty due from William by reason of his having issue by Elizabeth.”<sup>41</sup>

Parr did not, however, retire to his northern fortress in Westmorland, for Lancaster went to Amiens to negotiate a truce with Charles of France, taking a magnificent retinue of 1,000 horsemen. Stately processions, royal banquets and tournaments followed fast upon each other, and the grant made by the duke to Sir William and his wife of an estate in Cornwall,

“of the land and lordship of Ayran in the parish of St. Medart, Ruyan, forfeited by the lord of Budos, 26 October 1392”,<sup>42</sup>

points to a desire on the part of the duke to contribute towards the heavy expenses incurred by Parr as his knight bachelor during the recent diplomatic mission.

But a higher honour was pending. The duke decided to make use of the experience in diplomacy which at least two members of his suite had gained during their years of service with him in foreign courts. Sir William Parr with Sir Walter Blount and Henry Bowet, archdeacon of Lincoln were appointed in April 1393 to negotiate a renewal of the truce with King Enrique of Castile,<sup>43</sup> which had been arranged originally by John of Gaunt with King João.

Hard on his return to England Sir William was commissioned in 1394 to attend Lancaster to Aquitaine, this time as duke of the province. In the stately and luxurious court established in Bordeaux Parr evidently carried out the duties assigned to him to the duke's satisfaction for on 18 July 1394 he was appointed—from Bordeaux—Justice of the Forests of the duchy of Lancaster for life.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>40</sup> *R. of K.* I, 32, cit. Inq. p. m. 14, Rich. II, n. 41.

<sup>41</sup> *Calendar of Fine Rolls* (afterwards referred to as *C.F.R.*) 1383/91, X, 351.

<sup>42</sup> *C.P.R.* 1399/1401, 74.

<sup>43</sup> *Foedera* VII, 739.

<sup>44</sup> 43rd *D.K.R.* (App. I), 367.

But this colourful interlude in the south ended with Lancaster's return to England in the autumn of 1395. Though Parr was to see them again, Lancaster was unknowingly looking his last on the fruitful vineyards and cornfields of France. After tarrying in Brittany to conclude a treaty with its changeable duke on 25 November, the Lancastrian party proceeded to England where Parr must have been met, soon after his arrival with news of the illness, or possibly the death of his wife, for she died presumably early in the New Year, since Parr was in Kendal in May,<sup>45</sup> the first recorded report of his presence there. Before October 1396 he had remarried.<sup>46</sup>

His second wife was not, as might have been expected of superior wealth or social status to Elizabeth. She was Margaret, widow of Sir Laurence de Dutton, a Cheshire knight who had died before 30 January 1392/3.<sup>47</sup> The new marriage was made in such haste that the necessary licence from the king was not obtained. In consequence Lady Margaret had to

“make fine in £12. 4s. 4d. for marriage to William de Par, knight, without licence.”<sup>48</sup>

This was the exact amount of her yearly dower from lands formerly held of the king by the deceased Sir Laurence and valued at £36. 13s. 4d. yearly.<sup>49</sup>

One of Sir William's first recorded tasks in the north was to import corn from Ireland for the needs of his tenants and household at a time when, it seems, the domestic crop had failed.<sup>50</sup> Little is known of the domestic economy of the north west at this time, but a document of 18 Hen. V throws a thin ray of light upon this district, informing us that Cumberland and Lancashire had been accustomed “long since” to obtain much of their grain and bread from Richmond market in Yorkshire:

<sup>45</sup> *C.P.R.* 1391/6, 711.

<sup>46</sup> *36th D.K.R.* (App. II) 160, 161, no. 1.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> *C.P.R.* 1391/6, 711.

“Many merchants from the adjacent parts of Cumberland, Westmorland, and Lancashire were wont to resort there with merchandise, grain, victuals and other goods every Saturday in the year, as well as carriers of grain and bread belonging to the adjacent parts of Cumberland, Westmorland and Lancashire and the neighbourhood of Lonsdale, Craven, Dent and Sedbergh in which no great quantity of corn was then grown, for which reason the inhabitants of those parts made their chief provision of grain in Richmond market . . .

