EDGAR JOHN GEORGE

THE WARS OF THE ROSES

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Содержание

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PREFACE

My object in writing this book for boys is to furnish them with a narrative of the struggle between York and Lancaster – a struggle which extended over thirty years, deluged England with blood, cost a hundred thousand lives, emasculated the old nobility, and utterly destroyed the house of Plantagenet.

It is generally admitted that no period in England's history is richer in romantic incident than the three decades occupied by the Wars of the Roses; but the contest is frequently described as having been without interest in a political point of view. This idea seems erroneous. That struggle of thirty years was no mere strife of chiefs, ambitious of supremacy and unscrupulous as to means. Indeed, the circumstances of the country were such that no hand would have been lifted against sovereigns – whether reigning by Parliamentary or hereditary right – who showed a due respect to ancient rights and liberties. But the tyranny exercised, first

by the ministers of the sixth Henry, and afterward by those of the fourth Edward – one influenced by Margaret of Anjou, the other by the Duchess of Bedford, both "foreign women" – was such as could not be borne by Englishmen without a struggle; and evidence exists that Richard Neville, in arming the people against these kings, did so to prevent the establishment of that despotism which John Hampden and Oliver Cromwell afterward fought to destroy.

With such impressions as to the origin of the war which, during the fifteenth century, agitated England and perplexed Continental rulers, I have, in the following pages, traced the course of events from the plucking of the roses in the Temple Gardens to the destruction of Richard the Third, and the coronation of Henry Tudor, on Bosworth Field. And I venture to hope that a book written to attract English boys of this generation to a remarkable epoch in the mediæval history of their country will be received with favor, and read with interest, by those for whose perusal it is more particularly intended.

J. G. E.

INTRODUCTION
The Plantagenets

About the middle of the ninth century a warrior named Tertullus, having rendered signal services to the King of France, married Petronella, the king's cousin, and had a son who flourished as Count of Anjou. The descendants of Tertullus and Petronella rose rapidly, and exercised much influence on French affairs. At length, in the twelfth century, Geoffrey, Count of Anjou, surnamed Plantagenet, from wearing a sprig of flowering broom instead of a feather, espoused Maude, daughter of Henry Beauclerc, King of England; and Henry Plantagenet, their son, succeeded, on the death of Stephen, to the English throne.

Having married Eleanor, heiress of Aquitaine, and extended his continental empire from the Channel to the Pyrenees, Henry ranked as the most potent of European princes. But, though enabled to render great services to England, he was not an Englishman; and, indeed, it was not till the death of John, at Swinehead, that the English had a king who could be regarded as one of themselves. That king was Henry the Third, born and educated in England, and sympathizing with the traditions of the people over whom he reigned.

Unfortunately for Henry, he was surrounded by Continental kinsmen, whose conduct caused such discontent that clergy,

barons, citizens, and people raised the cry of England for the English; and Simon de Montfort, though foreign himself, undertook to head a movement against foreigners. A barons' war was the consequence. Henry, defeated at Lewes, became a prisoner in the hands of the oligarchy; and there was some prospect of the crown passing from the house of Plantagenet to that of Montfort.

At this crisis, however, Edward, eldest son of the king, escaped from captivity, destroyed the oligarchy in the battle of Evesham, and entered upon his great and glorious career. Space would fail us to expatiate on the services which, when elevated to the throne as Edward the First, that mighty prince rendered to England. Suffice it to say that he gave peace, prosperity, and freedom to the people, formed hostile races into one great nation, and rendered his memory immortal by the laws which he instituted.[1]

For the country which the first Edward rendered prosperous and free, the third Edward and his heroic son won glory in those wars which made Englishmen, for a time, masters of France. Unhappily, the Black Prince died before his father; and his only son, who succeeded when a boy as Richard the

[1] "Edward the First hath justly been styled the English Justinian. For, in his time, the law did receive so sudden a perfection, that Sir Matthew Hale does not scruple to affirm that more was done in the first thirteen years of his reign to settle and establish the distributive justice of the kingdom than in all the ages since that time put together… It was from this period that the liberty of England began to rear its head." —*Blackstone's Commentaries.*

Second, departed from right principles of government. This excited serious discontent, and led the English people to that violation of "the lineal succession of their monarchs" which caused the Wars of the Roses.

Besides the Black Prince, the conqueror of Cressy had by his queen, Philippa – the patroness of Froissart – several sons, among whom were Lionel, Duke of Clarence; John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster; and Edmund of Langley, Duke of York.[2] Lionel died early; but John of Gaunt survived his father and eldest brother, and was suspected of having an eye to the crown which his young nephew wore. No usurpation, however, was attempted. But when John was in the grave, his son, Henry of Bolingbroke, returning from an irksome exile, deposed Richard, and sent him prisoner to Pontefract Castle, where he is understood to have

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[2] "Lionel of Clarence married Elizabeth, daughter of William de Burgh, Earl of Ulster, and had a daughter, Philippa, wife of Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March. John of Gaunt was thrice married. His first wife was Blanche, heiress of Lancaster, by whom he had a son, Henry the Fourth, and two daughters – Philippa, married to the King of Portugal, and Elizabeth, to John Holland, Duke of Exeter. His second wife was Constance, eldest daughter of Peter the Cruel, King of Castile, by whom he had a daughter, Katherine, married to Henry the Third, King of Castile. His third wife was Katherine Swynford, by whom he had two sons – Henry Beaufort, Cardinal of St. Eusebius and Bishop of Winchester, and John Beaufort, Earl of Somerset, ancestor of the dukes who fought in the Wars of the Roses, and of Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond, mother of Henry the Seventh. But both the sons of Katherine Swynford were born before wedlock. Edmund of Langley espoused Isabel, second daughter of Peter the Cruel, and had two sons – Edward, Duke of York, who fell at Agincourt, and Richard, Earl of Cambridge, who married Anne Mortimer, daughter of the Earl of March, and left a son, Richard, Duke of York." – See *Sandford's Genealogical History*.

been murdered.

On the death of Richard, who was childless, Henry the Fourth, as son of John of Gaunt, would have had hereditary right on his side, but that Lionel of Clarence had left a daughter, Philippa, wife of Mortimer, Earl of March, and ancestress of three successive earls. Of these, Edmund, the last earl, was a boy when Henry of Bolingbroke usurped the throne; and his sister, Anne Mortimer, was wife of Richard Plantagenet, Earl of Cambridge, second son of Edmund of Langley, Duke of York. "This was that princely branch," says Sandford, "by the ingrafting of which into the stock of York, that tree brought forth not only White Roses, but crowns and sceptres also."

Henry the Fourth regarded young March with jealousy, and had him vigilantly guarded. But Henry the Fifth completely won the earl's loyalty, and made him a most zealous adherent. March showed no ambition to reign; and the nation, intoxicated with Agincourt and glory and conquest, cared not an iota for his claims. At the time when the hero-king expired at Vincennes and the Earl of March died in England the dynastic dispute was scarcely remembered, and it would never, in all probability, have been revived had the Lancastrian government not become such as could not be submitted to without degradation. It was when law and decency were defied, and when Englishmen were in danger of being enslaved by a "foreign woman," that they remembered the true heir of the Plantagenets and took up arms to vindicate his claims.

CHAPTER I
THE MONK-MONARCH AND HIS MISLEADERS

On St. Nicholas's Day, in the year 1421, there was joy in the castle of Windsor and rejoicing in the city of London. On that day Katherine de Valois, youthful spouse of the fifth Henry, became mother of a prince destined to wear the crown of the Plantagenets; and courtiers vied with citizens in expressing gratification that a son had been born to the conqueror of Agincourt – an heir to the kingdoms of England and France.

Henry of Windsor, whose birth was hailed with a degree of enthusiasm which no similar event had excited in England, was doomed to misfortune from his cradle. He was not quite nine months old when Henry the Fifth departed this life at Vincennes; and he was still an infant when Katherine de Valois forgot her hero-husband and all dignity for the sake of a Welsh soldier with a handsome person and an imaginary pedigree. The young king, however, was the beloved of a thousand hearts. As son of a hero who had won imperishable glory for England, the heir of Lancaster was regarded by Englishmen with sincere affection; the legitimacy of his title even was unquestioned; and the genius of his uncles, John, Duke of Bedford, and Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, under whose auspices the royal boy was crowned in

London and Paris, created a feeling of security seldom felt by kingdoms at the beginning of long minorities.

For a time the aspect of affairs was cheering. At a critical period, however, Bedford expired at Rouen; and ere long England was distracted by a feud between Gloucester and that spurious son of John of Gaunt, known in history as Cardinal Beaufort, and as chief of a house which then enjoyed the dukedom of Somerset. Gloucester charged the cardinal with contempt for the laws of the realm; and the cardinal avenged himself by accusing Gloucester's duchess of endeavoring to destroy the king by witchcraft, and banishing her to the Isle of Man. It soon appeared that the rivalry between Duke Humphrey and his illegitimate kinsman would involve the sovereign and people of England in serious disasters.

Nature had not gifted Henry of Windsor with the capacity which would have enabled a sovereign to reconcile such foes. Never had the Confessor's crown been placed on so weak a head. Never had the Conqueror's sceptre been grasped by so feeble a hand. The son of the fifth Henry was more of a monk than a monarch, and in every respect better qualified for the cloister than for courts and camps. In one respect, however, the king's taste was not monastic. Notwithstanding his monkish tendencies he did not relish the idea of celibacy; and the rival chiefs, perceiving his anxiety to marry, cast their eyes over Europe to discover a princess worthy of enacting the part of Queen of England.

Gloucester was the first to take the business in hand. Guided at once by motives of policy and patriotism, he proposed to unite his nephew to a daughter of the Count of Armagnac; and he trusted, by an alliance, to allure that powerful French noble to the English interest. The king did not object to the Armagnac match. Before striking a bargain, however, he felt a natural desire to know something of the appearance of his future spouse; and with this view he employed a painter to furnish portraits of the count's three daughters. Before the portraits could be executed circumstances put an end to the negotiations. In fact, the dauphin, as the English still called the seventh Charles of France, having no reason to regard the proposed marriage with favor, placed himself at the head of an army, seized upon the count and his daughters, and carried them off as prisoners of state.

Meanwhile, Beaufort was not idle. Eager to mortify Gloucester and increase his own influence, the aged cardinal was bent on uniting the king to Margaret of Anjou, daughter of René of Provence, and niece of the French monarch. René, indeed, though titular sovereign of Jerusalem and the two Sicilies, was poor, and Margaret, albeit the Carlovingian blood flowed in her veins, was portionless. But, though not favored by fortune, the Provençal princess was richly endowed by nature; and, young as she was, the unrivaled beauty and intellect of King René's daughter had made her name familiar in France and famous in England.

Never was an intriguer more successful than Beaufort. While

Gloucester was negotiating with the Count of Armagnac, the cardinal, aware of Margaret's charms, contrived to have a likeness of the princess transmitted to the court of England; and the young king became so enamored of the fair being whom the portrait represented that his wish to espouse her could not decently be combated. Matrimonial negotiations were therefore resolved on; and William de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk, was sent as embassador to bring home the princess. René drove a hard bargain. Before consenting to the marriage he insisted on the restoration of Maine and Anjou, which were among the Continental conquests that the English were in no humor to surrender. But Suffolk, who was thinking more of his own interests than of his country's honor, yielded without scruple; and the marriage of King René's daughter was made the basis of a treaty which could not fail to prove unpopular. At first, however, no complaint was uttered. Suffolk brought the royal bride to England, and declared, in allusion to her poverty, that her beauty and intellect were worth more than all the gold in the world.

One day in April, 1445, the marriage of Henry of Windsor and Margaret of Anjou was solemnized at the Abbey of Tichfield – the bridegroom being in his twenty-fourth, the bride in her sixteenth year. The religious ceremony having been performed, the wedded pair were conducted to the capital of their dominions, and the English, being then devotedly loyal, were prepared to welcome the spouse of young Henry to London with an enthusiasm which could hardly fail to intoxicate so

young a princess. The nobles, displaying all the pride and pomp of feudalism, wore the queen's badge in honor of her arrival. At Greenwich, Gloucester, as first prince of the blood, though known to have been averse to the match, paid his respects, attended by five hundred men, dressed in her livery. At Blackheath appeared the mayor, aldermen, and sheriffs of London, arrayed in scarlet robes, and mounted on horseback, to escort her through Southwark into the city. Passing under triumphal arches to Westminster, she was crowned in the Abbey; and that ceremony was the occasion of general rejoicing. The shows, the pageants, the tournaments, the display of feudal banners by the nobles, and loud applause of the populace might well have led the royal pair to prognosticate a life of peace and happiness. Nobody, who witnessed the universal joy, could have supposed that England was on the eve of the bloodiest dynastic struggle recorded in her history.

In fact, the people of England, knowing nothing of the restitution of Maine and Anjou, were at first delighted with their queen, and enraptured with her beauty. Her appearance was such as could hardly fail to please the eye and touch the heart. Imagine a princess in her teens, singularly accomplished, with a fair complexion, soft, delicate features, bright, expressive eyes, and golden hair flowing over ivory shoulders; place a crown upon her head, which seemed to have been formed to wear such a symbol of power; array her graceful figure in robes of state, and a mantle of purple fastened with gold and gems; and you will have

before your mind's eye the bride of Henry of Windsor, as on the day of her coronation she appeared among peers and prelates and high-born dames in the Abbey of Westminster.

Unfortunately for Margaret of Anjou, her prudence and intelligence were not equal to her wit and beauty. Ere two years passed the popularity she enjoyed vanished into empty air; but she was a woman of defiant courage, and far from taking any pains to regain the affections of the people, she openly manifested her dislike of Gloucester, who was their favorite and their idol. Indeed, the young queen never could forgive the duke's opposition to her marriage; and she listened readily to the counsels of Beaufort and Suffolk, who, in the spring of 1447, resolved, at all hazards, to accomplish his ruin.

With this view, a parliament was summoned to meet at Bury St. Edmunds; and Gloucester, suspecting no snare, rode thither, with a small retinue, from the castle of Devizes. At first, nothing occurred to raise his apprehension; but, in a few days, to his surprise, he found himself arrested by the Constable of England, on the charge of conspiracy to murder the king and seize the crown.

