

THE BATTLE FOUGHT AT TEWKESBURY
An account written by
GEORGE MAY
And published by
JAMES MILLS, HIGH STREET, TEWKESBURY
1826

This document has been transcribed from the original. As far as possible the spelling and grammar of the original have been retained. The document has been repaginated to fit it into modern page sizes.

The account is a very early one, and reflects very much the sentiments of the time. It is predated by that contained in Dyde's 'History of Tewkesbury. Like Dyde, it is almost entirely based on Holinshed's account.

George May was a bookseller with and insurance agent with a shop at 3, Bridge Street, Evesham.

AN ACCOUNT
OF
THE BATTLE
FOUGHT AT
Cewkesbury,
BETWEEN
THE HOUSES OF YORK AND LANCASTER,
the Houses of York vs 1471. Lancaster

Price One Shilling.

J. G. Percy.
AN ACCOUNT

*R. Dyer
Congressbury*

OF

J. G. Percy

THE BATTLE

FOUGHT AT

H.
TEWKESBURY,

BETWEEN

THE HOUSES OF YORK AND LANCASTER,

IN 1471.

" Ther dukys, and erlys, lordes and barons
" Were take, and sleyne, and that wel sone;
" And some were ledde in to Londone
" With joye, and merthe, and grete renone."

Percy's Reliques.

TEWKESBURY:

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY JAMES MILLS,
HIGH STREET.

1826.

PREFACE.

The object of the present little work is to furnish - what has long been considered a desideratum in the local publications of the town - a popular description of the important conflict that took place between the armies of two rival sovereigns, for no less a prize than the Crown of England.

In preparing such an account, the writer has considered that the particulars of the battle itself might perhaps be perused with still greater interest, if placed in immediate connection with a compressed relation of the historical events that occasioned the same.

Such a relation forms therefore the introductory part; and this, with the pages that follow, are founded upon the various accounts of oldest and best historians, carefully collated together.

GEORGE MAY.

December, 1826

CHAPTER 1

“Gives not the Hawthorn bush a sweeter shade
 To Shepherds, looking on their silly sheep,
 That doth a rich embroidered canopy
 To kings, that fear their subjects’ treachery?
 Oh yes, it doth, a thousand fold it doth!
 And to conclude; the Shepherd’s homely curds,
 His cold this drink out of his leathern bottle,
 His wonted sleep under a fresh tree’s shade,
 All which secure and sweetly he enjoys,
 Is far beyond a prince’s delicates.
 His viands sparkling in a golden cup,
 his body couched in a curious bed,
 When care, mistrust, and treason wait on him,”

HENRY VI. PART 3

Previous to entering on a description of the great event before us, it may not perhaps be considered irrelevant briefly to review the occurrences in our history which occasioned this decisive combat, as well as others far more sanguinary that occurred before.

The banishment and unfair treatment of Henry, then Duke of Hereford, but subsequently Duke of Lancaster, by Richard the second, ultimately led to the return of

that high-minded peer, In direct opposition to the command

of the King.

But safely landed on his native shores, Henry soon affected the deposition of Richard, and proclaimed the crown on his own under a *false* pretention of priority of dissent. But the king having in numerous instances rendered himself completely unpopular, the people generally received the new candidate without a minute examination of his claim; happy to admit for their new monarch, one who is generosity of spirit and ability to govern they considered far superior to that of him who had his ability to govern. Thus supported, Henry of Lancaster was crowned King by the title of Henry the fourth; and after a reign of fourteen years was peaceably succeeded by his son Henry the fifth; and in 1422 by his grandson Henry, the sixth of that name.

But in the reign of the last-mentioned prince, the claims of the elder branch of the royal line, hitherto passed unnoticed for the space of fifty Years, and almost forgotten in the apparently settled state of the succession, suddenly burst forth in the person of Richard Plantagenet Duke of York, in the year 1450.

This noble man was linearly descended from Lionel Duke of Clarence, second son of Edward the third, and in consequence stood in order of succession before the king; for he descended from John of Gaunt, “time honoured Lancaster,” who was the *third* son of Edward the third. Richard was a man of valour and abilities, was aligned to the most powerful families in the kingdom, and possessed an unbounded fortune, derived from the successive union of his ancestors with so many opulent and noble houses.

The arguments urged by the friends of Richard in favour of his succession, cannot be more clearly stated than in the language of a late historian. “the partisans of the Duke asserted that the maintenance of order in the succession of princes, far from doing injury to the people, or invalidating the fundamental title to good government, was established only for the purpose of government and served to prevent those numberless confusions which must ensue if no rules were followed but the uncertain and disputed views of present convenience and advantage. That it was never too late to correct a pernicious precedent; but that usurpers would be happy if the present possession of power, or their continuance for a few years could convert them into legal princes; but that it required a long time to produce

this effect, and the total extinction of those claimants whose title was founded on the original principles of the constitution.” They also contended that the deposition of Richard the second and the advancement of Henry the fourth were not deliberate national acts, but the result of popular vacillation and clamour; that the subsequent entails of the crown were but a continuance of the same violence and usurpation, and that the consent of the families of York and Mortimer have been imposed by necessity: that the restoration of the true order of succession could not be considered an unnecessary change, but as the correction of an abuse which had itself fostered and encouraged the spirit of disobedience and innovation. In conclusion remarking, that there was no comparison between the present King, utterly unable to sway the sceptre, governed by imperious Queen and corrupt ministers; and a prince of mature years, approved wisdom, a native of England, and lineal heir to the crown, who by his restoration would replace every thing on ancient foundations.

