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MARGARET OF
ANJOU

Jacob Abbott

Margaret of Anjou

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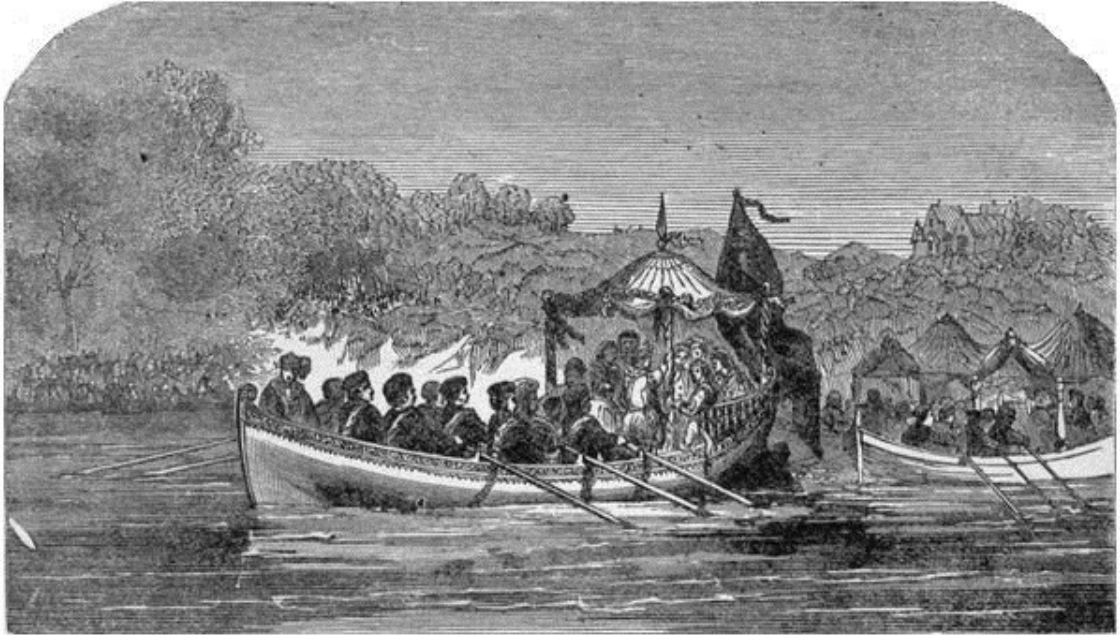
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Содержание

PREFACE	6
CHAPTER I.	9
CHAPTER II.	15
CHAPTER III.	21
CHAPTER IV.	27
CHAPTER V.	32
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	36

Jacob Abbott

Margaret of Anjou / Makers of History



The Bridal Procession.

PREFACE

The story of Margaret of Anjou forms a part of the history of England, for the lady, though of Continental origin, was the queen of one of the English kings, and England was the scene of her most remarkable adventures and exploits. She lived in very stormy times, and led a very stormy life; and her history, besides the interest which it excites from the extraordinary personal and political vicissitudes which it records, is also useful in throwing a great deal of light upon the ideas of right and wrong, and of good and evil, and upon the manners and customs, both of peace and war, which prevailed in England during the age of chivalry.



Map, Illustrating the History of Margaret of Anjou.

CHAPTER I.

The Houses of York and Lancaster

A real heroine.

Margaret of Anjou was a heroine; not a heroine of romance and fiction, but of stern and terrible reality. Her life was a series of military exploits, attended with dangers, privations, sufferings, and wonderful vicissitudes of fortune, scarcely to be paralleled in the whole history of mankind.

Two great quarrels.

She was born and lived in a period during which there prevailed in the western part of Europe two great and dreadful quarrels, which lasted for more than a hundred years, and which kept France and England, and all the countries contiguous to them, in a state of continual commotion during all that time.

Contest between the houses of York and Lancaster.

The first of these quarrels grew out of a dispute which arose among the various branches of the royal family of England in respect to the succession to the crown. The two principal branches of the family were the descendants respectively of the Dukes of York and Lancaster, and the wars which they waged against each other are called in history the wars of the houses of York and Lancaster. These wars continued for several successive generations, and Margaret of Anjou was the queen of one of the most prominent representatives of the Lancaster line. Thus she became most intimately involved in the quarrel.

Wars in France.

The second great contention which prevailed during this period consisted of the wars waged between France and England for the possession of the territory which now forms the northern portion of France. A large portion of that territory, during the reigns that immediately preceded the time of Margaret of Anjou, had belonged to England. But the kings of France were continually attempting to regain possession of it—the English, of course, all the time making desperate resistance. Thus, for a hundred years, including the time while Margaret lived, England was involved in a double set of wars—the one internal, being waged by one branch of the royal family against the other for the possession of the throne, and the other external, being waged against France and other Continental powers for the possession of the towns and castles, and the country dependent upon them, which lay along the southern shore of the English Channel.

Origin of Difficulty.

In order that the story of Margaret of Anjou may be properly understood, it will be necessary first to give some explanations in respect to the nature of these two quarrels, and to the progress which had been made in them up to the time when Margaret came upon the stage. We shall begin with the internal or civil wars which were waged between the families of York and Lancaster. Some account of the origin and nature of this difficulty is given in our history of Richard III., but it is necessary to allude to it again here, and to state some additional particulars in respect to it, on account of the very important part which Margaret of Anjou performed in the quarrel.

The difficulty originated among the children and descendants of King Edward III. He reigned in the early part of the fourteenth century. He occupied the throne a long time, and his reign was considered very prosperous and glorious. The prosperity and glory of it consisted, in a great measure, in the success of the wars which he waged in France, and in the towns, and castles, and districts of country which he conquered there, and annexed to the English domain.

The sons of Edward III.

In these wars old King Edward was assisted very much by the princes his sons, who were very warlike young men, and who were engaged from time to time in many victorious campaigns on the

Continent. They began this career when they were very young, and they continued it through all the years of their manhood and middle life, for their father lived to an advanced age.

The Black Prince.

The most remarkable of these warlike princes were Edward and John. Edward was the oldest son, and John the third in order of age of those who arrived at maturity. The name of the second was Lionel. Edward, the oldest son, was of course the Prince of Wales; but, to distinguish him from other Princes of Wales that preceded and followed him, he is known commonly in history by the name of the Black Prince. He received this name originally on account of something about his armor which was black, and which marked his appearance among the other knights on the field of battle.

Richard II.

The Black Prince did not live to succeed his father and inherit the throne, for he lost his health in his campaigns on the Continent, and came home to England, and died a few years before his father died. His son, whose name was Richard, was his heir, and when at length old King Edward died, this young Richard succeeded to the crown, under the title of King Richard II. In the history of Richard II., in this series, a full account of the life of his father, the Black Prince, is given, and of the various remarkable adventures that he met with in his Continental campaigns.

John of Gaunt.

Prince John, the third of the sons of old King Edward, is commonly known in history as John of Gaunt. This word Gaunt was the nearest approach that the English people could make in those days to the pronunciation of the word Ghent, the name of the town where John was born. For King Edward, in the early part of his life, was accustomed to take all his family with him in his Continental campaigns, and so his several children were born in different places, one in one city and another in another, and many of them received names from the places where they happened to be born.

