

POEMS CONCERNING  
THE STANLEY FAMILY  
(EARLS OF DERBY)  
1485-1520

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis is an edition of four poems (Lady Bessiye, Bosworth Feilde, Scotish Feilde, and Flodden Feilde) which were written in celebration of the military successes of the family of Stanley, Lords Stanley and Earls of Derby, at the battles of Bosworth (1485) and Flodden (1513). The introduction discusses the manuscripts and editions, the conditions for which the poems were composed, the style of the poems, and their contributions to the history of the period. The poems are newly edited, and the commentaries attempt, as well as elucidating the meanings of obscure lines, to identify the people and places which would have been of interest to the Stanley family and friends.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The preparation of this thesis has necessarily involved visits to parts of the country many miles from Birmingham in pursuit of long-forgotten scraps of local knowledge, and I would like to record my amazement - and thanks - that in every single library I have been in (Birmingham University, Birmingham University's Shakespeare Institute, Birmingham Central Library, the British Library, the Bodleian, Liverpool University, Sheffield University, the John Rylands Library Manchester, Preston Records Library, the Battlefield Centre at Bosworth, and local libraries in Ashton-under Lyne, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Chester, Eccles, Hawarden, Leigh, Middleton, Stalybridge, Wythenshawe) the librarians have responded to my outlandish requests for help in tracking down obscure moments from the past with not only politeness and efficiency, but in almost every case positive enthusiasm. The Earl of Derby's librarian (until 1983) Mrs Diana Kay has been a particularly fruitful source of encouragement and help, and I am grateful to her and to the Earl for allowing me to go and examine the books and manuscripts at Knowsley on so many occasions.

Much useful information about the obscure past can be gained from local amateurs who, for reasons best known to themselves, have made a lifelong study of some very restricted area of interest, and several of these people have opened their treasure-chests to me willingly and, if nothing else, pointed me in the right direction on many occasions: Mr North, verger of St Leonard's Church Middleton; Mr Dean, a local man also from Middleton; Mrs Marshall from Disley; Miss Raybould of the midlands branch of the Richard III society; and the late



Mr D. Corbett of Long Eaton, whose work on the participants at Bosworth and their heraldic devices was simply staggering.

I would also like to thank Dr S.C.Rapson, who gave much encouragement, advice, and time, particularly on matters of presentation.

My greatest debts have been to Professor G.T.Shepherd of Birmingham University, who was a mine of wisdom and inspiration to me and all his students, but who alas died while this thesis was still in preparation, and to my wife and children who willingly undertook so many sacrifices so that I could pursue this research.

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## I N T R O D U C T I O N



## INTRODUCTION

This thesis, which can be seen simply as an edition of four rather obscure poems, is intended rather as a study of a particular centre of poetic production in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. The poems are edited and presented as part of the thesis, but mainly because without them, and especially without the notes on the texts, which illustrate again and again the peculiar local upper-class interest which informs the whole group of poems, the material in the introductory sections would be void of reference.

The particular centre of interest is the noble family of Stanley, raised in 1485 to become Earls of Derby, whose sphere of influence was mainly in South Lancashire, Cheshire, and North Wales, although, depending on how far one pursues cousins and other dependants, it can fairly safely be claimed that they had connections throughout the country. These four poems all emphasise the local atmosphere, however, and it is this social and geographical unity which lies at the heart of the thesis. It would be possible to study the Stanley family and its connections with English literature within many different chronological limits. From that Lord Stanley who, in the middle of the 15th century commissioned the collection now known as Bodley MS Fairfax 16, through the great age of Elizabethan drama, when the Earl of Derby's Players were one of the more important groups by whom and for whom the drama existed; through the connections between the 5th and 6th Earls

with Shakespeare himself, including the suggestion, not without several books in its support, that some of Shakespeare's works were actually written by William, 6th Earl of Derby; on through the 13th Earl, literary patron of Edward Lear, up to the 14th Earl, who, in spare moments snatched from a political career which saw him three times as Prime Minister, translated the works of Homer into English verse: the connections between the family and English Literature are legion.

It happens that the thirty years 1485-1515 saw two major military campaigns in this country, in both of which the Stanleys played a significant and ultimately a decisive role. At Bosworth in 1485, the balance between the two main armies, those of King Richard III and Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, appeared to favour the King. All depended on which side the other two armies in the field, those of Lord Stanley and his brother, Sir William, would join. The outcome is well-known, and the victory went to Henry because certainly one, and probably both (historians are divided) of the Stanley armies threw their power behind the invading army and against the King. Historians are not all convinced that Lord Stanley, whose son George Lord Strange was being held hostage by Richard, joined battle on behalf of the invader, though nearly all would say that his involvement was decisive, but what is agreed is that he did not, as Richard hoped and expected that he would, side with the King.

At Flodden in 1513 the Stanleys, while not this time holding the balance of power, eventually tipped the scales of



battle by a smart out-flanking movement round the edge of the Scots' army, and King Henry VIII, who was not himself at the battle, was quick to acknowledge the part played in the victory by Sir Edward Stanley and his men from Lancashire and Cheshire. This decisive manoeuvre has not always been recognised for what it was by historians, but a contemporary verse-writer<sup>1</sup> introduces Sir Edward as the man 'on whom the matter wholly hinges'; and one later historian, G.F.T. Leather (1937, p. 11), after re-assessing the evidence of the battle, offers his opinion that 'the battle was really won by Sir Edward Stanley.'

The details of the battles are still being fought over, but what is beyond argument is that, as a direct result of these two successes, Thomas, 2nd Lord Stanley, was raised to become 1st Earl of Derby, and Sir Edward Stanley was raised to become Lord Mounteagle. Other Stanley men, cousins, nephews, in-laws, and (extending the limits generously) neighbours and dependants of all sorts, were also involved in these victories, were rewarded for their efforts, and rightly belong in the celebrations.

It is hardly surprising, given that anyone should ever write poems in praise of a family, that Bosworth and Flodden should draw forth poems in praise of the Stanleys. At least six such poems survive, but two of them were clearly composed many years after the events they deal with. It is always difficult to be confident when dating early poems, but the remaining four poems all have the indications (see pp. 77-82, 93-7) of having been composed very soon after the events they



describe, and are therefore in a different category from poems which are already 'historical' when composed.

The four poems, as with most poems until at least the fifteenth century, seem to be intended for oral delivery rather than for silent reading (see p. 126), and there is also a good case to be made for the members of the family and their friends being involved in the composition of the poems (see pp. 42-9). This thesis, then, examines the four poems as oral, self-congratulatory entertainment at one provincial court at one specific moment in history - but tacitly implies that this was by no means the only centre for such esoteric entertainments.

R.F.Green, in his book Poets and Princepleasers (Toronto, 1980), examines the nature of patronage and praise-poetry in (among others) the 15th and 16th centuries. Green's material, however, is almost exclusively concerned with the King's court. This thesis is, as it were, an examination with complete examples of the same subject one step removed socially and rather over a hundred miles removed geographically. Similarities abound, but much is different.

The four poems are called Lady Bessiye, Bosworth Feilde, Scotish Feilde, and Flodden Feilde. These titles are taken from the one manuscript which includes all four poems, but several alternative titles exist in other manuscripts, and many more have been invented by later critics (see pp. 13-14).

These four poems, then, are seen as examples of a specific type of literary production, and the thesis attempts

M A N U S C R I P T S

A N D

E D I T I O N S

## MANUSCRIPTS

The following manuscripts contain versions of these poems:

P = Bishop Percy's Folio Manuscript, B.L. Add. 27879 :

Lady Bessiye pp. 464-79

Bosworth Feilde pp. 434-43

Scotish Feilde pp. 79-90

Flodden Feilde pp. 117-24.

H = B.L. Harley 367 :

Lady Bessiye fols. 89a-100a

Flodden Feilde fols. 120a-125a.

B = The Bateman MS, now lost :

Lady Bessiye.

L = The Lyme MS, John Rylands Library, Manchester :

Scotish Feilde.

S = B.L. Harley 293:

Flodden Feilde fols. 55b-61b.



## TITLES

It is not always clear whether titles of early poems are 'original' or are added later by another hand, which is probably why the Index of Middle English Verse<sup>2</sup> always refers to poems by their first line rather than by their title. Between them these four poems possess a confusing multiplicity of titles in their various manuscripts and in the existing editions. Furthermore, later critics are far from consistent when referring to these poems, often mixing elements from different manuscripts, altering the spelling, adding or subtracting a definite article, or even adding words or phrases which have no manuscript authority, such as 'The Ballad of'. This confusion is nowhere better seen than in connection with Flodden Feilde (or Field), where there are seven poems all of which are somewhere given that title, and critics who are less than rigorous in attention to detail have sometimes referred to the 'wrong' poem.<sup>3</sup>

The titles used in this thesis are, as indicated on p. 10, those used in MS P, which contains all four poems. These titles have no more (and, owing to its late date, probably less) authority than the titles in other manuscripts, but the titles in MS P, or approximations to those titles, are the ones usually, though by no means invariably, used by critics when referring to these poems, so, in the absence of any incontrovertible indications that other titles are either more authentic or more widely used, these titles will be the ones always used in this thesis unless in quoting from someone

who uses another.

The complete titles on the manuscripts are as follows:

Lady Bessiye

P : Lady Bessiye.

B : The Most Pleasant Song of Lady Bessy,  
the eldest daughter of King Edward the  
Fourth; and how she married King Henry  
the Seventh of the House of Lancaster.

H : Ladye Bessie, or the Princesse  
Eliz-abeth, after wife of King H. VII.

Bosworth Feilde

P : Bosworth Feilde.

Scotish Feilde

P : Scotish Feilde.

L : (title missing)

Flodden Feilde

P : Flodden Feilde

H : Flowden Feilde

S : A ballate of the Battalle of Floden  
Feeld foughte betweene the Earle of  
Surrey and the kinge of Skots.

Two other Stanley poems occasionally referred to during the thesis also have such a multiplicity of titles that some early attempt at clarification is desirable:

- 1). The Battle of Floddan Field. This, not to be confused with Flodden Feilde (though it frequently has been), is a much longer poem about the battle, written one generation after the battle, i.e. about 1550. For details of manuscripts and editions of this poem see 'The Poems Called Flodden Field'.<sup>4</sup> All quotations in this thesis will be from the edition of H.Weber (Edinburgh, 1808).

2). The Stanley Poem. This is the title I shall use for the metrical chronicle of the family written in 1562 by Bishop Thomas Stanley, a 'natural' son of Lord Mounteagle. There are several manuscripts which contain versions of this poem:

B.L. Harley 541, fols. 183a-206b

B.L. Add. 5830, fols, 105a-121a

Bodley Rawlinson Poet. 143, pp. 12-41

Knowsley Hall (the Earl of Derby's residence) has two further manuscript copies.

The poem was revised in 1619 by R.G., 'a clergyman of Chester', and the manuscripts of this are:

Two at Knowsley Hall, one the original and the other a copy of B.L. Add. 5860, pp. 327-80, which is itself a copy of the original at Knowsley.

The only printed copy of this poem is in J.O.Halliwel, Palatine Anthology (London, 1850).

Both poems, though late, are constant sources of useful, though often highly coloured, information and interesting anecdote about the Stanley family, and any student of the family should not ignore their contribution.



## PREVIOUS EDITIONS

Bishop Percy's Folio Manuscript, which contains versions of all four poems, has been printed in three volumes edited by F.J.Furnivall and J.W.Hales (London, 1867-8):

<u>Lady Bessiye</u>	vol. iii, pp. 319-63
<u>Bosworth Feilde</u>	vol. iii, pp. 233-59
<u>Scotish Feilde</u>	vol. i, pp. 199-234
<u>Flodden Feilde</u>	vol. i, pp. 313-40

Lady Bessiye has been published a further three times:

ed. T.Heywood, The Most Pleasant Song of Lady Bessy (London, 1829) - an edition of MS B only.

ed. J.O.Halliwel, 'The Most Pleasant Song of Lady Bessy', Publications of the Percy Society, 20 (1847) - versions of MSS B and H.

ed. L.F.W.Jewitt, Ballads and Songs of Derbyshire (London, 1867), pp. 12-55 - MS B only.

Scotish Feilde has been printed two further times:

ed. J.Robson, 'The Scotish Feilde', Publications of the Chetham Society, 37 (1856) - MS L only.

ed. J.P.Oakden, 'Scotish Ffeilde', Publications of the Chetham Society, n.s. 94 (1935) - from MSS L and P.

Flodden Feilde has been printed three further times:

ed. H.Weber, The Battle of Floddan Field (Edinburgh, 1808), pp. 366-89. (N.B. Flodden Feilde is printed as an appendix to the later, longer poem of approximately the same name.) - Text from MSS H and S.

ed. T.Evans, Old Ballads, 3rd edn. enlarged and revised by R.H.Evans, 4 vols. (London, 1810), vol. iii, pp. 58-76. (N.B. Flodden Feilde does not appear in the first two editions of this collection.) - Text from MSS H and S.

ed. F.J.Child, English and Scottish Popular Ballads, reprinted 4 vols. (New York, 1957), vol. iii, pp. 353-60. (N.B. Flodden Feilde is printed as an appendix to another poem of approximately the same name, but a different poem of approximately the same name from that to which Flodden Feilde was an appendix in Weber's edition. This emphasises the need for caution in searching for any poem called Flodden Feilde or similar.) - Text from MS P only.

#### THE MANUSCRIPTS

P.

Bishop Percy of Dromore discovered his folio manuscript in about 1750 in the house of his friend Humphrey Pitt at Shifnal in Shropshire. It was being used by a maid to light the fire. Percy rescued the manuscript and used some of the poems in it for his Reliques of Ancient English Poetry (London, 1765). After his death many scholars tried to obtain access to the manuscript, but the Bishop's heirs stubbornly refused on the grounds that one day some member of the family might want to edit and publish it. It was not until the 1860s that Furnivall and Hales persuaded the family that they should allow it to be published, and after those two gentlemen had done their work, the manuscript was sold to its present home, the British Museum

(or Library).

The manuscript contains over a hundred poems of varying length, and of dates ranging from the 15th century to 1643, the latest identifiable date after which one of the poems ('The King Enjoys his Rights Againe') must have been composed. The handwriting of the manuscript is put by the editors at around 1650, which accords well with the internal evidence of date.

The Pages of the manuscript measure 39.5 cms. x 14 cms., but would originally have been longer, for when Bishop Percy sent it to be bound, his 'ignorant bookbinder' trimmed off the tops and bottoms of the pages, thus depriving us, in several places, of some lines of verse. Scotish Feilde has particularly suffered from his work. In addition some pages, and again Scotish Feilde seems the worst affected, have at some time in their history been laterally folded; the pages have cracked at the folds, and many words on or near the folds have been destroyed. With its present protective binding in the British Library, further damage should be prevented.

The scribe, who may have been Thomas Blount, a man from Worcestershire,<sup>5</sup> exhibits many modernising tendencies which can be seen if his versions of the poems are set against what are known to be older and more authoritative manuscripts.<sup>6</sup> In Scotish Feilde he not only modernises much of the deliberately antique vocabulary and grammar, but also on several occasions alters the word-order to accord with 'orthodox' usage, thereby destroying the rhythm and the



characteristic syntax of the alliterative long line in which the poem is composed. These alterations can be seen by comparing his version with that in MS L (see pp. 120-1). He is not always so meddling, however, and a comparison of forms used throughout the collection indicates that he did not always correct to his own usage but was often prepared to copy an old-fashioned form. This results in such an inconsistent set of forms that it is almost impossible to draw any conclusions about the language, dialect, or even the metre, either of the poems themselves or of the manuscript, for, it being so late and so changed, there are forms within the manuscript from many different times and places. As the collection is such a linguistic rag-bag, it is slightly surprising that nineteenth-century editors spoke with such confidence about the dialects of the poems they were editing from this manuscript. Only if a poem exists in other manuscripts as well can deductions about the dialect be more confidently made.

B.

The Bateman manuscript of Lady Bessie was owned by Mr William Bateman of Youghreave in Derbyshire at least between 1829, when Heywood edited it, and 1847, when Halliwell (1847, p. iii) reports that Mr Bateman still possessed the manuscript. What has since happened to it is not known.

The handwriting was put by Heywood (1829, p. v) as being 'of the reign of Charles the Second', which would make it the latest of all these five manuscripts. Heywood calls it 'a

very slovenly performance', and tells us that some corrections have been made by a co/contemporary, but not, apparently, to much /<sup>n</sup> effect, for Heywood finally refers (p. vi) to 'the incompatency [sic] of the copyist and of his reviser to the task which they had undertaken'.

The language, when compared with MS H, is considerably modernised, but, as in MS P, many concessions are made to the original, particularly for the sake of the rhyme, so again this has the appearance of new wine in old bottles.

H.

Harley 367 is, according to the B.L. Catalogue,<sup>7</sup>

a book in folio wherein are contained many papers and fragments, with various poems, written by the hands of Mr John Stowe and others, now bound up together.

Although many of the pieces are, as stated, in the hand of John Stow, there are also many pieces which refer to events considerably later than his death (1604), the latest one I identified being a reference to the dissolution of parliament by Charles I. The two Stanley poems in this collection (Lady Bessiye and Flodden Feilde) could have belonged to Stow, as the hand-writing is put at late sixteenth century by A.G.Watson (1966, p. 164) or, even more precisely, at 1560-80 by D.A.Lawton (1978, p. 46 and 55), apparently on the advice of Watson.

The two poems are on similar sized paper, 30.5 cms. x 20.25 cms. and are in an identical hand, which is not Stow's. They are the only two pieces in the collection on such paper and in such a hand, and yet they were apparently not part of the same collection when they were in the library of Sir Simonds d'Ewes in the seventeenth century.<sup>8</sup> It was only when Sir Simonds' library was added to the Harleian collection that the two pieces found their way almost together, which clearly they should be.

The scribe is extremely neat, careful, and conscientious, and, especially by comparison with all the other manuscripts discussed here, seems to retain many early forms in both grammar and vocabulary.

S.

Harley 293 is, according to the B.L. Catalogue,<sup>9</sup>

a book in folio consisting of certain tracts and loose papers now bound up together treating of the households, coronations etc, of our kings; the Arms, Honor, and Discents [sic] of several eminent English families.

According to A.G.Watson (1966, p. 163), the pages which contain the copy of Flodden Feilde are in the hand of Ralph Starkey, an antiquarian who died in 1628. When he died, all his papers were purchased by Sir Simonds d'Ewes, from whom they eventually came into the Harleian collection.

Starkey had a poor reputation as a scribe and scholar:



Sir Simonds d'Ewes calls him 'an ignorant, mercenary, indigent man',<sup>10</sup> and certainly if his copy of Flodden Feilde is representative, the reputation is fully deserved. The work is hurried, untidy, and very badly set out: despite the clear stanzaic pattern of the poem, he writes as many lines to a page as happen to fit, with the result that in some stanzas one line is at the bottom of one page and the remainder at the top of the next, or any other division as it happens to fall out. If, as will be suggested (see pp.121-3) he was copying from MS H, his deliberate and his careless alterations reach epidemic proportions.

L.

In many ways the Lyme MS of Scotish Feilde found by Beamont at Lyme Hall near Disley in Cheshire is the most interesting of all these five manuscripts. It is at present owned by Lord Newton, whose family name is Legh, and as the most likely author of the poem (see pp. 41-6) was a member of the Legh family, the continued existence of this manuscript in a collateral branch of the same family gives it an air of authenticity not present in any of the other manuscripts. The Leghs of Baguley, among whom was the likely author, became extinct in 1750, and it is highly likely that any treasured family possessions would have passed to the nearest branch of the Legh family, both genealogically and geographically, which was the Leghs of Lyme, of which Lord Newton is the present representative.

The manuscript, discovered by Beamont in 1851, has

remained in the family's possession ever since, though not always to their knowledge. In 1903 an Oxford student called Miss Hugon wrote to Lord Newton (grandfather of the present Lord Newton) asking if she might view the manuscript. He denied all knowledge of it, but after several letters either way it was eventually re-discovered and Miss Hugon worked on it in Oxford. She made a facsimile of it, which is now to be found among her papers in the Bodleian Library (dep. c 129-30). It is fortunate this facsimile was taken, for of the six strips she had to work on, two have since been lost. The manuscript was lent to the British Museum (Library) during the second world war, being returned to Lord Newton (father of the present Lord Newton) in 1947. In 1971 I wrote to the present Lord Newton asking if I might view the manuscript, but he, like his grandfather before him, knew nothing of it. Again, however, after several letters either way, it came to light again in 1973, but with two of its strips missing. After I returned what remains of the manuscript to Lord Newton, he deposited it with the rest of the family papers in the John Rylands Library in Manchester. The manuscript is in Elizabethan handwriting, and is made up of thin strips (36 x 10.5 cms.) of vellum, which were at one time pasted together to form one long roll. Now only strips 5 and 6 remain together; strips 3 and 4 are missing. Strip 1, which was discovered separately from the others even in 1851, is badly damaged, missing the title and the first 24 lines of the poem, and having most of lines 33-7 removed by a large tear. Further lines (255-7) are



unaccountably missing, possibly from a copying error. Even with the Bodleian facsimile, therefore, the manuscript is far from complete, yet it remains, with its association with the Legh family, the most interesting of all these manuscripts.

It retains, as might be expected, a far older appearance in its grammar, vocabulary, and word-order than the version in MS P, and is distinctly north-west-midland in many of its inflected endings, such as -en for the 3rd person plural of the present tense.

#### PREVIOUS EDITIONS

P.

The edition of Bishop Percy's Folio Manuscript by Furnivall and Hales provides an accurate reading of the texts (although I have found the occasional small error), and some interesting, though very brief introductory material to some of the poems. Their commentaries, however, are very limited in scope, with alternative readings from other manuscripts at best sporadically and often inaccurately noticed. Their inaccuracy is not altogether surprising, as they would rely on published versions, often themselves inaccurate, as texts for their alternative readings rather than the manuscripts themselves, as Hales himself confessed in a letter to Miss Hugon (Bodley, dep. C 130, 271). Vocabulary and other textual problems are hardly touched on, and historical explanations, so important for a fuller appreciation of these Stanley poems, are almost non-existent, and often inaccurate when they do occur.

Child's edition of Flodden Feilde from MS P is simply a re-print of Furnivall and Hales' text, with slightly better notice of alternative readings from other manuscripts, but no other information.

Lady Bessiye.

Heywood's 1829 edition of this text is, in the absence of manuscript B, the best we have available, and his introduction is informative, though brief. His notes, though few, are useful where they occur.

Halliwell recognised that the versions in MSS B and H were so different as almost to be two separate poems, so he printed both in his 1847 edition. His text of B is, as he acknowledges (p. vi), copied from Heywood's edition rather than from the manuscript itself. Unfortunately an error, presumably by a printer, has led to 64 lines being omitted,<sup>11</sup> which makes a nonsense of the narrative at that point in the poem. Surprisingly, this error was obviously not noticed by Halliwell or anyone else, for in 1850 the 1847 texts were re-printed with the 64 lines still missing. His reading of MS H suffers from no such error.

Halliwell's introduction is brief, being mostly a few relevant quotations from Heywood's 1829 introduction. There is no commentary.

Jewitt's 1867 edition is simply a re-print of Halliwell's re-printed re-print of Heywood's edition of MS B, which thus still has the 64 lines missing. There are five lines of introduction and no commentary.

### Scotish Feilde.

Robson's 1856 edition is from MS L only, for althought he knew, because it had been mentioned in Percy's Reliques,<sup>12</sup> that a version of the poem existed in the folio manuscript (from which he also discovered the title - or something like it), he, like many other frustrated antiquarians of the age, could not obtain access to it.

When he prepared his text, he did not at first have to hand the first strip - it was discovered separately - so he started numbering the lines at what is (in this edition) line 74, and continued numbering in half-lines, which is how he printed the poem. He later received the first strip, which he left unnumbered, and which he added to his introduction in time to be printed but too late to be included and re-numbered with the rest of the poem which had already, we must assume, been set and printed.

Above the extra portion of text at the end of his introduction Robson says:

The editor is indebted to the kindness of Canon Raines for the following additional fragment of the first portion of the ballad, which he found among the Lyme manuscripts and added to his valuable Lancashire collections, but which came to hand after the remainder of the poem was in print.

It is not unambiguously clear from this announcement whether it was Robson or Raines who actually transcribed this portion of the manuscript, but I would be fairly confident that it must



have been Raines: Robson's transcription of strips 2-6 of the manuscript is very competent indeed, but in the printed transcription of the first strip there are over ninety errors in forty-seven lines, many of them small matters such as an 'e' added or omitted at the end of a word, but many of them ludicrously far from what the manuscript actually says. At line 69, for example, the manuscript reads 'he wyndeth with the vaward'. The printed transcription is 'he royndeth the coward'. Matters are made slightly worse by a lengthy and impressive note on the old verb 'roynt'. Thus when Furnivall and Hales in their edition of Scotish Feilde say in a note that the Lyme MS reads 'he royndeth the coward' they mean that they have read that Robson has been told by Raines that that is what it says.

Robson's introduction is brief, much of it being taken up with that part of the Reliques in which Scotish Feilde is discussed. He also makes a few comments on the historical aspects of the poem, but these are often inaccurate, particularly with regard to the positioning of the English forces at the battle. As MS L is missing twenty-three lines at that point, his errors are excusable, but errors nonetheless. He completes his introduction with some etymological remarks, mostly about the word 'triden'. There are a few notes, but nothing very informative is provided in them: Robson seems to regard Sir Walter Scott's Marmion as the fons et origo of authentic information about the battle of Flodden.



Oakden's 1935 edition of Scotish Feilde is the best available edition of any of the poems. His introduction gives valuable information and his notes are helpful. Unfortunately (from my point of view) Oakden's interest in the poem was almost entirely philological, so his treatment of the historical setting and accuracy is minimal. Indeed, for historical comment he refers the reader to Robson's 1856 edition, which, as stated above, is far from satisfactory.

His text is a composite version from both P and L but, although he says he went to Lyme Hall to work on MS L, his readings from the early part of the poem seem borrowed from the disastrous Raines/Robson collaboration.

#### Flodden Feilde.

The editions of this poem by Weber (1808) and Evans (1810) are of little value. Neither appearing to have any rigid standards with regard to the text, Weber picking his way as he feels and with no explanations between the texts of MSS H and S, and Evans going one stage further by attempting to 'modernise' some of the less comprehensible parts of the poem. This has resulted in some schoolboy howlers such as when 'red' (line 44) meaning "read" (past tense) is rendered as 'blushed'. Neither has more than a token introduction; neither has any notes.

Of the available editions of these four poems, then, the most encouraging thing that can be said is that there is some sort of text available for each one, although the best text (Furnivall and Hales) is of one of the least reliable

manuscripts. Heywood's text of MS B is the nearest we can get to that manuscript, but his edition was in 1847 so rare that Halliwell felt the poem should be re-published. Oakden's edition of Scotish Feilde is a judicious mixture of MSS P and L, but he greatly favours P, whereas L, although it is less complete than P, is a far closer approximation to the original version of the poem.

What gave the greatest significance to these four poems when they were first produced was their celebration of the cunning plans, the organisational brilliance, the heroism, the personal sacrifices, the near-defeats and the final triumphant victories of the Stanleys and their associates. They are not simply chronicles recounting historical events; they are anthems extolling the virtues and the glories of this man, of that family, of this manor, of that village, and completely, utterly, entirely to disregard that aspect of these poems, as every single edition has done, is like providing a history of Aston Villa without ever mentioning that the organisation plays football.

In this edition, texts will be provided of all four poems, mainly for convenience of reference in the case of Lady Bessiye and Bosworth Feilde where only minor alterations and corrections have been made to already existing printed editions; the texts of Scotish Feilde and Flodden Feilde, however, are completely re-edited.

The main contribution to be made by this edition will be, it is hoped, in the commentaries, where full attention is

paid to the historical events, the local scenery, and most of all the people about whom, by whom and for whom the poems were created.



# THE POEMS

## THE POEMS

When folk ere festid and fed, fayn wald þai here  
Sum farand þing efter fode to fayn þare hert.  
Sum couettis and has comforth to carpe and to lestyn  
Of curtaissy of knythode, of craftis of armys,  
Of kyngis at has conquirid and ouer comyn landis.

### The Wars of Alexander

edited by W.W.Skeat, E.E.T.S., e.s. 47 (1886),  
lines 1-2 and 8-10.

Leod<sup>/</sup> waes asungen,  
gleomannes gyd. Gamen eft astah,  
beorhtode bencsweg, byrelas sealdon  
win of wunderfatum.

/8

Beowulf, ed. F.J.Klaeber (Boston, 1922), lines 1159-62

When faced with four poems all of which concern the military fortunes of the Stanley family at the battles of Bosworth (22nd August 1485) and Flodden (9th September 1513), it is advisable to attempt to see them for what they are rather than for what we (or others) might assume them to be. It is always right to investigate with an open mind such matters as author, audience, method of publication, sources, provenance, and such general considerations as: what the author believed were his obligations in composing the poem; what the audience might expect from their author; what future (if any) the author envisaged for his poem. These, and other questions which <sup>ls</sup> can illuminate, are worth asking of any poem, but are especially worth asking, it seems to me, of a collection of poems such as these from the relatively uncharted depths of late mediaeval Lancashire or Cheshire. It is too easy, and too obviously prone to simplistic reading, merely to make generic assumptions about them and then to read them in the light of those assumptions, which has been, up to now, the common fate of these poems.

One of the most common generic assumptions to have been made about these poems is that they are ballads. In one manuscript of Flodden Feilde (Harley 293) the word 'ballate' is actually incorporated into the title of the poem: 'A ballate of the Battalle of Floden Feild foughte betweene the Earle of Surrey and the kinge of Skots'. That one manuscript, however, is the only one of the eight manuscripts to use the word, and the scribe, Ralph Starkey, is one of the least competent of



all, having been called by Sir Simonds d'Ewes 'an ignorant, mercenary, indigent man'.<sup>13</sup> Yet all four poems, both singly and in groups, have been frequently referred to as 'ballads' by almost all their editors and by almost every critic who writes about them.<sup>14</sup> Indeed so accepted has the word become that it is now sometimes silently incorporated into the titles of the poems with no manuscript or other authority for its inclusion.<sup>15</sup>

To label such poems as 'ballads', however, is not at all helpful. G.L.Kittredge (1932, p. xi) warns us that, 'It should be noted that in common parlance the term 'ballad' is very loosely applied.'

E.K.Chambers too (1945, p. 137 and 153), was suspicious of the word:

Much confusion has been introduced into the history of literature by a loose use of the term 'ballad'... It is a pity that recent historians of literature have not been careful to restrict the meaning of the term.

And F.J.Gummere (1894, p.3) makes the extent of the confusion clear when he says:

Nearly every variety of short poem in English has been called a ballad, from the translated songs of Solomon, 'The Ballad of Ballads', through stirring lays in love and adventure and cheery lyrics of emotion, down to those feats of journalistic verse which filled the times of great Elizabeth with tales

of a 'monstrous pigge' or forecast of an earthquake.

Nor is it only, as Gummere suggests, 'short' poems which stand under this umbrella: Lady Bessiye has frequently been called a 'ballad', and in its longest version (MS B) is 1319 lines long which, however relative the word might be, can hardly be regarded as 'short'.

Part of the problem is that writers have used the term 'ballad' without distinguishing it from other forms: Furnivall and Hales, for example (1867-8, vol. iii, pp. 319-29), refer within two pages to Lady Bessiye as 'poem', 'ballad', or 'song', three terms which they appear to regard as synonymous. N.L.Frazer (1914, p. 5 and 9), setting himself the task of writing about poetry which dealt with historical matters, excluded ballads from the realm of 'Poetry' altogether: those who wanted to know about ballads were scornfully referred to Mr Firth's article on them: he was going to discuss proper sixteenth-century 'Poetry'. More recently D.A.Lawton (1978, p. 49), one of very few writers to acknowledge the true nature of these poems, refers to 'an extensive ballad literature on the Stanleys', but on the following page refers to a poem as being 'also part of a Stanley epic', thus suggesting that 'ballad' and 'epic' are synonymous.

As it is clear that the word 'ballad' has changed meaning many times, so that what was a 'ballad' to one century might not be to another, and vice-versa, it is slightly surprising that so few works about ballads appear to recognise

or comment on this. There is a sort of silent belief that everyone really knows what ballads are, so no more need be said.

One writer who did recognise this constant change in the meaning of the word 'ballad' was F. Sidgwick (1925, p. xix), who isolated four quite separate meanings:

1. A song to accompany dancing.

2. A song of sentiment or romance.

3. Any popular song.

4. 'Its modern meaning', which he carefully refrains from defining, thus rather weakening his point.

These four are not the only meanings the word has had, and it is still gaining new ones. In the field of pop music, for example, the term is used to define the speed of a song rather than anything to do with its form or content, 'ballad-tempo' being slow and gentle as opposed to, say 'rock'.

The uncertainty and division among critics has led to some accusing others (as I am now) of attaching the label 'ballad' to poems which they (the accusers) believe not to be ballads. W.P.Ker, for example (1910, p. 196), talking about Icelandic 'Rimur', said, 'They may be called ballads, but that is not their right name.' G.G.Smith (article on 'Ballad' in Encyclopaedia Britannica) states categorically that F.J.Child has made an error in including Judas in his collection of ballads: 'Judas is not a ballad.' E.K.Chambers (1945, p. 153) agrees: 'I do not think it can properly be regarded as a ballad', and adds his opinion that another of Child's



inclusions, St Stephen and Herod, is 'hardly in the ballad manner'. C.L.Kingsford (1913, p.242), discussing a group of poems about the loss of the English possessions in France, declares authoritatively: 'They are rude satires, not ballads.' D.C.Fowler (1968, p. 6 and 10) is very clear in his own mind what does not constitute a ballad:

There can be little doubt that carols of this kind were a permanent feature of the folksong tradition. But they were not ballads....What needs to be stressed is that these early texts ... were not ballads at all.

At the time in the eighteenth century when people first began to make collections of ballads - whatever the word might mean - they were certainly conscious of the imprecise limits of the word they were using. William Shenstone (ed. 1939, p. 577), who corresponded with Percy about his (Percy's) collection of ballads, asked him: 'Do you make any difference between a ballad and a song?' then pre-empted Percy's reply by providing one of his own:

For my part, I who love by all means of different words to bundle up distinct ideas, am apt to consider a ballad as containing some little story, either real or invented,

a difference he elaborated (p. 613) in a later letter to Hull:

As I love to avail myself of different words to bundle up ideas in different parcels, it is become habitual with me to call that a ballad which

describes or implies some action; on the other hand I term that a song which contains only an expression of sentiment.

The idea of narrative as the key to the definition has been echoed in this century by E.K.Chambers (1945, p.137):

I feel sure that any definition of ballad ought to be primarily in terms of the narrative which it records and not in those of the lyrical element which accompanies it.

Whatever may now be the criteria, narrative was not among them in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when these four poems were written. Chambers (1945, pp. 137-8) says that at that time the word meant

lyrical ... in the widest sense, and not narrative ... no fifteenth century narrative poem is ever called in contemporary documents a ballad.

The original meaning as suggested by Sidgwick (1925, p. xix), 'song to accompany dance' can be accurately observed in poems of the time. In Dunbar's 'The Golden Targe', for example (ed. 1932, p.116, lines 127-30), he describes the assembly of the gods:

And eviry one of thir, in grene arayit,  
On harp or lute full merily thai playit,  
And sang balletis with michty notis clere:  
Ladyes to dance full sobirly assayit.

Contemporary with Dunbar is the account of the wedding of King James IV of Scotland with Margaret, daughter of Henry VII,

known as the Fyancells of Margaret,<sup>16</sup> in which, coincidentally, we see a member of the Stanley family involved in the performance of such a 'ballad':

Apon the clarycorde Sir Edward Stannely playd a  
Ballade and sange therwith ... Afterward the said Sir  
Edward and two of hys servaunts sange a ballade or  
two, wherof the Kynge gave him good thaunke.

Among several other examples of early ballads which are clearly not narrative is that written in prison by Antony Lord Woodville,<sup>17</sup> or those 'In Praise of the new Queene' sung at the coronation of Anne Boleyn.<sup>18</sup>

The above selection of quotations about ballads is simply intended to demonstrate the unreliability of the word as a precise tool of criticism. It means so many things at different times and to different people that it would be hard to say that the word has a generally agreed meaning. This is tacitly admitted by most writers who take 'the ballad' as their subject, for they usually begin by defining what the term will mean for them, so that their arguments often tend towards circularity. Furthermore, no two writers will agree on the features which might enable us to recognise in any particular poem an instance of the type: some insist on narrative; some on oral, or even sung features; some on stylistic details; some on the absence of anything resembling a written text; and some on considerations of the social class within which the 'ballad' is to be performed.



With such uncertainty of definition, to label these four Stanley poems as 'ballads' and to assume that everyone will understand exactly what kind of poems they are is pure optimism. Even worse is to have a clear (if subjectively defined) notion of what ballads are, and then to foist that notion onto the Stanley poems simply because they have, in certain places, been called ballads. C.H.Firth, for example (1908, p.21), in his article confidently entitled 'The Ballad History of the Reigns of Henry VII and Henry VIII', began by announcing ex cathedra what ballads 'are':

About the events which happened in their time it is difficult to know what the common people, who formed the mass of the nation, thought. Here the ballads can help us, because they were the literature of the populace, composed by men of the people for the people, reflecting popular opinion and helping to shape it.

Having established this, Firth went on to illustrate how several poems, including all four of these Stanley poems, conformed to this 'definition'.

Yet the Stanley poems do no such thing, and if looked at in isolation from the term 'ballad' will be seen to be productions of quite a different kind. Although, therefore, in some respects the poems can be thought of as having similarities to some other poems which have also been called 'ballads', it seems far safer to ignore the term, and to attempt to look at the Stanley poems in a literary and social

context independent of any pre-selected generic descriptions. It is interesting and significant that F.J.Child, whose enormous and comprehensive collection was described by F.J.Gummere (1903-4, p. 78) as 'itself a definition of balladry', includes none of the Stanley poems in his collection (with the non-counting exception of Flodden Feilde, which he prints not as a ballad but as an appendix to a ballad called 'Flodden Field').