In the year 1454 Henry was seized with a mental malady which rendered him unable to preserve even the appearance of royalty. The duke of York now caused himself to be appointed lieutenant of the kingdom, with power to open a session of Parliament. This he did, and

was by both houses created to protector of the kingdom during pleasure. In the succeeding year, the enemies of the duke, perceiving the king to be partially recovered from his disorder, were anxious that he should annul the protectorship of Richard. But he, to retain this power, without insisting on his claim to the crown, flew to arms and fought the battle of St Albans, in which the Yorkists were superior. This was the first contest that drew blood in the great national quarrel of York and Lancaster. The Duke was now reinstated in the protectorship; but the Queen, Margaret of Anjou, a woman of masculine spirit, with whom the power in reality lay, acted as a check upon the great power of Richard. She soon took advantage of the duke's absence, to produce her husband before the House of Lords during an intermission of his disorder, and thereby put an end to the protector's temporary authority; to which he himself found it then necessary without further disturbance to accede.

The mask of amity was now recurred to, and many displays of apparent concord between the differing parties were publicly made. But it was evident that matters could not long continue thus. The earl of Warwick shortly brought from Calais a band of veterans

to assist his relative¹, and the friends of the house of York stood ready everywhere to join the standard of the leader. The earl having landed in Kent, was received with open gates by the people of London, from whence he hasted to meet the enemy of the king then posted at Northampton: here he became the victor, and took Henry himself prisoner.

The Duke of York, who had as yet never personally made a public claim to the throne, now entered the parliament and openly appealed to the house of lords, insisting on the priority of his descent, the cruelties of the house of Lancaster, and the total inability of Henry to govern the realm. The peers, after mature consideration, determined that Henry should continue to wear the crown during his life; but that the administration of government should remain in the hands of the Duke, who was thenceforth to be considered the true and rightful heirs to the throne. But the Queen, Indignant at such an arrangement, and knowing that Richard desired at least her banishment from the land - Fled with her son to Scotland, where she speedily raised an army of twenty thousand men. The duke being informed of her proceedings, marched

¹ The Duke of York had married Anne, daughter of Neville earl of Westmorland, and niece to the Earl of Warwick.

to meet her at Wakefield with a body of only five thousand; but the odds were thus fearfully against him, unable to brook the thought of flying from a woman, he offered her battle; which accepted, terminated in his overthrow and death. Thus perished Richard in the fiftieth year of his age.

But the pretensions of the house of York were not buried with him. His son Edward, now the heir of his father's title and possessions, hesitated not to urge his claim with redoubled vigour. Determined to revenge the death of his father, and the murder of his elder brother, slain *after* the battle by Lord de Clifford, he soon encountered a part of Margaret's army sent against him under the earl of Pembroke, at Mortimer's Cross in Herefordshire; where he defeated the earl and slew five thousand of his men. At the same time the Queen was engaged at St Albans against that powerful colleague of the duke, "the king-making earl of Warwick," where through an unexpected defection from the York and Warwick side, Margaret became the conqueror. Edward however, flushed with his personal success, united the remains of Warwick's army to his own, and while the Queen retreated from him towards the north, he entered London with loud acclaim, and opened a brilliant prospect to his party. Here, he first addressed

the people in a glowing speech; who gladly received him as the sovereign: and a number of prelates, peers and knights with other persons of distinction being next assembled, these ratified the people's choice; and he was accordingly proclaimed on the following day as Edward the fourth, King of England.

Thus terminated the reign of the imbecile, unfortunate, and misguided Henry. But his high-minded consort, still resolutely struggling for the crown which her pusillanimous husband had thus tamely suffered to be taken from him, soon reappeared in Yorkshire with an army of sixty thousand men. Edward assisted by the Earl of Warwick, set forth to meet her with a force of forty thousand. A skirmish first took place at Pomfret, where each party alternately prevailed. But the armies meeting at Towton, a bloody battle ensued. Chiefly owing to a sudden fall of snow, improved by Stratagem, the Lancastrians were here completely routed, six and thirty thousand of them being slain in the battle and pursuit. Margaret with her husband now fled to Scotland, and Edward, returning to London, was recognised by Parliament as rightful and undoubted sovereign of the realm; his late father's claim to the same dignity being likewise pronounced valid. They at the same time declared the accession of the Earl of Derby (Henry the

fourth) an usurpation; passed an act of forfeiture and attainder upon Henry the sixth, his grandson, the Queen and their son Edward; confiscated the estates of those who still adhered to them; and inducted Edward the fourth to all the privileges and possessions that pertained unto the crown at the time of the pretended deposition of Richard the second.

Margaret now went in person to France; where by promises of ample remuneration in case of success she obtained from Louis the eleventh a body of two thousand men. Returning thence to England, her force was somewhat augmented by the Scots; but she was again shortly defeated at Hexham in Northumberland, where some of her oldest adherents were taken and beheaded. From Hexham she was obliged to seek safety in flight, and with her son entered, during the night, a neighbouring forest; where being utterly defenceless, she fell into the hands of robbers, who professing to be ignorant of her rank, despoiled her of the jewels that remained about her person. To a bandit who afterwards approached alone, she determined to entrust herself and son; and with his assistance they were in a little time conducted to the seacoast, and escaped to her father's court in Flanders. Her husband, less fortunate in his

attempt to flee, was detected, delivered up to Edward, and committed prisoner to the Tower.