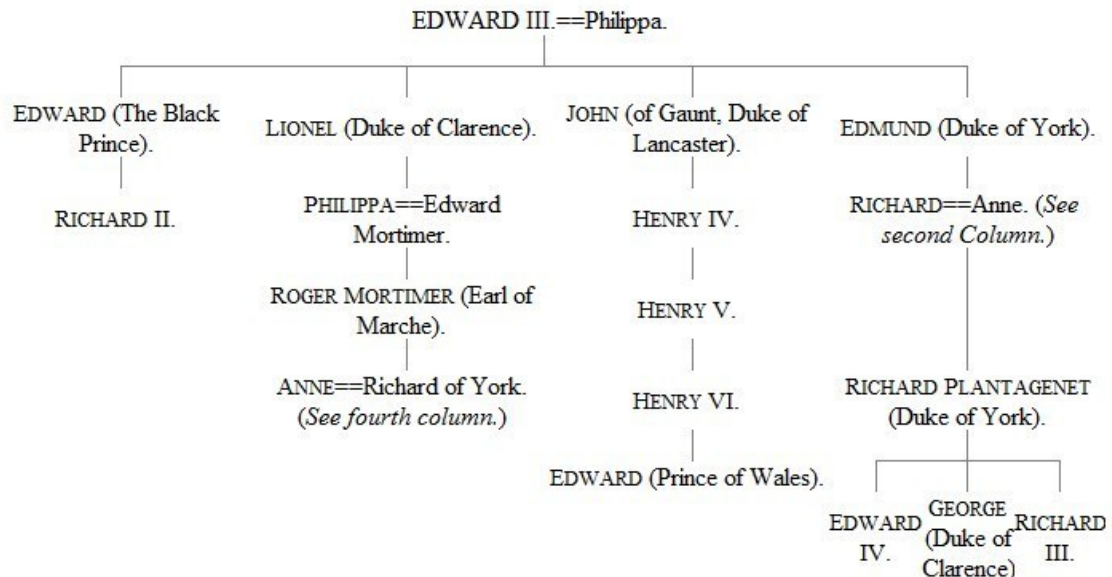


Selecting the Roses.

On the following page we have a genealogical table of the family of Edward III. At the head of it we have the names of Edward III. and Philippa his wife. In a line below are the names of those four of his sons whose descendants figure in English history. It was among the descendants of these sons that the celebrated wars between the houses of York and Lancaster, called the wars of the roses, arose.

Genealogical Table of the Family of Edward III., Showing the Connection of the Houses of York and Lancaster

Genealogical table of the descendants of Edward III



The character == denotes marriage; the short perpendicular line | a descent. There were many other children and descendants in the different branches of the family besides those whose names are inserted in the table. The table includes only those essential to an understanding of the history.

The roses.

These wars were called the wars of the roses from the circumstance that the white and the red rose happened in some way to be chosen as the badges of the two parties—the white rose being that of the house of York, and the red that of the house of Lancaster.

The four brothers.

The reader will observe that the dukes of Lancaster and York are the third and fourth of the brothers enumerated in the table, whereas it might have been supposed that any contest which should have arisen in respect to the crown would have taken place between families of the first and second. But the first and second sons and their descendants were soon set aside, as it were, from the competition, in the following manner.

Ambition of Richard's uncles. Richard's character.

The line of the first brother soon became extinct. Edward himself, the Prince of Wales, died during his father's lifetime, leaving his son Richard as his heir. Then, when the old king died, Richard succeeded him. As he was the oldest living son of the oldest son, his claim could not be disputed, and so his uncles acquiesced in it. They wished very much, it is true, to govern the realm, but they contented themselves with ruling in Richard's name until he became of age, and then Richard took the government into his own hands. The country was tolerably well satisfied under his dominion for some years, but at length Richard became dissipated and vicious, and he domineered over the people of England in so haughty a manner, and oppressed them so severely by the taxes and other exactions which he laid upon them, that a very general discontent prevailed at last against him and against his government. This discontent would have given either of his uncles a great advantage in any design

which they might have formed to take away the crown from him. As it was, it greatly increased their power and influence in the land, and diminished, in a corresponding degree, that of the king. The uncles appear to have been contented with this share of power and influence, which seemed naturally to fall into their hands, and did not attempt any open rebellion.

His cousin Henry.

Richard had a cousin, however, a young man of just about his own age, who was driven at last, by a peculiar train of circumstances, to rise against him. This cousin was the son of his uncle John. His name was Henry Bolingbroke. He appears in the genealogical table as Henry IV., that having been his title subsequently as King of England.

Quarrel between Henry and Norfolk. The trial.

This cousin Henry became involved in a quarrel with a certain nobleman named Norfolk. Indeed, the nobles of those days were continually getting engaged in feuds and quarrels, which they fought out with the greatest recklessness, sometimes by regular battles between armies of retainers, and sometimes by single combat, in which the parties to the dispute were supposed to appeal to Almighty God, who they believed, or professed to believe, would give the victory to the just side in the quarrel. These single combats were arranged with great ceremony and parade, and were performed in a very public and solemn manner; being, in fact, a recognized and established part of the system of public law as administered in those days. In the next chapter, when speaking more particularly of the manners and customs of the times, I shall give an account in full of one of these duels. I have only to say here that Richard, on hearing of the quarrel between his cousin Henry and Norfolk, decreed that they should settle it by single combat, and preparations were accordingly made for the trial, and the parties appeared, armed and equipped for the fight, in the presence of an immense concourse of people assembled to witness the spectacle. The king himself was to preside on the occasion.

Henry is sent into banishment.

But just before the signal was to be given for the combat to begin, the king interrupted the proceedings, and declared that he would decide the question himself. He pronounced both the combatants guilty, and issued a decree of banishment against both. Henry submitted, and both prepared to leave the country. These transactions, of course, attracted great attention throughout England, and they operated to bring Henry forward in a very conspicuous manner before the people of the realm. He was in the direct line of succession to the crown, and he was, moreover, a prince of great wealth, and of immense personal influence, and so, just in proportion as Richard himself was disliked, Henry would naturally become an object of popular sympathy and regard. When he set out on his journey toward the southern coast, in order to leave the country in pursuance of his sentence, the people flocked along the waysides, and assembled in the towns where he passed, as if he were a conqueror returning from his victories instead of a condemned criminal going into banishment.

1400. His estates confiscated.

Soon after this, the Duke of Lancaster, Henry's father, died, and then Richard, instead of allowing his cousin to succeed to the immense estates which his father left, confiscated all the property, under the pretext that Henry had forfeited it, and so converted it to his own use. This last outrage aroused Henry to such a pitch of indignation that he resolved to invade England, depose Richard, and claim the crown for himself.

A revolution.

This plan was carried into effect. Henry raised an armament, crossed the Channel, and landed in England. The people took sides. A great majority sided with Henry. A full account of this insurrection and invasion is given in our history of Richard II. All that it is necessary to say here is that the revolution was effected. Richard was deposed, and Henry obtained possession of the kingdom. It was thus that the house of Lancaster first became established on the throne.

The elder branches of the family.

But you will very naturally wonder where the representatives of the second brother in Edward the Third's family were all this time, and why, when Richard was deposed, who was the son of the first brother, they did not appear, and advance their claims in competition with Henry. The reason was because there was no male heir of that branch living in that line. You will see by referring again to the table that the only child of Lionel, the second brother, was Philippa, a girl. She had a son, it is true, Roger Mortimer, as appears by the table; but he was yet very young, and could do nothing to assert the claims of his line. Besides, Henry pretended that, together with his claims to the throne through his father, he had others more ancient and better founded still through his mother, who, as he attempted to prove, was descended from an English king who reigned *before Edward III*. The people of England, as they wished to have Henry for king, were very easily satisfied with his arguments, and so it was settled that he should reign. The line of this second brother, however, did not give up their claims, but reserved them, intending to rise and assert them on the very first favorable opportunity.

Henry reigned about thirteen years, and then was succeeded by his son, Henry V., as appears by the table. There was no attempt to disturb the Lancastrian line in their possession of the throne during these two reigns. The attention, both of the kings and of the people, during all this period, was almost wholly engrossed in the wars which they were waging in France. These wars were very successful. The English conquered province after province and castle after castle, until at length almost the whole country was brought under their sway.

1422. Birth and accession of Henry VI.

This state of things continued until the death of Henry V., which took place in 1422. He left for his heir a little son, named also Henry, then only about nine months old. This infant was at once invested with the royal authority as King of England and France, under the title of Henry VI., as seen by the table. It was this Henry who, when he arrived at maturity, became the husband of Margaret of Anjou, the subject of this volume. It was during his reign, too, that the first effective attempt was made to dispute the right of the house of Lancaster to the throne, and it was in the terrible contests which this attempt brought on that Margaret displayed the extraordinary military heroism for which she became so renowned. I shall relate the early history of this king, and explain the nature of the combination which was formed during his reign against the Lancastrian line, in a subsequent chapter, after first giving a brief account of such of the manners and customs of those times as are necessary to a proper understanding of the story.

CHAPTER II.