Of the poems themselves, it is first of all apparent that they have very little connection with Firth's 'common people'. The audience they are aimed at seems to be an audience composed of the family and friends of the Stanleys, local dignitaries, many of whose names, or whose fathers' and uncles' names, are mentioned in the poems. The interest in the poems is almost exclusively in the actions and arguments of the upper class, with involvement by 'other ranks' kept to a minimum: where messengers or servants appear, it is their function rather than their essential humanity that we are invited to observe. The only non-aristocrat who takes the centre of the stage for more than a passing moment is James Garsyde, the yeoman, who in Flodden Feilde features in a short incident; but even there his function, and the function of the whole incident (lines 239-352), is solely to confer added glory on the Earl of Derby. The tone of the episode is: "Look! even the common people worshipped him, and justifiably so in view of his benevolent consideration of those who served him: witness James Garsyde, ..." But aside from James Garsyde, the



dramatis personae are without exception from the top rank in English society, the King, the Queen, Dukes, Earls, Knights; the members of the Stanley family and their friends, the sort of people pictured as forming a social group by F.Walker (1939, p. 51):

The immense personal influence of the Stanleys has been one of the most consistent features of the history of this part of Lancashire ... The head of the Stanleys had an unrivalled claim to the allegiance of the vast majority of landowners of South-West Lancashire.

This group is the group the authors deal with from first to last, and D.A.Lawton (1978, p. 52) must be right when he suggests that

It is surely for this social group, many of whose members are identified by name in the poems ... that these poems were written.

As well as the subject matter concerning the highest in the land, and as well as the likely audience being precisely those people who are the actors in the poems, there is further evidence to suggest that at least some if not all the authors were also from that class. It has sometimes been assumed that these poems were composed by minstrels in the employ of the Stanley family,<sup>19</sup> but there is no reason to suppose that such minstrels were in fact the authors.

The clearest statement of authorship comes at the end of Scotish Feilde (lines 418-20):



He was a gentilman, by Jesu, that this jest made.

At Baguley that burne his biding place had.

If these lines can be trusted, they point to the author of the poem being a member of the well-connected gentry family of Legh of Baguley. (Baguley is today part of Greater Manchester, about six miles south-south-west of the city centre, and Baguley Hall, where the Legh family lived, still stands, recently repaired, in almost its original form.) Bishop Percy, in a marginal note (fol. 90) on his manuscript, seems to accept the ascription, for he writes, 'Baguleigh in Cheshire, the seat of the Leighs [sic]'. Since the Bishop's time, the poem has often been accepted as having been composed by a member of the Legh family. Indeed, one historian, C. Balshaw (1855, p. 90), has exaggerated the Legh author's reputation far beyond what even the most generous interpretation would allow:

Dr Gower, in a letter to Mr Harwood, says that one of the Leghs of Baguley wrote several historical poems in the reign of Henry VII [sic]; the manuscript is ... entitled 'Scottish Fielde'.

Such unbounded faith in the Legh authorship has not, however, always been demonstrated. In his 1856 edition of the poem, J. Robson (p. vi) offered his opinion that the last seven lines of the poems were

most likely not the work of the poet, but of the minstrel who sang it, and who was desirous of gaining credence by the declaration of his authority.

Following Robson's lead, J.P. Oakden in his 1935 edition (p. x)

says,

Robson takes the lines to refer to the minstrel who sang the poem, but this seems unlikely. The last line is admittedly a conclusion added by the minstrel.'

In fact, as can be seen from the above quotation by Robson, he did not take the lines to 'refer to' the minstrel, but rather to have been added by him.

It is, of course, possible that the last seven lines (or the last one line) were added by some hand other than the author's; but for several reasons this is unlikely. First, from a stylistic point of view, however inadequate Scottish Feilde is as a poem - and it has received some severe criticism - it cannot be denied that its author was well aware of the stylistic conventions of the poems of the alliterative revival. Indeed, J.P.Oakden (1930/35, vol. ii, p. 83), the fiercest critic of the poem, has pointed out that it leaves

the impression of a mosaic derived from earlier works, for quite half the poem consists of phrases of all types which can easily be paralleled in other alliterative poems.

Given such familiarity with the alliterative tradition, it is surely unlikely that the author would end his poem in a way quite untypical of that tradition, which a sudden ending at line 417 would be, however 'final' its sentiments. It is far more likely that he would end in a way sanctioned by the earlier poems of the revival. Two common and typical features

often found at the ends of such poems are, a). an appeal to authority, and b). a request for God's blessing. Most alliterative poems have one or both of these features, but a particularly illustrative example is to be found in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (lines 2522-30), where both features are present at the end, and neither can be accused of being unauthorial additions, both being bound up in the 'bob and wheel' of the poem's metrical structure:

þus in Arthurus day þis aunter bitidde,  
þe Brutus bokez þerof beres wyttenesse;  
Syþen Brutus, þe bolde burne, boȝed hider fyrst,  
After þe segge and þe assaute watz sesed at Troye  
iwysse,

Mony aunterez here-biforne

Haf fallen suche er þis.

Now þat bere þe croun of þorne,

he bryng vus to his blysse.

As Scotish Feilde contains exactly those two features at its conclusion, no doubt about the authenticity of the lines need be harboured on stylistic grounds.

Secondly, the fact that Scotish Feilde is a poem of the alliterative revival will immediately place it, if the usually accepted theory is right, among the upper classes. Malory in his Morte d'Arthure (ed. 1967, vol. i, p. 375) points out that a knowledge of hunting terms is a test whereby 'all men of worshyp may discever a jantylman', from which simple



test A.C. Spearing (1970, p. 11) concludes that the Gawain poet must have been a 'jantylman' writing for 'jantylmen'. J.R. Hulbert (1931) has propounded a 'hypothesis' according to which the poems of the revival represent a deliberately English, baronial opposition to the French-influenced London court-poetry of the fourteenth century, and, although his hypothesis has not met with universal acceptance,<sup>20</sup> other indications, such as the library lists of great mediaeval houses investigated by E. Salter (1966-7), and the manuscript involvement - where both the region and the years are very close to the composition of Scotish Feilde - of gentlemen as demonstrated by A. Luttrell (1958), make the argument for upper-class participation in the alliterative revival very strong, so the assertion that 'a gentilman' composed Scotish Feilde need come as no surprise, and suggestions of minstrel alternatives are unnecessary.

Thirdly, the evidence provided by the Lyme Manuscript of the poem, which is still owned by a collateral branch of the Legh family (the Leghs of Baguley having become extinct in 1750), strongly supports the claim that the author was indeed a member of the family of Legh of Baguley. The Leghs of Lyme, who now own the manuscript, were the nearest cousins, both genealogically and geographically, when the Baguley branch ended, and both families were related by several marriages to the Stanleys themselves. The continued existence of this, the earliest surviving manuscript of any of these Stanley poems, among the direct descendants of the man declared in the poem to

be its author, weighs heavily in favour of the claim. Even the usually-cautious J.P.Oakden (1935 edition, p. x) allows that 'there is some ground for believing that /the gentleman/ “//” in question was the author.'

The poem Lady Bessiye has no overt statement of authorship like that in Scotish Feilde, but it is thought that the most likely author was Humphrey Brereton, an 'esquire' in the service of Lord Stanley, who (Brereton) takes a central role in the poem.

The main reason for this assumption is that the author occasionally lapses into first-person narrative while describing the actions of Brereton, first (lines 555-6), when the porter at Lathom

forthwith opned me the gate

And received both my horse and me

and again (lines 882-3) when the porter at Beggrames Abbey

Welcomed me full heartily

And received then my mules three.

This divergence into first person narrative would be hard to explain if it were not authorial.

A second reason for believing Brereton to have been the author is that the details of his involvement in the action are so personal and intricate that he must at least have been involved in the composition. Lord Stanley is mentioned by name (that name being the Earl of Derby) thirty-one times, Lady Bessy fifty-one times, but Humphrey Brereton sixty-six times,



which gives some idea of how central a role he takes in the action. Firth (1908, p. 26), accepting without question the claim for Brereton's authorship without apparently noticing that it contradicts his theory about 'the common people', points out that the detailed descriptions in the poem 'seem to bear the stamp of personal observation rather than imagination'. That Brereton was indeed the poem's author is the opinion of all the poem's previous editors,<sup>21</sup> and of many others who have written about the poem.<sup>22</sup> All of them refer to Brereton's apparent closeness to the action. Agnes Strickland (1843, vol. iv, p. 58) talks of the surprisingly detailed accuracy of the account - surprising, that is, if the poem were not by Brereton. Furnivall and Hales in their edition of the poem (1867-8, vol. iii, p. 321) give as their reason for accepting Brereton as author the idea that, because the main interest of the plot centred around Lord Stanley and Lady Bessy,

Probably no-one but Brereton would have described so carefully Brereton's movements ... This author knows well and describes every passage of them.

If we accept, then, that Brereton was the author, we should also say who he was. According to the poem (line 312) he was an 'esquire' in service with Lord Stanley. This may seem to support Firth's notion of the 'ballad' being composed by a representative of 'the common people', but Brereton's being an esquire in service need not conflict with his being a man of the highest rank, for, as P.V.B.Jones (1917, pp. 25-32)



has shown, many young aristocrats and members of the gentry would serve a kind of apprenticeship to the life of a nobleman by working in the household of an established nobleman. Indeed, there is evidence that no less a person than the 3rd Earl of Derby spent about seven years 'in service' with Cardinal Wolsey, and then, as Coward (1968, p. 52) expresses it,

The Earl's household in turn served a similar purpose  
for the sons of Lancashire and Cheshire gentry.

It is almost certain that Humphrey Brereton was an employee of exactly that type. His family was a well-known and respected Cheshire family connected by marriages with many of the first families in the area, including the Stanleys themselves. William Brereton, a cousin of Humphrey's, who is mentioned in Flodden Feilde (line 69), was later 'in service' with Anne Boleyn, and was executed for serving her rather too assiduously.<sup>23</sup>

Heywood tells us in his edition (1829, p. vii) that Humphrey Brereton was the third son of Bartholomew Brereton of Schochlach and Malpas. This identification gains support at that moment in the poem (lines 878-9) when Humphrey arrives in Brittany.

The porter was a Cheshire man;

Well he knew Humphrey when he him see.

The reason he knew Humphrey so well, he later explains (lines 890-1):

For a Cheshire man born am I certain,

From the Malpas but miles three.

The possibility that gentlemen serving in the noble household of the Earl of Derby should have been the authors of poems about the family gains further support from the fact that we know that men with the names of Brereton and Legh actually did 'serve' the various Earls during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.<sup>24</sup>

Two of the four poems, then, would seem to belong to a social group quite opposite to Firth's 'common people'. The other two poems do not have obvious clues, like the first two, which might lead us to find out who composed them, but there is internal evidence suggesting at least identification with the class about who and for whom the stories are recounted. The author of Bosworth Feilde uses 'we', 'us', and 'our' several times (e.g. lines 6, 15, 17, 23, 337, 577), without it appearing either out of place or forced. Especially significant is that he refers (line 577) to 'our archers'.

He clearly does not feel any social inferiority to his audience, referring to them as 'friends' (line 343) rather than by the more servile forms of address common in minstrel verse; and he is not shy of adopting a moral stance and lecturing them on the rights and wrongs of the action (e.g. lines 129-136).

To attempt identification from the very little we have to go on, and from such a distance chronologically, is rather

like shooting into the dark, but there is a possibility - and it can be no more than that - that the author might have been an esquire such as Brereton or Legh, who was employed by the Earl as a kind of herald. The listing of participants in a battle was precisely the sort of function mediaeval heralds were required to carry out, and only a well-practised man would be able to recognise the knights lined up against him. Co-incidentally there is a short scene in Scotish Feilde (lines 355-74) which might serve as an analogy: just before the Battle of Flodden commences, King James IV summons his herald to him:

Then the Scotts King calleth to him a heralde,  
Biddeth tell him the truth, and tary no longer:

Who were the baners of the burns that bode in the valey?  
to which the herald is immediately able to reply in very precise detail.

Once the possibility is allowed that a herald might have been the author, other indications become apparent, such as the frequent mention of heraldic devices (lines 350, 473-6, 481-4, 497-500), which are spoken of with a familiarity that suggests that the terms of heraldry are daily business.

A second supporting indication is that when, at the close of the poem, the author is providing a short list of the more famous dead, he rather summarily brushes aside dukes and lords, reserving his elegaic fervour for two standard-bearers, whose noble defence of their respective standards is briefly



reminiscent of native refusal to flee against the odds at the Battle of Maldon.

There are precedents for men employed as heralds composing poems after military engagements. The Siege of Caerlaverock, for example,<sup>25</sup> is so full of heraldic description that L.G.Pine (1952, p. 48) is fairly certain that 'the poet was a herald in the service of King Edward'. The Arrival of Edward IV<sup>26</sup> announces that it was by one of the King's servants, but R.F.Green (1980, p. 171) points us once again in the direction of a herald:

Whether this servant was in fact a herald it is now impossible to say, but the first version of the Arrival must certainly have been the kind of factual

record heralds were regularly called upon to provide.

As this suggests, the heralds' function was to draw up accounts and lists of state occasions, which would include battles (such as the Falkirk Roll in the College of Arms, or MS Harley 6137, a list of knights with Henry V at Rouen in 1418) and tournaments, both events at which knights would appear with their helms closed, for which reason, as A.Wagner (1946, p. 18), himself a well-qualified man, having been Richmond Herald, points out,

To cry a knight's name, a herald must first know it.

When his helm was closed, they could only do so by

his arms, and so they must be learned in cote-armour.

It is proficiency of this sort which explains why the herald in Scotish Feilde could reply so promptly to King James's

question.

R.F.Green goes on to say that, as an extension of making such records the herald might become a kind of court journalist, as a result of which

heralds' reports became increasingly more elaborate and grandiloquent towards the end of the fifteenth century in response to a demand for greater literary display. They might even, on occasion, have turned their hand to verse.

Green is specifically talking about the King's Court and the King's heralds, but heralds also existed in the houses of great noblemen. L.G.Pine (1952, p. 36) records that the Percys and the Nevilles had their own heralds, A.Wagner (1946, p. 18) that several lords 'had their own heralds or pursuivants'. Among the Stanley manuscripts at Knowsley there are several whole volumes devoted to heraldry and genealogy, which suggests that either one of the lords was himself a practitioner, or, more likely, that the Stanleys too had their own herald, and if so, it is a possibility that he, or someone like him, was the author of Bosworth Feilde. And as heraldry and all things connected with the tracing of the ancestry of noble families was a popular pastime only with top people, it is probable that, if the author was such a herald or pursuivant, he was also, like Legh and Brereton, a man of at least moderate rank himself.

Of the author and the social level of Flodden Feilde there are even fewer positive indications. Certainly the heavy



concentration on the affairs and the conversations of the King and his senior ministers, and especially the author's intimate acquaintance with the social set surrounding the 2nd Earl of Derby suggest a man who had access to such social levels rather than a member of Firth's 'common people'. This closeness can be seen by comparing the names of the Earl's immediate circle of friends and acquaintances in the poem with other more 'official' documents which indicate who his close friends were, and E.B. Goodacre (1940, pp. 53-55) provides examples of such names repeatedly occurring in connection with the Stanleys.

The poem's main purpose (and that of Scotish Feilde) is of course superficially to extol the men from Lancashire and Cheshire who have contributed so successfully to the English victory, and to lament those few who died in the attempt; but underlying that simple purpose is the slightly more subtle one of apportioning blame for what was apparently a failure on the part of one section of the Cheshire troops. In Scotish Feilde this problem is dealt with quite confidently and competently, but in Flodden Feilde the blame is cast mostly onto the Howard family (see pp. 110-1). That sort of inside knowledge again suggests someone close enough to the centre of the action to appreciate it.

What emerges, then, from a study of the social level of these four poems, is that, far from Firth's idea that they will enable us to know 'what the common people ... thought' (an idea brought about by having faith in the word 'ballad'), we



find we have two poems which seem almost certainly to have been composed by well-born people, and two which have in them indications that they probably were; and four poems which, to judge from their very limited subject matter, are aimed at an audience of the highest social class in the region.

These conclusions are not inevitable, and it may be that a case can still be made for considering them as ballads of the kind that Child and his successors write about; but it is odd that Child, who certainly knew of all four poems, included none of them in his comprehensive collection of ballads. It cannot be denied that three of the poems have stylistic features in common with some ballads, such as repetition of key phrases, phrases contrived to ensure rhythm and rhyme, alliterative tags, or parallel development of narrative action in similar linguistic blocks (see pp. 127-39).

The textual history of Lady Bessiye, too, with its two versions so hopelessly far from each other in every way, is typical of what occasionally happened to ballads within the oral tradition. The fact remains, however, that none of the poems is entirely typical of ballads, and Scotish Feilde, which has been called a ballad as often as any of the others, has very little in common with the genre at all.

Rather than starting from the notion that these poems are ballads and seeing them within whatever framework that word may happen to suggest, it seems better to jettison the word altogether, and to see what function these poems performed, independent of any other information. It seems that the

Stanley household was a small centre of amateur verse production aimed at a very limited and specific audience, which might simply have been the Stanleys themselves and some close friends or relations who were attending a gathering at Knowsley, Lathom, Bidston, Lancaster, or even the homes of one of the other families. The interest of the poems is clearly very limited: as D.C.Fowler (1968, p. 147) says, 'The injustice done to the Earl of Derby is certainly lacking in universality.' The same criticism can be made of all four poems. The material has exactly the same sort of limited appeal as a school magazine, where only those who know the participants in the plays and sports will want to read the reports about them.

At such local, enclosed gatherings, verse might well be read out as entertainment. It is obviously conceivable that professional minstrels, that is, men employed specifically for that function, were involved in such performances; but not necessarily so. In Old English times, if we are to trust the evidence of the verse itself, the scop was simply a member of the comitatus who happened to be well able to supply the poetic requirements of the community. There is also evidence from later periods to suggest that poetic activity was not confined to professionals: C.Bullock-Davies (1978, p. 25), in her appraisal of minstrels who performed at the court festivities in 1296, emphasises that

analysis of the list has revealed that numbers of the people named in it were serving in the household in



other capacities, and receiving court wages, for duties far removed from singing songs.

R.F.Green (1980, p.103 and 203) attempting to show that entertainment happened but not necessarily with professional minstrels, says:

The traditional role of the professional minstrel was usurped in later courts by a new breed of amateur household poet...Authorship was very much a spare time occupation, and its material rewards were largely incidental ones.

This amateur status of poets in households can be seen both in mediaeval literature, where, for example, Chaucer's Squire, whose father was a knight, 'koude songes make and wel endite' (Prologue, line 95), and in mediaeval life, where many royal servants, such as Sir John Clanvowe, Sir John Montagu, Sir Richard Roos, Stephen Hawes, and many servants in provincial households, such as John Shirley (servant to the Earl of Warwick), John Russell (to Humphrey of Gloucester), William of Worcester (to Sir John Fastolf), and William Peiris (to the Earl of Northumberland), are all known to have written poems of some sort, not in any commissioned or official poetic capacity, but apparently as an extra to their normal duties; and we may suppose that they would receive some small reward, either money or some other favour, for their efforts.

Chaucer himself was a poet of exactly this kind. J.R.Hulbert (1912, p. 58) says of his position at court:

So far as we know [he] received no exceptional



favours; his career was in practically every respect a typical esquire's career, and E. Miller (1959, p. 95) puts Chaucer's various activities into perspective as he reminds us that

Chaucer was first a servant of the king, then a poet.

In other words, before one was a writer, one was a member of an integrated society.

And we can justifiably suppose that what Chaucer did in the King's court in London was reflected further down the social scale in Lancashire where, in the words of A. Luttrell (1958, p. 49), who was speaking exclusively of Scotish Feilde,

Perhaps we should imagine the picture we have of Chaucer transformed to a provincial setting and to a different mode of poetry, including the partly alliterative.

A coincidental, though artificial link between the Stanley poems and this tradition of amateur household poets exists through Henry Bolingbroke, later Henry IV, whose earlier title of Earl of Derby was later to descend on the Stanleys. His relationship with the poet John Gower was, according to R. F. Green (1980, p. 182), along similar lines:

Gower, a member of Derby's retinue, or at least bound to him by certain formal ties, serves the Earl by writing propagandist poems in defence of his political activities.

From such a tradition it is not hard to extrapolate into the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, where a later

Earl of Derby might also have had men 'bound to him by certain formal ties', men such as Humphrey Brereton or Legh of Baguley, composing and reciting 'Propagandist Poems' (for that is unquestionably what they are) to an interested local audience made up largely of relations, friends, and neighbours of the family. S.A.Moore (1913, p. 371) pictures precisely the sort of poetic production I think these Stanley poems are:

The fundamental difference between mediaeval and modern conditions is the fact that the mediaeval writer directed his work not to the world in general, or the 'public', but to a very definite and restricted circle. He addressed himself to his patron, and his patron's family, friends, and neighbours.

If the Stanley poems were indeed minor provincial productions of this kind, they stand near the end of a tradition which stretches back through Lydgate, Chaucer, the major poems of the Alliterative Revival, mediaeval Welsh and Irish verse, the scop's recitations as described in many Old English poems, the earliest Germanic poetic performances as so movingly recorded by Tacitus (Germania, ch. 2), and even back to the bardic recitations of family history in the Odyssey, where both Odysseus and Telemachus are frequently entertained in royal households. It is an unfortunate ironic demonstration of the failure of the 'generic' approach which some have applied to the Stanley poems at the end of this poetic line, that in E.V.Rieu's Penguin translation (1946, p. 33) of the

Odyssey right at the beginning of that line, those noble, aristocratic, formal, bardic utterances, are also called 'ballads'.



# THE POEMS AS HISTORY

## THE POEMS AS HISTORY

Although each of these poems is a self-contained narrative in which events are recounted in approximately chronological order, it should be borne in mind that the narrative itself is only a vehicle for the main purpose of the poems, which is the glorification of the Stanley family and their supporters. The events are therefore carefully selected to reveal the Stanleys in the best light, and where their actions are less than glorious, they have to be either concealed or excused. The relative weight given to the various historical events is disproportionate: nearer the centre of the actions no doubt other armies and other families were performing equally as valiantly; but these are of only passing interest to our authors and their audiences. As a fairly typical example of the disproportionate concentration on matters Stanleyite, the attempt by Lady Bessy to enlist the support of Lord Stanley runs for 272 lines (Lady Bessiye lines 5-276), whereas the attempt by Henry Tudor to enlist the support of the French King, where the Stanley interest is absent, takes a mere 22 lines (961-82).

## SUMMARIES

The following summaries of the plots of the poems are provided so that the discussion which follows may not take place in a void.

a). SUMMARY OF Lady Bessie:

After the opening prayer we enter straight into the attempt by Lady Bessy (Elizabeth of York) to persuade Lord Stanley to join her rebellion, the aim of which will be to bring Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, back from Brittany, where he has been in exile for many years, to defeat Richard III and re-establish the Lancastrian dynasty. Lord Stanley is very unwilling to succumb to her persuasions, and after each of her five 'reasons', he appears to denounce her whole scheme and vow loyalty to King Richard. The five reasons are:

- 1). Lord Stanley owes a debt of honour to Edward IV (Lady Bessy's late father) to see that his children get their deserts;
- 2). Richard is a murderer (of the Princes in the tower);
- 3). Edward IV had set up the scheme and had specifically asked her to seek help from Lord Stanley;
- 4). Richard has attempted to seduce her, offering to put away his wife and son;
- 5). Richard has sworn to destroy the power of the Stanleys.

Seeing that Lord Stanley is unshakeable, Lady Bessy then throws a fit of hysterics, and threatens suicide. Only then does Lord Stanley accept that Elizabeth's plan is genuine and not a trap to make him utter remarks which could be interpreted as treasonable.

Once Lord Stanley has decided to move, he moves quickly, and before the night is out he is dictating letters to his family and friends in 'the West Country' (which means



Lancashire and Cheshire), while Elizabeth, to avoid any chance of betrayal, acts as his scribe. There are seven Stanley supporters who are involved in the plot from the beginning:

- 1). Lord Stanley himself;
- 2). his brother, Sir William Stanley;
- 3). Lord George Strange, Lord Stanley's eldest son;
- 4) Sir Edward Stanley, another of his sons;
- 5). James Stanley ('the Warden'), another son;
- 6). Sir John Savage, Lord Stanley's nephew;
- 7). Sir Gilbert Talbot.

Several times in this poem the author 'does the round' of these supporters, although not all of them are included in each round: letters appear to be written, for example, only to numbers 2, 3, 6 and 7.

Once the letters have been written asking these men to come to a meeting in London, they must next be delivered, and for this task they select Humphrey Brereton, the likely author of the poem. Humphrey goes to each supporter (all six) and in each case the supporter vows absolute loyalty to Lord Stanley and gives Humphrey a tip.

When Humphrey returns from the West Country, he finds Lord Stanley in conversation with the King, so the conversation which ensues is delightfully ambiguous, as Humphrey announces the loyalty and readiness of all the men, without mentioning who they are loyal to, or what they are ready for. In a deeply ironic passage, Richard speaks a brief encomium on the whole Stanley family.

Now the Stanley supporters arrive in turn in London, all in disguise to emphasise the secrecy of the plot, and they all meet at an inn on the outskirts of the city. After Bessy outlines her plan, the others all pledge money and men for the campaign.

Humphrey now goes to Brittany to deliver to Henry the gold (which is sewn into the saddles of three mules) and the messages of support. Henry is not immediately enthusiastic about the mission, but after a conference with his aides, he agrees to the plan, insisting that first he must apply for further help from the King of France. The French King will not support him, however, so Humphrey returns to England with some letters and some good wishes to Lady Bessy and the Stanleys.

Now the various armies collect together and move towards Bosworth. Bessy is deposited in Leicester; Lord Strange is sent to London to allay the King's suspicions. In a very full hundred lines (1047-1146) the troops move towards the battleground, meetings are held to decide responsibilities, Henry, who has by now arrived in England, is welcomed, and all is ready.

Next day's events are rushed through, with the exception of the escape from execution of Richard's hostage, Lord George Strange, whose noble sentiments as he approaches the block are clearly an important moment in the poem. Finally, however, Richard is hacked to death, his forces are defeated, and Henry is crowned by the Stanleys. Elizabeth is brought out for the celebrations, and is married to Henry.



b). SUMMARY OF Bosworth Feilde:

This starts with a leisurely look at past years of English history, attempting to set Henry Tudor's rebellion into perspective. When Henry arrives in England he immediately links up with the Stanleys. A long section follows in which Richard, recognising the power of the Stanley forces, collects his own army to oppose them, and also ensnares Lord Stanley into leaving Lord George Strange with him as a hostage. In a long catalogue (118 lines) we are told the names of some of the men on Richard's side.

Now the Stanley forces array themselves in opposition, with Lord Stanley and his brother, Sir William taking the leading roles. Henry arrives and, as in Lady Bessiye, he has a meeting with Sir William before advancing to link up with the rest of the Stanley forces near Bosworth. Battle positions are allocated and all is ready.

The action on the day is again fairly hectic, with Lord George Strange's near-execution and reprieve (which is narrated almost exactly as in Lady Bessiye) again being an important event. After Richard is hacked to death, the author lists the important dead before turning to general rejoicing.

c). SUMMARY OF Scotish Feilde:

After the introductory prayer the author wanders through some vaguely connected past events: Bosworth, Henry VII in France, Henry VIII in France, and the French King's appeal (May, 1513) to the Scottish King to attack England. These events are connected, however, by a clear cause-and-



effect chain the theme of which is, of course, the Stanley family. The poem is going to be about Flodden, where the Stanleys will gain great glory; the battle happened because the French king appealed to the Scottish King; the French King appealed because Henry VIII was in France; Henry VIII (and with him the Earl of Derby) was in France because Henry VII had been there before him, and Henry VII was Henry VII because of Bosworth, where the Stanleys had gained great glory. This series of connections is not entirely accurate (see pp. 99-100), but no-one would be too concerned about that.

James responds to the French appeal by sending a preliminary raid into Northumberland, but they are ambushed and sent running back into Scotland by Sir William Bulmer and a small band of Northumbrians. It is important to realise that this defence force was not nearly as big as it should have been: Lord Dacres, the man responsible for border security, had refused to do anything when informed of the raid. He is thus established early in the poem as unreliable and even, perhaps, cowardly.

Now there is the build-up towards the battle: James IV comes into England at the head of a huge Scottish army. The Stanleys are summoned, and they collect men from all over Lancashire and Cheshire before marching northwards. As the armies jockey for position, the English leaders are appointed, and a disastrous error is made by the Earl of Surrey (commander of the English army): he puts his own son in charge of a large force of Cheshire men who are only used to serving under

Stanleys.

When the battle starts, those Cheshire men turn and run; and Lord Dacres (already known to be a coward), stationed behind them in reserve, also flees. The tone here is, "What do you expect if you have idiots in charge?" James is encouraged by this preliminary success and asks his herald who make up the rest of the English army, whereupon the herald lists the many Stanleyite supporters he can see ranged ahead of them. Foolishly James decides to attack them, and is inevitably beaten by the heroic Stanley forces. A message is sent off to tell King Henry of the English victory, and the few remaining Scots are chased off home before the final "Thank God".

d). SUMMARY OF Flodden Feilde:

Although this poem is entitled Flodden Feilde ('Feilde' means "Battle"), none of its events takes place anywhere near Flodden. The scene for this poem is outside Tournai, a town in Northern France, which Henry VIII and his army (including the Earl of Derby and a group of men from Lancashire and Cheshire) were besieging while the Earl of Surrey and his English army were defeating the Scots at Flodden.

Indeed, as the poem starts, the Battle of Flodden has already happened, and the first we know is that a messenger arrives from the Earl of Surrey to announce the victory. Henry is delighted, and wants to know which forces fought particularly well (or badly). He is told that the Lancashire and Cheshire forces had all fled and behaved in a cowardly



fashion. Henry is furious at this, but an attempt is made by Egerton and Brereton, two of the Earl's supporters, to justify the Stanley cowardice by saying (as in Scottish Feilde) that Stanley troops needed to be commanded by Stanleys. When a man called Compton scorns this excuse, there is almost a riot, but Henry manages to keep the troops calm.

At this moment the Earl of Derby arrives at the King's side, and he repeats this defence of his men, but the King is unmoved, and deprives him of his command. Derby is understandably shaken, and indulges in a nostalgic farewell to all those people and places in Lancashire to which he must now be as a stranger. Consolation is offered by two of his friends, the Duke of Buckingham and the Earl of Shrewsbury, but he is inconsolable.

There now follows an incident involving one of the common soldiers in the Earl's forces. James Garsyde has been summoned before the King for fighting, and indeed for killing and wounding other soldiers in the camp. When the King asks him what he thought he was doing, he replies that these other soldiers had been taunting him about the cowardice of the Stanley forces at Flodden; Garsyde, fiercely loyal to his leader, had struck out wildly. In a further attempt to avoid the obvious punishment Garsyde reminds King Henry of an incident at Greenwich Palace some years back when he (Garsyde) had greatly impressed the King with his bowmanship. Stirred partly by this reminder and partly by Garsyde's sense of loyalty, Henry forgives him, and announces that there is to be



no more criticism of the Stanley forces.

At that moment a second messenger arrives from England bearing a letter from the Queen, again announcing the victory at Flodden, but this time saying that the Stanley forces had been the heroes and largely responsible for the English victory. Henry immediately walks - quite a way, apparently - to the Earl of Derby's tent to apologise and to return his command to him. He further promotes several Stanley men who were mentioned in the Queen's letter as having distinguished themselves.

The Earl is puzzled as to why the two reports have been so different, and the explanation is given that Surrey has deliberately tried to cause disfavour towards the Stanleys as a form of vengeance for the death of his own father (the Duke of Norfolk) at the Stanleys' hands at Bosworth. Derby asks that he may give sentence on Surrey for this slanderous attack, to which the King, now on the Stanleys' side, agrees. At which Derby, to demonstrate the difference between the noble Stanleys and the mean Howards, immediately forgives Surrey and exacts no retribution whatsoever. In a friendly and triumphant mood they all return to the siege of Tournai, and God's blessing is asked on everyone.

Using poetry as source material for history has, of course, a long pedigree. If one accepts, as one can hardly refrain from doing, that 'history' means different things to different people - or even peoples - we can say with

justification that poems from the time of Homer onwards, and perhaps even before that, have been ransacked in search of matter for historians. In English history the earliest records are often verse records, and our earliest historians, just as eagerly as our recent ones, made use of the information provided by poetry.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, as H.Nicolas (1830, p. liv) observed,

That much historical information is often contained in productions of this nature is well-known, for of many events there are no other than metrical descriptions.

Where there has been no alternative, historians have been forced to rely on verse for their material. Where other sources have been available, however, verse, perhaps tainted with the aura of fiction, has often been ignored; yet, as G.R.Elton (1969, p. 199) says,

Imaginative literature - prose, poetry, drama - describe the reality that lies behind the record; it has its own literal rightness; and the historian will be wise to listen.

Because history means different things to different people, one should, if the treatment of the historical aspect of these four Stanley poems were to be complete, begin by asking E.H.Carr's question (1961, title) 'What is History?' But, as his book testifies, the question requires a very long answer, and this small chapter dealing with four smallish poems is not the place for major philosophical enquiry. His book



does, however, serve as a counterweight to those - and there have been enough of them - who persist in believing that there are things called 'the facts of history'. Which facts are 'historical' facts? Who chooses which facts count and which do not? Are such 'facts' objective? Carr replies (p. 114):

The facts of history cannot be purely objective. Objectivity in history cannot be an objectivity of fact. I reject as unhistorical the attempt to judge historical events by erecting an absolute standard of value outside history and independent of it. It is only the simplest kind of historical statement that can be adjudged absolutely true or absolutely false.

Carr's whole argument seeks to remind us of the dangers of attempting to determine that one source is 'right' while another is 'wrong'. Any judgment on the historical value of these, or any other, poems must be seen in that context, and that has not always happened.

In 1963 D.J. MacMillan attempted to assess the historical value of five ballads from the middle ages. His method was a model of what Carr warns against: he first divided the subject-matter of his ballads into chronological units of narrative action, so that each ballad was said to contain a certain number of 'events'. He then listed some - but not all - other accounts of the same historical material, not distinguishing between primary sources and modern history books. He then, by a series of tables with 'other sources' down the left and 'events' along the top, using a system of



ticks and crosses, came to his deductions about the historical reliability of his ballads.

Such a method naturally contains a great deal of subjectivity: his break-down of 'events' is the first obvious example: would every other analyst of the ballad have divided it up into the same (say) fifteen events? Is every event as important as every other event, or would a system of 'main' and 'subsidiary' events give a better picture? Are there some events so central to the whole issue that we would expect every source to agree on it, while variation in peripheral details is less serious? Likewise his list of sources is subjective because incomplete: he limits himself to a few primary sources and adds a few modern accounts, and the choice is his. The decision to include, for example, Sir Charles Oman's account of an event as having equal weight with a contemporary account would surely be questionable even if Sir Charles had universal and undisputed respect among historians, which is not the case.

As a method to follow, then, MacMillan's tables will not do; and yet, unless one is to resign from the problem before starting, one clearly has to engage in an investigation at least similar to his. Hoffman (1952, p 296 ) expresses the required method simply and obviously:

to compare the ballad versions of historical experiences with the documentation of these events in official sources and eye-witness accounts.

There is, however, a world of difference between Hoffman's 'compare' and MacMillan's tables, and although it is

fashionable to present material in tabular, quasi-scientific form thus lending it an apparent objectivity, any statistician is aware of the limitations of such tables: tables in which the elements plotted against each other are subjectively selected have little value.

Even if one is not attempting to be too scientific in assessing sources, there are bound to be (and with the Stanley poems there certainly are) occasions where sources conflict. There are also occasions where an event occurs in only one source. On such occasions one has to attempt to assess the over-all standard of the varying sources before deciding how much credibility to allow them in their reports of the conflicting or otherwise unreported events. If one particular source is known to be a liar, trust in everything he says will be small; if a source is obviously prejudiced, his statements will be viewed with suspicion. These, however, are easy. What does one do with a source which, while getting several small details apparently 'wrong', seems on the whole to give an accurate representation of the material? And if such a source provides a whole area of otherwise unrecorded information, is it to be accepted as trustworthy? Such questions have more than an abstract philosophical significance, for three of the Stanley poems provide on a large scale information which occurs in no other sources. All of the poems demonstrate enough familiarity with the general run of events and with the details of the personalities involved to indicate that they are not complete fabrications, and yet they contain errors of detail,



some quite serious, which at least instil doubt as to their reliability.

Such problems as those outlined above presumably occur to historians of any period or event. The problems of assessing what is or is not historically valid in the reign of Richard III, where two of the Stanley poems are set, are perhaps especially severe. J.J.Bagley (1972, vol. i, p. 233) despairingly comments:

The Tudor historians ... obscured the truth so effectively that we can still only see Richard's reign through a glass darkly.

A.Hanham (1975, p. 191), on the other hand, prefers to see our difficulties as being 'due to the lack of fifteenth-century records'. She finds what writings there are unsatisfactory, grudgingly admitting (p. 194) that

The Crowland Chronicler ... has the best title to be considered a historian in the strictest sense, but even his account might more accurately be compared to a statesman's memoirs.

Of the City Chronicle, of Polydore Vergil, and of Sir Thomas More, she is less enthusiastic (p. 102): they 'ought all to bear the caveat, "Historians beware"'. The writers were almost entirely indiscriminating (p. 115), extremely gullible (believing, for example, the absurd notion promulgated by Rous that Richard had been retained in his mother's womb for two years and when he finally emerged had teeth and shoulder-length hair), and did not (p. 30) ask nearly enough questions.



There is, furthermore, the question of the reliability of eye-witnesses. Hanham (p. 105) is quick to point out this difficulty:

The idea that a person who lived at the time of the events that he reports is necessarily a reliable witness to them would not be entertained by any historian ... Conflicting rumours, misunderstood news, wishful thinking, and deliberate falsification may all play a part in distorting the record at any stage.

