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**Notes on the Tombs in Tewkesbury Abbey**

by S Simonds  
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HISTORICAL NOTES ON SOME OF THE TOMBS  
IN TEWKESBURY ABBEY.

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*Read at Gloucester, 24th January, 1878.*

IN August, 1876, I had the honour of reading some Notes on the Battle Field of Tewkesbury before the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archæological Society, and on that occasion I alluded to the remarkable historical associations which surround the ancient Abbey, and attach to some of the tombs which contain the mouldering relics of many a member of a noble and princely house, famous in song and history. It may not, therefore, be uninteresting on an occasion like the present, to call attention, for the sake of those who may visit the venerable Abbey, to the memorials of the illustrious dead within its walls, as furnished by the monuments, or preserved in history and tradition:

There is some doubt as to the derivation of the name of Tewkesbury. William of Malmesbury—who wrote as long ago as the time of King Stephen—derives the name from the Greek word, *Theotocos*, because the first monastery that was built there was dedicated to the Virgin Mary. The Rev. J. H. Blunt, in his excellent account of “Tewkesbury Abbey and its Associations,” quotes an old Register or Chronicle of Tewkesbury of about the date 1540-50, which attributes the first Christian Church at Tewkesbury to a missionary monk, named Theoc, who lived in the latter part of the seventh century. Rudder, who wrote about a century ago (1779), describes Tewkesbury as “situated in a fine rich vale near the confines of Worcestershire, and watered by four rivers like the Garden of Eden,” and says that it was the prevailing

opinion that Tewkesbury derived its name from one Theocus, "an ancient hermit who dwelt here about the year 700, and had a chapel on the banks of the Severn." Thus Rudder's account and that of the "Chronicle of Tewkesbury" agree sufficiently; and we may believe that an Anglo-Saxon church was erected here some time early in the eighth century on the site on which now stands Tewkesbury Abbey.

#### SAXON GRAVES.

There is a bloody history belonging to a Saxon grave at Tewkesbury, the authority for which is Bishop Asser in his Life of King Alfred. This Saxon tomb rested over the remains of Beorhtic, King of the West Saxons, who married Eadburgha, the daughter of "Offa, The Terrible," King of Mercia. When Charlemagne was Emperor of the West, Offa corresponded with him on the commercial interests of France and England. He was singularly cruel to the Welsh; and there still exists in some parts of Herefordshire and Wales, remains of "Offa's Dyke," a boundary for centuries between the English and the Welsh, and about which a law was afterwards made between Griffith, King of Wales, and Harold:—"That every Welshman crossing with arms or weapons was liable to lose his right hand."<sup>1</sup> King Offa built a palace at "Tamworth Town," which was the wonder of the age. The venerable Abbey Church of St. Albans stands on the site of a church built by him. Sutton Walls, near Hereford, was once the site of a palace of King Offa, and it was here that his Queen caused Æthelbert, King of East Angles, to be murdered, when he was engaged in the hazardous pursuit of courting her daughter. In expiation of this murder by his Queen, a church was erected by Offa at Hereford, to which the body of Æthelbert was removed. Æthelbert was afterwards considered a martyr and a saint, miracles were performed at his tomb, and in his honour a church of stone, "!" pidea structura," was built, where before was a church of wood. But the daughter of Offa and Quendrida was as terrible as her father. The followers of her husband

<sup>1</sup> Comprehensive Hist. of England, 1862. I. 126.

whom she did not like, died suddenly—and at last her husband drank of a poisoned cup and died in the year A.D. 800. King Beorhtric was buried “in the Chapel of St. Faith, in his Priory of Tewkesbury,” by Hugo, a Mercian Earl, whose tomb was standing in the time of Henry VIII., as it was seen by Leland, on the north side of the nave of the Abbey. There is a tradition that Eadburgha, after her expulsion from England, was seen begging for bread in the streets of Pavia, in Italy.

