

LXXXIII.

WILLIAM OF BAVARIA, COUNT OF OSTREVANT.

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THE character of Ostrevant seems to bear the stamp of a period of comparative repose. His inclination to martial pursuits, which in a more stirring age might have raised him to distinction as a general, was nearly absorbed by a ruling passion for the triumphs of the tilt-yard and the festivities of the hall. He, therefore, figures prominently among the favourites of Froissart, whose lively pages became more redolent of praise of the combat and tourney, as the English star declined in France, and his early heroes had disappeared from the busy scene, together with the trophies of their achievements.

This prince was the eldest son of Albert, the sovereign of Holland, Hainault, and Zealand, and the grandson of the celebrated emperor Lewis Bavarus and of Margaret, the great heiress of the Netherlands.¹

His first military essay appears to have been made in 1385.² The citizens of Ghent had revolted against his father, and fortified themselves in the town of Damme, in West Flanders; when Ostrevant, availing himself of the aid of Charles VI. of France (who had assembled an army in the low countries for the purpose of invading England), carried the place by assault, and compelled the insurgents to sue for peace. During the siege he received knighthood from the French monarch,³ whose cousin-german, Margaret, the daughter of Philip the Hardy, duke of Burgundy, he had then recently married.

Ostrevant, with the sire de Gomeney and other knights in his train, was a gay visiter at the French court on the occasion of the magnificent entry of Isabel of Bavaria, queen consort of Charles VI, into Paris, on the 22d of August 1389.

¹ The count of Ostrevant was second cousin to Richard II; his grandmother having been the eldest sister of queen Philippa.

² *Art de verifier les Dates*, vol. iii. p. 212.

³ Pareus, *Hist. Bavarico-Palatina*, 1633. p. 84.

He jousted, "moult bien," (as the chronicler, an eye-witness, assures us,) and was honoured with the applause of the ladies present.¹

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The treaty of Leulinghen, of which the ratification was delivered at Paris soon after the jousts,² was concluded on the 18th June, and freed for a while the chivalry of both nations from their military engagements. The English sought employment in the crusade against the Lithuanians; and the French and Genoese, under the command of the duke of Bourbon, undertook an expedition to Africa in the summer of 1390. Ostrevant was then governor of Hainault; and many of his subjects joined the French standard, and displayed his banner on those distant shores.³

In the mean time king Richard, in order to rival the gorgeous Parisian festival, invited the knights of Europe to a similar tournament, to be held in London, soon after Michaelmas. Ostrevant, unable to resist so great a temptation, communicated to his father his intention of passing into England upon this occasion; and was ineffectually admonished to refrain, lest he should give offence to his French allies. Proceeding to Calais, he despatched from thence his herald, Gomeney,⁴ to signify his desire to Richard, who, on the 8th of September, forwarded a safe-conduct⁵ by his messenger.⁶ The delighted chronicler describes, with his usual zest, the stately progress of Ostrevant and his numerous attendants towards the English court; his cordial reception; the brilliancy of the jousts, balls, and banquets; and, finally, his investiture at Windsor castle with the Order of the Garter, by the reception of which he is said to have incurred the displeasure of the French knights present at the ceremony.⁷ It does not appear, however, that the acceptance of the Order was consi-

¹ Froiss. t. xii. p. 27.

² Ibid. p. 31.

³ Ibid. p. 254. The devise on Ostrevant's banner is there stated to have been "Gules, a field-hatch (*haise*) Or."

⁴ Froiss. *ut supra*, p. 288.

⁵ Rot. Franc. 14 Ric. 2, m. 11. The count's suite was to be limited in number to one hundred persons,

amongst whom there were to be none who had been banished or outlawed by the law of England. Rymer, vol. vii. p. 683.

⁶ Froissart relates that Gomeney was struck with blindness on his return from this mission.

⁷ See p. 253, and Froiss. tom. xii. pp. 288-296.

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dered to bind him to any new fealty; for, although the earl of Northumberland, captain of Calais, was instructed, on the 25th of February following, to treat with the count of Ostrevant concerning "friendship and allegiance,"¹ we have not met with any evidence that such a treaty was concluded.

Historians of the Netherlands relate that our knight was, in 1392, at the head of an insurrection of the Houkins party against duke Albert, the object of which was to destroy the influence of Adelaide de Poëlgeest, his father's favourite mistress; and that, having forcibly entered the palace on the 22nd of September, the unfortunate lady fell a victim to their fury.² Ostrevant was under the necessity of withdrawing from the country, in consequence of the part taken in this revolt; and did not return until 1394. The stain was effaced by his subsequent conduct. In 1396, being invited by John of Burgundy count of Nevers (who had married his sister Margaret) to accompany him into Hungary, in order to take arms against Bajazet, he consulted his father on the project; but was dissuaded from it, and rather prompted to direct his warlike views towards Friesland, and the recovery of that territory, which had formed part of the inheritance of his family. To this advice he willingly yielded; and, having allied himself with the counts of Cornouailles, Namur, and St. Paul, he defeated the Frisons in several engagements, and obliged them to render homage to his father.³

Ostrevant succeeded his father, Albert, on the 13th December 1404, and was inaugurated at Leyden on the 13th of the following month. In the first years of his reign the factions of the Cabeliars and Houkins excited great tumults, in which many perished.

Upon occasion of the visit of the emperor Sigismund to England, and the reception of that monarch into the Order of the Garter, by Henry V, on the 7th of May 1416, our knight, as "duke of Holland,"⁴ arrived once more in this country, and landed at Orwell on the 28th of that month; having been prevented by contrary winds from reaching the English coast in

¹ Rot. Franc. 14 Ric. 2, m. 3.

² Art de verifier les Dates, *ut supra*.