Further uncertainty derives from the fact that earlier historians do not consider it necessary to mention the sources of their information. Polydore Vergil tells us that much of his information came from eye-witnesses:

I betook myself to every man of age who was pointed out to me as having been formerly occupied in important and public affairs, and from all such I obtained information about events up to the year 1500.<sup>28</sup>

Unfortunately, however, he never tells us who that 'man of age' has been. Hanham (p.132, n.2) suggests that he might have discussed the reign of Richard III with Lord Stanley, but this is unlikely, as Henry VII did not commission Polydore Vergil to write his history until 1506,<sup>29</sup> two years after Lord Stanley's death. (As Polydore Vergil had been in England since 1502 a meeting between him and Lord Stanley was possible, but it is unlikely that he would have deliberately 'obtained information'

from him so long before being commissioned.)

An example of the kind of difficulty that confronts the historian concerns, appropriately, Lord Stanley. Nearly all the chronicle accounts record that he had a meeting with Henry Tudor a day or two before the Battle of Bosworth (22 August 1485). Some sources suggest that it was a secret meeting owing to Lord Stanley's son still being kept hostage by Richard, but even so, they say, the meeting took place. And yet on 16th January 1486, Lord Stanley testified on oath before the Bishops of London and Worcester that he had known Henry since 24th August 1485, that is two days after the battle.<sup>30</sup> Historians respond in opposite directions: S.B.Chrimes (1972, p. 45, n.1) says:

It is inconceivable that Henry did not meet Lord Stanley until the second day after the battle, and it is preferable to suppose that Stanley's memory was consciously or unconsciously at fault.

A.Hanham (1975, p. 134), on the other hand, would rather trust Lord Stanley's sworn statement:

I suggest that it is perverse to prefer a chronicler's account, written from hearsay twenty-nine years later, to evidence given on oath before a Papal Commission only five months after the event, when the deponent had no discernible reason to lie.

Thus two historians take opposite sides on a matter of fact, with each argument seeming reasonable. Thus in one short

episode is illustrated Hanham's summary (p.102) of the problem facing historians of the reign:

Much of the fascination of the reign of Richard III derives from the need to make an individual decision about the relative weight to be allotted to one somewhat untrustworthy chronicler rather than another.

And yet, in spite of the difficulties, the effort must be made. The Stanley poems must somehow be judged for reliability by comparing their stories against those provided by the eight contemporary chronicles that we know of.<sup>31</sup>

It is obviously important to find out as accurately as possible the date by which each of these Stanley poems was composed. If they were mid-sixteenth century, as has often been suggested (largely on the evidence of one word), then as source material for historians they will be valueless, being themselves works of history rather than of contemporary description. But there are indications that both Lady Bessiye and Bosworth Feilde are very early documents of the battle.



### THE DATE OF Lady Bessiye:

All the manuscripts of Lady Bessiye are from periods considerably later than the events of the poem, the earliest being from around 1600 (see p. 20). It is usually acknowledged, however, that the poem was originally composed much earlier than the date of the earliest manuscript. This is especially likely to be so if, as has been suggested (p. 46), the poem's author was Humphrey Brereton.

Heywood (1829, p. v), the poem's first editor, assumes that 'the composition was probably co-eval with the events it describes.' Halliwell (1847, p. vii), the second editor, speaks of 'the antiquity of the poem'. Furnivall and Hales (1867-8, vol. iii, pp. 319-20), the most recent editors, suggest that 'the groundwork of the poem was probably laid early in the sixteenth century, or still earlier,' and defend their estimate with the accusation that the minute details of the poem

can scarcely be attributed to the brilliant imagination of the writer. There are no signs apparent of any great talent of that kind. The style is that of a man who can relate soberly and steadily what he has seen. It is matter-of-fact, autoptic throughout.

Three commentators who have paid more than the usual scant attention to Lady Bessiye all give fairly early estimates of its date. A. Strickland (1843, vol. iv, p. 9) uses the word

'contemporary'; H.Nicolas (1830, p. lv) is 'prepared to concede' that the poem was 'written soon after the accession of Henry the Seventh'; J.Gairdner (1879, p. 401) allocates it to 'some time in the course of Henry VII's reign or perhaps the beginning of Henry VIII's'.

One of Nicolas's reasons (p. lv) is to do with the names the author uses to refer to his characters:

It was usual for early writers to allude to individuals by the designations borne by them at the time they wrote.

This seems to hold for the Stanley group of poems, where Lord Stanley is referred to as the Earl of Derby from the beginning of the poem, which deals with a time when he did not hold that title. (It was this that caused Nicolas to make his observation.) In Scotish Feilde Sir Edward Stanley is referred to throughout as Lord Monteagle, a title he did not get until after the battle. In Lady Bessiye James Stanley is called 'the Warden' even though he did not become Warden of Manchester until July 1485. If Nicolas is right, then the author must have known James Stanley as the Warden of Manchester, which would certainly put the poem before 1506, when he resigned his wardenship to become Bishop of Ely.

Secondly, there is the matter of subsequent deaths. If one of the heroes of a poem has died since the action of the poem, it would usually be mentioned: Scotish Feilde, for example, contains a short elegy for the Bishop of Ely as soon as he is mentioned in the poem. Lady Bessiye mentions the



death of Sir William Stanley, which would seem to place the poem after February 1495, the date of his death. But it does not mention the deaths of any of the other major contributors such as Lord George Strange (d. 1497), Elizabeth (d. 1503), or Lord Stanley (d. 1504). Nor, and this might be a puzzle, Sir John Savage (d.1492).

A closer look at the stanza (lines 1312-5) in which Sir William's death is mentioned reveals that it is probably an interpolation. Its sudden bathetic effect at the moment of triumph is quite out of place and alters the tone considerably: the poem has been a paeon of praise to Henry and the Lancastrian claim; Sir William's execution at Henry's behest caused, not surprisingly, ill-will between the Stanleys and the King, and the mention of William's death is therefore almost impossible as an 'original' part of the poem. The style of the stanza is also strange, being enigmatic and symbolist after the bludgeoningly straightforward style of the remainder. Any suggestion that the stanza is an ironic reversal is almost certainly ruled out by its position as the penultimate stanza of the poem: irony of that sort is, almost by definition, what comes early in the poem.

And if that stanza is, as it must surely be, a later interpolation, there are no other indications that the poem need be any later than January 1486, when the marriage took place. As the death of Sir John Savage is not mentioned, that would suggest that the poem was composed before 1492, and in view of the likelihood that the author was Humphrey Brereton,



it seems that Lady Bessiye should be regarded as very early indeed.

#### THE DATE OF Bosworth Feilde:

Like Lady Bessiye, Bosworth Feilde exists only in a late manuscript. The last line of the poem, a request for God's blessing, indicates that, at the time the manuscript was written, King James was on the throne of England; but, as Bishop Percy points out in a note on his manuscript (p. 443),

This poem was certainly written before the time of King James, but some transcriber applied the prayer to the reigning prince.

Furnivall and Hales in their edition (1867-8, vol iii, p. 233) concede that 'it may well belong to an earlier period.'

These estimates both seem to err on the side of caution, for, with the single exception of the word 'James' in the last line - nothing whatever to do with the events of the poem and almost certainly, as Percy suggested, a substitution - the poem has all the indications of having been composed very soon after the Battle of Bosworth by one who knew at first hand many of the details about which he was writing. The opening stanzas, indeed, are a hymn of welcome to the new King:

For we have cause to pray, both old and younge,

And say 'Welcome Henery, rightwise King.'

This theme of welcoming the new King is repeated several times as a sort of refrain.

In the fifth stanza the author urges his audience to 'remember' the change that 'hath befall' - and the perfect tense suggests that the effects of the change are still with them - since 'the martyrdome of the holy King Henery' (Henry VI, d. 1471). Many men have died in the troubles since then, we are told, but now we are past all that, and can say, 'Welcome Henry'. This type of instruction must surely mean that the envisaged audience is at most one generation from 1471, and that Henry VII is a 'new' king.

Then the author includes himself (line 337) in the action at Bosworth:

Had we not need Jesu to pray?

and succeeding events appear to be narrated from an eye-witness point of view: he uses the word 'see' several times (lines 396, 415, 431, 435).

One of the most telling things is that he refers (line 488) to Richard III as 'our Kinge', but he also refers (e.g. line 400) to Henry as 'our Kinge', thereby suggesting that he lived in the time of Richard, but quickly identified himself with Henry when he arrived in England.

As in Lady Bessiye, the heroes of the action are all presumed to be still alive by the fact that no deaths are recorded except of those who died in the battle. And the elegies of the two standard-bearers (lines 617-32) seem far too immediate and personal to have been composed decades later.

The end of the battle is signified (line 649) with the

line,

Now is this doubtfull day brought to an end,  
which is hardly the language one would expect if the author  
were composing thirty or forty years after the event.

There seems hardly any reason to doubt that this poem  
may well be perhaps the earliest account of Bosworth that  
survives, and certainly a very early one.

If we accept these early dates for the composition of Lady Bessiye and Bosworth Feilde, there seems no reason why they should not be considered with other sources as accounts of the battle and the events leading to it. The fact is, however, that the majority of historians have either ignored them altogether or, after acknowledging their existence, denied their validity. The most common use these poems have been put to is to have the occasional one line quoted in support of some particular point the writer wishes to establish; but if a writer is prepared to allow that one line of the poem constitutes 'evidence', how can he justify ignoring its far greater contribution to the history of the campaign? J.Gairdner, for example (1897, p.168-9 and 176), mentions Lady Bessiye twice, once to demonstrate that guns were used at Bosworth, and once to prove that a section of Henry's army was on the hillside. A.Makinson (1963, p. 248) quotes a stanza of Lady Bessiye to illustrate the death of Richard III, but in spite of all the poem's information about events leading up to Bosworth (the very subject of Makinson's article), he does not even mention what the poem has to offer. H.Nicolas (1830,



pp. liii-lvii) allows the poem more credibility than most historians do, but he refuses to believe that Richard could ever have wanted to marry Elizabeth, in spite of the fact that it is one of the main props in her argument to Lord Stanley as expressed in the poem. Indeed, Nicolas selects which parts of the poem to believe and which to reject on what seems an arbitrary basis.

The historians who take most notice of the poem are those with a particular interest in Elizabeth of York. A.Strickland (1843, vol. iv, p.9) comments on the poem in detail, saying that we should pay attention 'cautiously' to what the poem says, while acknowledging that it is very valuable

in the absence of regular information regarding the proceedings of Elizabeth from the time when she sat with Queen Anne royally attired at Westminster at Christmas 1484, till the death of Richard.

A.Plowden (1979, p.16) summarises the poem, and suggests, vaguely, that 'it contains a number of authentic touches.' S.Tytler (1896, p. 153) refers to Elizabeth as 'Lady Bessy', but otherwise shows no familiarity with the poem at all. S.Wilmot (n.d. vol. i, pp. 192-3) records with some surprise that Elizabeth could read and write, 'an accomplishment which proved invaluable in her later years', which is probably a reference to her acting as Lord Stanley's scribe at the beginning of the plot. E.T.Cook (1926, pp. 140-1) mentions the poem, and summarises what it says about Elizabeth's part to

bring Henry over to England. N.L.Harvey (1973, p. 100), in her imaginative biography of Elizabeth, quotes the lines about the prophecy that Elizabeth would one day become Queen, but apart from that one brief mention, is silent about the poem. She informs us, however, that before going to Sheriff Hutton in 1485, Elizabeth went to stay with the Stanleys at Lathom, where she tried unsuccessfully to persuade Lord Stanley to join her revolt. This looks suspiciously like a paraphrase of the scenes at the start of Lady Bessie, particularly as this information is provided on the same page of her book as the lines from the poem. It has, however, two obvious flaws: the meeting took place in London, and was not unsuccessful.

Of historians whose concern was mainly with the battle, W.Hutton (1788), the forefather of most later accounts, wrote before any of the Stanley poems had ever been printed. J.Nichols, however, includes among the additions forming the second edition of Hutton's work (1813, pp. 204-19), a printing of MS Harley 542 fol. 34, an account of the battle which is, as Hammond (1972, p. 16) has pointed out, simply a prose rendering of the poem Bosworth Feilde. Nichols offers no opinion as to the date of his addition, but the account (and therefore the poem) seems to contradict Hutton's assertion (p. 3) that 'This battle was never described by an eye-witness.' Hutton had also said, 'I am inclined to think that Richard had artillery, but this is not mentioned by any author.' Yet Bosworth Feilde (and MS Harley 542) clearly indicates (lines 487-96) not only that artillery was present, but also precisely how many and of what



kind.

P.Trollope's account of the battle does not mention any sources of information, but the suggestion (1870, p. 120) that while in France Henry received advice and money 'through the agency of Brereton' means that either he or one of his unnamed sources had some knowledge of Lady Bessiye. Typical of the way these poems have been used by historians is that Trollope, while accepting as gospel that it was Brereton that went across to Brittany, tells us (p. 138) that it was Lord Ferrars of Chartley who secured the stay of execution on Lord Strange, information he may have borrowed from Hutton (pp. 92-4), who also refused to name his sources. Yet Lady Bessiye says it was Sir William Harrington, a suggestion which Trollope totally ignores.

C.H.Firth (1908, pp. 26-7) gives a brief summary of the poem, and of its historical worth he has this to say:

Historians in general agree that it probably contains a certain number of true facts handed down by tradition, yet at the same time, owing to the scantiness of the other evidence about the conspiracy against Richard, it is impossible to determine exactly where the fact ends and the fiction begins.

A.L.Rowse (1967, pp. 253-5) also summarises the poem, quotes the lines Firth had quoted, and quotes Firth's assessment of the historical worth of the poem. A.Hanham (1975, p. 133), who bemoans the lack of fifteenth-century evidence, dismisses Lady Bessiye as having 'very little resemblance to fact'. The fact



that her footnote refers to the summaries by Gairdner and Kingsford rather than to the poem itself is not encouraging.

F.Espinasse (1874, p. 23, n. 2) says that the poem

cannot be accepted as genuine autobiography or history, and beyond that it is at least partly apocryphal.

Although historical novelists are not normally regarded as legitimate historians, it is interesting that Margaret Campbell Barnes in her novel The Tudor Rose (1953, chapter 14) accepts most of the poem's information as true.

Perhaps the longest discussion of the poem occurs in an appendix to J.Gairdner's biography of Richard III (1879, pp. 401-19). It is again only a summary, with an introductory remark on its historical value:

Unfortunately it contains numerous anachronisms, besides some facts or circumstances which are certainly due to the writer's imagination ... There is, however, certainly a great deal of truth in the poem.

It is a pity that Gairdner does not list some of these 'numerous anachronisms'. The anachronisms of the names by which the characters are called has already been explained by Nicolas's observation (1830, p. lv) that early writers use the designations with which they are familiar; the anachronism of the marriage taking place on the battlefield is excusable poetic licence; Richard's threat to kill his son Edward when

he was already dead (see note to line 151) seems anachronistic, but then, although Bessy, presumably talking early in 1485, says the offer was made 'not three days past', that must have been hearsay, as Brereton was not admitted to the first conversation between Bessy and Lord Stanley.

Nor does Gairdner list many of the 'facts and circumstances which are due to the writer's imagination': only Humphrey's being kissed by Elizabeth.

Comparison with other sources does, however (pace E.H.Carr) reveal that the author gets some things wrong:

1. Lady Margaret Beaufort is referred to (line 12) as a 'Dutchess'. She was Countess of Richmond.
2. George Lord Strange is said (line 14) to be Lady Margaret's son, when he was Lord Stanley's son by his first wife, Eleanor nee Neville.
3. Richard is said (line 49) to have received deathbed instructions from his brother Edward IV. Other sources say Richard was in Yorkshire at the time of Edward's death and received these instructions via Lord Hastings.
4. The author seems unclear as to the names of Edward IV's sons: he refers to them (line 53) as the Duke of York and the Duke of Clarence, appearing to believe that the eldest son and heir to the throne was the Duke of York, who was in fact the younger son. The Duke of Clarence was Edward IV's and Richard III's brother.
5. The poet seems unaware (line 1118) that Brittany was not part of France.

6. In Lady Bessiye Bessy was at Leicester while the battle was being fought; other sources say she was at Sheriff Hutton in Yorkshire.
7. The author lets George Lord Strange fall into Richard's hands while in London; other sources say in Nottingham.
8. Sir William Stanley marches from Stone to Bosworth on the day of the battle and then fights. (Maybe Atherstone?)
9. Lord Stanley is the first to join battle. This is very contentious, historians being divided as to whether Lord Stanley joined battle at all. They would certainly not think that he was first in.

Of these errors, none can be accounted to deliberate malicious falsehood. Only the presence of Elizabeth in Leicester to join in the celebrations at the end can definitely be called 'imaginative'. All other errors, none of which seems tremendously serious, can be put down to ignorance.

On the positive side, the poem accords with much that is recorded elsewhere, and the knowledge of the Stanley family and supporters is unimpeachable.

If we accept that the poem was an early and authentic account by Humphrey Brereton of events he was involved in, it seems there is every reason for further accepting that Lady Bessy did have a hand in devising the whole scheme with Lord Stanley. Brereton's journeys are described with such intricate detail that one could hardly suppose it was invention. We know that Lord Stanley was capable of being a double-agent; and we know that while Henry was in Brittany Elizabeth spent much of



her time with the Countess of Richmond, Henry's mother, who was also working towards her son's return.

The use historians have made of Bosworth Feilde has been much less, perhaps because the mention of James I in the last line has wrongly persuaded them that it is a late poem, although Furnivall and Hales, who have edited the only version of the poem, have tried to correct the impression that it is so late. Historians such as J.Gairdner (1897, pp. 168-9), who uses one line of Lady Bessiye, a poem he is not otherwise prepared to trust, to support his contention that there were guns at Bosworth, and ignores Bosworth Feilde, which gives precise details (lines 489 ff.) of the King's artillery, seem to miss an opportunity by so doing.

Trollope (1870, p. 134), in his rambling undocumented account of the battle, mentions in passing that there were bombards on the field, information which probably derives, directly or indirectly, from this poem. G.Temperley (1914, p. 22) quotes from the poem to show that Henry thought of himself as King before the battle, although there are several lines in the poem (e.g. line 64: 'when I am kinge') where it is clear he does not. Aside from this one erroneous quotation out of context, she completely ignores the poem, even though she calls it 'contemporary'.

In his study of memorials from the fifteenth century, W.E.Hampton (1979) makes regular use of MS Harley 542, but never refers to Bosworth Feilde, which is the source for the Harley version.

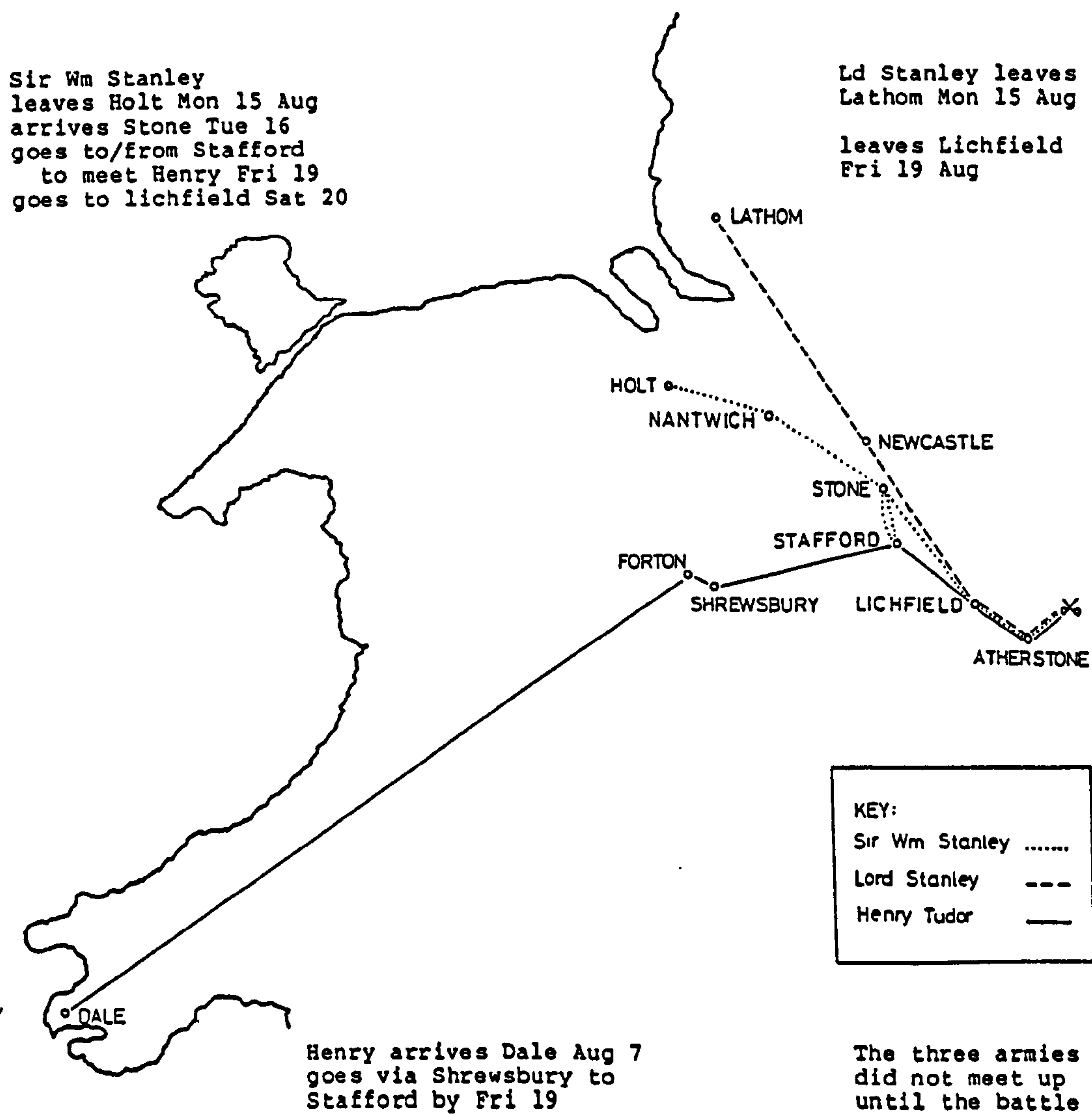
As an account of the events, Bosworth Feilde is more straightforward than Lady Bessiye which, as we have seen, provides a light on the events of early 1485 quite different from that provided by all other sources. Bosworth Feilde, being much shorter, and also less of a narrative and more of a eulogistic poem, has less room for divergent historical reporting. Nevertheless, there are one or two idiosyncracies:

- 1). The account of how George Lord Strange came to be a hostage is not as usually told: here Lord Stanley sets off for London but, being taken with the sweating sickness at Manchester, turns back and sends his son to London instead.
- 2). As in Lady Bessiye, Sir William's entry into battle is precipitated by a report that his brother is already fighting.

The main original contributions made by this poem are its lists of participants and artillery. For the artillery there is no other source, and for the men who fought for Richard III, this list of ninety-five participants is by far the fullest available. What the source of this list is, or how accurate it is, is hard to determine.<sup>32</sup> The late P. Corbett, whose only published work is a small chart at the field centre at Bosworth, had been working for many years on the participants at Bosworth, their descents, and their heraldic devices, when he sadly died with his work all in note form. He had made tentative positive identifications of about two thirds of the names in either the Bosworth Feilde list or its copy in MS Harley 542. The fact that Corbett was able to identify so

many names on the list, many of them with independent corroboration of the fact that they fought at Bosworth, shows at least that the list is not a wild fabrication.

The poem also contributes a fairly detailed timetable and itinerary of the movements of the Stanley troops on the way to Bosworth. The following diagram represents the information suggested in the poem:





The fullness and detail of the information given about men and marches in Bosworth Feilde suggests either a first-hand report or, at the least, a report from a reliable eye-witness. It has already been suggested (see pp. 50-52) that the author of the poem may have been a sort of herald in the service of the Stanleys, and details such as these are precisely the sort of information such a man would have been responsible for collecting and recording.

B.H.Bronson (1980, vol. ii, p. 71), writing about historical ballads, has this to say:

They may be based on a historical event, but the incidents related seldom correspond closely with verifiable fact, being distorted by bias, rumours, and hearsay. The report of a battle ... may be the reverse of the truth, as local partisanship and imperfect recollection may have worked together in the folk memory.

It is perhaps through fear that what Bronson says must be true of poems like Lady Bessiye and Bosworth Feilde that historians have almost universally rejected them as source material. I have tried to show that a). to class them as ballads and then make deductions from that classification is to ignore what the poems have to offer, b). they are among the earliest sources for the events leading up to and culminating in the Battle of Bosworth, and c). their authors are probably eye-witnesses to the events they describe. For these reasons, perhaps they should be among the first rather than the last works historians

of the Bosworth campaign should reach for.

The treatment by historians of the two Stanley poems connected with the Battle of Flodden (9th September 1513), is similar to that accorded to the two Bosworth poems: that is, they are ignored or rejected as reputable sources, but sometimes quoted in snatches to support minor points being made. Yet, as with the Bosworth poems, the case for their being regarded seriously is substantial.

#### THE DATE OF Scotish Feilde:

This poem was almost certainly composed not long after March 1515. Lines 283-94 of the poem are an elegy on the death - and the tone suggests the recent death - of James Stanley, Bishop of Ely, who died, as his stone in Manchester Cathedral records, 22nd March 1515. The twelve-line elegy occurs at a point in the poem where speed of action seems required, and it is the power of sadness still fresh in the author's mind that causes the unexpected delay.

The only possible reason for supposing that the poem was not composed so early consists in the repeated mention (lines 142 and 193) of a border raid led by a Scottish lord whose name is variously written as Mackesfeld (MS L) or Maxwell (MS P). The raid the poem is dealing with, called the 'Ill Roade', was led, according to every other source, by Lord Home.

There were some border raids in the late 1520s and the 1530s led by Lord Maxwell. Textual emendation by a later scribe from 'Home' to 'Maxwell' is very unlikely because the alliterating



letter in both lines is 'M'. The Lyme MS reading 'Mackesfeld' is likely, as in nearly every difference between the manuscripts, to be earlier, and 'Maxwell' as a corruption of Mackesfeld is fairly natural to a scribe who knew that Maxwell had made border raids; but that does not explain 'Mackesfeld'.

If the possibility of reading 'Maxwell' on the less reliable of the two manuscripts is the only reason for setting the date of composition later than 1515, the temptation should be resisted, for several reasons:

- 1). As in Lady Bessiye, the negative inference to be drawn from the not mentioning deaths of major participants, particularly in view of the very strong mention of the death of the Bishop of Ely, suggests that we are looking at a date before 1521, when the 2nd Earl of Derby died. Lord Mouteagle died in 1523. Sir John Stanley died in 1530 and, given the author's clear personal warmth towards him it is inconceivable that the poem could have been composed after that date without mentioning that he is 'now' dead.
- 2). The style of the poem, being that unrhymed alliterative verse which formed what has become known as the Alliterative Revival, is a deliberate archaism any time after about 1450. Occasional poems in the style occur after that date, but none so late as Scotish Feilde. Even 1515 is a surprisingly late date; any time added on after that would promote surprise into near-miracle.
- 3). The immediate motive of the poem is not simply to narrate the events of the battle, nor even simply to lavish praise



on the Stanleys, but, as in Flodden Feilde, to clear the Stanleys' name from an accusation of cowardice that was made against them immediately after the battle. The need to exculpate the family from such an accusation would be pressing in the years immediately following the battle, but irrelevant twenty years later, and quite impossible after 1528, when the 3rd Earl of Derby married Dorothy Howard, thus healing (if it had not already been healed) the breach between the Stanleys and the Howards that these poems record.

For these reasons it seems that 1515 was the date of composition, and that 'Mackesfeld' or 'Maxwell' is an error.

#### THE DATE OF Flodden Feilde:

As with all these Stanley poems, the manuscripts of Flodden Feilde are late. Various erroneous reasons have led writers to place the poems far later than necessary. The first error is to assume, as A.Hume (1852-3, pp. 186-92) did, that because the last stanza of the poem requests a blessing on the queen, that the poem must have been composed between 1553 and 1603. But in fact only one of the three manuscripts reads 'prynces', the others 'prynce', and in any case it is almost certain that the same has happened as with the name 'James' in the last line of Bosworth Feilde: any scribe might well be expected, when copying the standard blessing on the monarch at the end of the poem, to adapt to his own circumstances at the time: we now sing 'God save the Queen' but the 'original' of

that line was 'God save the King'.

A second dating error also ensues from concentrating on only one manuscript. In the copy of the poem in the Percy Folio MS, which, in Furnivall and Hales' edition is by far the most likely one for a reader to come across, there is an extra 85-line section not in either of the other manuscripts, which describes a series of events which relate to the year 1544. Thus the poem is catalogued in the supplement to the Index of Middle English Verse (1967, p. 118) as 'post 1544'. But the 85-line section is clearly a late addition: other evidence sets the date of composition much earlier.

A third error also arises from not reading all the manuscripts and from assuming that a blessing-request is original. The last line of the poem asks for God's blessing either on the Earl of Derby or on the Earl's soul of Derby. This has led some writers like Ives (1970, p. 354) to assume that the poem was composed after 1521, the date of the Earl's death. But a later scribe might well alter the line, and, although the metre of the poem is very unreliable, the line is metrically far more regular without his soul.

Once those three errors are recognised as errors, there is nothing to stop this poem, like the others, being seen as a more or less contemporary account. As the poem is so hostile to the Howard family it must have been before the 1528 marriage. But also the poem is most probably before 1521, because in that date occurred the trial and execution of the Duke of Buckingham, and the Earl of Derby was one of the peers



who found him guilty. The tone of admiration and friendship between the two men in the poem is highly unlikely after such a rift.

One further indication of an early date is to be found by invoking once again H.Nicolas's dictum that writers always referred to men by the designations borne by those men at the time of writing. The Earl of Derby is several times in the poem called 'the King of Man'. Now the 2nd Earl was the one who, at some stage during his life (and unfortunately I have been unable to find exactly when) abandoned the title 'King' because, as J.Stanley (1735, p. 6) tells us, he 'preferred to be a great lord than a petty king'. (J.Stanley is not the most reliable writer: he tells us that the 2nd Earl (1504-21) gave up the title in the reign of Edward IV (d.1483).) If Nicolas's dictum is right, the possibility is that the 'King' of Man was still known by that title soon after Flodden, but abandoned the title in the last years of his life, thus putting the likely date of composition as very soon after the battle. And, as with Scotish Feilde, the need for the Stanley family to be excused from the accusation of cowardice diminishes with each year that passes.

If these early dates for the poems are correct, they will be seen to stand, as with the Bosworth poems, among the earliest sources of the battle.<sup>33</sup> The likely author of Scotish Feilde, a member of the family of Legh of Baguley, may well have been involved at Flodden himself: certainly there was a



Cheshire contingent of Stanley supporters which took the road northwards under the command of Sir Edward Stanley, and the author on several occasions uses the first person pronoun (e.g. lines 255, 316, 317, 327, 330, 379) while recounting the moves before and during the battle, though not, significantly, during the account of the border raid a month before the battle. This is what we would expect if he was a member of Sir Edward's contingent. The fact that in one line (92) the poet uses a first person pronoun during his description of what was happening in France is slightly disturbing, but can most easily be accounted for by seeing it as an example of the custom among historians at least since Julius Caesar of referring to the troops they support as 'we'. If the author was at either engagement it was certainly Flodden, and if he was not there, it is at least probable that some member or members of the Legh family were.

The poem deals with considerably more than just the Flodden campaign. Its first historical event is the Battle of Bosworth; it then mentions Henry VII, especially his 1492 invasion of France as a kind of prelude to the next event, Henry VIII's 1513 invasion of France. There is then a section correctly linking this French invasion with the Flodden campaign, showing how one was the cause of the other. Only after these events does the author begin to recount the events leading up to and including the battle.

It is convenient, and also, given the nature of the narrative, fairly logical, to divide the action of the poem into three main sections: the first being up to line 96, which contains all the material not directly related to Flodden; the second being lines 97-129, a link passage; and the third, lines 130-417, which deals with the Flodden campaign.

The first section also falls conveniently into three:

a). Bosworth (lines 5-36). This account of Bosworth, being approximately thirty years after the event, is obviously unimportant as a source. It does no more than indicate in the most general terms that Henry arrived in Wales, defeated Richard at the battle, and that Richard's body was taken to Leicester. It lists the four main Stanleyite contributors to Henry's victory as being the four who are given the glory in Lady Bessiye, which could be coincidence or could be continuing the literary tradition. Neither explanation indicates that it is not true. Three other names are also singled out for praise, one of whom, Sir John Biron of Clayton, is another local man, but the other two, Sir Edward Poynings and Sir James Blunt, are not; nor are they mentioned in Lady Bessiye or Bosworth Feilde.

b). Henry VII (lines 37-47). Most of these eleven lines are taken up explaining that Henry ruled for twenty-four years and then died. His 1492 invasion of France occupies three lines (40-2) and says no more than that he went there and they agreed to pay him 'tribute' and to call him 'lord'. This 'tribute' is



presumably the financial consideration contained in the Treaty of Etaples (3 November 1492) under the terms of which Charles VIII agreed to pay the arrears of the Treaty of Picquigny (1475) and to pay a further 620,000 crowns to defray the expenses of Henry's war-effort. The treaty also acknowledged that Henry was still officially King of France, which is presumably the explanation of the French calling him 'lord'.

c). Henry VIII in France, 1513 (lines 48-96). Being but a part of the prefatory material to the main matter, this campaign, like those of Bosworth and 1492, is not of such consuming interest to the author that he will want to treat it in much detail. It is vital that he mention the fact of the invasion for two reasons: it was at the least a primary cause of the whole Flodden campaign; and secondly the Earl of Derby was on that invasion, which explains why he was not at Flodden to lead his troops there.

A comparison of the account in this poem reveals that the author knew very little about the reasons for Henry's presence in France: he gives Henry blatantly imperialist motives for his invasion, as opposed to the highly complex Western European power struggle in which Italy, Venice, the Papal States, the Empire, the Spanish kingdoms, and England all combined to keep France in check. Henry's invasion was mainly in fulfilment of his obligation to this league of anti-French nations (known as the Holy League). But if Henry had any doubts about invading, the French attack on his navy lying off Brest (25th April 1513) spurred him into action.



The details of the invasion are also erroneous. The English army was shipped to France in three divisions, the earliest in mid-May, the second in late May, and the third, under Henry himself, on 30th June.<sup>34</sup> By the time this third contingent arrived at Therouanne on 4th August, the siege was already well under way. The challenge to Henry and his boast in taking up the challenge are a romantic fiction.

As with the Bosworth description, the poet mentions several men who took part in the campaign, including of course the 2nd Earl of Derby. As his predecessor was the main contributor to Henry's victory at Bosworth, we begin to see the poem's line of argument.

Within all this prefatory material, then, there is nothing of any historical value: its accounts are the merest summaries, and the reason for including them in the poem is not essentially as part of the historical background, but to provide a pleasing link (apparently) between the first and the second Great Stanley Occasions.

The Link Passage (lines 97-129).

The connection between the invasion of France and the Flodden campaign is real, but the author's version of it is over-simplified. Again this is hardly surprising, as he is unlikely to have had full cognisance of the negotiations between James IV of Scotland, Louis XII of France, and Henry VIII of England. He had probably heard - no doubt everyone had

- that the French had appealed to the Scots to invade England. He also knew that the French King's ambassador to Scotland was called de la Mothe. It seems, however, that from these two scraps of knowledge he concocted his story of bribes and challenges.

In fact, the last message de la Mothe is known to have delivered to James from Louis was written as early as 5th March 1513,<sup>35</sup> over two months before the invasion began, although de la Mothe did return to France at the beginning of June,<sup>36</sup> and died at Flodden,<sup>37</sup> so he could possibly have brought a later message. In a letter written on 8th May Louis requested James to invade England as soon as the English army invaded France,<sup>38</sup> but again that was before rather than, as the poet suggests, after Henry had invaded. James received one further letter from Louis written on 7th June, but this was delivered by Ogilvy, not de la Mothe.<sup>39</sup> This letter has not survived, but may have been an appeal from Louis to James after the English had invaded. One contemporary account of the battle, Brian Tuke's letter from Tournai to Richard Pace, reports that Louis sent James a bribe of 25,000 crowns, but this would have been hearsay. Polydore Vergil (ed. 1950, p. 203 and 215) indicates that 'bribes and extortions' were used. In view of James' own letters, however, it seems that the decision to invade was his own, made out of enlightened self-interest, with his desire to help the French being a contributory, though not ultimately determining factor in his decision.



### The Third Section: Flodden.

The poet's account of the Flodden campaign is a complex mixture of reporting - whether first- or second-hand -, invention, and propaganda. Soon after Henry VIII received James's last letter warning him of imminent invasion,<sup>40</sup> the second week of August saw the Scots, under the leadership of Lord Home, embarking on a preliminary raid (the Ill Roade) into Northumberland. This raid was successfully repulsed by William Bulmer and John Heron with a comparatively small body of northern soldiers. If the author or his informer was, as has been suggested (pp. 97-8), among the Cheshire troops, he would have arrived on the scene much later than this initial foray, and he would have therefore only been able to hear about it. The rest of the narrative, once the Cheshire troops begin their march northward, is therefore the only section of the poem which can really be considered as a direct source for the battle, and even then there are large sections where he writes about, for example, the internal dealings within the Scots' army, for which his knowledge could not have been first-hand.

The author's task, as previously emphasised, is not only to recount the details of the battle, but to exculpate the Cheshire troops from the accusation of cowardice. In his letter Tuke specifically uses the word 'cowardice' when talking about the Cheshire troops, and the 'Trewe Encountre' (ed. 1870, p. 145) mentions Bold, Butler and Booth (all close friends of the 2nd Earl, as we can see from his mentioning them in Flodden Feilde) as men who fled. Hall (ed. 1809, pp. 557-8) adds the



names of Lawrens and Done. This cowardice must somehow be accounted for.