The new king now considered himself firmly seated on the throne. But a heavy cloud was soon destined to trail across the political horizon. Hardly had the monarch given up himself to the enjoyment of those pleasures so easily accessible to one in his exalted station - when the tremendous breach occurred between himself and his once powerful coadjutor the earl of Warwick. That nobleman incensed at being employed in negotiating a foreign alliance for the king, while Edward in the mean time had married a subject, consulted with George Duke of Clarence, brother to the king, who was alike indignant at the monarch's conduct; and by offering him his daughter and co-heiress in marriage, immediately secured his interest and concurrence. Under the guise of friendship to the king, these nobles for some time rose in the royal estimation; though they were in fact secretly engaged in fermenting disturbances and rebellion. At length however Edward became aware of their intentions; a reward was offered for their apprehension, and they were in consequence obliged to leave the kingdom for France. Here Louis easily prevailed on them to espouse the cause of Margaret, promising the marriage of Prince Edward to the second

daughter of the Earl of Warwick, and that in case of no issue proceeding therefrom the crown of England should then devolve upon the Duke of Clarence. This marriage was accordingly celebrated; and the two nobles soon after landed at Dartmouth, while the king was engaged in the north in suppressing an insurrection. Many declared in favour of Warwick, whose interest and wealth secured him followers; Edward being even obliged to escape for his life to Holland. The earl arriving in London, rescued Henry from his confinement, proclaimed him King, and summoned a parliament in his name; who speedily revoked the late acts of that assembly.

Queen Margaret aware of the Earl's success, aided by the Duke of Somerset, now prepared to re-appear in England. But before she could affect her purpose, Edward having obtained assistance from the Duke of Burgundy, had landed at Ravenspur in Yorkshire; from where he entered York, and after some obstruction, the city of London also; where he in his turn seized the person of the helpless king Henry. Warwick, joined by the Duke of Clarence and the Marquis of Montague, and in daily expectation of a queen with an accession to their forces, stationed himself at Barnet in the vicinity of London; determined on hazarding an immediate battle.

But in the interim, Clarence who had for some time being tampering with the York party now basely left his father-in-law, and in the night deserted to the king with a party of twelve thousand men. The earl however still resolved to engage; but in fulfilling his rash determination, partly owing to a mistake in cognizances occasioned by a mist, he received a total overthrow and was himself slain.

Queen Margaret with her son, a youth of eighteen, landed in Weymouth on that very day; just as the news of her husbands' captivity, the desertion of one powerful ally and the destruction of another was embodied as it were to overwhelm her. On the reception of these melancholy tidings, her powerful spirit, which nothing had yet been able to subdue, almost forsook her, and she sought refuge in the abbey of Beaulieu in Hampshire, which possessed the privilege of sanctuary², there to bewail her misfortunes. Here however she was visited by Edmund duke of Somerset, Courtney earl of Devonshire, Tudor earl of Pembroke, lord Wenlock

² In the reign of Edward the third, pope Innocent received the convent of Beaulieu under the protection of the apostolic see, and by his bull conferred on it the privilege of sanctuary.

and the lord grand prior of the order of St. John: the last having accompanied her as escort to England.

These nobles instead of uttering fruitless lamentations of the untowardness of late events, cheerfully congratulated the Queen and Prince of their safe arrival, holding out to them the brightest prospects of future success. Declaring to her highness that though they had lost the field at Barnet she had no reason on that account to despair: that it was not so difficult to raise another army as she supposed, the kingdom still abounding with King Henry's friends; from whom they could soon summon a new army, composed of men who would be ready to shed the last drop of their blood for the sake of the injured sovereign, his consort and their son. And though the duke of York had lately proved victorious, the chance of war might in the very next attempt completely reverse the state of things, and leave him a vanquished foe instead of conqueror. At the same time they urged her to cast away unreasonable fear, and call to mind the frequent victories that under the Lancastrian party had obtained during all the revolutions of this great quarrel. Concluding with the assertion, that the whole world viewed Edward prince of Wales, her son, as undoubted heir to the throne of England; and that by setting him at the head of the new army multitudes would flock to

their standard, which would also be gladly joined by that part of the late earl of Warwick's army left at Barnet, who now only waited for such a leader to rouse their latent strength and lead them to revenge.

The high toned and consolatory speeches of these nobles, who thus boldly vowed indissoluble attachment to the Lancastrian course, greatly revived the Queen - bowed down as she had previously been by her late misfortunes. Though still maternal solicitude would not suffer her to give up all doubt; for fearing lest the youthful Edward should by any means fall into the power of the enemy (though she heeded not her own person in the cause) she wished her supporters to defer a fresh engagement till the prince were safely landed in France; where hearing the event of the battle, he would be able to act as circumstances would then require without exposing himself to the hazard of awaiting its termination in England.

But her constituents, especially the Duke of Somerset, here warmly expostulated. Declaring that the presence of the Prince was that which they chiefly relied on, as the great attraction that must raise and augment their force: for the people seeing one so young thus boldly coming forward in his father's cause would everywhere be ready to yield their valour in the service of one thus

proving himself in their estimation so deserving of the heirship of the throne. Still, the Queen, in whom affection for her son seems to have absorbed all other tender feelings from her heart, continued undecided, whether to place him in a situation where he must either lose or win the crown; or convey him from the field of work to a place of temporary peace and safety. But ambition, that all-powerful passion of her mind, at length prevailed, and she at last resolved that the Prince should in person attempt to regain the inheritance of his father, even though he might perish in the attempt.

This resolution formed: it was immediately arranged that Margaret and her son should retire to Bath, while her friends were engaged in summoning a fresh army, and collecting the remains of that which had been so recently defeated at Barnet. The earl of Pembroke (father of Henry Tudor afterward king Henry the seventh) whose influence in Wales was vast, also engaged to raise a powerful force from thence: whither he at once departed, charging the duke of Somerset carefully to avoid by every means in his power any engagement with the duke of York till he should reappear.

