

Richard ii.

BEING AN ATTEMPT TO CONNECT SOME CHESHIRE PERSONS,
CIRCUMSTANCES, AND PLACES WITH SHAKSPERE'S
DRAMA OF THIS NAME.

BY WILLIAM BEAMONT.

WHICH of all our English monarchs do we consider the most fortunate? those who reigned long, or those whose reign has been of short duration? Those who, after triumphing in war closed their life in trouble? or those who have ruled well, lived happily, and descended to the grave in peace? Leaving for awhile all these questions, one circumstance occurs to us, which, as it makes some of our kings twice monarchs, it so far renders them superior to the rest; and these are they on whom Shakespere has employed his pen, and who stand before us in the lineaments which he has drawn! Such are King John, the second and third Richard, and the fourth, fifth, sixth, and eighth Henry, who at the poet's touch revisit their old kingdoms, and live their reigns on earth again. Any one who enquires what part of our history is generally best known, will find it, I think, to be that on which our great bard has laid his enchanter's spell.

The story of Richard of Bordeaux,—the second of his name after the Conquest, the second, too, in the series of our great bard's English historical dramas, and the second also in the order of their production,—challenges especial attention as being the first page in "that purple testament of bleeding war," which bequeathed to England the wars of the Roses,—

When, like a matron butchered of her sons
And cast beside some common way, a spectacle
Of horror and affright to passers by,
Our bleeding country bled at every vein!

Lormont, where the king was born, is an old castle, near Bordeaux, which to this hour is haunted by a ghost traditionally connected with the Black Prince and his wars in France. Richard bore a name which

has never been auspicious in our English annals. His Saxon namesake, and a predecessor on the throne, in the year 722 set out on a pilgrimage to Rome, and falling sick, died at Lucca, leaving his purpose unfulfilled. But though he was not permitted with his mortal eyes to see the holy city, the Pope, commending his pious purpose, finally canonized him as Saint Richard. Richard of the Lion heart, after a troubled life, died by an ignoble hand. Richard of York fell in the field at Wakefield, when the crown he was so nearly clutching slid from his grasp. Richard III, after a short and unquiet reign, deservedly lost both his crown and his life at Bosworth. Richard Cromwell, "Queen Richard" as he has been called, had the empire in his hands and suffered it to depart like a shadow. What was the fate of Richard II, we shall shortly see.

Of Richard II, we have the first portrait of any English monarch painted by a contemporary hand. The portrait, a full length sitting figure of life size, hangs in that Jerusalem Chamber of the Sanctuary of Westminster, where Convocation generally meets. It was lent to the Art Treasures' Exhibition at Manchester, where many of my hearers probably saw it, and it has since been engraved and published by the Liverpool Historic Society.* The king, whom it represents holding the orb and sceptre, has yellowish hair, and a fine rosy countenance rather round than long. The king is good looking, but he has an expression which is rather feminine. He is of middle stature, and his portrait corresponds with the description given of him by the old chroniclers.†

Although then only 11 years old, Richard was actually crowned king at his accession to the throne. From its commencement his reign was involved in trouble, and in its second year we read that the country was infested by an armed banditti, who went about despoiling people of their property, and committing many enormities. One of the expedients they resorted to for extorting money, was to carry off young maidens, and send to their friends demanding ransom. The king's writs not running into the two counties palatine of Chester and Lancaster, thither, as to a safe sanctuary, the offenders especially resorted.‡

* See their *Proceedings*, Vol. x. p. 287.

† *Trahison et mort Rich. III.*, p. 295. But since the above was written the picture has been restored. See an account of the restoration in the *Journal of the Royal Archaeological Institute* for 1867, pp. 68—70.

‡ Lingard's *History of England*, Vol. iii. p. 147.

A few years later, when an insurrection of the lower classes against the higher was raging in France, Flanders, and other parts of Europe, a spark of the same flame came wafted to England, and kindled Wat Tyler's celebrated rebellion. The boy king on this occasion shewed great courage and self possession, and after their leader had been struck down by the Lord Mayor, and despatched by Robert Standish, a Lancashire Esquire, the king rode unattended into the rebel host, which so overawed them that, ceasing their lawless proceedings, they dispersed and returned home. Such a beginning gained the king much credit, and from it men argued well for his future career.

It is not my intention to examine critically either the king's character or the poet's story; but to use the latter only as a thread on which to string such passing remarks as may occur to me as connecting the persons, circumstances, and places of the story with this neighbourhood, and in so doing render it more vivid and real. To give a local habitation and a name to events, persons, or places which history has commemorated or the hand of genius touched, is so natural as to require no apology, if only it be kept within due bounds, and not carried to a mistaken excess: such an excess as possessed the Scottish idolater of Burns, who, determining to identify all the persons in *Tam-o'-Shanter*, insisted that "Care, mad to see them all so happy," must be meant for Kerr of Bellenden!*

Without emulating this extravagance, we shall however meet with real personages enough, and have no need to call up imaginary ones. From the reign of Henry III. the eldest son of the reigning sovereign had been Earl of Chester, and throughout the long French wars, the county under the immediate eyes of Edward III, and his son the Black Prince, had won much renown. Remembering this, and remembering with just pride the feats of Lord Audley and his Cheshire Squires,—of Sir Robert Knolles, the favourite of Froissart,†—the rescue of the king's standard, at Cressy, by Sir Thomas Danyers,—and Sir Hugh Calveley's achievements at Navarete and elsewhere,—loyalty to the crown, and to Richard its youthful wearer, became almost a Cheshire instinct.‡ On the king's side too, the bond was further strengthened by the precaution, which on the death of the Black Prince, he had

* Ormerod's *History of Cheshire*, Vol. i, p. xxxii.

† *Ibid*, Vol. ii., p. 419, iii. p. 266 n.

‡ Williams' *Trahison et mort Richard II*, p. lxxxiv.

taken to create his son Earl of Chester and Prince of Wales; * and by the favour which the king himself in his various charters had shewn to the city of Chester. † We need not wonder therefore at the intimate connection which existed between the king and the palatinate, or that in his reverses, this and the enrolment of his Cheshire guard which arose out of it, should have been amongst the most serious of the charges urged against him at his deposition. The charge however is one, which, notwithstanding Grafton's prejudiced account of it, was of so general a nature that dispassionate enquirers are of opinion, not only that it was much exaggerated, ‡ but that the other charges against the king and his friends must be received with the more caution, since, with two exceptions, all the chroniclers who record them were Lancastrians, whose judgment at such a time could hardly be unprejudiced. This Cheshire guard are represented as thus addressing the king—"Dycun slep security quile we wake, and drede nought quile we lyve, Sefton: giff thou hadst weddet Perkyn, daughter of Lye, thou mun well holde a love day with any man in Chester schire i faith." § But independent of the improbable familiarity of this address, it can hardly have been used; for Perkin á Legh and his wife Margaret (on whom, for Sir Thomas Danyers, her father's services at Cressy, the king had settled the Lyme estate, in 1388, and which Perkin á Legh was the only person to whom the speech could apply,) had no daughter whom the king could have married.

A few words of explanation seem necessary as to this Cheshire guard. The personal service of his feudal retainers was first dispensed with by Henry II, in his expedition to Thoulouse, in the 5th year of his reign, when the persons excused were required to pay escuage, or, a sum of money to provide substitutes. After the decay of the feudal system, there seems to have grown up a plan of retaining men for service at stated rates of pay, but with the prospect of increased gains from a share of the ransoms and other perquisites of war.

In this way great numbers of men were retained by John of Gaunt, and the king afterwards confirmed them in their offices with their annuities and fees. || The king also, in two successive years of his

* Ibid I, p. 173, and *Chester Archaeological Journal*, Vol. i, p. 181, where the king's seal is engraved.

† *Chester Archaeological Journal*, Vol. ii, page 160, where the charge is reprinted.

‡ *Archæologia*, Vol. xx. p. 68.

