

The following seal is copied from that appendent to an original instrument, dated 26th December 1368, remaining among the Clairambault collections, vol. 45, fo. 3391, in the royal library at Paris; whereby the Soudan de la Trau attests the receipt of 583 fr. 6s. 8d., the balance of 1166 fr. 13s. 4d., due to him out of the levy for the ransom of the late king John.

BERMOND  
SOUDAN  
DE LA  
TRAU.



## LXVII.

THOMAS PLANTAGENET (OF WOODSTOCK),  
EARL OF BUCKINGHAM AND ESSEX, DUKE  
OF GLOUCESTER.

THIS prince, the sixth and youngest son of Edward III, was born on the 7th of January 1355-6.<sup>1</sup> There is no evidence that he was armed at the customary age: when he arrived at that period, the English laurels had lost their freshness, and the infirmities of the Sovereign had imparted a languor to that brave chivalry by whose means he had achieved so many victories.

THOMAS  
DUKE  
OF  
GLOU-  
CESTER.

In 1374 Thomas of Woodstock was affianced to Eleanor Bohun, the elder of the two co-heiresses of Humphrey earl of

<sup>1</sup> Wals. p. 163.

THOMAS  
DUKE  
OF  
GLOU-  
CESTER.

Hereford and Essex, late constable of England;<sup>1</sup> and, in consideration of that alliance, he was, on the 10th June 1376,<sup>2</sup> appointed to the high office of constable. His knighthood was, notwithstanding, delayed until St. George's day in the following year;<sup>3</sup> when the influence of the duke of Lancaster, his brother, was shown by the preference given on that day to the young earl of Derby, who, although scarcely ten years old, was elected into the Order of the Garter, before an adult son of the royal Founder.

Richard II, on the day after his accession, renewed the patent of constable<sup>4</sup> to his uncle; and, at his coronation, created him earl of Buckingham.<sup>5</sup>

An opportunity for his first martial employment was presented by the threatened invasion of the Kentish coast by the French;<sup>6</sup> and, a Spanish flotilla having also appeared in the Channel, the earl was sent, with other chiefs, to prevent a junction of the two hostile armaments. The capture of several vessels was the fruit of this expedition.<sup>7</sup>

About the end of March 1380 a vacancy occurred in the Order by the death of Guichard d'Angle earl of Huntingdon, and was supplied by the election of Buckingham<sup>8</sup> at the ensuing feast of St. George. He soon afterwards left England in command of a large army,<sup>9</sup> destined to support the duke of Brittany, the operations of which are detailed by Froissart.<sup>10</sup> After sundry sieges and skirmishes, the campaign was concluded by the determination of John of Montfort to do

<sup>1</sup> Pat. 48 Ed. 3, p. 1, m. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Pat. 50 Ed. 3, p. 1, m. 18. Thomas of Woodstock sat in parliament as constable, although not then a peer.—*Rot. Parl. vol. ii. p. 363.*

<sup>3</sup> “ dñs Principi [Ricardo] *Thome de Wodestok* Henr. filio Joh'is Reg. Castell. comiti Oxon. dñs de Bellomonte et Moubray duobus filiis comitum Staff. et Sar. tribus filiis dñi de Percy et Joh'i de Southerey quos dnus Rex ordinem militarem ad festum S. Georgii apud Wyndesore recipiend. ordinavit,” &c. “ p<sup>r</sup> lram de priv. sig. dat. xii die April a<sup>o</sup> eodem [1376]”

1377].—Wardrobe account in the Queen's Remembrancer's office.

<sup>4</sup> Pat. 22 Jun. 1 Ric. 2, p. 1, m. 7.

<sup>5</sup> Cart. 1 Ric. 2, No. 29. Habendum to him and his heirs. Upon partition of the lands of Bohun, in 1380, between the countess Eleanor and her sister Mary countess of Derby, Thomas of Woodstock added the title of *Essex*, jure uxoris, to that of Buckingham.

<sup>6</sup> Froissart, tom. vii. p. 181.

