

THOMAS
DUKE
OF
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.¹

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;² 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.

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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,

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

during fourteen years,¹ the high ministerial functions of seneschal.

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He was the second son of sir John Felton, and grandson of sir Robert Felton, both of Litcham in Norfolk; to which,² amongst other estates, our knight succeeded on the death of his elder brother, sir Hamon Felton, without issue male, in 1379.³

The earliest notice which we have seen of sir Thomas Felton occurs in 1355,⁴ when he attended prince Edward to Bordeaux, and was by him honourably mentioned in a letter, detailing his operations, addressed to the bishop of Winchester, towards the end of that year.⁵ In the year following he fought bravely at the battle of Poitiers;⁶ and was rewarded by the prince with an annuity of 40*l.* for his services on that memorable day.⁷ In 1360 he was one of those who swore at Calais to observe the peace with France;⁸ and, in 1361, he witnessed the marriage of the Black Prince,⁹ with whom he returned, in 1362, to Guienne. He was, immediately upon his arrival, appointed seneschal of that province; and, in that character, empowered, in February following, to treat with the king of Castile.¹⁰ Froissart records his presence at Angoulême, in 1364, at the festivities in honour of the visit of the king of Cyprus.¹¹ His name appears, in conjunction with

¹ 1362-1377.

² Esc. 4 Ric. 2, No. 22. It appears, by this record, that the manor and advowson of Litcham had been granted by John le Strange de Knockyn, [temp. Hen. 3.] to Robert de Felton and Maud his wife, and their heirs male, with reversion to the heirs male of the grantor; that the estate descended to John de Felton, son of Robert and Maud,—from John to Hamon his son,—and, upon the death of Hamon s. p. m. to our knight, as his brother and heir male; and sir Thomas dying also s. p. m. it reverted, in 1381, to Roger le Strange, as son of Roger, son of John, son of another John, the son and heir of John le Strange, the original donor.

³ Will of sir Hamon Felton, dated 13th April, proved 1st Aug. 1379 at Norwich.

⁴ Froissart, tom. iii. p. 69. and *Jornale de solutis*, &c. cited at p. 15, note 3. In the letters of protection, which he obtained in 1356, (Rot. Vasc. 30 Ed. 3, m. 5,) he is described as "morans in partibus Vasc. in comitiva principis."

⁵ Robert of Avesbury, ed. Hearne.

⁶ Froissart, ut supra, p. 197.

⁷ The warrant for this grant bears date, London, 1st July 1357. *Treasurer's account*, penes J. Philpot, arm. fo. 120.

⁸ Froissart, tom. iv. p. 90.

⁹ Rymer, vol. vi. p. 334.

¹⁰ Ibid. p. 402.

¹¹ Froissart, tom. iv. p. 176.

SIR
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that of sir John Chandos, in several instruments¹ touching the preparations for the expedition in support of don Pedro; particularly in the treaty which they concluded at Pamplona with the king of Navarre, whereby a passage was granted to the English army through the territories of that sovereign.²

But Felton was not destined to share the glory of the ensuing victory at Najara. Edward, upon reaching Navarre, had sent him forward with a detachment to ascertain the position of the enemy. Having passed the Ebro at Logroño, he halted at Navarete, and despatched from thence a herald to acquaint the prince with the result of his observations. Edward thereupon broke up from Sauveterre, and advanced to Vittoria; where Felton rejoined the main army. Amidst the arrangements for the approaching conflict, he again left the camp with a reconnoitring party of 200 English and Gascon knights and esquires; but, encountering a corps of 6000 French and Spaniards under Tello and Sanchet, he remained in the hands of the enemy,³ after a desperate defence, which proved fatal to his brother sir William Felton, seneschal of Poitou, and many others.

Sir Thomas Felton was, after the battle, exchanged for sire Arnoul d'Audenem,⁴ and continued in the council of the prince until the termination of his government. In 1369 he is noticed as the principal adviser of Edward in his refusal to obey the summons of the king of France upon the appeal of the Gascon nobles in the matter of the fougage.⁵ In 1370 Felton and the Captal de Buch, having their head-quarters at Bergerac⁶ on the Dordogne, had confided the garrison of La Linde, a small fortified town in the vicinity, to Thomas de Batefol, a knight of Gascony. The duke of Anjou laid siege to the place with a considerable force; and the inhabitants, being inclined towards the French party, induced the governor to betray his trust. Felton and the Captal, having been

¹ Rymer, vol. vi. pp. 514. 519. 523. 525.

² Froissart, tom. iv. p. 323, describes Felton and Chandos as "sages et bien enlangagés."

³ See p. 128; and Froissart, tom. iv. p. 383.

⁴ Ibid. p. 428.

⁵ Ibid. tom. v. p. 20.

