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HISTORICAL NOTICES OF THE CRADLE OF HENRY V.

By WILLIAM WATKINS OLD, Esq.,

Fellow of the Royal Historical Society.

THE venerable relic which is the subject of this paper is a wooden cot (or cradle, as it has been called) of unquestionable antiquity, traditionally said to have been the cradle of the hero of Agincourt, the glory of Monmouth, Henry V.

Lambarde, in his "Topographical Dictionary," speaking of the destruction of Monmouth Castle in the thirteenth century, writes: "Thus the glorie of Monmouth had cleane perished, ne had it pleased God longe after in that place to give life to the noble King Hen. V." ("Alphabetical Description of the Chief Places in England and Wales," by William Lambarde, first published in 1730). It may befit me, therefore, as an inhabitant of this town, to use my endeavour to preserve from perishing the memory of an object which tradition has associated with him who has given undying fame to my place of residence, and which for a period of many years has been lost to us. Tradition, of course, is not evidence. But where direct testimony is not to be obtained, and in the absence of authoritative contradiction, it must be accepted as of a certain weight and worth. It will generally be found to be built upon a substratum of fact, and although, in process of time, the groundwork is almost invariably distorted, it is rarely destroyed. Should there be nothing, then, but tradition to link this rare example of mediæval furniture with the House of Plantagenet and the town of Monmouth, it would not, I opine, be beneath the notice of those whose professed aim is to classify the stores of the past and to preserve everything

connected with those of our forefathers whose history is an honour to our land.

I may be allowed to observe, in the first place, that specimens of beds and cradles prior to the sixteenth century are very rare; and I believe the cot in question is a unique example of such an object claiming to belong to the fourteenth century. This is the more extraordinary, inasmuch as such articles of domestic use do not wear out very quickly, being usually made of hard wood, unexposed to weather or violence; and in the Middle Ages they were deemed of such value as to be often specially mentioned in the wills of people of quality. No trace exists of "my new bed of red velvet embroidered with ostrich feathers of silver, and heads of leopards of gold, with boughs and leaves issuing out of their mouths," which the mother of Richard II. left to her "dear son the king." The tattered remains of the old bed, called the bed of Henry V., which Coxe mentions in his history of Monmouthshire as having been long exhibited at the mansion of Courtfield, have vanished and left "not a rack behind." What has become of the "little cradille of tre in a frame coueryd and painted with fyne golde and devises, of a yerd and a quarter longe, and in bred xxij inches," which is ordered in a manuscript of "Ceremonies and Services in Court," *temp.* Henry VII.? or, still more, of the "gret cradille of estat, contenyng in length v foot and half, in bred ij foot and a half, coueryd in clothe of gold," of the same order-book? ("Antiquarian Repertory," vol. i., p. 336.) Rich coverlids were provided for the above; as also we find "a pane and a head shete for ye cradell of the same sute, both furred with mynever," in an inventory of Reginald de la Pole, in the fifteenth century (Turner's "Domestic Architecture in England, from Rich. II. to Hen. VIII.," 1859, vol. iii., p. 106). But of all such things, however treasured in their day, not a vestige has come down to us, except the venerable claimant which is the subject of this essay.

A false reputation for antiquity is so common that it makes one regard every claim with distrust. I am told that the

"fourteenth-century funeral pall," lent by the Fishmongers' Company to the Exhibition of Art Needlework in 1873, which was stated to have been used at the obsequies of Sir William Walworth in the time of Richard II., has since been proved, by the armorial bearings on it, to be of at least two centuries later date. The history of Edward's Tower in Carnarvon Castle is a parallel instance which will occur to every archæologist. The relic of which I am treating may, in like manner, be discovered by some future iconoclast to be an impostor; but, meanwhile, I will bring forward and record such claims as it has, and will adduce no opinion without producing my authority for the same.

The so-called *cradle* of Henry V., of which I submit a representation, is different in form from any of the antique

cradles I have met with, delineated in illuminated MSS. It is, in fact, a cot, and not a cradle. It belongs rather to the *lecti pensiles* mentioned by Joannes Alstorphius in his "Dissertatio Philologia de Lectis Veterum," which cradle-beds are said by Mercurialis, in his work, "De Arte Gymnastica," to have been invented by the Bithynian physician, Asclepiades ("De lecti pensilis, cunarum, ac navis gestationem facultatibus. Qui primo lectulos pensiles excogitavit Asclepiades.")

—*Mercuriali De Arte Gymnastica*). Ducange, in his Glossary, speaks of cradles suspended by cords, which would more resemble the cot under consideration. But there is one thing in common with them all—the peculiarity of an arrangement for a crossed band to prevent the child from tumbling out. This may be noticed in the twelfth-century bas-relief from the cathedral of Chartres, in Willemin's "*Monuments Français Inédits*" (planche 74, meubles du xi^{ème} siècle), "*Berceau garni de ses sangles croisées, précaution usitée encore dans quelques contrées et qui avait pour but d'empêcher l'enfant de tomber ;*" and again in the fifteenth-century cradle, from a manuscript in the Bibliothèque du Roi (No. 6896), "*Le petit bers ou berceau garni de ses bandelettes pour préserver l'enfant des dangers d'une chute.*"

In my drawing of the cradle of Henry V., the openings for the lacing of the band appear, three on each side, while at the base are small holes through which a cord passes across the bottom to support the mattress.

The measurement has been given with slight variations in sundry works. According to my own, its size runs :

Length, 38 inches.

Width at head, $19\frac{1}{2}$ inches ; at foot, $17\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

Depth, 17 inches.

Height of supports, including foot, 36 inches.

The wood is in places worm-eaten, and it is become rickety. One of the carved supports is very much decayed. Though all beauty has disappeared from what was originally a handsome and solid piece of furniture, traces of gilding and red paint can still be detected here and there, on close examination, and the carving of the spandrels and the birds perched on the supports is remarkably bold and characteristic. I am sorry to say some pieces of carved wood of anachronistic style have been inserted, of late years, in the corners ; while the old plain rail beneath has been replaced by similar carved work. This does not appear in Mr Shaw's excellent engraving of the cradle, in his great work on mediæval furniture

(H. Shaw & Meyrick's "Specimens of Ancient Furniture," fol. 1836); and the difference will at once be observed on comparing my drawing with any of the old engravings; but I have authority to state that these deplorable additions were made before it came into the possession of the father of the Rev. George Weare Braikenridge, the present owner. The entire chattel exhibits an appearance of archaic simplicity; and it has a far more ancient aspect than the cradle of James I., preserved at Alloa Park, the seat of the Earl of Mar, a drawing of which appears in Nichol's "Progresses." In the fine museum of its present owner, where the cradle occupies a place of honour, every care is taken of this precious relic; and should such care continue and the ravages of the Anobium beetle be stopped, as they might easily be, there is no reason why this antiquity might not continue, for many a century to come, a unique example of mediæval cabinet-work, and a memento of one of the greatest and worthiest of our kings. The cradle could not be in better hands than those of Mr Braikenridge, a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, whose refined taste and antiquarian proclivities render him the worthy guardian of the many treasures of mediæval art which his museum contains.