Gloucester was never brought to trial; and it was said that Suffolk and the cardinal, finding that every body ridiculed the charge of conspiracy, caused "The Good Duke" to be assassinated. Appearances rather strengthened the popular suspicion. One evening, about the close of February, Gloucester was in perfect health: next morning he was found dead in bed.

The indecent haste with which Suffolk seized upon the duke's estates was commented on with severity; and Margaret of Anjou shared the suspicion that had been excited.

The cardinal did not long survive the man who was believed to have been his victim. Early in the month of April, Beaufort died in despair, bitterly reproaching his riches, that they could not prolong his life; and Suffolk, now without a rival, so conducted himself as to incur the perfect hatred of the nation. The English people had a peculiar aversion to favorites, and remembered that while weak sovereigns, like the third Henry and the second Edward, had been ruined by such creatures, great kings, like the first and third Edward, had done excellently well without them. Suffolk was every day more and more disliked; and in 1449 his unpopularity reached the highest point.

The position of Suffolk now became perilous. Impatient at their Continental reverses, and exasperated at the loss of Rouen, the people exhibited a degree of indignation that was overwhelming, and the duke, after being attacked in both houses of Parliament, found himself committed to the Tower. When brought to the bar of the Lords, Suffolk, aware of his favor at court, threw himself on the mercy of the king; and, every thing having been arranged, the lord chancellor, in Henry's name, sentenced him to five years' banishment. The peers protested against this proceeding as unconstitutional; and the populace were so furious at the idea of the traitor escaping, that, on the day of his liberation, they assembled in St. Giles's Fields to the

number of two thousand, with the intention of bringing him to justice. But Suffolk evaded their vigilance, and, at Ipswich, embarked for the Continent.

On the 2d of May, 1450, however, as the banished duke was sailing between Dover and Calais, he was stopped by an English man-of-war, described as the Nicholas of the Tower, and ordered to come immediately on board. As soon as Suffolk set foot on deck, the master of the Nicholas exclaimed, "Welcome, traitor;" and, for two days, kept his captive in suspense. On the third day, however, the duke was handed into a cock-boat, in which appeared an executioner, an axe, and a block; and the death's-man, having without delay cut off the head of the disgraced minister, contemptuously cast the headless trunk on the sand.

While England's sufferings, from disasters abroad and discord at home, were thus avenged on the queen's favorite, the king was regarded with pity and compassion. Henry, in fact, was looked upon as the victim of fate; and a prophecy, supposed to have been uttered by his father, was cited to account for all his misfortunes. The hero-king, according to rumor, had, on hearing of his son's birth at Windsor, shaken his head, and remarked prophetically, "I, Henry of Monmouth, have gained much in my short reign; Henry of Windsor shall reign much longer, and lose all. But God's will be done."

Margaret of Anjou shared her favorite's unpopularity; and, when she reached the age of twenty, the crown which had been placed on her head amid so much applause became a crown of

thorns. Exasperated at the loss of their Continental conquests, Englishmen recalled to mind that she was a kinswoman and protégée of the King of France; and when it was known that, to secure her hand for their sovereign, Maine and Anjou had been surrendered, sturdy patriots described her as the cause of a humiliating peace, and, with bitter emphasis, denounced her as "The Foreign Woman."

These men were not altogether unreasonable. In fact, the case proved much worse for England than even they anticipated; and, ere long, France was gratified with a thorough revenge on the foe by whom she had been humbled to the dust, from having placed on the Plantagenets' throne a princess capable, by pride and indiscretion, of rousing a civil war that ruined the Plantagenets' monarchy.

CHAPTER II
THE DUKE OF YORK AND THE KING-MAKER

When Suffolk fell a victim to the popular indignation, Richard, Duke of York, first prince of the blood, was governing Ireland, with a courage worthy of his high rank, and a wisdom worthy of his great name. Indeed, his success was such as much to increase the jealousy with which the queen had ever regarded the heir of the Plantagenets.

York was descended, in the male line, from Edmund of Langley, fifth son of the third Edward, and was thus heir-presumptive to the crown which the meek Henry wore. But the duke had another claim, which rendered him more formidable than, as heir-presumptive, he would ever have made himself; for, through his mother, Anne Mortimer, daughter of an Earl of March, he inherited the blood of Lionel of Clarence, elder brother of John of Gaunt, and, in this way, could advance claims to the English crown, which, in a hereditary point of view, were infinitely superior to those of the house of Lancaster.

Richard Plantagenet was nearly ten years older than King Henry. He first saw the light in 1412; and, when a mere child, became, by the execution of his father, the Earl of Cambridge, at Southampton, and the fall of his uncle, the Duke

of York, at Agincourt, heir of Edmund of Langley. His father's misfortune placed Richard, for a time, under attainder; but after the accession of Henry the dignities of the house of York were restored; and in 1424, on the death of Edmund, last of the Earls of March, the young Plantagenet succeeded to the feudal power of the house of Mortimer.

An illustrious pedigree and a great inheritance rendered York a most important personage; and, as years passed over, he was, by Gloucester's influence, appointed Regent of France. In that situation the duke bore himself like a brave leader in war and a wise ruler in peace; but, as it was feared that he would obstruct the surrender of Maine and Anjou, he was displaced by Suffolk, and succeeded by the Duke of Somerset, who, it was well known, would be most accommodating.

When York returned to England, the queen, not relishing a rival so near the throne, determined to send him out of the way. She, therefore, caused the duke to be appointed, for ten years, to the government of Ireland, and then dispatched armed men to seize him on the road and imprison him in the castle of Conway. York, however, was fortunate enough to escape the queen's snares; and, reaching Ireland in safety, he not only gave peace to that country, but, by his skillful policy, won much favor among the inhabitants.

Time passed on; and the disappearance of Suffolk, of Beaufort, of Gloucester, and of Bedford from the theatre of affairs opened up a new scene. As minister of the king and

favorite of the queen, Beaufort and Suffolk were succeeded by Somerset; as first prince of blood and hero of the people, Bedford and Gloucester were succeeded by York. Moreover, the absence of the duke from the country caused much discontent. "If," said the people, "he who brought the wild, savage Irish to civil fashions and English urbanity once ruled in England, he would depose evil counselors, correct evil judges, and reform all unamended matters."

Firmly established the house of Lancaster then was; but York had friends sufficiently powerful to make him a formidable rival to any dynasty. In youth he had married Cicely, daughter of Ralph Neville, first Earl of Westmoreland; and, of all the English magnates of the fifteenth century, the Nevilles, who drew strength at once from an illustrious Saxon origin and distinguished Norman alliances, were by far the most powerful and popular.

The Nevilles derived the descent, in the male line, from the Anglo-Saxon Earls of Northumberland. Their ancestor, Cospatrick, figured in youth at the court of Edward the Confessor, and, relishing neither the sway of Harold the Usurper, nor of William the Conqueror, passed most of his life in adversity and exile. After much suffering he died at Norham, on the south bank of the Tweed, and left two sons, who were more fortunate. One of these founded the house of Dunbar, whose chiefs for hundreds of years flourished with honor and renown; the other was grandfather of Robert Fitzmaldred, who married the heiress

of the Nevilles, and was progenitor of that proud family, whose seat was long at Raby. About the beginning of the fifteenth century the house of Dunbar fell, and great was the fall thereof. About the beginning of the fifteenth century the Nevilles attained to the earldom of Westmoreland, and to a point of grandeur unrivaled among the nobles of England.

Among the chiefs of the house of Neville, Ralph, first Earl of Westmoreland, was one of the most important. His possessions were so extensive that, besides the castle of his Anglo-Saxon ancestors and those of Brancepath, Middleham, and Sheriff Hutton, inherited through Norman heiresses of great name, he possessed about fifty manor-houses; and his feudal following was so grand that, at times, he assembled in the great hall at Raby no fewer than seven hundred knights, who lived on his lands in time of peace, and followed his banner in war. Even the earl's children were more numerous than those of his neighbors. He was twice married; and the Duchess of York, known among northern men as "The Rose of Raby," was the youngest of a family of twenty-two. John Neville, Ralph's eldest son by his first countess, was progenitor of those chiefs who, as Earls of Westmoreland, maintained baronial rank at Raby, till one of them risked and lost all in the great northern rebellion against Elizabeth. Richard Neville, Ralph's eldest son by his second countess, obtained the hand of the heiress of the Montagues, and with her hand their earldom of Salisbury and their vast possessions.

In the Continental wars and domestic struggles in which Englishmen indulged during the fifteenth century, Salisbury was recognized as a man of military prowess and political influence. But almost ere reaching middle age his fame grew pale before that of his eldest son, Richard Neville, who espoused the heiress of the Beauchamps, who, in her right, obtained the earldom of Warwick, and who, as time passed on, became celebrated throughout Europe as the king-maker.

At the name of "The Stout Earl," as the people of England proudly called him, the fancy conjures up a mail-clad man of the tallest stature and the most majestic proportions; with dark brown hair clustering over a magnificent head, resting firmly and gracefully on mighty shoulders; a brow marked with thought, perhaps not without traces of care; a complexion naturally fair, but somewhat bronzed by exposure to the sun and wind; a frank and open countenance lighted up with an eye of deep blue, and reflecting the emotions of the soul, as clouds are reflected in a clear lake; and a presence so noble and heroic that, compared with him, the princes and peers of our day would sink into utter insignificance. Unfortunately, no portrait capable of conveying an adequate idea of Warwick's appearance exists for the instruction of our generation; but traditions and chronicles lead to the conclusion that, if a Vandyke or a Reynolds had existed in the fifteenth century to transmit to posterity the king-maker as, in form and feature, he appeared to his contemporaries in Westminster Hall, in Warwick Castle, or on Towton Field,

such a portrait, by such an artist, would not belie our conceptions as to the personal grandeur of the warrior-statesman of mediæval England.

But, however that might be, Warwick was the hero of his own times. From early youth he was in great favor with the people; and, as years passed on, his frankness, affability, sincerity, love of justice, and hatred of oppression endeared him to their hearts. In an age of falsehood and fraud, his word was never broken nor his honor tarnished. Even the lofty patrician pride, which rendered him an object of mingled awe and envy to the Woodvilles, the Howards, and the Herberts, recommended him to the multitude; for the new men, whom the descendant of Cospatrick would not recognize as his peers, were the instruments used by despotic sovereigns to grind the faces of the poor. Moreover, Warwick's patriotism was ardent; and the nation remarked with gratification, that "The Stout Earl" was animated by all those English sympathies which, banished from courts and parliaments, still found a home in cottage and in grange.

Besides being the most patriotic, Warwick had the good fortune to be the richest, of England's patricians; and his immense revenues were expended in such a way that his praise as the people's friend was ever on the tongues of the poor and needy. His hospitality knew no bounds. The gate of his mansion in London stood open to all comers; six oxen were usually consumed at a breakfast; no human being was sent hungry away; and every fighting man had the privilege of walking into the

kitchen and helping himself to as much meat as could be carried away on the point of a dagger. At the same time, thirty thousand persons are said to have feasted daily at the earl's mansions and castles in various parts of England.

And it was not merely as a patriot and a popular patrician that Richard Neville was distinguished, for great was his renown as a warrior and a statesman. On fields of fight his bearing reminded men of the Paladins of romance; and when he broke, sword in hand, into foemen's ranks, the cry of "A Warwick! A Warwick!" did more service to his friends than could the lances of five hundred knights. While Warwick's martial prowess made him the idol of the soldiery, his capacity for affairs secured him general confidence and admiration. "The Stout Earl," said the people, "is able to do any thing, and without him nothing can be done well."

With such a friend as Warwick in England the Duke of York doubtless felt secure that his hereditary claims were in little danger of being quite forgotten during his absence. The duke was in Ireland, when an incident, immortalized by Shakspeare, gave life and color to the rival factions. One day a violent dispute as to the rights of the houses of York and Lancaster took place in the Temple Gardens. The disputants, "The Stout Earl" and the Duke of Somerset, appealed to their friends to take sides in the controversy; but these, being the barons of England, declined to enter upon such "nice sharp quillets of the law." Warwick thereupon plucked a white rose, and Somerset a red rose; and

each asked his friends to follow his example. Thus originated the badges of the chiefs who involved England in that sanguinary struggle celebrated by poets and chroniclers as the Wars of the Roses.

CHAPTER III
THE CAPTAIN OF KENT

In the summer of 1450 there was a ferment among the commons of Kent. For some time, indeed, the inhabitants of that district of England had been discontented with the administration of affairs; but now they were roused to action by rumors that Margaret of Anjou, holding them responsible for the execution of Suffolk, had vowed revenge; that a process of extermination was to be forthwith commenced; and that the country, from the Thames to the Straits of Dover, was to be converted into a hunting-forest for the queen and her favorites.

About the middle of June, while the indignation of the Kentishmen was at its height, a military adventurer, who has since been known as "Jack Cade," but who called himself John Mortimer, and gave out that his mother was a Lacy, suddenly appeared among the malcontents, informed them that he was related to the Duke of York, and offered to be their captain. According to the chroniclers, he was "a young man of goodly stature, and pregnant wit," and he told his story so plausibly, that the men of Kent believed he was York's cousin. Delighted with the notion of having found a Mortimer to lead them to battle, and to free them from oppression, the people crowded by thousands to his standard; and Cade, having assumed the title of Captain

of Kent, arrayed them in good order, marched toward London, and encamped on Blackheath.

The men of Kent were not foes to be despised. They had ever claimed the privilege of marching in the van of England's army, and had so borne themselves on fields of fight, that their courage was beyond dispute. The determined spirit by which they were known to be animated rather daunted the court; and the king, in alarm, sent to ask why they had left their homes. Cade replied in a manner at which a government owing its existence to a revolution had little reason to take umbrage. He sent a document, entitled "Complaint of the Commons of Kent," containing a statement of grievances, demanding speedy redress, and requesting, in respectful language, the dismissal of the corrupt men by whom the king was surrounded, and the recall of "the Duke of York, late exiled from the royal presence."

The queen and her friends saw that something must be done, and that quickly. An army was, therefore, levied in the king's name; and, at the head of it, Henry advanced to Blackheath; but Cade, wishing to draw the royal force into Kent, broke up his camp and retreated to the quiet old market-town of Sevenoaks. The queen, doubtless somewhat surprised at the storm she had raised, dreaded the possibility of the king being environed by the insurgents. She, therefore, deputed the danger of encountering Cade to a gallant knight named Humphrey Stafford, and, having done so, retired to Greenwich.