Manners and Customs of The Time

The nobles. Their mode of life.

In the days when Margaret of Anjou lived, the kings, princes, nobles, and knights who flourished in the realms of England and France, though they were, relatively to the mass of the people, far more wealthy, proud, and powerful than their successors are at the present day, still lived in many respects in a very rude and barbarous manner. They enjoyed very few of the benefits and privileges which all classes enjoy in the age in which we live. They had very few books, and very little advantage of instruction to enable them to read those that they had. There were no good roads by which they could travel comfortably from place to place, and no wheeled carriages. They lived in castles, very strongly built indeed, and very grand and picturesque sometimes in external appearance, but very illy furnished and comfortless within. The artisans were skillful in fabricating splendid caparisons for the horses, and costly suits of glittering armor for the men, and the architects could construct grand cathedrals, and ornament them with sculptures and columns which are the wonder of the present age. But in respect to all the ordinary means and appliances of daily life, even the most wealthy and powerful nobles lived in a very barbarous way.

Retainers of the nobles.

The mass of the common people were held in a state of abject submission to the will of the chieftains, very much in the condition of slaves, being compelled to toil in the cultivation of their masters' lands, or to go out as soldiers to fight in their quarrels, without receiving any compensation. The great ambition of every noble and knight was to have as many of these retainers as possible under his command. The only limit to the number which each chieftain could assemble was his power of feeding them. For in those days men could be more easily found to fight than to engage in any other employment, and there were great numbers always ready to follow any commander who was able to maintain them.

Their courts.

Each great noble lived in state in his castle, like a prince or a petty king. Those of the highest class had their privy councilors, treasurers, marshals, constables, stewards, secretaries, heralds, pursuivants, pages, guards, trumpeters—in short, all the various officers that were to be found in the court of the sovereign. To these were added whole bands of minstrels, mimics, jugglers, tumblers, rope-dancers, and buffoons. Besides these, there was always attached to each great castle a large company of priests and monks, who performed divine service according to the usages of those times, in a gorgeously-decorated chapel built for this purpose within the castle walls.

Great power of the nobles.

Thus the whole country was divided, as it were, into a vast number of separate jurisdictions, each with an earl, or a baron, or a duke at the head of it, who ruled with an almost absolute sway in every thing that related to the internal management of his province, while, however, he recognized a certain general dominion over all on the part of the king. Such being the state of the case, it is not surprising that the nobles were often powerful enough, as will appear in the course of this narrative, to band together and set up and put down kings at their pleasure.

The Earl of Warwick.

Perhaps the most powerful of all the great nobles who flourished during the time of Margaret of Anjou was the Earl of Warwick. So great was his influence in deciding between the rival claims of different pretenders to the crown, that he is known in history by the title of the *King-maker*. His wealth was so enormous that it was said that the body of retainers that he maintained amounted sometimes in number to thirty thousand men.

Amusements of the nobility.

The employments, and even the amusements of these great barons and nobles, were all military. They looked down with great disdain upon all the useful pursuits of art and industry, regarding them as only fit occupations for serfs and slaves. Their business was going to war, either independently against each other, or, under the command of the king, against some common enemy. When they were not engaged in any of these wars they amused themselves and the people of their courts with tournaments, and mock combats and encounters of all kinds, which they arranged in open grounds contiguous to their castles with great pomp and parade.

Courts of justice. Quarrels among the nobles.

It could not be expected that such powerful and warlike chieftains as these could be kept much under the control of law by the ordinary machinery of courts of justice. There were, of course, laws and courts of justice in those days, but they were administered chiefly upon the common people, for the repression of common crimes. The nobles, in their quarrels and contentions with each other, were accustomed to settle the questions that arose in other ways. Sometimes they did this by marshaling their troops and fighting each other in regular campaigns, during which they laid siege to castles, and ravaged villages and fields, as in times of public war. Sometimes, when the power of the king was sufficient to prevent such outbreaks as these, the parties to the quarrel were summoned to settle the dispute by single combat in the presence of the king and his court, as well as of a vast multitude of assembled spectators. These single combats were the origin of the modern custom of dueling.

Dueling.

At the present day, the settlement of disputes by a private combat between the parties to it is made a crime by the laws of the land. It is justly considered a barbarous and senseless practice. The man who provokes another to a duel and then kills him in the fight, instead of acquiring any glory by the deed, has to bear, for the rest of his life, both in his own conscience and in the opinion of mankind, the mark and stain of murder. And when, in defiance of law, and of the opinions and wishes of all good men, any two disputants who have become involved in a quarrel are rendered so desperate by their angry passions as to desire to satisfy them by this mode, they are obliged to resort to all sorts of manœuvres and stratagems to conceal the crime which they are about to commit, and to avoid the interference of their friends or of the officers of the law.



Ordeal Combat.

The ancient trial by combat. Old representation of it.

In the days, however, of the semi-savage knights and barons who flourished so luxuriantly in the times of which we are writing, the settlement of a dispute by single combat between the two parties to it was an openly recognized and perfectly legitimate mode of arbitration, and the trial of the question was conducted with forms and ceremonies even more strict and more solemn than those which governed the proceedings in regular courts of justice.

The engraving on the preceding page is a sort of rude emblematic representation of such a trial, copied from a drawing in an ancient manuscript. We see the combatants in the foreground, with the judges and spectators behind.

Henry Bolingbroke.

It was to a public and solemn combat of this kind that Richard the Second summoned his cousin Henry Bolingbroke, and his enemy, as related in the last chapter. In that instance the combat was not fought, the king having taken the case into his own hands, and condemned both the parties before the contest was begun. But in multitudes of other cases the trial was carried through to its consummation in the death of one party, and the triumph and acquittal of the other.

Arrangements made. Guards.

Very many detailed and full accounts of these combats have come down to us in the writings of the ancient chroniclers. I will here give a description of one of them, as an example of this mode of trial, which was fought in the public square in front of King Richard the Second's palace, the king himself, all the principal nobles of the court, and a great crowd of other persons being provided with seats around the area as spectators of the fight. The nobles and knights were all dressed in

complete armor; and heralds, and squires, and guards were stationed in great numbers to regulate the proceedings. It was on a bright morning in June when the combat was fought, and the whole aspect of the scene was that of a grand and joyful spectacle on a gala day.

Great concourse of people.

It was estimated that more people from the surrounding country came to London on the occasion of this duel than at the time of the coronation of the king. It took place about three years after the coronation.

The parties.

The parties to the combat were John Anneslie, a knight, and Thomas Katrington, a squire. Anneslie, the knight, was the complainant and the challenger. Katrington, the squire, was the defendant. The circumstances of the case were as follows.

Nature of the quarrel. Castle lost.

Katrington, the squire, was governor of a castle in Normandy. The castle belonged to a certain English knight who afterward died, and his estate descended to Anneslie, the complainant in this quarrel. If the squire had successfully defended the castle from the French who attacked it, then it would have descended with the other property to Anneslie. But he did not. When the French came and laid siege to the castle, Katrington surrendered it, and so it was lost. He maintained that he had not a sufficient force to defend it, and that he had no alternative but to surrender. Anneslie, on the other hand, alleged that he might have defended it, and that he would have done so if he had been faithful to his trust; but that he had been *bribed* by the French to give it up. This Katrington denied; so Anneslie, who was very angry at the loss of the castle, challenged him to single combat to try the question.

Reason for this mode of trial.

It is plain that this was a very absurd way of attempting to ascertain whether Katrington had or had not been bribed; but, as the affair had occurred some years before, and in another country, and as, moreover, the giving and receiving of bribes are facts always very difficult to be proved by ordinary evidence, it was decided by the government of the king that this was a proper case for the trial by combat, and both parties were ordered to prepare for the fight. The day, too, was fixed, and the place—the public square opposite the king's palace—was appointed. As the time drew nigh, the whole country for many miles around was excited to the highest pitch of interest and expectation.

The company assemble. The combatants appear.