§ *Grants and Emoluments*, 22 Richard II.

|| *Whitney's Choice of Emblems*, p. 357.

reign, retained Randle (Honkyn) Mainwaring, of Peover as *Armiger Regis et sagittarius de corona*,* and he retained as "frank" or "free archers" of the crown (the *die Freischutzen* of the time) no fewer than 500 men,† whose names are all given in the records, and of whom many doubtless at a later period took service under Henry V. in France.‡ In the Welsh wars of Edward I., about a century before this time, an archer was paid at the rate of 2d. a day; but either men were now scarcer or money was more plentiful, for the king paid his archers not less than 6d. a day. One of them, who had served Edward III in Gascony, for which, in the 32nd year of his reign he had had a grant of the feeding of six cows on Row Marsh in Frodsham, had his pay increased 2d. a day by the king for his life.§ But besides these archers, the king retained great numbers of knights, esquires, and other gentlemen, at salaries varying from C's to XL marks a year. To the last the Cheshire men held fast by their faith to the king, and their conduct in the next reign shewed that they still cherished his memory. On the 23rd November, 1385, the king appointed John Cartelache to the office of porter of his Castle of Beeston for life. The appointment, it appears, took place by patent, and under the king's genuine seal, and not like that which beguiled the porter of Carlisle Castle, in the story of "Adam Bell," when he exclaimed

"Welcome is my lord's seal," he said,

"For this ye shall come in!"

He opened the gate full shortly,

An evil opening for him!

In the same year the king led an army into Scotland, penetrated as far as Edinburgh, burning the enemy's towns, and doing them great damage; but the Scotch, under their French commander, De Vienne, declining to encounter the king while he was ravaging their country on the east, entered England on the opposite side, and having advanced as far as Lancashire, returned home laden with spoil. Although through his impatience to return home, the king won but little glory by his expedition, it had the effect of detaching from his allies their French commander, and sending him away in disgust, both with them and their mode of warfare. In this advance into Scotland, the Cheshire men do not appear to have had any considerable

* *Cheshire Records*, 21 and 22 Richard II.

† *Williams' Gesta Henry V.*, p. 273.

‡ *Cheshire Records*, 21 Richard II.

share. Like some of their Lancashire neighbours, they were probably in the retinue of John of Gaunt, then on an expedition to Spain, seeking the crown of Castille, whence, on his return, one of the Lancashire men brought back a sort of certificate or "compostella," still in the possession of his descendants, admitting him into the confraternity of the church of St. Salvador, at Oviedo, and entitling him to the full benefit of all their relics, privileges and prayers.

In 1387, having been ten years upon the throne, the king, as others who have become their own masters too soon, began to experience what it was to have been

Left by his sire, too young such loss to know,
Lord of himself, that heritage of woe.

At his grandfather's death he had fallen, nominally, under the guardianship of his three uncle Dukes, respectively of Lancaster, York, and Gloucester. Of these, the first was proud, passionate, and unpopular; the second, indolent and inactive; and the third, bold and turbulent, but popular. Their guardianship, however, was in reality political and not personal. In John of Gaunt, one of the three, the county of Chester claimed a share. The Duke, the early friend of protestantism and Wycliffe, and the brother-in-law of Chaucer, was Constable of Chester, and Baron of Halton, where he had a hunting seat, with considerable other possessions in the county.

When the king came of age, his uncles' neglect of his education was seen in his ignorance of the art of governing; and thus, when no longer a minor, "he came of age" says an old chronicler "to undo himself,"—unlike in this respect one of his early successors, Prince Hal, who it is said gave no promise of knowing how to rule until the sceptre was actually in his grasp.

With a view to ingratiate himself and win favour with his friends, the king about this time visited Chester, the Duke of Ireland at the same time repairing to the northern borders of Wales to strengthen himself against a coming struggle.* The Duke of Lancaster's absence in Spain when the king came of age, favoured his brother Gloucester's design to retain the control over the king which he had exercised so long. Under pretence of removing the king's favourites, but in reality to carry out this design, he assembled a large body of men at Haringay Park, in Highgate, upon which the king, who did not want spirit, commanded Thomas Molyneux, his constable of Chester Castle, to call the Sheriff to his aid and to raise an army and march with the

* Lingard's *History of England*, Vol. iii, p. 163-4.

Duke of Ireland to his relief. Molyneux, who had been Justice or Deputy Justice of Chester in 1383, and was a man of undoubted valour, and of great power both in Cheshire and Lancashire, hastened to obey his sovereign's command, and calling in besides the Sheriff, Sir Richard Vernon, who afterwards died in the king's cause, and Sir Richard Ratcliffe, he raised a force of 5000 men, with which, in 1388, he advanced to meet the Duke of Gloucester.* The muster roll of this Cheshire host, could it be now recovered, would prove a curious and interesting document.

Meeting in Oxfordshire, the two armies encountered each other near Radcot bridge, when the gallant leader of the Cheshire men † having fallen in the battle, his troops were put to rout, and the Duke of Ireland, fleeing from the field, escaped into the low countries, where he shortly afterwards died.‡ Lady Molyneux, the widow it is presumed of Sir Thomas, was shortly afterwards, by Gloucester's influence, banished the court. By the same influence too, all the Duke of Ireland's moveables in Cheshire were seized and lodged in Chester Castle until the 21st of January (11th Richard II, 1388,) when the king, under the penalty of £1000, commanded Peter, the son of Robert Legh to restore them.§ The king shewed that his affection for the memory of his favorite was lasting, by bringing over his remains, and causing them to be honorably interred at home, in the year 1395.||

Richard must have loved field sports, for he paid for two falcons and two lanerets, 39 marks, and at another time 17 marks for a falcon and a tiercel. With this taste of the king's, still less with that of Henry V., who maintained and hunted a pack of hounds, a Cheshire man will hardly quarrel.

About this time one William de Marshton, probably one of Wycliffe's followers, being arrested and sent to Chester Castle on a charge of Apostacy, the abbot of Evesham presented a petition to have him given up to him.¶

In his attempt to control the king after his majority, Gloucester was joined by his nephew Henry Bolingbroke, who was thus early arrayed against his sovereign; and as men generally hate whom they have injured, the king was not long ignorant that he wanted "his

* Holinshed, p. 460-1.

† Hume's *History of England*, Vol. iii., p. 20.

‡ Lingard's *History of England*, Vol. iii., p. 165.

§ *Cheshire Records*.

|| Holinshed, p. 485.

¶ *Cheshire Records*, 11th Richard II.

cousin's love." The Parliament which Gloucester called in 1388 to confirm his irregular proceedings was called indifferently, either "The Wonderful," or "The Merciless" Parliament,* neither of them an enviable appellation.

In 1389, when the king led an army into Ireland, he displayed such courage and talent for command as to revive the memory of his father's and grandfather's old renown, and make men think the old English strain of valour was not extinct.† As a County Palatine, Cheshire has its own records, which are not wholly confined to state affairs; but occasionally give us glimpses of matters of a more private nature. Thus, on the 5th July, 1392, one of the entries shews how the king remunerated his surgeon. On that day, John Leche, no inappropriate name for one of his calling, had a grant for life of the manor of Moston, in Flintshire, as the king's surgeon, in return for his giving up a former patent of the moor of Over Marsh. The new manor was worth £14 13s. 4d. a year, at that time no small sum, so that the king's officer was not ill paid‡.

On the 27th October, 1393, when Cherburg was to be given up, the king commanded Robert Whitney and another to receive it from John Golafre, and to deliver it to the procurator of the king of Navarre.§ Whitney, a Cheshire man, was not the only one of his name whom the king took into his service for a few years later he retained Howell de Whitney as one of his archers.|| Both these Whitneys were probably of the same family as the poet, whose works have been lately so ably edited by a Cheshire man.

In 1393 there was probably some domestic disturbance in the county, for a commission issued into the hundred of Macclesfield, commanding the arrest of all malefactors and disturbers of the peace. The Macclesfield commission was addressed to Sir Robert de Legh, and Peter de Legh, and, a similar commission probably issued into the other hundreds of the county.¶

Two years afterwards in contemplation of another voyage to Ireland, the king, on the 23rd June in the 18th year of his reign, commanded John Drax, his serjeant at arms, to enquire and ascertain what ships and sailors could be had in the county of Chester, for

* Lingard's *History of England*, Vol. iii, p. 169.

† Hume's *History of England*, Vol. iii, p. 46.

‡ *Cheshire Records*, 15th Richard II.

§ *Cheshire Records*, 16th Richard II.

|| *Cheshire Records*, 21st Richard II.

