

## LXXXVIII.

SIR JOHN BEAUFORT—EARL OF SOMERSET—  
MARQUESS OF DORSET.JOHN  
MARQUESS  
OF  
DORSET.

THE Garter, vacant by the death of John lord Beaumont in September 1396, was conferred upon sir John Beaufort, the eldest natural son of John of Gant, by Katherine Swynford.

We are informed by Hoveden<sup>1</sup> that he and the other issue of that connection obtained their surname from their birth-place, Beaufort castle in Anjou, an hereditament of the house of Lancaster, derived from Blanch of Artois.

Of the early life of a person, born under such circumstances, few notices could be expected. In 1391, when he is supposed to have been about sixteen years of age,<sup>2</sup> we find him described as a knight in a licence permitting him to travel beyond the seas;<sup>3</sup> and, in 1393, he accompanied his father into France.<sup>4</sup>

The duke of Lancaster solemnized his nuptials with Katherine Swynford on the 13th January 1395-6.<sup>5</sup> On the 9th February 1396-7, the king's letters patent legitimating their issue were, with the previous sanction of the pope, ratified

<sup>1</sup> Hoveden, fo. 450. N<sup>o</sup> 30.

<sup>2</sup> The conjecture that he was born about 1375 rests upon the supposed age of his next brother Henry. By the receiver general's account of the duchy of Lancaster, we find that Henry Beaufort was pursuing his studies at Oxford in 1393.—"Roberto Style carrectario pro carriagio duarum pip. vini & unius compul' fructus miss. ex precepto dñi de Londoñ usque Oxon̄ magistro Henrico Beaufort, per litteras dñi de warranto dat. apud Hertford 4<sup>to</sup> die Feb: a<sup>o</sup>. 16<sup>o</sup>. [1392-3] 12l." He obtained the see of Lincoln in 1397. The taunt of Richard III, that the great-grandfather of Henry Tudor was the offspring of a *double adultery*,

(Ellis's Orig. Letters, 2nd series, vol. i. p. 164.) was probably not founded in fact. John of Gant's first consort, Blanch, died in 1367. Sir Hugh Swynford died in 1372; and the marriage with Constance of Castile took place in the latter year.

<sup>3</sup> Rot. Franc. 15 Ric. 2, m. 12. By an entry in the account of the receiver-general of John duke of Lancaster it appears that under a warrant of the duke, dated London 22nd Feb. 1391-2, the Lincoln estates were charged with an annuity of 100*l.* to him, by the description of John Beaufort, knight.

<sup>4</sup> Rot. Vasc. 17 Ric. 2, m. 7, Oct. 22.

<sup>5</sup> Wals. p. 390.

and confirmed by parliamentary authority;<sup>1</sup> and, on the day following, sir John Beaufort was created earl of Somerset.<sup>2</sup>

JOHN  
MARQUESS  
OF  
DORSET.

These public marks of the king's favour, and his admission about the same period into the Order of the Garter, naturally inclined, if not bound him, to the will of the Sovereign. He was accordingly a party to the proceedings at Nottingham castle in August 1397; and, at the opening of the parliament, on the 17th of the succeeding month, one of the lords appellants against the duke of Gloucester and his adherents. In common with his associates in the appeal he was rewarded with promotion in the peerage, and with more substantial benefits out of the spoils of the victims. On the 29th of the same month he was raised to the marquise of Dorset; but, by another patent, the title was changed to that of "marquess of Somerset:"<sup>3</sup> notwithstanding which, he appears, during the remainder of that reign, to have used, and been summoned to parliament by, the title of "marquess of Dorset," and to have received divers grants under that appellation. The offices of king's lieutenant in Aquitaine,<sup>4</sup> constable of Wallingford castle, and steward of Wallingford and St. Valery,<sup>5</sup> admiral of the fleet northwards and westwards,<sup>6</sup> constable of Dover castle and warden of the cinque ports,<sup>7</sup> and admiral of all England and Ireland,<sup>8</sup> were conferred upon him in rapid succession.

When his brother, Henry IV, ascended the throne, he was, together with the other appellants of 1397, called upon to justify himself in parliament, and was not exempted from the general sentence pronounced against them, whereby the dignities and beneficial grants, with which the proceedings against the duke of Gloucester and his party had been remunerated, were adjudged to be forfeited.<sup>9</sup> He was, however, immediately distinguished from his partners in guilt; for, on

<sup>1</sup> Rot. Parl. 20 Ric. 2, N<sup>o</sup> 28, vol. iii. p. 343.

<sup>2</sup> Chart. 10 Feb. 20 Ric. 2, N<sup>o</sup> 1.

<sup>3</sup> Chart. 21 Ric. 2, N<sup>o</sup> 23. In the margin of the roll against the record of the charter (which is crossed) are these words, "*Vacat quia nichil inde actum est*;" and, a little lower, by another charter of the same date, the grantee is cre-

ated *marquess of Somerset*, to hold to him and the heirs male of his body.