At the place where the combat was to be fought a large space was railed in by a very substantial barricade. The barricade was made very strong, so as to resist the utmost possible pressure of the crowd. Elevated seats, commanding a full view of the lists, as the area railed in was called, were erected for the use of the king and the nobles of the court, and all other necessary preparations were made. When the hour arrived on the appointed day, the king and the nobles came in great state and took their places. The whole square, with the exception of the lists and proper avenues of approach, which were kept open by the men-at-arms, had long since been filled with an immense crowd of people from the surrounding country. At length, after a brief period of expectation, the challenger, Anneslie, was seen coming along one of the approaches, mounted on a horse splendidly caparisoned, and attended by several knights and squires, his friends, all completely armed.

The horse excluded.

He stopped when he reached the railing and dismounted from his horse. It was against the laws of the combat for either party to enter the lists mounted. If a horse went within the inclosure he was forfeited by that act to a certain public officer called the high constable of England, who was responsible for the regularity and order of the proceedings.

Anneslie, having thus dismounted from his horse with the assistance of his attendants, walked into the lists all armed and equipped for the fight. His squires attended him. He walked there to and fro a few minutes, and then a herald, blowing a trumpet, summoned the accused to appear.

Summons to the accused.

"Thomas Katrington! Thomas Katrington!" he cried out in a loud voice, "come and appear, to save the action for which Sir John Anneslie, knight, hath publicly and by writing appealed thee!"

Appearance of Katrington.

Three times the herald proclaimed this summons. At the third time Katrington appeared.

He came, as Anneslie had come, mounted upon a war-horse splendidly caparisoned, and with his arms embroidered on the trappings. He was attended by his friends, the representatives of the seconds of the modern duel. The two stopped at the entrance of the lists, and dismounting, passed into the lists on foot. Every body being now intent on the combatants, the horse for the moment was let go, and, being eager to follow his master, he ran up and down along the railing, reaching his head and neck over as far as he could, and trying to get over. At length he was taken and led away; but the lord high constable said at once that he should claim him for having entered the lists.

Horse's head forfeited.

"At least," said he, "I shall claim his head and neck, and as much of him as was over the railing."

The pleadings.

The combatants now stood confronting each other within the lists. A written document was produced, which had been prepared, as was said, by consent of both parties, containing a statement of the charge made against Katrington, namely, that of treason, in having betrayed to the enemy for money a castle intrusted to his charge, and his reply. The herald read this document with a loud voice, in order that all the assembly, or as many as possible, might hear it. As soon as it was read, Katrington began to take exceptions to some passages in it. The Duke of Lancaster, who seemed to preside on the occasion, put an end to his criticisms at once, saying that he had already agreed to the paper, and that now, if he made any difficulty about it, and refused to fight, he should be adjudged guilty of the treason, and should at once be led out to execution.

Katrington is ready.

Katrington then said that he was ready to fight his antagonist, not only on the points raised in the document which had been read, but on any and all other points whatever that might be laid to his charge. He had entire confidence, he said, that the justice of his cause would secure him the victory.

Singular oath administered.

The next proceeding in this strange ceremony was singular enough. It was the solemn administering of an oath to each of the combatants, by which oath they severally swore that the cause in which they were to fight was true, and that they did not deal in any witchcraft or magic art, by which they expected to gain the victory over their adversary; and also, that they had not about their persons any herb or stone, or charm of any kind, by which they hoped to obtain any advantage.

After this oath had been administered, time was allowed for the combatants to say their prayers. This ceremony they performed apparently in a very devout manner, and then the battle began.

The battle.

The combatants fought first with spears, then with swords, and finally, coming to very close quarters, with daggers. Anneslie seemed to gain the advantage. He succeeded in disarming Katrington of one after another of his weapons, and finally threw him down. When Katrington was down, Anneslie attempted to throw himself upon him, in order to crush him with the weight of his heavy iron armor. But he was exhausted by the heat and by the exertion which he had made, and the perspiration running down from his forehead under his helmet blinded his eyes, so that he could not see exactly where Katrington was, and, instead of falling upon him, he came down upon the ground at a little distance away. Katrington then contrived to make his way to Anneslie and to get upon him, thus pressing him down to the ground with his weight. The combatants lay thus a few minutes locked together on the ground, and struggling with each other as well as their heavy and cumbrous armor would permit, Katrington being all the time uppermost, when the king at length gave orders that the contest should cease and that the men should be separated.

The proceedings arrested by the king.

In obedience to these orders, some men came to rescue Anneslie by taking Katrington off from him. But Anneslie begged them not to interfere. And when the men had taken Katrington off, he urged them to place him back upon him again as he was before, for he said he himself was not hurt at all, and he had no doubt that he should gain the victory if they would leave him alone. The men, however, having the king's order for what they were doing, paid no heed to Anneslie's requests, but proceeded to lead Katrington away.

Katrington's condition.

They found that he was so weak and exhausted that he could not stand. They led him to a chair, and then, taking off his helmet, they tried to revive him by bathing his face and giving him some wine.

Anneslie's request to the king.

In the mean time, Anneslie, finding that Katrington was taken away, allowed himself to be lifted up. When set upon his feet, he walked along toward the part of the inclosure which was near the king's seat, and begged the king to allow the combat to proceed. He said he was sure that he should obtain the victory if they would but permit him to continue the combat to the end. Finally the king and nobles gave their consent, and ordered that Anneslie should be placed upon the ground again, and Katrington upon him, in the same position, as nearly as possible, as before.

But on going again to Katrington with a view of executing this decree, they found that he was in such a condition as to preclude the possibility of it. He had fainted and fallen down out of his chair in a deadly swoon. He seemed not to be wounded, but to be utterly exhausted by the heat, the weight of his armor, and the extreme violence of the exertion which he had made. His friends raised him up again, and proceeded to unbuckle and take off his armor. Relieved from this burden, he began to come to himself. He opened his eyes and looked around, staring with a wild, bewildered, and ghastly look, which moved the pity of all the beholders, that is, of all but Anneslie. He, on leaving the king, came to where poor Katrington was sitting, and, full of rage and hate, began to taunt and revile him, calling him traitor, and false, perjured villain, and daring him to come out again into the area and finish the fight.

Anneslie's rage.

To this Katrington made no answer, but stared wildly about with a crazed look, as if he did not know where he was or what they were doing to him.

The termination of the trial.

So the farther prosecution of the combat was relinquished. Anneslie was declared the victor, and poor Katrington was deemed to be proved, by his defeat, guilty of the treason which had been charged against him. He was borne away by his friends, and put into his bed. He continued delirious all that night, and the next morning at nine o'clock he died.

Thus was this combat fought, as the ancient historian says, to the great rejoicing of the common people and the discouragement of traitors!

CHAPTER III.

King Henry VI

King Henry's accession.

King Henry the Sixth, who subsequently became the husband of Margaret of Anjou, was only about nine months old, as has already been said, when he succeeded to the throne by the death of his father. He was proclaimed by the heralds to the sound of trumpets and drums, in all parts of London, while he was yet an infant in his nurse's arms.

His uncles.

Of course the question was now who should have the rule in England while Henry remained a child. And this question chiefly affected the little king's uncles, of whom there were three—all rude, turbulent, and powerful nobles, such as were briefly described in the last chapter. Each of them had a powerful band of retainers and partisans attached to his service, and the whole kingdom dreaded greatly the quarrels which every one knew were now likely to break out.

The oldest of these uncles was Thomas. He was Duke of Exeter.

The second was John. He was Duke of Bedford.

The third was Humphrey. He was Duke of Gloucester. Thomas and Humphrey seem to have been in England at the time of their brother the old king's death. John, or Bedford, as he was commonly called, was in France, where he had been pursuing a very renowned and successful career, in extending and maintaining the English conquests in that country.

Division of power.

The leading nobles and officers of the government were assembled in council soon after the old king's death, and in order to prevent the breaking out of the quarrels which were otherwise to have been anticipated between these uncles, they determined to divide the power as nearly as possible in an equal manner among them. So they appointed Thomas, the Duke of Exeter, who seems to have been less ambitious and warlike in his character than the rest, to the charge and custody of the young king's person. Humphrey, the Duke of Gloucester, was made Protector of England, and John, the Duke of Bedford, the Regent of France. Thus they were all seemingly satisfied.

Quarrels. Beaufort and Gloucester.