¶ *Cheshire Records*, 2nd August, 16th Richard II.

transporting the king and his host across the channel.¹ Drax, the person selected for this commission must have been a man of some consequence, for in the following year we find him ordered to receive from the Earl of Huntingdon the castle and outworks of Brest, and to deliver them to the Duke of Brittany.² There had been an old connection between Brest and Cheshire, for her hero, Sir Hugh Calveley, after having had charge of Calais in 1380, became governor of Brest. On the 8th of August following Sir John Lovell, Knight, was ordered to take up all kinds of ships and shipping, and to arrest and impress sailors to man them, in all parts and places within the counties of Chester and Lancaster and the parts of North Wales.³ Monsieur John de Lovell, who appears here in the rather ambiguous character of something less than an Admiral and something more than the leader of "those four and twenty pressgang fellows" mentioned in the ballad, was a person of consequence, for on the march of the royal army to Scotland, in 1385, he and two companions had charge of 100 men at arms and 200 archers forming part of the right wing of the army.⁴

In September, 1394, the king arriving at Chester on his way to Ireland with the Duke of Gloucester and a large retinue of nobles, was met and escorted into the city by the mayor, carrying the sword of state, and attended by a large procession.⁵

On the 21st August, 1396, by letters patent tested by Edmund, Duke of York, keeper, or as he is afterwards called, "our uncle York, lord governor of our kingdom," the king granted his protection to John, son of Robert Dumvill, of Lymm, abiding in Rokesburghe Castle, in the king's service, under John Stanley its governor, and on the 10th October in the next year the king, then at Chester, granted this Cheshire soldier C's a year as a retainer.⁶ Another Cheshire man, Hamo Smithwicke, who, about the same time had a grant of 12d. a day as one of the king's 30 men at arms had his grant afterwards confirmed to him by the king's successor.⁷

Amongst other similar grants to other Cheshire men met with in the county records, there is one to the above named John, or Sir John

1 *Cheshire Records*, and *Trahison et Mort Richard II*, p. xliij.

2 *Traison et Mort Richard II.*, xxi.

3 *Cheshire Records*.

4 *Traison et Mort Richard II.*, 239, 294.

5 *Ormerod's History of Cheshire*, i, 195.

6 From copies of the originals in my possession.

7 *Grants and Enrolments, Henry IV.*

Stanley. In 1385, he had served as Lord Deputy of Ireland, and in 1396 we find him Constable of Rokesburgh Castle, a post of importance on the Scottish border, requiring for its governor, a cool, shrewd, and able commander. On 3rd October* he was retained by the king at a salary of 40 marks a year.† After returning again to Ireland he was made first Lord Justice and then Lord Lieutenant. Sir John accompanied the king on his return from Ireland to Conwy; very shortly afterwards we find him, alas, arrayed against his master. In the next reign he was made by his new master a Knight of the Garter, Born, a younger son of a Cheshire Knight, Sir Wm. Stanley, of Stourton, his rapid rise to wealth and power was remarkable even in that age. He did not, however, owe all his advancement to royal favour, for it was his good fortune to win the hand of Isabel de Lathom, and from his alliance with that rich Lancastrian heiress has descended a long line of illustrious names, amongst whom none has been greater than that the poet statesman and orator, who so lately sustained the dignity of the Earldom of Derby.

By the death of Sir Ralph de Percy, owner of Fulk Stapleford, an event which happened about this time, his brother and brother general, Henry Percy, better known as Hotspur, now aged 30, who had been taken prisoner at Otterburne, became his heir, and so introduced into the Cheshire bead roll, an historic name which has since passed into a household word. Having become Justice of Chester and North Wales, he possessed in the next reign great influence, not only in the county, but throughout the principality.‡

In the year 1397, when the king had determined to regain the power of which Gloucester and his cabal of nobles had deprived him, and for that purpose had called a parliament, the nobles, as if fearing violence, came to Westminster attended by great numbers of their retainers, while the king trusted his safety wholly to his body guard of Cheshire archers, a body of 2000 men, all of whom wore his badge of the White Hart.§ Of this parliament|| one principal business was to try the Earl of Arundel and others for attainting the king's ministers under an illegal commission. The earl being found guilty of this

* 21st *Richard II.*

† *Cheshire Records.*

‡ Lingard's *History of England*, iii, 180,

§ *Cheshire Records*, 20th *Richard II.*

|| Y'clept the "Great Parliament." (Harl. MSS) cod. 206, fo. 107.

charge, was guarded by a portion of the Cheshire force to the scaffold.* After a sitting of twelve days, either from some distrust of the nobles, his displeasure against the citizens, or in order to be nearer Roger Mortimer, the king adjourned the parliament from London to Shrewsbury, where it again met on the 27th January, 1398, and Roger Mortimer came over from Ireland for the purpose of attending its sittings. By an Act then passed, Cheshire was raised to a principality of which the king, who thereupon assumed the title of Prince of Chester, was to be the head. But this Act, which further enacted that no grant of the principality should be made to any but the king's eldest son for the time being was only short lived, for the first year of the next reign saw it repealed.†

In the same year the king commissioned the Earl of Salisbury to collect forces in Cheshire and North Wales, probably with a view to recruit that large army which, (under convoy of the fleet which, as we have seen accompanied Roger Mortimer back to Ireland) Sir John Lovell had been ordered to collect.‡ One of the Eaton Charters has preserved to us the name of Urian Brereton, a Cheshire man who sailed in this expedition, and lost his life the same year in the incursion led by the Irish Chieftain O'Brien in which Roger Mortimer also fell.§ A William Brereton and his son of the same name were retained to serve the king at C's a year on 10th October.|| The date of Urian's death admits of his having been one of the persons so retained, and if so, a careless or a hasty scribe may have written Urian for William or *vice versa*; tho' Urian was certainly a frequent family name of the Breretons. The king, who was affectionately attached to Roger Mortimer, grieved over his death.

It was during the sitting of the parliament at Shrewsbury that Bolingbroke made his memorable charge of high treason against the Duke of Norfolk. There is reason to believe that the king had the first intimation of this charge, during the sitting of this parliament at a time when he was the guest of Sir Robert Legh the constable or keeper of Oswestry Castle. It is certain that Norfolk appeared at Shrewsbury to answer it. The memory of the king's short sojourn at Oswestry is preserved by his favourite cognisance, the Hart in Park, still swinging as a tavern sign in the neighbourhood; the

* Hume's *History of England*, iii, 30. n., and *Traison et Mort Richard II*, 138.

† Holinshed's *Chronicles*, 492, *History of Cheshire*, I, xxxiii, and I. 45.

‡ Holinshed's *Chronicles*, 497, 499.

§ *Westminster Papers*.

|| *Ibid.*

phonetic painter however, has made havoc of the cognisance by representing it as a Bloody Heart surrounded by a park paling ! The appeal thus made brings us to the opening scene of the poet's story, which is occupied with the short remainder of the king's reign, a period of about a year and a half, and from this time we take the drama as our guide.

The first scene opens in the palace at Westminster, when the king is present, and John of Gaunt and other nobles are attending upon him. At this time the king was about 30 years old, and John of Gaunt, born 23rd June, 1340, was 58 : although this was not a very advanced age, the king invariably addresses his uncle as *old John of Gaunt*. Was it a compliment in England *then* as it is in the East *now* to call a man old, or did war and their hard lives make men in that age look prematurely old ? It would seem to have been so, for Falstaff, who had been page to the Duke of Norfolk and was by far John of Gaunt's junior, was constantly addressed as old Jack Falstaff, though the title did not always please him, for when the Chief Justice so addressed him, he resented it sharply, and said that he was only old in wisdom and understanding.

Being informed that Bolingbroke and Mowbray are in attendance, the king summoned them to his presence, and after hearing the charge and the denial, strives to reconcile his two angry nobles—

Wrath kindled gentlemen, be ruled by me,
Let's purge this choler without letting blood !
Forget, forgive !

Blood letting was *then* in as much favour with our fathers as it was *once* with Doctor Sangrado, and as it is in Italy *now*. The frame of man is indeed wonderfully made, or it must have succumbed under the severe treatment, which in every age it has encountered from dangerous and mistaken nostrums ! Down almost to our own times blood letting was periodical five out of twelve months in the year. August, however, was a fence month, when it was forbidden : but on that fatal night of St. Bartholomew, 24th August, 1572, Tavannes set aside the prohibition, crying in his frenzy as he ran through the streets of Paris

Saignez, saignez, la saignée est aussi bonne
Au mois d'aout qu au mois de Mai !