On receiving the queen's commands, Stafford, and some of

the court gallants, put on their rich armor and gorgeous surcoats, mounted their horses, and, with a detachment of the royal army, dashed off to engage the insurgents, all eagerness, as it seemed, to bring back the leader's head as a trophy. On coming up with the foe, however, the ardor of the gay warriors rapidly cooled; for, in posting his troops in Sevenoaks Wood, the Captain of Kent had made his dispositions with such masterly skill, that the insurgents felt high confidence, and presented a formidable front. Nevertheless, Stafford did not shrink from an encounter. Boldly dashing onward, he attacked the Kentishmen in their strong-hold. His courage, however, was of no avail. At the very onslaught, he fell in front of his soldiers; and they, fighting with no good-will, allowed themselves to be easily defeated.

Proud of his victory, the Captain of Kent arrayed himself in Stafford's rich armor, advanced toward London, encamped once more on Blackheath, and threatened to attack the metropolis. His success had rendered him so popular a hero, that the Kentishmen, under the delusion that all abuses were to be reformed, called him "Captain Mendall;" and the inhabitants of Surrey and Sussex, catching the enthusiasm, crowded to his camp.

Margaret of Anjou had now cause for serious alarm. The royal army could no longer be relied on. Already many of the soldiers had deserted, and those who remained were asking, with indignation, why the Duke of York was not recalled. Aware of all this, the king deputed Humphrey Stafford, first Duke of Buckingham, a popular favorite, and a prince of the blood, to

repair to Cade's camp, and expostulate with the rebels. The captain received the duke with all due respect, but declared that the insurgents could not lay down their arms, unless the king would hear their complaints in person, and pledge his royal word that their grievances should be redressed.

When Buckingham returned with Cade's answer to Greenwich, there was yet time for Henry to save his regal dignity. Had he been capable of laying aside his saintly theories for a few hours, bracing on his armor, mounting his steed, and riding forth with words of courage and patriotism on his lips, he might have won back the hearts of his soldiers, and either scattered the insurgent army by force, or dissolved it by persuasion. To do this, a king of England did not require the animal courage of a *Cœur de Lion*, or the political genius of an English Justinian. Any of Henry's predecessors, even the second Edward or the second Richard, could have mustered spirit and energy sufficient for the occasion. But the monk-monarch, having neither spirit nor energy, quietly resigned himself to his fate; and the queen, terrified at the commotion her imprudences had raised, disbanded the royal army, charged Lord Scales to keep the Tower, and, leaving London to its fate, departed with her husband to seek security in the strong castle of Kenilworth. There was quite as little discretion as dignity in the king's precipitate retreat. The most devoted adherents of the Red Rose might well despair of the house of Lancaster standing long, when they heard that the son of the conqueror of Agincourt had fled before the

ringleader of a rabble.

Not slow to take advantage of the king's absence, the Captain of Kent moved from Blackheath to Southwark. From that place he sent to demand entrance into London; and, after a debate in the Common Council, Sir Thomas Chalton, the mayor, intimated that no opposition would be offered. Accordingly, on the 3d of July, the insurgent leader crossed London Bridge – the single bridge of which the capital then boasted – and led his followers into the city.

The inhabitants of London must have felt some degree of dismay. Both courtiers and citizens had an idea what a mob was – what violence and bloodshed the French capital had witnessed during the outbreaks of the *Cabochiens*– of what horrors each French province had been the scene during the *Jacquerie*. Moreover, the ruins of the Savoy, destroyed during Wat Tyler's insurrection, and towering gloomily on the spot now occupied by the northern approach to Waterloo Bridge, formed at least one memorial of what mischief even English peasants and artisans were capable, when roused by injustice and oppression. At first, however, the Captain of Kent displayed a degree of moderation hardly to have been anticipated. Arrayed in Stafford's splendid mail, he commenced his triumphal entry by indulging in a little harmless vanity.

"Now," said he, stopping, and striking his staff on London Stone, "now is Mortimer Lord of London."

"Take heed," said the mayor, who was standing on the

threshold of his door, and witnessed the scene, "take heed that you attempt nothing against the quiet of the city."

"Sir," answered Cade, "let the world take notice of our honest intentions by our actions."

All that day the Captain of Kent appeared most anxious to gain the good opinion of the citizens. He issued proclamations against plunder, did his utmost to preserve discipline, and in the evening he marched quietly back to Southwark. Next morning, however, he returned; and, perhaps, no longer able to restrain the thirst of his followers for blood, he resolved to gratify them by the execution of "a new man."

Among the most obnoxious of the king's ministers was James Fiennes, who held the office of lord chamberlain, and enjoyed the dignity of Lord Say. The rapid rise of this peer to wealth and power had rendered him an object of dislike to the old nobility; and his connection with Suffolk's administration had rendered him an object of hatred to the people. Besides, he had lately purchased Knole Park, in the vicinity of Sevenoaks, and perhaps had, as lord of the soil, given offense to the commons of Kent by trenching on some of those privileges which they cherished so fondly.

Ere entering London, the insurgents had made up their minds to have Lord Say's head; and, aware of the odium attached to his name, the unpopular minister had taken refuge with Lord Scales in the Tower. Scales had seen much service in France, and highly distinguished himself in the wars of the fifth Henry;

but now he had reached his fiftieth summer; his bodily strength had decayed; and time had perhaps impaired the martial spirit that had animated his youthful exploits. At all events, instead of defending Lord Say to the last, as might have been expected, Scales allowed him to be taken from the Tower and carried to Guildhall, and on the ill-fated lord's arrival there the Captain of Kent compelled the mayor and aldermen to arraign him as a traitor. In vain Say protested against the proceeding, and demanded a trial by his peers. The captain twitted him with being a mock patrician, and insisted upon the judges condemning the "buckram lord." At length the insurgents lost patience, hurried their prisoner into Cheapside, and, having there beheaded him without farther ceremony, hastened to execute vengeance upon his son-in-law, Sir James Cromer, who, as sheriff of Kent, had incurred their displeasure.

Intoxicated with triumph as the Captain of Kent might be, the daring adventurer felt the reverse of easy while passing himself off as a Mortimer, and could not help dreading the consequence of his real origin being revealed to those whom he had deluded. Rumors were indeed creeping about that his name was Jack Cade; that he was a native of Ireland; that in his own country he had, for some time, lived in the household of a knight, but that having killed a woman and child he had entered the French service, and acquired the military skill which he had displayed against Stafford. Moreover, some chroniclers state that, to preclude the possibility of exposure, he mercilessly executed

those who were suspected to know any thing of his antecedents, and endeavored to insure the fidelity of his adherents by allowing them to perpetrate various kinds of enormity.

The citizens had hitherto submitted with patience; but on the 5th of July a provoking outrage roused them to resistance. On that day Cade, having gratified his vanity and satiated his thirst for blood, began to think of spoil. He commenced operations under peculiar circumstances. After dining with one of the citizens he requited the hospitality of his host by plundering the house, and the example of the captain was so faithfully followed by his men that the Londoners perceived the propriety of doing something for their defense. When, therefore, Cade led his forces back to Southwark for the night, and the shades of evening settled over London, the inhabitants took counsel with Lord Scales, and resolved upon fortifying the bridge so as to prevent his return.

While Cade was passing the night of the 5th of July at Southwark, reposing on his laurels, as it were, at the *White Hart*, news was carried to him that Lord Scales and the citizens were preparing to resist his return. With characteristic decision the Captain of Kent sprang to arms, declared he should force a passage forthwith, mustered his men, and led them to the attack. Fortune, however, now declared against him. A fierce combat took place, and the citizens defended the bridge so courageously that after a struggle of six hours the insurgents were fain to retire to Southwark.

The courage of the mob now cooled; and the king's ministers

determined to try the effect of promises never intended to be redeemed. Accordingly, William Waynflete, Bishop of Winchester, appeared with an offer of pardon to all who would return peaceably home. At first the insurgents were divided in opinion about accepting the bishop's terms; but Cade showed an inclination to grasp at the pardon, and finally all dispersed. The Captain of Kent, however, had as little intention as the government to act with honor; and within ten days he again appeared in Southwark with a considerable following. This time, however, the citizens, elate with victory, presented a firm front; and, dismayed at their threatening aspect, Cade retreated to Rochester. While there, terrified at the feuds of his followers, he learned with horror that a thousand marks had been offered for his apprehension; and, alarmed at the probability of being delivered up, he galloped across the country toward the coast of Sussex, and, for some time, wandered about in disguise.

The Captain of Kent was not destined to elude the vengeance of the government which he had defied. An esquire of the county, named Alexander Iden, pursued the despairing insurgent, and found him lurking in a garden at Rothfield. Cade did not yield to his fate without a struggle. Drawing his sword, he stood upon his defense; and both the captain and the esquire being men of strength and courage, a desperate conflict ensued. The victory, however, fell to Iden; and Cade's head, after being carried to the king, was set on London Bridge, his face turned toward the hills of Kent. Many of his companions, in spite of Bishop Waynflete's

promise of pardon, were subsequently taken and executed as traitors.

Such was the end of a popular tumult, the origin of which remains in considerable obscurity. Some asserted that Jack Cade was merely an agent of Richard Plantagenet, and did not hesitate to describe "Captain Mendall" as "one of the Duke of York's firebrands." No evidence exists, however, to show that the "high and mighty prince," freely as his great name might have been used by the insurgents, had any thing to do with the enterprise. Nevertheless the insurrection was not without influence on the duke's fortunes, and it has ever been regarded as a prelude to the fierce struggle between the houses of York and Lancaster.

CHAPTER IV
THE RIVAL DUKES

About the end of August, 1451, a rumor reached the court of Westminster that the Duke of York had suddenly left Ireland. The queen was naturally somewhat alarmed; for, during Cade's insurrection, the duke's name had been used in such a way as to test his influence, and no doubt remained of the popularity he enjoyed among the commons.

Margaret of Anjou had no wish to see York in London. On the pretext, therefore, that the duke came with too large a force, the queen, at Somerset's instigation, dispatched Lord Lisle, son of the famous Talbot, to prevent his landing. York, however, eluded the vigilance of his enemies, made his way to London, paid his respects to the king, complained of the misgovernment under which the country was suffering; and, still mute as to his intentions, retired to Fotheringay, a castle which had been built by his ancestor, Edmund of Langley.

The absence of York from court exercised more influence in London than his presence could have done, and soon after his return from Ireland a member of the House of Commons boldly proposed that, since Henry had no issue and no prospect of any, the duke should be declared heir to the throne. For his temerity this senator was committed to the Tower; but the Commons, who

were not thus to be daunted, passed a bill of attainder against the deceased Duke of Suffolk, and presented a petition to the king for the dismissal of Somerset, who was Suffolk's successor and York's foe.

The name of the Duke of Somerset was Edmund Beaufort. He was the illegitimate grandson of John of Gaunt, nephew of Cardinal Beaufort, and brother of that fair damsel whom James, the poet-king of Scots, had wooed at Windsor, under circumstances so romantic. He had, for several years, been Regent of France, and in that capacity displayed considerable vigor; but the loss of Normandy occurred during his government, and this misfortune, coupled with his violent temper, and the fact of his enjoying the queen's favor, rendered Somerset's name as odious to the multitude as that of Suffolk had ever been. The queen, however, not being inclined to bow to popular opinion, resisted the demand of the House of Commons for her favorite's dismissal; and the strife between the parties was carried on with a degree of violence which, in any other country, would have produced immediate war and bloodshed.

The heir of the Plantagenets, however, recognized the necessity of acting with prudence. In fact, the Lancastrian dynasty was still so much in favor with the nation that an attempt on York's part to seize the crown would inevitably have added to the power of his enemies; but in any efforts to put down Somerset, and the men whom that obnoxious minister used as the instruments of his tyranny, the duke well knew that he carried

with him the hearts of the people and of those great patricians whom the people regarded as their natural leaders.

Though the Earl of Westmoreland adhered to the house of Lancaster the alliance of the other Nevilles would of itself have rendered York formidable; and, besides the Nevilles, there were many feudal magnates who shared York's antipathy to Somerset. Thomas, Lord Stanley, who had married Warwick's sister; John Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk, descended from a granddaughter of the first Edward; John De Vere, Earl of Oxford, whose ancestors had been great in England since the Conquest; and Thomas Courtenay, Earl of Devon, whose pedigree dated from the age of Charlemagne, could not witness without indignation the domination of Beauforts. "We are unwilling," such men must have murmured, "to see the court of Westminster converted into a sty for the brood of Katherine Swynford."

York, for some time, hesitated to strike a blow; but, at length, and not without reason, he lost all patience. Indeed, the Yorkists affirmed that a plot had been formed for imprisoning their chief, and putting him secretly to death; and the memory of Humphrey of Gloucester's fate rendered people credulous of any such report. To baffle any such criminal project, a movement against Somerset was resolved upon by the partisans of the White Rose; and, about the opening of 1452, York repaired to his castle of Ludlow, gathered an army among the retainers of the house of Mortimer, and, declaring that he had no evil intentions against the king, to whom he offered to swear fealty on the sacrament,

commenced his march toward London.

The Lancastrians were alarmed at the intelligence that the duke was in arms; and forces were mustered to intercept his march. But while the royal army went westward by one road York came eastward by another, and, with several thousand men at his back, appeared at the gates of London. The metropolis, however, had aided in that revolution which placed Henry of Bolingbroke on the throne, and still continued well affected to the house of Lancaster. York did not, therefore, meet with such a reception as his friends could have wished. The gates, in fact, were shut in his face; and, not wishing to exasperate the citizens by acts of violence, he marched up the banks of the Thames, crossed the river at Kingston, and, having been joined by the Earl of Devon, encamped his army on Brent Heath, near Dartford.

Henry, meantime, ventured on taking the field, and pitched his pavilion on Blackheath. It soon appeared, however, that on neither side was there any inclination to involve the country in civil war. Negotiations were therefore opened; and two bishops, commissioned to act for the king, proceeded to the camp of the Yorkists and demanded of their chief why he had appeared in arms.