But the peace which resulted from this arrangement did not continue very long. Pretty soon a certain Henry Beaufort, a bishop, was appointed to be associated with Henry's uncle Thomas in the personal charge of the king. This Henry Beaufort was Henry's great-uncle, being one of the sons of John of Gaunt. He was a younger son of his father, and so was brought up to the Church, and had been appointed Bishop of Winchester, and afterward made a cardinal. Thus he occupied a very exalted position, and possessed a degree of wealth, and power, and general consequence little inferior to those of the grandest nobles in the land. He was a man, too, of great capacity, very skillful in manœuvring and intriguing, and he immediately began to form ambitious schemes for himself which he designed to carry into effect through the power which the custody of the young king gave him. He was, of course, very jealous of the influence and power of the Duke of Gloucester, and the Duke of Gloucester became very jealous of him. It was not long before occasions arose which brought the two men, and their bands of followers, into direct and open collision.

Progress of the quarrel.

I can not here go into a full account of the particulars of the quarrel. One of the first difficulties was about the Tower of London, which Beaufort had under his command, and where there was a prisoner whom Gloucester wished to set at liberty. Then there was a great riot and disturbance on London Bridge, which threw the whole city of London into a state of alarm. Beaufort alleged that Gloucester had formed a plan to seize the person of the king and take him away from Beaufort's

custody; and that he had designs, moreover, on Beaufort's life. To defend himself, and to prevent Gloucester from coming to the palace where he was residing, he seized and fortified the passages leading to the bridge. He built barricades, and took down the chains of the portcullis, and assembled a large armed force to guard the point. The people of London were in great alarm. They set watches day and night to protect their property from the anticipated violence of the soldiers and partisans of the combatants, and thus all was commotion and fear. Of course there were no courts of justice powerful enough to control such a contest as this, and finally the people sent off a delegation to the Duke of Bedford in France, imploring him to come to England immediately and see if he could not settle the quarrel.

Bedford summoned home from France.

The Duke of Bedford came. A Parliament was convened, and the questions at issue between the two great disputants were brought to a solemn trial. The Duke of Gloucester made out a series of heavy charges against the cardinal, and the cardinal made a formal reply which contained not only his defense, but also counter charges against the duke. These papers were drawn up with great technicality and ceremony by the lawyers employed on each side to manage the case, and were submitted to the Duke of Bedford and to the Parliament. A series of debates ensued, in which the friends of the two parties respectively brought criminations and recriminations against each other without end. The result was, as is usual in such cases, that both sides appeared to have been to blame, and in order to settle the dispute a sort of compromise was effected, with which both parties professed to be satisfied, and a reconciliation, or what outwardly appeared to be such, was made. A new division of powers and prerogatives between Gloucester, as Protector of England, and Beaufort, as custodian of the king, was arranged, and peace being thus restored, Bedford went back again to France.

Death of Bedford.

Things went on tolerably well after this for many years; that is, there were no more open outbreaks, though the old jealousy and hatred between Gloucester and the cardinal still continued. The influence of the Duke of Bedford held both parties in check as long as the duke lived. At length, however, when the young king was about fourteen years old, the Duke of Bedford died. He was in France at the time of his death. He was buried with great pomp and ceremony in the city of Rouen, which had been in some sense the head-quarters of his dominion in that country, and a splendid monument was erected over his tomb.

Anecdote.

A curious anecdote is related of the King of France in relation to this tomb. Some time after the tomb was built Rouen fell into the hands of the French, and some persons proposed to break down the monument which had been built in memory of their old enemy; but the King of France would not listen to the proposal.

Generosity of the French king.

"What honor shall it be to us," said he, "or to you, to break down the monument, or to pull out of the ground the dead bones of him whom, in his life, neither my father nor your progenitors, with all their power, influence, and friends, were ever able to make flee one foot backward, but who, by his strength, wit, and policy, kept them all at bay. Wherefore I say, let God have his soul; and for his body, let it rest in peace where they have laid it."

Coronation of the young king in France.

When King Henry was old enough to be crowned, in addition to the English part of the ceremony, he went to France to receive the crown of that country too. The ceremony, as is usual with the French kings, was performed at the town of St. Denis, near Paris, where is an ancient royal chapel, in which all the great religious ceremonies connected with the French monarchy have been performed. A very curious account is given by the ancient chroniclers of the pageants and ceremonies which were enacted on this occasion. The king proceeded into France and journeyed to St. Denis at the head of a grand cavalcade of knights, nobles, and men-at-arms, amounting to many thousand

men, all of whom were adorned with dresses and trappings of the most gorgeous description. At St. Denis the authorities came out to meet the king, dressed in robes of vermillion, and bearing splendid banners. The king was presented, as he passed through the gates, "with three crimson hearts, in one of which were two doves; in another, several small birds, which were let fly over his head; while the third was filled with violets and flowers, which were thrown over the lords that attended and followed him."

At the same place, too, a company of the principal civic dignitaries of the town appeared, bearing a gorgeous canopy of blue silk, adorned and embroidered in the most beautiful manner with royal emblems. This canopy they held over the king as he advanced into the town.

Curious pageants.

At one place farther on, where there was a little bridge to be crossed, there was a pageant of three savages fighting about a woman in a mimic forest. The savages continued fighting until the king had passed by. Next came a fountain flowing with wine, with mermaids swimming about in it. The wine in this fountain was free to all who chose to come and drink it.

Then, farther still, the royal party came to a place where an artificial forest had been made, by some means or other, in a large, open square. There was a chase going on in this forest at the time when the king went by. The chase consisted of a living stag hunted by real dogs. The stag came and took refuge at the feet of the king's horse, and his majesty saved the poor animal's life.

The coronation.

Thus the king was conducted to his palace. Several days were spent in preliminary pageants and ceremonies like the above, and then the coronation took place in the church, the king and his party being stationed on a large platform raised for the purpose in the most conspicuous part of the edifice.

1441. The banquet.

After the coronation there was a grand banquet, at which the king, with his lords and great officers of state, sat at a marble table in a magnificent ancient hall. Henry Beaufort, the Bishop of Winchester, was the principal personage in all these ceremonies next to the king. Gloucester was very jealous of him, in respect to the conspicuous part which he took in these proceedings.



Henry VI. in his Youth.

Henry was quite young at the time of his coronations. He was a very pretty boy, and his countenance wore a mild and gentle expression.



The Penance.

The old quarrel broke out again. The duchess's penance.

The quarrel between the Duke of Gloucester and the bishop was kept, in some degree, subdued during this period, partly by the influence of the Duke of Bedford while he lived, and partly by Gloucester's mind being taken up to a considerable extent with other things, especially with his campaigns in France; for he was engaged during the period of the king's minority in many important military expeditions in that country. At length, however, he came back to England, and there, when the king was about twenty years of age, the quarrel between him and the bishop's party broke out anew. The king himself was, however, now old enough to take some part in such a difficulty, and so both sides appealed to him. Gloucester made out a series of twenty-four articles of complaint against the bishop. The bishop, on the other hand, accused the duke of treason, and he specially charged that his wife had attempted to destroy the life of the king by witchcraft. The duchess was condemned on this charge, and it is said that, by way of penance, she was sentenced to walk barefoot through the most public street in London with a lighted taper in her hand. Some other persons, who were accused of being accomplices in this crime, were put to death.

Witchcraft.

The witchcraft which it was said these persons practiced was that of making a waxen image of the king, and then, after connecting it with him in some mysterious and magical way by certain charms and incantations, melting it away by degrees before a slow fire, by which means the king himself, as was supposed, would be caused to pine and wither away, and at last to die. It was universally believed in those days that this could be done.

Position of the king.

Of course, such proceedings as these only embittered the quarrel more and more, and Gloucester became more resolute and determined than ever in prosecuting his intrigues for depriving the bishop of influence, and for getting the power into his own hands. The king, though he favored the cardinal, was so quiet and gentle in his disposition, and so little disposed to take an active part in

such a quarrel, that the bishop could not induce him to act as decidedly as he wished. So he finally conceived the idea of finding some very intelligent and capable princess as a wife for the king, hoping to increase the power which he exercised in the realm through his influence over her.

Scheme formed by Beaufort.