I fancy it is Sir Thomas Browne in his "Garden of Cyrus," who remarks that nothing is ever so lost that diligent research cannot bring it to light; and he goes on to surmise that it would not be impossible to recover the ground-plan of the tower of Babel, or the song of the Sirens, or the language of Paradise! Without striving after anything so recondite, I must confess I have more than once almost despaired of ever coming upon the track of the cradle of Henry V., concerning which I read twenty years ago in topographical works relating to the county of Monmouth, and of which I was then assured, by local antiquaries, that not a trace was to be found. I should be almost ashamed to admit how shortsighted and futile my endeavours have been, did I not know that others far more influential and intelligent than myself have also sought the same object, and sought in vain.

For upwards of seventy years the cradle had been missing ; and although once during that period a description, by an eye-witness, and an engraving of it was published, it does not seem to have caught the attention of local antiquaries ; and when, last summer, I determined to make a fresh effort to obtain intelligence respecting the missing chattel, the point from which I had to start was the commencement of the present century.

In the year 1804, Mr Charles Heath of Monmouth published his " Historical and Descriptive Account of the Ancient and Present State of the Town of Monmouth ; including a variety of particulars deserving the stranger's notice relating to the Borough and its neighbourhood, collected from original papers and unquestionable authorities, the whole never before published." In this book is an account of " the cradle in which King Henry the Fifth was nursed when an infant." And the following description being written by a person who had himself seen the cradle, I felt I had some solid ground to go upon, though I had been more than once assured that the very fact of its existence was mythical :

" This highly curious and interesting relique," Mr Heath proceeds, " was the property of the Rev. Thomas Ball, vicar of Newland, in Gloucestershire ; but at the time of my visit to inspect it a few years ago, such was the estimation in which it was then held, that it was consigned to a garret of an untenanted house, as an associate of the most useless lumber.

" According to the account which Mr Ball gave of its descent, it appears ' that one of his ancestors had been employed as a rocker to the prince—that it became an honorary present to him, in consequence of his situation in the royal household—and had continued as an heirloom in the family down to its then possessor.'

" The body of the cradle," writes Mr Heath, " which is wider at one end than the other, is suspended by staples, and a ring at each end, from two pillars joined by framework ; a carved bird perches at the top of each, with foliage at the feet ; it has six long holes at the upper edge for the rockers (three on each side), and twelve round holes at the bottom for cordage to pass through, which formerly was

for supporting a rush-mattress, upon which beds of the best fashion in this country were used to be laid. A full inclination is shown to add all the ornament the workman's planes would afford upon the sides, which are carved with variety of irregular mouldings, struck from end to end : although it is remarkable that this Cambrian artist seems to have been unacquainted either with dovetailing or mitring, the ends being plain boards to keep out and fasten the sides to, which is done simply with nails ; and yet the carving of the birds, and foliage to the pillars, between which it swings, are specimens of better execution. Old wainscoting of excellent impannelling carved in this style, has frequently no better joinings. Whence it appears that those who executed the nicer parts were not employed to put the work together. Its dimensions are three feet two inches long ; one foot eight inches wide at the head ; one foot five inches three-quarters at the foot ; and one foot five inches deep. It is made of oak, inch and half thick, and the pillars are two feet ten inches from the ground to the top of the birds.*

"The Rev. Mr Ball was a very sensible and intelligent character, and lived to an extreme age—nor does there exist a doubt among well-informed persons in this neighbourhood but that the cradle was originally devoted to the use of the royal infant. On the decease of the Rev. Mr Ball, it was presented by his son to ——— Whitehead, Esq. of Hom-brook, French-hay, near Bristol, in whose possession it now remains, and who, I am informed, justly appreciates its value. Greatly indeed it is to be lamented that some character of fortune in the county did not endeavour to fix it at Monmouth—since, by its removal, its history is done entirely away."

So far Heath, an enthusiastic historian, but not always accurate. The name of the incumbent of Newland was *Peregrine* not *Thomas* Ball. Why the passage "that one of his ancestors had been," etc., is placed within inverted commas, I cannot say ; but I remark that a long quotation from Bonnor, which follows, is *not* so distinguished. In speaking of the "prince" and the "royal household," Heath was simply blundering, inasmuch as Henry of Bolingbroke was only Earl

* "These birds had been gilt, but owing to lapse of time, and damp, or other cause, the gilding is nearly effaced, except in a few interstices of the feathers of the wings."

of Derby at the time of the birth of his son and heir, and had no pretensions to the throne. His utter ignorance on this score is continually apparent. He says "at the time the *queen* was pregnant with her son and heir, the *king* was engaged in state affairs at Windsor," and in this he follows the blunders of others; but I fancy it was from his own imagination that he described the rocker as an *officer* of the royal household, who obtained the cradle "in consequence of *his* situation." The holes said to be "for the rockers" are the holes for the lacing band, before mentioned; but this error occurs in the quotation from Bonnor. The measurement is slightly different from my own and from Bonnor's. Lastly, Hom-brook should be Hambrook.

From this account we can gather certain original statements.

1. *That Heath himself had seen the cradle in a neglected state at Newland, a few years previous to 1804.* Now, from the First Fruits Papers in the Record Office, Gloucester division, I learn that the Rev. Peregrine Ball was appointed to the vicarage of Newland 20th February 1745-46, and was succeeded on his death by the Rev. John Probyn, 26th December 1794. There is every reason to conclude that Mr Ball was dead at the time of Heath's visit. The quotation of Mr Ball's account reads as though Heath had received it from some other person, who showed him over the house; and, though he afterwards speaks of Mr Ball as a very sensible and intelligent character, he does not state that he had been in personal communication with him, which there is little doubt he would otherwise have done. I think it most probable, therefore, that Heath examined the cradle about the close of 1794, before it had been removed to Mr Ball's son's residence at St Briavels, whither it appears to have been taken; and very likely it was at the sale of the effects of the old vicar. From this time of Heath's examination, till eighty years afterwards, when I lighted upon it in Mr Braikenridge's museum, I believe no Monmouth person had ever seen it, nor was it believed to be any longer in existence.