The duke, who would seem to have been unaware of the utter insincerity of his enemies, answered that repeated attempts had been made to effect his ruin, and that he was in arms for his own safety. The bishops, who well knew how truly York spoke, admitted that he had been watched with a jealous eye, but

assigned as a reason that the treasonable talk of his adherents justified suspicion. On the king's part, however, they acquitted him of all treason, saying that Henry esteemed him as a true man and well-beloved cousin; and York, maintaining a high tone, insisted that all persons who had broken the laws of the realm, especially those who had been indicted for treason, should be put upon their trial. The demand was so reasonable that compliance could not with decency be refused; and Henry, having promised that every offender should be punished, issued an order for the apprehension of Somerset, and gave York to understand that he should have a place in the council.

Far from doubting the king's good faith, York disbanded his army, and agreed to a personal interview with his royal kinsman. The result was not the most satisfactory. It proved beyond question that, however saintly his theories, Henry was capable of acting with an utter disregard of honor – that he had little sympathy with the fine sentiment of his ancestor, John de Valois, who, when advised to violate a treaty with our third Edward, exclaimed: "Were truth and sincerity banished from every part of the earth, they ought yet to be found in the mouths and the hearts of kings." It appears that the queen had concealed Somerset behind the arras of the king's tent, and no sooner did York enter, and repeat what he had said to the two bishops, than the favorite, stepping from behind a curtain, offered to prove his innocence, and called York liar and traitor.

The scene which followed may easily be imagined. Somerset

was violent and insolent; Henry, alarmed and silent; York, indignant and scornful. The duke could now entertain no doubt that he had been betrayed; but his courage did not desert him. He retorted Somerset's epithets with interest, and was turning haughtily to take his departure, when informed that he was a captive. Somerset then proposed a summary trial and execution; but the courtiers shrunk from the opprobrium of another murder. The king, who, save in the case of Lollards, had no love of executions, took the more moderate view; and the duke, instead of perishing on the scaffold, was sent as a state prisoner to the Tower of London.

While the queen and her friends were still bent on York's destruction, a rumor that his eldest son Edward, the boy-Earl of March, was coming from Ludlow at the head of a strong body of Welshmen, filled the council with alarm. The duke was thereupon set at liberty, and, after making his submission, allowed to retire to the borders of Wales. Having reached the dominions of the Mortimers, the heir-presumptive sought refuge within the walls of the castles of Wigmore and Ludlow, repressed ambitious longings and patriotic indignation, and, for the restoration of better days to himself and his country, trusted to the chapter of accidents and the course of events.

CHAPTER V
THE KING'S MALADY

In the autumn of 1453 the queen was keeping her court at Clarendon; the Duke of York was at Wigmore and at Ludlow, maintaining a state befitting the heir of the Mortimers; the barons were at their moated castles, complaining gloomily of Henry's indolence and Somerset's insolence; and the people were expressing the utmost discontent at the mismanagement that had, after a brave struggle, in which Talbot and his son, Lord Lisle, fell, finally lost Gascony; when a strange gloom settled over the countenances of the Lancastrians, and mysterious rumors crept about as to the king's health. At length the terrible truth came out, and the Yorkists learned that Henry was suffering from an eclipse of reason, similar to that which had afflicted his maternal grandsire, the sixth Charles of France. In this state he was slowly removed from Clarendon to Westminster.

About a month after the king's loss of reason, there occurred another event, destined to exercise great influence on the rival parties. At Westminster, on the 14th of October, 1453, Margaret of Anjou, after having been for eight years a wife, without being a mother, gave birth to an heir to the English crown; and the existence of this boy, destined to an end so tragic, while reviving the courage of the Lancastrians, inspired the partisans of the

White Rose with a resolution to adopt bold measures on behalf of their chief.

At first, indeed, the Yorkists altogether refused to believe in the existence of the infant prince. When, however, that could no longer be denied, they declared that there had been unfair play. Finally, they circulated reports injurious to Margaret's honor as a queen and reputation as a woman; and rumor, which, ere this, had whispered light tales of René's daughter, took the liberty of ascribing to Somerset the paternity of her son. Such scandals were calculated to repress loyal emotions; and the courtiers attempted to counteract the effect by giving the child a popular name. Accordingly, the little prince, who had first seen the light on St. Edward's Day, was baptized by that name, which was dear to the people, as having been borne by the last Anglo-Saxon king, and by the greatest of the Plantagenets. Nobody, however, appears to have supposed that because the boy was named Edward, he would, therefore, prove equal in wisdom and valor to the English Justinian, or the conqueror of Cressy, or "the valiant and gentle Prince of Wales, the flower of all chivalry in the world."

The insanity of the king, naturally enough, brought about the recall of York to the council; and when Parliament met in February, 1454, the duke having, as Royal Commissioner, opened the proceedings, the peers determined to arrive at a knowledge of the king's real condition, which the queen had hitherto endeavored to conceal. An opportunity soon occurred.

On the 2d of March, 1454, John Kempe, Primate and Chancellor of England, breathed his last. On such occasions it was customary for the House of Lords to confer personally with the sovereign, and, accordingly, Henry being then at Windsor, twelve peers were deputed to go thither for that purpose. Their reception was not gracious; but they insisted on entering the castle, and found the king utterly incapable of comprehending a word. Three several times they presented themselves in his chamber, but in vain; and, returning to London, free from any doubts, they made a report to the House which convinced the most incredulous. "We could get," said they, "no answer or sign from him for no prayer nor desire." At the request of the twelve peers, this report was entered on the records of Parliament; and, ere two days passed, Richard, Duke of York, was nominated Protector of England. His power was to continue until the king recovered, or, in the event of Henry's malady proving incurable, till young Edward came of age.

The duke, when intrusted by Parliament with the functions of Protector, exercised the utmost caution; and, while accepting the duties of the office, was careful to obtain from his peers the most explicit declaration that he only followed their noble commandments. It is true that one of his first acts was to intrust the great seal to the Earl of Salisbury; but, on the whole, his moderation was conspicuous; and the claims of Prince Edward, as heir of England, having been fully recognized, he was created Prince of Wales and Earl of Chester, and a splendid provision

was made for his maintenance.

With York at the head of the government, matters went smoothly till the close of 1454; but in the month of December the king's recovery threw every thing into disorder. About Christmas Henry awoke as from a confused dream; and, on St. John's Day, he sent his almoner with an offering to Canterbury, and his secretary on a similar errand to the shrine of St. Edward.

The queen's hopes were now renewed and her ambitions stimulated. Having in vain endeavored to conceal the plight of her husband from the nation, she marked his restoration with joy, and presented the prince to him with maternal pride. Henry was, perhaps, slightly surprised to find himself the father of a fine boy; but, manifesting a proper degree of paternal affection, he asked by what name his heir had been called. The queen replied that he had been named Edward; and the king, holding up his hands, thanked God that such was the case. He was then informed that Cardinal Kempe was no more; and he remarked, "Then one of the wisest lords in the land is dead."

The king's recovery was bruited about; and, on the morning after Twelfth Day, William Waynflete, Bishop of Winchester, paid the royal invalid a visit. Henry spoke to him as rationally as ever he had been capable of doing; declaring, moreover, that he was in charity with all the world, and wished his lords were in the same frame of mind. The bishop, on leaving the king, was so affected that he wept for joy; the news spread from Thames to Tweed; and, from Kent to Northumberland, the partisans of the

Red Rose congratulated each other on the return of good fortune.

CHAPTER VI
THE BATTLE OF ST. ALBANS

When Henry recovered from his malady York resigned the Protectorship, and Margaret of Anjou again became all-powerful. The circumstances were such that the exercise of moderation, toward friends and foes, would have restored the Lancastrian queen to the good opinion of her husband's subjects. Unfortunately for her happiness, Margaret allowed prejudice and passion to hurry her into a defiance of law and decency.

It happened that, during the king's illness, Somerset had been arrested in the queen's great chamber, and sent to keep his Christmas in the Tower, as a preliminary to his being brought to trial. No sooner, however, did Margaret regain authority, than her favorite was set at liberty; and people learned with indignation that, instead of having to answer for his offenses against the state, the unworthy noble was to be appointed Captain-general of Calais. After this, the Yorkists became convinced that the sword alone could settle the controversy; and, about the spring of 1455, the duke, repairing to Ludlow, summoned, for the second time, his retainers, and prepared to display his banner in actual war against the royal standard of England. He had soon the gratification of being joined by the two great Earls of Salisbury and Warwick, by John Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk, and by other

men whose rank and nobility lent lustre to the cause. Having armed and arrayed the Marchmen of Wales, York advanced toward the capital.

War was now inevitable; and Somerset did not shrink from a conflict with the prince whose life he had sought and whose vengeance he had defied. A Lancastrian army was forthwith assembled; and at its head Henry and Somerset, accompanied by many men of influence, marched from London to face the Yorkists in fight. Sir Philip Wentworth bore the royal standard; and with the king went Humphrey, Duke of Buckingham, and his son, Earl Stafford; James Butler, chief of the house of Ormond, whom Henry had created Earl of Wiltshire; Thomas, Lord Clifford, from the Craven; and Hotspur's son, Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland, who, having in youth been restored by Henry the Fifth, now went out, at the age of threescore, to fight for the crown worn by Henry's son. The people, however, held aloof from the contest; and the army of the Red Rose, composed entirely of nobles, with their knights, and squires, and fighting men, does not appear to have exceeded two thousand in number.

The king had not far to go in search of his kinsman. After passing the night of Thursday, the 22d of May, at Watford, and proceeding next morning to St. Albans, the Lancastrians, when about to continue their march, perceived that the hills in front of them were covered with armed men, who moved rapidly in battle order toward the ancient historic town. On observing the approach of the Yorkist foe, the Lancastrian leaders halted, set

up the royal standard, placed troops under the command of Lord Clifford to guard the barriers, and sent the Duke of Buckingham to confer with the White Rose chiefs, who had encamped at Heyfield.

Richard Plantagenet, though a warrior of the highest courage, had no relish for bloodshed; and he did not forget that those to whom he now stood opposed were Englishmen like himself. When, therefore, Buckingham went, in Henry's name, to demand why York thus appeared before his sovereign in hostile array, the duke professed great loyalty, and replied that he would at once lay down his arms if the king would surrender Somerset to justice.

Buckingham, whose affection for the Beauforts was not excessive, carried this answer to Henry; and the duke's demand for the surrender of the queen's favorite produced an effect which could hardly have been anticipated. For once the monk-monarch showed some spark of the Plantagenet, expressed the utmost scorn at the message, and swore by St. Edward, as if he had been a conqueror of Evesham, "that he would as soon deliver up his crown as either Somerset or the meanest soldier in his camp."

Every prospect of an accommodation was now dissipated; and the warriors of the White Rose, who had remained inactive for three hours, prepared for an encounter. Having addressed his adherents, York advanced, with banners streaming and clarions sounding, and at noon commenced that struggle, which, thirty years later, was terminated on the field of Bosworth.

From occupying St. Albans the Lancastrians had the

advantage of position, and such hopes of victory that Somerset's men were ordered to put to death all the Yorkists who should be taken prisoners. Moreover, Clifford made a brave defense, and for a time the duke was kept in check at the barriers. The Yorkists, among other weapons of offense, had guns; and Warwick and Salisbury had such a degree of skill in using them as their enemies could not boast of. Yet so steadily were they resisted by Clifford that the prospect of coming to close conflict with the foe appeared distant; and the partisans of York looked somewhat blank. But Warwick was not a man to yield to obstacles. Leading his soldiers round part of the hill on which St. Albans is situated, that great war-chief broke down a high wall, ordered his trumpets to sound, crossed the gardens which the wall inclosed, and, shouting "A Warwick! A Warwick!" charged forward upon the recoiling foe. On the Lancastrian ranks Warwick's presence produced an immediate impression; and the barriers having been burst, the Yorkists, encouraged by "The Stout Earl's" war-cry, rushed into the town, and came face to face with their foes.

A conflict now took place among the houses, in the lanes, in the streets, and in the market-place. The fight was fierce, as could not fail to be the case in a struggle between men who had long cherished, while restraining, their mortal hate; and the ancient town was soon strewn with traces of the battle, and crimsoned with the blood of the slain. The king's friends made a desperate resistance; and delayed the victory till the clash of mail reached

the monks in the abbey. But Warwick cheered on archer and spearman to the assault; and York, not to be baffled, re-enforced every party that was hard-pressed, and pressed forward fresh warriors to relieve the weary and the wounded. Humphrey, Earl Stafford, bit the dust; Clifford fell, to be cruelly avenged on a more bloody day; and Northumberland, who had seen so many years and fought so many battles, died under the weapons of his foes.

Somerset appears at first to have fought with a courage worthy of the reputation he had won on the Continent; and on hearing that Clifford's soldiers were giving way before Warwick's mighty onslaught he rushed gallantly to the rescue. The chief of the Beauforts, however, did not live to bring aid to the men of the Craven. Years before, the Lancastrian duke had been admonished by a fortune-teller to beware of a castle; and, finding himself suddenly under a tavern bearing that sign, the warning occurred to his memory. Superstitious like his neighbors, Somerset lost his presence of mind, gave himself up for lost, became bewildered, and was beaten down and slain. The fortune of the day being decidedly against the Red Rose, the Earl of Wiltshire cast his harness into a ditch and spurred fast from the lost field; while Sir Philip Wentworth, equally careful of his own safety, threw away the royal standard, and fled toward Suffolk. The Lancastrians, beaten and aware of Somerset's fall, rushed through the gardens and leaped over hedges, leaving their arms in the ditches and woods that they might escape the more swiftly.

Ere this Henry had been wounded in the neck by an arrow. Sad and sorrowful, he sought shelter in a thatched house occupied by a tanner. Thither, fresh from victory, went the duke; and treated his vanquished kinsman with every respect. Kneeling respectfully, the conqueror protested his loyalty, and declared his readiness to obey the king. "Then," said Henry, "stop the pursuit and slaughter, and I will do whatever you will." The duke, having ordered a cessation of hostilities, led the king to the abbey; the royal kinsmen, after praying together before the shrine of England's first martyr, journeyed to London; and Margaret of Anjou, then with her son at Greenwich, learned, with dismay, that her favorite was a corpse and her husband a captive. At such a time, while shedding tears of bitterness and doubt within the palace built by Humphrey of Gloucester, the young queen must have reflected, with remorse, on the part she had taken against "The Good Duke," and considered how different a face affairs might have worn in 1455, if she had not, in 1447, consented to the violent removal of the last stately pillar that supported the house of Lancaster.