The lady that he selected for this purpose was Margaret of Anjou.

CHAPTER IV.

Margaret's Father and Mother

1420. Provinces of France.

In former times, the territory which now constitutes France was divided into a great number of separate provinces, each of which formed almost a distinct state or kingdom. These several provinces were the possessions of lords, dukes, and barons, who ruled over them, respectively, like so many petty kings, with almost absolute sway, though they all acknowledged a general allegiance to the kings of France or of England. The more northern provinces pertained to England. Those in the interior and southern portions of the country were under the dominion of France.

Great families.

The great families who held these provinces as their possessions ruled over them in a very lordly manner. They regarded not only the territory itself which they held, but the right to govern the inhabitants of it as a species of property, which was subject, like any other estate, to descend from parent to child by hereditary right, to be conveyed to another owner by treaty or surrender, to be assigned to a bride as her marriage portion, or to be disposed of in any other way that the lordly proprietors might prefer. These great families took their names from the provinces over which they ruled.

Anjou. King René.

One of these provinces was Anjou.¹ The father of Margaret, the subject of this history, was a celebrated personage named Regnier or René, commonly called King René. He was a younger son of the family which reigned over Anjou. It is from this circumstance that our heroine derives the name by which she is generally designated—Margaret of Anjou. The reason why her father was called *King René* will appear in the sequel.

Lorraine.

Another of the provinces of France above referred to was Lorraine. Lorraine was a large, and beautiful, and very valuable country, situated toward the eastern part of France. Anjou was considerably to the westward of it.

1429. Marriage of René to Isabella.

The name of the Duke of Lorraine at this time was Charles. He had a daughter named Isabella. She was the heiress to all her father's possessions. She was a young lady of great beauty, of high spirit, of a very accomplished education, according to the ideas of those times. When René was about fourteen years old a match was arranged between him and Isabella, who was then only about ten. The marriage was celebrated with great parade, and the youthful pair went to reside at a palace called Pont à Mousson, in a grand castle which was given to Isabella by her father as a bridal gift at the time of her marriage. Here it was expected that they would live until the death of her father, when they were to come into possession of the whole province of Lorraine.

Birth of Margaret.

In process of time, while living at this castle, René and Isabella had several children. Margaret was the fifth. She was born in 1429. Her birthday was March 23.

Theophanie.

The little infant was put under the charge of a family nurse named Theophanie. Theophanie was a long-trying and very faithful domestic. She was successively the nurse to all of Isabella's children, and the family became so much attached to her that when she died René caused a beautiful monument

¹ See [map](#) at the commencement of the volume.

to be raised to her memory. This monument contained a sculptured image of Theophanie, with two of the children in her arms.

1431.

Very soon after her birth Margaret was baptized with great pomp in the Cathedral in the town of Toul. A large number of relatives of high rank witnessed and took part in the ceremony.

Isabella's uncle Antoine. Conflict for the possession of Lorraine.

When at length Charles, Duke of Lorraine, Isabella's father, died, and the province should have descended to Isabella and René, there suddenly appeared another claimant, who thought, not that he had a better right to the province than Isabella, but that he had more power to seize and hold it than she, even with all the aid that her husband René could afford her. This claimant was Isabella's uncle, the younger brother of Duke Charles who had just died. His name was Antoine de Vaudemonte, or, as it would be expressed in English, Anthony of Vaudemont. This uncle, on the death of Isabella's father, determined to seize the duchy for himself, instead of allowing it to descend to Isabella, the proper heir, who, being but a woman, was looked upon with very little respect. "Lorraine," he said, "was too noble and valuable a fief to descend in the family on the spindle side."

So he collected his adherents and retainers, organized an army, and took the field. Isabella, on the other hand, did all in her power to induce the people of the country to espouse her cause. René took the command of the forces which were raised in her behalf, and went forth to meet Antoine. Isabella herself, taking the children with her, went to the city of Nancy²—which was then, as now, the chief city of Lorraine, and was consequently the safest place for her—intending to await there the result of the conflict. Little Margaret was at this time about two years old.

The battle. René wounded and made prisoner.

The battle was fought at a place called Bulgneville, and the fortune of war, as it would seem, turned in this case against the right, for René's party were entirely defeated, and he himself was wounded and taken prisoner. He fought like a lion, it is said, as long as he remained unharmed; but at last he received a desperate wound on his brow, and the blood from this wound ran down into his eyes and blinded him, so that he could do no more; and he was immediately seized by the men who had wounded him, and made prisoner. The person who thus wounded and captured him was the squire of a certain knight who had espoused the cause of Antoine, named the Count St. Pol.

Isabella's terror and distress.

In the mean time Isabella had remained at Nancy with the children, in a state of the utmost suspense and anxiety, awaiting the result of a conflict on which depended the fate of every thing that was valuable and dear to her. At length, at the window of the tower where she was watching, with little Margaret in her arms, for the coming of a herald from her husband to announce his victory, her heart sank within her to see, instead of a messenger of joy and triumph, a broken crowd of fugitives, breathless and covered with dust and blood, suddenly bursting into view, and showing too plainly by their aspect of terror and distress that all was lost. Isabella was overwhelmed with consternation at the sight. She clasped little Margaret closely in her arms, exclaiming in tones of indescribable agony, "My husband is killed! my husband is killed!"

Heavy tidings.

Her distress and anguish were somewhat calmed by the fugitives assuring her, when they arrived, that her husband was safe, though he had been wounded and taken prisoner.

² The position of Nancy, as well as the situation of the two provinces of Anjou and Lorraine, which are now departments of France, may be seen by referring to any good map of that country, or to that at the commencement of this volume.



Distress of Margaret's Mother.

Sympathy for Isabella. Isabella's interview with her uncle.

There was a great deal of sympathy felt for Isabella in her distress by all the people of Nancy. She was very young and very beautiful. Her children, and especially Margaret, were very beautiful too, and this greatly increased the compassion which the people were disposed to feel for her. Isabella's mother was strongly inclined to make new efforts to raise an army, in order to meet and fight Antoine again; but Isabella herself, who was now more concerned for the safety of her husband than for the recovery of her dominions, was disposed to pursue a conciliatory course. So she sent word to her uncle that she wished to see him, and entreated him to grant her an interview. Antoine acceded to her request, and at the interview Isabella begged her uncle to make peace with her, and to give her back her husband.

Negotiations for peace.

Antoine said that it was out of his power to liberate René, for he had delivered him to the custody of the Duke of Burgundy, who had been his ally in the war, and the duke had conveyed him away to his castle at Dijon, and shut him up there, and that now he would probably not be willing to give him up without the payment of a ransom. He said, however, that he was willing to make a truce with Isabella for six months, to give time to see what arrangement could be made.

Hostages.

This truce was agreed upon, and then, at length, after a long negotiation, terms of peace were concluded. René was to pay a large sum to the Duke of Burgundy for his ransom, and, in the mean time, while he was procuring the money, he was to leave his two sons in the duke's hands as hostages, to be held by the duke as security. In respect to Lorraine, Antoine insisted, as another of the conditions of peace, that Isabella's oldest daughter, Yolante, then about nine years old, should be betrothed to his son Frederick, so as to combine, in the next generation at least, the conflicting claims of the two parties to the possession of the territory; and, in order to secure the fulfillment of this condition, Yolante was to be delivered immediately to the charge and custody of Antoine's wife, the mother of her future husband. Thus all of Isabella's children were taken away from her except Margaret. And even Margaret, though left for the present with her mother, did not escape being involved in the entanglements of the treaty. Antoine insisted that she, too, should be betrothed to one of his partisans; and, as if to make the case as painful and humiliating to René and Isabella as possible, the person

chosen to be her future husband was the very Count St. Pol whose squire had cut down and captured René at the battle of Bulgneville.

Hard conditions of peace. René can not procure the money for his ransom.

These conditions were very hard, but Isabella consented to them, as it was only by so doing that any hope seemed to be opened before her of obtaining the release of her husband. And even this hope, in the end, proved delusive. René found that, notwithstanding all his efforts, he could not obtain the money which the duke required for his ransom. Accordingly, in order to save his boys, whom he had delivered to the duke as hostages, he was obliged to return to Dijon and surrender himself again a prisoner. His parting with his wife and children, before going a second time into a confinement to which they could now see no end, was heartrending. Even little Margaret, who was yet so very young, joined from sympathy in the general sorrow, and wept bitterly when her father went away.