2. *That the well-informed people of the neighbourhood then*

regarded the cradle as a genuine relic, and that Mr Ball, who lived to an extreme age, always asserted the tradition.

3. *That the gilding of the birds was still visible though nearly effaced.*

4. *That it was in the possession of Mr Whitehead of Hambrook, French-hay, near Bristol, as late as 1804, who was said to justly appreciate its value.*

5. *That its removal from the neighbourhood of Monmouth was at once felt to be a loss to the town, as well as a detraction from the interest of this relic.*

The same year that Heath published his history of Monmouth, Bingley's "Tour through North Wales" appeared, in which, according to Sir Samuel Meyrick ("Specimens of Ancient Furniture"), was a representation of the cradle. My copy of the book, however, does not contain it. In 1818 the Rev. T. D. Fosbrooke published "The Wye Tour," and gave in it a description of another cradle which, for some forty or fifty years, usurped the title of the cradle of Henry V., and of which anon. Fosbrooke at the same time referred to "that of Henry V., once preserved at Newland—a wooden oblong chest, without tester, swinging by links of iron between two posts, surmounted by two birds for ornament," which description is stated to be "from the engraving." He goes on: "This looks much more ancient than that at Troy, which has a tester, rockers, and is covered with crimson velvet, but this is similar to ancient royal cradles." The engraving above mentioned was, I presume, Bonnor's, which Fosbrooke reproduced on a very small scale in his "Encyclopædia of Antiquities," 4to, 1825 (plate, fig. 1. "The cradle of Henry V., misnomered of Edward II., see Archeol. vi. 336"). Under the heading "Cradle" is a similar description to the above: "In the Middle Ages we find cradles suspended by cords and covered with cloth. That of Henry V. is a wooden oblong chest, swinging by links of iron between two posts, surmounted by two birds for ornament."

Fosbrooke's knowledge of the cradle, we therefore see, was limited to an old engraving. He states that *it resembles*

ancient royal cradles; but I do not know upon what authority.

In 1841, Mr Leitch Ritchie published "The Wye and its Associations." Speaking of Courtfield, he observes, "The remains of a bed and an old cradle were formerly shown as relics of the Monmouth hero."

In 1843, in the "Dictionnaire Iconographique des Monuments de l'Antiquité," by L. J. Guenebault, we find, under the heading, "Berceaux d'Enfant," the cradle is mentioned "de Henry V., roi d'Angleterre, ouvrage de 1400—Shaw." I need scarcely point out that, if genuine, the cradle must have been made at least twelve or thirteen years before the above date. The author seems to have known of it only through the before-mentioned "Specimens of Ancient Furniture."

In 1850, in a number of the *Monmouthshire Gazette*, appeared the following letter, bearing upon the subject :

"ST BRIAVELS, *April* 1850.—SIR,—It is so much the fashion in our day to look back to olden time, that anything bearing the stamp of antiquity is regarded as interesting; be it an old book, an old table, an antique high-backed chair, or any other article that may have been in daily use by our grandmothers generations back. This feeling seems to have been on the increase since the close of the great war in 1815; and having no further fights or deeds of glory of our own to talk about, we commence thinking of days gone by, and the relics left of those times and doings. I, therefore, being possessed of the like feeling, have an itching to enlighten my neighbours with respect to an 'old cradle;' not the stately cot with damask curtains sweeping the ground, lined and befringed in modern style, such as those we now see elevated in the window of the fashionable emporium of our great cities, but one formed of good old-fashioned heart of oak, pannelled and carved with demons of monstrous shapes, flying serpents with forked tongues, both hooked and barbed, enough to scare the crying babe to silence, did it but know the horrid figures that watch its slumbers; and, withal, so firmly put together that it might have cradled royalty ever since the days of its first princely occupant down to the early part of the present century, at which date I have some faint recollections of having seen it. The tradition

connected with it was called to my remembrance by reading in a local paper of the present year a notice of this very cradle, or, 'our cradle;' as it certainly should at this day be reposing, after all its rockings and tossings, in 'our village,' and would consequently be 'our cradle.' Sir, have you in your walks among the humble cottages of Wales ever seen the old wooden cradle that, rocked by force, sends forth a cry of seeming sympathy with the helpless babe within? If so, you have some idea of *my* cradle that rocked to sleep, not far distant from the banks of the Wye and Monnow, the warlike Harry of Monmouth who stands amongst you the admiration of every one. You *have* your hero always to look upon; we *had* the cradle that rocked to sleep that hero; it is gone from us for ever—sold for a mess of pottage or flattery. The tradition, as handed to me by my late father is this: In the village of Newland, near Monmouth, lived in the last century, the Rev. Peregrine Ball, vicar of the former place for forty-five years, and in whose possession was the cradle in which Harry of Monmouth had been nursed. The rev. gentleman often related the way in which it came into his family, tracing it back as having belonged to an aunt of his great-grandmother, but there the record of its earlier days is lost; still the cradle bore the stamp of its antiquity and royal purpose, its genuineness never being doubted, though no account has been preserved as to the direct way in which it had been handed down to posterity till about the close of the seventeenth century, when it came into the possession of the Ball family. How desirable would it be if some one could give us further information as to its earlier career. After the decease of the old vicar, his only son removed to 'our village,' bringing with him the cradle. Years rolled on, and reverse of fortune affected the mind of him who possessed this valuable piece of antiquity. The lady who presided over his household, in an unlucky moment, was induced to lend this precious relic, in order that a drawing might be taken of it for a society in London, and on board a Brockweir boat, plying from thence to Bristol, was shipped '*our cradle*'—shipped did I say?—thrown on board a Brockweir trow, treated as lumber during its transit, and at Bristol tumbled out on the landing-place, and taken away by strangers! Years afterwards application was made for its restoration; no reply was ever given, as far as could be ascertained. Mr Ball became imbecile and died, the

lady left our village, and this most valuable and interesting relic, 'our cradle,' was lost to us for ever. C."