I shall not allude farther to that period of England’s history—when the land (to use the words of the chronicler, Fabian) “Was vexed with three manners of sorrows: with wars of the Danes, pestilence of men, and murrain of beasts”—than to invite you to remember that it was near Gloucester that the beautiful wife of Eadwy (Elgiva) was seized, on her escape from Ireland, and was foully murdered A.D. 957, and that nearly fifty years later, in the reign of King Ethelred, the sudden massacre of the Danes was perpetrated (1002), which, in 1016, brought a Danish fleet up the Severn; when the Danish warriors burnt Deerhurst Church, two miles below Tewkesbury, and, we may well believe, committed every excess that a thirst for vengeance and rapine could suggest, both at Gloucester and Tewkesbury. Tradition says that Edmund Ironside and Canute the Dane met on the Isle of Olney, close to Gloucester; while my friend, Mr. Butterworth, maintains that they agreed to divide England between them on an “ait,” opposite the Church of Deerhurst.<sup>1</sup>

We know that several of the Saxon Kings held their courts at Gloucester, and it is said that, after his arrangement with Canute, Edmund Ironside came to Gloucester. Here, also, Edward the Confessor frequently resided and kept his court. From Gloucester, Harold, afterwards the last of our Saxon Kings, marched against

<sup>1</sup> The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle says “The Kings came together at Olanegc near Deorhyrste” (*Mon. Hist. Brit.*, 425). Florence of Worcester is more explicit, he says:—“Quorum suggestionibus, licet invitus, ad postremum eum consentiret, recurrentibus internuntiis, et obsidibus ad invicem datis, ambo reges, ad locum qui Deorhyrst nominatur in unum convenerunt;” and again: “Dein uterque rex in insulam quæ Olanegc appellatur, et est in ipsius fluminis (Severn) medio sita, trabariis advehetur.”—*Ibid.*, 593. Ed.

the turbulent Welsh, who had burnt Hereford, and then the law was passed respecting the passing of Offa's dyke.

This takes us to the time of the Norman Conquest, when we learn that William the Conqueror generally passed his Christmas in great splendour at Gloucester, attended by his principal nobility and ecclesiastics. This custom was also continued by William Rufus, and it was, probably, at a court held here that the lordship and honour of Gloucester was granted to Robert Fitz-Hamon on the death of Matilda, wife of the Conqueror, A.D. 1083, and hence the foundation of the Norman part of Tewkesbury Abbey.

#### NORMAN TOMBS. THE FOUNDER'S TOMB.

Robert Fitz-Hamon was a noble Norman who married a niece of William the Conqueror. In 1091, he led an army, commanded by himself and twelve other knights, for the purpose of assisting one Welsh chieftain against another. The Norman knights soon occupied a large portion of South Wales for themselves, and Fitz-Hamon apportioned the conquered country among his knights companions. The names of the knights who accompanied him, with the lands assigned to each, are stated in an ancient MS. still in the British Museum. It is entitled "The Winning of the Lordship of Glamorgan, out of the Welshmen's hands."<sup>1</sup> In this list appears the name of Sir Paine Turberville, whose name and descendants continue at Ewenny, in that neighbourhood, to this day. He received the lordship of Coyty. Powell's *Cambria* states that Robert Fitz-Hamon kept for himself "the castells of Cardyff and Kenfygg, with the three market towns of Cardyff, Kenfygg, and Cowbridge," and that "he dwelt most himself in the said castell or town of Cardyff." There is a sad episode about this Castell of Cardyff. It was to Cardyff Castle—be it remembered—that Robert of Normandy, eldest son of the Conqueror, was committed a prisoner for life by his own brother, Henry I., and it was here that the noble soldier and crusader had his eyes seared and destroyed by a basin of red-hot copper. As this happened A.D. 1106, I fear that Robert Fitz-Hamon must have been the means of executing this detestable order.

<sup>1</sup> Harl. MS. 6108.

As regards Tewkesbury Abbey, the noble Norman nave owes its foundation to Fitz-Hamon, and the Norman arches stand now as they did in the days of the Norman knights. Mr. Blunt gives a copy of a curious engraving of this Norman Earl and his Countess, Sybil, from the "Chronicle of Tewkesbury." He also gives an eloquent description of the consecration of the Abbey A.D. 1123, in the days of Robert, Earl of Gloucester, thirteen years after Fitz-Hamon had been laid in the grave; and how the Bishop and a vast procession of "abbesses" and "nuns in white whimples," the monastic clergy, canons, arch-deacons, and bishops invited the "King of Glory" to come in. Alas, those who read the Welsh Chronicles of those times, and know something of the detestable cruelties enacted by the Norman knights, will think of the means by which the Normans acquired the wealth wherewith to build their churches. I fear that Robert Fitz-Hamon, like Bernard Newmarch, at Brecon, founded Tewkesbury Abbey, for the good of his soul, after a lifetime of savage violence, murder, and plunder. Still, such were the customs and manners of the times in which he lived, and, without doubt, "a gallant knight was he." His body was originally buried in the Chapter House, but was removed to the right hand of the high altar in the choir, and what was then left of the skeleton was placed underneath what is now called the Founder's Chapel. The tombs of three of his contemporaries are worth mentioning, men he must have known and associated with.

