

Research Notes and Queries

P. W. HAMMOND

BASTARDY AND THE PRINCES

THE FOLLOWING note, commenting on Mr J. O. Petre's contribution to Notes and Queries in the September *Ricardian*, has been received from Mr Stephen Borrett.

Mr Petre says 'Assuming bastardisation necessarily involved forfeiture of titles, etc., we can state that the Duke of York was only Duke of Norfolk until 26th June, and if Howard was the murderer for his own ends, it would have to be before that date.'

The point in question is why must bastardisation necessarily involve loss of title?

Although it is, or was, an acceptable doctrine that an illegitimate child could not inherit in precedence to a legitimate member of the family, it is not a precondition to be legitimate before a title can be granted.

Thus, if we accept that the 'marriage' between Edward IV and Elizabeth Woodville was never valid and that all children born thereof were bastards then this must have been known to Edward himself when he created his son Duke of Norfolk.

The key to the argument is that Richard, Duke of York, was *born* a bastard, the 'bastardisation' of 1483 only confirmed this in legal terms. Therefore for John Howard to correctly assume the title of 'Duke of Norfolk' its previous 'possessor' must have been dead.

On the point that a bastard may hold a title the precedents are almost endless. The first to spring to mind is William the Bastard, Duke of the Normans, later to be King of England and from whom the Plantagenet claim to the throne ultimately derives. There is also the case of Geoffrey Bastard, natural son to Henry II, who was created Archbishop of York.

Taking this just one step further, the case of Henry VIII's daughters, Mary and Elizabeth. Whatever the legality of Henry's marriage to Catherine of Aragon one or the other of his daughters was a bastard and yet *both* succeeded to the throne, meaning the ultimate title, that of sovereign, was held by a bastard. I am thus unable to see the justification for authors commenting that because Edward IV's sons were bastards they were necessarily debarred from their rightful titles.

This whole question is obviously a complicated one. The point concerning the illegitimacy of Elizabeth and Mary was made by Anne Sutton in Richard III's Tytyle and Right, etc., *Ricardian*, Vol. 4, No. 57, 1977, p.5. That of the invalidation of a title of honour by bastardy could perhaps be explained by arguing that it was the discovery of bastardy subsequent to the grant which did this. The intentions or knowledge of Edward IV when making the grant may or may not be relevant.

THE METCALFS OF NAPPA HALL

Mrs Pauline Routh has sent the following interesting note on the arms and home of the Metcalfs of Nappa, amplifying Mr. Greensmith's article in the September *Ricardian*.

The coat of arms of James Metcalf, argent three calves passant sable, along with those of Richard, third Baron Scrope of Bolton, azure a bend or (Scrope) quartering argent a saltire engrailed gules (Tiptoft), impaling gules a saltire argent (Neville), (he married Margaret, daughter of Ralph Neville, 1st Earl of Westmorland by Joan Beaufort), both survivors of Agincourt, still survive in medieval glass now preserved in the porch of the Scrope Chapel (Roman Catholic) at Ulshaw Bridge in Wensleydale. This glass was originally in the east window of Aysgarth Church, but when the church was extensively restored in 1866 it was removed, and replicas were made which were put, inexplicably, in a clerestory window. The Yorkshire Post of 16th December, 1974 carried an item naming Nappa Hall as a grade one listed building, and reported the completion of part of the roof restoration work which had been undertaken with the aid of a grant from the Department of the Environment. Nappa is still owned by Metcalfes, but is occupied by a tenant farmer.

PAULINE ROUTH

THE DATE OF DEATH OF MARQUESS DORSET

In the September *Ricardian* (p.19) in the article The Ladies of the Minories by W. E. Hampton, it was noted that the Marquess of Dorset dined with Edmund de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk, a short time before Suffolk fled abroad. It was known that the first Marquess of Dorset, the son of Elizabeth Woodville, died at about this time, but the exact date was uncertain. It was thus not known if it was he or his son the second Marquess who dined with Suffolk. Mr Hampton, after extensive work on the subject, has sent the following note.