CHAPTER VII
THE QUEEN AND THE YORKIST CHIEFS

When the battle of St. Albans placed the king and kingdom of England under the influence of the Yorkists, the duke and his friends exercised their authority with a moderation rarely exhibited in such circumstances. No vindictive malice was displayed against the vanquished; not a drop of blood flowed on the scaffold; not an act of attainder passed the Legislature. Every thing was done temperately and in order.

As Henry was again attacked by his malady he was intrusted to Margaret's care, and York was again declared Protector of the realm, with a provision that he was to hold the office, not as before at the king's pleasure, but until discharged from it by the Lords in Parliament. Salisbury was, at the same time, intrusted with the Great Seal; and Warwick was appointed to the government of Calais. Comines calls Calais "the richest prize in the crown of England;" and the government of the city was an office of greater trust and profit than any which an English sovereign had to bestow.

Margaret of Anjou, however, was not quite absorbed in her duties as wife and mother. While educating her helpless son and tending her yet more helpless husband, she was bent on a

struggle for the recovery of that power which she had already so fatally abused; and as necessity alone had made her submit to the authority of York and his two noble kinsmen, who were satirized as the "Triumvirate," she seized the earliest opportunity of ejecting them from power.

One day in spring, while the queen was pondering projects of ambition, and glowing with anticipations of vengeance, two noblemen of high rank and great influence appeared at the palace of Greenwich. One of these was Humphrey Stafford, Duke of Buckingham; the other, Henry Beaufort, Duke of Somerset; and their errand was to confer with Queen Margaret on the present state of affairs. The queen received them with open arms, expressed haughty scorn of her potent foes, and reminded Buckingham of the son he had lost at St. Albans, and Somerset of the father he had lost on the same fatal day. The dukes, having listened to all this, represented to Margaret the indignity to which the king was subjected in being deprived of all share in the government, while York and his accomplices managed every thing according to their pleasure. The queen heard her friends with delight, vowed that the triumph of the Yorkist chiefs should be brief, and resolved upon acting without delay.

Accordingly it was determined to hold a council; and the enemies of York were summoned to Greenwich. After some debate as to the most politic method of restoring the royal authority, the council resolved that York should be commanded to resign the office of protector, seeing that the king was of

years and discretion sufficient to rule without a guardian, and that Salisbury should be commanded to surrender the post of chancellor. "The great seal," they said, "had never been in his custody, that which he used having been made since the king's restraint." Henry, for whose opinion none of the Lancastrians had any respect, was easily prevailed upon to give his sanction to their measures, and York and Salisbury were discharged from their high offices, and summoned to appear before the council.

The duke and the earl were much too wise to place themselves in the power of enemies who had, on former occasions, proved so unscrupulous. They answered boldly that there existed no power to displace them or command their appearance, save in Parliament. When, however, the houses assembled after Christmas, 1456, Henry presented himself and demanded back his regal power. Every body was surprised; but no doubt was expressed as to the king's sanity, and York, without a murmur, resigned the protectorship.

The queen was not content with having deprived the duke and the earl of power. Her ideas of revenge went far beyond such satisfaction; and she occupied her brain with schemes for putting her enemies under her feet. Feigning indifference to affairs of state, the artful woman pretended to give herself up entirely to the restoration of the king's health, and announced her intention of affording Henry an opportunity to indulge in pastimes likely to restore him to vigor of mind and body.

On this pretext the king and queen made a progress into

Warwickshire, hunting and hawking by the way, till they reached Coventry. While residing in that ancient city, and keeping her court in the Priory, the queen wrote letters, in affectionate terms, to York, Salisbury, and Warwick, earnestly entreating them to visit the king on a certain day; and the duke, with the two earls, suspecting no evil, obeyed the summons, and rode toward Coventry. On approaching the city, however, they received warning that foul play was intended, and, turning aside, escaped the peril that awaited them. York, unattended save by his groom and page, made for Wigmore; Salisbury repaired to Middleham, a great castle of the Nevilles in Yorkshire; and Warwick took shipping for Calais, which soon became his strong-hold and refuge.

Totally unaware of the mischief projected by his spouse, but sincerely anxious for a reconciliation of parties, Henry resolved on acting as peace-maker, and, with that view, summoned a great council. The king was all eagerness to reconcile York and his friends with the Beauforts, Percies, and Cliffords, whose kinsmen had been slain at St. Albans; and he swore upon his salvation so to entertain the duke and the two earls, that all discontent should be removed. London was fixed upon as the place of meeting; and, at the head of five thousand armed men, the mayor undertook to prevent strife.

Accompanied by a number of friends and followers, York entered the capital, and repaired to Baynard's castle; the Earl of Salisbury arrived, with a feudal following, at his mansion called

the Harbor; and Warwick, landing from Calais, rode into the city, attended by six hundred men, with his badge, the ragged staff, embroidered on each of their red coats, and took possession of his residence near the Grey Friars.

At the same time, the Lancastrian nobles mustered strong. Henry Beaufort, Duke of Somerset; Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland; and John, "the black-faced" Lord Clifford, came riding toward London, in feudal array, attended by hundreds of the men of the west, of Northumberland, and of the Craven. Each of the three had lost a father in the first battle of the Roses; and, albeit young and vigorous, they were to pour out their heart's blood in the struggle, ere a few years passed over. But in no wise apprehensive did they seem, as they alighted at their respective lodgings to the west of Temple Bar. Thither, at the same time, came Exeter, Buckingham, and Thomas Percy, Lord Egremont, a younger son of that Earl of Northumberland slain at St. Albans. Devon would have been in London also; but, while on his way, he fell sick, and died in the Abbey of Abingdon.

One circumstance connected with this attempt at pacification was particularly noticed. While the Yorkists lodged in the city, the Beauforts, Percies, and Cliffords, sojourned on the west of Temple Bar; and while one party held their deliberations in the Black Friars, the other held their meetings in the Chapter House at Westminster. The wits of the period had their joke on the occasion, and said, that as the Jews disdained the company of the Samaritans, so the Lancastrian lords abhorred the idea of

familiarity with the White Rose chiefs.

The farce was played out. The king, who, during the conferences, resided at Berkhamstead and acted as umpire, in due time gave his award. The Yorkists appear to have had scanty justice. They were heavily mulcted, for the benefit of their living foes, and ordered to build a chapel for the good of the souls of the lords slain at St. Albans. Every body, however, appeared satisfied, and agreed to a religious procession to St. Paul's, that they might convince the populace how real was the concord that existed. The day of the Conception was appointed for this ceremony; and, to take part in it, the king and queen came from Berkhamstead to London.

The procession was so arranged as to place in the position of dear friends those whose enmity was supposed to be the bitterest. The king, with a crown on his head, and wearing royal robes, was naturally the principal figure. Before him, hand in hand, walked Salisbury and Somerset, Warwick and Exeter. Behind him came York leading Margaret of Anjou. The citizens were, perhaps, convinced that Yorkists and Lancastrians were the best of friends. All was delusion, however, naught was truth. Though their hands were joined their hearts were far asunder, and the blood already shed cried for vengeance. Stern grew the brows of Lancastrian lords, pale the cheeks of Lancastrian ladies, at the mention of St. Albans. The Beauforts, Percies, and Cliffords, still panted for vengeance, and vowed to have an eye for an eye and

a tooth for a tooth.[3]

The procession to St. Paul's took place in spring, and ere the summer was over events dissipated the illusions which the scene created. Warwick, as Captain of Calais, interfered with some ships belonging to the Hanse Towns; and of this the Hanseatic League complained to the court of England, as an infraction of the law of nations. The earl was asked for explanations; and to render them more clearly presented himself at Westminster.

The opportunity for a quarrel was too favorable to be neglected. One day, when Warwick was attending the council at Westminster, a yeoman of his retinue, having been struck by one of the royal household, wounded his assailant. The king's servants assembling at the news watched until the earl was returning from the council to his barge, and set upon him with desperate intentions. A fray ensued, and Warwick, with some difficulty, escaped in a wherry to London. Unfortunately, the mischief did not end here. The queen, having heard of the affair, acted with characteristic imprudence, and ordered Warwick to be sent to the Tower, and a cry was therefore raised

[3] A serious quarrel – destined to be fought out eight years later on Hexham Field – occurred about this date between the chief of the Beauforts and Warwick's younger brother, who, in 1461, became Lord Montagu. "It was not long after that dissension and unkindness fell between the young Duke of Somerset and Sir John Neville, son unto the Earl of Salisbury, being then both lodged within the city. Whereof the mayor being warned, ordained such watch and provision that if they had any thing stirred he was able to have subdued both parties, and to have put them in ward till he had known the king's pleasure. Whereof the friends of both parties being aware, labored such means that they agreed them for that time." —*Fabyan's Chronicle.*

that "The Foreign Woman," who had murdered "The Good Duke Humphrey," was going to murder "The Stout Earl." Warwick, however, consulted his safety by making for Yorkshire, where he took counsel with York and Salisbury. After this conference he passed over to Calais, and during the winter employed himself in embodying some veteran troops who had served under Bedford and Talbot in the wars of France.

CHAPTER VIII
THE CITY AND THE COURT

One day, in the year 1456, a citizen of London, passing along Cheapside, happened to meet an Italian carrying a dagger. The citizen was a young merchant who had lately been on the Continent, and who had, in some of the Italian states, been prohibited by the magistrates from wearing a weapon, even for the defense of his life. Naturally indignant at seeing an Italian doing in the capital of England what an Englishman was not allowed to do in the cities of Italy, the merchant ventured upon stopping the foreigner and reminding him of the laws of his own country.

Not having any relish for being thus challenged, the Italian answered with some degree of insolence; and the Englishman, stung to the quick, forcibly seized the dagger of the foreigner, "and," according to the chroniclers of the period, "with the same a little cut his crown and cracked his pate." Enraged at this assault, the Italian complained of the outrage to the lord mayor; and the Englishman, having been summoned to the court at Guildhall, was committed to Newgate.

Between the London merchants of that day and the foreigners carrying on business in London no good-will existed. Free trade was not the fashion of the age; and the inhabitants of the city,

hating the Italians for interfering with their commerce, were ready on any fitting occasion to rise to the tune of "England for the English." No sooner, therefore, was it known that an Englishman had been incarcerated for breaking an Italian's head than he was regarded as a martyr to his patriotism; and the Londoners, assembling in crowds, compelled the mayor to deliver the merchant from prison, and took the opportunity of attacking the houses of all the Italians in London. The mayor, in the utmost alarm, summoned the elder and graver of the citizens to his assistance; and these, with much difficulty, prevailed on the crowd to disperse to their homes. As for the merchant, not seeing any security under the circumstances, he repaired to Westminster, and there took refuge in the sanctuary.

The riot in London created considerable sensation; and, unfortunately, the queen, as if she had not already business enough on her hands, took upon herself to interfere, and expressed her intention of inflicting signal punishment on the offenders. With that purpose in view, she instructed two of her dukes, Buckingham and Exeter, to proceed to the city; and these noblemen, with the mayor and two justices, opened a commission at Guildhall.

At first the business was conducted with all due form, and the inquiry was ceremoniously prosecuted. Suddenly, however, a great change occurred in the city. Bow bell was rung, and at its sound the streets filled with armed men, who appeared bent on mischief. The queen's high-born commissioners were,

doubtless, as much taken by surprise as if Jack Cade had come to life again; and, probably, not unmindful of Lord Say's fate, they abandoned the inquiry in a state of trepidation hardly consisting with the dignity of a Stafford and a Holland. The city, however, was nothing the worse for their absence; indeed, the lord mayor, having thus got rid of his lordly coadjutors, called some discreet citizens to his aid, and dealt so prudently with the multitude, that order was restored and justice satisfied.

The part enacted by the queen, in regard to the quarrel between the English and Italians, destroyed the last particle of affection which the inhabitants of London entertained for the house of Lancaster; and Margaret, for many reasons, began to prefer Coventry to the metropolis. This, however, was not the only result of her interference. In the eyes of foreigners it elevated the riot to the dignity of an insurrection, the French mistaking it for one of those revolutions in which the Parisians, under the auspices of Jean de Troyes and Jean Caboche, were in the habit of indulging during the reign of the unfortunate Charles.

The French were excusable in their delusion. With an insane king and a reckless queen in both cases the parallel was somewhat close. But the French soon discovered their mistake. Having fitted out two expeditions to avail themselves of our domestic disorders, they intrusted one to Lord de Pomyers, and the other to Sir Peter de Brezé. Pomyers landed on the coast of Cornwall, and having burned Towey, sailed back to France without doing serious mischief. Brezé, with four thousand

men, embarked at Honfleur, made a descent on Sandwich, and proceeded to spoil the town, which had been deserted by its defenders on account of the plague; but, the country people in the neighborhood arriving in great numbers, the invaders were fain to return to their ships.

Such was the end of the riot in London; and from that time the metropolitan populace adhered to the chiefs of the White Rose; and to that badge of hereditary pride and personal honor they clung with fidelity long after it had lost its bloom in the atmosphere of a corrupt court, and been dyed red on scaffold and battle-field in the blood of the noble and the brave.

CHAPTER IX
A YORKIST VICTORY AND A LANCASTRIAN REVENGE

In the summer of 1459 Margaret of Anjou carried the Prince of Wales on a progress through Chester, of which he was earl. The queen's object being to enlist the sympathies of the men of the north, she caused her son, then in his sixth year, to present a silver swan, which had been assumed as his badge, to each of the principal adherents of the house of Lancaster. Margaret had left the County Palatine, and was resting from her fatigues at Eccleshall, in Staffordshire, when she received intelligence that the Yorkists were in motion; that the duke was arraying the retainers of Mortimer beneath the Plantagenet banner; that Warwick was on his way from Calais with a body of warriors trained to arms by Bedford and Talbot; and that Salisbury, at the head of five thousand merry men of Yorkshire, was moving from Middleham Castle to join his son and his brother-in-law at Ludlow.