In Scotish Feilde there are two scapegoats, and, by casting the blame on them, the author creates the impression that the cowardice could have been avoided. The easiest scapegoat is the leader of the English right wing, Edmund Howard. The Howards and the Stanleys had not been friends since the Wars of the Roses. It was thought that Sir William Stanley had killed the Duke of Norfolk, as reported twice in Flodden Feilde (lines 142, 413). The author does not attack Edmund Howard for his cowardice; indeed, other sources report that he fought valiantly, being three times knocked down. But he blames Edmund's father, the Earl of Surrey, for putting Edmund in charge of a group of men who were only used to fighting under Stanley leaders. The implication has positive attractions, for it suggests that, if a Stanley had been in command, the men would, as usual, have fought gallantly.

The second scapegoat is Lord Dacres, who was in charge of the cavalry, which was stationed behind Sir Edmund's forces on the right of the English army. The author tells us that it was Dacres who led the retreat, and that the men in front of him, realising that all their support had gone, turned and ran after them. This accusation, when other sources are followed, is only half true. That the cavalry did retreat early in the battle is reported by Lord Dacres himself in a letter to the King:<sup>42</sup>

At the battle his men not being strong enough to be a wing to my Lord Treasurer (Surrey), he assigned him Bamborough and Tynemouth, but they fled at the first shot of the Scottish guns, as my Lord Admiral can report.

Lord Dacres himself, however, with what remained of his own borderers, rallied to the defence of the few men who stayed on with Edmund Howard, and saved the day for the English right wing, as is reported by all sources except Hall.

During the account of Lord Home's preliminary raid, the author has prepared the ground for Dacres' later defection by suggesting that when the Scots first encroached into England, the English appealed to Lord Dacres, but that he refused to come and help them. Whether this is true or not is not recorded elsewhere, but it achieves its purpose as far as the Stanley author and audience are concerned.

Of the remainder of the battle, it is convenient to see the author's narrative as being roughly what one would expect from a man who saw little bits of action here and there and was attempting to fuse everything he had seen or heard into one complete narrative. He writes at more length and in more detail when he (or his informer) was directly involved or when the Stanley troops are concerned in the action, both circumstances usually, of course, occurring together. When he knows less, he writes less, or, as in the case of King James's deliberations with his herald just before the final onslaught,



invents. He knows, although he was not present, that James had captured Norham Castle; he might not have known that he had also captured three smaller castles of Wark, Etal and Ford - or he might have deliberately abridged the account because these details did not accord with his purpose.

The mustering of the English army is of interest to the author because the Stanley troops are involved. The Lancashire and Cheshire contingents all met up, he tells us, at Skipton in Craven, before embarking on the long march northwards. This might possibly have elicited a frisson of nostalgic pleasure from the Stanley audience, for Sir William Stanley, one of the heroes of Bosworth, who had later been executed at Henry VII's command, had previously been the owner of this land.<sup>43</sup> As the troops spread out across the land (line 236),

fowrtene thousand egill feete feteled in araye  
must have gladdened the audience's hearts.

The army then marched to Bolton in Glendale, near Alnwick in Northumberland, where Surrey made his mistake of putting his son in charge of the Stanley troops. As for the rest of the English army, the author mostly agrees with the 'Trewe Encountre' and Hall concerning which section people served in, although as those two sources do not always agree with each other, there can be no certainty who is 'right'. The author appears to know less about where people were stationed on the left of the English army, with Lord Clifford, Lord Lumley and Sir William Bulmer being placed differently from the



other sources.<sup>43</sup>

The poet records the lack of water and the murmurings of impatience among the men, which also occur in other sources.

He informs us that the Scots had taken up such a strong position against any army approaching from the south that it would have been foolish to attack them. The delay at Wooler Haugh is reported, though the author possibly did not know that Surrey was negotiating through heralds with James, trying to arrange a time and place for the battle. All this is reported in the 'Trewe Encountre' (ed. 1870, pp. 557-8) and in Hall (ed. 1809, pp. 558-60). The night before the battle they moved to Barmoor (incorrectly called 'Barwicke' by the author). From the English camp at Barmoor, the army marched, on the morning of the battle, northwards past the Scots on Flodden Edge, and appeared to be heading into Scotland. James, sensing danger, burnt his camp and set off northwards down the hill, at which the English wheeled left and pushed back towards the Scots. Thus the battle actually took place with the English heading south and the Scots north, which may well be a cause of the fact that several mistakes have been made by writers both early and late in the matter of 'left' and 'right': the author of Scotish Feilde, for example, makes such a mistake in line 266, but he is not alone in such an error.

As the two front lines came towards each other, the Scots would have been, as the author records, 'moving over the mountains' (line 318). There follows the report that the battle started, and that the Cheshire men fled - following Lord

Dacres. A list of local Lancashire and Cheshire men killed in the battle is provided, all of which names are also recorded in other sources. Then there is a final scrimmage in which the Scots' King is killed, according to the author by one of James Stanley's Ely men, and the battle ends.

One slightly surprising omission from the Scottish Feilde account of the battle is the crucial part played by Sir Edward Stanley and the English left wing. According to the other sources, Sir Edward's flanking manoeuvre round the outside and then up behind the Scots' right wing was the turning-point of the battle. Certainly King Henry thought so, for he raised Sir Edward to Lord Mouteagle, and wrote him (and the leader of the Middleton archers) special letters of commendation.<sup>44</sup> The reason for omitting any account of this part of the action may, of course, be ignorance: if, as has been suggested, our source was on the right, how should he know what was going on on the left? But the poem was composed over eighteen months after the battle, and surely by then he would have found out what had happened. If ignorance is not the reason, tact may be: as far as the 2nd Earl of Derby was concerned, Sir Edward was persona non grata for most of the time between Flodden and the Earl's death in 1521, and the Earl's will gives a slightly enigmatic manifestation of the unpleasantness between the two men:<sup>45</sup>

And whereas I the said Erle have made an estate of  
the Castell and demaynes of Hornby to myne uncle Sir  
Edward Stanley Lord Mouteagle in hope of his favour



towards me, which estate was made upon certain conditions and entents, now the said conditions being broken, I will that my said unkle have no profit by the said deed.

If the poem were to be recited before a Stanley audience, perhaps Sir Edward's contribution would have to be played down.

It cannot finally be said that Scotish Feilde makes any significant contribution to our knowledge of the Battle of Flodden, but as another contemporary account of the proceedings it can be seen as a document supporting, for the most part, what the other contemporary accounts have to say.

The poem Flodden Feilde, on the other hand, like Lady Bessiye, is an account of an action nowhere else reported, and, as with other Stanley poems, its contribution has been largely ignored by historians, with the exception of E.Ives (1970, p. 355), who accepts that 'in large measure the facts of the poem are correct.' And yet, like Lady Bessiye, it suggests enough familiarity with the surrounding details of what is happening for us not to reject out of hand what it has to offer.

Like Scotish Feilde, the poem has the propagandist purpose of exculpating the Stanley troops from the accusations of cowardice at Flodden, but its method is very different. The scene is set outside the French town of Tournai, which the English went on to besiege after Therouanne had capitulated as a result of the Battle of the Spurs on 15th August. The plot



hinges on the two letters Henry received, one saying that Lancashire and Cheshire had been cowards, one saying they had been heroes. It is a fact that Henry did receive two reports of the battle: in his own letter of 16th September to Maximilian,<sup>46</sup> he writes of how

Surrey's first letters were forwarded by the Queen to Tournai and as yet no further details have reached the King. P.S. After writing the foregoing has received sure intelligence that the King of Scots perished in the battle.

This 'sure intelligence' may well have been the 'paludamentum' or cloak of King James, which was sent to the King as a token of James' death. The arrival of a second, more detailed account of the battle together with this 'paludamentum' is recorded in the letters of Tuke from Tournai, and of Spinelly from nearby Lisle.<sup>47</sup> That the Queen sent on Surrey's first letter but not the 'paludamentum' is clear from her letter to Henry in which she enclosed Surrey's 'first' account to her.<sup>48</sup>

What emerges from the above letters is that Henry did get two reports of the battle, but both of them reached him through the Queen. In the poem, however, only the second message comes from her, the first coming directly from Surrey himself. Although the surviving letters give no indication that yet a third message arrived (which would have in fact been the first received), it is more than likely that there was one.

For Surrey not to have sent directly to the King after the battle would have been undiplomatic, and it is reported in

Scotish Feilde (line 405-9) that he did send such a message. The two letters in Flodden Feilde would therefore seem to be this first letter, sent directly from Flodden via Surrey's own messenger; and Surrey's first, non-detailed report, with no 'paludamentum', sent on by the Queen. Surrey's messenger was the man asked by Henry who had fought well, and he may well have answered as he had seen things, which gave rise to the rumours of cowardice throughout the camp. Certainly Tuke's letter suggests that the first letter gave the idea of cowardice.<sup>49</sup>

Much of the framework of Flodden Feilde, then, accords with facts found elsewhere. Of the series of events within the body of the poem, the Earl's lament contains exactly the names of people and places we would expect; and for the Garsyde incident, the only corroboration is in the names of the persons mentioned, who certainly were at Tournai.<sup>50</sup> Even the name 'Gartside' is not an invention.

Of the historical contribution of Flodden Feilde, then, one can say that what can be measured against other accounts is all in agreement, and that the central story may be true, although probably exaggerated for effect. Certainly the King's offer to Derby that he can pass sentence on the Earl of Surrey seems a bit unlikely.

Hall's report (ed. 1809, p. 564) of what happened at Tournai is interesting:

The Kynge had a secrete letter that the Cheshyre men fledde from Syr Edmond Hawarde, whyche letter caused

greate harte burning and many woordes, but the Kynge  
thankfully accepted al thynges, and would no man to be  
disprayed.

If Hall found this out independently, it supports the story in  
the poem. It is, however, possible that Hall, unlike most  
historians, had read Flodden Feilde and taken seriously what it  
had to say.

One other historian who has read more than one of  
these poems agrees that they are unjustly neglected. A.Hume  
(1852-3, p. 192) thinks that the writers

who have handed down to us such glowing and minute  
accounts of these events deserve a more enduring  
record than either history or tradition has  
preserved.



## EDITORIAL PRINCIPLES

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There is no manuscript version of any of these four poems that was written within fifty years of the presumed dates of composition (see p. 20). The scribes who wrote the surviving manuscripts (and also, if the printed versions are anything like representative, the scribe who wrote the lost MS B) suffered in varying degrees from the diseases which have always affected scribes, such as carelessness, lack of concentration, copying without thinking, lack of revision; but also from that equally crippling affliction, intelligence, the enthusiasm to illuminate that which is dark. Add to this the possibility emphasised by Kingsford (1913, p. 252) that some of these poems have also experienced the effects of being transmitted orally for the early part of their existence, and it becomes apparent that the texts as we have them could be but poor reflections of what their original authors intended: bits are unaccountably missing (e.g. MS L lines 255-77, MS B at line 957); bits are repeated apparently out of context (in Bosworth Feilde (MS P), lines 29-32 = 37-40, 89-90 = 105-6, 174-6 = 182-4); bits have been lost (e.g. MS L lines 1-27); bits have been eroded by cuts and tears (MS P is constantly suffering from Percy's 'ignorant bookbinder' and from lateral folding); words which make no sense have been written down (e.g. 'liart', MS B line 875); obscure words which make good sense and fit rhyme or rhythm have been changed to more recognisable ones which do not (the scribe of MS P is particularly prone to this, as D.C.Fowler (1968, p. 118) has



shown); words have been added or subtracted which spoil any chance of metrical regularity, and in Scottish Feilde, especially in MS P, word-order has been changed resulting in the destruction of the traditional rhythm of the alliterative long line; whole sections have been added (e.g. the 44-line section immediately before the last stanza of Flodden Feilde in MS P, and probably the penultimate stanza of Lady Bessiye); proper names have been altered either from right to wrong or vice-versa (especially in MSS H and S of Flodden Feilde, where changes occur like Bidston/Beeston, Seton/Fitton).

From this multiplicity of confusions four texts must emerge. It would be a great boon to editors if there were a text-book detailing exactly how to proceed when editing Middle English Texts; but far from there being a simple set of agreed rules to follow, there are serious disagreements among those who have tried as to how it should be done. There are almost as many methods as there are editors, but Ann Hudson (1977, pp. 39-41) identifies three main strategies which have been advocated and practised:

- a). those where a chosen scribe's text is regarded as almost sacrosanct, even as far as making line-divisions (in prose texts) at identical places;
- b). those where an editor chooses what, for a stated reason, he considers the best available text, "which he prints with necessary emendations and to which other variants are subordinated" (p. 40). (R. Hanna (1987, p. 87) describes this process clearly: "He chooses one copy of the work as



qualitatively superior to all others, and follows that copy's readings with greater or less pertinacity." This "greater or less" adequately reflects the wide differences between what editors will and will not emend, yet also reflects that such editors are all in the same area of the park.)

c). the method adopted by such as Kane (1960), where at each point of variance he selects the reading most likely to have given rise to the other variants.

L.Patterson (1985, p. 55) distinguishes between what are often regarded as 'external', 'objective' readings, i.e. those provided by a manuscript source, and 'internal', 'subjective' readings, i.e. those an editor postulates as correct; but (p. 66) he rejects the distinction, claiming that "Neither internal nor external evidence is more objective than the other." He feels, therefore (p. 88), that a text which is "based on a single manuscript" is "incompletely edited". D.Brewer also argues for an editor's right to "Be bold!" on the grounds that (1982, p. 123) "the modern editor (is) in a position vastly superior to any scribe to reconstruct the author's original text."

The idea that one can, or should even try to, recover what Brewer calls "the author's original text" is not always approved of: D.A.Pearsall (1985, p. 100) is against "trying to find the perfect original text", preferring to see texts as shifting with each new rendering of them, often in ways which (p. 95) "might have been preferred by the poet himself had he thought of them". R.Hanna, while prepared to try, warns us

(1987, p. 90) that "the best text" is not the same as "the perfect text", preferring to emphasise (p. 88) "the best text which survives". D.Embree and E.Urquhart (1987, p. 52) also question whether it is really an editor's duty to "detect inferior readings and recover the original" in view of poets' known propensity to revise.

One of the deciding factors in choosing what to do, as Hanna (1987, p. 87) and Hudson (1977, p. 39) recognise, is the projected audience. Hudson (p. 41) acknowledges that, for an audience interested in content (rather than, say, philology), the second of her three identified methods is the best. Brewer, who thinks that in general it is wrong "to print a good manuscript with the minimum of emendation", nevertheless admits (1982, p. 123) that "if there are only one or two manuscripts, that might be the right thing to do."

As these Stanley poems are perhaps of more interest for their content, and as there are only a very small number of manuscripts to choose from, my aim with each poem will be to select a manuscript as a base-text, and to emend it in the case of obvious scribal error. Where alternative readings are available, they will appear in the apparatus, and discussions of the discrepancies will frequently appear in the commentaries. In addition, I have on a very few occasions chosen to provide a reading from another manuscript where although the base-text makes sense, the variant provides what seems a clearer insight into the poet's thought. In Scotish Feildeline 234, for example, the base-text informs us that on



their shields the Stanley soldiers had "there crowns ... of gold". It makes sense, but the variant reading "three crowns" provides the extra historical information that the Stanley crest had that number of crowns on it. Likewise, the more precise (and alliterating) variant reading "Nevills" (line 286) is in every way a more accurate and "helpful" reading than the base-text's unspecific and unalliterating "Duke". There are, perhaps, a dozen such emendations only, each one clearly indicated as an emendation and justified in the commentary.

It is very difficult to know at what point to stop emending. If the attempt were to be made to reconstruct the original in its entirety, one would be forced to reconsider rhythm, rhyme, and alliteration as well as orthography, meaning and sense, and here, as even Kane (1960, p. 158) has pointed out, one would be tempted to "correct" on the assumption that the poet obeyed all the rules, which would be an unjustifiable assumption. My text, then, will offer some possible routes towards the original while remaining more or less steadily on the safer highway of the scribe's version.

The problem arises, then, of which manuscripts to select. As MS P contains versions of all four poems, it was initially tempting to use that for all; but in fact where there is a choice of manuscripts (i.e. in all except Bosworth Feilde) MS P is never the best. The manuscripts chosen are as follows:

The three manuscripts of Lady Bessiye represent not one poem but two completely different poems which tell a



similar story. While MSS H and P are almost identical, MS B is only just recognisable as being of 'the same' poem. Approximately the same story is told, but the language is entirely different and the version in MS B is 230 lines longer than that in MSS H and P. It would be even more accurate to suggest that the three manuscripts represent one and a half versions of the poem, for up to line B438/HP244 there is hardly any linguistic similarity, and the narratives, though superficially dealing with the same plot, vary enormously in their treatment of it. After that line, however, the two versions become considerably more alike, and there is a considerable amount of linguistic similarity, though still one version has 836 lines and the other 874. However this split occurred, and C.L.Kingsford (1913, p. 252) believes it is due to oral transmission, we are left with two versions and three manuscripts to choose between. It is a fair assumption that the longer version is likely to be nearer the original, because if some part is, as Kingsford suggested, being re-created from memory, omission of some details is more likely than substantial addition. This is borne out by an examination of the variations in the versions of this poem, where the narrative of MS B is (with the exception of the missing lines at line 957) quite comprehensibly continuous and coherent, while that in MSS H and P misses sections of narrative out, resulting in awkward leaps and unexplained occurrences.

Against this is the fact that MS B is heavily 'modernised' by its seventeenth-century scribe, while MS H,

being far earlier and by a careful scribe, is linguistically far more authentic. As the emphasis in this thesis is on the literary and socio-historical more than on the philological significance of these poems, MS B, which tells the story most completely, must be preferred. Unfortunately, the MS is now lost, so the text must perforce be an edition of that provided by Heywood.

There is only one manuscript of Bosworth Feilde, MS P. Of Scotish Feilde the version in MS P is later than that in MS L, but is copied from a different source, because lines 255-77 are missing in MS L. MS L is also missing lines 1-27, the first strip of the MS having been torn off. In spite of its lack of completeness, however, there are several reasons for considering MS L as the better of the two manuscripts:

1. It is considerably older.
2. Its continued connection with the family of the probable author (see pp. 41-46) lends it authenticity.
3. The scribe of MS P is known to be a liberal emender, as has been shown by D.C.Fowler (1968, p. 118).
4. The vocabulary in MS L appears more deliberately archaic than that in MS P: it looks as though the scribe of MS P has tried to modernise or explain words he might not recognise, either by synonyms (e.g. 'held' for 'kidde' (line 29), 'hied' for 'piked' (line 100)) or by homoeographs (e.g. 'traine' for 'tene' (line 53), 'lordes' for 'leedes' (line 65)).
5. The alliteration in MS L is more regular than that in MS P,

with the normal pattern of a-a-a-x [a = stressed syllable alliterating; x = stressed syllable not alliterating] occurring more frequently. This is a side-effect of MS P's alterations. The alliteration in MS L rarely goes 'excessive', such as a-a-a-a, or even a-a-a-a-a, whereas these can be seen in MS P (e.g. line 44).

6. The word-order in MS L nearly always produces rhythmical patterns of the kind that K.Luick (1888), after his exhaustive study of alliterative rhythms, accepts as typical of the genre, while in MS P, with its alterations, there are many patterns which the alliterative poets avoided, which Luick names 'verkürzte vers' (e.g. lines 67, 93, 114, 158, 159).

The fact that the last two points tend towards circularity (This is what we would expect if the poet knew what he was doing, therefore it must be right) is acknowledged, but when added to other reasons, can reasonably be adduced in support of MS L.

In favour of MS P is its relative completeness (although there are also some lines in MS L which are absent in MS P, such as 32, 110-112), and a very small number of lines where the reading in MS P is simply preferable. But in the belief that what remains of MS L is a better representation of what the author intended than MS P, and attracted by its continued connection with that author's family, I have elected to use MS L where it is available, and to provide its missing lines from MS P.



It seems probable that MS S of Flodden Feilde was copied from MS H. In lines 325-6, MS H reads

Then I bad the                      bowe down his face.

And geder up the bowe and brynge it to his Kynge.

The gap between 'the' and 'bowe' is filled, by the same hand but at a later time, with the word 'Scott', which completes the sense, and which is supported by MS P, the third manuscript, which comes from an independent source. At this point MS S reads

Then I layd the bowe on his face

And bade him gather upe the bowe and bring it to his king.

What has almost certainly happened is that the scribe of MS S misread 'bad' as 'laid' - a very plausible error - and then completed line 325 as well as he could; then he recognised that line 326 lacked a verb of speaking, so he added 'bade him', thus making the line far too long metrically, even for the irregular metre of this poem: it was so long that it over-ran, and was the only line to over-run, the ruled margin of his page. This sequence is only possible if the manuscript from which the scribe of MS S was copying was missing the word 'Scott', thus causing confusion between 'bowe' (verb) and 'bowe' (noun). And MS H has just such an omission.

Secondly, in MS H many of the proper nouns were originally written 'wrongly'. The scribe of MS S knew the correct forms of names like 'Birkenhead' (not 'Byrkhead'), 'Fitton of Gawseworth' (not 'Seton'), 'Fitzwater' (not 'Fighwater'), 'Ryce ap' (not 'up') 'Thomas', and these names

are all correct in MS S. In MS H, they are all written wrongly, but later corrected to exactly the forms of MS S. This is very possibly what would happen if the scribe of MS S were copying from MS H, because on the return of the manuscript, the 'errors' would be pointed out and corrected. The authenticity (that is, the earlier authority for the 'wrong' names) is shown by the fact that MS P, from an independent source, also has the names 'wrong'.

Several other factors support the contention that MS S is later. It often 'corrects' or modernises forms, such as 'came' for 'come' (line 284), which in MS H are older dialect forms. He corrects words he does not recognise either by synonyms (e.g. 'angerly' for 'tenyslye' (line 88)), or by homoeographs (e.g. 'marshallynge' for 'manratten' (line 391)). MS S, then is not considered as the base-text.

MS P is about 150 years later than MS H, and not copied from it, as can be deduced from the existence in MS P of the extra 85 lines immediately before the last stanza: these lines refer to an event from the year 1544, and are neither part of the poem as originally composed, nor an invention of the Percy scribe; they must therefore have been added at some time and yet not reached MS H.

In its forms, as is to be expected from a manuscript so much older, MS H retains a more original vocabulary and syntax. The scribe of MS P also tried for a few lines at the start of the poem to impose a regularly alternating tetrameter/trimeter rhythm on the lines, where MS H remains



doggedly near-tetrameter all through. MS P also corrects old past tenses such as 'bare', 'speake', 'bend' to the more recognisable 'bore', 'spoke', 'bent'; and MS H retains many older inflected endings, such as '-st' for the second person singular and '-eth' for the third person singular, while MS P usually modernises them. In the verb 'to be' MS H prefers the old third person plural 'bene', using 'are' only twice, while MS P always uses 'are' or 'be'. In pronouns, MS H nearly always uses 'ye', which MS P never does. The vocabulary of MS P is considerably modernised: 'radly' becomes 'readilye', 'bren' 'burne', 'schunte' 'shrink' or 'shun', 'leaver' 'rather', and many more. The formulae, or alliterative phrases, are sometimes needlessly altered in MS P (e.g. lines 20, 154, 168).

Against these, the number of instances where MS P seems superior to MS H are very few, amounting to three or four places where the scribe of MS H has written a word carelessly, such as 'your' for 'you' (line 56) or 'deed' for 'dyed' (line 93). There seems no possible reason to doubt the absolute superiority of MS H, and so this edition will be of that manuscript.

For the sake of legibility, the texts will be presented in Roman type except where alteration is made from the base-text, which means, for example, that in Scotish Feilde lines 1-27 and 255-77 will be in Roman type even though they are from MS P, as MS P is the base-text for those lines.

Emendations from other manuscripts will be underlined;



emendations without manuscript support will be in square brackets. All substantive (as opposed to spelling) variants from Scotish Feilde and Flodden Feilde will appear at the foot of the page. Of Bosworth Feilde there are no variants, there being only one manuscript.

The only way to reproduce the variants in Lady Bessiye would be, as Halliwell did in his edition (1847), to print out both versions of the poem, but this is an unnecessary extra. Where MSS H or P have significant contributions, they will be mentioned in footnotes.

To make the text as readable as possible, in matters of orthography I have made the appearance completely modern: all abbreviations (of which there are many in the manuscripts) have been silently expanded; the letters 'v' and 'u', which are reversed in some but not all the manuscripts, have been 'normalised' to their modern uses; some of the scribes use two 'f's at the beginning of a word to indicate 'F', and that too has been silently changed.

The scribes had irregular, inconsistent, and often inexplicable habits with regard to capital letters, some of which I am convinced are matters of handwriting rather than of policy: the scribe of MS L, for example, writes 'R' rather than 'r' whenever the letter 'r' begins a word, so that one can only deduce that he simply writes 'r' as 'R' in those circumstances. To reproduce it as 'R' would be false to his intentions. Likewise the scribe of MS P appears to begin proper names with capital letters unless the letter is 'W',

when he appears to write 'w', and again, to reproduce, as Furnivall and Hales have done in their edition, 'sir william warcop' (Scotish Feilde line 342 in their numbering) is almost certainly false to that scribe's intentions, however accurately it may represent what is actually written. Some scribes begin each line of verse with a capital letter; others do not. In this edition, all capitalisation is in accordance with modern practice.

Punctuation, of course, is hardly in evidence on any of the manuscripts, and is entirely editorial. This is not simply a matter of dropping in the occasional comma or fullstop and putting inverted commas round speech: decisions on where punctuation should go will radically alter the sense of the narrative, especially in Scotish Feilde, where the syntax and word-order are so unlike modern syntax and word-order that it is often hard to recognise exactly where the stops should go (see, for example, note to lines 16-18). Nor is it always obvious whether direct speech has been entered (e.g. Lady Bessiye lines 476, 1093-4) and if so, who is speaking (lines 677-80, 835-6).

Lineation is another area where modern practice has been adopted. In the three rhyming poems, some scribes (e.g. S and H) have clearly recognised and reproduced stanzaic patterns, while others (e.g. B and sometimes P) have not. I have assumed, unlike its previous editors, that Bosworth Feilde is in an eight-line stanza rather than a four-line stanza, for two reasons: first, the verbal repetition which occurs every



eighth line: of eighty-two eight-line stanzas thus identified, fifty-nine end with the word 'king' and eighteen with the word 'crowne', and within those broad groups are many further patterns. Secondly, the rhyme pattern, which at first sight seems to be a simple a-b-a-b, is actually a far more sophisticated eight-line pattern a-b-a-b-b-c-b-c. This pattern occurs in seventy-three out of eighty-two stanzas, with another five looking as though they want to be like that but have gone wrong somewhere, leading to patterns like a-b-a-b-a-c-b-c or a-b-c-b-b-d-b-d; thus leaving only four in the apparently unlinked a-b-a-b-c-d-c-d. These figures seem more than satisfactory to establish the case. (Some hand on the manuscript has evidently recognised this pattern and tried to number the eight-line stanzas, but has gone wrong at 5, 44-47 (understandably, because the eight-line verbal repetition inexplicably goes 'wrong' in that section), 57, 63 and 78.)

In Flodden Feilde, on the other hand, two scribes, H and S, set the poem out in eight-line stanzas, whereas the linguistic and metrical evidence would suggest that the poem is in a basic four-line stanza with the rhyme scheme about 60/40 in favour of a-b-c-b over a-b-a-b. Even fours are far from perfect, the rhyme-pattern of fours being maintained only by allowing an occasional six. In this edition, that is how Flodden Feilde will appear.

Lady Bessiye's earliest editors, Heywood (1829) and Halliwell (1847), printed the poem with no stanza divisions at all, but Furnivall and Hales (1867-8), who had only MS p,



printed it in four-line stanzas. MS B is also quite clearly in a four-line stanza pattern, with the rhyme scheme being mostly a-b-a-b. By looking at those stanzas that do not fit that pattern, one soon recognises that there are more sounds allowed as rhymes than a twentieth-century pronunciation would allow: the sounds as in 'try', 'tray', and 'tree' are frequently rhymed, so much so that the spelling is sometimes altered by a scribe to make the rhyme clear. Thus the past tense of the verb 'lie' is variously presented as 'lay', 'lee', or 'lye'; the frequent word 'Stanley' also rhymes either with 'tree' sounds or 'tray' sounds. This adds fifty-five to the number of a-b-a-b stanzas. Thirty-two more can be included by recognising that the author counts 'o' + any nasal sound as a rhyme (home, done, renowne, boone, son, ground, procession, towne, London, Richmond, Stone, upon), and that such sound-groups as -air -er -eer -oor; -en -ain; -ed -eed; -ast -est -ost; are also counted. An admittedly generous allowance of near-rhymes brings the figure to 299 stanzas a-b-a-b, 29 a-b-c-b, and one a-b-c-c. The four-line stanza goes wrong at line 957, where there are some lines missing, and at line 1219, where an extra line appears.

I therefore print Lady Bessiye and Flodden Feilde in four-line stanzas, Bosworth Feilde in eight-line stanzas.

Scotish Feilde is a poem in a completely different metre, the old unrhymed alliterative long line seen in the poems of the Alliterative Revival. The scribe of MS L, however, and J. Robson (1856), its editor, provide texts where

the long line is split into two. The scribe of MS P presents it 'correctly', and I have reproduced long lines with the caesura in each line marked by a short gap. There are, of course, no stanza divisions.

In the apparatus, if the variant is a simple and obvious one-word exchange, just the word is given. If there is any doubt, the words before the ] make clear where the alternative is available.



# S T Y L E



## STYLE

[In this section, line references are designated only by the first letter of each poem's title.]

The main argument of this thesis is that these poems, and others like them, were originally composed to be read aloud. There is nothing surprising in this: as Ruth Crosby (1936) has demonstrated, most early poems were. That these Stanley poems should contain some of the more obvious features of orally delivered verse need not surprise us; indeed, the lack of them would be more surprising. Thus the fact that the authors describe their activity with words like 'say' (L761, 1089, 1303; B137, 385; S2, 419), 'tell' (L5, 926, 1085, 1300; B344, 485; S279; F3), 'talke' (L1116, B74, F1), 'min' or 'minge' (B454; S35), and 'carpe' (S5, 98); and their recipients' activity with words like 'listen' (L4), 'hear' (B223, 447, 487; S151, 192, 424) and 'hearken' (B343, 424), is what we would expect. Similarly, the fact that each poem asks for God's blessing on either its listeners or the reigning monarch or both at either the beginning or the end or both, is to be expected (see opening and closing lines of all poems except Flodden Feilde, where there is no request at the beginning). R.Crosby also identified the announcement of a pause as a sign of oral delivery, the assumption being there would now be a short interval. In Scotish Feilde this almost occurs twice (lines 151, 192), but in fact this poem is probably not long enough to require breaks in the telling, so this may be simply a narrative device.

In view of the fact that all these poems have at times been called 'ballads', one should also consider whether or not their performance was in any way musical, for descriptions of recitals in earlier poems occasionally refer to a musical accompaniment, and true ballads (if one can accept that such things exist) are always, as Entwistle (1939, p. 33) insists, sung. The fact that the verbs describing the reciter's actions are always 'say' and 'talke' rather than 'sing' suggests that the recital was without musical accompaniment, but the full title (see p. 14) in other manuscripts of what MS P (and this edition) calls Lady Bessiye contains the word 'Song', which might be a significant word. Not much reliability, however, can be placed on titles, as was emphasised on p. 13.

In spite of the near-certainty that the poems were composed for oral delivery, we should describe the poems as 'oral' only with caution, for, as R.Finnegan (1977, p. 33) has emphasised, oral poems can be oral in three ways: composition, delivery, and transmission. That the poems are intended for oral delivery is clear, but were they orally composed, in the way that A.B.Lord (1969) describes true oral poetry as being composed, or were they originally written? There are features in common with other poems which are thought to have been orally composed, especially those 'blocks' of narrative which are repeated with more or less the same action and speech happening, but different people involved each time. This is a very pronounced feature of Lady Bessiye, where we see



1. the letters being composed (lines 349-436), with each letter containing some detail of its recipient, some short incident from the past which will act as a guarantee of the message's authenticity, the request to come to London disguised as a local tradesman, and severe instructions on how to behave on the way.
2. the reception (lines 508-656) Humphrey Brereton receives when he visits each of the six recipients of the letters, where there is surprise, a question asking what he is doing there, the handing over of the letter with the instruction to read it, the surprised or amused response, and the promise, in spite of their concern, to help Lord Stanley in every way they can.
3. The arrival (lines 741-80) of each of the recipients in London, where first Humphrey sees them coming, then they tell their companions to go and have a drink somewhere, while they slip in to the inn where Lord Stanley and Lady Bessy are.
4. The speeches of the recipients (lines 789-828) to Lady Bessy, where each one promises to provide men and money for the enterprise.
5. The movements towards Bosworth (lines 1033-46) as each man gets himself and his men ready for action.

Flodden Feilde also has a repeated question and answer session between the King and a messenger (lines 1-44, 353-72) and the Earl of Derby's long lament (lines 145-238), where the names of the people and places change line by line, but the analysis of



how he will miss them is repeated again and again.

Another feature of poems orally composed is the frequent use of reach-me-down ideas which add little or nothing to the sense but which conveniently produce a rhyme and a pleasant rhythm at the end of a line. This is hardly observed at all in Bosworth Feilde, where there is, comparatively speaking, a fairly careful approach to the words in which ideas are clothed, only occasionally in Flodden Feilde, where 'trulye' occurs six times (lines 224, 240, 282, 386, 404, 412) and 'right' four times (lines 78, 83, 88, 121), but abundantly in Lady Bessiye, where 'trulye' is used fourteen times (lines 18, 384, 432, 632, 655, 739, 839, 855, 896, 914, 947, 1053, 1061, 1184), 'certaine' ten times (lines 355, 540, 560, 838, 903, 913, 997, 1045, 1065, 1197), and there is a proliferation of meaningless expressions such as 'far and near' (lines 22, 198, 698), 'day and night' (26, 1135), 'it is no nay' (162, 592), 'to my degree' (12, 116), 'for all the gold in Christantye' (224, 268, 788, 1152); and then a vast number of lines that end with some vague adjective or adverb (and it is often difficult, though not worth the effort, to tell whether the word is being used adjectivally or adverbially) tacked on to the end. Words such as 'free', 'deare', 'bright', 'shene', 'clear', 'clene', 'anon', 'right', 'faire', 'faine' seem to occur every other line.

The alliterative long line has sometimes been thought of as a line well adapted for oral composition, and it is a

re-working of the old Anglo-Saxon style which M.Parry (ed. 1971) first demonstrated to have been orally composed. R.A.Waldron (1963) has examined the poems of the Alliterative Revival in the light of the oral-formulaic theory, and found that, although the poems were not actually composed during delivery like genuine oral productions, they had many features in common with poems composed in that way. Scotish Feilde is a very clear example of that: there is nothing to be gained from assuming that it was orally composed, but it has features, such as the rhythm-filling formulae in the second half-lines, that Waldron particularly identified as a legacy of the oral-formulaic style. Scotish Feilde, in fact, contains the one really clear reference to a written mode of composition, when the author refers in line 292 to his pen failing him. It seems that this late resuscitation of an earlier style, like Walter Mitty's famous resuscitation, required a pen.

It is out of the question to think of Bosworth Feilde having been orally composed, because it has such a complex and interrelated rhyme-scheme (see p. 116).

As to oral transmission, Kingsford (1913, pp. 250-2) uses the fact of Lady Bessie having two quite separate versions to illustrate what happens when a poem is orally transmitted. It is certainly hard to see how the same original poem could have become so widely divided if it were being copied from documents, so Kingsford must be right that at least some part of the history of that poem belongs to an oral tradition.



It is still quite possible, however, that the longer version, that contained in MS B, was from a written tradition - however many of its features are similar to poems from an oral tradition. With the other three poems, the only evidence we have, namely the manuscript variations, are only such as derive from accidental copying errors or deliberate scribal emendations. It seems that of the four poems, only Lady Bessiye could possibly be regarded as a genuine oral poem, and there is certainly no necessity to assume that it was.

Although the poems have all been seen so far as constituting a homogeneous group with a unified purpose, and now with an almost unified form of composition, delivery and transmission, each poem nevertheless has an individual as well as a corporate identity, which deserves some attention.

As Scotish Feilde is in the alliterative long line while the other three are in almost metrical mostly rhyming stanza-form, it is the most individual of the four, and will therefore be dealt with first.

Scotish Feilde is the very last poem of the Alliterative Revival, that group of poems unified only by their use of the alliterative long line, that began in about 1345. It is entirely fitting that the Stanleyite author should choose this form to praise the deeds of his liege lords, as it has three distinct merits which, according to J.R.Hulbert (1931), had attracted the poets of the mid-fourteenth century at the beginning of the revival: it was archaic, and therefore



embodied what seemed to be traditional values; it was English, as opposed to the French-influenced verse of the King's court; and it was in non-London English, thus representing the baronial families of the West and North. All those three advantages in the fourteenth century could still be seen to apply, though in different degrees, to a poem such as Scotish Feilde at the beginning of the sixteenth. Its archaic form emphasises the antiquity of the Stanley tradition, which the poem itself also glories in, with mentions of Brutus, the earlier Stanley triumphs, and the eagle motif, which is inherited from the very earliest moments of Stanley history. Its Englishness is relevant, as Henry VIII was at war with France. And its northerness is both to emphasise the Stanley excellence and to derogate the authority of those Southerners, the Howards, who are seen in these poems as enemies almost as hostile as the Scots. It is clearly a most fitting form in which to write such a poem.