Let blood, let blood, arise, let blood and slay,
'Tis well to bleed in August as in May !

The angry nobles are both refractory, but of the two, Mowbray is the most moderate in his language :

I am disgrac'd, impeach'd, and baffled here ;
 Pierc'd to the soul with slander's venom'd spear ;
 The purest treasure mortal times afford,
 Is—spotless reputation ; that away,
 Men are but gilded loam, or painted clay.
 Mine honour is my life ; both grow in one ;
 Take honour from me, and my life is done.

Although the person most injured, the king tries to appease their wrath, until, finding all his efforts of no avail, he at length exclaims

We were not born to sue, but to command :
 Which since we cannot do to make you friends,
 Be ready, as your lives shall answer it,
 At Coventry, upon St. Lambert's day :
 There shall your swords and lances arbitrate
 The swelling difference of your settled hate.

The appeal for high treason before parliament thus unwillingly allowed, was a trial decided by the two parties fighting from sunrise until sunset, unless one of them was sooner killed or cried craven, either of which was taken to be a proof of guilt. It seems strange to us that a man's guilt or innocence should be made to depend on his prowess or the strength of his arm. But heaven seemed nearer to our ancestors than to us, and either their faith or their superstition was stronger, for they believed that providence would not only not suffer wrong to prevail, but would defend the right and award victory where it was due.

At the time when the appeal was made, parliament was still sitting, but the members took the unusual course of appointing twelve noblemen and twelve commoners, to be a committee to complete whatever business was still unfinished, and parliament then rose and the members hastened to their homes. Even now a committee of parliament sits occasionally during a recess for a special purpose, but that both houses should thus delegate their great powers to a committee authorising it to live and legislate after their own demise, seems an unprecedented procedure. Before this committee, this parliamentary anomaly, the appeal of the two nobles was now to be tried at Coventry, on St. Lambert's Day, the 17th September, 1398. There is a throne set, and the king has taken his seat. The Duke of Norfolk, who was then Earl Marshal, being one of the combatants, *Surrey* is acting in his place; and Aumerle, the king's cousin, who had lately been raised to his honourable title, which is to be found in the peerages both of France and England, being Aumerle in the former, and Albermarle in the latter, is High Constable on the occasion. The Lord Marshal

has made proclamation, and both the challenger and the challenged, arrayed in their proper coats (for heraldry was never more accounted of than at this time, the king having in the same year created a new herald, by the title of Chester Herald,* and conferred the office on William Briggs,) have taken solemn leave of their friends.

Being mounted, and both roused in their seats,
 Their neighing coursers daring of the spur,
 Their armed staves in charge, their beavers down,
 Their eyes of fire sparkling through sights of steel,
 And the loud trumpet blowing them together.

But, lo! the king has thrown down his warder, and the combatants are arrested in mid career.

The king was no stranger to the course of a trial by battle, for on the 7th June, 1380, such a trial had taken place in his presence in the precincts of the Palace at Westminster, between Sir John Annesley and Thomas Katrington, Esquire, when the latter was struck down and slain before the king's eyes, a circumstance which had made him painfully alive to the cruel usages of this mode of trial; and this perhaps was one of the motives which made him at the last moment interpose in the death struggle between Bolingbroke and his opponent. After consultation with his council, the king pronounces sentence on his two nobles; addressing Bolingbroke by his title of Hereford, which was one of his many honours,

You, cousin Hereford, upon pain of death,
 Till twice five summers have enrich'd our fields,
 Shall not re-greet our fair dominions,
 But tread the stranger paths of banishment!

to which, in the spirit of the Roman maxim, "omne solum forti patria est," Hereford replies,

Your will be done, this must my comfort be,
 That sun that warms you here shall shelter me.

Turning next to his opponent, the king says,

Norfolk, for thee remains a heavier doom,
 The hopeless word of never to return
 I breathe against thee!

Norfolk, who was unprepared for such a doom, thus feelingly laments it,—

A heavy sentence, my most sovereign liege,
 And all unlook'd for from your highness' mouth:
 The language I have learn'd these forty years,
 My native English, now I must forego:
 And now my tongue's use be to me no more,
 Than an unstringed viol or a harp.

* *Cheshire Records.*

Out of concern for John of Gaunt, the king immediately consents to shorten the term of his son's banishment four years, whereupon Gaunt, though sufficiently distressed himself, still attempts to offer comfort to his son :—

All places that the eye of heaven visits,
 Are to a wise man ports and happy havens :
 Teach thy necessity to reason thus ;
 There is no virtue like necessity.
 Think not, the king did banish thee ;
 But thou the king : Woe doth the heavier sit,
 Where it perceives it is but faintly borne.

Feeling there was more imagination than philosophy in this advice, Hereford thus beautifully comments upon it—

For guarling sorrow has less power to bite
 The man that mocks at it, and sets it light.
 Oh ! who can hold a fire in his hand,
 By thinking on the frosty Caucasus ?
 Or cloy the hungry edge of appetite,
 By bare imagination of a feast ?
 Or wallow naked in December snow,
 By thinking on fantastic summer's heat ?
 Oh, no ! the apprehension of the good,
 Gives but the greater feeling to the worse.
 Then England's ground, farewell : sweet soil, adieu ;
 My mother, and my nurse, that bears me yet ;
 Where'er I wander, boast of this I can,—
 Though banish'd, yet a true born Englishman.

The concluding boast sounds so modern, that we can hardly persuade ourselves it is Bolingbroke who says it.

For a few moments let us now accompany the two earls. Norfolk, attended only by a few friends proceeded to a port near Lowestoff, and thence took shipping almost unnoticed for Holland. Bolingbroke's progress on the other hand was so like a triumph as to be thought ominous. Great numbers of his friends attended him to Sandgate, and thence, on 3rd October, 1398, he sailed to France, where he was met on landing by the Dukes of Orleans and Berry, of Bourbon and Burgundy. He was well known to the Duke of Bourbon, and had been his fellow soldier in Barbary, in 1390, and he was doubtless known by fame, if not in person, to the other Dukes, having served in the crusade in Lithuania, in 1392, and having afterwards made a pilgrimage to Mount Sinai, and the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem. *

On 3rd February, 1399, John of Gaunt, who, though outwardly consenting to it, had taken his son's banishment greatly to heart, was

* *Traison et Mort Richard II.* xliv.

lying upon a sick bed, which he was never to leave, in his palace at Ely House, a place which has obtained some notoriety since. From its garden, it was that Richard III. on that fatal morning when he so abruptly broke up the council and sent Hastings to the block, desired to have some strawberries. At a later period it was coveted by Queen Elizabeth's favourite, Sir Christopher Hatton, whose name it has since borne, as well it might, for he did not obtain it without some trouble, as this characteristic letter from his mistress to the Bishop of Ely, its then owner, will shew :

"PROUD PRELATE,—I understand you refuse to give up a portion of your garden at my request. I would have you know, that I who made you what you are can unmake you, and by St. Paul, if you do not comply with what I ask, I will unfrock you."

Here too, at a still later period occurred the incident commemorated by Cowper :

So in the Chapel of old Ely house,
When wandering Charles, who meant to be the third,
Had fled from William and the news was fresh ;
The simple clerk, but loyal, did announce
And eke did rear right merrily two staves,
Sung to the praise and glory of King George.

To this palace and to Lancaster's bedside the king has come. It had been reported that the king, to some or all of his four favourites, had let out the kingdom to farm, and the dying prince taking it as true, beautifully, but rather too warmly expostulates with him upon it.

This royal throne of kings, this scepter'd isle,
This fortress, built by nature for herself,
Against infection, and the hand of war :
This happy breed of men, this little world ;
This precious stone set in the silver sea,
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England,
Dear for her reputation through the world,
Is now leas'd out (I die pronouncing it),
Like to a tenement, or pelting farm.

The sick man utters this with almost his dying breath, and he is scarcely dead before the king declares

To-morrow next

We will for Ireland.

His continual wars having brought leanness to his exchequer, the king now declares an unkingly resolve to seize all the deceased's effects to meet the charges of his great affairs, of which the principal was to chastise the Irish for the death of Roger Mortimer.