<sup>7</sup> Wals. pp. 199. 210.

<sup>8</sup> Windsor tables.

<sup>9</sup> Wals. p. 247.

<sup>10</sup> Froissart, tom. vii. pp. 310-385. 391-427.

homage to the king of France for his duchy; and the English army returned home. In 1383 Buckingham was employed against the Scots;<sup>1</sup> and, in the year following, he was joined in commission with Lancaster and others to treat with the count of Flanders.<sup>2</sup> In 1385 he accompanied the king to Scotland;<sup>3</sup> and, during that expedition, he was advanced to the dukedom of Gloucester by patent dated 6th August;<sup>4</sup> the ceremony of the creation being performed at Hawick by girding him with a sword, and placing a cap with a circle of gold upon his head.<sup>5</sup>

THOMAS  
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In 1386 and the three ensuing years, the remarkable contest which had arisen on the march to Scotland, between sir Richard Scrope and sir Robert Grosvenor (and to which we have frequently alluded), touching the right of bearing the arms "Azure, a bend Or," occasioned voluminous proceedings in the court of chivalry, over which Gloucester presided as constable.

As chief of "the lords appellant," in 1387-8, he impeached the duke of Ireland and others of the council of high crimes and misdemeanours; and succeeded in obtaining from the parliament judgments of death against the unpopular favourites of the monarch. The sentences were, in some instances, executed; in others, commuted for banishment and confiscation.<sup>6</sup> In 1389 the king resumed the ascendancy; and Gloucester and his party (who had evinced little moderation in their government) were removed from the cabinet. The partiality, however, with which the duke was regarded by the people, rendered some outward show of favour to him necessary. Several valuable grants of lands and revenues were accordingly made to him. He was employed on embassies; attended his nephew to Ireland in 1394; and was present in 1396 at the interview at Guisnes between Richard and Charles VI, and the king's marriage with the princess Isabel. The angry feeling of Richard towards his uncle, during the brief interval of the power of the latter, had been politically stifled but

<sup>1</sup> Wals. p. 332.

<sup>2</sup> Froissart, tom. ix. p. 135.

<sup>3</sup> Rot. Parl. vol. iii. p. 206.

<sup>4</sup> Cart. 9 Ric. 2, No. 15, with

limitation of the dignity to *the heirs male* of his body.

<sup>5</sup> Selden, p. 755.

<sup>6</sup> Rot. Parl. vol. iii. pp. 237, *et*

*sequen.*

THOMAS  
DUKE  
OF  
GLOU-  
CESTER.

never extinguished; and it is said to have burst into a flame in 1397, when Gloucester reproached him with his boundless extravagance, and his unpatriotic alliance with France, instead of directing his efforts to the recovery of the ground which had been lost by the English in that kingdom. The king's unworthy resentment carried him so far as to prompt him to destroy his kinsman by means the most violent and treacherous. Having himself basely stooped to decoy the unsuspecting Gloucester from his seat at Pleshy in Essex, he caused him, whilst riding at his side and in familiar conversation with him, to be arrested; conducted to a vessel on the Thames; and transported to Calais, where the governor of the fortress, Mowbray earl marshal, the duke's former friend and partisan, and who appears to have superintended the arrest, was intrusted with his future fate.

The same fears which had suggested the confinement of the illustrious victim in a distant prison, now prompted the selection of a place also remote from the metropolis for the scene of deliberation on ulterior measures. Richard assembled his ministers for that purpose at Nottingham castle; where, on the 5th of August,<sup>1</sup> it was agreed to appeal the duke of Gloucester and his adherents of treason, upon the precedent of 1387-8. The doom of the unhappy prince was already sealed; but as, however shallow, a foundation for its sanction by parliament was necessary, the strange device was resorted to of sending one of the judges of the land to take his confession in prison. Sir William Rickhill, accordingly, received at his house in Kent, on the 5th of September, by the hands of John Mulsho, the king's writ, dated Woodstock, the 17th of the preceding month, commanding him, under pain of forfeiture, to attend the earl marshal to Calais, and to do whatever that nobleman should require of him on the king's behalf. Rickhill, in ignorance, as he afterwards averred, of the object, met, as desired, Mowbray at Dover on the evening of the 6th of September. On the morning following the earl passed over to Calais, having ordered Mulsho to convey Rickhill in another vessel. In the evening Mowbray delivered to him at Calais another writ, bearing equal date with the former, directing him to con-

