

XLIV.

HENRY PERCY FIRST EARL OF NORTHUMBERLAND.

HENRY
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NORTHUM-
BERLAND.

THE name of this powerful nobleman has been hitherto excluded from the catalogues of the Order, although it is incontestable that he enjoyed, amidst all vicissitudes of fortune, the high distinction of a knight-companion during a term of forty-two years. The resentment of king Henry IV, whose ascent to the throne he had promoted with a zeal surpassing even that which, in the last year of his eventful life, he devoted to the overthrow of his idol, abated only so far as to allow, by a special precept, the mangled remains of his subject and benefactor, after their exposure in different parts of the realm, to be delivered to his friends for sepulture. With the forfeiture of his lands and dignities, every trace of his long connexion with the Order was expunged from its annals; and, but for the recent recovery of wardrobe accounts long mislaid, we should not now have been authorised to render this act of justice to his memory.¹

Henry Percy first earl of Northumberland (the son and heir of Henry lord Percy by Mary Plantagenet, daughter of Henry earl of Lancaster, grandson of king Henry III,) was the seventh in lineal descent from Josceline de Louvaine,² (a

¹ The Windsor tables present Edward [Cherleton] sire de Powys as the immediate successor, in the fifth stall on the Sovereign's side, of sir Richard de la Vache, who had succeeded therein to Lisle the first Founder; although the death of La Vache happened six years before the birth of Cherleton. That sir Henry Percy, afterwards lord Percy and earl of Northumberland, was the immediate occupant, is clear, first, from the state of the Order at the death of La Vache in January 1365-6: secondly, that, at the issues of robes to Percy in

1371, 1374, 1375, 1376, 1377, 1384, 1388, 1389, 1390, and 1399, the stalls of the other knights, participant in the same issues, were full: and, thirdly, that Percy, having been completely reconciled to the king, and restored to all his possessions in 1405, must be supposed to have retained the Order until his attainder and execution in the year following; before which date Cherleton (whose plate is still affixed to that stall), is nowhere mentioned as a companion.

² Eleventh in descent from Charlemagne.

younger son of Godfrey I. duke of Brabant, and brother to Adelaide queen of England, the second consort of king Henry I.) by Agnes de Perci, the descendant, in the fifth generation, and heir-general of William de Perci, called Gernon, who came into England at the time of the Norman conquest.

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In 1359 he was in the wars of France; and, in the following year, one of those who, with the prince of Wales, swore at Calais to the observance of the treaty of Bretigny.¹ In 1363 he was again employed in France; as also in 1368, when, being already a knight of the Order, he obtained livery of his lands upon his father's death.

His name occurs,² in 1369, among the commanders of the expedition under the duke of Lancaster, the operations of which terminated at Tournehem. About the same time he was appointed warden of the marches towards Scotland. In 1370 he was again in France, having in his retinue sixty men-at-arms, including himself and twelve knights, forty-seven esquires, and one hundred mounted archers.³ On the 5th November in the same year he witnessed, at Westminster, with other peers, the king's⁴ public letters for redress of the grievances of the people of Aquitaine.⁴ In 1372 he attended the king and the royal princes on their expedition towards France for the relief of Thouars; but they were driven back after contending with adverse winds during nine weeks. In 1373 he was with the dukes of Lancaster and Brittany in French Flanders;⁵ and, in 1376, being marshal of England, was appointed to inspect Calais and the castles and forts within those marches. He was nominated, in 1377, general of all the forces then sent to France, having, of his own retinue, two hundred men-at-arms and as many archers, all mounted. About this time, being returned to England in expectation, probably of the king's death, he supported the duke of Lancaster in protecting Wycliff at the celebrated conference in St. Paul's cathedral, and narrowly escaped the fury of the populace, incited, as was supposed, by the bishop of London.⁶

Officiating as marshal of England at the coronation of

¹ Froissart, tom. iv. p. 90.

² Ibid. tom. v. p. 100.

³ Rot. Franc. 43 Ed. 3, m. 4.

⁴ Froissart, tom. v. p. 165.

⁵ Ibid. tom. vi. p. 57.

⁶ Collins, p. 26.

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Richard II, he was raised to the dignity of earl of Northumberland; and, shortly afterwards, having surrendered his staff of marshal, he invaded Scotland at the head of ten thousand men, and wasted the lands of the earl of Dunbar, as a reprisal for the violence committed by him at Roxburgh. Upon the conclusion of peace with Scotland, his appointment of warden of the marches was renewed. In 1378 he again invaded that kingdom with the earl of Nottingham, and took Berwick. In 1381 the Scots having invaded Cumberland and Westmorland, Percy was preparing to advance against them; but was prevented by the king's letters. In 1382 he was involved in a dispute with the duke of Lancaster in consequence of the refusal of sir Matthew Redman, the earl's lieutenant at Berwick, to admit into that town a part of the duke's forces on their return from Scotland. Of this conduct the duke made serious complaint before the king and his nobles, assembled at Berkhamstead; and the king, having in vain attempted to silence the earl, who, in defending himself, had given vent to his anger in furious language, commanded him to be put under arrest; but the earls of Warwick and Suffolk responding for his appearance at the next parliament, he was liberated.