Notwithstanding the rout of her friends at St. Albans, Margaret was not daunted at the prospect of another trial of strength. Perhaps, indeed, she rather rejoiced that the Yorkist chiefs afforded a fair opportunity of executing her vengeance and effecting their ruin. Her measures, with that purpose, were taken

with characteristic promptitude. She issued orders to James Touchet, Lord Audley, to intercept Salisbury's march; and at the same time summoned Thomas, Lord Stanley, to join the Lancastrian army with all his forces. Stanley, who was son-in-law of Salisbury, answered that he would come in all haste, but failed to keep his promise. Audley, however, exhibited more devotion to the Red Rose. On receiving the queen's commands, he undertook to bring her one Yorkist chief dead or alive; and hastily assembling a force of ten thousand men in Cheshire and Shropshire, boldly threw himself between the earl and the duke. On the evening of Saturday, the 22d of September, Audley came face to face with Salisbury at Bloreheath, within a short distance of Drayton, anciently the seat of those Bassets who fought with so much distinction in the wars of the first Edward.

The position of the Yorkists was the reverse of pleasant. The Lancastrian army was greatly superior in number, and Audley had the advantage of being posted by the side of a stream, of which the banks were particularly steep. But Salisbury was not to be baffled. Seeing that there was little prospect of success in the event of his crossing to attack, the earl resolved on a military stratagem, and gave orders that his army should encamp for the night.

Early on the morning of Sunday – it was St. Tecla's Day – Salisbury set his men in motion; and, having caused his archers to send a flight of shafts across the river toward Audley's camp, feigned to retreat. Audley soon showed that he was no match

for such an enemy. Completely deceived, the Lancastrian lord roused his troops to action, caused his trumpets to sound, and gave orders for his army passing the river. His orders were promptly obeyed. The men of Cheshire, who composed the van, dashed into the water, and plunged through the stream; but scarcely had they commenced ascending the opposite banks when Salisbury turned, and attacked them with that degree of courage against which superiority of numbers is vain. The battle was, nevertheless, maintained for hours, and proved most sanguinary. The loss of the Yorkists was indeed trifling,[4] but more than two thousand of the Red Rose warriors perished in the encounter. Audley himself was slain, and with him some of the foremost gentlemen of Cheshire and Lancashire, among whom were the heads of the families of Venables, Molyneux, Legh, and Egerton. The queen, who witnessed the defeat of her adherents from the tower of a neighboring church, fled back to digest her mortification at Eccleshall.

The Earl of Salisbury soon found that his success was calculated to convert neutrals into allies. Lord Stanley, on receiving the queen's message, had gathered a force of two

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[4] "But the earl's two sons – the one called Sir John Neville, and the other Sir Thomas – were sore wounded; which, slowly journeying into the north country, thinking there to repose themselves, were in their journey apprehended by the queen's friends, and conveyed to Chester. But their keepers delivered them shortly, or else the Marchmen had destroyed the jails. Such favor had the commons of Wales to the Duke of York's band and his affinity, that they could suffer no wrong to be done, nor evil word to be spoken of him or of his friends." —*Hall's Union of the Families of Lancaster and York.*

thousand men; but, being reluctant to commit himself on either side, he contrived, on the day of battle, to be six miles from the scene of action. On hearing of the result, however, he sent a congratulatory letter to his father-in-law; and Salisbury, showing the epistle to Sir John Harrington, and others of his knights, said, jocosely, "Sirs, be merry, for we have yet more friends."

The contest between York and Lancaster now assumed a new aspect. Salisbury, rejoicing in a victory so complete as that of Bloreheath, formed a junction with York at Ludlow; and the duke, perceiving that moderation had been of so little avail, and believing that his life would be in danger so long as Margaret of Anjou ruled England, resolved henceforth upon pursuing a bolder course. He could not help remembering that he was turned of forty, an age at which, as the poet tells us, there is no dallying with life; and he began to consider that the time had arrived to claim the crown which was his by hereditary right.

Having resolved no longer, by timidity in politics, to play the game of his enemies, York set up his standard and summoned his friends to Ludlow. Fighting men came from various parts of England, and assembled cheerily and in good order at the rendezvous; while, to take part in the civil war, Warwick brought from Calais those veterans who, in other days, had signalized their valor against foreign foes. The projects of the Yorkists seemed to flourish. Salisbury's experience, knowledge, and military skill were doubtless of great service to his friends; and having thrown up intrenchments, and disposed in battery a

number of bombards and cannon, they confidently awaited the enemy.

Meanwhile, the Lancastrians were by no means in despair. The king, having, with the aid of the young Dukes of Somerset and Exeter, drawn together a mighty army at Worcester, sent the Bishop of Salisbury to promise the Yorkists a general pardon if they would lay down their arms. The Yorkists, however, had learned by severe experience what the king's promises were worth, and received the bishop like men who were no longer to be deluded. "So long," said they, "as the queen has supreme power, we have no faith in the king's pardon; but," they added, "could we have assurance of safety, we should express our loyalty, and humbly render ourselves at the king's service."

The king, having received the answer of the insurgent chiefs, advanced on the 13th of October to the Yorkist camp, and made proclamation, that whoever abandoned the duke should have the royal pardon. Though this appeared to be without effect, the king's army did not commence the attack. Indeed, the Yorkist ranks were most imposing, and the duke's guns wrought considerable havoc in the Lancastrian lines. Observing the formidable attitude of his foes, the king resolved to delay the assault until the morrow; and, ere the sun again shone, an unexpected incident had changed the face of matters, and thrown the Yorkists into utter confusion.

Among those who heard the king's proclamation was Andrew Trollope, captain of the veterans whom Warwick had brought

from Calais. This mighty man-at-arms had served long in the French wars, and cared not to draw his sword against the son of the Conqueror of Agincourt. After listening to the king's offers of pardon, and considering the consequences of refusing them, Trollope resolved upon deserting; and, at dead of night, he quietly carried off the Calais troops, and making for the royal camp, revealed the whole of York's plans.

When morning dawned, and Trollope's treachery was discovered, the adherents of the White Rose were in dismay and consternation. Every man became suspicious of his neighbor; and the duke was driven to the conclusion that he must submit to circumstances. No prospect of safety appearing but in flight, York, with his second son, the ill-fated Earl of Rutland, departed into Wales, and thence went to Ireland; while Salisbury and Warwick, with the duke's eldest son, Edward, escaped to Devonshire, bought a ship at Exmouth, sailed to Guernsey, and then passed over to Calais.

The king, on finding that his enemies had fled, became very bold; and having spoiled the town and castle of Ludlow, and taken the Duchess of York prisoner, he called a Parliament. As measures were to be taken to extinguish the Yorkists, no temporal peer, unless known as a stanch adherent of the Red Rose, received a summons; and Coventry was selected as the scene of revenge; for, since the unfortunate result of the Commission at Guildhall, the queen looked upon London as no place for the execution of those projects on which she had

set her heart. Away from the metropolis, however, Margaret found herself in a position to do as she pleased; and at Coventry Bloreheath was fearfully avenged. With little regard to law, and still less regard to prudence, the most violent courses were pursued: York, Salisbury, Warwick, and their friends, were declared traitors; and their estates, being confiscated, were bestowed on the queen's favorites. The chiefs of the White Rose appeared utterly ruined; and England was once more at the feet of "The Foreign Woman."

CHAPTER X
THE BATTLE OF NORTHAMPTON

In the month of June, 1460, while the Duke of York was in Ireland, while Margaret of Anjou was with her feeble husband at Coventry, and while Henry Holland, Duke of Exeter, York's son-in-law, was, as lord high admiral, guarding the Channel with a strong fleet, Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, sailed from Calais for the shores of England. It was in vain that Exeter endeavored to do his duty as admiral; for on the sea as on the land, "The Stout Earl" was a favorite hero, and the sailors refused to haul an anchor or hoist a sail to prevent his landing. At Sandwich he safely set foot on English ground, and prepared to strike a shattering blow at the house of Lancaster.

Warwick was accompanied by the Earl of Salisbury and the Earl of March; but the army with which he came to change the dynasty did not consist of more than fifteen hundred men. The earl, however, was not dismayed at the weakness of his force. Indeed, his own great name was a tower of strength; and when, on landing, he proclaimed that his motive for taking up arms was to deliver his countrymen from oppression, and to maintain the ancient laws and liberties of England, he knew that the people would rally around his banner. Ere this, the White Rose, in addition to being the emblem of hereditary right, had become

identified with the cause of civil and religious freedom.

The earl's confidence in the people of England was not misplaced. As he marched toward London, the fighting men of Kent and of all the south flocked to his standard, and on reaching Blackheath he was at the head of thirty thousand men. As the patrician hero entered the capital he was hailed with enthusiasm, and cheered with the hope of crowning his enterprise with success.

The king and queen were still at Coventry when informed of Warwick's landing, and Margaret lost no time in taking measures to resist the Yorkist invasion. Money was borrowed from the Lancastrian clergy and nobles, and troops, under Percies, Staffords, Beauforts, Talbots, and Beaumonts, gathered rapidly to the royal standard. The respect which, on his heroic father's account, people still entertained for Henry, and the fear with which Margaret inspired them, were powerful motives; and a great army having been assembled, the Lancastrian king and his haughty spouse, accompanied by Somerset and Buckingham, removed to Northampton, and took up their quarters in the Friary.

Meanwhile, leaving his father in London to defend the city and besiege the Tower, still held for the king by Lord Scales, Warwick marched through the midland counties. Having taken up a position between Towcester and Northampton, he sent the Bishop of Salisbury to the king with pacific overtures. The bishop returned without satisfaction, and Warwick, having thrice

ineffectually attempted to obtain an audience of the king, gave the Lancastrians notice to prepare for battle.

The queen was not less willing than the earl to try conclusions. Believing the Lancastrians equal to an encounter with the army of Warwick, she addressed her partisans, and encouraged them with promises of honors and rewards. Confident in their strength, she ordered them to cross the Nene; and, Lord Grey de Ruthin leading the van, the royal army passed through the river, and encamped hard by the Abbey of Delapré in the meadows to the south of the town. There the Lancastrians encompassed themselves with high banks and deep trenches; and, having fortified their position with piles, and sharp stakes, and artillery, they awaited the approach of the Yorkist foe.

Warwick was not the man to keep his enemies long waiting under such circumstances. After charging his soldiers to strike down every knight and noble, but to spare the common men, he prepared for the encounter; and, ere the morning of the 9th of July – it was gloomy and wet – dawned on the towers and turrets of the ancient town on the winding Nene, his army was in motion. Setting their faces northward, the Yorkists passed the cross erected two centuries earlier in memory of Eleanor of Castile, and in feudal array advanced upon the foe – "The Stout Earl" towering in front, and Edward of March, York's youthful heir, following with his father's banner.[5]

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[5] "At that period, the men-at-arms, or heavy cavalry, went to battle in complete armor; each man carried a lance, sword, dagger, and occasionally a mace or battle-

At news of Warwick's approach, the Lancastrian chiefs aroused themselves to activity, donned their mail, mounted their steeds, set their men in battle order, and then alighted to fight on foot. The king, in his tent, awaited the issue of the conflict; but Margaret of Anjou repaired to an elevated situation, and thither carried her son, to witness the fight. Her hopes were doubtless high, for gallant looked the army that was to do battle in her cause, and well provided were the Lancastrians with the artillery which had, in the previous autumn, rendered the Yorkists so formidable at Ludlow.

By seven o'clock the Yorkists assailed the intrenched camp at Delapré, and the war-cries of the Lancastrian leaders answered the shouts of Warwick and March. At first the contest was vigorously maintained; but, unfortunately for the queen's hopes, the rain had rendered the artillery incapable of doing the service that had been anticipated. In spite of this disheartening circumstance, the warriors of the Red Rose bravely met their antagonists, and both Yorkists and Lancastrians fought desperately and well. But, in the heat of action, Lord Grey de Ruthin, betraying his trust, deserted to the enemy. Consternation thereupon fell upon the king's army, and the Yorkists having, with the aid of Lord Grey's soldiers, got within the intrenchments, wrought fearful havoc. The conflict was,

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axe; his horse, also, was, to a certain extent, in armor. A considerable part of an English army consisted of archers, armed with long bows and arrows; and another part consisted of men armed with bills, pikes, pole-axes, glaives, and morris-pikes." —*Brooke's Visits to Fields of Battle.*

nevertheless, maintained with obstinacy till nine o'clock; but after two hours of hard fighting the king's men were seen flying in all directions, and many, while attempting to cross the Nene, were drowned in its waters.

In consequence of Warwick's order to spare the commons, the slaughter fell chiefly on the knights and nobles. The Duke of Buckingham, the Earl of Shrewsbury, Thomas Percy, Lord Egremont, and John, Viscount Beaumont, were among the slain. Somerset narrowly escaped, and fled after the queen in the direction of North Wales.

When intelligence of Warwick's victory reached London, the populace broke loose from all restraint. Lord Scales, who, while keeping the Tower, had incurred their hatred, disguised himself and endeavored to escape. The watermen, however, recognized him, and, notwithstanding his threescore years, cut off his head and cast the body carelessly on the sands. Thomas Thorpe, one of the barons of the Exchequer, met a similar fate. While attempting to fly, he was captured and committed to the Tower; but afterward he was taken possession of by the mob, and executed at Highgate. With such scenes enacting before their eyes, the citizens recognized the necessity of a settled government; and the adherents of the White Rose intimated to their chief the expediency of his immediate return from Ireland.

King Henry, after the defeat of his adherents at Northampton, was found in his tent, lamenting the slaughter. As at St. Albans, he was treated by the victors with respectful compassion, and by

them conducted, with the utmost deference, to London.

CHAPTER XI
YORK'S CLAIM TO THE CROWN

On the 7th of October, 1460, a Parliament, summoned in King Henry's name, met at Westminster, in the Painted Chamber, for centuries regarded with veneration as the place where St. Edward had breathed his last, and with admiration on account of the pictures representing incidents of the Confessor's life and canonization, executed by command of the third Henry to adorn the walls.

On this occasion the king sat in the chair of state; and Warwick's brother, George Neville, Bishop of Exeter, who, though not yet thirty, had been appointed chancellor, opened the proceedings with a notable declamation, taking for his text, *Congregate populum, sanctificate ecclesiam*. The Houses then entered upon business, repealed all the acts passed at Coventry, and declared that the Parliament there held had not been duly elected.