The people of the adjoining counties of Cumberland, Westmorland and Lancashire have thrown into cultivation large tracts of moors and wastes by means of which carriers of grain, using to resort to Richmond from these parts of Lonsdale and Sedbergh, have *long since* withdrawn from the said market.”<sup>51</sup>

Was Sir William, inspired by recollections of the corn-fields of France, one of those who threw “into cultivation large tracts of moors and wastes” in Westmorland?

The fact that he began to play an active part in the county as a commissioner introduces us to two feuds which had a more than local interest. On 1 March 1397 he was appointed to serve on a commission of the peace and of oyer and terminer in Westmorland.<sup>52</sup> As the delinquents named were still at large in November 1398 a stronger commission was appointed—Ralph, earl of Westmorland,\* Henry Percy, earl of Northumberland,\* his son, Henry Percy,\* Richard Redman of Levens, William de Culwen, Thomas Colvyll, a Yorkshire knight,\* Thomas Tunstall of Thurland Castle,\* Thomas Musgrave and the sheriffs of Yorkshire and Westmorland, with John Elyngham the king’s sergeant at arms, Richard de Croft,\* and John Hudleston, with orders—

“on information of dissensions between John de Preston, and John, son of Thomas de Middleton, John de Blande, Adam Touke, William and Roger de Blande and Thomas Spicer of unlawful assemblies in those counties and the lying in wait of the last named to kill the said John de Preston and his friends, causing homicides, insurrections, riots—to arrest the persons last

<sup>51</sup> *Richmondshire*, Whitaker, I, 96, 97. C.P.R. 1436/41, 452, 509, 510.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 1396/99, 97.

\* The asterisk denotes a relative, retainer or supporter of Gaunt.

named and bring them before the king in council, arresting also others to be found of their following."<sup>53</sup>

Now since 1377, the Blandes and Middletons had been involved from time to time in disturbances of the peace in Yorkshire aimed particularly against Gaunt's officers and property or that of his retainers.<sup>54</sup> They were joined later by the Bekwyths<sup>55</sup> and the trouble came to a head in February 1393 when Sir Robert de Rokley, Gaunt's forester of the Chace of Knaresborough slew several of the Bekwyths,<sup>56</sup> who retaliated by murdering Thomas de Blande, one of their own confederates whom they accused of betraying them to their enemies.<sup>57</sup> John de Preston and his friends, whom the Middletons and Blandes with their confederates were lying in wait to kill in 1397 and 1398 was a justice of the King's Bench<sup>58</sup> and a landowner in Westmorland having inherited the manor of Preston Patrick near Kendal.<sup>59</sup>

During the disturbances in Yorkshire he had served on commissions of a strongly Lancastrian character in Westmorland and Yorkshire at least fifteen times since November 1376.<sup>60</sup> It seems clear, therefore, from this evidence, that the enmity of the Middletons and Blandes was directed against Preston in his judicial capacity, the justice's "friends" being most probably, his fellow commissioners.

The second feud with which Parr had to deal appears from the names of some of the protagonists to have a certain connection with the first. In November 1398 he and John Elyngham were appointed

"on information of divers dissensions between Edmund Redman, Richard Doket, John and Thomas de Lancaster and others, on

<sup>53</sup> C.P.R. 1396/99, 503; 1377/81, 94.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.* 1377/81, 305.

<sup>55</sup> C.P.R. 1389/92, 140, 343; 1391/96, 76, 273, 284, 551. *Polychronicon*, Higden, IX, 239/240.

<sup>56</sup> *Polychronicon*, Higden, IX, 219.

<sup>57</sup> *Polychronicon*, Higden, IX, 265. C.P.R. 1391/96, 265.

<sup>58</sup> *Judges of England*, E. Foss, III, 354, 355.

<sup>59</sup> C.C.R. 1392/96, 472.

