

HISTORICAL REMARKS

ON THE

DEATH OF RICHARD THE SECOND.

IT is generally known, that much obscurity hangs over the common stories relative to the death of Richard the Second, and that Henry the Fourth was greatly annoyed by reports of the captive king having escaped to Scotland ; reports which he, of course, invariably treated as false, and which all our modern historians, both of England and of Scotland, have been disposed to consider fabulous ; some contenting themselves with a brief notice, that an impostor appeared under the name of Richard the Second, and others passing over the circumstance altogether.

In investigating this obscure part of our history, it was lately my fortune to discover some very interesting evidence, which induced me to believe that there was much more truth in these reports than I was at first disposed to admit. This led to an examination of the whole proofs relative to Richard's disappearance, and alleged death in England, and the

result was, a strong conviction that the king actually did make his escape from Pontefract castle ; that he succeeded in conveying himself to Scotland, where he was discovered, detained, and supported, by Robert the Third and the Duke of Albany ; and that he actually died in that country, long after his reputed murder in England. I am well aware that this is a startling proposition, too broadly in the face of long-established opinion to be admitted upon any evidence inferior almost to demonstration. It is quite possible, also, that there may exist in the manuscript treasures of the public libraries of England, or of France, absolute proof that Richard was murdered, or that he died in prison ; and one great object of these observations will be attained, if they have the effect of directing the attention of the learned to the farther investigation of a subject still very obscure. In the meantime, I trust I shall succeed in showing, that my hypothesis, as to Richard's escape, for it pretends to no higher name, is supported by a body of direct as well as of negative evidence, superior to that which could be adduced upon many other historical facts, the truth of which has not been questioned by the most fastidious and sceptical writers.

It is stated by Bower, or Bow-makar, the continuator of Fordun, and one of the most ancient and authentic of our early historians, that Richard the Second found means to escape from Pontefract castle ; that he succeeded in conveying himself to the Scottish isles, and, travelling in disguise through those remote parts, was accidentally recognised and discovered,

when sitting in the kitchen of Donald Lord of the Isles, by a jester who had been educated at the court of the king in his better days. The same historian proceeds to say, that Donald of the Isles sent him, under the charge of Lord Montgomery, to Robert the Third, with whom, as long as the Scottish monarch lived, he was supported as became his rank; and that, after the death of this king, the royal fugitive was delivered to the Duke of Albany, then governor of Scotland, by whom he was honourably treated; and he concludes this remarkable sentence, which I have given nearly in his own words, by affirming, that Richard at length died in the castle of Stirling, and was buried in the church of the preaching friars, on the north side of the altar.¹

In another part of his history, the same writer, in describing the devastations committed by Richard in his expedition into Scotland, alludes in equally posi-

¹ Fordun a Goodal, vol. ii p. 427. "Isto modo rex Ricardus fuit regno privatus et perpetuis carceribus, cito deficiendus deputatus; sed subtiliter abinde ereptus, et ad insulas Scotiæ transvectus, et in coquina Dovenaldi domini Insularum, a quodam fatuo qui in curia Regis Ricardi dum floreret, educatus fuerat cognitus et repertus, et a dicto domino Insularum ad Regem Scotiæ Robertum Tertium per Dominum de Monte-Gomorry transmissus, cum quo dum Rex Scotiæ vixerat reverenter, ut decuit, procuratus, et post mortem regis Duci Albanici gubernatori Scotiæ presentatus; cum quo regifice quoad statum honoratus, tandem in castro de Strivelyn mortuus, et in ecclesia fratrum ejusdem ad aquilonare altaris cornu tumulatus."—"Hic Ricardus fuit filius Edwardi principis Walliæ, filii Eduardi Windesor, qui rexit annis viginti duobus; mortuus sine liberis."

tive terms, and almost in the same words, to his subsequent escape into that country, and his being discovered by Donald of the Isles;¹ again, in the passage in which he mentions the death of Robert the Third, the same historian remarks, that about this time many persons fled out of England from the face of Henry the Fourth, and came to King Richard in Scotland; amongst whom were Henry Percy, the elder, with his grandson, Henry Percy, the younger, who had come a little before this, and being of the same age with James the First, had been brought up with him in the castle of St Andrews. At the same time, he continues, there came also the Lord Bardolph, two Welsh prelates, the Bishops of St Asaph and of Bangor, the Abbot of Welbeck, and other honourable persons; but, adds he, King Richard would in no wise be persuaded, either by the governor, or by any other persons, to have a private interview with the Earl of Northumberland;²

¹ Fordun a Goodal, vol. ii. 402. “Unde ad id deventum est, ut ipse idem Rex Ricardus II., qui olim in florenti majestate sua, stipatus, turnis militum, et multitudine clientum, Salomoni magno in expensis æquiparabatur, tandem carceres evadens, insulas Scotiæ petens, cognitus est a quodam fatuo, qui in sua curia ante hoc educatus fuerat, et inventus in culina, tanquam vilis elixa, Dovenaldi domini Insularum.”

² Fordun a Goodal, vol. ii. p. 441. “His diebus fugerunt multi de Anglia a facie regis Henrici IV., et in Scotiam ad regem Ricardum venerunt. Venit enim Henricus Percy, senior, cum nepote suo Henrico juniore qui paulo ante venerat et cum principe nostro Jacobo I. coævus in Castro Sancti Andreæ extiterat. Venitque tunc temporis, dominus de Bardolf, cum diversis honestis personis, et