His long confinement.

The duke confined his captive in an upper room in a high tower of the castle of Dijon, and kept him imprisoned there for several years. One of the boys was kept with him, but the other was set at liberty. All this time Margaret remained with her mother. She was a very beautiful and a very intelligent child, and was a great favorite with all who knew her. The interest which was awakened by her beauty and her other personal attractions was greatly increased by the general sympathy which was felt for the misfortunes of her father, and the loneliness and distress of her mother.

1436. His occupations and amusements in prison.

In the mean time, René, shut up in the tower at the castle of Dijon, made himself as contented as he could, and employed his time in various peaceful and ingenious occupations. Though he had fought well in the battle with Antoine, he was, in fact, not at all of a warlike disposition. He was very fond of music, and poetry, and painting; and he occupied his leisure during his confinement in executing beautiful miniatures and paintings upon glass, after the manner of those times. Some of these paintings remained in the window of a church in Dijon, where they were placed soon after René painted them, for several hundred years.

Origin of René's royal title.

It has already been stated that the name by which Margaret's father is commonly designated is King René. The origin of this royal title is now to be explained. He had an older brother, who became by inheritance, with Joanna his wife, king and queen of the Two Sicilies, that is, of the kingdom consisting of the island of Sicily and the territory connected with Naples on the main land. The brother, at the close of his life, designated René as his heir. This happened in the year 1436, while René was still in captivity in the castle of Dijon. He could, of course, do nothing himself to assert his claims to this new inheritance, but Isabella immediately assumed the title of Queen of the Two Sicilies for herself, and began at once to make preparation for proceeding to Italy and taking possession of the kingdom.

Isabella and the children at Tarascon.

While maturing her plans, she took up her residence for a time at the chateau of Tarascon, on the banks of the Rhone, with the two children who remained under her care, namely, her son Louis and Margaret. Her other son was at Dijon with his father, and the other daughter, Yolante, had been given up, as has already been said, to the custody of the wife of Antoine, with a view of being married, as soon as she was old enough, to Antoine's son.

The children attracted great attention at Tarascon. Their mother Isabella was by birth a lady of very high rank, her family being intimately connected with the royal family of France. She was now, too, by title at least, herself a queen. The children were very intelligent and beautiful, and the misfortunes and cruel captivity of their father and brother were known and talked of in all the country around. So the peasants and their families crowded around the chateau to see the children. They brought them wreaths of flowers and other votive offerings. They sang songs to serenade them, and

they built bonfires around the walls of the chateau at night, to drive away the infection of the plague, which was then prevailing in some parts of the country, and was exciting considerable alarm.

Witches and the plague.

The people of the country believed that this plague was produced by magic and witchcraft, and there were some poor old women, who came with the other peasants to the walls of the chateau of Tarascon to see the children, who were believed to be witches. Afterward the plague broke out at Tarascon, and Margaret's mother was obliged to go away, taking the children with her. The poor women were, however, seized and burned at the stake, it being universally believed that it was they who had caused the plague.

Isabella goes into Italy.

Isabella's arrangements were now so far matured that she went at once into Italy with the children, and took up her abode there in the town of Capua. René still remained in captivity, but Isabella caused him to be proclaimed King of the Two Sicilies with great pomp and parade. At the time of this ceremony, the two children, Margaret and her brother, were seated beside their mother in a grand state carriage, which was lined with velvet and embroidered with gold, and in this way they were conveyed through the streets of the city.

René is at last set free.

After a time René was liberated from his confinement, and restored to his family, but he did not long enjoy this apparent return of prosperity. His claim to the kingdom of Naples was disputed, and, after a conflict, he was expelled from the country. In the mean time, the English had so far extended their conquests in France that both his native province of Anjou, and his wife's inheritances in Lorraine, had fallen into their hands, so that with all the aristocratic distinction of their descent, and the grandeur of their royal titles, the family were now, as it were, without house or home. They returned to France, and Isabella, with the children, found refuge from time to time with one and another of the great families to which she was related, while René led a wandering life, being reduced often to a state of great destitution.

His temper and disposition. King René's fireside.

He, however, bore his misfortunes with a very placid temper, and amused himself, wherever he was, with music, poetry, and painting. He was so cheerful and good-natured withal that he made himself a very agreeable companion, and was generally welcome, as a visitor, wherever he went. He retained the name of King René as long as he lived, though he was a king without a kingdom. At one time he was reduced, it is said, to such straits that to warm himself he used to walk to and fro in the streets of Marseilles, on the sunny side of the buildings, which circumstance gave rise to a proverb long known and often quoted in those parts, which designated the act of going out into the sun to escape from the cold as warming one's self at King René's fireside.

Such was the family from which Margaret of Anjou sprang.

CHAPTER V.

Royal Courtship

1444. Margaret's talents and accomplishments. Offers of marriage.

When Margaret was not more than fourteen or fifteen years of age, she began to be very celebrated for her beauty and accomplishments, and for the charming vivacity of her conversation and her demeanor. She resided with her mother in different families in Lorraine and in other parts of France, and was sometimes at the court of the Queen of France, who was her near relative. All who knew her were charmed with her. She was considered equally remarkable for her talents and for her beauty. The arrangement which had been made in her childhood for marrying her to the Count of St. Pol was broken off, but several other offers were made to her mother for her hand, though none of them was accepted. Isabella was very proud of her daughter, and she cherished very lofty aspirations in respect to her future destiny. She was therefore not at all inclined to be in haste in respect to making arrangements for her marriage.

State of things in England. Henry's character.

In the mean time, the feud between the uncles and relatives of King Henry, in England, as related in a preceding chapter, had been going on, and was now reaching a climax. The leaders of the two rival parties were, as will be recollected, Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester, or Cardinal Beaufort, as he was more commonly called, who had had the personal charge of the king during his minority, on one side, and the Duke of Gloucester, Henry's uncle, who had been regent of England during the same period, on the other. The king himself was now about twenty-four years of age, and if he had been a man of vigor and resolution, he might perhaps have controlled the angry disputants, and by taking the government fully into his own hands, have forced them to live together in peace under his paramount authority. But Henry was a very timid and feeble-minded man. The turbulence and impetuosity of his uncles and their partisans in their quarrel was altogether too great for any control that he could hope to exercise over them. Indeed, the great question with them was which should contrive the means of exercising the greatest control over *him*.

Plans of the courtiers.

In order to accomplish this end, both parties began very early to plan and manœuvre with a view of choosing the king a wife. Whichever of the two great leaders should succeed in negotiating the marriage of the king, they knew well would, by that very act, establish his influence at court in the most absolute manner.

Princes and kings. Their matrimonial plans.

Princes and kings in those days, as, indeed, is the case to a considerable extent now, had some peculiar difficulties to contend with in making their matrimonial arrangements, so far at least as concerned the indulgence of any personal preferences which they might themselves entertain on the subject. Indeed, these arrangements were generally made for them, while they were too young to have any voice or to take any part in the question, and nothing was left for them but to ratify and carry into effect, when they came to years of maturity, what their parents, or grand councils of state, had determined for them when they were children, or else to refuse to ratify and confirm it at the cost of incurring a vast amount of difficulty and political entanglement, and perhaps even open and formidable war.

Embarrassments. Difficulty of leaving the country.

And even in those cases where the prince or king arrived at an age to judge for himself before any arrangements were made for him, which was the fact in regard to Henry VI., he was still very much embarrassed and circumscribed in his choice if he attempted to select a wife for himself. He could not visit foreign courts and see the princesses there, so as to judge for himself who would best

please him; for in those days it was very unsafe for personages of any considerable rank or position to visit foreign countries at all, except at the head of an army, and in a military campaign. In the case, too, of any actually reigning monarch, there was a special difficulty in the way of his leaving his kingdom, on account of the feuds and quarrels which always in such cases arose in making the necessary arrangements for the government of the kingdom during his absence.

Miniatures. Situation of King Henry.

