

there, such as Plantagenets Cottage, pool, etc., could refer to earlier connections. The Earls of Kent had lands in Leicestershire even in the time of Edward IV. King Richard could have formed an attachment when a young man whilst at Tonbridge Castle or on visits to King Edward's friends or, of course, in Northamptonshire or the Midlands. If Richard Plantagenet was aged 7 or even 9 when moved to Lutterworth he could have been born about 1462-4. Hasted makes reference to his tomb monument bearing two shields with coats of arms, alas indecipherable. Who was the Lady? Out of many possibilities I venture to suggest two names: the De Poultneys who owned land near Eastwell and Lutterworth and not least Curteis of whom Peter was of considerable importance as Keeper of the Royal Wardrobe to Edward IV. Granted lands at Donnington le Heath, Leics., in 1764. Mayor of Leicester 1482. Owned land near Eastwell. There is still a place called Curteis Corner a mile from Eastwell. On the occasion of the Royal Tour of King Richard and Queen Anne to Leicester Castle in 1483 he was appointed Usher to the King's Privy Chamber and Wardrobe and continued in this office under Henry VII. Did all three know the secret and the remaining two agree to leave Richard to pass away his days unmolested and unproclaimed on his mother's lands, maybe his childhood home, or even where he was born and then returned to die?

The Nobility of Later Mediaeval England

A. F. SUTTON

(by K. B. McFarlane)

This series of lectures by the eminent Oxford historian K. B. McFarlane includes the 1953 Ford Lectures, a prestigious foundation, a number of lectures given to undergraduates in 1965, and other related topics. The subject is the English nobility 1306 to 1509, the period when the nobility was created and finally gelled into its set form. By 1509 a man might be said to know his place. The impressive range of ideas in these lectures have influenced many students of this period who have since become university teachers themselves; and it is some of these students who have edited this book from McFarlane's surviving papers as a tribute to his memory. Many of these ideas have in turn become the theses and books of his students; he was a great inspirer of interest and a great teacher. He was also a lecturer of presence and style and in the nobility of later medieval England he had an inexhaustible subject. In 1965 the subject readily overflowed the allotted number of lectures and his audience willingly came back the next term for more.

The subject of the late mediaeval nobility must instantly excite the enthusiasm of the Richard III Society, though some members may ruffle their feathers at a flippant remark which reveals a traditional view of Richard III and be disappointed that the period 1461 to 1481 does not come in for much specific mention. But let us bear in mind that the subject runs from 1306 to 1509 and that if the myth of Richard III is unassailed there are plenty of others that are exploded most rewardingly. This is a book which can only profit its reader

even if he usually finds academic history wearisome and unreadable, for the lecturing style of McFarlane is easy, fluid and may provide an easy introduction to heavier tomes.

Being a perfectionist, McFarlane published little and this publication might not have entirely pleased him if he had lived to see it, for he himself had never polished every inclusion to his own satisfaction, but the quality and breadth of his learning is nevertheless evident. One is made aware through the introduction and the lectures themselves how an historian's views may change, even radically, over the years of his working life and from this and other things comes much good advice both for the professional and the hopeful amateur. He admits the impossibility of writing absolutely true history; he knew the historian's need for imagination with which to recreate the past and most of all the need for that self knowledge which makes the historian aware of his own bias. This is the essential humility of the great historian. "It would be nice for a change to know," he says at one point, "and not merely to air opinions on the past." At another he says: "It is better to restrain one's itch to condemn altogether and be content to record."

There is a mass of information on the life and habits of a mediaeval noble covering the running of a noble household and estate, the lord and his retainers as well as the luxuries on which a rich man or woman spent their money. We may note in passing that an indulgence in building was a sign that the spender has money to spare and we may think instantly of Richard of Gloucester and William Hastings. There are details to be culled on several noble families such as the many titled Lovels of Titmarsh. Francis Lovel could, thanks to three marriages to rich baronial heiresses in five generations of his families, style himself Viscount Lovel, Lord Holland, Deincourt, Burnell and Grey of Rotherfield. The buying of a husband or wife was, of course, a great factor in the development of these families, along with the changing fortunes of primogeniture, the rate of extinction in the male line and the rate of recruitment to the ranks of the nobility from the lower classes as their landed wealth fitted them for the position. Wealth, McFarlane stresses, not chivalry, was the mark of the noble just as it was the mark of a knight. The exclusive Order of the Garter was the reward for military prowess or chivalry, not a royal summons to Parliament which was the distinction of the noble when the king thought he had sufficient land to support the estate. Because land was so important a possession, the means by which it could be left, granted or conveyed is of great relevance to the development of the land owning classes. The common law of the land was literally the law of the land and as such comes in for much scrutiny by McFarlane.

I have already mentioned McFarlane's concern to explode the myths of dead and living historians. The school book adage that the Wars of the Roses decimated the English nobility finds no support and equally he questions the less widely known misconceptions about primogeniture and its effect on the younger son. There is a whole chapter on the education of the nobility and with McFarlane we may safely assume that nobles neither lacked education and Latin grammar or the ability to use their power wisely, deviously and with profit to themselves. They knew how to improve their inheritance and could

be harsh landlords, recognising the value of thrift as well as the need for display just as their kings, Henry V, Edward IV and Richard III did. They were the versatile counsellors of their kings, they were his soldiers, administrators, diplomats, ambassadors and his relatives. McFarlane stresses the mutual aims, wishes and interests of the kings and their nobles seeing the "inherent" struggle between king and baron as yet another historians' myth. As he points out, strong kings had no real trouble with the overmighty baron, it was Richard II, Henry VI, and Edward V who experienced the problems because they were weak, unwise or too young to rule. The lords preferred strong, efficient rulers whom it was to their profit to serve. This unity of king and lords McFarlane sees as the essence of good mediaeval government. Similarly does he stand both against the myth of Lancastrian Constitutionalism and the New Monarchy and its New Men, preferring to stress continuity in methods of administration and continuity in the bureaucratic families manning the royal government offices and the nobles' estate offices.

The basis of all the broader views put forward is detailed research and analysis of many documents of estates and families. The Neville Earl of Warwick muniments have gone but the Beauchamp Earls and the Stafford Dukes of Buckingham have left an abundance, and to these two houses he devotes a chapter tracing their rise and fall, their incomes and their assets. McFarlane assessed that in the 1450s Richard Neville, to whom the Earldom of Warwick had come by two deaths in the Beauchamp family, had a landed income of £3,900. This was less than that of his Beauchamp father-in-law because about £500 a year went to a Despenser dowager (the Countess of Northumberland) and the £550 Lisle inheritance had gone to Beauchamp's daughters by his first wife, heiress of the house of Lisle.

Both the detail and the broader views will interest all members of the Society who read history for pleasure and information. Should you have taken a surfeit of novels this book will provide an excellent antidote.

RICHARD, DUKE OF GLOUCESTER AND

CARLISLE CASTLE

JEAN M. PERKINS

There are many reminders of Richard III scattered throughout England in the form of places with which he was associated. Chief among these is Middleham Castle in Yorkshire, which was his home both as a boy in the household of the Earl of Warwick, and later when he governed the North in the reign of his brother, Edward IV. While Middleham is the most well known memorial to Richard III as Duke of Gloucester, there are others and among these is Carlisle Castle.

Richard, Duke of Gloucester, was granted the Lordship of the Castle of Penrith by Edward IV in 1471 and in 1474 he was made Warden of the West Marches towards Scotland and thus the castle and town of Carlisle came under his jurisdiction. The Wardenship of the West Marches was enhanced the following year when he was made Sheriff (for life) of the County of Cumberland.¹