While this was going on, the Duke of York, who had landed at Chester, came toward London; and three days after the meeting of Parliament, accompanied by a splendid retinue, all armed and mounted, he entered the capital with banners flying, trumpets sounding, and a naked sword carried before him. Riding along with princely dignity, the duke dismounted at Westminster, and

proceeded to the House of Lords. Walking straight to the throne, he laid his hand on the cloth of gold, and, pausing, looked round, as if to read the sentiments of the peers in the faces. At that moment the Archbishop of Canterbury, who had been with Henry, entered the house, and made the usual reverence to the duke.

"Will not my Lord of York go and pay his respects to the king?" asked the archbishop.

"I know no one," answered York, coloring, "to whom *I* owe that title."

The archbishop, on hearing the duke's answer, went back to the king; and York, following, took possession of the palace. Then, returning to the house, and standing on the steps of the throne, he claimed the crown of England as heir of Lionel of Clarence. When the duke concluded his speech, the peers sat motionless as graven images; and perceiving that not a word was uttered nor a whisper exchanged, York sharply asked them to deliberate. "Think of this matter, my lords," said he; "I have taken my course, take yours."

The duke left the house in some chagrin, and the peers took his request into consideration. After discussing the claim to the crown as calmly as if it had been an ordinary peerage case, they resolved that the question should be argued by counsel at the bar.

Most of the lords were under essential obligations to the house of Lancaster, and therefore in no haste to take York's claim into consideration. When a week elapsed, therefore, the duke

deemed it politic to send a formal demand of the crown, and to request an immediate answer. The peers, somewhat startled, replied that they refused justice to no man, but in this case could decide nothing without the advice and consent of the king. Henry was consulted; and he recommended that the judges should be summoned to give their opinion. These legal functionaries, however, declined to meddle with a matter so dangerous, and the peers were under the necessity of proceeding without the aid of their learning and experience. The duke was then heard by his counsel; and, an order having been made "that every man might freely and indifferently speak his mind without fear of impeachment," the question was debated several days.

All this time York lodged in the palace of Westminster, where Henry then was, but refused to see his royal kinsman, or to hold any communication with him till the peers had decided on the justice of his claim; he knew no one, he said, to whom he owed the title of king.

At length the peers arrived at a decision; and the youthful chancellor, by order of the house, pronounced judgment. It was to the effect that Richard Plantagenet had made out his claim; but that, in consideration of Henry having from infancy worn the crown, he should be allowed to continue king for life, and that York, who meanwhile was to hold the reins of government, should ascend the throne after his royal kinsman's death. This compromise of a delicate dispute seemed to please both parties. On the vigil of the feast of All Saints, York and two of his

sons appeared in Parliament, and took an oath to abide by the decision; on All Saints Day the heir of John of Gaunt and the heir of Lionel of Clarence rode together to St. Paul's in token of friendship; and on the Saturday following the duke was, by sound of trumpet, proclaimed Protector of the realm and heir to the crown.

The king appeared quite unconcerned at the turn which affairs had taken, and York had no apprehensions of a man who was never happy but when giving himself up to devotional exercises. The duke, however, was not indifferent to the enmity of Margaret of Anjou, and he felt anxious to secure himself against her hostility. He therefore sent a summons to bring her son without delay to Westminster, intending in case of disobedience to banish her from among a people on whom she had brought so many misfortunes. The Protector, it soon appeared, had under-estimated the resources, the energy, the terrible enthusiasm of the daughter of King René. He sent his messengers, as it were, to hunt a wild-cat, and he found, to his cost, that they had roused a fierce tigress.

CHAPTER XII
THE QUEEN'S FLIGHT AND RETURN

When Margaret of Anjou, from the rising ground at Northampton, saw her knights and nobles bite the dust, and descried the banner of Richard Plantagenet borne in triumph through the broken ranks of the Lancastrian army, she mounted in haste and fled with her son toward the bishopric of Durham. Changing her mind, however, the unfortunate queen drew her rein, turned aside, and made for North Wales.

The way was beset with danger. As Margaret was passing through Lancashire she was robbed of her jewels; and while, with bitter feelings, pursuing her flight through Cheshire she was attacked by a retainer of Sir William Stanley. Having escaped these perils, and been joined by Somerset, the fair Anjouite sought refuge in Harleck Castle, which had been built on the site of an ancient British fortress by the first Edward, and which was held for that mighty monarch's feeble descendant by a Welsh captain who rejoiced in the name of Davydd ap Jefan ap Einion.

The Castle of Harleck stood on a lofty cliff, the base of which was then washed by the ocean, though now a marshy tract of ground intervenes. From the sea, with such a rock to scale, the strong-hold was well-nigh impregnable; while on the land

side it was defended by massive walls, by a large fosse, and by round towers and turrets, which covered every approach. Owen Glendower had, during four years, maintained the place against the fifth Henry; and the sturdy "Davydd" would not have shrunk from defending it against a Yorkist army, even if led by Warwick in person.

At Harleck Margaret passed months, brooding over the past, uncertain as to the present, and anxious about the future. At times, indeed, she must have forgotten her misfortunes, as, from the battlements of the castle, she gazed with the eye of a poetess over the intervening mountains to where the peaks of Snowdon seem to mingle with the clouds. At length she was startled by intelligence of the settlement made by Parliament, and by a summons from York, as Protector, to appear at Westminster with her son.

Margaret might well crimson with shame and anger. The terms on which the dispute between York and Lancaster had been compromised recalled all the injurious rumors as to the birth of her son; and her maternal feelings were shocked at the exclusion of the boy-prince from the throne he had been born to inherit.[6] Submission was, under these circumstances, impossible

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[6] "One of the greatest obstacles to the cause of the Red Rose, was the popular belief that the young prince was not Henry's son. Had that belief not been widely spread and firmly maintained, the lords who arbitrated between Henry VI. and Richard, Duke of York, in October, 1460, could scarcely have come to the resolution to set aside the Prince of Wales altogether, to accord Henry the crown for his life, and declare the Duke of York his heir." —*Sir E. B. Lytton's Last of the Barons.*

to such a woman. She was not yet thirty, decidedly too young to abandon hope; and she was conscious of having already, in seasons of danger, exhibited that energy which is hope in action. The idea of yet trampling in the dust the three magnates by whom she had been humbled, took possession of her mind; and, unaided save by beauty, eloquence, and those accomplishments which, fifteen years earlier, had made her famous at the courts of Europe, she started for the north with the determination of regaining the crown which she had already found so thorny. The distressed queen embarked on the Menai; and her destination was Scotland.

One day in the autumn of 1460, James, King of Scots, the second of his name, while attempting to wrest Roxburgh Castle from the English, was killed by the bursting of a cannon, and succeeded by his son, a boy in his seventh year. The obsequies of the deceased monarch were scarcely celebrated, when intelligence reached the Scottish court that Margaret of Anjou had, with her son, arrived at Dumfries; that she had met with a reception befitting a royal personage; and that she had taken up her residence in the College of Lincluden.

Mary of Gueldres, the widowed Queen of Scots, was about Margaret's own age. Moreover, Mary was a princess of great beauty, of masculine talent, and of the blood royal of France. Surrounded by the iron barons of a rude country, her position was not quite so pleasant as a bed of roses; and she could hardly help sympathizing with the desolate condition of her distant

kinswoman. Hastening with her son to Dumfries, she held a conference that lasted for twelve days.

At the conference of Lincluden every thing went smoothly. Much wine was consumed. A close friendship was formed between the queens. A marriage was projected between the Prince of Wales and a princess of Scotland. Margaret's spirit rose high; her hopes revived; and encouraged by promises of aid, she resolved on no less desperate an adventure than marching to London and rescuing her husband from the grasp of "the Triumvirate."

The enterprise decided on, no time was lost. An army was mustered in the frontier counties with a rapidity which, it would seem, York and his friends had never regarded as possible. The great barons of the north, however, had never manifested any tenderness for the White Rose; and they remembered with indignation that hitherto their southern peers had carried every thing before them. Eager to vindicate their importance, and inspired by Margaret with an enthusiasm almost equal to her own, the Nevilles of Westmoreland, the Percies of Northumberland, and the Cliffords of Cumberland, summoned their fighting men, and at the same time endeavored, by promises of plunder south of the Trent, to allure the foraying clans to their standard.

The Borderers boasted that their property was in their swords; and they were seldom slow to ride when the prospect of booty was presented to their imaginations. They went to church as

seldom as the twenty-ninth of February comes into the calendar, and never happened to comprehend that there was a seventh commandment. When on forays, they took every thing that was not too heavy; and were sometimes far from satisfied with the exception. Such men hailed with delight the prospect of plundering the rich South. From peels and castellated houses they came, wearing rusting armor, and mounted on lean steeds, but steady of heart, stout of hand, and ready, without thought of fear, to charge against knight or noble, no matter how proof his mail or high his renown in arms. The Borderers cared nothing for York or Lancaster; and would have fought as readily for the White Rose as the Red. But the spoil south of the Trent was a noble prize; and they gathered to the queen's standard like eagles to their prey.

Finding herself at the head of eighteen thousand men, Margaret of Anjou pressed boldly southward. Even the season was such as would have daunted an ordinary woman. When operations commenced, the year 1460 was about to expire; the grass had withered; the streams were darkened with the rains of December; the leaves had fallen; and the wind whistled through the naked branches of the trees. Margaret, far from shrinking, defied all hardships; and the spectacle of a queen, so young and beautiful, enduring fatigue and daring danger, excited the admiration and increased loyalty of her adherents. With every inclination to execute a signal revenge, she appeared before the gates of York; and marched from that city toward Sandal Castle.

CHAPTER XIII
THE ANJOUITE'S VENGEANCE

As the autumn of 1460 was deepening into winter, a rumor reached London that Margaret of Anjou was raising troops on the borders of England. The Duke of York, though not seriously alarmed, was apprehensive of an insurrection in the north; and, marching from the metropolis, with an army of five thousand men, he, on Christmas-eve, arrived at Sandal Castle, which stood on an eminence that slopes down toward the town of Wakefield. Finding that his enemies were so much more numerous than he had anticipated, the Protector saw the propriety of remaining in his strong-hold till re-enforced by his son, who was recruiting in the marches of Wales.

The fact, however, was that Margaret had no intention of allowing Duke Richard to profit by delay. Marching to Wakefield Green, she challenged him to the field, and ridiculed the idea of a man having aspired to a crown who was frightened to encounter an army led by a woman. Well aware, however, that the battle is not always to the strong, Margaret did not altogether trust in numerical superiority. Determined to secure victory, she formed an ambuscade on either side: one under Lord Clifford, the other under the Earl of Wiltshire; while to Somerset she intrusted the command of her main army.

Meanwhile York called a council of war: Salisbury and the other chiefs of the White Rose who were present strongly objected to hazarding a battle; and David Hall, an old and experienced warrior, implored the duke to remain within the walls of Sandal. But York considered that his honor was concerned in fighting; and, addressing himself to Hall in familiar phrase, he expressed the sentiments by which he was animated.

"Ah! Davy, Davy," said the duke, "hast thou loved me so long, and wouldst now have me dishonored? No man ever saw me keep fortress when I was Regent of Normandy, when the dauphin, with his puissance, came to besiege me; but, like a man, and not like a bird inclosed in a cage, I issued, and fought with mine enemies; to their loss (I thank God), and ever to my honor. If I have not kept myself within walls for fear of a great and strong prince, nor hid my face from any living mortal, wouldst thou that I should incarcerate and shut myself up for dread of a scolding woman, whose weapons are her tongue and nails? All men would cry wonder, and report dishonor, that a woman made a dastard of me, whom no man could ever, to this day, report as a coward. And, surely, my mind is rather to die with honor than to live with shame. Their numbers do not appall me. Assuredly I will fight with them, if I fight alone. Therefore, advance my banners, in the name of God and St. George!"

Seeing the duke determined to hazard a field, Salisbury and the other captains arrayed their men for battle; and the Yorkists, sallying from the castle, descended to meet the foe on Wakefield

Green. The duke supposed that the troops under Somerset were all with whom he had to contend; and the brave warrior, now in his fiftieth year, advanced fearlessly to the encounter. Never was Plantagenet more completely deceived. When between Sandal Castle and the town of Wakefield, York was suddenly assailed, by Clifford on the right hand, and by Wiltshire on the left; but, though environed on every side, the duke did not yield to fate without a desperate struggle. On both sides, the soldiers fought with savage fury; and the Yorkists, conscious of superior discipline, were for a while hopeful of victory. At a critical moment, however, Margaret brought up a body of Borderers, and ordered them to attack the Yorkists in the rear; and the effect was instantaneous. The northern prickers laid their spears in rest, spurred their lean steeds, and charged the warriors of the White Rose with a vigor that defied resistance. The victory was complete; and of five thousand men, whom York had brought into the field, nearly three thousand were stretched on the slippery sod. The bold duke was among the first who fell. With him were slain his faithful squire, David Hall, and many lords and gentlemen of the south – among whom were Sir Thomas Neville, Salisbury's son; and William Bonville, Lord Harrington, the husband of Katherine Neville, Salisbury's daughter.

An incident as melancholy as any connected with the Wars of the Roses now occurred. York's son, Edmund, Earl of Rutland, being in the castle of Sandal, had gone with his tutor, Sir Robert Aspall, to witness the fight. They dreaded no danger, for Aspall

was a priest, and Rutland was a fair boy of twelve, and innocent as a lamb. Seeing, however, that the fortune of the day was against York, the tutor hurried the young earl from the field; but as they were crossing the bridge, Lord Clifford rode up and asked the boy's name. The young earl fell on his knees, and, being too much agitated to speak, implored mercy by holding up his hands.

"Spare him," said the tutor; "he is a prince's son, and may hereafter do you good."

"York's son!" exclaimed Clifford, eying the boy savagely. "By God's blood, thy father slew mine, and so will I thee and all thy kin."

Deaf to the tutor's prayers and entreaties, "the black-faced lord" plunged his dagger into Rutland's heart; and as the boy expired turned to the priest, who stood mute with horror. "Go," said the murderer, "bear to his mother and his brother tidings of what you have heard and seen."