For these and various other causes, a king or a prince desiring to choose a wife was obliged to content himself with such information relating to the several candidates as he could obtain from hearsay in respect to their characters, and from miniatures and portraits in respect to their personal attractions. This was especially the case with King Henry VI. Each of the two great parties, that of Cardinal Beaufort on one hand, and that of the Duke of Gloucester on the other, were desirous of being the means of finding a bride for the king, and both were eagerly looking in all directions, and plotting for the accomplishment of this end, and any attempt of the king to leave the kingdom for any purpose whatever would undoubtedly have brought these parties at once to open war.

Plan of the Duke of Gloucester.

The Duke of Gloucester and those who acted with him fixed their eyes upon three princesses of a certain great family, called the house of Armagnac. Their plan was to open negotiations with this house, and to obtain portraits of the three princesses, to be sent to England, in order that Henry might take his choice of them. Commissioners were appointed to manage the business. They were to open the negotiations and obtain the portraits. The cardinal, of course, and his friends were greatly interested in preventing the success of this plan, though, of course, it was necessary for them to be discreet and cautious in manifesting any open opposition to it in the then present stage of the affair.

The three princesses of Armagnac. Their portraits.

The king was very particular in the instructions which he gave to the commissioners in respect to the portraits, with a view of securing, if possible, perfectly correct and fair representations of the originals. He wished that the princesses should not be flattered at all by the artist in his delineation of them, and that they should not be dressed at their sittings in any unusually elegant manner. On the contrary, they were to be painted "in their kirtles simple, and their visages like as ye see, and their stature, and their beauty, and the color of their skin, and their countenances, just as they really are." The artist was instructed, too, by the commissioners to be expeditious in finishing the pictures and sending them to England, in order that the king might see them as soon as possible, and make his choice between the three young ladies whose "images" were to be thus laid before him.

The plan fails.

This plan for giving the king an opportunity to choose between the three princesses of Armagnac, nicely arranged as it was in all its details, failed of being carried successfully into effect; for the father of these princesses, as it happened, was at this same time engaged in some negotiations with the King of France in respect to the marriage of his daughters, and he wished to keep the negotiations with Henry in suspense until he had ascertained whether he could or could not do better in that quarter. So he contrived means to interrupt and retard the work of the artist, in order to delay for a time the finishing of the pictures.

In what way. The cardinal's scheme.

In the mean time, while the Duke of Gloucester and his party were thus engaged in forwarding their scheme of inducing Henry to make choice of one of these three princesses for his wife, the cardinal himself was not idle. He had heard of the beautiful and accomplished Margaret of Anjou, and after full inquiry and reflection, he determined in his own mind to make her his candidate for the honor of being Queen of England. The manner in which he contrived to introduce the subject first to the notice of the king was this.

Champchevrier.

There was a certain man, named Champchevrier, who had been taken prisoner in Anjou in the course of the wars between France and England, and who was now held for ransom by the knight who had captured him. He was not, however, kept in close confinement, but was allowed to go at large in England on his parole—that is, on his word of honor that he would not make his escape and go back to his native land until his ransom was paid.

Champchevrier at court.

Now this Champchevrier, though a prisoner, was a gentleman by birth and education; and while he remained in England, held by his parole, was admitted to the best society there, and he often appeared at court, and frequently held converse with the king. In one of these interviews he described, in very glowing terms, the beauty and remarkable intelligence of Margaret of Anjou. It is supposed that he was induced to this by Cardinal Beaufort, who knew of his acquaintance with Margaret, and who contrived the interviews between Champchevrier and the king, in order to give the former an opportunity to speak of the lady to his majesty incidentally, as it were, and in a way not to excite the king's suspicions that the commendations of her which he heard were prompted by any match-making schemes formed for him by his courtiers.

His conversations with the king.

If this was the secret plan of the cardinal, it succeeded admirably well. The king's curiosity was strongly awakened by the piquant accounts that Champchevrier gave him of the brilliancy of young Margaret's beauty, and of her charming vivacity and wit.

The king wishes for a picture.

"I should like very much to see a picture of the young lady," said the king.

"I can easily obtain a picture of her for your majesty," replied Champchevrier, "if your majesty will commission me to go to Lorraine for the purpose."

Champchevrier considered that a commission from the king to go to Lorraine on business for his majesty would be a sufficient release for him from the obligations of his parole.

Champchevrier's expedition.

The king finally gave Champchevrier the required authority to leave the kingdom. Champchevrier was not satisfied with a verbal permission merely, but required the king to give him a regular safe-conduct, drawn up in due form, and signed by the king's name. Having received this document, Champchevrier left London and set out upon his journey, the nature and object of the expedition being of course kept a profound secret.

The Earl of Suffolk.

A certain nobleman, however, named the Earl of Suffolk, was admitted to the confidence of the king in this affair, and was by him associated with Champchevrier in the arrangements which were to be made for carrying the plan into execution. It would seem that he accompanied Champchevrier in his journey to Lorraine, where Margaret was then residing with her mother, and there assisted him in making arrangements for the painting of the picture. They employed one of the first artists in France for this purpose. When the work was finished, Champchevrier set out with it on his return to England.

Champchevrier in danger.

In the mean time, the English knight whose prisoner Champchevrier was, heard in some way that his captive had left England, and had returned to France, and the intelligence made him exceedingly angry. He thought that Champchevrier had broken his parole and had gone home without paying his ransom. Such an act as this was regarded as extremely dishonorable in those days, and it was, moreover, not only considered dishonorable in a prisoner himself to break his parole, but also in any one else to aid or abet him in so doing, or to harbor or protect him after his escape. The knight determined, therefore, that he would at once communicate with the King of France on the subject, explaining the circumstances, and asking him to rearrest the supposed fugitive and send him back.

Gloucester writes to the King of France.

So he went to the Duke of Gloucester, and, stating the case to him, asked his grace to write to the King of France, informing him that Champchevrier had escaped from his parole, and asking him not to give him refuge, but to seize and send him back. Gloucester was very willing to do this. It is probable that he knew that Champchevrier was a friend of the cardinal's, or at least that he was attached to his interests, and that it was altogether probable that his going into France was connected with some plot or scheme by which the cardinal and his party were to derive some advantage. So he wrote the letter, and it was at once sent to the King of France. The King of France at this time was Charles VII.

Champchevrier arrested.

The king, on receiving the letter, gave orders immediately that Champchevrier should be arrested. By this time, however, the painting was finished, and Champchevrier was on the way with it from Lorraine toward England. He was intercepted on his journey, taken to Vincennes, and there brought before King Charles, and called upon to give an account of himself.

The whole story comes out.

Of course he was now obliged to tell the whole story. He said that he had not broken his parole at all, nor intended in any manner to defraud his captor in England of the ransom money that was due to him, but had come to France *by the orders of the King of England*. He explained, too, what he had come for, and showed Charles the painting which he was carrying back to the king. He also, in proof of the truth of what he said, produced the safe-conduct which King Henry had given him.

King Charles laughed very heartily at hearing this explanation, and at perceiving how neatly he had discovered the secret of King Henry's love affairs. He was much pleased, too, with the idea of King Henry's taking a fancy to a lady so nearly related to the royal family of France. He thought that he might make the negotiation of such a marriage the occasion for making peace with England on favorable terms. So he dismissed Champchevrier at once, and recommended to him to proceed to England as soon as possible, and there to do all in his power to induce King Henry to choose Margaret for his queen.

Trouble in court.

Champchevrier accordingly returned to England and reported the result of his mission. The king was very much pleased with the painting, and he immediately determined to send Champchevrier again to Lorraine on a secret mission to Margaret's mother. He first, however, determined to release Champchevrier entirely from his parole, and so he paid the ransom himself for which he had been held. The Duke of Gloucester watched all these proceedings with a very jealous eye. When he found that Champchevrier, on his return to England, came at once to the king's court, and that there he held frequent conferences, which were full of mystery, with the king and with the cardinal, and when, moreover, he learned that the king had paid the ransom money due to the knight, and that Champchevrier was to be sent away again, he at once suspected what was going on, and the whole court was soon in a great ferment of excitement in respect to the proposed marriage of the king to Margaret of Anjou.

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