CHAPTER II.

“Thick strew’d with shiver’d Spears were all the fields,
 With shatter’d helmets, and with Broken Shields;
 Here on the ground lay many a useless sword,
 Th’re fixed in bellies gash’d, in bosoms gor’d;
 Some corpses lay supine, some prone were found,
 And bit in parting agony the ground.
 Close to his lord, the expiring steed was spread
 And comrades lay amid their comrades dead.”

HUNT’S TASSO.

A battle being thus determined on, each leader accordingly went forth to raise all the forces in his power; so that adherents were brought from Somersetshire, Dorsetshire, part of Wilts, and the counties of Cornwall and Devon. For the influence of the duke of Somerset and earl of Devonshire in these countries was so great, that it is probable their will alone made followers; though it is said that they found the people generally in favour of king Henry’s cause: yet of their unbiased inclination to continue thus fruitlessly fighting for him we may now be disposed to doubt.

However, that these Lords should find themselves at the head of a numerous body but a few days after the defeat, must remain matter of just surprise. Though we may account for the readiness of the scattered remnant from Barnet to repair to them; When we consider that such as had there escaped, had little mercy to expect from Edward, sanguinary even after victory as they knew him to be; and these would in consequence rather hazard their lives again upon the slightest chance of victory, than quiescently await the approach of poverty or death.

King Edward though at a distance was not altogether ignorant of the proceedings, of which he was appraised by spies and others in his interest. But unable to learn the route they meant to follow, he was anxious to bring them to an encounter before they should approach too near the capital. His army therefore being now in readiness again to March, he furnished his soldiers with artillery and provisions, and leaving London on the 19th of April 1471, advanced to Windsor where he splendidly celebrated the feast of Saint George, and awaited such reinforcements as were ordered and expected to join his standard: at the same time establishing his head quarters there.

The Lancastrian party, to increase the uncertainty, and if possible, deceive the King as to the spot where they intended to recommence hostilities, sent detachments of their troops to different towns; whereby they not only induced others to enlist amongst them, but lead the Yorkists to suppose that they purposed a line of march totally different from the one they in reality had determined on. For this purpose upon leaving Exeter they sent a party to Shaftesbury, then to Salisbury, then turned towards Taunton, Wells and Glastonbury. Still hovering about the country they detached others to Yeovil and Bruton, as though they had planned the line of march towards Reading, through Berkshire and Oxfordshire to London; or else were ready to attack the royal army at the first advantageous opportunity.

But Edward on deliberate consideration, knowing that they were in the South-west part of the kingdom, perceived that if they moved towards London, they must either do so by the way of Salisbury, or else pass along the coast through Hampshire and Sussex. Or in case they should suddenly determine to avoid a battle, he then expected they would move off on the left towards Lancashire and Cheshire, to join a large body of the Welsh under the Earl of Pembroke; who had, he

understood, been engaged some time in Wales in raising a body to assist them.

The Lancastrian Lords had now conducted their followers, increasing as they are advanced, to Bath; there to join the Prince of Wales the ostensible leader. The king desirous to approach as near his foes as possible, that he might interrupt their line of march and unexpectedly attack them, left Windsor on the 24th of April, continuing his march till Saturday, when he arrived at Abington. Here, on the same day that Somerset and Devonshire had joined the Queen at Bath, he issued a Royal proclamation, in which he declared “that his title to the crown was unquestionable; First by reason; secondly by authority of parliament; thirdly by his victories, and especially the last, where in the marquis of Montague and the earl of Warwick were slain. That’s not withstanding these three firm foundations, namely reason, parliamentary authority, and victory, sundry persons had taken arms against him. But to avoid the effusion of more blood he had thought proper to give his people a list of the names of those persons who were proved traitors and rebels; that their encouragers might not complain if any mischief befell them”. The persons prescribed were - “Margaret, styling herself queen of England; Edward her son; the duke of

Exeter; the duke of Somerset; John earl of Oxford; John Courtney earl of Devonshire; William viscount de Beaumont; John Beaufort, brother to the Duke of Somerset; Hugh Courtney,” and eleven others.

The leaders of the queen’s party, knowing their present inferiority to Edward’s well-armed soldiers, and aware that he was marching after them, determined to retire towards Wales; at the same time hoping to meet the succours of the earl of Pembroke in the march: after which addition, they calculated upon being strong enough to meet him in the fight, and would then engage him in their predetermined battle. Every effort in consequence, was now made to cross the Severn before the king could come up to them.

On Monday the 29th, Edward with his army advanced to Cirencester where he was informed that the insurgents had met at Bath and there resolved that on Wednesday, the following day, they would draw out and give him battle. Upon this intelligence, the king prepared for the event and encamped at the distance of three miles from the town; but on the morrow perceiving no signs of their approach, he marched to Malmesbury there hoping to encounter them. Here he learned that they had changed their plan, postponed their intention of meeting him in battle, and had turned

towards Bristol, where they were favourably received; that city having supplied them liberally with men, artillery and stores; that thus strengthened and encouraged they proposed to meet the king at Sodbury, 9 miles from Bristol, whither they had rewarded the Vanguard, having chosen for the scene of combat, a place one mile from the town, called Sodbury Hill.