William Rufus, the Red King, gave the lordship of Gloucester to Fitz-Hamon. After his untimely death in the New Forest, he was buried in Winchester Cathedral, and over his remains was erected a coped tomb of grey marble. There is a tradition that King Stephen's brother, the once great and powerful prelate, Henry de Blois, took up the hurriedly-buried body of the Red King and shrouded it in a mantle of Cloth of Gold. Also another tradition said that his bones were placed in the chest which contains those of Canute, and his wife, Emma of Normandy. However, when in 1838 the coped tomb was removed and opened, underneath was found an entire skeleton, and with that skeleton, the Verger

assured me, were found "remains of golden threads" and "a rusty arrow head." In the choir of Gloucester Cathedral, too, is a figure carved in Irish oak of Robert, Duke of Normandy, the victim of a brother's cruelty at Cardiff Castle. About the beginning of this century the body of Sir Payne Turberville and that of his wife were discovered in the chancel of Coity Church, From the inscription we learn that this Norman knight, the contemporary of Fitz-Hamon, "had to remain in purgatory forty days".<sup>1</sup>

#### ROBERT FITZ-ROY, EARL OF GLOUCESTER.

Fitz-Hamon had no son by his wife, Sybil, but his eldest daughter, Mabel, married a natural son of Henry I., who was created first "Erle of Gloucester." This was that celebrated Earl of Gloucester who so powerfully contested the claims of his half-sister, Matilda, to the throne of England, against King Stephen. It was he who took Stephen prisoner in 1141, when he was besieging Lincoln. It was he who persuaded the proud Bishop of Winchester, to whom we have just alluded, to desert his own brother, Stephen, and acknowledge the pretensions of Matilda; and who, later on, when another shuffle took place, was handed over to Maud, Stephen's queen, who imprisoned him in the castle of Rochester. He was a mighty agent through all those civil wars at a time when all England "wore a time of utter desolation." He was the guardian of Prince Henry, afterwards Henry II., for three years in the Castle of Bristol, and at Bristol he was buried, A.D. 1147. He had much to do with the building—and was present at the consecration—of Tewkesbury Abbey, though he was not buried there.

#### THE GRAVES OF THE DE CLARES.

The Earls of Gloucester and Lords of Tewkesbury who succeeded Robert Fitz-Roy were none of them buried at Tewkesbury until the times of the illustrious family of De Clare, when, the line of male succession failing, the earldom descended by the female side. The name of De Clare is associated in our memories with that of the celebrated Richard de Clare, the Strongbow of history, the conqueror of Ireland for Henry II. Among the sepulchral

<sup>1</sup> Ree's South Wales, Beauties of England and Wales, p. 696.

effigies amidst the ruins of Tintern, on the banks of the silver Wye, is still shown a sadly disfigured monumental effigy of a knight in a coat of mail, said to be commemorative of Richard Strongbow. But Strongbow was buried in Gloucester Cathedral. The first Tewkesbury De Clare was the son of that Richard de Clare whose name appears at the head of the signatures to Magna Charta. The days of the second Henry had passed away, and all the sad and humiliating history of Thomas à Becket, rebellious children, and a dying broken-hearted king. Rosamond Clifford had been laid in the tomb in the "little nunnery of Godestow, in the rich meadows of Evenlode, near unto Oxford;" the lion-hearted Richard had been cut off in the full strength and pride of manhood, and laid at the feet of his father in the Abbey of Fontevault. John Lackland had murdered his nephew at Rouen, and disgraced the English throne by truckling to pompous ecclesiastical pretensions, and by endeavouring to extinguish the liberties of his own subjects, when the name of De Clare, at the head of the Great Charter—the foundation of the liberty of free England—warms our hearts and makes our pulses beat with a sense of freedom after perusing the history of the degradation of this country and its Bishops, when submitting to the interdict of Pope Innocent III. and the tyranny of King John. We learn, too, that the name of the first Tewkesbury de Clare, Gilbert, appears not far below that of his father on the Great Charter. The body of this lord of Tewkesbury was buried in the year 1230 before the high altar in the choir of Tewkesbury Abbey, and during the recent repairs the stone coffin in which he was laid, and a portion of the skeleton were found where he was buried.