Arriving at Milford on the 19th May, 1399, he determines ere

sailing to increase the strength of his Cheshire guard by a fresh levy, and summonses for that purpose were addressed to Richard Venables, of Kinderton, Sir John Massy, of Tatton, Sir Richard Wynnngton, Sir John Hawkston, William Venables, of Bollington, and Sir Hugh Browe, commanding each of them to summon the archers of his hundred between 16 and 60, and out of them to select 80 to attend him to Ireland.* He did not actually sail, however, before the 4th June, on which day he was joined by his faithful friend and subject Sir Richard Vernon, who on the 10th October previous had been retained for his service at a salary of £10 a year. Of this knight it is said that Sir Walter Scott makes that *fast* young lady Diana Vernon somewhat irreverently say that her ancestor had been sadly slandered by a sad fellow called Will Shakspeare, whose Lancastrian partialities and a certain knack of embodying them, had turned history upside down, or rather inside out. Surely he was not unjustly treated by the poet, who has put into his mouth the noble character of the prince, his enemy.

I never in my life
 Did hear a challenge urg'd more modestly,
 Unless a brother should a brother dare
 To gentle exercise and proof of arms.
 He gave you all the duties of a man ;
 Trimm'd up your praises with a princely tongue ;
 Spoke your deservings like a chronicle ;
 Making you ever better than his praise,
 By still dispraising praise, valued with you :
 And, which became him like a prince indeed,
 He made a blushing cital of himself ;
 And chid his truant youth with such a grace
 As if he master'd there a double spirit,
 Of teaching, and of learning, instantly,
 There did he pause. But let me tell the world,—
 If he outlive the envy of this day,
 England did never owe so sweet a hope,
 So much misconstrued in his wantonness.

When the shepherd is absent with his dog the wolf easily leaps into the fold. Hardly had the king loosed his sails before a cabal of discontented nobles meet to plot his downfall and inflame their mutual discontents. Northumberland, one of their number communicates to them this piece of intelligence—

I have from Port le Blanc, a bay
 In Britanny, receiv'd intelligence,
 That Harry of Hereford,
 Well furnished by the Duke of Bretagne,
 Is making hither with all due expedience.

* *Cheshire Records*, 22nd Richard II.

Amongst the handful of bold men who embarked on this rash enterprise, which if it had not succeeded would have been called madness, one name, that of Sir John Norbury, has a Cheshire ring in it; but I have failed to find him in the family pedigree. Possibly he was the same person who was a witness to the will of Henry IV. A Sir Thomas Norbury who had some connection with the port of Brest so early as the year 1377, and was ordered to procure and send there a supply of gunpowder,* may have been Sir John's father. Bolingbroke, the leader of this expedition, was no laggard, and after hovering upon the coast no longer than was sufficient to communicate with his friends, he landed very early in July, near the mouth of the Humber, at Ravenspurg, the place where, coming on a similar errand, Edward IV landed at a later period, but it exists no more, having been swallowed up by the sea, so that neither Lancastrian nor Yorkist may now go on a pilgrimage to visit it. As soon as he landed, Bolingbroke dispatched no less than 150 pairs of letters to his friends in all parts of England, intreating their favour and assistance, and three weeks afterwards we find him at the head of a large force in the wolds of Gloucestershire, attended by the Earl of Northumberland; and that nobleman's answer to his leader's question, how far it is to Berkeley, shows how soon he has become a courtier.

I am a stranger here in Gloucestershire.
 These high wide hills, and rough uneven ways,
 Draw out our miles, and make them wearisome;
 Yet your fair discourse hath much beguil'd
 The tediousness and process of my travel.

To Ross and Willoughby, who next arrive and tender their service, Bolingbroke thus returns his courteous thanks—

All my treasury
 Is yet but unfelt thanks, which, more enrich'd
 Shall be your love and labour's recompense.
 Evermore thanks, the exchequer of the poor,
 Which, till my infant fortune comes to years,
 Stands for my bounty.

“But who comes here?” he exclaims, as he sees his uncle the Duke of York approach. Fickle and timid, if not treacherous, the Duke, though regent of the kingdom, first admits Bolingbroke to a parley, and then openly declares his intention to stand neuter between him and the king.

When, twice or oftener in every day, the mail between England and Ireland in our time, passes to and fro with more regularity than a village post, and a trembling wire speeds messages swifter than a weaver's

* *Traison et Mort Richard II.*, 185, n.

shuttle through air and ocean, we can hardly believe that rebellion could for several weeks be stalking unchecked through England without the news reaching, in the sister island, him whom it most concerned. The proverb, "that ill news has swift wings" was singularly falsified in this instance, for, not until Bolingbroke had secured most of the Castles, and was almost master of the whole kingdom, did the king hear of his return. On the 19th July, the king issued his commission to the Earl of Salisbury, his seneschal of the Cheshire principality, committing to his government all and singular the king's lieges in North Wales, and requiring them to serve under his orders wherever he might direct.* If this commission was a consequence of Bolingbroke's advance, it is the earliest intimation we have that the news had reached the king. Before the 1st August 1399, Salisbury, who had landed in Wales, endeavours to persuade an impatient Welsh commander to await the king's arrival; but no, his superstitious hearer insists on disbanding his forces, because, as he says, the bays have all withered, and the omen is evil. Holinshed, who records that these trees did so wither at this time, tells us that, contrary to all men's thinking, they afterwards revived and grew green again; which, had he only waited long enough, would have puzzled the Welsh captain still more. The bay tree withering has long been held an ill omen. One instance of it is noticed as having occurred in the mild winter before Nero died; and in 1629, when all these trees died before a great pestilence at Padua, it was said that Apollo, who wore the bays, and the nine sisters over whom he rules, were taking a mournful leave of that far famed university.

On the 9th August the king landed on the Welsh coast, near a place called Barkloughly Castle.† Creton, the rhyming chronicler whom he had taken with him to Ireland, has left us the best account extant of the expedition. He, however, arrived before the king, and when the king landed he was at Conwy, so that his account of the place of debarkation, which he says was Milford, is only from hearsay. No sooner has the king landed than Aumerle asks him

How brooks your grace the air,
After late tossing on the breaking seas?

To which he feelingly replies,

Needs must I like it well: I weep for joy,
To stand upon my kingdom once again.—

* *Cheshire Records.*

† *Holinshed, l. 499.*

Dear earth, I do salute thee with my hand,
 Though rebels wound thee with their horses hoofs :
 As a long parted mother with her child
 Plays fondly with her tears, and smiles in meeting ;
 So, weeping, smiling, greet I thee, my earth.

Having heard Salisbury state that his forces are dispersed,
 Aumerle, noticing the colour leave the king's cheek, asks

Why looks your grace so pale ?

The king only replies by another question,

But now, the blood of twenty thousand men
 Did triumph in my face, and they are fled ;
 And, till so much blood thither come again,
 Have I not reason to look pale and dead ?

Alternating for a while between hope and despair as he hears the
 varying reports of his followers, he at last seems to throw away all
 hope, and gives this passionate utterance to his despair :

No matter where ; of comfort no man speak :
 Let's talk of graves, of worms, and epitaphs :
 Make dust our paper, and with rainy eyes
 Write sorrow on the bosom of the earth.
 Let's choose executors, and talk of wills :
 And yet not so,—for what can we bequeath,
 Save our deposed bodies to the ground ;
 Our lands, our lives, and all are Bolingbroke's,
 And nothing can we call our own, but death ;
 And that small model of the barren earth,
 Which serves as paste and cover to our bones.
 For heaven's sake, let us sit upon the ground,
 And tell sad stories of the death of kings :—
 How some have been depos'd, some slain in war,
 Some poison'd by their wives, some sleeping kill'd ;
 All murder'd :—For within the hollow crown,
 That rounds the mortal temples of a king,
 Keeps death his court : and there the antick sits,
 Scoffing his state, and grinning at his pomp ;
 Allowing him a breath, a little scene
 To monarchise, be fear'd, and kill with looks ;
 Infusing him with self and vain conceit,—
 As if this flesh, which walls about our life,
 Were brass impregnable ; and humour'd thus,
 Comes at the last, and with a little pin
 Bores through his castle wall, and—farewell, king !