<sup>60</sup> C.P.R. 1374/77, 314, 88; 1377/81, 515; 1381/85, 140, 245, 253; 1385/89, 258, 475; 1389/92, 137, 192, 343, 346; 1393/96, 292, 434, 438.

the one side, and Roger de Wyndesore, William, Thomas and John de Bethom, Roland, John and Richard Threlkeld and Christopher Forster on the other . . . to arrest all persons named and their followers . . .'<sup>61</sup>

The primary cause of these divisions seems to have been a family dispute over the will and property of Sir William de Wyndesore of Heversham, Westmorland, husband of the court beauty, Alice Perrers, mistress of Edward III. Wyndesore had died in 1385 and his three sisters, Margery Duket, Christiana Morieux and Isabel de Wyndesore were found by inquisition to be his heirs.<sup>62</sup> Sir William had, however, during his lifetime disposed of some of his property to his nephew John de Wyndesore,<sup>63</sup> leaving the bulk of it by will to him and his brothers.<sup>64</sup>

Of the disputants mentioned in Parr's commission of 1398, Richard Duket was Margery's son,<sup>65</sup> Thomas and John de Lancaster, if my deductions from the evidence are correct, were illegitimate sons of Christopher de Lancaster by Isabel de Wyndesore,<sup>66</sup> while Edmund Redman was a relative by marriage of the Dukets.<sup>67</sup>

On the opposing side, Roger Wyndesore was John's brother and one of the beneficiaries of his uncle's will which does not mention any of Sir William's three sisters or their descendants. The Bethoms and Christopher Forster were adherents of the Lancastrian party,<sup>68</sup> and John de Preston of the Wyndesores,<sup>69</sup> which provides evidence for a connection in the personnel at least between this feud and the first, especially as Christopher Forster was one of those who supported Sir Robert de Rokley, Gaunt's officer, in his feud against the Bekwyths;<sup>70</sup> the

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.* 1396/99, 503.

<sup>62</sup> *Duchet.* 332 cit. Chancery Inq.p.m. 8, Rich. II, n. 38.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.* 17 (note 9).

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.* 286.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.* 16.

<sup>66</sup> *CW2* x 463/469.

<sup>67</sup> *Duchet.* 16; *Redmans of Levens*, W. Greenwood, 159, 186.

<sup>68</sup> Thomas de Bethom was esquire to Hugh de Calveley. *C.P.R.* 1385/89, 476. In 1372 Calveley was Gaunt's "well loved bachelor". *Reg.* 1372/76, I, 45

<sup>69</sup> *C.P.R.* 1388/92, 476; 1361/64, 217, 416.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.* 1361/64, 219.

Threlkelds, Bethoms and John de Preston also shared a common enmity against the abbot of Shap.<sup>71</sup>

Unfortunately we are given no certain evidence regarding the final outcome of these disturbances. The likelihood is that they were swallowed up—for a time at least—in the great feud of 1399 which ended by Bolingbroke mounting his cousin Richard's throne as Henry IV.

Before that happened Gaunt died on 3 February 1399 and Parr, one of the executors of his will, experienced at first hand King Richard's unscrupulous actions regarding the Lancastrian inheritance. Within a month of Gaunt's death the king had changed Henry of Lancaster's temporary sentence of exile into one for life and seized his vast inheritance, ordering the executors to carry out Gaunt's will as speedily as possible, but to keep the stock formerly owned by the duke in places appointed by the king and his ministers.<sup>72</sup>

On Gaunt's death, Richard took Parr into his service, confirming to him "because retained to stay with the king only" the £50 a year for life which the duke had granted to him from the issues of the duchy.<sup>73</sup>

Exactly what part was played by Parr in the tragic events which ended in Richard's deposition is not known. The usurping king showed himself more than generous to most of those who had aided him to gain the throne, but Sir William only received a confirmation of the grant of the lordship of Ayran made to him by Gaunt seven years previously.<sup>74</sup> Taking into consideration the long and faithful service given to the new king's father, the meagreness of his reward perhaps suggests that Parr had been slow in deciding to support Henry.