#### THE "RED EARL."

The "Red Earl" was a man of great note in his day, and seems to have been of a quarrelsome and changeable disposition. He became the great friend of Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, in his youth, and was knighted by him at Lewes (1264), where King Henry III. and Prince Edward were both taken prisoners by the confederate Barons. De Clare, however, soon

changed sides, and we find him, with Roger Mortimer, assisting Prince Edward to escape from the castle at Hereford when the Prince fled for life and liberty from Widemarsh at the waving of Mortimer's banner on the summit of Dinmore Hill. De Clare fought against his old friend at the battle of Evesham, where "160 knights and great numbers of gentlemen, and about 4000 common men" of De Montfort's and the Barons' party were left dead upon the field. He was not faithful to his wife, Alice of Angouleme, for after they had been married more than twenty years he divorced her (1285) and married the Princess Joan d'Acre, daughter of Edward I. (1289.) It was now that he received from King Edward the gift of the ancient Chase of Malvern, and soon after had a dispute with the Bishop of Hereford respecting the boundary. "The Red Earl's Dyke" may be traced to this day along the crest of the Malverns for several miles, and is the relic of a great trench which he had dug to mark the extent of his right of chase in the direction of Ledbury and Hereford. He died in 1295 at Monmouth and was buried in Tewkesbury Abbey at the time his ambitious father-in-law, Edward I., by his ignominious treatment of the Scotch and their king, was arousing the patriotism of Wallace, and afterwards of Robert Bruce, which was to end on the Borders, at Burgh-upon-the-sands, in the death of himself, and at Bannockburn in the extinction of the family of De Clare.

#### THE LAST OF THE DE CLARES.

The last of the De Clares was the son of the "Red Earl" and the Princess Joan. He was born at Tewkesbury (1291). He was only three and twenty when he was slain at the battle of Bannockburn. Scott alludes to him in the "Lord of the Isles" as a principal leader in the great army of England. Indeed, the opening attack of Bannockburn rings to the words—

"Bid Gloster's Earl the fight begin."

"Earl Gilbert waved his truncheon high,  
Just as the Northern ranks arose,  
Signal for England's archery  
To halt and bend their bows."—*Canto vi., St. xxii.*

And later on we read of that fearful *melée* where—

“ There Gloster plied the bloody sword ;  
 And Berkley, Grey, and Hereford,  
 Unflinching foot against foot was set,  
 Unceasing blow by blow was met.  
 The groans of those who fell  
 Were drown'd amid the shriller clang  
 That from the blades and harness rang,  
 And in the battle-yell.”—*St. xxvi*

It was in such a scene as this the last of the De Clares died, as is recorded, “ fighting valiantly.” The Scots would have saved him, but as he wore no armorial bearings he was killed in the throng. His body was brought to Tewkesbury Abbey, and his grave, and that of Maud de Burgh, his widow, were uncovered during the recent restoration of the choir. I have to thank my friend, Mr. Allard, of Tewkesbury, for noting the particulars. The skeleton was that of a powerful man ; and the bodies lay in the space between the Beauchamp Chapel and the kneeling figure of Baron Despencer.

#### TOMBS OF THE DESPENCERS.

These graves take us to those troublous times of Edward II. and his favourites. On Blacklow Hill, near Warwick, is a cross which commemorates the execution, by “ barons as lawless as himself,” of

“ Piers Gaveston, Earl of Cornwall”  
 The minion of a pitiful king ;  
 In life and death  
 A memorable instance of misrule.”

Somewhere in Tewkesbury Abbey lie the mutilated remains of Edward's second favourite, Hugh Despencer, Earl of Gloucester. The “ Chronicle of Tewkesbury ” records that they were gathered somehow from the places where they were distributed, and buried in the Abbey ; while Leland says that they were deposited near the lavatory. This history reminds us of those episodes when the “ gentle Mortimer ” and the “ She-Wolf of France ” butchered the Despenchers, father and son, the one at Bristol and the other at Hereford, with revolting barbarity. The trunk of the son was brought to Tewkesbury ; Hugh Despencer, the elder, was devoured by dogs. This happened in 1326. On a dark night

towards the end of September, 1327, the shrieks of a tortured king rang through the walls of Berkeley Castle, and the next day some of the citizens of Gloucester and Bristol went to see the body of Edward of Caernarvon. His body and monument lie in the Cathedral of Gloucester, and Dr. Chevers, who has paid much attention to such subjects, assures me that he is convinced the face of the effigy of Edward II., is carved from a cast taken after death.