<sup>1</sup> Rot. Parl. vol. iii. p. 374.

fer with Gloucester, and to take such declaration as he should make before him. He expressed his surprise to learn that Gloucester was still alive, contrary to the rumours which prevailed in England on that head. Mowbray then required him to attend at the castle early on the following morning, Saturday the 8th of September; when Rickhill (who had adopted the precaution of demanding the presence of two witnesses) was introduced to Gloucester; and, having read to him his commission, he requested the duke to commit to writing whatever he might think fit to declare to him. In a second interview, after the expiration of twelve hours, the duke read and delivered to him a paper, which had been drawn up by one of the three clerks in attendance upon him. By this document, which had reference solely to the events of 1387-8, the duke confessed his guilty participation in those transactions; and, in language the most abject, threw himself upon the king's clemency. Gloucester added, by word of mouth, that when Richard interceded with him in behalf of sir Simon Burley, he had replied, that, if the king wished to preserve his crown, he must suffer the proceeding against that person to take its course. The duke, at parting, desired to see Rickhill again on the morrow; but, on his appearance at the castle gate for that purpose, he was denied admittance.<sup>1</sup>

On the 17th September the parliament met at Westminster; and the ministers presented their appeal. On the 21st, the king's writ was issued to the earl marshal, ordering him to bring his prisoner to answer the charges preferred against him. The return to the writ, on the 25th, purported that the earl marshal could not obey the order, the duke of Gloucester having died in prison at Calais. The parliament thereupon pronounced the late duke guilty of treason, and decreed the forfeiture of his lands and chattels. Rickhill was then heard to make his report, and Gloucester's confession was entered of record.

It is presumed that the unfortunate prince was put to death as soon as the confession had been, probably under a promise of mercy, extorted from him. The returns to several

THOMAS  
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<sup>1</sup> Rot. Parl. vol. iii. pp. 431-2.

THOMAS  
DUKE  
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GLOU-  
CESTER.

of the writs of inquisition *post mortem* assign various dates to that event, but all agree in placing it in the month of September 1397; and they are corroborated by the declaration of John Halle, who was executed in the beginning of the reign of Henry IV. as an accessory to the crime. This man stated that he was an eye-witness, having kept the door of the chamber in which the murder was perpetrated by suffocation between two feather-beds. His circumstantial narrative of the atrocious transaction is preserved among the records of parliament.<sup>1</sup>

Thomas of Woodstock left by Eleanor Bohun (who died soon after him) an only son, Humphrey; and three daughters:—1. Anne, who married, first, Thomas third earl of Stafford; and, secondly, Edmund fifth earl of Stafford, K. G.; 2. Joan, who was designed to be the wife of Gilbert Talbot, but died unmarried; 3. Isabel, a nun. Humphrey was sixteen years old at his father's death. Richard II. took him with him to Ireland in 1399;<sup>2</sup> and, on hearing of Lancaster's landing at Ravenspur, caused him to be secured in the castle of Trim: he died in the following year.

George-William Stafford-Jerningham, baron of Stafford, is the heir-general and sole representative of Thomas duke of Gloucester.

ARMS.

France and England, quarterly, within a bordure Argent.

LXVIII.

SIR THOMAS FELTON.

SIR  
THOMAS  
FELTON.

THE important services, for which this eminent person was distinguished, were chiefly performed in Aquitaine; where his military talents were long successfully employed by his illustrious patron, the Prince of Wales, and where he discharged,

<sup>1</sup> Rot. Parl. vol. iii. p. 452.    <sup>2</sup> Exit. Pell. Pasch. 22 Ric. 2, Maii 2.