But let us now accompany the king from Milford, or wherever
 else he landed, to Conwy, where we next find him. That he rode
 between the two places in the space of a single night, as Creton would

have us believe, is impossible from the distance alone. At this time, or shortly before, the king must have been at Haverford Castle; for in an account taken of his property after his deposition, certain parts of it were found there, and amongst the rest "xxv. draps d'or de d'vses suytes dount iij de cypre les autres de Lukes."* If he landed at Milford, he may have passed from thence to Haverford, which is in the direct line from the former place to Conwy. Some authorities make the king disembark at Caermarthen, and tell us that there being no army to receive him, seven gallant Cheshire men, John Legh, of Booths, Thomas Cholmondeley, Ralph Davenport, Adam Bostock, John Done, Thomas Beeston, and Thomas Holford, each with 70 retainers became his body guard, wearing on their shoulders his cognisance of the "white hart rising from the ground," and kept watch over him night and day with their battle axes, for which loyal service they were expressly excepted out of the act of indemnity granted by the usurper in the next reign.

When the king became fully assured that Bolingbroke was at the head of a great host while he had no army to oppose him, he quitted his small force in a friar's dress, with only 15 of his attendants, and repaired in succession to several of his Welsh castles. He came first to Harlech or Hardelagh, next to Carnarvon, afterwards to Beaumaris, and finally to Conwy castle, where Creton saw him arrive at daybreak.† It is not easy to say which of these three castles has been corrupted into Barkloughly. Harlech, the first of them, was rendered famous in the wars of the Roses by one of its Governors, who used this boast, "I held a castle in France till all the old women in Wales heard of it; and I will hold Harlech till all the old women in France hear of it." Harlech, which is but 40 miles from Conwy, is within a night's ride from that place, and near it is a mountain ridge called Lough Legh, which probably once gave the castle its now forgotten name. The monk of Evesham distinctly says, indeed, that Harlech was the place of the king's landing, and a recent writer in the *Archæologia Cambrensis*, after investigating the subject, though he concludes that the king landed at Barmouth, is of opinion that Harlech was Barkloughly.‡ If, however, the king visited Carnarvon and Beaumaris in his way to Conwy, his journey must have occupied more than one night: and if so, the chroniclers who record it are not to be understood

* *Antient Kalendars of the Treasury*, iii., 350.

† *Traison et Mort Richard II.*, 282 *History of Cheshire*, ii, 135, 6.

‡ *Traison et Mort Richard II.*, 189, and *Arch. Camb.*, Jan., 1858. p. 10.

as meaning that the whole journey only occupied that space of time. Otterburne in his account, which Holinshed follows, leads us to believe that the king in his wanderings visited the several castles above mentioned, and in a manuscript on the Antiquities of Chester in the Harleian collection, we have many other particulars, some of them highly honourable to the Cheshire men.* On the 14th August, while the king was at Conwy, he exercised one of his few remaining prerogatives of royalty, by appointing Sir Richard de Wynnyngton, Knight, and Richard de Manley, Esquire, to be keepers of the peace (*custodes pacis*) for the Hundred of Edisbury during pleasure.†

Meanwhile Bolingbroke was not idle. Having occupied Bristol, he concluded that the king's aim would be to reach Chester, where he had many friends, and his power was strongest. He therefore wheeled about, and marching through Gloucester, Hereford, Leominster, and Ludlow, came to Shrewsbury, crying as he went havoc and destruction on Cheshire and the Cheshire men. Alarmed by this cry, or influenced by baser motives, Sir Robert Legh, of Adlington, and his brother John Legh repaired to Shrewsbury and made their submission to Bolingbroke; conduct which was both treason and ingratitude, for within one short year John Legh had been both retained and pensioned by the king, while Sir Robert had been made constable for life of the castle of Oswestry, with an adequate salary, and as we have seen had the further honour of receiving the king as his guest during the sitting of the parliament, at Shrewsbury.‡

From Shrewsbury, Bolingbroke advanced to Prees, and from thence he came to Chester, which he entered on the 9th August, and, to mask his intention, caused peace to be proclaimed at the city cross. The next day, however, men saw a strange commentary on this proclamation. His policy being to

Cut off the heads
Of all the favorites that the absent king
In deputation left behind him here,
When he was personal in the Irish wars.

He had put Bushy Green and the Earl of Wiltshire to death at Bristol, and his resentment now fell on Sir Peter Legh, of Lyme, brother of that Sir Robert who has been already mentioned. Sir Peter had received many favours from the king and had great reason to hold

* *Traison et Mort Richard II.*, 189, n.

† *Cheshire Records*.

‡ *Cheshire Records*, 20 and 21 *Richard II.* Holinshed's *Chronicles*, 500.

by his allegiance. On 4th August, 1387,* very soon after he came of age, the king confirmed to him and John Holland, the king's brother, an annuity of C's a year out of the manor of Northwich, and he also granted him the Lyme estate, in satisfaction of the annuity which the Black Prince had given to Sir Thomas Danyers, in return for his services at Crescy. Sir Peter was also made equitator, and one of the park keepers of Macclesfield forest, and he was frequently one of the Cheshire forest judges in eyre, with a salary of C's a year.† It may have been in consequence of his appointment as forest Justice in eyre that the poet Drayton calls him the chief justice, and thus addresses him,

Nor thou, magnanimous Legh, must not be left
 In darkness, for thy rare fidelity
 To save thy faith, content to lose thy head,
 That reverent head, of good men honoured.

The day after Bolingbroke's entrance into Chester, Sir Peter Legh was apprehended and beheaded.‡ What his offence was, or whether he was subjected to the formality of a trial we do not know. Probably nothing worse was laid to his charge than that he desired to hold fast by his allegiance, and to preserve for his lawful sovereign either Chester castle or some other fortress which had been committed to him to keep. His head was placed upon the East gate, where it remained until the following year; when it was taken down and buried in the same grave with his body, in the church of the Carmelites, at Chester, whose house stood near the present White Friars. The Carmelites perhaps claimed to do the last offices to Sir Peter's remains out of a grateful memory of his grandfather, who, on All Saints' Day, 1348, had purchased from them for 40 marks a perpetual chantry within their house.§ Richard Pygas, their prior at this time, must be added to the list of Carmelite priors at Chester. Richard Doune, their prior in 1386, was probably still the head of the house when Sir Peter Legh met his fate. The foundations of the Carmelite priory, and of that of the Friars' Preachers which stood near, have lately been uncovered. In 1459, when John Holland, who probably succeeded their prior Richard Runcorn, was at the head of the house, the Friars' Preachers issued letters of fraternity to such as were willing to purchase them. The demand for these letters must have been considerable, since they were prepared in blank so as to allow of the purchasers' names being

* *Cheshire Records* 11 Richard II.

† *Cheshire Records*.

‡ Ormerod's *History of Cheshire*, i, 275.

§ *Lyme MSS*.

inserted afterwards. One of these letters without a name is in the possession of John Ireland Blackburne, Esquire, of Hale. From Chester, Bolingbroke took in the castles of Holt and Beeston, in the latter of which the king is said to have deposited 200,000 marks.* Returning again to Chester, he was there joined by the Duke of Surrey and the Earl of Worcester, Lord Lovell, the king's admiral, and Sir John Stanley, his lieutenant of Ireland, all of whom had deserted the king, and now hastened to make peace with his enemy.

On the very same day that Bolingbroke ordered Sir Piers Legh to be put to death he granted the following letter of safe conduct to the Prior of Beauvall. It bears date at Chester, and was probably made in consideration of some services which the prior had rendered. "Henry duc de Lancastre, Conte de Derby, de Nycole, de Leycestre de Herford et de Northampton, Seneschal D'Angleterre. A touz ceulx qui ces presentes lettres verront ou orront salut. Sachiez nous avoir donne et ottroye a nostre bienaime en Dieu le Prieur de Chartreux de Bauval, nostre bon congie et licence de venir par devers il luy nous et ailleurs ou il luy plaira. Sy vous prions et mandons que vous souffrey le dit nostre bienaime en Dien le Pieur de venir a nous ou ailleurs a son plaisir sauvement & suerement avecques ses chevaulx, hernoysz, & biens quelzconques sans leur faire dommage, injure, empeschement ou grievance quelconque. En tesmoignanie de ce, nous avons mis a ces presentes nostre seel. Donne a Cestre le x jour D'aoust l'an du regne vingt et tierce.—(*Madox Formulare Anglicanum*, p. 327.)

