

LXXVII.

EDWARD PLANTAGENET—SECOND DUKE OF YORK.

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THE memory of this prince, to whom history has not denied the possession of considerable military talent, is unhappily stained with perfidies and crimes of no ordinary turpitude: his own strongly-worded penitential confession, made in the last solemn act of his life—that he was “of all sinners the most wicked,” “the most criminal and unnatural of created beings,”¹—may, however, be charitably viewed as the emanation of a mind susceptible, at least, of some redeeming virtues.

The eldest son of Edmond of Langley, duke of York, and of the princess Isabel of Castile, and grandson of the royal Founder, he was admitted at the age of thirteen into the Order, as successor to sir Richard Burley,² who died in May 1387; he occupied the fourth stall on the Prince's side; and was first provided with robes for the festival of St. George in 1388.³ On the 25th February 1389–90 he was created earl of Rutland, to hold that dignity during the life of his father, together with rents of the annual value of eight hundred marks; and to that effect the castle, town, and lordship of Okeham, and the whole forest of Rutland, were granted to him for the same term.⁴ In 1391 he was constituted, notwithstanding his youth, admiral of the fleet northward and westward.⁵ He was also, about the same time, joined with John of Gant and others in an embassy to treat with France;⁶ and, in 1392, he was appointed justice of the forests south of Trent,⁷ and constable of the Tower of London for life.⁸ By

Cornwall; that the grant had been confirmed by Henry IV, Henry V, and the then sovereign; that she had leased the premises to John Wilcotes, esq. and Thomas Franklyn, his clerk, for their lives, at the rent of 50*l.*; but that, upon the death of the last surviving lessee, the manor had not been returned to her. An act, thereupon, passed in 1431, for restoring to her the said manor, to be held during her life.—*Rot. Parl. vol. iv. p. 396^b.*

¹ Nichols' Royal Wills, 1, p. 217.

² Windsor tables.

³ See p. 251.

⁴ Cart. 13 Ric. 2, N^o 5; declared in parliament 2nd March following. Rot. Parl. iii. 264.

⁵ Rot. Franc. 14 Ric. 2, m. 3, March 22. Ibid. 15 Ric. 2, m. 7, Nov. 29.

⁶ Ibid. 22d Feb. 1391–2. Knyghton, col. 2739.

⁷ Pat. 15 Ric. 2, p. 2, m. 32.

⁸ Ibid. m. 31.

these and other favours, the king, his cousin, manifested his great affection for him; and he appears to have been, during several years, a constant companion of the monarch. In 1394, after the death of queen Anne, he attended Richard to Ireland;¹ in October 1396 he was in the royal suite at the interview with the French king at Guisnes,² and one of the commissioners to treat of the marriage with the young queen Isabel.³ Soon afterwards, he was appointed governor of the Channel Islands⁴ and of the isle of Wight,⁵ for life; warden of the New Forest;⁶ constable of Dover castle, and warden of the cinque ports.⁷

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The earliest record of his sitting in parliament is of the 21st January 1396-7.⁸ In that eventful year he was at the head of the eight appellants against his uncle the duke of Gloucester; in whose murder, if we may rely on the confession of Halle,⁹ he took a guilty part by sending two of his servants to aid in its perpetration.

Before the close of the month, in which that crime was committed, he was rewarded with grants of several manors and estates,¹⁰ which had been part of the possessions of Gloucester, Arundel, and Warwick; and advanced to the dignity of duke of Aumarle or Albemarle.¹¹

As constable of England¹² he attended king Richard to Ireland in 1399; but, on the return of that fatal expedition, deserted his unfortunate master, and adhered to the interests of the new Sovereign.¹³ Upon being accused by the lord Fitzwalter, in the first parliament of Henry IV, of the murder of Gloucester, he was, with the other appellants against that prince, put upon his defence; and, after an angry discussion, deprived, as well as Surrey and Exeter of the ducal title, and reduced to his former rank of earl of Rutland.¹⁴ It has been asserted that he, immediately afterwards, united himself

¹ Wals. p. 388.

² Ibid. p. 390.

³ Rot. Franc. 19 Ric. m. 19.

⁴ Ibid. 20 Ric. 2, m. 6, Nov. 30.

⁵ Pat. 20 Ric. 2, p. 3. m. 5,

June 4.

⁶ Ibid. April 26.

⁷ Ibid. p. 1. m. 20.

⁸ Rot. Parl. iii. 338.

⁹ Ibid. p. 452.

¹⁰ Pat. 21 Ric. 2, p. 1. m. 13.

¹¹ Rot. Parl. 21 Ric. 2, N^o 23. 35.

Sept. 29.

¹² Pat. 12 Jul. 21 Ric. 2, 1397.

¹³ Stowe, and Leland, Coll. vol. i.

p. 696.

¹⁴ Rot. Parl. 2 Hen. 4, N^o 33.