³ Van Mieris, tom. iii. p. 686.

⁴ The counts of Holland, of this family, being, by birth, dukes of Bavaria, were usually styled "dukes of Holland."

time to attend at the celebration of St. George's feast and the installation of the emperor.¹

The last public act of his life, on record, is that the emperor Sigismund having sent ambassadors to the Frisons, proposing to obtain a subsidy from them, duke William forbade the payment, by his letter of the 30th April 1417, since the counts of Holland owed nothing to the empire beyond their homage for Friesland.

He died at Bouchain on the 31st May 1417, leaving issue, by Margaret of Burgundy, an only child, Jacqueline,² then

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¹ Compare the several authorities on this point, cited by Anstis in his Introduction.

² Jacqueline was, in her infancy, married to John, a younger son of Charles VI, and who, for a short time after the death of his brother Louis, enjoyed the title of dauphin, but died in 1416 without issue. Upon the death of her father, in the year following, she was inaugurated as countess of Holland, Hainault, Zealand, and Friesland. A widow at the early age of sixteen, her vast inheritance became an object of ambition to the neighbouring princes. Her uncle, John of Bavaria, bishop of Liege, quitted the priesthood in the hope of espousing her; but his addresses were rejected, and, under the direction of her mother, she bestowed her hand upon her cousin-german, John duke of Brabant, son of her maternal uncle, Anthony of Burgundy. The duke, her equal in years, but of languid health, mild spirit, and weak understanding, was soon despised by his consort, who was endowed with the opposite qualities, both of body and mind. Anxious to free herself from so unpromising a union, Jacqueline eloped from her husband and repaired to England, accompanied by her mother, who had, a few years antecedently, visited the English court. This step would seem to have been taken with the sanction of Henry V. who, having failed in a former endeavour to secure for his brother, the duke of

Gloucester, a splendid alliance in Sicily, appears to have favoured the view of that prince to unite himself with the fair fugitive, and thereby to obtain possession of four of the finest provinces of the Netherlands. The protection afforded to her was undisguised: a monthly allowance of 100*l.* was issued for her maintenance, (*Rymer, vol. x. p. 67*); and she publicly assisted, as sponsor, at the baptism of the infant prince, Henry. But, in order to accomplish Gloucester's object, a divorce from the duke of Brabant was indispensable; and pope Martin V. being in the contrary interest, recourse was had to the anti-pope, Benedict XIII, to annul the marriage; and the pseudo-pontiff, too happy to be consulted by such powerful clients, readily complied with the requisition. Gloucester's nuptials were, notwithstanding, postponed by the king in the fear of embroiling himself with the duke of Burgundy. In this situation of affairs Henry died; and the government, in the name of the infant king, having passed into the hands of Gloucester in the absence of his brother, the duke of Bedford, regent of France, he conceived himself absolved from all restraint; hastened to consummate his marriage with Jacqueline; and laid claim to her patrimonial dominions. This rash and impolitic conduct created a powerful diversion for Charles VII. at a crisis when the English rule in France might have been firmly establish-

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recently become the widow of John the dauphin, son of Charles VI.

This knight filled the eleventh stall on the Sovereign's side until the death of John duke of Brittany, in 1399, when he was translated to the second stall on the Prince's side. The Windsor tables mention him by his title of "Ostrevaunt" only. According to the wardrobe accounts hitherto recovered, robes of the Order were issued to him in 1399, as "duke of Holland" in 1408; as "duke of Holland and Bavaria, count of Ostrevaunt" in 1409; as "duke of Holland" in 1413; and as "duke of Holland, duke of Bavaria" in 1416.

ARMS.

Quarterly, First and Fourth, bendy, lozengy, Argent and Azure, BAVARIA: Second and Third, Or, four lions rampant, the first and fourth Sable, the second and third Gules, HOLLAND.

ed; an opportunity which thus was lost for ever. Gloucester and his duchess passed over to Calais; and, at the head of 5,000 men, marched into Hainault, and invested several towns in that province. The duke of Burgundy joined his forces to those of Brabant, and opposed their progress. In consequence of an angry correspondence between the contending princes, Philip challenged the duke of Gloucester to single combat: the defiance was accepted by the latter, and a day appointed for the issue. In the mean time a truce was agreed upon, and Gloucester passed into England. He would have carried the duchess with him, but for the intreaties of the inhabitants of Mons, who solemnly engaged to defend her with their lives. But the duke had scarcely quitted Hainault, when Philip began to intrigue with the people of Mons, in order to induce them to surrender Jacqueline into his hands. This act of treachery was finally accomplished with the concurrence, as it is supposed, of her mother; and she was shut up in Ghent in the month of June 1426. In September following, she found means to escape disguised in male attire, and fled into Holland, where the

war was renewed and carried on with great violence by the two factions, the one (the "Cabelliers") fighting under the banners of Brabant and Burgundy, and the other (the "Houkins") on the side of Jacqueline. Her enemies prevailed: she was compelled to commit the government of her states to Philip, and to nominate him her heir. Pope Martin having annulled her marriage with Gloucester; and, the duke of Brabant dying in 1427; she further engaged to continue a widow during the remainder of her life. It appears, however, that so late as 18th May 1428, the duke of Gloucester and Jacqueline had not acquiesced in the sentence of the pope; as permission was then granted to export certain articles for the use of "Jacqueline duchess of Gloucester and Holland, the king's aunt."—(*Rymer, vol. x. p. 398.*) The duke having, however, found his endeavours to withdraw her from the power of Burgundy ineffectual, married Eleanor Cobham; and Jacqueline, in 1432 took, secretly, for her fourth husband, Francis de Borselen, a Dutch nobleman, who filled the post of stadtholder of Holland. The duke of Burgundy, informed of the marriage, arrested