We last heard of the king at Conwy, where he was attended only by the Bishop of Carlisle, the Earl of Salisbury, and a few other friends. On Sunday, 17th August, at a council held at Chester, Northumberland, under orders from Bolingbroke, went to meet the king, and the next day waited on him at Conwy, where, professing the most humble duty, and presenting a forged letter from the Duke of York, he induced the king to leave Conwy and set out with him to Flint castle. In the narrow pass where Gwrych castle now stands, Northumberland, who appeared at Conwy with only seven followers, had placed an ambuscade. The king, when he perceived that he was betrayed, would have returned to Conwy: Northumberland however would not allow it, but forced him on, and after a short halt for rest and refreshment at Rhudlan, they passed on to Flint and reached the castle the same evening.† On the 19th, Bolingbroke, at

* *Chester Archaeological Journal*, part ii, 132.

† Holinshed, 500.

the head of his host appeared before the castle. Even in the poet's day the castle must have shewn signs of ruin, for, approaching its walls, not only does he make Bolingbroke thus commission Northumberland

Go to the rude ribs of that ancient castle;
Through brazen trumpet send the breath of parley
Into his ruined ears;

but in another place he speaks also of "its tottered battlements, Shakspeare must have seen this venerable castle and been familiar with its appearance, when he thus twice alluded to its ruined state. Within the castle occurred one of the spirited scenes which is given in the drama, and here also that striking incident occurred which so dispirited the king's remaining friends. During his interview with Bolingbroke, Math, his favourite hound, quitting his master's side went to crouch and fawn on his adversary. Have dogs, or men, or both, degenerated since the heroic times when Argus, the dog of Ulysses, could claim and cling to his master, though travel-stained and in disguise, after long years of absence and in the presence of his enemies?

Bolingbroke, who had so lately professed his strong intention to deserve the king's love, having him now fairly in his toils, the king thus sadly concludes the scene at Flint castle—

Well you deserve :—They well deserve to have,
That know the strong'st and surest way to get.—
Uncle, give me your hand ; nay, dry your eyes ;
Tears show their love, but want their remedies.—
Cousin, I am too young to be your father,
Though you are old enough to be my heir.
What you will have, I'll give, and willing too ;
For do we must, what force will have us do.—
Set on towards London :—Cousin, is it so ?

Mounted on two sorry hacks, both together not worth the sum the king had paid for his cast of hawks, the king and Salisbury at two o'clock set out from Flint and rode straightway to Chester, where the king was taken direct to the castle and lodged in the dungeon, or as the Cowper MSS. have it, in a tower over the great outer gateway opposite to Gloverstone.* Here two of his servants, John Pallet and Richard Seimer counselled an escape and pointed out a way across the sands of the Dee ; but the king was too narrowly watched to allow the attempt to be made.† Although he remained at Chester only one or two nights, he stayed there long enough to issue writs for the assembling

* *History of Cheshire*, i, 196.

† *Treason et Mort Richard II*, 211.

of parliament.¹ On the 21st August he was at Nantwich and the next day at Newcastle-under-Lyne. On the 24th August he was at Litchfield where he made an unsuccessful attempt to escape, which led to his being afterwards more strictly guarded. At Northampton, which he reached on the 29th he indulged in a lingering show of sovereignty, and granted a patent of the priory of Derehurst to one Master Richard Wyche, probably a member of a once celebrated Cheshire family.² On the 30th the king was at Dunstable and on the next day at St. Albans. On the 2nd September he entered London, and that well known scene occurred described by the poet with such inimitable pathos. The king, however, was still in semblance, but only in semblance, a monarch, and so late as the 23rd September he issued his commission constituting Richard de Vernon, of Shipbroke; Thomas de Fouleshurst, of Edlaston; Richard de Roop, Tho. de Maisteron, Richard Massey, of the Hough-in-mere, and Wm. Crue de Sonde, keepers of the peace (*custodes pacis*) for the hundred of Wich Malbank,³ which was perhaps the last warrant issued by his authority and in his name before his deposition.

In the reign of Richard II, waver of battle was a violent epidemic, of which the fury rose to such a height that in one instance it stripped the clergy of their sacred character, and men saw even an archbishop challenged to mortal combat. This prevailing taste is shockingly illustrated in the next scene of the drama. Sir Wm. Bagot, (who had a Cheshire name, for there is a charter extant granting to one Richard Bagot, the custody of the Bridge Gate in 1269⁴) is led a prisoner into the presence of Bolingbroke. Sir William had been in high favour, and in 1397 the king had appointed him with others to set forth his grievances before parliament.⁵ He occurs more than once in our Cheshire records, and possibly for the above service he had a grant of the seueschalship of the possessions of the late Earl of Arundel, after his execution.⁶ During the lists at Coventry the king had lodged at Bagot's house at Lyne, and had afterwards granted him the manor of Chaylesmore, and an annuity of £60 a year.⁷ In 1398 he had a general pardon of all crimes and offences whatsoever.⁸ When the

¹ Lingard's *History of England*, iii., 193.

² *Lancashire Historic Society's Journal*.

³ *Cheshire Records*, 23rd Sept., 23 Richard II.

⁴ *History of Chester*, i, 279.

⁵ Holinshed, 490.

⁶ *Cheshire Records*, 28th March, 21 Richard II.

⁷ Holinshed, 494. *Traison et Mort Richard II.* 17 n.

⁸ *Cheshire Records*, 20 Oct.

king set out for Ireland, he left Sir William one of his four lieutenants or commissioners.† He was with his colleagues at Bristol when they were shut out of the castle; and after the fall of that city he fled to Chester, and then to Ireland, where he was afterwards taken prisoner.‡ Standing now before Bolingbroke, Aumerle, Surrey, Northumberland, Percy, Fitzwalter, the Bishop of Carlisle, the Abbot of Westminster, and other nobles, the king's favourite boldly charges Aumerle with being an abettor of the Duke of Gloucester's murder. The latter, denying the charge, throws down his gage, and offers to prove his innocence in mortal combat. Upon this several other lords interfere, other gauntlets are thrown down, and a general *melée* ensues, in which "liar" and other unpronounceable epithets are freely applied by the nobles to each other until, as a great historian informs us, as many as forty gauntlets, the pledges of furious battle, strewed the floor of the house at the same time.§ If manners are regulated by the law of gravitation, as Sir Edward Coke tells us the law of inheritance is, and descend by a regular gradation, we may hope that the language used by these nobles, which is now used only by the lowest vulgar, will in time pass away and disappear, and be buried in the earth where it deserves to be. Well might Bolingbroke, though he had himself indirectly profited by the law of battle, desire to see an end to it; and accordingly one of the first acts of his reign was to obtain a statute abolishing this appeal to heaven for ever.

Norfolk's name being mentioned in the course of the stormy debate, just alluded to, awakes in Bolingbroke a generous feeling towards his old opponent, and he thus interposes between his nobles:—

These differences shall rest under age
Till Norfolk be repealed, repealed he shall be,
And, tho' mine enemy, restored again
To all his lands and seignories.

Upon hearing which, the bishop of Carlisle sorrowfully announces to the assembly that the duke is no more. Having visited Jerusalem, and returned from thence to Venice, he died there a broken-hearted man, on the 22nd September, 1399. The speed which wafted this news, which could only just have reached England, appears in strange contrast with the tardy pace at which the intelligence of Bolingbroke's

† Holinshed, p. 496.

‡ *Traison et Mort Richard II*, 185. 6.

§ Hume's *History of England*.

rising had travelled to the king in Ireland. Norfolk was at first buried in the church of St. Mark at Venice; but, in 1533, his family performed the pious office of bringing his remains to England, and committing them to the family burial place.

The Duke of York, by a preconcerted signal, now enters and announces that the king has adopted Bolingbroke as his heir, on which he invites him to ascend the throne; exclaiming, as the latter nothing loath proceeds to accept the invitation,—“Long live King Henry of that name the Fourth!” which calls forth from the bishop of Carlisle this grave and loyal protest.