The Inquisitions, including Exchequer transcripts and inquisitions *virtute officii* (i.e. taken by the escheators—as they were empowered to do—without a writ), give dates for the death of the first Marquess of Dorset which range from 9th November, 1500, to 20th November, 1501. It is clear, however, that Dorset's death occurred before 2nd September, 1501, on which date writs of *diem clausit extremum* following his death were sent to the escheators of ten counties and to the mayor and escheator of London. His will was made on 30th August, 1501 (no probate, which perhaps led Dugdale to state that the will was undated), at London. If inquisitions post mortem were taken following these writs, none of the findings appear to have survived. Of three inquisitions *virtute officii* which have survived, that for Bucks., taken 15th October, 1502, gives what must almost certainly be the true date of Dorset's death—1st September, 1501.

So, hardly more than one month after having 'banketted prively,' with Edmund de la Pole, Dorset was dead. (*Letters and Papers, etc.* Ed. J. Gairdner, Vol. 1, London (1861), p.226). It is difficult to avoid the suspicion that the two events were linked and that Dorset's death was 'accelerated.' Sir Thomas Grene (d. 1506) of Norton Davy, Richard Middleton's stepson (see present article, Appendix 2, in this issue) left this dinner party with Suffolk, according to William Hussey (probably the brother of the unfortunate John Hussey; see *John Nesfield* by this writer, *Ricardian*, Vol. IV, no. 58, pp.4-5), although Suffolk is reported to have denied this. In February, 1503, with Sir Robert Throckmorton and others, he was bound in recognizances to Henry VII for 2000 marks, to be true to his allegiance for three years (see *Calendar Close*

Rolls, 1485-1509, Vol. 2, HMSO (1956) no. 209). He is said to have died in the Tower.

Gairdner was therefore correct in assuming that the first marquess dined with Suffolk. The date most commonly accepted for Dorset's death—20th September, 1501—is certainly incorrect.

ANNE BEAUCHAMP, COUNTESS OF WARWICK

The Countess of Warwick is a little known and shadowy figure, knowledge of whose personality and character may be thought to be lost beyond recall. However Mrs Alwyn Allen has sent the following note, based on an unremarked note in Gairdner, which does seem to throw some light on these aspects of Anne Beauchamp.

This lady has been overshadowed by others, notably Margaret Beaufort, Margaret of Anjou and Elizabeth Woodville not to mention her flamboyant husband, 'the Kingmaker.' I believe, too, that she has been greatly underestimated. It should be remembered that she was the daughter and eventual heiress of that illustrious knight, Richard, 5th Earl of Warwick, a man of both military and administrative talents. It is difficult to believe that all Richard's strength of character completely by-passed his daughter. The Countess, for all her tribulations, lived to about the age of 66 years which alone seems to show a remarkably resilient nature and to belie the few references made to her.

James Gairdner, in his *'Life and Reign of Richard III.'* (London, 1898, p.22), says: 'for the weak and friendless, law sometimes exists in vain.' It is interesting, however, that Dr Gairdner, in a fairly long footnote (3) to the same page, tells us something about Lady Anne which is oddly at variance with her being 'weak' even if 'friendless.' Indeed she makes a very spirited and courageous defence of her rights in her petition to Parliament written while in sanctuary at Beaulieu. She does not hesitate to accuse King Edward himself of injustice towards her. She admits to writing, in her own hand, a positive spate of letters to every member of the Royal Family from the King downwards. This latter scriptorial industry (one can imagine the tone of it) by the good lady would have been quite sufficient to account for Edward's initial impatience with her. He probably did not take kindly to women lodging complaints which, in any way, implied criticism of himself.

However, it seems unlikely that, had the Countess any real fear for her safety, she would have pursued so firm and persistent a course. It is more probable that she wished to gain as much publicity as she could to strengthen her case so that her property would be restored to her to dispose of as she wished. As we know, she did not succeed in this, but her actions in trying reveal something of the woman behind the name and titles.

Book Reviews

THE MYSTERY OF THE PRINCES An Investigation into a Supposed Murder, by Audrey Williamson. Alan Sutton, 1978, £5.95. 215pp. 16 plates.

Audrey Williamson has nurtured a hybrid bloom! In this book she bravely seeks to hold the difficult ground between academic and popular readers. The work is not a biography of the princes (there would be scarcely