In 1383 he chastised the Scots for their invasion of the English border; but it so happened, that the enemy having, by the treachery of the lieutenant-governor, gained possession of Berwick, the duke of Lancaster seized the opportunity of impeaching Northumberland in parliament, and of obtaining judgment of death and forfeiture against him. Richard, however, remitted the severe sentence; and the earl manifested his sense of the royal clemency by laying siege to and procuring the evacuation of Berwick.

In subsequent years, he was frequently employed as ambassador in negotiations with Scotland, France, and Flanders; and, in 1395, was present at the interview between Richard II. and Charles VI, near Guisnes, and was one of the English lords who conducted the French king to his tent.

Upon information given, in 1399, that Northumberland and his son Hotspur had uttered words in derogation of the king, they were summoned from the North, and, neglecting to ap-

pear, banished the realm.¹ Whilst the earl was preparing to retire into Scotland, Richard passed over to Ireland. Henry of Bolingbroke, with whom Northumberland probably maintained a secret intelligence, landed at Ravenspur, and the two Percys soon joined him at Doncaster. Afterwards, when the king had landed in Wales, and saw no hopes left for the preservation of his regal authority, he treated with Northumberland and the Archbishop of Canterbury at Conway castle, touching a resignation;² and, proceeding from thence to Flint castle, fell into the power of his rival.

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Henry IV. conferred upon the earl the high office of constable of England, and granted to him the isle of Man, upon the tenure of carrying at the coronation the sword "Lancaster," being that which the king had worn on his landing at Ravenspur. The custody of the castles of Chester, Conway, Flint, Carnarvon, and Carlisle was also committed to him.

In 1402 the Scots again invaded England, under the command of Archibald earl of Douglas; and Northumberland and his valiant son hastened, with a considerable army which they had raised, to repel the enemy. The two armies met at Homildown in Northumberland, and the Scots sustained a signal defeat; Douglas (who lost an eye on the occasion) and many other nobles of distinction being made prisoners.

The consequences of this victory proved fatal to the reciprocal confidence which had until then uninterruptedly subsisted between the king and his powerful subject. As soon as Henry was apprised of the result of the battle, he ordered the earl not to liberate any of his prisoners; but to deliver them into the king's hands. Northumberland, who had reckoned upon obtaining large ransoms, hastened to the

¹ Froissart, tom. xiv. p. 167. Rapin, tom. iii. ed. 1749, p. 331, asserts that the king declared Northumberland a traitor, and gave orders to seize his estates.

² Ypod. Neustr. 161, No. 50. Froissart and the MS. 9745^b. Bibl. du Roi omit altogether the conference at Conway; and the French metrical history of the deposition of Rich. II, of which an able trans-

lation with notes by the Rev. John Webb appeared in *Archæol.* vol. xx, makes no mention of a *resignation* as having been the subject of it. The relation of the atrocious perfidy which it attributes to Northumberland upon the authority of a presumed eye-witness, bears, we regret to say, all the semblance of truth.

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court; and, failing to prevail upon the king to revoke his order, entered into a conspiracy for placing the crown upon the head of Edmond Mortimer. At the battle of Shrewsbury, 21st July 1403, Hotspur was slain, and Worcester his uncle taken prisoner, and soon afterwards beheaded.

Northumberland had been prevented by illness from taking part in the battle; but was on his march with the reserve, when, apprised of the fatal result, he dismissed his troops, and submitted himself to the king's clemency. He was in 1404 restored in all his possessions. In the following year, however, he joined the insurgents in Yorkshire; and, upon their being subdued, fled into Scotland. Having in 1406, ascertained that the king entertained a secret negotiation in Scotland for his delivery and that of lord Bardolf, the earl sought in Wales the protection of Owen Glendour; and re-appearing in Yorkshire at the head of a considerable number of disaffected persons, was opposed by Rokeby the sheriff, and slain in a conflict on Branham moor, on the 28th February 1406-7, at the age of about sixty-four.

By Margaret, his first wife, the sister of Ralph Nevil first earl of Westmorland, the earl of Northumberland had three sons, of whom the eldest, sir Henry, called lord Percy, and known in history by the name of Hotspur, continued the line, and is now represented by the heirs-general of Thomas Percy seventh earl of Northumberland, K. G., who was attainted and beheaded in 1572.

That earl had three daughters, 1. Elizabeth, who married Richard Woodroffe of Woolley, in the county of York: 2. Lucy, wife of sir Edward Stanley: and, 3. Jane, who married lord Henry Seymour. Lady Seymour died without issue. Of Elizabeth Woodroffe, William Paver was the heir-general in 1775. Of Lucy Stanley, the co-representation is now vested in sir Stephen Richard Glynne, bart., as heir-general of Venetia Anastasia, eldest daughter and co-heir of sir Edward Stanley, by the said Lucy, and in the present Viscount Gage, as co-representative, with the heir of the body (if any) of Thomas Brome Whorwood, esq., of Frances Stanley, the other daughter of Lucy Percy.

ARMS.

Or, a lion rampant Azure.