The principal interest of this epistle is, that *it is the evidence of some one between fifty and sixty years of age who had seen the cradle at the village of St Briavels, in Gloucestershire, about the commencement of the present century, and who had heard its history from his father.* As usual with all oral accounts, there is a certain amount of truth in this narrative mixed up with a deal of error. We have seen the Rev. Peregrine Ball held Newland forty-nine, and not forty-five, years. The childish imagination of the narrator transformed the carven foliage and arabesques of the spandrels into serpents and demons; and its having been located for a very short while in *our village*, during the early youth of the writer, seemed to him to make it *our* property. Whether his assertions are to be taken as facts, I will not say; but, in as far as they agree with other known facts, we may, I think, accept them.

Thus, we have fresh information that *Mr Ball's son conveyed the cradle to St Briavels, and that thence it was taken to Bristol, having been shipped on board one of the Wye barges plying between Brockweir and Bristol; that the relic passed out of the Ball family during the temporary imbecility of the owner; that it was sent away, on loan, for a drawing to be made of it for some London society, and was never returned, although efforts were made to recover it.* Beyond this is the oft-told tale of the aged vicar of Newland, with the addition that *the cradle came into the possession of the Ball family about the close of the seventeenth century, and had descended to the vicar from an aunt of his great-grandmother; also that an inquiry about the cradle was made in a local paper at the beginning of the year 1850, and, no information forthcoming, "C." published his recollections in the hope of obtaining news of the lost chattel; lastly, that the genuineness of the relic was never doubted.*

In 1861 Mr and Mrs S. C. Hall brought out their "Book of South Wales," and among other sketches which I had the pleasure of giving them for that work were the drawings of the two cradles laying claim to the honour of being the cradle

of Henry V., page 72. The one was an original sketch, the other was copied from an engraving.

Their notice runs thus :

“On the great staircase at Troy House is preserved an old cradle, which is called that of Henry V. It is certainly not as old as the era of that monarch ; we engrave it, together with some pieces of old armour, apparently of the time of Elizabeth, which stand beside it. A comparison of this cradle with that upon the tomb of the infant child of James I., in Westminster Abbey, with which it is almost identical, will satisfy the sceptical as to its date. It is covered with faded and tattered red velvet, and ornamented with gilt nails and silken fringe ; from its general character we may believe it was constructed about 1650. The late Sir Samuel Meyrick considered it of the time of Charles I., and archæologists repudiate the notion of its being that of the fifth Harry.

“We engrave a representation of another old cradle, long preserved in Monmouth Castle, and which had better claims to be considered as that in which the baby-king was rocked. It has all the characteristics of cradles of his era as represented in ancient drawings, and was entirely made of wood. It was merely a wooden oblong box, which swung between posts, surmounted by carved birds, with foliated ornaments beneath. It has been figured in books devoted to antiquities, and recently in Murray’s ‘Handbook of Mediæval Art,’ where it is stated to be preserved in Monmouth Castle ; it has, however, long passed from thence into private hands.”

Perhaps this is the point where I should introduce the little I have to say respecting the pseudo-cradle of Troy, mentioned dubiously also, as I have already observed, by Fosbrooke in 1818. The first public notice of it I have discovered is in the *European Magazine* for September 1808 : “Half-a-mile from Monmouth is situated Troy House, the seat of the Duke of Beaufort, where is still to be seen the cradle in which Henry V. was rocked, and the armour that he wore at Agincourt.” At this time the real cradle had passed out of sight for some years. The tradition of its having been preserved in the vicinity of Monmouth clung to the neighbourhood, and doubtless gave birth to this spurious successor. It is described

by Williams in his "History of Monmouthshire" in 1796 as "a neglected habitation, the family of Beaufort residing in Gloucestershire," and it probably continued to be occupied only for a few weeks at intervals. Visitors to Monmouth would naturally inquire about the ancient cradle, and the one on the staircase at Troy being of undoubted antiquity, it would readily be associated with the original article.

Various topographical works meanwhile have supported the above delusion. Lewis's "Topographical Dictionary of England" describes Monmouth as "the birthplace of Henry V., who passed his infancy here, and whose cradle, and sword which he used at the battle of Agincourt, are deposited in Troy House." "The Land we Live in," a well-known work by Charles Knight, mentions Troy House, "an ancient residence of the Worcester family, but now most observable as a show-house. It contains family pictures and curiosities, chief among which are the cradle in which Henry of Monmouth was rocked, and the armour he fought in at Agincourt." A similar statement concerning "the cradle of the precious infant" finds a place in "The History of Henry V.," by George Makepeace Towle. In 1857 the Cambrian Archæological Society met at Monmouth, and in the paper drawn up by the late Mr Wakeman of the Graig, he denounced the Troy cradle unhesitatingly.

To return to the notice of our cradle in "The Book of South Wales." Here we meet with a statement that it was "long preserved in Monmouth Castle." I do not know upon what evidence this is founded, but I suspect it arose from an error in the "Archæologia." According to Mr and Mrs S. C. Hall, this error has again been repeated in Murray's "Handbook of Mediæval Art," a work I have not been able to meet with in the British Museum Library. It will be observed that the authors of "The Book of South Wales" could obtain no tidings of the locality of the relic, and even questioned its existence; and I may add that Mr Wakeman informed me, many years ago, that he had not been able to trace it.

In 1873 an essay, entitled "Notes on Beds and Bedding,"

was published by James Blythe. The author remarks: "We may here mention that the cradle in which Henry V. was born at Monmouth is still in existence. It is very similar to the modern cot, and consists of a box three feet two by one foot eight wide at the head, and one foot five and three-quarters at the foot, its depth being two feet five inches. This is suspended on two carved uprights, on the top of each of which stands the image of a dove."

This notice is clearly not the testimony of an eye-witness. It is the first time we have heard it mentioned as "the cradle in which Henry V. was *born!*" There is a considerable mistake also as to its measurement. The notices in Rudder's "History of Gloucestershire" and the *London Magazine* being the only two that I have met with which call the carved birds "doves," I presume one of them is the source from which this description was taken.

I have produced those notices of the cradle I could find between the period of its last description by an eye-witness (1804) and the present time, with one exception; and that exception contains the clue to its locality. I did not know of Shaw's engraving of the cradle, and the notice of its being in 1836 in the possession of Mr Braikenridge, of Bristington, father of the Rev. George Weare Braikenridge, till after I had lighted upon it in the splendid museum of its present owner.

Upon making inquiries at Hamgreen, I found the Whitehead family had long since disappeared from the neighbourhood. The oldest inhabitants of the village stated that a Mr Whitehead had lived at Hambrook Court, and died there about seventy years ago. My inquiries, however, reached a gentleman of the name of Tanner, of French Hay, who, in the most friendly manner, informed me of all he could gather upon the subject. From Mr H. C. Harford, of Stapleton House, he learned that the cradle was successively in possession of a Mr Barnes and of Mr Braikenridge; and thus I reached the object of my search.