The great period of the Revival was from 1345-1400, but as time went on, the alliterative style weakened, and was only rarely employed, even in the fifteenth century. The weaknesses of the late alliterative style, which are so evident in Scotish Feilde, grew, paradoxically from the strengths of the early style. These weaknesses are firstly metrical: the form may seem exceptionally free, requiring merely four stressed syllables per line with (usually) three of them alliterating, but K.Luick (1888) has shown that the pattern of unstressed syllables is by no means unlimited, and certain

stress-patterns are always shunned by the poets, patterns which Luick calls 'verkürzte vers'. To avoid these unwanted patterns, the poets of the early revival had to be very inventive with word-order and phraseology, and the invention of such phrases adds an air of vigour and spontaneity to their lines. Once these problems had been satisfactorily solved, however, with phrase-shapes which would fit the patterns now established, succeeding poets had merely to adapt what they wanted to say to the ready-made phrase patterns inherited from the early poems. One example from Scotish Feilde will make this tendency clear.

In alliterative verse, the events, the movement of the poem, tends to occur in the first half of the line (or 'a-line'), while the second half (or 'b-line') provides some descriptive comment of an adverbial or adjectival sort, frequently a relative clause. There are sixty-four b-lines in Scotish Feilde made up of relative clauses. If a poet of the early revival wanted to describe a soldier 'who was doughtie of deedes', he could do so without alteration, because the stress-pattern  $x / x x / (x)$  [/ = stressed syllable; x = unstressed] was not verkürzte vers. If, however, he wanted to say, 'who was strong in armes', he could not, because the pattern  $x x / x / (x)$  was verkürzte vers. Someone inverted the word-order, so that the halfline then read, 'that strong was in armes', creating a pattern  $x / x x / (x)$ , which is allowable. This was an admirable solution to the problem, but unfortunately once the solution had been found, the new phrase-



shape became common property, and countless instances occurred of a b-line being made up of 'that' + adjective + 'was' + preposition + noun, so that the phrase is no longer vigorous but tired. In Scotish Feilde there are fourteen such phrases:

that proved was of deeds (line 20)  
that fuerse ws in armes (57)  
that proved were in armes (111)  
that fuerse were in armes (126)  
that epe was of deedes (222)  
that sturne was of deedes (228)  
that proved was of deedes (275)  
that borne was at Lathum (283)  
that epe was of deedes (284)  
that sterne was of deedes (296)  
that borne were of mothers (310)  
that epe was of deedes (342)  
that kene is of deedes (361)  
that told were by tale (394)

These reversed relative clauses constitute only one example of the weakening: one could examine the use of oaths, asseverations of truth, infinitives preceeded by their objects, superlative adjectives followed by 'of other', the intensive adverb 'ful' being slipped in before a final adjective to prevent the halfline being verkurzte vers, the phrase 'with' + noun + 'enough'. All these were once probably clever original inventions to overcome metrical problems, but by the time of Scotish Feilde they are easy escape routes for poets of limited skill.

A second weakness in late alliterative poetry is in its vocabulary. In the early years of the revival the demands of alliteration forced the poets to be inventive: one word for each concept would not suffice, and for commoner concepts such as 'man', or 'go', fifteen or twenty words would be required. They succeeded in finding this wealth of words by reaching back



into the vocabulary of earlier centuries, and their verbal dexterity and variety was one of the great achievements of the genre. As with the word-order and phraseology, however, once the words were available, they became common property. Even that might not have caused weakening if the poets had been more conscious of the original force of the words they were using; but once 'tulk', originally a spokesman, is discovered as a word for "man", it comes to mean simply "man"; 'carp', originally "boast", comes to mean simply "talk"; and almost all adjectives come to be selected not for their shades of meaning, but rather the opposite: as long as they are vaguely commendatory or derogatory and begin with the right letter, that will do. Thus in Scotish Feilde we read of 'seemlie saints' (line 4) and 'worthy water' (line 261). When J.P.Oakden (1935, vol. ii, p. 83) complains that Scotish Feilde is 'marred throughout by the constant repetition of stock phrases and tags', he is about right, but right only in a technical sense. The author has spirit and enthusiasm, generosity towards his enemies, and observes the progress of the campaign with a wealth of detail that has a cumulative effect on the reader. C.S.Lewis (1954, pp. 121-2) was also about right when he said that Scotish Feilde was 'incomparably better battle-poetry than England was to produce for many centuries'.

The stylistic weaknesses in the poems may be the fault not so much of the poet as of the weakened tradition: he was technically competent, using his form flexibly and efficiently

on occasion, but it seems that the deadweight of accumulated stagnation within the form held him down. And after him, no one else tried.

The other three poems are all in approximately the same metrical form, which Bronson, (1980 p. 72) calls the alternative form of the ballad stanza. Metrically this means that each line has a basic iambic rhythm, with four stressed syllables, and alternate lines rhyming. Lady Bessiye, for example, begins:

For Jesus sake be merry and glad.  
Be blythe of blood, of bone and ble,  
And of your words be sober and sad,  
And a litle while listen to me.

As is immediately evident, the basic form is subject to massive amounts of variation. The regularity of metre is sporadic, with anapaests, anacrusis, short lines, long lines, all appearing occasionally. Often one can guess how an originally 'correct' line might have been 'corrupted' into its form in the manuscript, but, as Kane (1960, p. 158) has said, to make emendations on metrical grounds is a dangerous pastime, as it assumes a thoroughly competent original author, which may be an unjustified assumption. But one can see that line 4 above could be more regular if written

But listen a litle while to me.



This kind of re-organisation of word-order could frequently re-establish 'lost' rhythm and rhyme, and if one needed to regularise the whole poem it could surely be done with little difficulty. One can never be certain, however, whether one has an author who can't quite count, or an incompetent scribe.

A second probable corrupting feature is the occasional writing in full of a proper name which, in the original, was probably in shortened form. Lines like  
Your brother, Sir William Stanley, by parliament (L17)  
Therefore help, good father Stanley, while you have space (L65)  
Therefore, good father Stanley, grant my request (L119)  
would all approach regularity with the word 'Stanley' omitted. To the presumed original audience, of course, the word would not have been necessary, and it seems that some later scribe, wanting to 'help' his readers, has added the surname, thus spoiling the metre in the same way that Silas Wegg's adding 'Mr Boffin' every now and then would spoil his.

The surviving text of Lady Bessie is, nevertheless, a fairly regular performance, with most stanzas conforming approximately to the norm; but the author is far more concerned with content than with language. The poem races along, being thoroughly engrossing especially for a committed audience, with suspense, excitement, irony (especially lines 665-702), pace, and climax all competently handled, but with the verse being the literary equivalent of jerry-built. Rhymes are created by the simplest possible methods, frequently by adding a superfluous adverb to the end of a sentence, like



'certaine', 'truely', or 'right'. Alliterative phrases are plundered, too, for simple endings: 'sober and sad', 'fair and free', 'might and main' (or 'main and might'), 'weal or woe', 'heavy in heart', 'fight and not flee', 'bone and blee', 'braine and blood', 'tarry this tide', and even 'banished full bare'. Little phrases which mean hardly anything, like 'night and day', 'far and near', 'more and less', 'to my degree', help to fill up stanzas without too much effort. Anything in the nature of imagery, wordplay, or subtle poetic effect is almost entirely absent, so that when in line 1173 Henry Tudor and the Earl of Oxford are referred to as 'the Red Rose and the Blew Boar' it stands out as an unusual phenomenon set amongst such mundane surroundings.

The same criticism is not nearly so true of Bosworth Feilde. As already shown it has a complex rhyme scheme, which continues almost uninterrupted throughout the poem, with its few 'failures' often simply explained: if the word 'neere', for example, is altered to 'nye' or 'nee' (both spellings used elsewhere), it would 'correct' the rhyme at lines 77, 89, 93, and 218, and there can be very little doubt, given the careful nature of the poem's construction, that that is what has happened. Line 313 needs the word 'land' adding; in line 386 'taken' would be better in its older (and common in these poems) form, 'tane'. These simple corrections would leave only six lines (205, 279, 339, 427, 531, and 619) as apparent failures, and with a small amount of ingenuity those could surely be 'solved' if necessary. In addition two stanzas (lines

489-96 and 553-60) appear not to have the linked rhyme-scheme.

The poem's metre is not nearly so regular, indeed there are times when one is reminded of William McGonagall, but its metrical intentions are clear. It, too, makes considerable use of alliterative phrases, so we read 'grounded with grace', 'deemed to dye', 'dowted and dread', 'tell with tongue', 'see with sight', 'witt the will', 'wise and wittye', 'sterne on steede', 'noble at need', 'stiffe to stand', 'fierce to fight', 'fell and farr' in addition to most of those listed above from Lady Bessiye. On the whole, however, this author does not sink into easy methods of achieving rhymes in the 'certaine' fashion of Lady Bessiye, and it can be seen that, even if the long list of participants in the battle (lines 217-336) is very dull verse, he is a craftsman from at least one division higher than the author of Lady Bessiye.

Flodden Feilde is another similar production, enthusiastic in praise of the Stanley family but not startling in its poetic inspiration. It, too, has a large number of lines where rhythm and rhyme appear to fail, but one feels that to reconstitute a regular version would be only half a morning's work.

There is no doubt, in summary, that these poems could not claim any laurels in literary competition, being linguistically crude, often tacked together, carelessly formed, often with scant attention to what phrases actually mean (What can the author of Scotish Feilde mean by the line

As boldlie as any burnes that borne were of mothers?), lacking in verbal subtlety or originality. And yet when they are read 'through the ears of' their original audience, especially if one is aware of some of the intricate details of the Stanley family, its friends and relations, its quarrels and its delights, the poems are an undoubted success of a different kind.



FOOTNOTES

TO THE

INTRODUCTION

## FOOTNOTES

1. 'The Battle of Floddan Field', ed. H.Weber (Edinburgh, 1808), line 1328.
2. The Index of Middle English Verse, ed. C.Brown and R.H.Robbins (New York, 1943). Supplement ed. R.H.Robbins and J.Cutler (Lexington, 1965).
3. See I.F.Baird (1981) for clarification.
4. ibid.
5. This suggestion was offered by Bishop Percy in a note on the front cover of his Folio Manuscript.
6. For evidence of these changes see D.C.Fowler (1968), p.118.
7. Catalogue of the Harleian Manuscripts in the British Museum, vol. i, p. 212.
8. See A.G.Watson (1966), p. 164.
9. op. cit. p. 162.
10. Quoted in J.O.Halliwel (1845), vol. i, p. 391.
11. See I.F.Baird (1983).
12. In H.B.Wheatley's edition (1966), vol. ii, p. 192 and vol. iii, p. 109.
13. Quoted in J.O.Halliwel (1845) loc. cit.
14. A far from complete list could include T.Heywood (1829), p. 69; J.O.Halliwel (1847), p. v; L.F.W.Jewitt (1867), p. 12 and 54-55; F.J.Furnivall and J.W.Hales (1867-8), vol. iii, p. 320; T.Heywood (1825), p. 1; J.Harland (1875), pp. 20-4; C.H.Firth (1908), passim; W.P.Ker (1919), p. 185; T.F.Henderson (1912), p. 102; C.L.Kingsford (1913),

- pp. 250-2; G.G.Langsam (1951), p. 120; D.C.Fowler (1968), pp. 119-23; D.A.Lawton (1978), p. 49.
15. e.g. H.T.Evans (1915), p. 218; E.W.Jones (1979), p.
16. In J.Leland (1774), vol. iv, p. 284.
17. Quoted in A.Hanham (1975), p. 119.
18. Quoted in W.E.Duncan (1907), p. 141.
19. e.g. F.J.Furnivall and J.W.Hales (1867-8), vol. i, p. 199; C.L.Kingsford (1913), p. 252; A.Abram (1913), p. 239; D.C.Fowler (1968), p. 147.
20. e.g. D.A.Pearsall (1977), p. 154, who speaks of 'the improbabilities of such a simple answer'.
21. T.Heywood (1829), p. 6; J.O.Halliwel (1847), p. vi; L.F.W.Jewitt (1867), p. 12; F.J.Furnivall and J.W.Hales (1867-8), vol. iii, pp. 319-21.
22. e.g. H.Nicolas (1830), p. liv; F.Espinasse (1874), vol. i, p. 23; J.Gairdner (1879), p. 401; J.H.Jesse (1900), vol. ii, p. 67; C.L.Kingsford (1913), p. 250; A.L.Rowse (1966), p. 253.
23. Mentioned by E.Ives (1970), pp. 366-7.
24. Such men are mentioned in the 1st Earl of Derby's will (Somerset House P.C.C. Holgrave 14), and see E.B.Goodacre (1940), pp. 53-55.
25. Edited by H.Nicolas (London, 1828).
26. Edited by J.Bruce, Publications of the Camden Society, o.s. 1 (1838).
27. J.Aubrey (1881, p. 229) points out that even a historian as early as William of Malmesbury (c.1090-1143) had recourse to



early 'cantilenae' for his material.

28. Quoted by F.A.Gasquet (1902), p. 11.

29. The date given by A.L.Rowse (1966), p.256.

30. This anomaly is referred to by K.B.MacFarlane (1963), pp. 771-2.

31. The eight contemporary sources are

a). 'A Spanish Account of the Battle of Bosworth', ed. E.M.Nokes and G.Wheeler (1927); written 1 March 1486.

b). The Second Continuation of the Croyland Chronicle, in Rerum Anglicarum Scriptorum Veterum, ed. W.Fulman (Oxford, 1684-91), pp. 549-78. The chronicle has recently been re-edited by N. Pronay and J.Cox (London, 1986).

c). Johannes Rous, Historia Regum Angliae, ed. T.Hearne (London, 1716). The relevant portion of Rous's Latin is translated in A.Hanham (1975), pp. 118-24. Rous died in 1492.

d). Chronicles of London, ed. C.L.Kingsford (Oxford, 1905). Kingsford suggests (p. xvii) that this chronicle antedates

e). R.Fabyan, The New Chronicles of France and England (London, 1517). Completed by 1504.

f). The Great Chronicle of London, ed. A.H.Thomas (London, 1938). Completed by 1512.

g). Thomas More, History of King Richard III, in The Complete Works of St Thomas More, ed. R.S.Sylvester (New Haven and London, 1963), vol. ii, pp. 51ff. More's nephew says that this was completed by 1513.

- h). Polydore Vergil, Anglia Historia (London, 1534). The most accessible translation is in H.Ellis, 'Three Books of Polydore Vergil's English History', Publications of the Camden Society, 29 (1894), especially pp. 173-227.
32. See P.W.Hammond, a note in Ricardian, 37 (1972), p. 16.
33. Flodden is remarkably short of contemporary accounts. The ones usually referred to are:
- a). 'Gazette of the Battle' (a contemporary French account), in J.Pinkerton, The History of Scotland (London, 1797), vol. ii, pp. 456-8. Translated in Letters and Papers (1920), pp. 1005-6.
- b). 'Trewe Encountre', ed. D.Laing, Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 7 (1870). Also in J.Skelton, A Ballade of the Scottysse Kynge, ed. J.Ashton (London, 1882), who gives an interesting account of the document's history. J.D.Mackie (1951, p. 40) says these are the only contemporary authorities. An early account of the battle was
- c). E.Hall, Chronicle, ed. H.Ellis (London, 1809). Hall seems to have used B.L. Add. MS 29506 as his source.
- There are also State Papers and Letters, in e.g. Letters and Papers (1920), Part I, vol. ii, nos. 2270, 2279, 2283, 2284, and in Calendar of State Papers - Venetian, vol. ii, nos. 309, 316, 340.
34. The details of the sailings are recorded in Letters and Papers (1862), nos. 357 and 579.
35. This letter is in M.Wood (1933), pp. 66-72.

36. In J.B.Paul (1877-92), vol. iv. p. 412.
37. Recorded in the 'Gazette of the Battle'.
38. This letter is in M.Wood (1933), pp. 79-83.
39. This letter is in R.K.Hannay (1953), p. 310.
40. ibid, pp. 311-3.
41. This letter is in Calendar of State Papers - Venetian, vol. ii, 134.
42. This letter is in Letters and Papers (1920), I, ii, no. 2386.
43. See J.Ward (1891), pp. 42-46.
44. These letters are in J.Seacome (1793), pp. 111-7, and in the Chester archives.
45. Quoted in P.Draper (1864), p. 46.
46. Calendar of State Papers - Venetian, no. 309, pp. 127-8.
47. ibid, no. 316, p. 135 and Letters and Papers (1920), I, ii, no. 2286.
48. ibid, no. 2268.
49. loc. cit.
50. Letters and Papers (1920), I, ii, provides official lists of those at Tournai: nos. 1834, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2301, 2392.



THE FIRST POEM :

L A D Y   B E S S I Y E

For Jesus sake be merry and glad;  
 Be blythe of blood, of bone and ble,  
 And of your words be sober and sad,  
 And a litle while listen to me: 4

I shall tell you how Lady Bessy made her moan,  
 And downe she kneeled upon her knee  
 Before the Earle of Darby her self alone.  
 These were her words, fair and free: 8

"Who was your beginner? Who was your ground?  
 Good father Stanley, will you tell me?  
 Who married you to the Margaret Richmond,  
 A dutchess of a high degree? 12

"And your son, the Lord George Strange,  
 By that good lady you had him by?  
 And Harden lands under your hands?  
 And Moules Dale also under your fee? 16

"Your brother, Sir William Stanley, by parliament  
 The Holt Castle who gave him truely?  
 Who gave him Brome-field, that now I ment?  
 Who gave him Chirk-land to his fee? 20

"Who made him High Chamberlain of Cheshire?  
 Of that countrey, farr and near,  
 They were all wholly at his desire:  
 When he did call, they did appear. 24

"And also the Forrest of Delameer  
 To hunt therein both day and night  
 As often as his pleasure were,  
 And to send for baron and knight? 28

"Who made the knight and lord of all,  
 Good father Stanley - remember thee?  
 It was my father, that King royall:  
 He set you in that room so high! 32

"Remember Richmond, banished full bare,  
 And lyeth in Brittain behind the sea?  
 You may recover him of his care  
 If your heart and mind to him will gree. 36

"Let him come home and claim his right,  
 And let us cry him 'King Henry';  
 And if you will maintain him with might,  
 In Brittain he needeth not long to tarry." 40

"Go away, Bessy," the Lord said then.  
 "I tell thee now, for certainty,  
 That fair words oft make fooles full faine  
 When they be found but vain glory." 44

"Oh, father Stanley, to you I call:  
 For the love of God, remember thee,  
 Since my father, King Edward, that King royall,  
 At Westminster on his death-bed lee, 48



"He called to him my unckle Richard,  
 So did he Robert of Brakenbury,  
 And James Terrill, he was the third;  
 He sent them to Ludlow in the West Countrey, 52

"To fetch the Duke of York and the Duke of Clarence,  
 These two lords born of a high degree:  
 The Duke of York should have been Prince  
 And King after my father free, 56

"But a balle-full game was then among,  
 When they doomed these two lords to dye:  
 They had neither justice nor right, but had great wrong.  
 Alack! It was the more pittty. 60

"Neither were they burried in St Maries,  
 In church or church-yard or holy place:  
 Alas! They had dolefull destines:  
 Hard was their chance; worse was their disgrace. 64

"Therefore help, good father Stanley, while you have space,  
 For the love of God and mild Mary,  
 Or else in time to come you shall - alas! -  
 Remember the words of Lady Bessy." 68

"Good Lady Bessy, be content,  
 For tho your words be never so sweet,  
 If King Richard knew, you must be shent,  
 And perchance cast into prison deep. 72

"Then you had cause to waile and weep  
And wring your hands with heavy chear.  
Therefore, good lady, I you beseeke  
To move me no more in this matter." 76

"Oh good father Stanley, listen now and hear:  
Heare is no more but you and I.  
King Edward, that was my father dear,  
On whose estate God had mercy, 80

"In Westminster as he did stand  
On a certain day in a study,  
A book of reason he had in his hand,  
And so sore his study he did apply 84

"That his tender tears fell on the ground.  
All men might see that stood him by.  
There were both earls and lords of land,  
But none of them durst speak but I. 88

"I came before my father, the King,  
And kneeled down upon my knee;  
I desired him lowly of his blessing,  
And full soon he gave it unto me, 92

"And in his arms he coud me thring,  
And set me in a window so high.  
He spake to me full sore weeping.  
These were the words he said to me: 96

"Daughter, as thou wilt have my blessing,  
Do as I shall counsell thee,  
And to my words give good listning,  
For one day they may pleasure thee: 100

"Here is a book of reason; keep it well,  
As you will have the love of me;  
Neither to any creature do it tell,  
Nor let no liveing lord it see, 104

"Except it be to the Lord Stanley,  
The which I love full heartiley;  
All the matter to him shew you may,  
For he and his thy help must be. 108

"As soon as the truth to him is shown,  
Unto your words he will agree,  
For their shall never son of my body be gotten  
That shall be crowned after me; 112

"But you shall be Queen and wear the crown -  
So doth expresse the prophecye.'  
He gave me tax and [there]to land,  
And also diamonds to my degree 116

"To gett me a prince when it pleaseth Christ.  
The world is not as it will be!  
Therefore, good father Stanley, grant my request;  
For the love of God, I desire thee. 120



"All is at your commandment down in the West,  
Both knight and squire and the commentie:  
You may choose, then, where you like best.  
I have enough both of gold and fee.

124

"I want nothing but the strength of men  
And good captains two or three."

"Go away, Bessy!" the Lord said then.

"To this will I never agree,

128

"For women oft time cannot faine.  
These words they be but vain glory  
For, and I shoud treason begin  
Against King Richard his royalty,

132

"In every street within London  
The eagle's foot shoud be pulled down;  
And as yet in his great favour I am,  
But then shoud I loose my great renowne.

136

"I shoud be called traitor thro the same  
Full soon in every markett towne.  
That were great shame to me and my name -  
I had rather spend ten thousand pounce."

140

"Oh father Stanley, to you I make my moane:  
For the love of God, remember thee:  
It is not three days past and gone  
Since my unckle Richard sent after me

144

"A batchelor and a bold baron,  
A doctor of divinitye,  
And bad that I shoud to his chamber gone,  
His love and his leman that I shoud be; 148

"And the Queen, that was his wedded feere,  
He would her poyson and putt away;  
So would he his son and his heir -  
Christ knoweth he is a proper boy! 152

"Yet had I rather burn in a tunne  
On the Tower Hill, that is so high,  
Or that I woud to his chamber come.  
His love and his leman will I not be! 156

"I had rather be drawn with wild horses five  
Through every street of that citty  
Or that good lady shoud loose her life,  
Good father, for the love of mee. 160

"I am his brothers daughter dear;  
He is my uncle, it is no nay.  
Or ever I woud be his wedded feer  
With sharp swords I will me slay. 164

"At his biding if I were then,  
And followd also his cruel intent,  
I were well worthy to suffer pain  
And in a fire for to be brent. 168

"Therefore, good father Stanley, some pittie take  
 On the Earle Richmond and me,  
 And the rather for my fathers sake,  
 Which gave thee the Ile of Man so free. 172

"He crowned the with a crown of lead;  
 He holpe the first to that degree;  
 He set the crown upon thy head,  
 And made thee the Lord of that countrey. 176

"That time you promised my father dear  
 To him to be both true and just;  
 And now you stand in a disweare.  
 Oh Jesu Christ! Who may men trust?" 180

"Oh good lady, I say againe,  
 Your fair words shall never move my mind.  
 King Richard is my Lord and Sovraign;  
 To him I will never be unkind. 184

"I will serve him truely till I dye;  
 I will him take as I him find,  
 For he hath given to mine and me;  
 His bounteous gift[s] do me so bind." 188

"Yet, good father Stanley, remember thee,  
 As I have said, so shall it prove:  
 If he of this gift be soe free,  
 It is for fear and not for love, 192



"For if he may not to his purpose come,  
 You shall not live these years three,  
 For these words to me he did once move  
 In Sandall Castle underneath a tree: 196

"He said their shall no branch of the eagle fly  
 Within England, neither far nor nigh,  
 Nor none of the Talbots to run him by,  
 Nor none of their lineage to the ninth degree, 200

"But he woud them either hang or head,  
 And that he swear full grievously.  
 Therefore help, gentle Lord, with all speed,  
 For when you would fain, it will not be. 204

"Your brother dwelleth in the Holt Castle;  
 A noble knight, forsooth, is he;  
 All the Walsh men love him well:  
 He may make a great company. 208

"Sir John Savage is your sisters son;  
 He is well beloved within his shire.  
 A great company with him will come;  
 He will be ready at your desire. 212

"Gilbert Talbott is a captain pure.  
 He will com with main and might;  
 To you he will be fast and sure  
 Against my uncle King and knight. 216

"Let us raise an host with him to fight;  
 Soon to the ground we shall him ding,  
 For God will stand ever with the right -  
 For he hath no right to be King." 220

"Go away, Bessy!" the Lord can say.  
 "Of these words, Bessy, now lett be.  
 I know King Richard woud not me betray  
 For all the gold in Christantye." 224

"I am his subject, sworn to be true.  
 If I should seek treason to begin,  
 I and all mine full sore shoud rue,  
 For we were as like to loose as winn." 228

"Beside that, it were a deadly sin  
 To refuse my King and him betray.  
 The child is yet unborne that might moan in time,  
 And think upon that woefull day;" 232

"Wherefore, good lady, I do you pray,  
 Keep all things close at your hart root.  
 So now farr past it is of the day  
 To move me more it is no boot." 236

Then from her head she cast her attire;  
 Her colour changed as pale as lead;  
 Her faxe that shoan as the gold wire,  
 She tair it of besides her head, 240

And in a swoon down can she swye.

She spake not of a certain space.

The Lord had never so great pittie

As when he saw her in that case,

244

And in his arms he can her embrace.

He was full sorry then for her sake:

The tears fell from his eyes apace,

But at the last these words she spake:

248

She said, "To Christ my soul I betake,

For my body in Temms drownd shall be,

For I know my sorrow will never slake,

And my bones upon the sands shall lye.

252

"The fishes shall feed upon me their fill.

This is a dolefull destinye,

And you may remedy this and you will;

Therefore the bone of my death I give to thee."

256

And ever she wept as she were woode.

The Earle on her had so great pittie

That her tender heart turned his mood:

He said, "Stand up now, Lady Bessye.

260

"As you think best, I will agree,

Now I see the matter you do not faine.

I have thought in this matter as much as yee,

But it is hard to trust women,

264



LADY BESSIYE

"For many a man is brought into great woe  
Through telling to women his privity.  
I trust you will not serve me so  
For all the gold in Christantye."

268

"No, father, he is my mortall foe;  
On him fain wrooken woud I bee:  
He hath putt away my brethren two,  
And I know he woud do so by me.

272

"But my trust is in the Trinity.  
Through your help we shall bale to him bring,  
And such a day on him to see  
That he and his full sore shall rue."

276

"O Lady Bessy," the Lord can say,  
"Betwixt us both forcast we must  
How we shall letters to Richmond convey:  
No man to write I dare well trust,

280

"For if he list to be unjust  
And us betray to King Richard,  
Then you and I are both lost;  
Therefore of the scribes I am afraid."

284

"You shall not need none such to call,  
Good father Stanley: hearken to me,  
What my father, King Edward, that King royall,  
Did for my sister, Lady Wells, and me:

288

"He sent for a scrivener to lusty London -  
 He was the best in that citty -  
 He taught us both to write and read full soon.  
 If it please you, full soon you shall see.

292

"Lauded be God I had such speed  
 That I can write as well as he,  
 And alsoe indite and full well read,  
 And that, Lord, soon shall you see,

296

"Both English and alsoe French,  
 And also Spanish if you had need."  
 The Earle said, "You are a proper wench!  
 Almighty Jesus be your speed,

300

"And give us grace to proceed out  
 That we may letters soon convey  
 In secrett wise and out of doubt  
 To Richmond, that lyeth beyond the sea.

304

"We must depart, lady," the Earle said then,  
 "Wherefore keep this matter secrettly,  
 And this same night betwixt nine and ten  
 In your chamber I think to be.

308

"Look that you make all things ready.  
 Your maids shall not our counsell hear,  
 For I will bring no man with me  
 But Humphrey Brereton, my true esquire."

312

He took his leave of that lady fair,  
 And to her chamber she went full tight,  
 And for all things she did prepare:  
 Both pen and ink and paper white. 316

The Lord unto his study went,  
 Forecasting with all his might  
 To bring to pass all his intent.  
 He took no rest till it was night; 320

And when the starrs shoone fair and bright,  
 He him disguised in strange mannere.  
 He went unknown of any wyght,  
 No more with him but his esquire, 324

And when he came her chamber near,  
 Full privily there can he stand.  
 To cause the lady to appeare  
 He made a signe with his right hand, 328

And when the lady there him wist,  
 She was as glad as she might be.  
 Char coals in chimneys there were cast;  
 Candles on sticks standing full high. 332

She opned the wicket and let him in,  
 And said, "Welcome, Lord and knight soe free!"  
 A rich chair was set for him,  
 And another for that fair lady. 336



They ate the spice and drank the wine;  
 He had all things at his intent.  
 They rested them as for a time,  
 And to their study then they went.

340

Then that lady, so fair and free,  
 With rudd as red as rose in May,  
 She kneeled down upon her knee,  
 And to the Lord thus can she say:

344

"Good father Stanley, I you pray,  
 Now here is no more but you and I:  
 Let me know what you will say,  
 For pen and paper I have ready."

348

He saith, "Commend me to my son, George Strange:  
 In Latham Castle there he doth lye.  
 When I parted with him his heart did change:  
 From Latham to Manchester he road me by;

352

"Upon Salford Bridge I turned my horse again;  
 My son George by the hand I hent.  
 I held so hard, forsooth, certaine,  
 That his formest finger out of the joint went!

356

"I hurt him sore; he did complain.  
 These words to him then did I say:  
 'Son, on my blessing, turn home again.  
 This shall be a token another day.'

360

"Bid him come like a marchant of Farnfield,  
 Of Coopland or of Kendall, wheather that it be,  
 And seven with him, and no more else  
 For to bear him company.

364

"Bid him [al]way watch and ward,  
 And take no heed to mynstrels glee;  
 Bid him sit at the lower end of the board  
 When he is amongst his meany;

368

"His back to the door, his face to the wall,  
 That comers and goers shall not him see;  
 Bid him lodge in no common hall  
 But keep him unknowne right secretly.

372

"Commend me to my brother, Sir William, so dear:  
 In the Holt Castle there dwelleth hee  
 Since the last time that we together were  
 In the Forest of Delameere, both fair and free;

376

"And seven harts upon one hearde  
 Were brought to the back sett to him and me,  
 But a forester came to me with a whoore bearde  
 And said, 'Good sir, a while rest ye:

380

"'I have found you a hart in Darnall Park,  
 Such a one I never saw with my eye.'  
 I did him crave; he said I shoud him have;  
 He was brought to the broad heath truely.

384

"At him I let my gray hound then slipp,  
 And followed after while I might dree.  
 He left me lyeing in an ould moss-pitt;  
 A loud laughter then laughed hee. 388

"He said, 'Rise up and draw out your cousin;  
 The deer is dead - come you and see.'  
 Bid him come as a marchant of Carnarvon,  
 Or else of Bew-morris, whether it be, 392

"And in his company seven Welsh men,  
 And come to London and speak to me.  
 I have a great mind to speak with him;  
 I think it long since I him see. 396

"Commende me to Sir John Savage, that knight.  
 Lady, he is my sisters sone.  
 Since upon a Friday at night  
 Before my bed he kneeled downe; 400

"He desired me, as I was [his] uncle dear,  
 Many a time full tenderly,  
 That I would lowly King Richard require  
 If I might get him any fee. 404

"I came before my Sovereigne Lord  
 And kneeled down upon my knee:  
 So soon to me he did accord;  
 I thanked him full courteously. 408



"[I] gatt him an hundred pounds in Kent

To him and his heirs perpetually;

Alsoe a manor of a Duchy rent:

Two hundred pounds he may spend thereby;

412

"And High Sheriff of Worcestershire,

And alsoe the park of Tewksbury.

He hath it all at his desire -

Therewith dayley he may make merry.

416

"Bid him come as a marchant man

Of West Chester, that fair city,

And seven yeomen to wait him on -

Bid him come to London and speak with me.

420

"Commend me to good Gilbert Talbott;

A gentle esquire, forsooth, is he.

Once on a Fryday, full well I woot,

King Richard called him a traitour high;

424

"But Gilbert to his fawchon prest -

A bold esquire, forsooth, is he!

Their durst no sarjant him arreast,

He is called so perlous of his body.

428

"In the Tower Street I met him then,

Going to Westminster to take sanctuarie.

I light beside my horse I was upon;

The purse from my belt I gave him, truely.

432

"I bad him ride downe into the North West:  
 Perchance a knight in England I might him see.  
 Wherefore pray him at my request  
 To come to London to speak with me."

436

Then said the royal Lord, so just,  
 "Now have you written, and sealed have I,  
 There is no messenger that we may trust  
 To bring these writeings into the West Countrey,

440

"Because our matter it is so high,  
 Least any man woud us descry."

"Humphrey Brereton," then said Bessye,  
 "Hath been true to my father and me."

444

"He shall take the writeings in hand  
 And bring them into the West Countrey.  
 I trust him best of all this land  
 On this message to go for me."

448

"Go to thy bed, father, and sleep full soon,  
 And I shall wake for you and me."

By tomorrow at the riseing of the sune  
 Humphrey Brereton shall be with thee."

452

She brings the Lord to his bed, so trimly dight,  
 All that night where he shoud lye,  
 And Bessy waked all that night:  
 There came no sleep within her eye."

456

In the morning, when the day can spring,  
 Up riseth young Bessye,  
 And maketh hast in her dressing:  
 To Humphrey Brereton gone is she. 460

But when she came to Humphreys bower bright,  
 With a small voice called she.  
 Humphrey answered that lady bright,  
 Saith, "Who calleth on me so early?" 464

"I am King Edwards daughter right,  
 The Countess clear, young Bessy.  
 In all hast with mean and might  
 Thou must come speak with the Earle of Darby." 468

Humphrey cast upon him a gowne  
 And a pair of slippers upon his feet;  
 Forth of his chamber then they are gone,  
 And went with that lady fair and sweet. 472

She brought him to the bedd side  
 Whereas the Earle was laid to sleep;  
 When the Earle Humphrey saw at that tide,  
 "I know thou canst secrett counsell keep." 476

[He] said, "My love, my trust, my life, my land,  
 All this, Humphrey, doth lye in thee:  
 Therefore, that thou mayst understand,  
 In secret wise I will tell thee. 480



"Thou mayst make, thou mayst marr all;

Thou may undo both Bessy and me.

Take these six letters in thy hand withall,

And bring them into the North Countrey.

484

"They be written on the backside

Whither the letters brought shoud be,

For in every countrey where thou doest ride

I pray thee take no company."

488

He received these letters six full right;

Into the West wind woud hee;

Then met him that lady bright.

She said, "Humphrey, abide and speak with me.

492

"A poor reward I shall give thee:

It shall be but pounds three.

If I be Queen, and may live, surely

Better rewarded shall thou be.

496

"A litle witt God hath sent me:

I pray thee take some counsell of me:

When thou ridest into the West Countrey,

I pray thee take no company.

500

"Sit not too long, nor drink the wine,

Least in heart thou be too merry.

Such words thou mayst cast out that time

Tomorrow forthought that it may be."

504

Humphrey at Bessye received these nobles nine;  
 With a bowle of wine she coud him away.

He took his leave of this lady shene;

Straight to the Holt Castle he took the way.

508

When Sir William Stanley did him see there,

He said to himself, "Benedicite!

Humphrey Brereton, what makes thou here

That here dost ride so hastily?

512

"How fareth that Lord, my brother dear

(That lately was made the Earle of Darby)?

Is my brother dead, so life and deare,

Or with King Richard what counsell is he?

516

"If he be suspected of crime or faulte,

And taken into the Tower so high,

London gates shall tremble and quake

But my brother borrowed shall be.

520

"Tell me, Humphry, without letting,

Why hither thou ridest so hastily?"

"Break that letter," said Humphrey to him;

"Behold, sir, then, and you may see."

524

When Sir William looked the letter upon,

He stood full still in a study then.

Answer to Humphrey he woud give none,

But still he gawres upon a staves end.

528

He pulled the letter in pieces three;

Into the water he coud it fling.

"Have here, Humphry," said the knight so free,

"I will give thee an hundred shilling. 532

"Thou shalt not tarry here this tide:

Straight to Latham wind must [yle."

"Alas," said Humphrey, "I may not ride:

My horse is tired, as you may see. 536

"Since I came from London city,

Neither night nor day, I tell you plain,

There came no sleep within my eye.

On my buisness I thought certaine." 540

"Lay thee down, Humphrey," he said, "and sleep.

I will give space of hours three.

A fresh horse, I thee bee-hyte,

Shall bring thee through the West Countrey." 544

Humphrey slept not hours two,

But on his journey well thought hee.

A fresh horse was brought him tooe,

To bring him through the West Countrey. 548

Then Humphrey Brereton with mickle might

Hard at Lathum knocketh hee.

"Who is it," said the porter, "this time of night,

That so hastily calleth on mee?" 552



The porter then in that state  
 That time of night riseth hee  
 And forthwith opned me the gate  
 And receieved both my horse and me. 556

Then said Humphrey Brereton trueely,  
 "With the Lord Strange speak woud I faine  
 From his father, the Earle of Darby."  
 Then was I welcome that time certaine. 560

A torch burned that same tide,  
 And other lights that he might see,  
 And brought him to the bedd side  
 Where as the Lord Strange lee. 564

The Lord mused in that tide,  
 Said, "Humphrey Brereton, what makest thou here?  
 How fareth my father, that noble Lord,  
 In all England that hath no peer?" 568

Humphrey took him a letter in hand  
 And said, "Behold, my Lord, and you may see."  
 When the Lord Strange looked the letter upon,  
 The tears trickled downe from his eye. 572

He said, "We must come under a cloud;  
 We must never trusted bee;  
 We may sigh and make great moane:  
 This world is not as it will be. 576

"Have here, Humphrey, pounds three;  
 Better rewarded may thou bee.  
 Commend me to my father dear;  
 His daily blessing he woud give me."

580

He said also in that tyde,  
 "Tell him also thus from me:  
 If I be able to go or ride,  
 This appointment keep will I."

584

When Humphrey received the gold, I say,  
 Straight to Manchester rideth hee.  
 The sun was light up of the day.  
 He was aware of the Warden and Edward Stanley.