⁶ Ibid. p. 188.

apprised of this proceeding on the evening before the day fixed for the surrender, marched after midnight from Bergerac with 200 lances; and, entering La Linde at the point of day, proceeded through the town to the opposite gate, at which the French were to be admitted. The Captal meeting Batefol near the gate, preparing to consummate his treachery, put him to the sword; and the French, upon sight of the banners of Felton and the Captal, convinced of the failure of their enterprise, abandoned the siege.¹

SIR
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The duties of those two commanders at Bergerac spared them the disgrace of co-operating at the sacking of Limoges, which happened shortly after this event. On the departure of prince Edward for England, Felton attended the duke of Lancaster to the siege and capture of Montpaon,² and in all the subsequent actions of that prince, until he quitted France, when our knight and the Captal were appointed to govern the province. In 1372 Felton, having assembled his troops at Bordeaux, marched to Niort,³ in order to meet king Edward, who was expected from England for the relief of Thouars, but prevented by contrary winds from landing, according to his design, at Rochelle. In 1373 he was commissioned, with others, to treat with Peter king of Arragon.⁴ In 1374 Berard de la Bret, chevalier, prisoner to sir Thomas Felton, had a licence to go beyond sea for his ransom.⁵ Froissart records, in 1375, the judgment and decollation, by order of the senechal, of Guillaume de Pommiers and his secretary, convicted of treason, at Bordeaux.⁶ In that and the year following, Felton was party to several treaties⁷ with the count de Foix and other neighbouring powers, for aid against the French, who, under the duke of Anjou, had gained ground considerably on the English frontier. He had in vain solicited succour from the inert and feeble administration which ruled in England at the close of the life of Edward III, and his own government was suddenly concluded by a great personal disaster.

¹ Froissart, tom. v. p. 192.

² Ibid. p. 239.

³ Ibid. tom. vi. p. 21.

⁴ Rymer, vol. vii. p. 4, March 15.

⁵ Ibid. p. 48, Nov. 20.

⁶ Froissart, tom. vii. p. 5.

⁷ Rymer, vol. vii. pp. 63, &c.

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Anjou had besieged Bergerac; and Felton, with four of the most powerful Gascon barons in the English interest, and 500 lances, left Bordeaux to proceed to the relief of that fortress. Having marched through La Réole, they placed themselves in ambush near Eymet, a small town on the road from thence to Bergerac; intending to attack a French detachment which they heard was on its way to La Réole for the purpose of conveying a large engine¹ to be used at the siege. In the encounter, which ensued on the 1st of November 1377,² our knight had the misfortune to be made prisoner by Jean de Lignac, who, having fixed his ransom at 30,000 francs,³ permitted him to go to England in order to raise it within three years. Much time appears to have been consumed in the endeavour to accomplish this object; and, the term being about to expire, king Richard, considering the services performed by Felton to his grandfather and father, and also that the ransom of the count de St. Paul, which had been granted for that purpose, remained undischarged, placed, on the 30th August 1380,⁴ another French prisoner, Guillaume de Bordes, chevalier, at the disposal of Felton; and, on the 23rd October,⁵ allowed him to proceed to France, in order to negotiate his freedom.

Having, as it is presumed, speedily accomplished that object, sir Thomas Felton was honoured with the Garter upon the decease of sir Hugh Wrottesley in January following, and placed in the tenth stall on the Sovereign's side, where his plate is still to be seen. But he enjoyed this distinction, so justly paid to his merits, during a few weeks only, as he died on the 26th April 1381.

By Joan, his wife, daughter and co-heir of sir Richard Walkefare, a knight of considerable military renown, he left three daughters, his co-heirs, viz.—1. Mary, aged 24, who first married Edmund de Hemgrave, and, secondly, sir John Curson of Becks Hall, in Norfolk; 2. Sibill, aged 22, who

¹ *Truie*, a machine used at sieges; Froissart, tom. vii. p. 12.

² Hist. de Languedoc par Vaissette, tom. iv. p. 363; and Chron. de France, chap. 46.

³ Froissart, ut sup. p. 20.

⁴ Rymer, vol. vii. p. 267.

⁵ Ibid. p. 276.

married sir Thomas Morley; 3. Eleanor, aged 20, who married sir Robert de Ufford.

The representative, in 1577, of dame Mary Curson, was Thomas Curson, who had two sons, William and Thomas, then living. The heir of dame Sibill Morley was, in 1500, Gregory Ratcliffe of Framsdon, in Suffolk, who had three daughters and co-heirs. The heir-general of dame Eleanor Ufford is Thomas Brand, now lord Dacre.

SIR
THOMAS
FELTON.

ARMS.

Gules, two lions passant in pale Ermine, ducally crowned Or.

CREST.

Out of a ducal coronet Or, two wings inverted, Gules, quilled of the first.

LXIX.

SIR JOHN HOLAND—EARL OF HUNTINGDON,
DUKE OF EXETER.

THE character of this celebrated person, who bore an active part in the public events of his time, is drawn in colours far from flattering by his compatriot Walsingham; whilst the foreign chronicler, Froissart, viewed it only in a chivalrous, and therefore, to him, favourable light, without caring to conceal or extenuate its defects.

JOHN
DUKE
OF
EXETER.

John Holand was the younger of the two sons of the Founder, Thomas earl of Kent, by Joan Plantagenet, and the uterine brother of king Richard II. Dugdale erroneously places his first military service in 1356,¹ as he was certainly born *after* 1350;² and there is no trace of his having been armed in the reign of Edward III.

In 1380 Richard appointed him justiciary of Chester for

¹ Baronage, vol. ii. p. 78.

² His mother was twenty-four years old at the death of her brother, John earl of Kent, in 1352, and

then the wife of sir Thomas Holand. *Esc.* 26 *Ed.* 3, *No.* 54. Her eldest son, Thomas, was ten years old in 1360.—*Esc.* 35 *Ed.* 3, *No.* 104.