HUGH, BARON DESPENCER, & EDWARD, BARON  
DESPENCER.

The magnificent monument in the chancel on the north side is that of the son of Hugh Despencer, the younger, who was hung, drawn, and quartered at Hereford. Hugh, Baron Despencer, lies by the side of his wife, Eleanor de Clare. She married, after his death, Guy de Brian, Lord of Welwyn; but, dying in 1359, she was buried by the side of her first husband, Despencer.

For the account of the later Despenchers I refer my readers to Mr. Blunt's "Tewkesbury Abbey and its Associations." The kneeling figure in armour on the roof of Trinity Chapel on the north side of the Chancel, is that of Edmund Despencer, who died at Cardiff Castle, 1375. He was a man of mark and a Knight of the Garter. The last of the Despenchers of the male line died A.D. 1414, and his lands, &c., went to his sister, Isabel, Countess of Warwick, the foundress of the Beauchamp chantry. It appears, however, that some relics of this once powerful family still linger among our aristocracy. Leland speaks of a "faire maner place of timber and stone" in a "Theokesbyri parke, where the lord Edward Spenser lay and late my lady Mary," and this is evidently the Tewkesbury Park now the residence of Mr. Sergeaunt, and not the Holme where the "erles of Gloucester's house" was. From this Lord Edward Spenser are descended the Countess of Enniskillen and Lady Falmouth.<sup>1</sup>

MONUMENT OF GUY DE BRIAN.

North of the splendid double monument of Lord and Lady

<sup>1</sup> The Viscountess Falmouth and Baroness Le Spencer still holds the Castle and Manor of Mereworth, Co. Kent, anciently held by her ancestors, the Despenchers, with Tunbridge Castle of the Honour of Gloucester.

Despenser is the Margaret Chapel, and underneath a stone screen is the monument of Guy de Brian, who does not appear, however, to have been buried there. His history takes us to other scenes than the miserable civil wars of the days of Edward II., and we hear the trumpets sounding on the fields of Crecy and Poitiers (1346 and 1356). Guy de Brian was standard-bearer to Edward III., and heard the shout "Advance Banners, in the name of God and St. George," which led the banner of St. George against the Oriflamme of France. There is, or was, within the last few years, an old windmill on the field of Crecy, from which tradition says King Edward watched the battle and the terrific charges of the Black Prince with the chivalry of England.

We may imagine the anxiety from time to time with which he watched his Standard. It is recorded, too, that Guy de Brian was a Knight of the Garter, to which he was elected in 1369, and was thus introduced into that roll of Princes, gallant soldiers, and statesmen who have since been entitled to use the proud motto "*Honi soit qui mal y pense*," and who were, on the first grand meeting of the Knights of the Garter at Windsor, "clothed in gowns of russet, powdered with garters blue, wearing the like garters also on their right legs, and mantles of blue with scutcheons of St. George;" and the first knight of which was Edward the Black Prince, the hero of Crecy, afterwards the victor of Poitiers.

#### THE GRAVES OF THE BEAUCHAMPS.

It had become the practice for great people to build Chantry Chapels where chantry priests could offer up daily masses for the welfare of the King, and for souls of their deceased relations or ancestors, and for all Christian souls: and thus the celebrated, so called, Warwick Chapel, in Tewkesbury Abbey, was erected by Isabel Despenser in 1422, to the memory of her first husband, Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Abergavenny and Worcester.

Now this chapel should certainly be called the Beauchamp Chapel, for it is constantly being merged in Warwick histories and mistaken for a monument either of the family of Isabella's

second husband or of that of the "King Maker." And yet this beautiful chapel was erected by his disconsolate widow to Richard Beauchamp, a right good knight and true, who fought at Agincourt, and for his gallantry was created Earl of Worcester. He was killed at the siege of Meaux, and was buried at Tewkesbury in 1421.