On making application to Mr Braikenridge, at Clevedon, he afforded me the following particulars of its history: It was

purchased by his father, G. W. Braikenridge, Esq. of Broomhill House, Bristington, in 1834, at the sale of the effects of Mr Barnes, of Redland Hall, Bristol. In 1835 a careful, though inexact, drawing of it was made by Mr Henry Shaw, for Shaw and Meyrick's "Specimens of Ancient Furniture" (fol. 1836), wherein the following notice from the pen of Sir Samuel Meyrick appears :

"Plate XLI. The cradle of Henry the Fifth, in the possession of G. W. Braikenridge, Esq., Bristington, near Bristol. The beautiful foliage which fills the space between the uprights and stays of the stand of this cradle were never before engraved, although Bonnor in his 'Itinerary,' the *London Magazine* for 1774, and Bingley in his 'Tour through North Wales,' pretended to give representations of this interesting piece of antiquity. Henry the Fifth was born at Monmouth, in the year 1388, and sent to Courtfield, in that county, about seven miles off, to be nursed for the benefit of his health, under the superintendence of Lady Montacute. Here it was preserved for many years, until a steward of the property contrived to sell it. It then got into the hands of the Rev. Mr Ball, rector of Newland, Gloucestershire, and next those of Mr Whitehead, of Hambrook, and has been finally purchased by Mr Braikenridge. Its dimensions are 3 ft. 2 in. long, 1 ft. 8 in. wide at the head, 1 ft. 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. at the foot, 1 ft. 5 in. deep. The uprights, including the birds, are 2 ft. 10 in. in height. The foliage, before mentioned, corroborates the date."

In this notice, we may remark *the authority of Sir Samuel Meyrick, as a distinguished antiquary, with respect to the age of the carving, and the importance of the relic.* The cradle is now, *for the first time, stated to have been preserved many years at Courtfield; and the steward of the property is said to have sold it.* With the exception of the owner's name, there is not much in the notice but what may be traced, errors and all, to Bonnor's "Itinerary." With respect to Shaw's delineation, which accompanies the foregoing notice, I must observe, although by far the best representation we have, it is incorrect. He has ignored the carved corners, etc., which, according to Mr Braikenridge, were inserted prior to

1834. He has also left out the holes at the base, and has inserted an imaginary clump of iron, apparently just where the cord goes.

This new statement respecting Courtfield was, I have no doubt, communicated to Sir Samuel Meyrick by the late Mr Vaughan; for I am informed by Colonel Vaughan, the present owner of the picturesque and historically interesting domain of Courtfield, that there is no documentary evidence of the cradle ever having been in his family's possession, but that he always understood from his father the cradle was formerly in possession of the Vaughans at Courtfield, till some time after 1745, when, owing to their being mixed up in the rebellion of the Pretender, they were compelled to leave England for a while; and during their absence, the cradle was disposed of by their steward, and so came into the possession of Mr Ball, of Newland. That on the death of Mr Ball, his curiosities were sold by auction, and that the late Sir Samuel Meyrick, of Goodrich Court, told him that he would have purchased it and reinstated it at Courtfield had he not missed the sale.

I have great reluctance in attacking family tradition. Tradition is the poetry of history; and, if genuine, is full of instructive truth. Unless, therefore, I found distinct arguments to the contrary, I should be inclined to admit the above as probable. But I am compelled to say I find much in this account that is untenable; and I can only admit this legend as carrying the weight of the undoubted testimony of the present representative of the ancient house of Courtfield.

In 1794, when the Rev. Peregrine Ball died, Sir Samuel Meyrick was only eleven years of age, he having been born 26th August 1783. I suspect the sale of which he spoke must have been that of Mr Barnes of Redland Hall in 1834. We have seen that Heath describes the cradle as being held in no estimation except as a family relic, consigned to a garret; and, whether he saw it before or after the death of the vicar, his account overthrows any theory of Mr Ball's having been a collector of curiosities, or that the

relic was sold at his decease. The story of the steward's disposing of the cradle is one difficult to reconcile with the fact that the relic in question is a very cumbersome article, of no intrinsic value, nor in any way ornamental. Its only worth consists in the associations connected with it—associations which would render it of more value at Courtfield or at Monmouth than anywhere else. Supposing, however, some curiosity-monger did tempt the steward with £5 for the chattel, we must remember it remained within a few miles of Courtfield; and when the family returned to their seat they would at once have been made acquainted with the abstraction of an heirloom, whose history was closely connected with the traditional glory of their home, and they would have been in a position immediately to reclaim it from their neighbour, the clergyman of Newland. Moreover, in about five or six and twenty years after the alleged abstraction, we find a published description of the cradle, as an ancient heirloom in the family of the Rev. Peregrine Ball, which description is repeated in county histories, and no contradiction ever advanced against the claim, by the Vaughan family, who, we may naturally conclude, would never have allowed so flagrant an assumption, had they been in a position to contradict it.

Among the family papers in the possession of Colonel Vaughan, are some manuscript poems of the seventeenth century, elaborately describing the beauties and resources of Courtfield, with its statues, hanging gardens, etc., but no mention is made of the cradle of Henry of Monmouth. In the mansion, a room—a remnant of the old house—is still pointed out as the nursery of the young lord Harry. The name of this seat, according to Coxe, was originally Grayfield, and it was changed, from the circumstance of Henry V. having been nursed there. The Rev. J. Endell Tyler, in his "Memoir of Henry V.," speaks disparagingly of "the vanity of tradition at Courtfield, and the absence of any stories on the other side of Monmouth," as continuing a belief in the tale of this being the hero's nursing-place; but I think the

historian steps beyond his province, when he allows personal feeling to discountenance tradition. There is a tradition that the horseman, who was hurrying through the ravine, near Goodrich, with the news of the birth of Henry of Monmouth, was thrown, from the stumbling of his steed, in the steep lane leading towards the castle, and was killed on the spot. There is another tradition, that the ferryman at Goodrich was the first who informed the Earl of Derby of the birth of his son and heir, and that he received the boon of the ferry in return. The old belief in Henry's having been sent to Courtfield to be nursed, may have many arguments produced in its favour; and it is certainly not to be upset by the sneer of unsupported opinion. I am not aware that there is even any direct evidence of Henry having been born in Monmouth Castle, but it would be difficult to find any one who would set it down to the vanity of tradition in the county, and the absence of claim elsewhere. In this case it is of course an admitted fact; and in the minor matter of his nursing-place, it may be accepted as an uncontradicted tradition, until reason can be produced that it should be discarded.