But Parr's wide military experience made him invaluable in the north where, in spite of the preliminaries of a truce having been arranged with Scotland at the end

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.* 1361/64, 654.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.* 1396/99, 502.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.* 1396/99, 575.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.* 1390/1401, 74.

of November 1399, Henry had to complain of "very great and horrible outrages perpetrated in England by certain Scots"<sup>75</sup> who burned Wark Castle. Parr, under Northumberland and Westmorland, called out the local forces,<sup>76</sup> but the trouble blew over when the Scottish government offered profuse apologies.<sup>77</sup>

In 1400 Henry recognized Parr's diplomatic ability by sending him with John Trevor, bishop of St. Asaph to announce his accession in Spain<sup>78</sup> where the young Enrique of Castile and his consort, Katherine of Lancaster were now reigning. Parr was rewarded after his return in 1402—

"to the king's knight, William Par, a stag and hind in season each year for life, within the forest of Inglewode."<sup>79</sup>

Sir William's last recorded services were the collection of the tenth and fifteenth in Westmorland in December 1402,<sup>80</sup> and his appointment with the earl of Westmorland to a commission of array in September 1403.<sup>81</sup> If one may deduce from this that Parr was serving with Westmorland when the earl prevented the forces of the rebel Northumberland from joining those of his son Hotspur at Chester, then we are left with no doubts of Parr's wholehearted allegiance to Henry IV, once he was established on the throne.

Before 9 October of the following year Parr was dead.<sup>82</sup> His only son John was now aged 22 and over,<sup>83</sup> and, until a short time before his father's death had not married. Perhaps Sir William had hoped for further sons by his second wife, for John's early death at the age of 26 or 27,<sup>84</sup> and the fact that his name is practically

<sup>75</sup> *Royal and Historical Letters of Henry IV*, ed. F. C. Hingeston, 13, No. 5.

<sup>76</sup> *C.P.R.* 1399/1401, 209.

<sup>77</sup> *Polit. Hist. of Eng.*, C. Oman, IV, 160, 161.

<sup>78</sup> *Chron. of Trokelowe and Blaneford*, ed. H. T. Riley, 320.

<sup>79</sup> *C.P.R.* 1401/05, 85.

<sup>80</sup> *C.F.R.* 12, 188.

<sup>81</sup> *C.P.R.* 1401/05, 287.

<sup>82</sup> *C.F.R.* 1399/1405, 265; Chancery: Inq.p.m. 6 Hen. IV n. 37.

<sup>83</sup> Chancery: Inq.p.m. *ut supra*.

<sup>84</sup> *C.F.R.* 1405/13, 120; Chancery: Inq. p.m. 9 Hen. IV, n. 38.

absent from the records, suggests a delicacy of constitution. A premonition of his own death may have impelled Sir William to arrange a match between his heir and Agnes Devereux, widow of Sir Walter Devereux of Herefordshire, who had died in 1403.<sup>85</sup>

Sir William had not the consolation of knowing about the birth of his grandson Thomas. He may have died tormented by the fear that the line he had worked so strenuously to establish in prosperity might die out. In fact, Thomas was to prove the most prolific of all the Westmorland Parrs, and many of Sir William's descendants were to inherit his fine qualities of courage in war, versatility and adaptability in peace, as well as those of foresight and industry, which, with a certain ruthlessness often inherent in ambitious natures, enabled his descendants to add to the family wealth, prestige and possessions.

These, as left by Sir William and judged comparatively were not great. Much of his income, granted for life, died with him, so that only the fourth part of the manor of Kirkby in Kendale, his in the right of his first wife and worth £40 yearly,<sup>86</sup> with one-eighth part of the vill of Parr, his own inheritance, for which he paid 15d. yearly to his overlord,<sup>87</sup> were inherited by John.

But the importance of Sir William's efforts lay in the fact that he had established his family firmly in the ranks of the independent, landed middle class which was to play such an important part in the development of 15th and 16th-century England.

On his foundation, using his means—those of natural ability, the favour of powerful patrons and brilliant marriage alliances—Parr's grandson and great grandson were to heighten the family edifice, until its upper storeys reached that rarer air warmed by the sun of royalty itself. They were also to find that the tempests of changing fortune buffeted a taller building more dangerously.

<sup>85</sup> *Hist. Co. Hereford*, J. Duncumbe, II, 36 seq.; cit. Chancery: Inq.p.m. 14 Hen. VI, n. 9.

<sup>86</sup> *R. of K. I*, 34, 35.

<sup>87</sup> *VCH. Lancs.* III, 377 (note 6).