When Isabel had beheld the Beauchamp Chapel finished and dedicated, she married, secondly, a cousin of her first husband, another Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, K.G., and thus she became Countess of Warwick. The early days of this noble Earl and gallant Knight take us to the date 1400, and the long struggles between Owen Glendower and Henry IV., when, in one of the earlier engagements, the Earl of Warwick took, in open battle, the standard of Owen Glendower. He was present, also, at the battle of Shrewsbury, and afterwards fought at Agincourt and other French wars of Henry V., which King visited him at Warwick Castle. It was this Earl of Warwick who founded a chantry chapel at Guy's Cliff, and made John Rous, the antiquary, his chantry priest. On the death of Henry V. (1422) he, with Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester, was entrusted with the care of the person and education of Henry VI. In 1437 he was made Regent of France, and died after a residence of two years at Rouen Castle. His body was laid in the celebrated Beauchamp Chapel at Warwick, underneath the well known and magnificent tomb. Isabel, his wife, Countess of Warwick, returned from France with his dead body, accompanied by her son Henry. She died in the same year (1435), and was buried in Tewkesbury Abbey, close to the monument erected to her first husband in the Beauchamp Chapel, and over her body was placed a magnificent tomb, but no remains of this monument are left. In 1875 her grave was found covered with a stone, on the under side of which was "Mercy, Lord Jesu." The body had been embalmed and was wrapped in a linen shroud: her auburn hair still adhered to the skull, and a lock of it may be seen in a brooch at Tewkesbury. Isabel, Countess of Warwick, died in 1435, but "the great commanding Warwick," "the setter up and plucker down of Kings," "the greatest and the last of

the old Norman chivalry, kinglier in pride, in state, in possessions, and in renown than the king himself," did not become Earl of Warwick until 1449, nor until after the death of the Duke of Warwick (son of Richard Beauchamp) and his young daughter Anne. The King-maker then succeeded in right of his wife.

The Duke of Warwick and "King of the Isle of Wight," as he was created by Henry VI., was also buried in Tewkesbury Abbey.

#### GRAVES OF THE BATTLE OF TEWKESBURY.

The graves of Tewkesbury Battle Field remind us of the "Wars of the Roses," which lasted for nearly thirty years, reckoning from the battle of St. Albans to that of Bosworth Field, and in which wars almost the whole of the ancient nobility of England were annihilated. Edward IV. had quarrelled with the "King-maker," and been obliged to fly to Holland; while his own brother, the Duke of Clarence, had married Isabella, one of Warwick's daughters, and the Prince of Wales, young Edward, married the other, Anne of Warwick. Then came the strange shuffle when the "King-maker" released Henry VI. from the Tower, and proclaimed him King again (1470); Edward's return from the continent, and the battle of Barnet (1471), which ended in the defeat and death of Warwick. A few days later was fought the "decisive and dreadful battle of Tewkesbury" (4th May, 1471), and it is interesting to trace the principal scenes of action from the "luckless place" Queen Margaret chose, to the "Bloody Meadow"; and the hill where Somerset retreated, called Lord Wenlock "traitor," and "with his axe stroke the brains out of his head." Local memorials and tradition help us somewhat, but the resting places of many of the illustrious dead are very obscure.

I think the Rev. E. Dowdeswell has given us good grounds for believing that Queen Margaret sheltered for a night or two in the "Queen's Room," at Paine's House, near Bushley Church (Bushley Almanack, 1877); while the rude engravings mentioned by Mr. Blunt as being still in the Public Library of Ghent, and picturing the battle field and the execution of the Barons, support the old traditions of Tewkesbury, viz.: that Prince Edward was stabbed

to death in a house near Tewkesbury Cross, which was occupied by King Edward, and from which he witnessed the beheading of Somerset and the other prisoners. Several of the fugitives were killed in the churchyard, and some in the Abbey itself: but Edward IV. yielded to the entreaties of Abbot Stensham bearing the mass, and stopped the slaughter in the church, where those that were spared took refuge from the Saturday night until the Monday, when they were dragged forth to a court-martial, presided over by the Duke of Gloucester, and afterwards beheaded.

The corpse of Edward, Prince of Wales, is said to have been buried in the choir, underneath a brass, which has been removed for a time; but I cannot learn that any remains of a skeleton were found underneath this brass, and one old writer—I think, Speed—says he was buried with the common men. We can hardly believe, however, that Edward IV. would have allowed this. The burial places of Somerset and Wenlock are both assigned by tradition, but both are equally doubtful. The armour of the knight above the supposed tomb of Wenlock belongs, Sir William Guise informs me, to the 13th century. With regard to the burial place of those slain in battle, it appears to have been near the old Turnpike site, on the right hand side of the road to the Ferry at the Lower Lode, for, during some sewerage excavations, a pit was discovered filled with human bones.