There is another point in connection with Courtfield which has been disputed. Henry is stated, in many topographical works, to have been nursed by the Countess of Salisbury; and her tomb is still pointed out in the picturesque church of Welsh Bicknor, which stands on the banks of the Wye, below the mansion. Coxe gives an engraving of this effigy, which, he states, must have been that of Margaret, Lady Montacute, daughter of Thomas, Lord Monthermer, and lady of the manor at that date. Williams, in his "History of Monmouthshire," makes the blunder (since copied by others) of calling this lady "Countess of Sunderland." She was daughter-in-law of the first Earl of Salisbury, sister-in-law of the second, and mother of the third. She died in 1395; and the monument, with its angel supporters, closely resembles the effigies of this period in Gough's "Sepulchral Monuments." It was thus a not unnatural mistake among the country

people of the district, to call the figure the Countess of Salisbury instead of Lady Montacute. Being a family connection of the young Earl of Derby (her grandmother was a daughter of Edward I.), it is not improbable that the child might have been placed under her care in the safe and secluded peninsula of Courtfield.

That we find her son, John, Earl of Salisbury, within twelve years, conspiring against Henry IV., does not in any way invalidate the tradition of Lady Montacute's taking charge of her kinsman's son and heir. Henry, by his usurpation of the throne, must have made enemies as well as friends; and the Earls of Salisbury had been old adherents of Richard II. The second earl, uncle of the preceding, it was, who met Anne of Bohemia on her way to England to be married; the Earl of Salisbury, with 500 spears and as many archers, received the bride-elect at Gravelines, and escorted her to Calais; and he himself was the companion of Richard in his downfall, mounted on "a sorry nag," as narrated by the historians Stowe and Pennant, when "the Duke of Lancaster brought them from Flint to Chester," and thence, after a night's rest, on to London. Lady Montacute's son was certainly no friend to Henry IV., whatever his mother may have been to the Earl of Derby. He it was who "purposed to kil hym on the xij night," and, when encountered with "hard by licestre," was "overcum and by & by heddid" (Leland's "Collectanea," vol. i., p. 485).

The autumn of the year of Henry's birth was a period of disquiet. The friends and evil counsellors of Richard II., Robert Vere, Duke of Ireland, Michael de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk, and others, were accused of misgoverning the realm, and were defeated wherever they took the field against the opposing party, of whom the infant Henry's father, though quite a young man, was a prominent member. We read, the Earl of Suffolk escaped to France, and entered Calais disguised as a poulterer, selling capons. The Duke of Ireland, defeated by the Earl of Derby at Radcot Bridge, in Berkshire, December 20, 1387-88 ("Eulogium;" Cotton MSS.;

Galba, e. vii.), had to rid himself of his gauntlets and sword to swim the river Thames. "Richard the Redeles," as the king was called in a contemporary poem, was already beginning to feel the strength of that party which eleven years later hurled him from his throne; and the struggle of this crisis must have made it an anxious and exciting time for all engaged in it, and this may perhaps have been one reason for the baby lord to be sent to the quiet and seclusion of Courtfield.

That Lady Montacute herself acted as nurse to the infant, is of course a ridiculous supposition; in fact, it would appear, the nurse's name was Johanna Waring, who, after Henry V. came to the throne, received an annuity of £20, "in consideration of good service done in former days" (*"Memoirs of Henry of Monmouth,"* by the Rev. J. Endell Tyler). Had the child's father then held the throne it might have been different. The Countess of Mar was appointed nurse to James VI. of Scotland, whose cradle, as I have already had occasion to remark, is still preserved at the family seat, Alloa Park. In the wardrobe accounts of Henry, Earl of Derby, from 1387-88 to 1388-89, the first year of his married life (for although he was espoused to Mary Bohun at fifteen years of age, when she was but twelve, the young couple did not probably live together till 1387, no prior household accounts being in existence), it would appear the earl and countess then resided at Monmouth Castle, but only for a while. Among the entries is a charge "for a long gown for the young Lord Henry." The second child, Thomas, was born, and £2 paid to the midwife in London, before October 1388 (according to Tyler), which I suppose means 1388-89. The entries in the various chronicles and MSS. of this period are rather confusing, owing to the different modes of reckoning; 1388 is the date accepted as the year of the birth of Henry of Monmouth, although the inscription on the statue in front of Monmouth Town Hall gives it 1387; and, according to Coxe, the historians Holinshed, Rapin, and Stowe, each give a different year for the event. Various items of clothing for the

children are entered in the before-mentioned accounts ; and, "at Kenilworth," there is an entry of "five yards of cloth for the bed of the nurse of Lord Thomas, and an ell of canvas for his cradle." It would therefore seem that the earl and countess were moving about pretty much as earls and countesses do in these more peaceful days. But while from their household records we learn that the second child, with its nurse and cradle, were with them, there is no entry to show whether the elder son, together with his nurse and cradle, were with the family, or at Courtfield, or elsewhere. We are therefore thrown back on the tradition ; and must leave the matter there, while we proceed to gather certain remaining notices of the cradle itself, extending back from the period when it was in the possession of Mr Whitehead of Hambrook, at the beginning of the present century.

It was not only mentioned, as we have seen, by Heath in his "History of Monmouth ;" it was likewise noticed by Archdeacon Coxe in his "History of Monmouthshire," published in the year 1800, the most important county topographical work we have. Referring to Henry V. having been nursed at Courtfield, he continues : "His old cradle was preserved at the house of the Rev. Mr Ball, rector of Newland, in the vicinity, which descended to him from his ancestor, one of the rockers ; it is now in the possession of Mr Whitehead of French Hay, near Bristol, and, from the engraving given by Bonnor, seems to be a curious piece of antiquity." But this account is simply copied from Bonnor, who the preceding year had published his "Itinerary." One would have thought the archdeacon, however, might have known that Newland was a vicarage and not a rectory, and might have corrected Bonnor on that point.