Edward desirous if possible to engage them on that very day (May 1) arranged his army and march to Sodbury. But the Lancastrians, steadfast it would appear in the original intention (notwithstanding those reports to the contrary that had met the king) were pursuing their route to Gloucester, as the nearest town where they could obtain assistance and provisions and effectually cross the Severn. They might have been endeavouring to deceive the king into a supposition that they intended to encounter him at Sodbury; but, from thence we learn that they retreated in the night to Berkeley, and afterwards to Gloucester, consistently with their plan.

Meanwhile the king having arrived at Sudbury and there waited some time, sent forth his scouts to learn if the enemy were at hand. But receiving no intelligence he placed his Vanguard in the valley and remained with his army upon the hill. At three in the morning the news arrived that the Queen and her army had passed

through Berkeley and were then proceeding to Gloucester. Upon this, Edward perceiving that they were in truth still endeavouring to cross the Severn to meet their expected reinforcement, summoned a council, who advised to send messages immediately to Sir Richard Beauchamp, son of Lord Beauchamp of Powick, to whose custody the king had previously committed the castle of Gloucester. Orders were consequently forwarded to Sir Richard without delay, commanding him to defend the town and castle against any who would assail the same; as the king had received information of such an intention on the part of his enemies, and should therefore march speedily with all his army to his aid. The Royal message was duly received, and the town and castle vigilantly guarded before the enemy's approach. Indeed it was well for Edward that such commands were sent, for there were many in the town who would gladly have received the Queen and her friends, if not in this manner timely prevented.

Queen Margaret and her Lord having maintained correspondence with the disaffected in the town, were encouraged to expect an easy entrance. Stimulated by the hope, they urged their march all night, and appeared before the city in the morning (Friday) about 10 o'clock.

But now perceiving the mistake, all entrance being peremptorily denied, through the orders of the king, they were violently enraged and menaced an assault upon the walls: but knowing that endeavour to be fruitless, they were compelled to depart, and now marched with all speed to the next town on the river: - that town was Tewkesbury.

It may be a matter of surprise to some, that the army should thus have left the city without an attempt to gain an entrance, when they knew so many of the inhabitants to be attached to their cause. But they were in fact ill provided to attack a fortified town, and feared lest Edward should fall upon their rear while so engaged, well knowing him to be not far distant. Nor did their partisans within the town, when they heard of the kings approach, not think the meaner of their ultimate prospect of success because under such circumstances they had refused to attack the city.

It was about four in the afternoon when the Lancastrian army arrived at Tewkesbury; having marched all night from Sodbury to Berkeley, from thence to Gloucester, and from Gloucester, with scarcely any refreshments, they had now travelled upwards of eleven miles, through what was then a rugged country, "Through miry lanes and stony Ways, through woods and hedges;" so that as

we may well conclude, both horse and foot were completely wearied.

It was the wish of some of in the queen's advisors to have crossed the Severn without delay on account of their inferiority to the Yorkists who followed close up on their heels. Indeed so closely where they pursued, that it is even said they consulted whether they should venture to pass at the peril of losing their rear; or intrench themselves between the river and the town, till the Earl of Pembroke with his long expected succours should arrive. The poor queen thus harassed and pursued from a town to town, sharing in the retreat by night and the melancholy march and disappointments of the day; anxious for the safety of her son who still accompanied her, was in favour of an immediate passage. But the Duke of Somerset strenuously opposed the thought; he represented the certain destruction of great parts of their followers if they attempted to gain the opposite side of the river in their present weary state; and enlarged on the ill effects that would result from such a defeat, Itself an overthrow that would actually destroy the Lancastrian cause. He added as his advice, that though their army was inferior to the enemy they should intrench themselves near the town and wait their coming.

This advice was yielded to and the night being passed in forming the intrenchments, they stationed themselves in a park adjoining town, having that with its abbey in the rear, and an uneven ground intersected with lanes, ditches and hedges in the front and on each side of them. A meadow called “the Vineyard,” south of the church, is still pointed out as containing vestiges of these intrenchments: though a late erudite writer in a ‘disposition upon the church’ considers them to be the circumvallations of Holme Castle, which stood somewhere near this part. Neither the castle nor its garrison are mentioned in the accounts of the battle; but as it had belonged with all the vast inheritance of the Beauchamps and Despencers to the “King making Earl of Warwick” but a fortnight before³; we may safely conclude that the Lancastrian army was suffered to approach its walls without annoy. And that the fight commenced here or a little further to the west, over

³ Ann, sister of Henry earl of Warwick, and daughter of Isabel Countess Despenser (who lies buried in her chantry in Tewkesbury choir) became sole heiress of her brother who had inherited the vast possessions of their mother. She afterwards married Richard Neville of Salisbury, thus vesting in him the lordship of Tewkesbury and other immense estates, on which occasion he was created Earl of Warwick and was afterward slain, as we have seen (vide page 12) while fighting for queen Margaret on the 14th of April in this same year.

meadows now belonging to the lodge estate and still called "Tewkesbury Park," we have certain reason to believe.

Edward, having divided his army into three wards advanced on the Friday in battle array over the moors of Cotswold: and though the day was very hot and he had with him more than three thousand infantry, he marched in that day upwards of thirty miles. And yet through all their track they found no kind of provision, not even so much as water fit for their horses; except one small stream, and this was so ploughed up by the passage of their horses and artillery that it was of little use. The king now found himself but a short distance from his foes. Arriving at the village of Cheltenham (since that raised to a populous town) and receiving their correct information that they were encamped at Tewkesbury intending to await his coming; he ordered his followers to refresh themselves with the provisions he had caused to be conveyed there beforehand; and then without more delay advanced within three miles of the enemy and there passed the night.