Marry, heaven forbid!
 Worst in this presence may I speak,
 Yet best beseming me to speak the truth.
 Would God that any in this noble presence
 Were enough noble to be upright judge
 Of noble Richard; then true nobleness would
 Learn him forbearance from so foul a wrong!

For this bold speech the bishop, Thomas Merkes by name, was forthwith arrested. But the age was not yet ripe for putting a bishop to death, nor was it easy to deprive or depose him. The pope had indeed recently taken upon him to assume that right against refractory bishops in England; but to his great honour king Richard had manfully resisted the attempt and stigmatised it as a horrible excess; whereupon his holiness had recourse to another expedient, which answered the same end. He no longer deposed or deprived a refractory prelate, but translated him to some other see, which might either be *in partibus infidelium*, or a sinecure without revenue. In this way, even in this very reign, the archbishop of York had been transferred from York to St. Andrews.* And in the same way Merkes was made bishop of Samos, in Greece. Bolingbroke at first committed the bishop to ward in St. Alban's Abbey, but the prelate's honest boldness could hardly fail to commend itself to the usurper; and afterwards, when he found his seat more secure, he pronounced on him this sentence:—

Choose out some secret place, some reverend room,
 More than thou hast, and with it joy thy life;
 So as thou liv'st in peace, die free from strife,
 For though mine enemy thou hast ever been,
 High sparks of honour in thee have I seen.

When we next hear of Merkes, he was vicar of Sturminster, in Dorsetshire, from which he was removed to the rectory of Todenham.

* Lingard's *History of England*, II. 166.

in Gloucestershire. What trouble would it not have saved William III. at the revolution, if Sancroft and the non jurors could have been thus dealt with?

But Merkes, although the boldest was not the only prelate who thus openly dissented from the king's deposition; for the bishops of Bath and Wells, of Lichfield and Coventry, and of Hereford and Worcester, shared his views.

Amongst those of lower rank, who espoused the king's part, was William de Bromborough, once rector of St. Olave's in Chester; but when Richard was deposed, parson of the neighbouring rectory of Aldford.* Sir William, a man of some note, on the trial between Scrope and Grosvenor, as to which of them had the best right to bear the shield "azure with the bend or," sat as one of the judges during the three days that the court sat at Warrington, in the year 1386. He and John de Coke, one of his parishioners, had been employed to provide a supply of hay for the king's horses when he came to Chester, on 21st February, 1398, to be present at the installation of bishop Burghill, in St. John's church, and the money he expended, 26s. 2d., was only repaid him just before the king's deposition.† In or about 19 and 20 Richard II., Master William de Bromborough, bachelor of laws, was retained to act in the place of the justice of Chester in a cause touching the annulling the divorce (*annullationem divortii*) between John de Olton, deceased, the king's tenant in *capite* by knight's service, and Peterina his wife, and the chamberlain was charged 20s. disallowed in his account as paid to the said Master William de Bromborough. This entry is repeated in the three following years.. Probably it was intended to make the chief justice bear the expense of his deputy.‡ He was still rector when the king was deposed; but in a bad game choosing to adhere to the losing rather than the winning side, he left his benefice and went on pilgrimage beyond the seas, first obtaining a protection for himself and his tenants and their lands and goods.§ The case of this good man, who to save his faith and loyalty

* *History of Cheshire*, I. 272, II. 414.

† *Cheshire Records*, and *History of Cheshire*, I. 195.

‡ In the *Cheshire Records* are these entries:—"15 and 16 Ric. II. 'Recept Mag. Will. de Brunburgh de Aldeford, persona ecclesia ibidem, de denar. per camerar, sibi prius prestit.' 17 and 18 Ric. II. 'De prestit. de argento domini regis,'" from which it seems that an advance of money had been made to him.

§ *Cheshire Records*, I Henry IV.

gave up his benefice, is so faithfully described by Dryden in his paraphrase of Chaucer's good parson, that he might have sat for the portrait, so exactly do the circumstances correspond:—

The tempter saw him too with envious eye,
And, as on Job, demanded leave to try.
He took the time when Richard was deposed,
▲nd high and low with happy Harry closed ;
He joined not in their choice, because he knew
Worse might and often did from change ensue.
Much to himself he thought, but little spoke,
And undeprived his benefice forsook !

At Aldford, Bromborough's former living, there is a sculpture of an ecclesiastic, which I would fain believe is the effigy of this good parson. If so, it is sad to see it turned out of the church and abandoned to neglect.*

I may observe in passing that the succession of the rectors of Aldford, as given in the *History of Cheshire*, is very inaccurate, and that of St. Olave's even more so.† The latter makes Sir William Bromborough die in 1393, which was before the king's deposition.

Passing over several intervening scenes of the drama, I next pause to notice the singular question which the duchess of York put to her son, when she asks him

Who are the *violets* now,
That strew the green lap of the new-come spring ?

If she did not mean that the courtiers were hastening to adopt the violet as a *fleur de souvenance* and a Lancastrian emblem, she meant that they who were flocking in such haste to pay court to Bolingbroke, were no other than *violates* of their faith to their late master, Richard. But there was at least one man, Tanico d'Artois, a Gascon squire, who

* Since this Paper was read before the Chester Archaeological Society, the Parish Church of Aldford has, by the munificence of Richard, second and late Marquess of Westminster, been almost entirely rebuilt. The sculptured effigy referred to above still remains exposed to the weather on the east side of the churchyard, and is probably the one referred to in Ormerod's *History of Cheshire*, Vol. 2, p. 413, as "a recumbent figure of a female, the hands clasped in prayer," and as being then "nearly covered by the turf of the churchyard." It is hoped that room may yet be found for it in the body of the church, simply, if for no better reason, as a curious relic of days gone by, a connecting link between the old structure and the new.

† Ormerod's *Cheshire*, I. 272, II. 414.

was no such *violet*. Groom of the king's stud, he went with him on his last journey to Ireland;* and, returning with him, accompanied him to Conwy and Chester. At the latter place he was committed to the castle, for persisting to wear, after it had been forbidden, his master's cognisance of the white hart. The fidelity with which he clung to his humanity.† This faithful follower, passing through Pontefract, master in his misfortunes, and which is alike honourable to both, is one of those incidents which is calculated to make us in good temper with where his master (who had been previously sent to Knaresboro' and some other castles) then was, sought and obtained leave to visit him. Their affecting interview is interrupted by the entrance of the keeper, and Tanico is compelled to take a last farewell of his master. After the characteristic fashion of the age, the king desires his keeper to taste his offered food, and strikes him upon his refusing to do so; whereupon Sir Piers Exton and a number of armed men rush into the chamber, and fall upon the king. With a weapon snatched from his assailants he defends himself, but is at length struck down, and he dies exclaiming—

Mount, mount my soul on high,
While my gross flesh sinks downward here to die!

The chronicler, who records the king's burial, tells us that his obsequies were performed at Langley, by the bishop of Chester, and the abbots of St. Albans and Waltham.

But did the usurper imagine that Richard's death would tranquilise the kingdom and make his seat secure? Did he believe that whatever removed his victim—whether that slow fate, which in rapt vision was present to the poet when,

Close by the regal chair
Fell thirst and famine scowl
Upon their baffled guest,

or the stern and more sudden violence which waited on Sir Piers Exton's axe—his future life would bring him days of quiet and nights of rest.

Great delusions often accompany great crimes; but if Henry Bolingbroke had been hitherto thus blinded, his eyes were soon

* *Traison et Mort Richard II.* 197.

† Holinshed's *Chronicle*, 500. *Traison et Mort Richard II.* 47, 210, and *Chronicle Henry V.*, *passim*.

unscaled. Monarchs in misfortune, especially when their misfortunes are past remedy, always draw after them many sympathies. Scarcely was Richard dead, before there was a great revulsion in his favour; and those who, when he lived, would have him die, now exclaimed—

Oh! earth, yield us that king again
And take thou this!

He was canonized, too, after a sort, and hostile hosts, to consecrate their march, carried before their banners

The blood of fair king Richard scraped from Pomfret stones!

And the usurper, who had dreamed only of a crown lined with ermine, found himself seated between two fell spectres,—conscience and insatiate treason, with the sword of Damocles suspended over his head!

The realm was filled with turbulence and disquiet, and the usurper became a monument of the retribution of heaven; which, commending the poisoned chalice to his lips who has mingled it, makes success the very means to punish and chastise his crime!