After thus imbruing his hands in the blood of an innocent boy, Clifford went in search of the corpse of York. Having severed the duke's head from the body, and put a crown of paper on the brow of the dead man, and fixed the head on a pole, he presented the ghastly trophy to the queen. "Madam," said Clifford, mockingly, "your war is done; here I bring your king's ransom." Margaret of Anjou laughed; the Lancastrian lords around her laughed in chorus; there was much jesting on the occasion. "Many," says Hall, "were glad of other men's deaths, not knowing that their own was near at hand;" and the chronicler might have added that

others lived through many dreary years to rue the jesting of that day.

One of the hated "Triumvirate" was now no longer alive to annoy the queen; and she was yet to have another victim. Thomas Neville, the son of Salisbury, was, as has been stated, among the slain; but the old earl, though wounded, had left the field. He was too dangerous a foe, however, to be allowed by Clifford to escape. Keenly pursued, he was taken during the night, carried to Pontefract Castle, and there executed. Margaret ordered Salisbury's head, and those of York and Rutland, to be set over the gates of York, as a warning to all Englishmen not to interfere with her sovereign will. "Take care," she said to her myrmidons, "to leave room for the head of my Lord of Warwick, for he will soon come to keep his friends company."

Glowing with victory, and confident that her enterprise would be crowned with triumph, the queen, taking the great north road, pursued her march toward the capital. Her progress was for a time unopposed. On approaching St. Albans, however, she learned that the Earl of Warwick and the Duke of Norfolk had left London to intercept her; that they had taken possession of St. Albans; that they had filled the streets of the town with archers, and posted their army on the hills to the southeast.

Margaret was not dismayed at the intelligence that such formidable foes were in her way. On the contrary, she intimated her intention of passing through St. Albans in spite of their opposition; but did not deem it safe to trust to force alone. One

of the ladies of her court – so runs the story – happened to have, in other days, interested Warwick, and had not quite lost her influence with "The Stout Earl." Upon this dame – the daughter of Sir Richard Woodville and the wife of John Grey of Groby – devolved the duty of playing the spy; and accordingly she repaired to Warwick under the pretense of asking some favor. The lady was cunning enough to act her part with discretion; and she, doubtless, brought her royal mistress intelligence which gave the Lancastrians courage to proceed.

It was the morning of the 17th of February, 1461, when the van of the queen's army advanced to force their way through St. Albans. At first the attempt was unsuccessful; and the Lancastrians were met by Warwick's bowmen with a flight of arrows that caused them to fall back from the market-place. Undaunted by this repulse, Margaret persevered; and, driving the archers before her, she brought her soldiers into action with the main body of the Yorkists in a field called Bernard's Heath.

At this point the Lancastrians found their task more easy than they could have anticipated. For the third time during the wars of the Roses occurred an instance of desertion in the face of the enemy. At Ludlow, Andrew Trollope had left the Yorkists; at Northampton, Lord Grey de Ruthin had abandoned the Lancastrians; and now Lovelace, who at the head of the Kentish men led Warwick's van, deserted the great earl in the hour of need. This circumstance placed the victory in Margaret's power; and a dashing charge made by John Grey of Groby, at

the head of the Lancastrian cavalry, decided the day in favor of the Red Rose. A running fight was, nevertheless, kept up over the undulating ground between St. Albans and the little town of Barnet; and, a last stand having in vain been made on Barnet Common, Warwick was fain to retreat with the remnants of his army.

So unexpected had been the queen's victory, and so sudden the earl's discomfiture, that the captive king was left in solitude. However, Lord Bonville, grandfather of the warrior who fell at Wakefield, and Sir Thomas Kyriel, renowned in the wars of France, went to the royal tent, and in courteous language expressed their regret at leaving him unattended. Henry, entreating them to remain, gave them a distinct promise that in doing so they should incur no danger; and after accepting the royal word as a pledge for their personal safety they consented, and advised the king to intimate to the victors that he would gladly join them.

A message was accordingly dispatched; and several Lancastrian lords came to convey Henry of Windsor to the presence of his terrible spouse. The monk-king found Margaret of Anjou and the Prince of Wales in Lord Clifford's tent, and, having expressed his gratification at their meeting, rewarded the fidelity of his adherents by knighting thirty of them at the village of Colney. Among these were the Prince of Wales, and John Grey of Groby, the warrior who had broken the Yorkists' ranks, and who, dying of his wounds a few days later, left a

widow destined to bring countless miseries on the royal race whose chiefs had so long ruled England. After the ceremony of knighting his partisans, Henry repaired to the Abbey of St. Albans and returned thanks for the victory.

While Henry was occupied with devotional exercises, the queen was unfortunately guilty of an outrage which, even if she had been in other respects faultless, must have for ever associated crime with the name of Margaret of Anjou. The Lord Bonville and Sir Thomas Kyriel had consented, as we have seen, from motives of compassion and romantic honor, to remain with Henry; and the king had on his part given a distinct promise that no evil should befall them. But by the queen and her captains no respect was paid to Henry; in fact, much less decorum was observed toward him by the Lancastrians than by the Yorkists. At all events Margaret, exhibiting the utmost disregard for her husband's promise, ordered a scaffold to be erected at St. Albans; and, in defiance of all faith and honor, Lord Bonville and Sir Thomas Kyriel died by the hands of the executioner.

Meanwhile, Margaret's adherents were taking a sure way to render her cause unpopular. Ere marching toward London the men of the north had, as the price of their allegiance to the Red Rose, covenanted to have the spoil south of the Trent; and, resolved not to return home empty-handed, they had forayed with so much energy as to spread terror wherever they went. At St. Albans their rapacity knew no limits. Not only did they plunder the town with an utter disregard to the rights of property,

but stripped the abbey with a sacrilegious hardihood which rapidly converted the head of that great monastic house from a zealous Lancastrian to a violent partisan of the White Rose.

The report of the lawless scenes enacted at St. Albans was carried to London, and the citizens, who believed that the queen had marked them as objects of her vengeance, were impressed with a sense of danger, and rather eager to win back her favor. When, therefore, the northern army lay at Barnet, and Margaret sent to demand provisions, the mayor hastened to forward some cart-loads of "lenten stuff" for the use of her camp. The populace, however, exhibited a courage which their wealthier neighbors did not possess, and rising in a mass at Cripplegate stopped the carts, and forcibly prevented the provisions leaving the city. The mayor, in alarm, sent the recorder to the king's council, and moreover interested Lady Scales and the Duchess of Bedford to intercede with the queen, and represent the impolicy of exasperating the commons at such a crisis. This led to another scene of lawless outrage. Some lords of the council, with four hundred horsemen, headed by Sir Baldwin Fulford, were sent to investigate matters, and attempted to enter London at Cripplegate. Again, however, the populace fought for the White Rose; and the Lancastrian horsemen, being repulsed, plundered the northern suburbs in retaliation, and left matters infinitely worse than they had previously appeared.

While affairs were in this posture – Margaret's heart beating high with the pride of victory – a price set on the head of

Edward of York – the Lancastrian lords cherishing the prospect of vengeance – "the wealth of London looking pale, knowing itself in danger from the northern army" – and the citizens apprehensive of being given over to the tender mercies of Grahams and Armstrongs – from Mortimer's Cross there arrived news of battle and bloodshed. The citizens resumed their feelings of security; the wealth of London appeared once more safe from huge Borderers; and Margaret of Anjou, forcibly reminded that Edward Plantagenet and Richard Neville yet lived to avenge their sires, prepared to return to "Northumberland, the nursery of her strength."

CHAPTER XIV
A PLANTAGENET AND THE TUDORS

At the opening of the year 1461, a princely personage, of graceful figure and distinguished air, rather more than twenty years of age, and rather more than six feet in height, might have been seen moving about the city of Gloucester, whose quiet streets, with old projecting houses, and whose Gothic cathedral, with stained oriel window and lofty tower, have little changed in aspect since that period. The youthful stranger, who was wonderfully handsome, had golden hair flowing straight to his shoulders, a long oval countenance, a rich but clear and delicate complexion, broad shoulders, and a form almost faultless. Perhaps his eye roved with too eager admiration after the fair damsels who happened to cross his path; but it was not for want of more serious subjects with which to occupy his attention; for the tall, handsome youth was Edward Plantagenet, Earl of March; and he had been sent to the Welsh Marches to recruit soldiers to fight the battles of the White Rose.

Edward of York was a native of Rouen. In that city he was born in 1441, while his father ruled Normandy. At an early age, however, he was brought to England, to be educated in Ludlow Castle, under the auspices of Sir Richard Croft, a

warlike Marchman, who had married a widow of one of the Mortimers. Under the auspices of Croft and of his spouse, who, at Ludlow, was known as "The Lady Governess," Edward grew up a handsome boy, and was, from the place of his birth, called "The Rose of Rouen," as his mother had been called "The Rose of Raby." Early plunged into the wars of the Roses, the heir of York never acquired any thing like learning, but became a warrior of experience in his teens; and, when at Northampton, bearing his father's banner, he exhibited a spirit which inspired the partisans of York with high hopes.

When Edward received intelligence that, on Wakefield Green, his father, the Duke of York, had fallen in battle against Margaret of Anjou, and that his brother, the Earl of Rutland, had been barbarously murdered by Lord Clifford, the prince, in the spirit of that age, vowed vengeance, and applied himself with energy to execute his vow. Doubtless, other objects than mere revenge presented themselves to his imagination. As the grandson of Anne Mortimer, he was the legitimate heir of England's kings; and he had not, during his brief career, shown any of that political moderation which had prevented his father plucking the crown from the feeble Henry.

The recruiting expedition on which Edward had gone, accompanied by a gallant squire, named William Hastings, said to derive his descent, through knights and nobles, from one of the famous sea kings, was, at first, much less successful than anticipated. The Marchmen seemed disinclined to stir in

a dynastic quarrel which they did not quite understand. But a report that York had fallen in battle, and that Rutland had been murdered in cold blood, produced a sudden change. Men who before appeared careless about taking up arms rushed to the Yorkist standard; and the retainers of the house of Mortimer, on hearing that their valiant lord was slain, appeared, with sad hearts and stern brows, demanding to be led against the murderers.

Edward was already, in imagination, a conqueror. After visiting Shrewsbury, and other towns on the Severn, he found himself at the head of twenty-three thousand men, ready to avenge his father's fall, and vindicate his own rights. At the head of this force he took his way toward London, trusting to unite with Warwick, and, at one blow, crush the power of the fierce Anjouite ere she reached the capital. An unexpected circumstance prevented Edward's hope from being so speedily realized.

Among the Welsh soldiers who fought at Agincourt, and assisted in repelling the furious charge of the Duke of Alençon, was Owen Tudor, the son of a brewer at Beaumaris. In recognition of his courage, Owen was named a squire of the body to the hero of that day, and, a few years later, became clerk of the wardrobe to the hero's widow. It happened that Owen, who was a handsome man, pleased the eye of Katherine de Valois; and one day, when he stumbled over her dress, while dancing for the diversion of the court, she excused the awkwardness with a readiness which first gave her ladies a suspicion that she was

not altogether insensible to his manly beauty. As time passed on, Katherine united her fate with his; and, in secret, she became the mother of several children.

When the sacrifice which the widowed queen had made became known, shame and grief carried her to the grave; and Humphrey of Gloucester, then Protector, sent Owen to the Tower. He afterward regained his liberty, but without being acknowledged by the young king as a father-in-law. Indeed, of a marriage between the Welsh soldier and the daughter of a Valois and widow of a Plantagenet no evidence exists; but when Edmund and Jasper, the sons of Katherine, grew up, Henry gave to one the Earldom of Richmond, and to the other that of Pembroke. Richmond died about the time when the wars of the Roses commenced. Pembroke lived to enact a conspicuous part in the long and sanguinary struggle.

When the Lancastrian army, flushed with victory, was advancing from Wakefield toward London, Margaret of Anjou, hearing that Edward of York was on the Marches of Wales, resolved to send a force under Jasper Tudor to intercept him; and Jasper, proud of the commission, undertook to bring the young Plantagenet, dead or alive, to her feet. With this view he persuaded his father to take part in the adventure, and Owen Tudor once more drew the sword which, in years gone by, he had wielded for the House of Lancaster.

Edward was on his march toward London when he heard that Jasper and other Welshmen were on his track. The prince was

startled; but the idea of an heir of the blood and name of the great Edwards flying before Owen Tudor and his son was not pleasant; and, moreover, it was impolitic to place himself between two Lancastrian armies. Considering these circumstances, Edward turned upon his pursuers, and met them at Mortimer's Cross, in the neighborhood of Hereford.

It was the morning of the 2d of February – Candlemas Day – and Edward was arraying his men for the encounter, when he perceived that the "orb of day" appeared like three suns, which all joined together as he looked. In those days the appearance of three suns in the sky was regarded as a strange prodigy; and Edward either believed, or affected to believe, that the phenomenon was an omen of good fortune. Encouraging his soldiers with the hope of victory, he set fiercely upon the enemy.

The Tudors, whose heads had been turned by unmerited prosperity, were by no means prepared for defeat. Owen, with whom a queen-dowager had united her fate, and Jasper, on whom a king had conferred an earldom, were too much intoxicated to perceive the danger of giving chase to the heir of the Plantagenets. Not till Edward turned savagely to bay did they perceive that, instead of starting a hare, they had roused a lion.

At length the armies joined battle, and a fierce conflict took place. Edward, exhibiting that skill which afterward humbled the most potent of England's barons, saw thousands of his foes hurled to the ground; and Jasper, forgetful of his heraldic precept, that death is better than disgrace, left his followers to their fate

and fled from the field. Owen, however, declined to follow his son's example. He had fought at Agincourt, he remembered, and had not learned to fly. His courage did not save the Welsh adherents of Lancaster from defeat; and, in spite of his efforts, he was taken prisoner with David Lloyd, Morgan ap Reuther, and other Welshmen.

Edward had now a golden opportunity, by sparing the vanquished, of setting a great example to his adversaries. But the use which Margaret had made of her victory at Wakefield could not be forgotten; and it seemed to be understood that henceforth no quarter was to be given in the Wars of the Roses. Accordingly, Owen and his friends were conveyed to Hereford, and executed in the market-place. The old Agincourt soldier was buried in the chapel of the Grey Friars' Church; but no monument was erected by his regal descendants in memory of the Celtic hero whose lucky stumble over a royal widow's robes resulted in his sept exchanging the obscurity of Beaumaris for the splendor of Windsor.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.