In the morning, being that of Saturday, May 4 - that memorable day which saw the hopes of Margaret entombed for ever! - Edward drew toward the enemy, and marshalled his army in three divisions. His brother,

Richard duke of Gloucester, afterward the arch-murderer and tyrant, Richard the third, led the van; the king in person commanded the centre; and the marquis and young Lord of Hastings followed with the rear. In this order they approached the spot where the duke of Somerset with the opposing army had taken their stand. This they found difficult to be assailed, on account of the deep ditches, hedges, trees, bushes and lanes, in front and at the side of them. The army of queen Margaret had thus arranged themselves for the assault: the duke of Somerset and Lord John Somerset his brother, led the first division; the young Prince Edward was commander of the second under the conduct of the lords Wedlock and St. John, while Courtney earl of Devonshire followed with the third.

The decisive moment was now at hand; king Edward for a time remained undecided which way with most effect he should commence the fight: but while observing the entrenchment of the enemy, he perceived an opening left; which led him to conclude that Somerset after repelling the first charge, intended if he should observe any disorder ensue, to sally through this pass and improve the advantage. The king therefore, being well acquainted with the impetuosity and intrepidity of the duke, that he might thus draw him out from the lines

ordered the duke of Gloucester after the first assault to retreat with precipitation; and when pursued by Somerset, to face about and he should immediately be supported.

The battle now began with the division under Gloucester, which being well furnished with artillery effectively employed those destructive weapons to the great loss as well as annoyance of the enemy, while the archers poured forth at the same time a flood of arrows. This the Lancastrians courageously returned with arrows and artillery, though in the latter they were much inferior. As yet the fight was distant, the nature of the ground preventing closer combat; the army of the Queen however continuing unmoved in their intrenchments. The duke of Gloucester therefore, in compliance with the previous order, with intent to draw them forth recoiled back with his division; which when Somerset perceived, he passed the lines and through the passages he had provided, of which it seems he thought the enemy was not aware, he passed a lane, and came forth into an open meadow⁴ directly facing the army of the king; taking it for granted, it would appear, that lord Wenlock and the prince with the main body under their

⁴ The “Gaston field” near Tewkesbury Park, now well known as “the Bloody Meadow.”

command were following him. But whether Wenlock did not perfectly understand the duke's intent, or secretly wish to be friend King Edward, (from whom he had lately deserted, having previously received from him the title of baron) or whether cowardice was the cause, remains uncertain; be the reason what it might "still he stood and gave the looking on." The duke of Gloucester seeing that his Stratagem had succeeded, wheeled round toward Somerset's division, and winning a hedge and ditch that separated them, charged with his full force, and drove Somerset and his followers with great violence back towards the hill from whence they had descended. At this critical period, two hundred spearmen who had been posted by Edward near a wood to the right of the enemy, to prevent surprisal by an ambuscade, (perceiving the wood to be perfectly unoccupied, and unwilling therefore to continue looking on, having been commanded by the king in such case to assist their comrades,) rushed down upon the duke so unexpectedly, that they who were unable to contend with the first pursuers, supposing they were beset by a second powerful force, now gave up all in despair, and fled in all directions; some into the park, some into the lanes at hand while others hid themselves in ditches; each endeavouring to save himself how he could; great

numbers also being beaten down, slain, or taken prisoners.

The duke of Somerset having managed to regain the hill with some few of his followers, turned to the main division of the army, on which his reliance had been placed when he quitted his original station; and they're seeing lord Wenlock in the midst, having made no effort to assist him - burning with rage and fury, he reviled himself for his cowardice, called him by the opprobrious name of "Traitor," and lifting his battle axe at the word cleaved his skull with the blow. All this was the work of a moment, for the duke of Gloucester was still following in the rear, and entered the trench directly after. With him came the King his brother, and before their united strength the whole army of the Queen was speedily routed: the duke of Somerset being incapacitated, by rage and disappointment, from issuing the necessary orders, and the young prince, now Wenlock was dead, not knowing how to act in his new situation of general. The king in person pursued the fleeing troops hewing them down on all sides till they were stayed by a mill-pool belonging to the abbey, where many more were drowned. Some few however escaped to the town, others took refuge in the abbey and its church, and the remainder in different places round.

When the camp was taken, such as presumed to attempt resistance were immediately slain. Prince Edward himself was made prisoner by Sir Richard Crofts as he was escaping to the town. Among those who met their death in flight or in the field, were lord John Somerset, the earl of Devonshire, Sir John Delves, sir Edward Hampden, sir Robert Wittingham and sir John Lukenor, with three thousand more.

CHAPTER III.

“these Arms of mine shall be by winding sheet;
My heart, sweet boy, shall be thy sepulchre;
Four from my heart line image ne’re shall go.”

SHAKESPEARE

“Kynge Edward saw the rudie streakes
Of light eelypse... The greie;
And herde the raven’s crokyng throte
Proclayme the fated daie.

“Thou’rt right,” quod hee, “for by the godde
That syttes entron’d on hyghe
Charles Bawdin and his fellowes twaine,
To-daie shall surelie die.”

CHATTERTON.

The battle thus terminated, a royal proclamation was sent forth, offering the sum of one hundred pounds annually for life, to him who should deliver up the young Prince Edward, dead or alive. Sir Richard Crofts not supposing that harm was intended against the prince’s person, delivered him up to Edward as he sat in state in the town, surrounded by his nobles. This done, the king haughtily interrogated him ‘how he dared so

presumptuously to enter his realm with banner displayed?’