"The Copper Plate Perspective Itinerary, or Pocket Portfolio," by J. Bonnor, engraver, appeared in 1799. In No. iv., p. 34, we find the following passage :

"Proceeding along the path you have in view the old mansion, venerable woods, and hanging gardens of Court Field, the residence of the late William Vaughan, Esq. For the benefit of this salubrious

air, Henry, Prince of Wales, born 1388, at Monmouth Castle, and therefore called Harry of Monmouth, was nursed here. Fig. 3, pl. xi., represents the curious cradle in which he was rocked. It became an honorary perquisite to one of the rockers, who was an ancestor of the Rev. Mr Ball, rector of Newland, which is in this vicinity. And in 1773, when this drawing was made, by his permission, it was in his possession, who related that it had continued in his family from that time. It is given as a real curiosity of the fourteenth century. Since the death of that gentleman, his son has presented it to ——— Whitehead, Esq. of Hambrook, French Hay, near Bristol.

“A drawing of it was presented to the publisher of the *London Magazine* the same year, but the inaccuracy of the engraving from which it appears in that work for March 1774, and a very material error in the history which accompanies it, renders its introduction here necessary to their correction, as will be obvious from a comparison with the representation here offered. The misstatement of its history was occasioned in the following manner: To the drawing was annexed a written description of the cradle only. When it was put into the editor's hand, he was informed that it was the cradle of Prince Henry of Monmouth, afterwards King Henry V., who was born at Monmouth Castle. In preparing the article for the press, some time after, he erred in his recollection of the account that was given him, and, not aware of the mistake, he stated it to have belonged to the first Prince of Wales, who was born at Carnarvon Castle. The error was pointed out by Mr Bonnor, but was never corrected. The editor was unwilling, perhaps, to proclaim his own mistake, at so material an injury to the story it would have sustained by losing an hundred years of its antiquity; yet it is sufficiently respectable on that account, it being 410 years since it was really in use.

“The body of the cradle, which is wider at one end than the other, is suspended by staples and a ring at each end, from two pillars joined by framework; a carved bird perches at the top of each, with foliage at the feet; it has six long holes at the upper edge for the rockers (three on each side), and twelve round holes at the bottom for cordage to pass through, which formerly was for supporting a rush mattress, upon which beds of the best fashion in this country were used to be laid. A full inclination is shown to add all

the ornament the workman's planes would afford upon the sides, which are covered with a variety of irregular mouldings struck from end to end. Although it is remarkable that this Cambrian artist seems to have been unacquainted either with dovetailing or mitring, the ends being plain boards to keep out and fasten the sides to, which is done simply with nails, yet the carving of the birds and foliage to the pillars, between which it swings, are specimens of better execution. Old wainscoting of excellent impannelling, carved in this style, has frequently no better joinings, whence it appears that those who executed the nicer parts were not employed to put the work together. Its dimensions are 3 feet 2 inches long; 1 foot 8 inches wide at the head; 1 foot $5\frac{3}{4}$ inches at the foot; and 1 foot 5 inches deep. It is made of oak, inch-and-half thick, and the pillars are 2 feet 10 inches from the ground to the top of the birds."

Beneath the engraving is the inscription :

"The cradle of Prince Henry, afterwards King Henry V., born at Monmouth Castle, 1388. Drawn from the original, 1773, by permission of the Rev. Mr Ball, rector of Newland, Gloucestershire, by J. Bonnor."

From the above we learn that *Bonnor made the drawing in 1773, from which the engraving in the London Magazine was copied*; and he seems also to have supplied the description, since he states that *he at once informed the negligent editor of the mistake he had fallen into in calling it the cradle of Edward II.* It may be remarked that Mr Bonnor received the account from the Rev. Peregrine Ball himself. He speaks of the "hanging gardens" of Courtfield, which we have heard were features of the spot in the preceding century. His blunders in calling the infant the Prince of Wales, and the vicar the rector, demand correction. There is also a mistake of twenty-five years in his chronology. Under a false impression of the infant's regal state he imagines more than one person would be appointed to rock the child, and fancies the band-holes are the places for their hands.

This description, however, is the fullest we have met with, and had the cradle never been engraved, it would have enabled one to recognise the relic at a glance. Bonnor's

engraving will be seen to differ slightly from the one in the *London Magazine*; but, even had he not stated that it was from the same drawing, the fact would have been self-evident. Mr Whitehead is stated to have been *presented* with the cradle by the son of the Rev. Peregrine Ball. From the before-quoted letter of "C.," in the *Monmouthshire Gazette*, it would be inferred that it came into his hands by chance, after being sent to London to be engraved. I am inclined to think the former is more probable. I can find no engraving made between 1794 and 1799, at which last date we hear it was in Mr Whitehead's possession. Nor have I any evidence of Mr Ball's derangement of mind. The Rev. William Taprell Allen, vicar of St Briavels, informs me that a Mr Thomas Ball lived in the vicarage house about eighty years ago. He was a bachelor, and a particular friend of the old Squire Edwin of Clearwell, which is close to Newland, and there is every probability that he was the son of the old vicar. He is said to have been eccentric, and to have had a great fondness for birds. A reason for Mr Ball's parting with this heirloom may appear in his being unmarried, while Mr Whitehead may possibly have been a family connection, and, any way, is described as one who would appreciate and take care of such a curiosity. An old seal, bearing the Ball crest—a demi-lion rampant, carrying a ball between its paws—was found near the vicarage some time since, and is now in the possession of Mr Allen. The name frequently occurs in the church registers of St Briavels and Hewelsfield from 1661, but no entry of a Peregrine Ball can be found. There is a probability of the old vicar's family having belonged to this neighbourhood, but I have no evidence of the fact, much as it would strengthen his assertion respecting the history of the cradle.

In the "*Archæologia*" (vol. vi., p. 363), published in 1782, is the following short sentence, which is of interest to us, and at the same time illustrates my observations :

"The birth of Henry the Fifth in the Castle of Monmouth, when his father was Duke of Hereford, and resided there, at which place his cradle is still preserved."

In these few words, extracted from a pseudo-scientific journal, there are no less than two glaring blunders. In the first place, the Earl of Derby was not created Duke of Hereford before the twenty-first year of the reign of Richard II., when Harry of Monmouth was in his tenth year (Leland's "Collectanea," vol. i., p. 483). In the second, the cradle was not in Monmouth, but, as we have seen, in the possession of the Rev. Peregrine Ball, at Newland.

In Rudder's "History of Gloucestershire," published in 1779, the following account of the cradle occurs, under "Newland :"

"The Reverend Mr Ball, the present incumbent of Newland, is possessed of a curiosity that deserves to be mentioned. It is the cradle of King Henry V., who was born at Monmouth. The whole is made of oak, and the part where the infant lay is an oblong chest, open at top, and with an iron ring at the head, and another at the feet, by which it hangs upon hooks, fixed in two upright pieces, strongly mortised in a frame which lies upon the floor. Thus suspended, the cradle is easily put in motion. Each of the upright pieces is ornamented at the top with the figure of a dove, gilt and tolerably executed."