588

The one brother said to the other  
 As they together their mattins did say,  
 "Behold," he said, "my owne dear brother,  
 Yonder comes Humphrey Brereton, it is no nay,

592

"My fathers servant at command:  
 Some hasting tydeings bringeth hee."  
 He took them either a letter in hand,  
 And bad them behold, read and see.

596

They turnd their backs shortly tho,  
 And read those letters readily.  
 Up they leap, and laughed toe,  
 And also they made game and glee:

600

"Fair fare our father, that noble Lord!  
 To stirr and rise now beginneth hee.  
 Buckinghams blood shall be wroken,  
 That was beheaded in Salsbury.

604

"Fare fall that Countesse, the Kings daughter,  
 That fair lady, young Bessye!  
 We trust in Jesus in time hereafter  
 To bring thy love over the sea.

608

"Have here, Humphrey, of either of us shillings ten;  
 Better rewarded may thou bee."  
 He took the gold of the two gentlemen;  
 To Sir John Savage then rideth hee.

612

He took him then a letter in hand,  
 And bad him behold, read and see.  
 When Sir John Savage looked the letter upon,  
 All blackned the knights blee.

616

"Womans wisdom is wondrous to hear, loe!  
 My uncle is turned by young Bessye.  
 Whether it turn to w[ealle or woe,  
 At my uncles bidding will I bee."

620

To Sheffield Castle at that same tide  
 In all the hast that might bee,  
 Humphrey took his horse and forth could ride  
 To Gilbert Talbott, fair and free.

624



He took him a letter in his hand;

"Behold," said Humphrey, "read and see."

When he the letter looked upon,

A loud laughter laughed hee.

628

"Fare fall that Lord in his renowne there!

To stirr and rise beginneth hee.

Fair fall Bessye, that Countesse clear,

That such counsell coud give truely!

632

"Commend me to my nephew, nigh of blood,

The young Earle of Shrewsbury.

Bid him neither dread for death nor good

In the Tower of London if he bee.

636

"I shall make London gates to tremble and quake

But my nephew borrowed shall bee.

Commend me to the Countesse, that fair make,

King Edwards daughter, young Bessy.

640

"Tell her I trust in Jesu, that hath no pear,

To bring her love over the sea.

Commend me to that Lord, to me so dear,

That lately was made the Earle of Darby.

644

"And every hair of my head

For a man counted might be

With that Lord without any dread.

With him will I live and dye.

648

"Have here, Humphrey, pounds three.

Better rewarded may thou bee.

Look to London gates thou ride quickly

In all the hast that may bee.

652

"Commend me to that Countesse, young Bessy;

She was King Edward[s] daughter dear.

Such a one she is, I say truely,

In all this land she hath no peer."

656

He took his leave at that time.

Straight to London rideth he;

In all the hast that he could wind

His journey greatly he did apply.

660

But when he came to London, as I weene,

It was but a litle before the evening.

There was he warr walking in a garden

Both the Earle and Richard the King.

664

When the Earle did Humphrey see,

When he came before the King,

He gave him a privy twink then with his eye,

That downe falls Humphrey on his knees kneeling.

668

"Welcome, Humphrey," said the Lord.

"I have missed thee weeks three."

"I have been in the West, my Lord,

There born and bred was I,

672

"For to sport and play me certaine  
Among my friends far and nigh."

"Tell me, Humphrey," said the Earle then,  
"How fareth all that same countrey?"

676

"Of all the countreys, I dare well say,  
They be the flower of chivalry,  
For they will bycker with their bowes,  
They will fight and never fly."

680

"Tell me, Humphrey, I thee pray,  
How fareth King Richard his commenty?"  
When King Richard heard him say so,  
In his hart he was merry.

684

He with his cap that was so dear  
He thanked that Lord most courteously,  
And said, "Father Stanley, thou art to me near:  
You are the cheif of our poor commenty.

688

"Half England shall be thine:  
It shall be equall between thee and me.  
I am thine and thou art mine,  
So two fellows will we bee.

692

"I swear by Mary, that mild maiden,  
I know no more such under the skye.  
When I am King and wear the crown, then  
I will be cheif of the poor commenty.

696



"Task nor mize I will make none

In no countrey, farr nor nigh.

If their goods I shoud take and pluck them downe,

For me they woud fight full faintly.

700

"There is no riches to me so rich

As is the love of our poor commenty."

When they had ended all their speeches,

They take their leave full heartiley.

704

And to his bower King Richard is gone;

The Earle and Humphrey Brereton

To Bessys bower anon were gone.

When Bessy Humphrey did see, anon

708

She took him in her arms and kissed him times three.

"Welcome," she said, "Humphrey Brereton!

How hast thou spedd in the West Countrey?

I pray thee, tell me quickly and anon."

712

Into a parlour they went from thence;

There were no more but he and shee.

"Humphrey," said Bessy, "tell me ere we go hence,

Some tideings out of the West Countrey.

716

"If I shall send for yonder Prince

To come over the sea for the love of me,

And if King Richard shoud him convince,

Alas! it were great ruthe to see;

720

"Or murthered among the Standleys bl[o]od to be,  
 Indeed, that were a great pittty.  
 That sight on that Prince I woud not see  
 For all the gold in Christantie.

724

"Tell me, Humphrey, I thee pray,  
 How hast thou spedd in the West Countrey?  
 What answer of them thou had, now say,  
 And what reward they gave to thee."

728

"By the third day of May it shall be seen  
 In London all that they will bee.  
 Thou shalt in England be a queen  
 Or else, doubtless, that they will dye."

732

Thus they proceed forth the winter then;  
 Their councell they kept close all three.  
 The Earle he wrought by prophecy certaine  
 In London he woud not abide or be,

736

But in the subburbs without the city  
 [An] ould inn chosen hath hee:  
 A[nd] drew an eagle foot on the door truely  
 That the Western men might know where he did lye.

740

Humphrey stood on a high tower then;  
 He looked into the West Countrey.  
 Sir William Stanley and seven in green  
 [Came rideing into the city].

744

He was ware of the eagle drawne.

He drew himselfe so wonderous nigh,

And bad his men go into the towne

And drink the wine and make merry.

748

Into the same inne he went full prest

Whereas the Earle, his brother, lay.

Humphrey full soon into the West

Looks over a long lee.

752

He was aware of the Lord Strange and seven in green

Come rideing into the city.

When he was aware of the eagle drawn,

He grew himself so wonderously nigh;

756

He bad his men go into the towne certaine,

And drink the wine and make merry.

And he himself drew then

Where as his father in the inne lay.

760

Humphrey looked into the West, I say,

Sixteen in green then did he see:

He was aware of the Warden and Edward Stanley

Come rideing both in one company.

764

When they were aware of the eagle drawne,

The gentlemen, they drew it nee,

And bad their men go into the towne

And drink the wine and make merry;

768



And did go themselves into the same inn full prest  
Where the Earle, their father, lay.

Yet Humphrey beholdeth into the West,

And looketh towards the North Countrey:

772

He was aware of Sir John Savage and Sir Gilbert Talbot  
Came rideing both in one company.

When they were aware of the eagle drawne,

Themselves grew it full nigh,

776

And bad their men go into the towne

To drink the wine and make merry.

They did go themselves into the same inn

Where as the Earle and Bessy lye.

780

When all the lords together were,

Amongst them all Bessye was full buissy:

With goodly words Bessy then said there,

"Fair lords, what will you do for me?

784

"Will you relieve yonder prince

That is exiled beyond the sea?

I woud not have King Richard him to convince

For all the gold in Christentye."

788

The Earle of Darby came forth then.

These were the words he said to young Bessye:

"Ten thousand pounds will I send,

Bessy, for the love of thee,

792

"And twenty thousand eagles feet  
 The Queen of England for to make thee."  
 Then Bessy most lowly the Earle did greet,  
 And thankt his honor most heartiley. 796

Sir William Stanley came forth then.  
 These words he said to fair Bessy:  
 "Remember, Bessy, another time,  
 Who doth the most, Bessy, for thee. 800

"Ten thousand coats that shall be red, certaine,  
 In an hours warning ready shall bee.  
 In England thou shalt be our Queen  
 Or doubtlesse I will dye." 804

Sir John Savage came forth then.  
 These words he said to young Bessye:  
 "A thousand marks for thy sake, certaine,  
 I will send thy love beyond the sea." 808

Sir Gilbert Talbott came forth then.  
 These were the words he said to Bessye:  
 "Ten thousand marks for thy sake, certaine,  
 I will send to [thy love] beyond the sea." 812

The Lord Strange came forth then.  
 These were the words he said to Bessy:  
 "A litle money and few men  
 Will bring thy love over the sea. 816

"Let us keep our gold at home," said he,  
 "For to wage our company;  
 For if we shoud send it over the sea,  
 We shoud but put our gold in jeopardie." 820

Edward Stanley came forth then.  
 These were the words he said to Bessye:  
 "Remember, Bessye, another time,  
 Who that now doth the best for thee; 824

"For there is no power that I have,  
 Nor no gold for to give thee.  
 I will be under my fathers banner if God me save,  
 There either to live or dye." 828

Bessye came forth before the lords all,  
 And downe she falleth upon her knee.  
 "Nineteen thousand pound of gold I shall  
 Send my love behind the sea; 832

"A love letter and a gold ring  
 From my heart root rite will I."  
 "Who shall be the messenger the same to bring,  
 Both the gold and the writeing over the sea?" 836

"Humphrey Brereton," said Bessy,  
 "I know him trusty and true, certaine;  
 Therefore the writeing and the gold truely  
 By him shall be carried to Litle Brittaine." 840



"Alas!" said Humphrey, "I dare not take in hand  
 To carry the gold over the sea:  
 These galley ships, they be so strange  
 They will me nigh so wonderously.

844

"They will me robb, they will me drowne,  
 They will take the gold from me."

"Hold thy peace, Humphry," said Bessye then.

"Thou shalt carry it without jeopardye.

848

"Thou shalt have no caskett nor any male,  
 Nor budgett nor cloak sack shall go with thee:  
 Three mules that be stiff and strong withall  
 Sore loaded with gold shall they bee,

852

"With saddles side skirted I do tell thee,  
 Wherein the gold sowe will I.

If any man faine whose is the shipp truely,  
 That saileth forth upon the sea,

856

"Say it is the Lord Lislai:

In England and France well beloved is he."

Then came forth the Earle of Darby.

These words he said to young Bessy:

860

He said, "Bessye, thou art to blame  
 To appoint any shipp upon the sea.

I have a good shipp of my owne

Shall carry Humphrey with the mules three.

864

"An eagle shall be drawne upon the mast top  
 That the Italians may it see;  
 There is no freak in all France  
 The eagle that dare come nee.

868

"If any one ask whose shipp it is, then  
 Say it is the Earles of Darby."  
 Humphrey took the three mules then;  
 Into the West wind woud hee.

872

Without all doubt at Liverpoole  
 He took shipping upon the sea.  
 With a swift wind and a liart  
 He so saild upon the sea

876

To Beggrames Abbey in Litle Brittain,  
 Where as the English Prince lie.  
 The porter was a Cheshire man;  
 Well he knew Humphrey when he him see.

880

Humphrey knocked at the gate truely,  
 Where as the porter stood it by  
 And welcomed me full heartily  
 And received then my mules three.

884

"I shall thee give in this breed  
 To thy reward pounds three."

"I will none of thy gold," the porter said,  
 "Nor, Humphrey, none of the fee.

888

"I will open thee the gates, certaine,  
 To receive thee and the mules three,  
 For a Cheshire man born am I, certaine,  
 From the Malpas but miles three."

892

The porter opned up the gates that time  
 And received him and the mules three.  
 The wine that was in the hall that time  
 He gave to Humphrey Brereton truely.

896

"Alas!" said Humphrey, "how shoud I doe?  
 I am strayed in a strange countrey.  
 The Prince of England I do not know:  
 Before him I did never see."

900

"I shall tell thee," said the porter then.  
 "The Prince of England know shall ye:  
 Low where he siteth at the butts, certaine,  
 With other lords two or three.

904

"He weareth a gown of velvet black,  
 And it is cutted above the knee.  
 With a long visage, and pale and black -  
 There by the Prince know may ye.

908

"A wart he hath," the porter said,  
 "A litle also above the chinn;  
 His face is white, his wart is redd,  
 No more than the head of a small pinn.

912



"You may know the Prince, certaine,  
 As soon as you look upon him, truely."  
 He received the wine of the porter then;  
 With him he took the mules three. 916

When Humphrey came before the Prince,  
 He falleth down upon his knee;  
 He delivereth the letters which Bessye sent,  
 And so did he the mules three. 920

A rich ring with a stone,  
 Thereof the Prince glad was hee.  
 He took the ring of Humphrey then  
 And kissed the ring times three. 924

Humphrey kneeled still as any stone,  
 As sure as I do tell to thee.  
 Humphrey of the Prince answer gott none,  
 Therefore in heart was he heavy. 928

Humphrey stood up then, full of skill,  
 And then to the Prince said he,  
 "Why standest thou so still at thy will  
 And no answer dost give to me? 932

"I am come from the Standleys blood so dear,  
 King of England for to make thee;  
 A fairer lady then thou shalt have to thy fair  
 There is not one in all Christantye. 936

"She is a countesse, a kings daughter," Humphrey said.

"The name of her it is Bessye.

She can write and she can read;

Well can she work by prophecy.

940

"I may be called a lewd messenger

For answer of thee I can gett none.

I may sail home with a heavy cheare.

What shall I say when I come home?"

944

The Prince, he took the Lord Lee,

And the Earle of Oxford was him nee;

The Lord Ferris woud not him beguile, truely:

To counsell they are gone, all three.

948

When they had their counsell taken,

To Humphrey then turned he:

"Answer, Humphrey, I can give none truely

Within the space of weeks three."

952

The mules into a stable were taken anon;

The saddle skirts unopened were:

Therein he found gold great plenty

For to wage a company.

956

[lines missing here]

He caused the abbott to make him cheare:

"In my stead now let him be.

958

"If I be King and wear the crowne,  
 Well acquitted, Abbott, shalt thou be."  
 Early in the morning they made them knowne  
 As soon as the light they coud see. 962

With him he taketh his lords three,  
 And straight to Paris he took his way.  
 An herriott of arms they made ready:  
 Of men and money they coud him pray, 966

And shipps to bring him over the sea.  
 "The Stanleys blood for me hath sent  
 The King of England for to make me,  
 And I thank them for their intent; 970

"For if ever in England I wear the crowne,  
 Well acquitted the King of France shall be."  
 Then answered the King of France anon,  
 "Men nor money, he getteth none of me, 974

"Nor no shipps to bring him over the sea.  
 In England if he wear the crowne,  
 Then will he claim them for his owne, truely."  
 With this answer departed the Prince anon, 978

And so departed the same tide  
 And the English lords three.  
 To Beggrames Abbey soon coud they ride,  
 There as Humphrey Brereton then lee. 982



"Have, Humphrey, a thousand mark here;  
 Better rewarded may thou be!  
 Commend me to Bessy, that Countesse clear:  
 Before her never did I see.

986

"I trust in God she shall be my feer:  
 For her I will travell over the sea.  
 Commend me to my father, Stanley, to me so dear;  
 My owne mother married hath he.

990

"Bring him here a love letter full right,  
 And another to young Bessye:  
 Tell her I trust in Jesus, full of might,  
 That my Queen that she shall be.

994

"Commend me to Sir William Stanley,  
 That noble knight in the West Countrey:  
 Tell him that about Michaelmas, certaine,  
 In England I do hope to be;

998

"Att Milford Haven I will come inn  
 With all the power that make may I.  
 The first towne I will come inn  
 Shall be the towne of Shrewsbury.

1002

"Pray Sir William Stanley, that noble knight,  
 That night that he will look on me.  
 Commend me to Sir Gilbert Talbott, that royall knight,  
 He [is] much in the North Countrey;

1006

"And Sir John Savage, that man of might -  
 Pray them all to look on me,  
 For I trust in Jesus Christ, so full of might,  
 In England for to abide and bee." 1010

"I will none of thy gold, Sir Prince," said Humphrey then,  
 "Nor none, sure, will I have of thy fee.  
 Therefore keep thy gold thee within  
 For to wage thy company." 1014

"If every hair were a man,  
 With thee, Sir Prince, will I be."  
 Thus Humphrey Brereton his leave hath tane,  
 And saileth forth upon the sea. 1018

Straight to London rideth he then,  
 There as the Earle and Bessy lay;  
 He took them either a letter in hand,  
 And bad them behold, read and see. 1022

The Earle took leave of Richard the King,  
 And into the West wind woud he.  
 He left Bessye in Leicester then,  
 And bad her lye in privitye, 1026

"For if King Richard knew thee here, anon  
 In a fire burned must thou be."  
 Straight to Latham the Earle is gone  
 There as the Lord Strange then lee. 1030

He sent the Lord Strange to London

To keep King Richards company.

Sir William Stanley made anone

Ten thousand coats readily,

1034

Which were as redd and any blood,

There on the harts head was set full high,

Which after were tryed both trusty and good

As any coud be in Christantye.

1038

Sir Gilbert Talbot ten thousand doggs

In one hours warning for to be,

And Sir John Savage fifteen white hoods

Which woud fight and never flee.

1042

Edward Stanley had three hundred men:

There were no better in Christentye;

Sir Rees ap Thomas, a knight of Wales, certain,

Eight thousand spears brought he.

1046

Sir William Stanley sat in the Holt Castle

And looked over his head so high:

"Which way standeth the wind, can any tell?

I pray you, my men, look and see."

1050

"The wind it standeth South East,"

So said a knight that stood him by.

"This night yonder Prince, truely,

Into England entereth hee."

1054



He called a gentleman that stood him nigh:  
 His name was Rowland of Warburton.  
 He bad him go to Shrewsbury that night  
 And bid yonder Prince come inn. 1058

But when Rowland came to Shrewsbury,  
 The port-culles it was let downe;  
 They called him Henry Tydder in scorn, truely,  
 And said in England he shoud wear no crowne. 1062

Rowland bethought him of a wyle then,  
 And tied a writeing to a stone,  
 And threw the writeing over the wall, certaine,  
 And bad the baliffs to look it upon. 1066

They opned the gates on every side  
 And met the Prince with procession,  
 And woud not in Shrewsbury there abide,  
 But straight he dressed him to Stafford towne. 1070

King Richard heard then of his comeing:  
 He called his lords of great renowne:  
 The Lord Percy he came to the King  
 And upon his knees he falleth downe: 1074

"I have thirty thousand fighting men  
 For to keep the crown with thee."  
 The Duke of Northfolk came to the King anone,  
 And downe he falleth upon his knee. 1078

The Earle of Surrey, that was his heir,

Were both in one company:

"We have either twenty thousand men here

For to keep the crown with thee."

1082

The Lord Latimer and the Lord Lovell,

And the Earle of Kent, he stood him by;

The Lord Ross and the Lord Scrope, I you tell,

They were all in one company.

1086

The Bishop of Durham, he was not away;

Sir William Bonner, he stood him by;

The good Sir William Harrington, as I say,

Said he woud fight and never fly.

1090

King Richard made a messenger

And sent him into the West Countrey,

[Said] "Bid the Earle of Darby make him bowne,

And bring twenty thousand men unto me

1094

"Or else the Lord Strange his head I will him send,

And doubtless his son shall dye,

For hitherto his father I took for my friend,

And now he hath deceived me."

1098

Another herald appeared then:

"To Sir William Stanley, that doughty knight:

Bid him bring to me ten thousand men

Or else to death he shall be dight."

1102

Then answered that doughty knight,  
 And spake to the herald without letting:  
 "Say upon Bosseworth Field I mind to fight  
 Upon Monday early in the morning. 1106

"Such a breakfast I him behight  
 As never did knight to any king."  
 The messenger home can him gett  
 To tell King Richard this tydeing. 1110

Fast together his hands then coud he ding,  
 And said the Lord Strange shoud surely dye,  
 And putt him into the Tower of London,  
 For at liberty he shoud not bee. 1114

Lett us leave Richard and his lords full of pride,  
 And talk we more of the Stanleys blood,  
 That brought Richmond over the sea with wind and tyde  
 From Litle Brittain into England over the flood. 1118

Now is Earle Richmond into Stafford come,  
 And Sir William Stanley to litle Stoone.  
 The Prince had rather than all the gold in Christentye  
 To have Sir William Stanley to look upon. 1122

A messenger was made ready anone,  
 That night to go to litle Stoon.  
 Sir William Stanley, he rideth to Stafford towne  
 With a solemn company ready bowne. 1126



When the knight to Stafford was comin  
 That Earle Richmond might him see,  
 He took him in his arms then,  
 And there he kissed him times three: 1130

"The welfare of thy body doth comfort me more  
 Then all the gold in Christantye."  
 Then answered that royall knight there,  
 And to the Prince these words spake he: 1134

"Remember, man, both night and day,  
 Who doth now the most for thee.  
 In England thou shalt wear a crown, I say,  
 Or else doubtless I will dye. 1138

"A fairer lady then thou shalt have for thy feer  
 Was there never in Christanty:  
 She is a countesse, a kings daughter,  
 And there to both wise and witty. 1142

"I must this night to Stone, my Soveraigne,  
 For to comfort my company."  
 The Prince, he took him by the hand  
 And said, "Farewell, Sir William, fair and free!" 1146

Now is word come to Sir William Stanley there,  
 Earley in the Monday in the morning,  
 That the Earle of Darby, his brother dear,  
 Had given battle to Richard the King. 1150

"That woud I not," said Sir William anone,  
 "For all the gold in Christantye,  
 That the battle shoud be done  
 Unless that [I] at the battle shoud be." 1154

Straight to Lichfield coud he ride  
 In all the hast that might be,  
 And when he came to Lichfield that tyde,  
 All they cryed, "King Henry!" 1158

Straight to Bolesworth can they go  
 In all the hast that might be;  
 But when he came Bolesworth Field unto,  
 There met a royall company: 1162

The Earle of Darby thither was come,  
 And twenty thousand stood him by;  
 Sir John Savage, his sisters son,  
 He was his nephew of his blood so nigh: 1166

He had fifteen hundred fighting men  
 That woud fight and never flye.  
 Sir William Stanley, that royall knight, then  
 Twenty thousand red coats had he. 1170

They woud bicker with their bows there;  
 They woud fight and never flye;  
 The Red Ros[e] and the Blew Boar,  
 They were both a solemn company. 1174

Sir Rees ap Thomas, he was thereby  
 With ten thousand spears of mighty tree.  
 The Earle of Richmond went to the Earle of Darby  
 And downe he falleth upon his knee; 1178

Said, "Father Stanley, full of might,  
 The vaward, I pray you, give to me,  
 For I am come to claime my right,  
 And faine revenged woud I bee." 1182

"Stand up," he said, "my son, quickly!  
 Thou hast thy mothers blessing, truely.  
 The vaward, son, I will give to thee,  
 So that thou wilt be ordered by me. 1186

"Sir William Stanley, my brother dear,  
 In the battle he shall bee.  
 Sir John Savage, he hath no peer,  
 He shall be a wing then to thee. 1190

"Sir Rees ap Thomas shall break the array,  
 For he will fight and never flee.  
 I my selfe will hove on the hill, I say.  
 The fair battle I will see." 1194

King Richard, he hoveth upon the mountaine;  
 He was aware of the banner of the bould Stanley,  
 And said, "Fetch hither the Lord Strange, certain,  
 For he shall dye this same day. 1198



"To the death, Lord, thee ready make,  
 For I tell thee`certainly  
 That thou shalt dye for thy uncles sake,  
 Wild William of Standley." 1202

"If I shall dye," said the Lord Strange then,  
 "As God forbid it shoud so bee,  
 Alas for my lady, that is at home:  
 It shoud be long or she see me. 1206

"But we shall meet at Dooms day  
 When the great doom shall be."  
 He called for a gent in good [f]ay  
 Of Lancashire, both fair and free: 1210

The name of him it was Lathum.  
 A ring of gould he took from his finger,  
 And threw it to the gent then  
 And bad him bring it to Lancashire, 1214

To his lady, that was at home;  
 At her table she may sit right;  
 Or she see her lord it might be long.  
 "I have no foot to fligh nor fight:  
 I must be murdered with the King. 1219

"If fortune my uncle Sir William Stanley loose the field,  
 As God forbid it shoud so bee,  
 Pray her to take my eldest son and child  
 And exile him over behind the sea. 1223

"He may come in another time  
 By feild or fleet, by tower or towne;  
 Wreak so he may his fathers death in fyne  
 Upon Richard of England that weareth the crown." 1227

A knight to King Richard then did appeare,  
 The good Sir William of Harrington:  
 "Let that Lord have his life, my dear  
 Sir King, I pray you grant me this boone. 1231

"We shall have upon this field anon  
 The father, the son and the uncle, all three;  
 Then shall you deem, Lord, with your own mouth then  
 What shall be the death of them all three!" 1235

Then a block was cast upon the ground,  
 Thereon the Lords head was laid.  
 A slave over his head can stand,  
 And thus that time to him thus said: 1239

"In faith there is no other booty tho  
 But need that thou must be dead."  
 Harrington in his hart was full woe  
 When he saw the Lord must needs be dead. 1243

He said, "Our ray breaketh on evry side;  
 We put our feyld in jeopardie."  
 He took up the Lord that tyde:  
 King Richard after did him never see. 1247

Then they blew up the bewgles of brass  
 That made many a wife to cry, "Alas!"  
 And many a wives child father-lesse.  
 They shott of guns then very fast. 1251

Over their heads they coud them throw;  
 Arrows flew them between  
 As thick as any hayle or snowe  
 As then that time might plaine be seene. 1255

Then Rees ap Thomas with the black raven  
 Shortly he brake their array.  
 Then with thirty thousand fighting men  
 The Lord Percy went his way. 1259

The Duke of Northfolke would have fledd with a good will  
 With twenty thousand of his company.  
 They went up to an wind millne upon a hill,  
 That stood soe fayre and wonderousse hye. 1263

There he met Sir John Savage, a royall knight,  
 And with him a worthy company.  
 To the death was he then dight,  
 And his son prisoner taken was he. 1267

Then the Lord Alroes began for to flee,  
 And soe did many other moe.  
 When King Richard that sight did see,  
 In his heart he was never soe woe: 1271



"I pray you, my merry men, be not away,  
 For upon this field will I like a man dye,  
 For I had rather dye this day  
 Then with the Standley prisoner for to be." 1275

A knight to King Richard can say there  
 (Good Sir William of Harrington),  
 He said, "Sir King, it hath no peere  
 Upon this field to death to be done, 1279

"For there may no man these dints abide.  
 Low! Your horse is ready at your hand."  
 "Sett the crown upon my head that tyde;  
 Give me my battle-ax in my hand; 1283

"I make a vow to mild Mary, that is so bright,  
 I will dye the King of merry England."  
 Besides his head they hewed the crown down right,  
 That after he was not able to stand. 1287

They dunge him downe as they were woode;  
 They beat his bassnet to his head  
 Until the braine came out with bloode.  
 They never left him till he was dead. 1291

Then carryed they him to Leicester,  
 And pulled his head under his feet.  
 Bessye mett him with a merry cheere  
 And with these words she did him greete: 1295

"How like you the killing of my brethren dear?

Welcome, gentle uncle, home!"

Great solace it was to see and hear

When the battle it was all done.

1299

I tell you, masters, without lett,

When the Red Ros[e] so fair of hew

And young Bessy together mett,

It was great joy, I say to you.

1303

A bishopp them married with a ringe,

The two bloods of great renowne.

Bessy said, "Now may we singe,

Wee two bloods are made all one."

1307

The Earle of Darby he was there,

And Sir William Stanley, that noble knight.

Upon their heads he set the crown so fair,

That was made of gold so bright.

1311

And there he came under a cloud

That some time in England looked full high,

But then the hart he lost his head

That after no man coud him see.

1315

But Jesus, that is both bright and shine,

And born was of mild Mary,

Save and keep our noble [Queen],

And also the poor commentie.

1319

Amen.



THE SECOND POEM :

B O S W O R T H   F E I L D E



God, that shope both sea and land,  
 And for all creatures dyed [on] tree,  
 Save and keepe the realme of England  
 To live in peace and tranquillitye! 4  
 St George, to us a sheild thou bee!  
 For we have cause to pray, both old and younge,  
 With a stedfast hart full devatlye,  
 And say "Welcome, HENERY, right wise King!" 8

Welcome, right wise King and joy royall,  
 He that is grounded with grace!  
 Welcome the fortune that hath befall,  
 Which hath beene seene in many a place! 12  
 Who wend that England as itt was  
 Soe suddenlye changed shold have beene?  
 Therefore lett us thanke God of his grace  
 And say, "Welcome, Henery, right wise King!" 16

[N]ow had wee need to remember and to our minds call  
 How England is transported miraculouslye  
 To see the great mischeefe that hath befall  
 Sith the martyrdome of the holy King HENERY! 20  
 How many lords have beene deemed to dye,  
 Young innocents that never did sinn!  
 Therefore lett us thanke God hartilye  
 And say, "Welcome HENERY, right wise King!" 24

Some time a king raigned in this land;  
 That was Edward of hye felicitye.  
 He was dowed and dread, as I understand,  
 Through all the nations in Christentye. 28

He served Jesus full heartilye:  
 These examples may be taken by him  
 Which hath prevailed him with royaltie  
 To weare the crowne and be our King. 32

For with tounge I have heard it told,  
 When HENERY was in a far cuntrye,  
 That 3 times he was bought and sold  
 Throughe the might of gold and fee. 36

He served Jesus full hartilye:  
 This example may be said by him  
 Which prevailed right royallye  
 To weare the crowne and be our King. 40

They banished him over the flood,  
 Over the flood and streames gray;  
 Yett his right in England was good,  
 As hereafter know you may. 44

There was hee banished over the floode,  
 And into a strange land they can him bring.  
 That time raigned Richard with royaltie:  
 He ware the crowne and was our Kinge. 48

That was well seene att streames stray,  
 Att Milford Haven, when he did appeare  
 With all his lords in royall array,  
 He said to them that with him weare: 52

"Into England I am entred heare;  
 My heritage is this land within.  
 They shall me boldlye bring and beare,  
 And loose my liffe, but Ile be King. 56

Jesus, that dyed on Good Fryday,  
 And Marry mild, thats full of might,  
 Send me the love of the Lord Stanley!  
 He marryed my mother, a lady bright. 60  
 That is long sith I saw her with sight;  
 I trust in Jesu wee shall meete with winne,  
 And I shall maintaine her honor right  
 Over all England when I am Kinge. 64

Had I the love of that Lord in rich array,  
 That hath proved his manhood soe well att need,  
 And his brother, Sir William, the good Stanley -  
 A better knight never umstrode steede! 68  
 That hath beene seene in mickle dread:  
 Much was the worshipp that happened him;  
 A more nobler knight att neede  
 Came never to maintaine kinge." 72



Now leave wee HENERY, this Prince royall,  
 And talke of Richard in his dignitie,  
 Of the great misfortune did him befall:  
 The causer of his owne death was hee. 76

Wicked counsell drew Richard neere  
 Of them that had the prince in their guiding,  
 For wicked counsell doth mickle deere,  
 That bringeth downe both emperour and king. 80

The Lord Stanley both sterne and stout -  
 He might be called the flower of flowers - man dye.  
 That was well seene without doubt  
 Att Barwicke walls with towers hye: 84  
 When all the lords of England let itt bee,  
 That castell wightlye can hee' winn.  
 Was there ever lord in England, fare or nere,  
 That did such jorney to his Kinge ? 88

Then Richard bade a messenger to fare  
 Soe far[r] into the West Countrie,  
 To comfort his knights, squiers, lesse and more,  
 And to set good rule amongst his comintye. 92  
 Then wicked counsell drew him neere;  
 These were [the] words they said to him:  
 "Wee thinke yee worke unwittlye  
 In England and yee will continue King, 96

90 fare MS    94 they MS

For why the Lord Stanley is le[f]t in this land,  
 The Lord Strange, and the Chamberlaine, these 3.  
 They may show upon a day a band  
 Such as may noe lorde in Christentye. 100  
 Lett some of them under your bondage bee  
 If any worshipp you thinke to winn,  
 Or else short while continue shall yee  
 In England to be our Kinge." 104

Then they made out messengers with maine and might  
 Soe farr into the West Countrie  
 To the Lord Stanley, that noble knight;  
 They kneeled downe upon their knee 108  
 And said, "Richard, that raignes with royaltye,  
 Emperour of England, this day within  
 He longeth you sore, my Lord, to see.  
 You must come and speake with our Kinge." 112

Then [the] Lord busked him upon a day  
 To ryde to King Richard with royaltye,  
 And hee fell sicke att Manchester by the way -  
 As the will of God is, all things must bee. 116  
 The Lord Strange then called [he] him nee;  
 These were the words hee said to him:  
 "In goodlye hast now ryde must yee  
 To witt the will of Richard our Kinge." 120

97 lent MS    113 they MS.    117 he ] om. MS

Then this Lord bowed him full right  
 To ryde to King Richard hastilye.  
 When hee came before his Soverraigne in sight,  
 He kneeled downe upon his knee. 124

"Welcome, Lord Strange, and kinsman nye!"  
 These were the words he said to him:  
 "Was there ever any baron in England of ancetrye  
 Shold be soe welcome to his Kinge?" 128

Alas that ever he cold soe say,  
 Soe froward a hart as hee had under!  
 That was well seene after upon a day:  
 Itt cast him and his crowne assunder, 132  
 And brought his body into bale and blunder,  
 These wicked words he cold begin.  
 Thus falshood endeth in shame and wonder,  
 Whether itt be with emperour or king. 136

Of itt heere is no more to say,  
 But shortlye to ward comanded was hee.  
 New messengers were made without delay  
 Soe farr into the West Countrye, 140  
 To the Lord Stanley, soe wise and wittye.  
 These were the words the sayd to him:  
 "You must raise those that under you bee,  
 And all the power that you may bringe. 144



Yonder cometh Richmond over the flood,  
 With many allyants out of far cuntrye,  
 Bold men of bone and blood;  
 The crowne of England chalengeth hee. 148  
 You must raise those that under you bee  
 And all the power that yee may bringe,  
 Or else the Lord Strange you must never see,  
 Which is in danger of our King." 152

In a studye this Lord can stand,  
 And said, "Deere Jesus, how may this bee ?  
 I draw wittenes to him that shope both sea and land  
 That I never delt with noe trecherye. 156  
 Richard is a man that hath no mercye:  
 Hee wold mee and mine into bondage bringe.  
 Therefore cleane against him will I bee,  
 Of all England though hee bee King." 160

Then another messenger he did appeare  
 To William Stanley, that noble knight,  
 And saith, "Richard, that weareth the crowne soe cleare,  
 And in his empire raigneth right, 164  
 Willeth you to bring your power to helpe him to fight,  
 For all his trust itt is you in."  
 Then answered that gentle knight,  
 "I have great marveill of your king: 168

"He keepeth the[r]e my nephew, my brothers heyre.

A truer knight is not in Christentye.

That Richard shall repent full sore

For any thing that I can see.

172

Bidd him array him with royaltye

And all the power that hee may bringe,

For hee shall either fight or flee

Or loose his liffe if hee bee Kinge.

176

"I make mine avow to Marye that may,

And to her sonne, that dyed on tree:

I will make him such a breakefast upon a day

As never made knight any king in Christentye.

180

Tell thou King Richard these words from mee:

For all the power that he may bringe,

In the feild he shall either fight or flee,

Or loose his liffe [if] hee be Kinge."

184

Then this messenger forth hee went

To carry to King Richard with royaltye,

And saith, "In yonder countrie I have beene sent,

Soe greeved men are not in Christentye,

188

For love of the Lorde Strange that in bale doth bee."

These were the words hee sayd to him:

"You must either fight or flee,

Or loose your liffe if you bee Kinge."