To this the young prince answered as became a youth through whose veins the royal blood of England rolled, and who was at all events not the inferior of him who sat before him, - “to recover at my father’s kingdom and heritage, descended from his father and grandfather to him; and from him after his life to me lineally descending.” To this the king made no answer; but instead of admiring the bravery of the boy, though in the character of an enemy, either thrust him from him with his hand, or passionately struck him with his gauntlet. This action his blood-thirsty myrmidons chose to interpret as a signal for slaughter: upon which, according to the oldest historians, George duke of Clarence, Richard duke of Gloucester and Grey marquis of Dorset, fell upon the defenceless youth and butchered him. If indeed, as has been elsewhere surmised, he did not receive his death immediately from the weapons, it is allowed by all, that the murder was committed in their presence. As for the bloody duke of Gloucester, he was

villain enough for such an act, and we may suppose the treacherous Clarence is capable of assisting in it⁵.

Here we cannot but remark the striking similarity that occurs in the death of two noble youths of different houses, who separately appeared before a conquering army during this civil war, in the aspiring character of candidates for the throne. The recollection of the historical student will immediately recur to Edmund earl of Rutland the eldest son of Richard duke of York and brother to the present king (Edward IV). He had been brought before lord Clifford, then leader of queen Margaret's army after the Battle of Wakefield, and in a manner similar to the present instance was basely murdered in cold blood. Papal Superstition reared an altar there whereupon to offer sacrifice for the departed soul⁶: but the lordly Abbacy of Tewkesbury, fearful of offending royalty, has resigned to a Protestant minister the honour of the memorializing the illustrious individual whose death is here described⁷.

⁵ This murder is traditionally reported to have been committed in an ancient house, since partially altered, standing in the centre of the town, and at presently the residence of Mr John Moore.

⁶ The "chapel on the bridge" near that town.

⁷ A small brass plate in the centre of the choir of Tewkesbury church, bears the following inscription from the pen of the late Vicar:

NEC TOTA PEREAT MEMORIA

In a curious contemporary manuscript⁸, lately discovered in the public library of Ghent, containing an account of king Edward's return from Holland and the battles of Barnet and Tewkesbury, the young prince is there said to have fallen in the battle: and a richly illuminated miniature at the head of its second chapter represents a young knight with light coloured hair beaten to the ground, while another mounted on a white charger richly caparisoned is with uplifted sword about to strike off his head: this it is conjectured represents the death of the prince by the hand of Gloucester or Clarence. But as in another of these illuminations the Earl of Warwick is portrayed as perishing by the lance of King Edward in person, we may reasonably conclude,

EDVARDI PRINCIPS WALLIAE
 POST PRELIUM MEMORABILE
 IN VICINIS ARVIS DEPUGNATUM
 CRUDELITER OCCISI
 HANC TABULAM HONORARIAM
 DEPONI CURABAT
 PIETAS TEWKESBURIENSIS
 ANNO DOMINI

⁸ "Account of King Edward the fourth's second invasion of England, in 1471, drawn up by one of his followers: with the King's letter to the inhabitants of Bruges upon his success. Translated from a French manuscript in the public library of Ghent." Communicated by Edward Jeringham, Esq. to the Society of Antiquaries.

with the information we possess, that the Prince is introduced in a similar manner merely for the sake of effect.

Victory having thus decided for the house of York, the king and his nobles repaired in solemn procession on the Sunday following to the venerable Abbey Church; were being met at the western portal by all the members of the monastery, they proceeded up the nave in state, to the choir and chancel: where high mass was performed and the “Te Deum” sung with all the gorgeous ceremonial attendant on such rites when displayed before a sovereign in the fifteenth century⁹. In this manner did the barbarous murderers of innocence in those unenlightened days expect to be assoilzied by heaven from all their crimes.

⁹ On such occasions as the present, the late Dr Milner, himself a popish prelate, informs us that in Cathedral - and the great conventual - churches, the distinguished visitor “was received in solemn State by a procession of the whole convent. The acolyths (*candidates for the priesthood*) and thurifiers (*incense bearers*) led the way, and the bishop – or abbot - the Prior and other dignified clergy in their proper insignia and richest vestments closed the ranks. In the meantime the church was hung from one end to the other with gorgeous tapestry, representing religious subjects; the alters dazzled the beholders with a profusion of gold, silver, and precious stones, the lustre of which was heightened by the blaze of a thousand wax lights; whilst the well-tuned voices of a numerous choir, in chosen psalms and anthems, gave life and meaning to the various minstrelsy.”

On the Tuesday after, the following persons were beheaded on a scaffold erected in the centre of the town; after the shadow of a trial before the Duke of Gloucester, as high constable and the Earl of Norfolk as hereditary earl marshall: viz - the Duke of Somerset; the Lord Prior of the knights of St John; and other knights and esquires: their bodies being permitted burial without further dismemberment.

Some few who had taken refuge in the church were pardoned: though it was in the Royal power to have forced them thence, as rebels, without infringing on ecclesiastical privileges: and this it is more than probable the king had already done, because of the Duke of Somerset, we are informed by some, was among those who had taken refuge there. In fact we do not find that the church of Tewkesbury ever possessed the privilege of "sanctuary."

Permission was at the same time granted that the bodies of peers and others slain in the battle might be buried in the church, or where ever else their friends might choose to entomb them. Hollingshed informs us that the body of the prince of Wales "was homelie interred with the other simple corpses in the church of the monastery of black monks at Tewkesbury."