#### THE GRAVES OF THE DUKE AND DUCHESS OF CLARENCE.

In April, 1473, Sir John Paston wrote that “the world seemeth queasy”<sup>1</sup> about the disputes between the brothers Clarence and Gloucester, for Gloucester had married Anne, the daughter of the King-maker and widow of Prince Edward, and Clarence swore that “he would not part the livelihood with him.” The King settled the quarrel for a time, and Clarence and Isabella kept Tewkesbury, when, in 1477, there arose another of those dark tragedies in which the house of York appears to have been so much involved.

<sup>1</sup> QUEASY: Unsettled (Paston Letters, ii., 127.

In 1477, Isabella, the daughter of the King-maker and wife of Clarence, died, after an illness of two or three months, and one of her attendants was condemned and executed for poisoning her. She was buried at Tewkesbury, and immediately after her death Clarence proposed to take to wife the great heiress, Mary of Burgundy, and thus excited the jealousy of his brother Edward. Then comes the monstrous accusation, prosecuted by the King in person, that Clarence had sought resource to "damnable magic," and dealt with conjurors and necromancers, to dethrone the King and disinherit his children. We know the rest. He was found guilty, and received sentence of death on the 7th February, 1477; while Shakespeare has immortalized the way in which that sentence was carried out. That the great poet believed that Clarence had a hand in the death of Prince Edward at Tewkesbury there can be no doubt, as exhibited in that passage where, in the dream of "dismal terror," Clarence passes in the "tempest of his soul"—

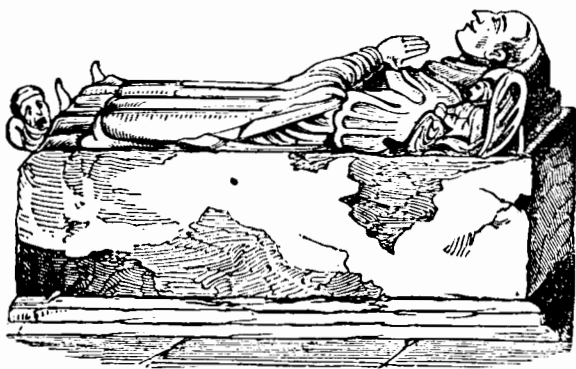
"With that grim ferry-man which poets write of,  
Unto the kingdom of perpetual night."

"The first that there did greet my stranger soul,  
Was my great father-in-law, renowned Warwick,  
Who cried aloud,—*What scourge for perjury  
Can this dark monarchy afford false Clarence?*  
And so he vanished. Then came wandering by  
A shadow like an angel, with bright hair  
Dabbled in blood; and he shrieked out aloud,—  
*Clarence is come,—false, fleeing, perjured Clarence—  
That stabb'd me in the field by Tewkesbury.*"—*Rich. III., Sc. 4.*

After his murder in the tower, the body of Clarence is said to have been laid by the side of his wife in the vault behind the chancel; but their bones appear to have been removed more than once, and some uncertainty must always hang over the authenticity of the mouldering relics we saw lately in the stone coffin filled with water in the Clarence vault, and attributed to this ill-fated scion of the house of York.

Such is a brief sketch of the days and doings of some of the illustrious dead, whose dust yet mingles beneath the floors of Tewkesbury Abbey. Besides those mentioned are the graves of

numerous ecclesiastics, of which none are worth recording, save, perhaps, that of Abbot Alan, who corresponded with Henry II., and died in the days of King John (1202), and that of Abbot Cheltenham, who was Abbot of Tewkesbury in the days of Edward IV., lived through the troublous times of Richard III., saw the crushing out of the Barons' power, and the changes produced by Bosworth field, and lived on to the days of Henry VIII. (1481 to 1509). The "Skeleton Monk," said to be the tomb of the last Abbot of Tewkesbury is, I am informed, and as suggested by Mr. Blunt, a tomb of a far earlier date; and the wasted form on the tomb is not in the least applicable as a monument of one who, amidst the ruins of the Reformation, took such excellent good care of himself, as did the last Abbot of Tewkesbury, Abbot Wakeman.



*Tomb of William Canynge, in Church of St. Mary Redcliffe, Bristol.*