192

169 thee MS    184 or MS

Att that King Richard smiled small,  
 And sware, "By Jesu, full of might,  
 When they are assembled with their powers all,  
 I wold I had the Great Turke against me to fight, 196  
 Or Prester John in his armor bright,  
 The Sowdan of Surrey with them to bringe!  
 Yett with manhood and with might  
 In England I shold continue King. 200

"I sweare by Jesu, that dyed on a tree,  
 And by his mother, that mayden blythe,  
 From the towne of Lancaster to Shrewsburye  
 Knight nor squier Ile leave none alive. 204  
 I shall kindle their cares [rife]  
 And give their lands to my knights keene.  
 Many a man shall repent the while  
 That ever they rose against their King. 208

"From the Holyhead to St Davids land,  
 Where now be towers and castles hye,  
 I shall make parkes and plaine feilds to stand,  
 Frythes faire and forrests free. 212  
 Ladyes "Well away!" shall crye,  
 Widdowes shall weepe and their hands wringe.  
 Many a man shall repent that day  
 That ever they rose against their Kinge." 216

205 riffe MS



Then he made out messengers with maine and might  
 Throughout England, farr and neere,  
 To duke, erle, barron, and knight,  
 And to every man in his degree. 220  
 You never heard tell of such a companye  
 Att sowte, seege, nor noe gatheringe.  
 Part of their names heere shall yee  
 That came that day to serve their Kinge: 224  
 Thither came the Duke of Norffolke upon a day,  
 And the Erle of Surrey, that was his heyre;  
 The Erle of Kent was not away;  
 The Erle of Shrewsbury, breme as beare; 228  
 The Erle of Lincolne wold not spare;  
 The Erle of Northumberland ready bowne;  
 The Erle of Westmoreland great othes sware:  
 All they said Richard shold keepe his crowne. 232  
 [There] was my Lord Zouch, sad att assay;  
 My Lord Mattrevis, a noble knight;  
 Young Arrundell dight him upon a day;  
 The Lord Wells, both wise and wight; 236  
 The Lord Gray Cotner in his armour bright;  
 The Lord Bowes made him bowne;  
 The Lord Audley was feirce to fight,  
 And all said Richard shold keepe his crowne. 240

233 theres MS

There was my Lord Bartley, sterne on a steede;  
 The Lord Ferryes of Chartlye, the Lord Ferryes of Strobe;  
 The Lord Bartlye, noble att neede:  
 Chamberlaine of England that day was hee. 244

The Lord Fittz Hugh and his cozen nye;  
 The Lord Scroope of Upsall, the Lord Scroope of Bolton;  
 The Lord Dacres raised all the North Cuntrye,  
 And all said Richard shold keepe his crowne. 248

There was many nobles mustered to fight:  
 The Lord Audley and the Lord Lumley;  
 The Lord Graystocke in his armour bright,  
 He brought with him a noble companye. 252

He sware by Jesus, that dyed on a tree,  
 That his enemyes shold be beaten downe:  
 He was not [in] England, farr nor neere,  
 That shold lett Richard to weare his crowne. 256

There was Sir John Spencer, a noble knight;  
 Sir Raph Harebottle in rich array;  
 Sir William Ward, alwayes that was wight;  
 Sir Archeobald, the good Rydley; 260  
 Sir Nicholas Moberly was not away,  
 Nor yett Sir Robert of Clotten;  
 Alsoe Sir Oliver, the hend Horsley:  
 All said Richard shold keepe his crowne. 264

255 in ] om. MS

There was Sir Henery Percy, sterne on steede;  
 Sir Roger Bowmer in his companye;  
 Sir Richard Manners, noble att neede;  
 Soe was Sir Henery, the hend Hatteley; 268  
 Sir Robert Conway in companye;  
 Sir Raphe Smyth and Sir Roger Akerston,  
 And Sir William, his cozen nye;  
 And all sayd Richard shold keepe his crowne. 272

There was a noble knight, Sir John the Gray,  
 And Sir Thomas of Mountgomerye;  
 Sir Rodger Sanfort was not away;  
 From London came Sir Robert Brackenbury; 276  
 Sir Henery Bowdrye was not away,  
 Nor yett Sir Richard, the good Chorlton;  
 Sir Raphe Robbye made him yare;  
 All sayd Richard shold keepe his crowne. 280

There was Sir Marmaduke Constable, a noble knight:  
 Of King Richards counsell hee was nye;  
 Sir William Conyous, allwayes that was wight;  
 Sir Robert Thribald with his meanye; 284  
 Soe was Sir Martine of the Wardley,  
 And Sir Richard, the good Hortton,  
 And Sir Richard Rosse sware smartlye  
 That King Richard shold keepe his crowne. 288



There was Sir Robert, the sterne Sturley;  
 Sir John of Melton, thither came hee;  
 Sir Garvis Clyfton in rich array;  
 Sir Henery Perpoint in his degree; 292  
 Sir Thomas North with royaltye,  
 And alsoe Sir John of Babington;  
 Sir Humphrey Stafford sware certainelye  
 That King Richard shold keepe his crowne. 296

There was Sir Robert Ryder, a man of might;  
 Sir Robert Utridge in his dignitye;  
 Sir John Huntington was feirce to fight;  
 Soe was Sir John Willmarley; 300  
 Sir Robert Swayley with royalltye,  
 And alsoe Sir Bryan of Stableton,  
 And Sir William, his cozen nye,  
 And all said Richard shold keepe his crowne. 304

There was Sir Richard Ratcliffe, a noble knight:  
 Of King Richards counsell was hee;  
 Sir William, his brother, was feirce to fight,  
 And Sir Thomas - they were brethren 3; 308  
 And Sir Richard the Mallivere,  
 And Sir John, the good Hortton,  
 And Sir Thomas, the good Mallyvere,  
 And all said Richard shold keepe his crowne. 312

All the North Wales, for the most partye  
 The flower of Cheshire with him hee did bringe:  
 Better men were not [in] Christentye  
 That ever came to maintaine their King. 364  
 Erly upon Twesday att morne  
 Sir William Stanley, that noble knight,  
 Removed from Nantwiche to the towne of Stone.  
 By then was Henery come to Stafford streaight. 368  
 He longed sore to see him in sight  
 And straight to Stafford towne is gone,  
 And kneeled downe anon right,  
 And by the hand he hath him tane. 372  
 Hee said, "I am full glade of thee."  
 And these were the words he said to him:  
 "Through the helpe of my Lord thy [bro]ther and thee  
 I trust in England to continue Kinge." 376  
 Then he hent that noble Prince by the hand  
 And said, "Welcome, my Soverraigne King HENERY!  
 Challenge thy herytage and thy land  
 That thine owne is and thine shall bee. 380  
 Be eger to fight and lothe to flee;  
 Let manhood be bredd thy brest within;  
 And remember another day who doth for thee,  
 Of all England when thou art Kinge." 384

363 in ] om. MS    375 father MS

Had wee not need Jesu to pray,  
 That made the world, the day and night,  
 To keepe us out of bale and woe?  
 2 shires against all England to fight 340  
 And maintaine HENERY that came for his right  
 And in the realme of England was ready bowne!  
 Freinds, and yee will hearken me right,  
 I shall tell you how Henery gott his crowne: 344

The Lord Stanley, sterne and stout,  
 That ever hath beene wise and wittye,  
 From Latham Castle withouten doubt  
 Uppon a Munday bowned hee 348  
 With knights and squiers in companye:  
 They had their banners in the sunn glitteringe;  
 They were as feirce as fawcon to flye,  
 To maintaine HENERY, that was their King. 352

Then this Lord bowned him upon a day  
 With noble men in companye;  
 Towards Newcastle under Line he tooke the way  
 And told his men both gold and fee. 356  
 Sir William Stanley, wise and wight,  
 From the castle of Holt with holts hye  
 To the Nantwich hee rydeth straight  
 And tooke his men wages of gold and fee. 360



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 The flower of Cheshire with him hee did bringe:  
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 Let manhood be bredd thy brest within;  
 And remember another day who doth for thee,  
 Of all England when thou art Kinge." 384

363 in ] om. MS

After, there was noe more to say,  
 But leave of the Prince he hath taken,  
 And came againe by light of the day  
 To the litle prettye towne of Stone. 388

Early upon Saturday att morne  
 To Lichfeild they remove, both old and younge.  
 Att Woosley Bridge them beforne  
 There had they a sight of our Kinge; 392

And to Lichefeild they ridden right,  
 With answerable army came royallye.  
 To nomber the companye that was with the knight,  
 Itt was a goodlye sight to see. 396

Guns in Lichefeild they cracken on hye  
 To cheere the countye both more and min,  
 And glad was all the chivalrye  
 That was on Heneryes parte, our Kinge. 400

Throughout Lichefeild rydeth the knight;  
 On the other side there tarryed hee.  
 A messenger came to him straight  
 And kneeled downe upon his knee, 404  
 And saith, "The Lord Stanley is his enemy nye,  
 That are but a litle way from him.  
 They will fight within these houres 3  
 With Richard, that is Englands Kinge." 408

"That wold I not," the knight can say,

"For all the gold in Christentye!"

Towards Tamworth he tooke the way

And came to Hattersey and neighed nye 412

Where the Lord Stanley in a dale cold bee,

With trumpetts and tabours tempered with him.

Itt was a comelye sight to see

As ever was to maintaine kinge. 416

All that night there tarryed they

And upon the Sunday Gods service did see.

Toward the feild they did them array:

The vaward the Lord Stanley tooke hee; 420

Sir William Stanley the rereward wold bee,

And his sonne, Sir Edward, with a winge.

The did remaine in their array

To waite the coming of Richard King. 424

Then they looked to a forrest syde;

They hard trumpetts and tabours tempered on hye;

They thought King Richard had comen there,

And itt was the noble Prince, King HENERYE. 428

Over a river then rydeth hee;

He brake the ray and rode to him.

Itt was a comelye sight to see

The meeting of our Lord and Kinge. 432



Then in their host there did fall affray

A litle time before the night.

You never saw men soe soone in their array

With fell weapons feirce for to fight. 436

Upon a keene courser that was wight

Other lords with him hee cold bringe;

Thus in array came ryding straight

HENERY of England, our noble Kinge. 440

He lowted low and tooke his hatt in his hand,

And thanked the states and cominaltye:

"To quitt you all I understand;

I trust in Jesu that day to see." 444

Many a cry in the host that night did bee,

And anon the larke began to singe.

Truth of the battell heere shall yee

That ever was betweene king and king. 448

King HENERY desired the vaward right

Of the Lord Stanley, that was both wise and wittye,

And hee hath granted him in sight,

And saith, "But small is your companye." 452

4 of the noble knights then called hee;

Their names to you then shall I minge.

He bade array them with their chivalrye

And goe to the vaward with our Kinge: 456

Sir Robert Tunstall, a noble knight,  
 And come of royall anceytree;  
 Sir John Savage, wise and wight,  
 Sir Hugh Persall - there was 3 - 460  
 Sir Humphrey Stanley the 4th did bee  
 That proved noble in everye thinge.  
 They did assay them with their chivalrye  
 And went to the vaward with our Kinge. 464

The Lord Stanley, both sterne and stout,  
 2 battells that day had hee  
 Of hardye men withouten doubt:  
 Better were not in Christentye. 468  
 Sir William, wise and worthye,  
 Was hindmust att the outsettinge.  
 Men said that day that dyd him see,  
 Hee came betime unto our King. 472

Then he removed unto a mountaine full hye  
 And looked into a dale full dread:  
 5 miles compasse no ground they see  
 For armed men and trapped steeds. 476  
 Theyr armor glittered as any gleed;  
 In 4 strong battells they cold forth bring.  
 They seemed noble men att need  
 As ever came to maintaine king. 480

The Duke of Norfolke avanted his banner bright;  
 Soe did the younge Erle of Shrewsburye  
 To the sun and wind right speedylve dight;  
 Soe did Oxford, that Erle, in companye. 484

To tell the array itt were hard for me,  
 And [the] noble power that they did bring;  
 And of the ordinance heere shall yee  
 That had that day Richard our Kinge. 488

The had 7 scores sarpendines without dou[b]t,  
 That were locked and chained uppon a row;  
 As many bombards that were stout:  
 Like blasts of thunder they did blow. 492

10,000 morespikes with all  
 And harquebusyers, throwlve can the thringe  
 To make many a noble man to fall  
 That was on HENERYS part, our Kinge. 496

King Richard looked on the mountaines hye  
 And sayd, "I see the banner of the Lord Stanley."  
 He said, "Feitch hither the Lord Strange to mee,  
 For doubtlesse hee shall dye this day. 500

I make mine avow to Marye, that may,  
 That all the gold this land within  
 Shall not save his liffe this day  
 In England iff I be Kinge." 504

486 they MS    489 dout MS



Then they brought the Lord Strange into his sight.

He said, "For thy death make thee readye."

Then answered that noble knight

And said, "I crye God and the world mercye! 508

And Jesus, I draw wittnesse to thee

That all the world from woe did winn:

Since the time that I borne did bee

Was I never traitor to my Kinge." 512

A gentleman then called hee

(Men said Latham was his name):

"And ever thou come into my countrie,

Greete well my gentlemen eche one; 516

My yeomen, large of blood and bone,

Sometimes we had mirth att our meetinge!

They had a master and now they have none,

For heere I must be martyred with the Kinge." 520

There he tooke a ring of his fingar right,

And to that squier raught itt hee,

And said, "Beare this to my lady bright,

For shee may thinke itt longe or shee [me] see. 524

Yett att Doomes day meete shall wee -

I trust in Jesu, that all this world shall winn -

In the celestyall heaven upon hye,

In presence of a noble king. 528

524 may MS

And the feild be lost upon our partye -  
 As I trust in God itt shall not bee -  
 Take my eldest sonne, that is my heyre,  
 And flee into some farr countrie. 532

Yett the child a man may bee:  
 Hee is comen of a lords kinn,  
 Another day to revenge mee  
 Of Richard of England if he be King." 536

Then to King Richard there came a knight,  
 Saith, "I hold noe time about this to be:  
 See yee not the vawards begining to fight?  
 When yee have the father, the unckle, all 3, 540  
 Looke what death you will have them to dye;  
 Att your will you may them deeme."  
 Through these fortunate words eskaped hee  
 Out of the danger of Richard the Kinge. 544

Then the partyes countred together egerlye.  
 When the vawards began to fight,  
 King Henery fought soe manfullye;  
 Soe did Oxford, that Erle soe wight; 548  
 Sir John Savage, that hardy knight,  
 Deathes dints he delt that day,  
 With many a white hood in fight,  
 That sad men were att assay. 552

Sir Gilbert Talbott was not away,  
 But stoutly stirred him in that fight;  
 With noble men att assay  
 He caused his enemyes lowe to light. 556

Sir Hugh Persall with sheild and speare  
 Full doughtylye that day did hee:  
 He bare him doughtye in this warr  
 As a man of great degree. 560

King Richard did in his army stand:  
 He was n[un]mbred to 40,000 and 3  
 Of hardy men of hart and hand  
 That under his banner there did bee. 564

Sir William Stanley, wise and worthie,  
 Remembered the brea[k]fast he hett to him;  
 Downe att a backe then cometh hee,  
 And shortlye sett upon the Kinge. 568

Then they countred together sad and sore:  
 Archers they lett sharpe arrowes flee;  
 They shott guns both fell and farr;  
 Bowes of vewe bended did bee; 572  
 Springalls spedd them speedylye;  
 Harquebusiers pelletts throughly did thringe;  
 Soe many a banner began to swee  
 That was on Richards partye, their King. 576

562 nmbred MS    566 breakfast MS



Then our archers lett their shooting bee;  
 With joynd weapons were growden full right.  
 Brands rang on basenetts hye;  
 Battell axes fast on helmes did light. 580

There dyed many a doughtye knight:  
 There under foot can the thringe.  
 Thus they fought with maine and might  
 That was on HENERYES part, our King. 584

Then to King Richard there came a knight,  
 And said, "I hold itt time for to flee,  
 For yonder Stanleys dints they be soe wight,  
 Against them no man may dree. 588

Heere is thy horsse att thy hand readye.  
 Another day thou may thy worshipp win,  
 And for to raigne with royaltye,  
 To weare the crowne and be our King." 592

He said, "Give me my battell axe in my hand;  
 Sett the crowne of England on my head soe hye,  
 For, by him that shope both sea and land,  
 King of England this day I will dye. 596

One foote will I never flee  
 Whilest the breath is my brest within."  
 As he said, soe did itt bee,  
 If hee lost his liffe if he were King. 600

About his standard can the light;  
 The crowne of gold the hewed him froe;  
 With dillfull dints his death the dight;  
 The Duke of Norfolke that day the slowe; 604  
 The Lord Ferrers and many other moe  
 Boldlye on bere they can them bringe;  
 Many a noble knight in his hart was throwe  
 That lost his liffe with Richard the King. 608

There was slaine Sir Richard Ratcliffe, a noble knight:  
 Of King Richards counsell [he] was full nye;  
 Sir William Conyas, allwayes that was wight,  
 And Sir Robert of Brakenburye. 612  
 A knight there dyed that was full doughtye:  
 That was Sir Richard, the good Chorlton;  
 That day there dyed hee  
 With Richard of England that ware the crowne. 616

Amongst all other knights, remember,  
 Which were hardy and therto wight,  
 Sir William Brandon was one of those;  
 King Heneryes standard he kept on height, 620  
 And vanted itt with manhood and might  
 Untill with dints hee was dr[i]ven downe,  
 And dyed like an ancyent knight  
 With HENERY of England, that ware the crowne. 624

610 he ] om. MS    622 druen MS

Sir Percivall Thriball the other hight,  
 [A] noble knight, and in his hart was true;  
 King Richards standard hee kept upright  
 Untill both his leggs were hewen him froe; 628  
 To the ground he wold never lett itt goe  
 Whilest the breath his brest was within;  
 Yett men pray for the knights 2  
 That ever was soe true to their King. 632

Then they moved to a mountaine on height;  
 With a lowde voice they cryed, "King HENERY!"  
 The crowne of gold that was bright  
 To the Lord Stanley delivered itt bee; 636  
 Anon to King HENERY delivered itt hee,  
 The crowne that was soe delivered to him,  
 And said, "Methinke ye are best worthye  
 To weare the crowne and be our King." 640

Then they rode to Leister that night  
 With our noble prince, King HENERYE.  
 They brought King Richard thither with might,  
 As naked as he borne might bee, 644  
 And in Newarke laid was hee,  
 That many a one might looke on him.  
 Thus fortunes raignes most marvelouslye,  
 Both with emperour and with king. 648



Now this doubtfull day is brought to an end;  
Jesu now on their soules have mercye!  
And hee [that] dyed this world to amend  
Save Stanleys blood where soever they bee, 652  
To remaine as lords with royaltye,  
When truth and conscyence shall spread and spring,  
And that they bee of counsell nye  
To James of England that is our King! 656

FINIS

651 that ] om. MS

THE THIRD POEM :

SCOTISH   FEILDE

Grant, gracious God, grant me this time  
 That I may say, or I cease, thy selven to please,  
 And Mary, his mother that ma[k]ed all this world,  
 And all the seemlie saints, that sitten in Heaven.  
 I will carpe of [a] king that conquered full wide, 5  
 That dwelled in this land, that was al[wa]yes noble:  
 Henery the Seaventh, that Soveraigne Lord;  
 How he moved in at Milford with men but a few.  
 There were lite lords in this land that to that Lord longed  
 But of Derby that deare Earle, that doughty hath beene ever,  
 And the Lord Chamberlaine, that was his cheefe brother;  
 Savage, his sisters sonne, a sege that was able;  
 And Gylbert, the gentle, with a jollye meanye.  
 All Lancashire these ladds the ledde att their will,  
 And Cheshyre hath them chosen for their cheefe captaine. 15  
 Much worshipp have the woone in warre; their was of their names  
 In France and in fe[le] lands, soe fayre them behappen!  
 Sith Brute heere abode and first built up houses.  
 Sir James Blunt, that bold knight, he bowed to their hands;  
 Soe did Sir Edward Poynings, that proved was of deeds; 20  
 Sir John Biron was never afrayd for no burne livinge:  
 A more manfull man was not of this mold maked.  
 Thus with a royall retinewe raked the forwarde.  
 On this side Bosworth in a bancke the bred forth their standards  
 With a dragon full derffe, that dred was sone after, 25

3 masked MS. 5 a ] om. MS. 6. alyes MS.  
 17 few MS 25 dred ] adread P; sone ] ther P.



Rayled full of redd roses and riches enoughe.  
 There he bekered with a bore that doughtie was called,  
 Richard, that rich Lorde, in his bright armour;  
 He kidde himself no cowarde, for he was a king noble.  
He fought full fuerslye his formen amonge, 30  
 Till all his bright armour was blodye beronen,  
 For he would not flie for feare of no foe.  
 Thus was he dongen to death with many derffe strokes,  
And cast him on a capull, and carryed him to Liester,  
And naked into Newarke. I will mine him no more, 35  
 But let Drough[t]en deale with all as him dere liketh.  
 Then had Richmond this realme, with all the royall cuntrye,  
 And raigned with royaltie and riches enough,  
 Fully fower and twenty yeeres in this faire lande.  
 He made Frenche men aferde of his fell deedes: 40  
 They paid him tributes many tolde thowsands  
 That they might live in their lande and him their Lord call.  
 But death at him drove that die must he needes.  
 Thus went he forth of this worlde, this worchifull Lord,  
 To the celestiall blisse with saints enough. 45  
 I will meddell with this matter no more at this tyme,  
 But he that is makeles of mercy have mynde of his soule!  
 Then succeded his sonne, a soveraigne most noble,

29 kidde ] held P. 30 he fought ] P, missing in L.  
 31 armour ] P; arm( ) L. 31 was ] was all P. 31 beroven P.  
 32 Whole line missing in P. 33 thus ] then P.  
 33-39 many words illegible in L. 36 Droughen MS.  
 37 had ] said P. 39 24 P. 41 tribute trulie P.  
 44 lord ] missing in P.

That proved was for a prince most peareles of other:  
 That was Henry theight, our most dreade Lorde. 50  
 When his father, that furse freake, had finished his daies,  
 He made Frenche men aferde, and faire him besoughte  
 That he would take their tributes, and tene them no further;  
 But he nicked them with nay, and none of yt woulde,  
 For he would see under their signorie some of their sure townes.  
 Thus he graythes him godly with a greate oste,  
 Fullie fowertie thowsande, that fuerse was in armes,  
 For to fare into Fraunce at theire free will.  
 Then left he in this land a lede that was nouble:  
 Of Surrey that sure Erle, the saddest of all other, 60  
 As Lord and Levetenaunt to looke this land over  
 Yf any aliaunt in his absence durst aventure himself  
 To visite or invade his most valiant realme.  
 Then he dressed him to Dover, our most dred King,  
 With many leedes of this land - our Lord geve them joye! 65  
 Of Buckingham that bold Duke, he was a burne noble;  
 And of Derby that deare Erle, that doughtie hath bene ever;  
 And Shresburie, the sure Erle, the saddest of all other:  
 As a warriour full wise he wyndeth with the vawarde;  
 The noble Erle of Northumberland with others full manye, 70  
 The wynd at their will, wrought as they liked.

49 for ] om. P. 53 tribute P. 53 tene ] traine P.  
 55 sure ] fayre P. 57 full 15 P. 63 his ] our P.  
 65 leedes ] lordes P. 66 Duke bold P. 67 that ] the P.  
 67 hath beene doughtie P. 68 the sure ] that sure P.  
 68 other ] P, missing in L. 69 wends P.  
 69 the P, missing in L. 71 & wrought P. 71 they ] them P.



Thus the glenten to Calice with greate shippes of warre,  
 And many semely sailes were seene on their masts.  
 When they to Calice come, all this comely meany,  
 Our King, full of couradge, carped theis wordes, 75  
 Calleth his counsell him till to weet of their will  
 On what wise was best his warres to beginne.  
 Some set him to a citie that was sure walled,  
 And told him to Turwin, a towne that was noble,  
 That oft had been assaied both with emperour and other; 80  
 Yet would it never be wonen in warr for no [wee] upon lyve:  
 There was no wight in the world that wyne it ne might,  
 Yt was so deepe dolven with ditches aboute.  
 Then our King, full of coradge, carped theis wordes,  
 Saith, "I will sedge it aboute within this seaven daies, 85  
 And wyne it or I hence wynde - with the helpe of our Lorde,  
 Or leave here my life, le[ed]les, I you heete."  
 Thus he promised to the Prince that Paradice weldeth.  
 There were cariadges with carts and many kene weapons.  
 Oure vaward full valiantly avaunced them selven; 90  
 With trumpetts and taberetts forward they wenten.  
 Beside the towne of Tirwin our tents downe we tilden,

72 P, gleneen L. 72 Cali() L. 73 semely sailes ]  
 a sellcoth saylor P. 74 comen P. 74 comely ] seemly P.  
 75 king ] knight P. 75 of ] om. P. 75 carpeth P.  
 76 calleth to his counsell to witt their wills P.  
 77 warre P. 79 to ] of P. 80 that ] & P. 80 both ] om. P.  
 81 wonen ] woone P. 81 wee ] weede L, way P. 81 upon ] on P.  
 81 lyve ] lyre L, live P. 82 the ] this P. 82 ne ] nay P.  
 83 delven P. 85 sayes P. 86 and ] or P.  
 86 wynde ] win P. 86 helpe ] leave P. 87 letees L, lords P.  
 87 heete ] sett P. 88b missing in P. 90 Oure vawarde ]  
 Then they waward P.



And sedged it surely on sides all aboute,  
 And many a gaping gunne was girde to the walles;  
 There they fell at the first shotte, many a fell fothir 95  
 Of stones that were never stirred - so stoutlie they shotten.  
 Now leve we our King lying at the sedge,  
 And carpe of the Frenche King - care him behappen!  
 When he heard how unkindly his townes they were halched,  
 He piked him to Parice for things that might happen. 100  
 There called he his counsell for to knowe their myndes  
 On what wise was best to worcke his warres to beginne:  
 He durst not counter with our King, he was so kene holden,  
 For all the glaring goulde under God of heaven.  
 Then his counsell full kenely carped in this wise, 105  
 Saith, "Make furth a messenge to the mighty King of Scotts,  
 And proferre him a present all of pure goulde,  
 And byd him enter into England and aunter himselven:  
 He may wyne it in warre and welde as him liketh:  
 There are no ledes in that lande to looke him against: 110  
 All bene faren into Fraunce that fayre were in armes:  
 But milners and massepreists there bene no men ells."  
 Then the King called an erle that was a lord noble:

93 all sides P. 94 & ] om. P. 95 there they ] where there P.  
 95 at ] of P. 95 fooder P. 96 of ] that P.  
 96 never ] new P. 96 so ] for P. 97 the ] this P.  
 100 piked ] hyed P. 102 on ] or P. 103 counter ] venter P.  
 104 gloring P. 104 the God P. 105 in ] on P. 106 says P.  
 108 venter P. 109 warre P, ware L. 109 weld it P.  
 110 are ] is P. 110 in that lande ] missing in P.  
 110b missing in P. 111 bene ] were P. 111 fayre P, proved L.  
 112 But ] saue P. 112 preists ] missing in P.  
 112b missing in P. 113 was ] wold P.

Sir de la Mote, that dere Duke, that doughtie was ever.  
 He bid buske and bowne him to go on his message: 115  
 He was as wise of his wordes as any [wee] ells.  
 Then that knight full curtislye kneled to the grounde,  
 Sayeth, "I am bowne to goe, as ye bid me woulde,"  
 And tooke his leave of the King, and the letter he taketh,  
 Shott into a sure shipp, and shoggeth over the water 120  
 Into Scotland, I you heete, and there the King findeth,  
 And proffered him a present of poundes many thowsand  
 For to wynde to that warre and weld as him liketh,  
 And enter into England, and weld yt for ever:  
 There is no lede in that lande to looke him against: 125  
 All bene faren into Fraunce that fuerse were in armes.  
 The King was glade of that golde that the gome brought,  
 And promised him full pertly his part for to take,  
 That his cossen, the Frenche King, full sone should yt knowe.  
 The sumoned he his sedges in sondry places, 130  
 That they should be at Blacator in their best weedes,  
 By the viii<sup>th</sup> day of August to knowe their Kings mynde.  
 They come at his comaundement, kettricks full many:  
 From Orkenche, that strange ile, there came a greate oste;

114 delamont P. 114 was doughtie P. 115 bid ] bad P.  
 115 buske him P. 116 was ] wold P. 116 wee ] were L, way P.  
 118 saies P. 118 bound P. 118 me bid P. 119 the letter ]  
 a better P. 120 shott ] shoggs P. 120 shoggeth ] shoggs P.  
 121 heete ] to hett P. 122 many a P. 123 weld ] worke P.  
 125 lede ] lord P. 126 bene ] were P. 127 the gome ]  
 he gan P. 129 full ] om. P. 130 summons P. 130 sedges ]  
 soeged P. 131 should be ] byde should P. 131 best weedes ]  
 missing in P. 132a missing in P. 133 there came P.  
 134 Orkney P. 134 strange ] missing in P.



From Galaway a gay lord      with a greate meany;      135  
 All Scotland theder come      to knowe their Kings mynde:  
 Many Scotts and kettericks      bowed to his hande.  
 Suche an ost of that nation      was never sene before:  
 Their names were nombred      to nyne score thousande  
 Truly, by their owne tounge,      as it was tolde after.      140  
 Then they light at a lotte,      the King and his lordes,  
 That the mightie Lord Mackesfelde      should move them before  
 With tenne thowsand by tale      that were tried of the best,  
 To see whether any sedge      durst sett him against.  
 Thus they rested in that realme, the ri[nck]s all togeder,      145  
 Till the heard of that [hattell],      how yt with him happed.  
 Then he bowneth him boldlie      over the brode waters,  
 And manly him marketh      to the mylne feild.  
 He robbes like a rebell,      the right him against,  
 But all light on his ledes      at the later ende,      150  
 For killed they were like caitives,      as ye shall heare after.  
 When the comons of the country      of there com[ing] wisten,  
 Then fledde they for feare,      soe cruelly the ferden,  
 & made a wee to wynde      to tell my Lord Dakers  
What mischeefe the fomen made      in the marche endes;      155

136 came P.      140 tounge P, towne L.      142 Maxwell P.  
 142 move P, meane L.      144 sett P, sitt L.      145 they ] he P.  
 145 rincks ] knights L, riggs P.      146 hattell ] battaile L,  
 missing in P.      146 happed ] missing in P.      148 marcheth P.  
 149 robbeth P.      150 ends P.      152 there ] this P.  
 152 coming ] comon PL.      153 for ] missing in P.  
 153 the ] missing in P.      154 & made a w ] P, missing in L.  
 154 to wynde ] om. P.      155a P, missing in L.



But he kepeth him at Carleile, and kere woulde no further:  
 He would not medle with this me[any] for no mans will.  
 Then a knight of that cuntrey, that knowen was full wyde,  
 One Sir William Bowmer, that bolde hath bene ever,  
 He moveth toward [t]his meany with men but a fewe: 160  
 Not fullie five hundreth that the freake followed.  
 Then mett he with a man that had foure hundreth:  
 Yt was bold bastard Hearne, that bashed was never,  
 A warriour full wise and wittie of deedes.  
 When they were sumoned and sene, those sedges altogether, 165  
 they were numbered nyne hundreth - that was the highest nomber,  
 And the were X thousand by tale upon the other partie.  
 Full unmette were they matched - Mary them speede!  
 Thus the faren over the feilde there foemen to seeke.  
 Never rest would those r[inck]s, but alway rayled forwarde  
 Till they had sene that sedge that they had sought after,  
 All those s[catell] Scotts, that all the scathe deden.  
 Then nighed the night, that byde must they neden.  
 Every rincke to his rest radly him dressed,  
 Not the mountenance of a myle from their most enemies. 175  
 Sone after dayned the daie, and the dewe falleth;

156 kepeth him ] missing in P. 156 Carleile P, Carl() L..  
 156 at ] in P. 157 this me() L, those men P.  
 158 was knowne P. 159 Bawbener P. 159 hath beene bold P.  
 160 this ] his L, these P. 162 mett ] om. P. 163 bashed ]  
 bastard P. 165 those ] these P. 165 altogether ]  
 together P. 168 unmeete be them P. 169 fared P.  
 169 formen P. 170 rincks ] rangers P, knights L. 171b had ]  
 om. P. 172 scatell ] starlishe L, schachlech P.  
 172 all the ] alwayes P. 173 the night ] they nighe P.  
 173 abyde P. 173 needs P. 174 rincke ] ranke P.  
 174 rudlie P. 174 him dressed ] missing in P. 176 drayned P.

# SCOTISH FEILDE

The sonne shott up full sone, and shone over the hilles;  
 Brydes brayden to the bowes and boldlie they songen.  
 It was a solace to see for any sedge living.  
 Then every burne full boldly bowneth him to his weapon; 180  
 Full radly in array royallie them dressed.  
 Our Englishmen full egerly attilde them to shoott,  
 Skochen the cruell Scotts with their kene arrowes.  
 Many a horse in that heape hurlde down his maister.  
 Then they fetteled them to flye, as false be they ever. 185  
 That serveth not, for sothe, who so trulie telleth.  
 Our Englishmen full egerly fast followed after,  
 And tooke prisoners prest, and home againe wenten.  
 There were killed of the Scotts moe then xii scower,  
 And as many prisoners were put to their ransome. 190  
 Thus were they beaten at the first braid, all that brawling  
 [people,  
 And likewise in the later ende, as ye may heare after.  
 Then the mightie Lord Mackesfeld over the mountaines fleethe,  
 And kyred to his King with carefull tithindes,  
 Telleth him the truthe, and tarieth he no longer, 195  
 Sayeth, "I am beaten back, for all my bigge meany,  
 And there bene killed of the Scotts I knowe not how many."

177 hilles ] fields P. 178 bradd P. 180 weapons P.  
 182 egerly ] merrilye P. 183 skochen ] & shotten P.  
 184 seape P. 185 be ] beene P. 187 men full egerly ]  
 missing in P. 187 after ] missing in P. 190 many ]  
 many more P. 193 Maxwell P. 193 flees P. 194 to his ]  
 missing in P. 194 careful tithindes ] missing in P.  
 195 he ] om. P. 196 my P, his L. 197 killed of ]  
 missing in P.



Then the Scottishe Kinge full nighe his witt wanteth,  
 And saide, "On who was thou mached, man, by the sooth?"  
 And he promised him pertely they passed not a thousand. 200  
 "Ye bene cowards," quod the Kinge, "care mote ye happen!  
 I will wynde you to wreke, wees, I you heete,  
 And, lying within that land the length of three weekes,  
 Dstroy all aright that standeth me before."  
 Thus he promised to the Prince that Paradice weldeth. 205  
 Then he sumoned his sedges and set them in order.  
 The next way to Norham anone then he taketh;  
 He umclosed that castell clene round aboute,  
 And they defended fast, the folke that were within.  
 Without socour come sone there sorow is the more! 210  
 The Erle of Surrey himself at Pomfret abideth,  
 And heard what unhapp all those harlotts didden;  
 He made letters boldlie all the land over:  
 Into Lancashire belive he caused a man to ride  
 To the Bishopp of Eley, that bode in those parts, 215  
 Curteslie commaunded him, in the Kings name,  
 To somon the shire and set them in order.  
 He was put in more power then any prelate ells.  
 Then the Bishop full boldlie bowneth furth his standart

198 witt wanteth P, wanted wytte L. 199 the P, thy L.  
 199 sooth P, southe L. 200 and ] om. P. 201 cowards ]  
 cravens P. 202 I will ] but Ile P. 202 wreke ] worke P.  
 202 wees ] wayes P. 202 heete ] sett P.  
 203 and lying ] along P. 204 Dstroy ] And dstroy P.  
 208 enclosed P. 212 and ] he P. 212 unhappiness P.  
 212 all ] om. P. 212 those ] these P. 212 scarlotts P.  
 213 letters boldlie ] missing in P. 214 into P, in L.  
 214 to ] om. P. 219 full ] om P.



With a captain full kene, as he was knowen after. 220  
 He made a wee to wynde to warne his dere brother  
 Edward, that egar knight, that epe was of deedes,  
 A stalke of the Standles, stepe of himselven.  
 Then full radlie he rayseth rincks tenne thousandes;  
 To Skypton in Crane then he come belive. 225  
 There abideth he the banner of his dere brother  
 Till a captaine with it come that knowen was full wide:  
 Sir John Stanley, that stowte knight, that sterne was of deedes,  
 With foure thousand furse men that followed him after.  
 They were tenants that they tooke, that tenden on the Bishopp,  
 Of his houshold, I you hete, hope ye no other.  
 Every burne had on his breast, browdered with goulde,  
 A fote of the fairest foule that ever flowe on winge,  
 With 3 crownes full cleare, all of pure goulde.  
 Yt was a semely sight to see them togeder: 235  
 Fowrtene thousand egill feete feteled in araye.  
 Thus they costen throw the cuntrey to the New Castell;  
 Proclamation in that place was plainely declared  
 That every hatell should him hie, in hast that he might,  
 To Bolton in Glendowre, all in godly haste. 240  
 There mett they at a muster men many thousande,

220 he ] it P. 221 wee ] way P. 222 epe P, rape L.  
 223b of ] upp P. 224 readilye P. 224 rincks ] knights P.  
 224 thousand P. 225 he come ] the comen P. 227 come ]  
 came P. 230 that they tooke ] to the booke P.  
 230 tenden on ] tended P. 231 of ] and of P. 231 ye ] you P.  
 231 no ] none P. 232 with goulde ] full fayre P. 233 flew P.  
 234 3 P, their L. 239 hatell ] battell P. 241 at ] om. P.  
 241 men ] then P. 241 many ] many a P.

With knights that were kene, full well knowne in their cuntrey,  
 And many a lovely lorde upon that land light.  
 Then the moved towards the montains those meany to seche,  
 Those skatell Scotts, that all the scath diden. 245  
 They would never rest, but alway raked forward  
 Till they had sene the sedges that they had sought after;  
 But they had gotten them a ground most ungracious of other  
 Upon the toppe of a high hill, I hete you for sothe.  
 There was no wee in this worlde might wynd them againe 250  
 But he should be killed in the cloes or he could clymbe the  
 montains.  
 When the lordes had on them loked as long as them liked,  
 Every captaine was commaunded their companie to order.  
 Though we were bashed of theis burns, I blame us but littell.  
 Then we tild downe o[u]r tents, that told were a 1000. 255  
 At the foot of a fine hill they fettled them all night.  
 There they lyen & lodged the length of 4 daies,  
 Till every captaine full keenlie callen to their lords,  
 Bid them [f]ettle them to fight or they wold fare homeward:  
 There company was clemmed and much cold did suffer; 260  
 Water was a worthy drinke, win it who might.  
 Then the Lord Lieuetenant looked him about,  
 And boldly unto battell busked he his meanye.

242 full ] om. P. 243 light ] hight P. 244 mountaine P.  
 244 those ] these P. 245 scattered P 245 the ] they P.  
 246 raked P, dayled L. 250 wee ] way P. 251 in the ] om. P.  
 251 could clymbe ] climbed P. 251 mountaine P.  
 252b missing in P. 254 were ] are P. 255 - 277 P,  
 missing in L. 255 over MS. 259 settle MS.



The Lord Howard, the hende knight, have shold the vanwarde,  
 With 14,000 feirce men that followed him after; 265  
 The left winge to that ward was Sir Eward Howarde:  
 He chose to him Cheshire - theire chance was the worse -  
 Because they knew not their captaine theire care was the more,  
 For they were wont att all warr to wayte uppon the Stanleys.  
 Much worshipp they woone when they that w[ee] served, 270  
 But now lanke is their losse - our Lord itt amend!  
 The right wings, as I weene, was my Lord Lumley,  
 A captaine full keene, with St Cutberds banner;  
 My Lord Clifford with him came, all in cleare armour;  
 Soe did Sir William Percy, that proved was of deeds; 275  
 And Sir William Bawmer, that bold hath beene ever,  
 With many captaines full keene, who soe knowes their names.  
 And yf I reckon the rewarde, I rest must to longe,  
 But I shall tell you the best frekes that thereupon tenden:  
 The Erle of Surrey himself surelie it guided; 280  
 The Lord Scroupe full comely, with knights full many;  
 Yf ye would witt the wings that to that ward longed,  
 That was a bishop full bolde, that borne was at LATHUM:  
 Of Ely that ylke Lorde, that epe was of deedes,  
 An egg of that bold Erle that named was Standley, 285  
 Nere of nature to the Nevills, that noble have bene ever;  
 But now death with his dart hath driven him awaye:

270 way P. 279 frekes ] tokens P. 279 tended P.  
 281 the ] & the P. 282 Yf ye ] he P. 282 wing P.  
 283 capitals only in L. 284 epe ] eke P.  
 285 an egg of ] & nere of blood to P.  
 285 bold ] om. P. 286 Nevills P, duke L.