In this description *the gilding of the birds* is mentioned, from which we may infer it was then in better condition ; the birds are also specified as doves. It appears to have been written by an eye-witness. The cradle is described as an oblong chest, open at the top. Perhaps I should add there is also no bottom, the mattress having been supported by the cords, while its shape very much resembles the Saxon cryb or cota, as figured in ancient MSS.

In 1775 another original sketch of the cradle was made, which appeared in the "Antiquarian Repertory" (4 vols. 4to), that year edited by Grose. It is described as "the cradle in which Henry V. was nursed at Monmouth Castle. Engraved from an original drawing by F. Blyth, September 1, 1775." This sketch is taken from the opposite side to my own (as also is Bonnor's), the foot of the cradle being towards the spectator, and the spandrels carved alike. It is incorrect

in its proportions, and does not give the lacing-holes for either the cord or band. In the description *we find it stated to have been in Monmouth Castle*. It was probably from this the writer of the notice in the "Archæologia" made his misstatement respecting the locality of the relic.

Two years before, in 1773, the original sketch of which we have read in Bonnor's "Itinerary," had been taken by Bonnor, with Mr Ball's permission, and sent to the editor of the *London Magazine*. The article appeared in the number for March 1774:

"Having been favoured with a curious drawing of the cradle in which Edward the Second was rocked at Carnarvon Castle, we have taken the earliest opportunity to present it to our readers.

"The plate is engraved from an accurate drawing of the cradle in which this unfortunate prince was rocked, which piece of antiquity is in the possession of the Rev. Mr Ball, of Newland, in Gloucestershire. It descended to him from his ancestors, to whom it became an honorary perquisite. This singular piece is made of heart of oak, whose simplicity of construction and rudeness of workmanship are visible demonstrations of the small progress that elegance had made in ornamental decorations. On the top of the uprights are two doves; the cradle itself is pendent on two staples, driven into the uprights, linked by two rings to two staples fastened to the cradle, and by them it swings. The sides and ends of the cradle are ornamented with a great variety of mouldings, whose junctions at the corners are not mitred, but cut off square without any degree of neatness, and the sides and ends fastened together by rough nails. On each side are three holes for the rockers. To secure the uprights from falling, there is a strong rail near the bottom, and the whole is rendered steady by cross pieces for feet, on which it stands. Its dimensions are: 3 feet 2 inches long; 1 foot 8 inches wide at the head; and 1 foot 5 inches wide at the foot; 1 foot 5 inches deep; and from the bottom of the pillar to the top of the birds is 2 feet 10 inches."

The period of history involved in the tradition of this relic is replete with interest. During the short lifetime of the hero who is said to have been rocked in it, not only a blaze of

military glory lit up the land, but the dawn of the Reformation was slowly brightening. Wycliffe had just passed away, and under his influence the Lollards were beginning to bear testimony to a faith that outshone the fires of martyrdom. The dark ages of serfdom were doomed, and although the grand tyranny of the feudal system still kept all classes in a condition of bondage, it produced a ferment that was the cause of those chivalric pictures of alternate violence and splendour which distinguish this epoch. The light of intelligence was growing from day to day, and amidst clouds of ignorance there glimmered a foreshadowing of modern liberty.

Llewellyn, the last Welsh prince, had closed the scene of Cambrian history in bloodshed and defeat a century before; but the conquest of Wales remained unsettled till the seal was put upon it by Henry of Monmouth, when not even the magical glamour of Owen Glendower's fame could avail against the march of events which was to establish a united kingdom. James I. of Scotland was a captive in England. It was the period of the rebuilding of Westminster Hall, and of many of our historic castles and abbeys. The story of Wat Tyler's rebellion must have been the common recollection of London citizens, while every town and hamlet had its tale of warfare. The very language of the people was undergoing rapid development. "The Vision of William concerning Piers the Plowman" was introducing new ideas as well as a new tongue, while the muse of Chaucer opened the splendid roll of English literature, a literature that is now the treasured heritage of continents, and seems destined to be the foremost of "the great globe itself."

How strangely, yet how forcibly, is Richard described on his throne in his chamber, "wherynne he was wont to sitte, fro after mete vnto evensong tyme, spekyng to no man, but ouerloking alle menne; and *yf he loked on eny man, what astat or degre that evir he were of, he most knele.*" Within a few months of this pride of place the sower of the wind reaped the whirlwind, and, in his despair, cursed "the untrouthe of England; and said, Allas! what trust is in this

fals worlde!" At the formal abdication of Richard at Westminster, we read, Henry the Usurper "aros and blissid hym," and claimed the crown, with the full approbation of those present; whereupon the Archbishop of Canterbury "made a colacion" on the text "*Vir fortis dominabitur populo*," which, I presume, was a defence of the old theory that might is right. There is something deplorable in the tragic end of King Richard. One can well imagine when he heard in his captivity of the execution of the Earl of Salisbury, the son of Lady Montacute of Welsh Bicknor, "he was utterlie in despair," and so "for sorou and hunger he deid in the castle of Pountfret."

The perfect character of Henry of Monmouth warded off all opposition. He was the admiration of his age: "truli a gracious man," as Lydgate calls him. He looked "very much like an angel," says Elmham, in describing his coronation; while, according to Monstrelet he was almost apotheosised by his people after his demise, "*comme silz furent ascertenés qu'il fut ou soit saint, en paradis*." Prophetic as genius often is, it is narrated that he turned sorrowfully to his chamberlain, when told of his son's birth at Windsor Castle, and said: "My lord, Henry of Monmouth shall reign but a short time and shall acquire much, but Henry of Windsor shall reign long and lose all." He expired, we are told, while the priests were chanting, at his request, certain Psalms of David; and so, soothed by the deep spiritual experience of the sweet singer of Israel, he tasted "the joy of salvation," and passed away so serenely that his attendants were unaware that he had died.

It is refreshing to come into contact, as it were, with this grand soul, whose whole existence was heroic. His nobility invests with honour everything with which he has been associated. It is with reverence we gaze upon his shield and helmet in Westminster Abbey, or examine his signature amongst our records, or read his pleasant words; and the tradition of his having slept, a little child, in the old cradle of this memoir, lends an undying interest to its history.