On the same day (Tuesday) king Edward left the town for Worcester; and on his way thither was informed that Margaret had taken refuge “in a poor house of religion” not far from thence, on Saturday, the morning of the battle. She was in consequence, shortly conveyed to London as prisoner of state; from whence her father the Duke of Anjou, soon after ransomed her with fifty thousand crowns, advanced to him by Louis the eleventh, King of France. This courageous and unconquerable-Spirited woman passed the remainder of her days in private tranquillity, till the year 1482, when she died. It has been justly said of her, that “she seems neither to have enjoyed the virtues, nor to have been subject to the weaknesses of her sex; and was as much tainted with the ferocity as endowed with the courage of that barbarous age in which she lived.”

The poor King her husband, after all the changes he had seen, and in which he had acted almost as an automaton, expired in confinement a few days after the battle. Popular suspicion charged the cruel duke of Gloucester with murdering the parent as he had the child. Whether he did or not, remains a question: but the subsequent exposure of the body to Public view, increased rather than diminished the cause for such a supposition.

Tudor earl of Pembroke, when he heard of the defeat of the Lancastrians, disembodied the army with which he was hastening to their support, and soon after escaped with his son Henry earl of Richmond, to France.

George duke of Clarence - “false, fleeting, perjured Clarence,” as our poet Styles him - appears never to have regained the royal confidence. The king had used him as a tool to weaken the power of Warwick; and knowing well that he who has betrayed one friend, will be ready to prove traitor to another when opportunity occurs - circumstances, in themselves trivial, were magnified to summon him before the house of peers, where he was tried for his life in 1478, found guilty and afterwards privately executed. The Chronicles of the abbey of Tewkesbury present a full account of the funeral of his Duchess, daughter of the earl of Warwick, who had died in child-bed two years before.

The vault in which she was interred has lately been examined¹⁰, and there is reason to believe that in the

¹⁰ the antiquary and historian will like regret the re-closure of this sepulchre. As *no remains of the original possessors are smouldering* therein, it ought to be cleared of the bones of intruders and lie open to the church in the same manner as the vault of Humphrey duke of Gloucester is accessible to the public in St Albans Abbey church, Hertfordshire.

same place the corpse of her husband was afterward deposited; though in a less public manner.

The battle thus fought at Tewkesbury was the cause of suspension for fourteen years to that bloody feud between the houses of York and Lancaster, which had already existed for one and twenty years; which had given rise to twenty sanguinary battles, sacrificed the lives of many of the royal blood, and almost destroyed the ancient peerage of the realm. But the flame of civil war could not be *quenched* with Gore: - the peaceful alliance of Henry VII. To the daughter of Edward IV¹¹. alone affected that which sanguinary warriors had in vain attempted; and for ever sheathed the sword.

It has been observed that had the Queens commander, the Duke of Somerset, chosen for his station the eminence of the Mythe, above the Severn, to the north of the town; the fortunes of the day at Tewkesbury would most probably have been reversed. Or else secured in that position from attack, they might have waited there the arrival of the earl of Pembroke with his expected Troops. But the character of the Duke

¹¹ Henry the seventh, of the house of Lancaster, (descended from John of Gaunt by the female side,) married the princess Elizabeth, heiress to the house of York, January 18, A.D. 1486.

appears to have been irritable and impetuous; there would consequently here have been the same impatience to engage, the same probability of Gloucester's Stratagem taking effect, and the same grounds for the co-operating defalcation of Lord Wenlock.

King Edward the fourth after this event, reigned undisputed sovereign; and was succeeded in the throne by his eldest son Edward at the age of 13 years.

List of NOBLES, KNIGHTS *and* ESQUIRES *Beheaded after*
 “THE BATTLE OF THE GASTONS,” *at Tewkesbury.*

EDWARD DUKE OF SOMERSET	<i>interred at Tewkesbury.</i>
JOHN LONSTROTHER LORD PRIOR OF THE ORDER OF KNIGHTS OF ST, JOHN	<i>his body was removed and buried with his ancestors.</i>
SIR JOHN GOWER, SWORD-BEARER TO PRINCE EDWARD	
SIR JOHN FLORE, STANDARD- BEARER TO THE DUKE OF SOMERSET	
SIR GERVAIS CLIFTON	<i>interred at Tewkesbury</i>
SIR WILLIAM CAR	<i>buried in the church-yard, at Tewkesbury.</i>
SIR HENRY ROSS	<i>Ditto.</i>
SIR WILLIAM NEWBOROW	<i>Ditto.</i>
HENRY TRESHAM	<i>Ditto.</i>
SIR THOMAS TRESHAM	
HUMPHREY HANDELEY	<i>Interred at Tewkesbury</i>
THOMAS COURTNEY	<i>Ditto</i>
WALTER COURTNEY	
HUGH COURTNEY	
JOHN DELVES, THE YOUNGER	<i>Ditto, but afterward removed elsewhere.</i>
ROBERT ACTON	

EDWARD PRINCE OF WALES,

ONLY SON OF HENRY VI. KING OF ENGLAND,

Basely murdered after the battle and interred at Tewkesbury.

PEERS *and* KNIGHTS *who fell in the field.*

THOMAS COURTNEY. EARL OF DEVONSHIRE	<i>Interred at Tewkesbury.</i>
JOHN DE SOMERSET, BROTHER OF THE DUKE	<i>Ditto</i>
LORD WENLOCK	<i>His body was removed to be buried elsewhere</i>
SIR EDWARD HAVARDE	
SIR WILLIAM WICHINGHAM	
SIR JOHN LEWKENOR	<i>Buried at Tewkesbury.</i>
SIR WILLIAM VAULZ	<i>Ditto</i>
SIR WILLIAM LERMOUTH	<i>Dito</i>
SIR EDWARD HAMPDEN	
SIR JOHN DELVES THE ELDER	<i>Buried at Tewkesbury but afterward removed.</i>

FINIS