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with those noblemen, and the earls of Salisbury and Gloucester, in the celebrated plot against the king's life; and that he betrayed their common design to Henry.¹ The evidence of his share in the conspiracy is not quite conclusive, although it has been generally admitted by historians, who have presumed that he purchased his immunity with an eager and depraved zeal in the pursuit and ruin of his associates.²

His treacherous conduct seems, nevertheless, to have prompted the king to remove him from the court, by sending him to Gascony, with the flattering appointment of the king's lieutenant of that province.³ Whilst abroad, he succeeded his father as duke of York, in 1402, and had thereupon livery of his lands, with respite of his homage.⁴

Soon after his return to England, the duke's restless disposition involved him in new difficulties. In February 1404-5, Edmond the young earl of March (the rightful heir to the crown) and his brother Roger Mortimer, who had, since their father's death, in 1399, been closely detained in Windsor castle, were suddenly conveyed from thence by Constance, the widow of Thomas le Despenser earl of Gloucester; but retaken on their flight towards Wales. The countess, or, as she was then called, the lady le Despenser, being committed to prison,⁵ is said to have denounced her brother, the duke of York, as the author of the bold attempt.⁶ He was thereupon arrested and confined in Pevensey castle;⁷ and orders were issued to the escheators of various counties to seize his large estates into the king's hands.⁸ In 1406-7, however, during

¹ Camden, vol. i. fo. 548.

² Exit. Pell. Pasch. 1 Hen. 4. Monstrelet relates that Waleran count of St. Paul, who had married Maud Holand, the sister of Richard II, after sending a letter of reproach and defiance to his successor, ordered Rutland's effigy, in his coat-armour, to be suspended, the feet uppermost, from a gibbet near the gate of Calais.

³ Rot. Vasc. 2 Hen. 4, m. 7.

⁴ Rot. Fin. 4 Hen. 4, m. 16.

⁵ Elemyngo Leget scutifero, in denar. super expens. et salvo conductu dñe le Despenser de Lond.

usque castrum regis de Killingworth et ibidem salvo et secure custodiend—x/i. Exit. Pell. Mich. 6 Hen. 4, 2d March.

⁶ Stowe, p. 332. Holinshed, p. 527. ⁷ Rymer, vol. viii. 387.

⁸ Ibid. p. 386. Exit. Pell. Mich. 6 Hen. 4, March 2d,—“div^s nunciis et cursoribus miss. ad oēs p'tes Angl. et Hib. literis de magno sigillo direct. singulis escaetoribus com. predictor. ad seisiend. et capiend. in man. dñi regis o'ia et sing'la dñia man^a ter. et ten. que fuerunt Edwardi ducis Ebor. et Dñe le Despenser unacū o'ib's aliis

the next long session of parliament, he was vindicated by the prince of Wales, his firm friend on all occasions, and restored to liberty and his possessions.¹ He was immediately re-appointed constable of the Tower.²

In 1412 he accompanied the duke of Clarence on his expedition in aid of the duke of Orleans against the duke of Burgundy;³ and was, in the following year, again employed in France.⁴

Upon the accession of Henry V, his martial abilities were called into action, and secured to him solid proofs of that monarch's favour. As constable and marshal of the host, he solicited and obtained the command of the van of the royal army at the battle of Agincourt, 25th October 1415; but was not destined to share the glory of the victory. Being very corpulent, he is said to have been borne down in the throng, and suffocated or trampled to death.⁵

By his will, made at Harfleur, during that expedition, on the 22nd August 1415, he directed the interment of his remains in the college of Fotheringhay, which he had founded.⁶

He married Philippa, daughter and co-heir of John lord Mohun, one of the founders of the Order; but had no issue by her.

ARMS.—Quarterly, France and England, over all a label of three points. During his father's life he bore the label per pale Gules and Argent, charged with six castles Or and six lioncels Gules; but, after his father's death, the label Argent charged with nine torteaux.

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bonis et catallis infra eadem dñia et man^a inventa arrestand. et seisiend. et salvo et secure custodiend p^o com^o regis—lxiii. iiiid.

¹ Rot. Parl. vol. iv. p. 17. Dugdale (upon the authority of Walsingham) states that he was then restored to his hereditary dignity of duke of York; but he seems not to have been deprived of it by any sentence of attainder.

² Rymer viii. 457.

³ Wals. p. 425.

⁴ Rot. Franc. 14 Hen. 4, m. 10.

⁵ Leland's Itin. vol. i. f. 5.

⁶ Pat. 13 Hen. 4, m. 17; Pat.

3 Hen. 5, p. 2, m. 43. Mon Anglie. iii. p. 2. fo. 162. He was interred in the choir under a flat marble stone, with his figure in brass thereon. After the dissolution, the choir was pulled down by order of the duke of Northumberland, to whom Edward VI. had granted the estate. The stone is said to have been then taken up, and the corpse exposed to view. Queen Elizabeth commanded that the stone should be replaced over the grave, and a monument of freestone erected in memory of the duke at the south side of the altar.