<sup>4</sup> Rot. Vasc. 21 Ric. 2, m. 8, Sept. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Pat. eod. a<sup>o</sup>. p. 2, m. 20, Nov. 22.

<sup>6</sup> Rot. Franc. eod. a<sup>o</sup>. m. 4, Feb. 2.

<sup>7</sup> Chart. eod. a<sup>o</sup>. m. 9, Feb. 5.

<sup>8</sup> Pat. eod. a<sup>o</sup>. p. 3, m. 23.

<sup>9</sup> Rot. Parl. vol. iii. p. 450.

JOHN  
MARQUESS  
OF  
DORSET.

the 9th of February 1399-1400, he was, as earl of Somerset, nominated great chamberlain of England for life.<sup>1</sup> In 1401-2 he was appointed captain of Calais;<sup>2</sup> and he filled, during the remainder of his life, several high diplomatic and other employments. In 1403 the commons in parliament petitioned for his restitution to the title of marquess of Dorset; and, although he humbly desired to be excused, alleging that the name of *marquess* was strange in this realm,<sup>3</sup> and that he preferred to retain his title of *earl*, yet, in deference to wishes, so cordially expressed by the lords and commons, he consented to resume the dignity which had been bestowed upon him in the late reign.<sup>4</sup>

In 1404 the revenue of the isle of Thanet was placed at his disposal for the support of himself and his retinue in garrison at Calais;<sup>5</sup> and, in the same year, being then styled chamberlain of England and captain of Calais, a commissioner was delegated to appear for him in the court military.<sup>6</sup>

We derive from contemporary writers no means of forming a just opinion of the capacity or character of this nobleman. The latter can scarcely be supposed to have been uncontaminated by the corrupt manners of the court amidst the frivolities of which he had passed a chief portion of his life. His denial, however, of all other than a passive acquiescence in the transactions which disgraced the concluding years of the reign of his cousin and lavish benefactor, was in terms so ingenuous that he seems to have retained the good will of king and people during his remaining short career.

Beaufort's last recorded public appearance was at the jousts held, at the instance and on the challenge of the chivalrous seneschal of Hainault, John de Werchin, in 1409, when he entered the lists against that celebrated champion.<sup>7</sup> He made soon afterwards his nuncupative will on Palm Sunday the 16th of March 1409-10,<sup>8</sup> died on the same day, and was in-

<sup>1</sup> Pat. 1 Hen. 4, p. 2, m. 4, Feb. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Rot. Franc. 2 Hen. 4, m. 7.

<sup>3</sup> De Vere was the first marquess, Beaufort the second.

<sup>4</sup> Rot. Parl. 4 Hen. 4, m. 18, art. 18, Selden's titles of honour, p. 217.

<sup>5</sup> Pat. 5 Hen. 4, p. 2, m. 26.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. p. 1, m. 32.

<sup>7</sup> Leland's Coll. vol. i. p. 699.

<sup>8</sup> Arundel, vol. ii. fo. 48; Nichols's Royal Wills. The will was proved 5th April 1410.

tered in St. Michael's chapel in the south transept of Canterbury cathedral. He had issue (by Margaret Holand, his wife, third daughter of Thomas second earl of Kent, K.G. and afterwards the consort of Thomas duke of Clarence) three sons and two daughters. Henry Beaufort, the eldest, became earl of Somerset, and died unmarried in 1418; John, the second, and Edmund, the third son, were successively created dukes of Somerset, and elected into this Order. Of the daughters,—Joan married James I. king of Scotland, and Margaret was the wife of Thomas Courtenay earl of Devon. The only issue of John duke of Somerset was Margaret, who married Edmond Tudor, created earl of Richmond by Henry VI, and was mother to king Henry VII, whose co-heirs and representatives are also those of John Beaufort marquess of Dorset.<sup>1</sup>

JOHN  
MARQUESS  
OF  
DORSET.

The marquess occupied the thirteenth stall on the Sovereign's side, to which his plate is still affixed. According to the wardrobe accounts extant, robes were issued to him, by his title of marquess of Dorset, in 1399,<sup>2</sup> and, as earl of Somerset, in 1408 and 1409.<sup>3</sup>

## ARMS

(before legitimization).<sup>4</sup>

Per pale Argent and Azure, on a bend Gules, three lions passant guardant Or, a label of three points, of France.

(After legitimization).<sup>5</sup>

Quarterly, France and England, within a bordure gobony, Argent and Azure.

## CREST.

On a chapeau d'état the lion of England, gorged with a collar gobony, as the bordure of the arms.

<sup>1</sup> See *antea*, p. 220.

<sup>2</sup> Page 254.

<sup>3</sup> Queen's Remembrancer's office.

<sup>4</sup> In a glass window in Wanlip church, Leicestershire.

<sup>5</sup> Garter plate.