It is a losse to the lande - our Lord have his soule!  
 For his witte and his wisdom and his wale deedes,  
 He was a piller of peace the people amonge. 290  
 His servaunts they maie syke and sorow for his sake,  
 What for pitie and for paine my pen doth me fayle.  
 I will medle with this matter no more at this tyme,  
 But he that is makles of mercie have mynd on his soule!  
 The he sent with his company a knight that was noble: 295  
 Sir John Standley, that stoute knight, that sterne was of deedes.  
 There was never burne borne that day bare him better.  
 The left winge to that reward was my Lord Munteegle,  
 With many leedes of Lanchashire that to him longed,  
 Which foughten full fuerslie whiles the feild lasted. 300  
 Thus the reward in aray rayked ever after,  
 As longe as the light daie lasted on the grounde.  
 The the sonne full sone shott under the clowdes,  
 And yt darkened full dymly and drew toward the night.  
 Every ryncke to his reste full radlie him dressed, 305  
 Beten fires full fast, and feteled them to sowpe  
 Besides Barwick in a banck within a brode woode.  
 Then dayned the daie, so dere God it ordeyned:  
 Cloudes cast up full clerely like castells full hie.

289 & his wisdom ] missing in P. 291 syke ] sighe P.  
 296a that ] the P. 298 left P, lift L. 298 that ] the P.  
 299 him ] himselfe P. 300 fuerslie ] freshly P.  
 302 grounde ] land P. 304 the ] om. P. 304 night P,  
 knight L. 305 ryncke ] ring P. 305 him ] he P.  
 306 fettlen P. 307 in ] on P. 308 darned P.  
 308 it ] om. P.

Then Phebus full faire florished out his beames, 310  
 With leames full light all the land over.  
 All was damped with dewe the daysies aboute;  
 Flowers florished in the feildes, faire to beholde;  
 Brides brayden to the bowes and boldly the songen:  
 It was solace to heare for any sedge living. 315  
 Then full boldlie on the brode hills we busked our standarts,  
 And on a soughe us beside there seene we our enemies  
 Were moving over the mountains; to matche us they thoughten,  
 As boldlie as any burnes that borne were of mothers;  
 And we egerlie with ire atylde them to meete. 320  
 Then trompetts full trulie they triden togeather;  
 Many shalmes in that shawe, with their shrill notes.  
 Heavenly was their melady, their myrthes to heare,  
 How they songen with a showte all the shawes over.  
 There was gurding furth of gunnes with many greate stones; 325  
 Archers uttered out their arrowes and egerlie they shotten.  
 They proched us with speares and put many over,  
 That the bloud out brast at their broken harnes.  
 There were swinging out of sweords and swapping of heddes.  
 We blancked them with billes through all their bright armor,

311 leames P, beames L. 312 damped P, dampit L.  
 313 feild P. 316 busked P, bushed with L. 317 soughe ]  
 faugh P. 317 we seene P. 319 were ] was P. 320 and we ]  
 soe P. 321 then ] they P. 322 shalmes ] shames P.  
 322 shawe ] showe P. 322 notes ] pipes P.  
 323 mirth P. 324 showte P, shotte L. 326b missing in P.  
 328 the ] they P. 328 harnish P.  
 329 were ] was P.



That all the dale dynned of their derffe strokes.  
 Then betide a checke that Cheshire men fledden.  
 In wynges with those wees was my Lord Dacars:  
 He fled at the first brade, and they followed after.  
 When their captaine was away, their comfort was gone; 335  
 They were wonte at all warres to waite upon the Standles:  
 They never fayled at no forward that tyme that they were.  
 Now lost is their losse - our Lord yt amende!  
 Many swyers full swiftelie were swapped to the deathe:  
 Sir John Both of Barton was brought from his life: 340  
 A more bolder burne was never borne of woman;  
 And of Yorkshire a yong knight that epe was of deedes:  
 Sir William Warkehoppe, as I wene, was the wees name;  
 Of the same shire Sir William, that was so fuerse holden:  
 Besides Raderam that rinck his resting place had; 345  
 The Barne of Kinderton full kenely was killed them beside;  
 So was HONFORDE, I you hete, that was a hynde swyer;  
 Fullsewise full fell was fallen to the groundes;  
 Christopher Savadge was downe caste, that kere might he never;  
 And of Lancashire John Lawrens - our Lord have their soules!  
 Theis freaks would never flee for feare that might happen:

331 dynn() L, dunned P. 331 of ] att P. 331 strok() L,  
 strokes P. 332 checke P, chicke L. 332 fledden P, f()den L.  
 333 was ] was with P. 335 away ] kered away P. 336 at ] in P.  
 336 upon ] on P. 338 losse ] loofe P. 339 squieres P.  
 339 snapped P. 341 of P, on L. 344 Sir William ]  
 figh will P. 345 rinck ] knight P. 347 capitals only in L.  
 348 Fullshow P. 350 our Lord have ] god have mercy on P.  
 351 feare ] noe feare P. 351 might ] cold P.



They were killed like conquerours in their Kings service.  
 When the Scottes and the ketericks seen our men sketer,  
 They had greate joy of their joyning and jolily came downwarde.  
 Then the Scotts King calleth to him a heralde, 355  
 Biddeth tell him the truth, and tary no longer:  
 Who were the baners of the burns that bode in the valey ?  
 "They are the standarts of the Standles that stand by them  
 selven.  
 Yf he be faren into Fraunce the Frenche men to feere,  
 Yet is his standart in that steede with a styffe captaine:  
 Sir Henry Kighley is called, that kene is of deedes.  
 Sir Thomas Jared, that jollie knight, is joyned thereunder  
 With Sir William Molynex with a manfull meany.  
 Theis freakes will never flee for feare of no weapon,  
 But they will sticke with their standarts in their stele weedes.  
 Because they bashed them at Berwick, that boldeth them the more.  
 Lo, how he baters and beates, the bird with his wings!  
 We are ferde of yonder foule, so fuerslie he fareth;  
 And yonder streymer full streight, that standeth him beside,  
 Is the standart of St [Audrey], trow ye noe other. 370  
 That never beaten was in battaile for burne upon lyve;  
 The third standart in that stidde is my Lordes Mountegle,

352 they ] but P. 354 joyinge P. 354 jolly P.  
 355 then ] om. P. 355 king keenlie P. 355 herrott P.  
 357 burns ] beanes P. 358 stands P. 362b missing in P.  
 363 William Molynex ] missing in P. 364 of no weapon ]  
 that might happen P. 365 sticke ] strike P. 366 bashed ]  
 busked P. 366 bolds P. 367 his ] her P. 370 is ]  
 yonder is P. 370 Audrey ] Tandere L, Towder P.  
 370b P, missing in L.

And of Yorkshire full epe, my young Lord Dakars,  
 With muche pusanee and power of that pure shire."  
 Then the Skottishe Kinge carped theis wordes: 375  
 "I will fight with yonder freakes that are so fuerse holden;  
 And I beate those burnes, the battell is ours."  
 Then he moved toward the montains and manly came downwarde;  
 We mett him in the midway and matched him full even;  
 Then there was dealling of dents, that all the dales ronge;  
 Many helmes with heddes were hewen all to peeces.  
 This layke lasted on the lande the length of fower howers.  
 Yorkshire like yorne men egerly they foughten;  
 So did Darbyshire that day deyred many Scotts;  
 Lancashire like lyons layden them aboute. 385  
 All had bene lost, by our Lorde, had not those leedes bene;  
 But the care of the Skotts increased full sore,  
 For their Kinge was downe knocked and killed in their sight  
 Under the banner of a bishopp: that was the bold Standley.  
 Then they fetiled them to flye as fast as they might, 390  
 But that served not, for sothe, who so truth telleth.  
 Our Englishmen full egerly after them folowed  
 And killed them like catiffes in clowes all aboute.  
There were killed of the Skotts, that told were by tale,  
That were found in the feild, fiftene thousand. 395

373 full epe P, fu()e L. 376 freakes P, fr()ks L.  
 378 mountaine P. 378 manly ] madly P. 380 was there P.  
 380 ronge ] rangen P. 381 hewd P. 383 Yorkshire P,  
 Yorkshippe L. 385 layden ] laid P. 387 care ] race P.  
 388 for ] but P. 391 that ] it P. 394 there P, they L.  
 395 that P, they L.



Lo, what it is to be false and the finde serve!  
They have broken a booke othe to their blessed King,  
And the truce that was taken for the space of two yeares.  
All the Scotts that were scaped were scatered farre asonder;  
The removed over the more upon the other morninge, 400  
And their stoode like stakes and stirre durst no further,  
For all the lordes of their land were laft them behinde.  
Beside Brymstone in a brinck bretheles the lyen,  
Gaping against the mone, their ghosts were awaye.  
Then the Erle of Surrey himself calleth to him a heralde, 405  
Bad him fare into Fraunce with theis faire tithandes:  
"Commende me to our Kinge theis comfortable wordes:  
Tell him I have rescowed his realme, so right required.  
The King of Scotts is killed with all his cursed lordes."  
When the Kinge, of his kindnes, heard theis wordes, 410  
He saith, "I will singe him a souleknell with the sound of  
my gunnes."  
Such a noyse, to my name, was never heard before,  
For there was shott at a shotte a thousand at ones,  
That all rang with the rowte, rocher and other.  
Now is this fuerse feilde foughten to and ende; 415  
Many a wee wanted his horse and wandered home [on] fote.  
All was long of the march men - a mischeffe them happen!

397 blessed | blithe P.    398 for | om. P.    399 farre |  
all P.    401a missing in P.    403 brinston P.    403 bryke P.  
404 guests P.    405 herott P.    406 bad | reade P.  
406 fare | farr P.    408 rescowed | restored P.    410 of P,  
om. L.    411 knell P, kn() L.    412 a noyse | awise P.  
415 fuerse | ferle P.    416 on | one L, a P.    417 marx P.



He was a gentilman, by Jesu, that this jest made,  
Which said but as ye see, for soth, and no other.

At Baguley that burne his biding place he had; 420

His auncetors of old time have yerded their longe,

Before William Conquerour this countrey inhabited.

Jesue bring them to thy blisse, that brought us forth of bale,

That have hearckened me here, and heard well my tale.

419 said ] say P. 419 ye see ] he sayd P. 420 bidding P.  
420 he ] om. P. 421 his ] & his P. 421 old P, long L.  
422 inhabited ] did inhabitt P. 423 them to thy ] us to P.  
424 have ] hath P. 424 and ] or P. 424 well ] om. P.

THE FOURTH POEM :

F L O D D E N   F E I L D E

# FLODDEN FEILDE

Nowe lett us talke of the mounthe of Floden,  
 Forsothe suche is our fortune and chaunce;  
 And lett us tell of what tythandes the Earle of Surrey  
 Sent to our Kynge into Fraunce. 4

The Earle he hathe a wryting made  
 And surlye sealed yt with his hande.  
 From the Newcastell upon Tyne  
 The herott passed from the land; 8

And after at Calyce he aryved  
 Like a nowble leede of great degree,  
 And then to Tyrwyn sone he hyed:  
 There he thoughte to have founde Kynge Henry; 12

But there the walles were beaten downe,  
 And our Englishe sowdiers therin layne.  
 Sythe to Torney the way he nome,  
 Wher as laye the Emperour of Almayne;  
 And there he founde the Prynce of England -  
 Blessed Jesu preserve that name! 18

1 take S. 1 the ] om. P. 2 fortune and ] om. P.  
 3 of ] om. P. 3 tythaunce S, tydings P. 6 surlye ] om. P.  
 6 his owne P. 8 (and throughout the poem) herott ] herald SP.  
 9 at ] to P. 10 leede ]: lorde S. 10 great ] high P.  
 12 Henry our kynge S. 15 nume P. 17 prynce ] king P.  
 18 Jesus SP.



When the herott came before our Kynge,  
 Lowlye he kneled upon his knee,  
 And said, "Christe, Christean Kynge, that on the crosse dyed,  
 Nowble Henry, this day thy speede may bee!" 22

The firste worde that the Prynce did mynge  
 Said, "Welcome, herott, out of England to me!  
 Howe fares my leedes? How fares my lordes?  
 My knyghts and swyers in their degree?" 26

"Here gretteth you well your own leavetenaunt,  
 The honourable Earle of Surrey:  
 He byddeth you in Fraunce to venter your chaunce,  
 For slayne is your brother, Kynge Jame,  
 And at lovlye London yee shall hym fynde,  
 My comlye Prynce, in the presence of the." 32

Then bespeke our comlye Kynge,  
 And said, "Whoe did fighte and whoe did flee?  
 And whoe bare them beste upon the Mounthe of Floden?  
 And whoe was false and whoe was true to me?" 36

20 kneled upon ] fell downe on P. 22 Noble King P.  
 26 and ] my P. 26 esquiers SP. 29 bidds P.  
 30 (and throughout the poem) James S. 31 yee ] you P.  
 33 bespake SP. 34 and (1) ] om. P. 35 bare ] bore P.  
 35 them ] him SP. 35 upon ] of P.

"Lancashire and Cheshire," said the messenger,

"Cleane they bene bothe fledd and gone.

There was never a man that longed to the Earle of Derbye

That durste looke his enemye upon." 40

Still in a studye stoode our nowble Kynge,

And he toke the wryting in his hande.

Shortlye the sealle he did uncloose,

And radly red as he yt founde. 44

Then bespeake our nowble Kynge,

And he caled upon his chevallrye,

And said, "Whoe will feche me the Kinge of Man,

The honourable Thomas, Earle of Derbye? 48

"He may take Lancashire and Cheshire bothe,

That he hath caled the cheefe of chevalrye!

Nowe falslye are they fled and gone:

Not one of them is true unto me." 52

Then bespeke Sir Rauphe Egerton, the knyghte,

And lowlye kneled upon his knee,

And said, "My Sovereigne Kynge Henrye,

Yf it like you, my Sovereigne Lorde, to pardon me: 56

38 bene ] be SP. 38 bothe ] om. P. 39 belonged S.  
 40 enemyes SP. 41 studye ] stand S. 42 he ] om. P.  
 44 redely S, readilye he P. 44 yt ] om. P. 44 founde ]  
 toulde S. 45 bespake SP. 45 nowble ] comlye P.  
 46 he ] om. P. 49 Cheshire and Lankeshire S.  
 49 bothe ] om. P. 50 the cheefe P. 52 not ] never a P.  
 52 unto ] to P. 53 bespake SP. 55 kynge ] Lord King P.  
 56 you ] MS your (corrected to you). 56 yf ] and S.  
 56 my Sovereigne Lorde ] your grace P.

"Yf Lancashire and Cheshire bene fled and gon,  
Of those tythandes we may be unfayne:  
But I dare laye my lyve and lande  
Yt was for wante of their captayne: 60

"For yf the Earle of Derbye our captayne had bene,  
And us to leade in our arreye,  
Then noe Lancashire man nor Cheshire  
That ever woulde have fled awaye." 64

"Soe yt proved well," said our nowble Kynge,  
"By hym that dearlye dyed on tree!  
For nowe, when we had the greatest neede,  
Falslye then served they to me." 68

Then spake Wylliam Breerton, knyghte,  
And lowlye kneled his prynce before,  
And said, "My sovereigne Kynge Henry theighte,  
And your Grace sett by us soe lytill store, 72

"Whersoever ye come in feilde to feighte,  
Sett the Earle of Derbye and us before.  
Then shall ye see whether we fighte or fllee;  
True or falsse whether we be borne." 76

57 bene ] be SP. 58 (and throughout the poem)  
tydings SP. 63 man nor Cheshire ] nor Cheshire mene S.  
64 that ever woulde ] wold ever S. 66 on ] upon a P.  
67 for ] om. P. 67 greatest ] most P. 68 then ] they P.  
68 they ] them P. 72 and ] if P. 73 ye ] you SP.  
73 feilde ] any feild P. 75 ye ] you P.  
76 we be borne ] that wee are S.



Compton rowned with our Kynge anon,  
 Said, "Goe we and leave the cowards righte!"  
 "Here is my glove," quoth Egerton,  
 "Compton, yf thou be a knyghte. 80

"Take my glove and with me feighte  
 Man to man, yf thou wylte turne agayne;  
 For yf our Prynce were not present righte,  
 The one of us two shoulde be slayne, 84

"And never a foote besyde the ground gon  
 Untyll the one dead shoulde bee."  
 Our Prynce was moved there at anon  
 And returned hym righte tenyslye; 88

And to him came one the other syde  
 The honourable Earle of Derbye  
 And, when he before our Prynce came,  
 Lowlye he kneled upon his knee 92

And said, "Jesu Chryste, that on the crosse dyed,  
 This day, nowble Henry, thy speede maye bee!"  
 The firste wurde that our Kynge speake  
 Said, "Welcome, Kynge of Man and Earle of Derbye! 96

77 rounded S. 77 anon-] om. S. 78 said ] sayenge S,  
 & said P. 79 glove to thee P. 83 wright P.  
 85 a ] S, om. HP. 88 tenyslye ] angerly S.  
 89 syde ] hand P. 92 he lowlye P. 93 dyed SP, deed H.  
 95 sayde S, did speake P. 96 said ] was S.

"Howe lykeste thou Lancashire and Cheshire bothe,  
Which was cownted cheefe of chevallrye?  
Falsly are they fled and gon:  
Never one of them ys true to me." 100

"Yf that be soe," said the Earle then,  
"My Leige, therof I am not fayne.  
My comlye Prynce, rebuke not me:  
I was not there to be their captayne." 104

"Yf I had bene their captayne," the Earle said then,  
"I durst have layed bothe lyffe and land  
He never came out of Lancashire nor Cheshire  
That woulde have fled a foote beside the grounde." 108

"But yf yt like your nowble Grace  
A lytill boune to graunte yt me,  
Lett me have Lancashire and Cheshire bothe -  
I desyre noe more helpe trulye." 112

"Yf I fayle to bren up all Scotteland,  
Take and hange me upon a tree.  
I shall conquer all to Parys gate,  
Both the comlye castylls and towers heigh." 116

97 Cheshire and Lancashire SP. 98 was ] were P.  
99 nowe ] om. P. 100 Never ] Never a S, & never a P.  
100 of them ] om. P. 101 then] free P. 108 a foote ]  
om. P. 110 yt ] to S. 111 me ] my H (corrected to me).  
113 bren ] burne P. 114 take me P. 115 I, I P.  
115 all ] om. P. 115 gates S. 116 the ] om. P.

"Where as the walles they bene soe stronge,  
Lancashire and Cheshire shall beate them downe."

"By my fathers sowle," then said our Kynge,

"And by hym that dyed on the roode, 120

"Thou shalte never have Lancashire and Cheshire righte  
At thine owne obedyence for to be.

Cowards in a feilde fellye will feighte

Agayne to wynn the victory." 124

"We were never cowards," said the Earle,

"By hym that derlye dyed for me!

Whoe broughte in your father at Melforde Haven ?"

(Kynge Henry the Seaventh, forsothe, was hee.) 128

"Throughe the towne of Fortune we did him brynge,

And soe conveyed hym to Schrewesburye,

And soe we crowned hym a nowble kynge,

And Richard that day we demed to dye." 132

Our Prynce was greatlye moved at that worde

And returned hym hastelye in same.

To comferte the earle came on the other syde

The doughtye Edward, Duke of Bokingham: 136

121 and ] nor P. 123 freely S. 125 coward S.  
126 for me ] on tree P. 130 the towne of Shrewsbury S.  
131 we ] om. P. 134 in same ] on the same H (corrected),  
uppon the same S, againe P. 135 syde ] hande P.



"Plucke up thy harte, brother Standley,  
And lett noe thyng greve the,  
For I dare lay my lyffe to wedde  
Yt is a false wryting of the Earle of Surrey: 140

"Synce Kynge Richard feylde he never loved the,  
For thyne uncle slewe his father there,  
And dearlye demed hym to dye.  
Sir Christofer Savage his standarte away did beare." 144

"Alas, brother," said the Earle of Derbye,  
"Woe be the tyme that I was made knyghte,  
Or were ruler of any land,  
Or ever had manhooe in feilde to feighte! 148

"Soe boulde men in battell as were they,  
Forsoothe, had neyther lorde nor swayne.  
Farewell, myne uncle, Sir Edward Standley,  
For well I wott that thou arte slayne. 152

"Surlie whiles that thy lyffe woulde laste  
Thou wouldest never schunte besides the playne;  
Nor Sir John Standley, that childe soe yonge,  
Well I wott nowe that thou arte slayne. 156

140 Duke S. 141 Richards S. 142 there ] deare P.  
144 away ] always P. 153 that ] om. P. 154 schunte ]  
shrinke P. 155 nor ] now S. 156 nowe ] om. P.

"Farewell Kyghley: coward was thou none,  
 Olde Sir Henrye, the goode knyghte!  
 I lafte the ruler of Lathum  
 To be my deputye bothe day and nyghte. 160

"Farewell Towneley, that was soe true,  
 And the nowble Hashton of Mydelton,  
 And the sad Sothewarke, that ever was sure,  
 Farewell - I wott that thou arte gon. 164

"Farewell Hashton under Lyne,  
 And manlye Mollenax, for thou arte slayne,  
 For dowteles whilest your lyves woulde laste  
 Ye woulde never schunte beside the playne. 168

"Farewell Aderton with the leaden mall:  
 Well I knowe thou arte demed to dye.  
 I may take my leave nowe at you all;  
 The flowre of manhooode is gon from me. 172

"Farewell Sir John Boothe of Barton, Knyghte:  
 Well I knowe that thou arte slayne,  
 For whiles thy liffe woulde laste to feighte  
 Thou woulde never [schunte] beside the playne. 176

157 for coward S. 157 none ] never P. 160 my ] om. P.  
 162 the ] that P. 163 Sotheworth S (and correction to H)  
 168 ye ] you P. 168 schunte ] shun P. 169 Anderton S.  
 169 mall SP, wall H. 171 nowe ] om. P. 171 at ] of S.  
 175 for ] om. P. 176 woldeste S. 176 schunte ] om. SHP.

"Farewell Butteler and Sir Bode:

Sure ye have bene ever to me,

And soe I knowe that still you woulde

Unslayne nowe yf you had bee.

180

"Farewell Christofer Savage, the wighte:

Well I know that thou arte slayne,

For whiles thy lyffe woulde laste to feighte

Thou wouldest never [schunte] beside the playne.

184

"Farewell Dutton and Sir Downe:

Ye have bene ever true to me.

Farewell the Baron of Kynderton:

Beside the feilde thou woulde not fllee.

188

"Farewell Seton of Gowsewurthe:

Other thou arte taken or slayne,

For dowteles whiles thy lyffe woulde laste

Thou wouldest never [schunte] beside the playne."

192

As they stoode talking together there,

The Duke and the Earle trulye,

Came to comfort hym the true Talbott,

[The] nowble Earle of Schrewesburye.

196

177 Bolde S. 178 ye ] you P. 179 still ] om. P.  
 180 you had ] that you S. 180 if that unslayne you bee P.  
 181 knighte P. 184 wold P. 184 schunte ] om. SHP.  
 185 Downe ] Dane P. 186 ye ] you P. 188 woulde S.  
 189 Seton ] Fitton SP (and correction to H).  
 190 other ] either P. 191 for ] om. P. 192 wold P.  
 192 schunte ] om. SHP. 195 to ] for to P.  
 196 The ] And the HPS.



"Plucke up thy harte, sonne Thomas, and be merrye,  
And lett noe tythands greve the!  
Am I not godfather to our Kynge?  
Myne owne godson, forsothe, is hee."

200

He toke the Duke of Buckingham by the arme  
And the Earle of Schrewesburye by the other:  
"To parte with you yt is my harme.  
Farewell my father and my brother."

204

"Farewell Lancaster, that lytill towne,  
Farewell now for ever and aye!  
Many poore men may praye for my sowlle  
When they lye weping in the lane."

208

"Farewell Lathum, that bright bower:  
Nyne towers thou bearest on hye,  
And other nyne thou bearest in the utter walles.  
Within the may be lodged kyngs three."

212

"Farewell Knoweslay, that lityll tower  
Under nethe the holtes soe whore:  
Ever when I thinke on that bright bower  
Wyte me not thoughe my harte be sore."

216

208 lawne H, lane SP. 210 beares P. 211 beares P.  
211 in l on P. 216 white P. 216 thoughe l thoughte S.

"Farewell Tockestaffe, that trustie parke,  
And the fair rever that renneth there beside:  
There was I wonte to chasse the hynde and harte.  
Nowe therin I wyll never abyde. 220

"Farewell boulde Byrkhead: there was I borne  
Within the abbey and that monestrye.  
The sweete covent for me may morne.  
I gave to you tythe of Beeston trulye. 224

"Farewell Westchester for ever more,  
And the Water Gate - it is myne owne.  
I gave a mase the Sergeant to weare  
To wayte on the mayor, as yt is known. 228

"Wyll I never come that cetye within,  
But, sonne Edward, thou maiest yt clayme of righte.  
Farewell Westharden - I may the myn.  
Knyght and Lorde I was of greate myghte. 232

"Swete sonne Edward, white bokes thou make,  
And ever have petye on the poore comyntye.  
Farewell Hope and Hopes Dalle,  
Moulde and Mouldes Dale: God be with the! 236

218 renneth ] runes P. 218 there ] thee S.  
220 I wyll ] will I P. 221 Berkenhede S (and  
correction to H). 224 the tythe SP. 227 weare SP (and  
correction to H), neare H. 227 gave ] give P. 227 the ]  
pro the P. 230 may P. yt clayme ] clayme S, claim it P.  
230 wright P. 233 bokes ] lookes P. 234 cominaltye P.

"I may take my leave with a heavye cheare,  
For within the wyll I never bee."

As they stoode talking togeder there,  
The Duke and the lordes trulye,

240

Came James Garsyde, a yeoman of the garde,  
That had bene broughte up with the Earle of Derbye.  
Lyke the dyvell with his fellowes he had fared:  
He stycked two and wounded three.

244

After, with his sworde drawen in his hande,  
He fled to the nowble Earle of Derbye.

"Stande up, Jame," the Earle said,  
"Theis tythandes nothyng liketh me.

248

"I have seene the daye I could have saved the  
Suche xxx<sup>tie</sup> men yf thou had slayne;  
And nowe yf I shoulde speake for the,  
Sure thou were for to be slayne.

252

"I wyll ones desire my brethren echon  
That they will nowe speake for the."

He prayed the Duke of Buckingham  
And also the Earle of Schrewesburye;

256

237 my ] om. P.    237 heavye ] sorry P.    241 Garsye S.  
244 sicked P.    245 after ] and after S.    250 hads P.  
252 wearte S, weret P.    252 for ] om. P.  
254 nowe ] om. P.



Also my Lord Feighwater soe wyse,  
 And the gude Lorde Wyllabee;  
 Sir Ryse up Thomas, a knyghte of pryce,  
 And all they spake for longe Jame. 260

They had nott standen but a lytyll whyle there,  
 The Duke and the earles in their talking,  
 Streighte to the Earle came a messenger  
 That came latlye from the Kynge, 264

And bad that longe Jame shoulde be send;  
 There shoulde nether be grythe nor grace,  
 But on a boughe he shoulde be hanged  
 In mydest the feylde before the Earles face. 268

"Yf that be," said the Earle of Derbye,  
 "I trust our Prynce wyll better bee  
 (Suche tythandes maketh my herte full heavye)  
 Affore His Grace when that we bee." 272

The Duke of Buckingham toke Jame by the on arme  
 And the Earle of Schrewesburye by the other.  
 Affore them they putt the Kynge of Man:  
 Yt was the Earle of Derbye and non other. 276

257 Fitzwater SP (and correction to H). 259 up ]  
 ap SP. 260 and ] om. P. 260 they all spoke P.  
 261 standen ] stayd P. 263 but straight P.  
 264 the SP (and correction to H), they H. 265 send ]  
 sente SP. 268 amydeste S. 269 be ] be soe SP.  
 271 makes S. 276 non ] noe P.

The Lorde Feighwater he followed faste,  
 And soe did the Lorde Wyllabye;  
 The comfortable Cobham made greate haste:  
 All went with the nowble Earle of Derbye. 280

The hynde Hassall hoked on faste  
 With the lustye Lealand trulye;  
 Soe did Sir Alexander Osboston  
 Came in with the Earle of Derbye. 284

Thy ryall Ratcliffe, that rude was never,  
 And the trustye Trafforde, kene to trye,  
 And wighte Werberton out of Chesshire:  
 All came with the Earle of Derbye. 288

Sir Ryse up Thomas, a knyghte of Walles,  
 Came forthe even with a feirce meny.  
 He bend his bowes on the bent to abyde,  
 And cleane unsett the gallowes tree. 292

When as they came affore the Kynge,  
 Lowlye they kneled upon their knee.  
 The firste wurd that our Prynce did myn  
 Said, "Welcome, dukes and earles, unto me! 296

277 Fitzwater SP. 277 he ] om. P. 281 hynde ] lynd S.  
 281 hoked ] hied S. 283 Osboldstone S. 284 came ]  
 come S. 287 wighty S. 289 up ] ap SP.  
 290 forthe even ] om. SP. 291 bend ] bente SP.  
 292 gallow P. 293 as ] om. P. 293 the ] our P.  
 294 knee SP, knees H. 295 mynge S. 296 said ] om. P.  
 296 duke S. 296 unto ] to P.

"But the moste welcome hither of all  
Is our owne traytour, long Jame.  
Jame, howe durest thou be soe boulde  
As in our presence for to bee ?

300

"To slaye thy brethren within their houlde!  
Thou waste sworne to them and they to the."  
Then began long Jame to speake boulde:  
"My leige, yf it like your Grace to pardon me,

304

"When I was to my sopper sett,  
They caled me cowarde to my face,  
And of their talking they woulde not lett,  
And thus with them upbrayded that I was.

308

"They bad me fllee from them apace  
To that coward the Earle of Derbye.  
When I was lytell and had smalle grace,  
Hee was my helpe and souccoure trulye.

312

"Hee tooke me from my father deare  
And keeped me within his woun  
Tyll I was able of my selfe  
Bothe to shoote and picke the stone.

316

297 But ] om. P. 302 was SP. 304 like ] please P.  
308 I upbrayded was P. 313 me ] om. P.



"Then after, under Grenwiche upon a daye,  
A Scottishe mynstrell came to the  
And broughte a bowe of vewe to drawe,  
And all the garde myghte not stirre that tree. 320

"Then the bowe was gyven to the Earle of Derbye,  
And the Earle delivered it to me.  
Seaven shotts before your face I shotte,  
And at the eighte in sunder yt did be. 324

"Then I bad the Scott bowe downe his face,  
And geder up the bowe and brynge it to his Kynge.  
Then yt liked your nowble Grace  
Into your garde me to brynge. 328

"Sythen I have lyved a merye lyffe  
(I thanke Your Grace and the Earle of Derbye),  
Butt to have the Earle rebuked thus,  
That my brynger up, forsothe, was hee, 332

"I had leaver suffer deathe," hee said,  
"Then be false to the Earle that was true to me."  
"Stand up, Jame," said our Kynge.  
"Have here my charter - I gyve yt the. 336

319 yew P. 324 and ] om. P. 324 be ] flie S (and  
correction in H), breake P. 325-6 The I layd the bowe one  
his face / and bade him gather upe the bowe & bring it to  
his King S; Scott ] added later in H. 328 me ] for me P.  
332 that ] and S. 333 leaver ] rather P.

"Lett me have noe more feighting of the  
Whyles thou arte within Fraunce lande."

"Then one thinge ye muste grante," said Jame,

"That your wurde theron may stand: 340

"Whoe soe rebuketh Lancashire or Chesshire  
Shortelye shall be demed to dye."

Our Prynce comaunded a crye, I wys,

To be proclaymed hastelye. 344

"Yf the dukes and earles knele on their knees  
Yt settethe on sterre the comynalite."

"Yf that we be upbrayded thus,

Many a man is like to dye."

The Kynge said, "He that rebuketh Lancashire or Chesshire  
Shall have his judgment on the next tree." 350

Then soe they were styll at reste

For the space of a nyghte as I wene.

And on the other day, without leassing,

There came a messenger from the Queene, 354

338 Frenche S. 339 ye ] you P. 340 ward P.  
343 prynce ] king P. 343 a ] I P. 346 sterre ]  
and styres S. 347 that ] om. P. 349 or ] & S.  
351 styll ] om. P. 351 at ] in P. 352 as ] om. S.  
356 kneeded S. 356 kneene S. 357 Prynce ] King P.  
358 & thy speed this day may bee P.

And when he came before our Kynge,  
 Lowlye he kneled upon his knee,  
 And said, "Christe the save, our nowble Prynce;  
 This, our nowble Kynge, thy speede may bee. 358

"Here gretteth you well your lyffe and liking,  
 Your honourable Queene and faire ladye,  
 And bydeth you in Fraunce for to be glad,  
 For slayne is your brother in lawe, Kynge Jame,  
 And at lovelye London he shall be founde,  
 My comelye Prynce, in the presence of the." 364

Then bespeke our comlye Prynce,  
 And said, "Whoe did feighte and whoe did flee ?  
 And whoe bare them beste upon the Mounte of Floden ?  
 And whoe were false and whoe were true to me ?" 368

"Lancashire and Chesshire," said the messenger,  
 "They have done the deede with their hande.  
 Had not the Earle of Derbye bene to the true,  
 In great adventure had bene all England." 372

359 greetes S. 359 you ] thee P. 359 your ]  
 thy P. 359 lyffe ] love P. liking ] spouse S.  
 360 your ] & our P. 360 faire ] om. P. 361 for ] om. P.  
 362 in lawe ] om. S. 365 bespake SP. 366 and said ]  
 saying P. 366 flee ] flye S. 367 upon ] of P.  
 368 were ... were ... ] his ... is ... P.



Then bespake our Prynce on highe:

"Sir Rauphe Egerton, my Marshall I make the;

Sir Edward Standley, thou shalte be a lorde:

Yea, Lord Munteigle shalt thou be.

376

"Yonge John Standley shall be a knyghte,

As he is well wurthye for to bee."

The Duke of Buckingham the tythands harde,

And shortlye ran to the Earle of Derbye:

380

"Plucke up thy harte, brother, and be merye,

And lett noe tythandes greve the!

Yesterdaye thy men cowardes called were,

"And this day have wonne the victoriee."

384

The Duke tooke the Earle by the arme,

And thus they leaden to the Prynce trulye.

Seaven rowdes of grounde the Kynge he came

And said, "Welcome, Kynge of Man and Earle of Derbye!

This thyng that I have from the taken

I give it agayne to the whollye:

390

373 on highe ] with an highe word S. 376 Yea ] om. P.

376 thou shalt P. 378 as ] & P. 379 the ] thes S.

379 hard ] righte S. 381 brother ] om. P.

383 cowards were they S, called cowards were P.

384 have ] they have P. 385 the Earle ] him S.

386 thus they leaden ] led him S. 386 trulye ] om. P.

389 this ] the SP. 389 taken from thee P.

390 to thee againe P.

"The Manratten of Lancashire and Chesshire bothe  
At thy bydding ever for to bee,  
For these men bene true, Thomas, indeede;  
They beene true bothe to the and me." 394

"Yett one thinge greveth me," said the Earle,  
"And in my harte maketh me heavye:  
This day to heare they wan the feilde,  
And yesterdaye cowardes for to bee." 398

"Yt was a wronge wryting," said our Kynge,  
"That came from the Earle of Surrey;  
But I shall hym teache his Prynce to knowe  
And ever we come in our cowntrye." 402

"I aske noe more," said the nowble Earle,  
"For all that my men have donne, trulye,  
But that I gyve judgment my selfe  
Of that nowble Earle of Surrey." 406

"Stande up, Thomas," said our Prynce.  
"Lord Marshall, that I shall make the,  
And thou shalte gyve the judgment thy selfe,  
And as thou saiste, soe shall yt bee." 410

391 Manratten ] marshallynge S. 391 bothe ] men S.  
392 ever ] om. S. 392 for ] om. P. 393 those P.  
393 bene ] be S. 394 beene ] be S. 395 the Earle said S.  
398 for ] om. P. 399 our Kynge said S. 402 and ] if P.  
403 nowble Earle ] Earle nowe S. 405 gyve judgment ]  
may be judge P. 405 that I myself his judgement  
maye pronounce S. 408 that I shall ] will I S, I P.  
409 gyve the judgment ] be judge P.

"Then is his lyffe saved," said the Earle.

"I thanke Jesu and your Grace trulye.

Yf my uncle slewe his father deare,

He woulde have venged hym on me." 414

"Thou arte very patient," said our Kynge.

"The Holye Ghoste remayneth in the.

On the south syde of Torney thou shalte stand

With my godfather, Earle of Schrewesburye." 418

And soe to that seige fourthe they went,

The nowble Schrewesburye and the Earle of Derbye,

And they layde seige unto the walles

And wan the towres within dayes three. 422

Thus was Lancashire and Chesshire rebuked

Throughe the polycie of the Earle of Surrey.

Nowe God, that was in Beathlem borne,

And for us dyed upon a tree,

Save our nowble Prynces that weareth the crowne,

And have mercye on the Earles sowle of Derbye! 428

Finis Flowden Feilde

411 Then sayd the earle saved is his lyfe S.

413 yf ] om. S. 415 our Kyng sware S.

416 remaines I thinke P. 417 shall S.

418 Earle ] the Erle SP. 422 within ] in P.

427 Prynces ] Prynce SP. 427 weres S.

428 have ] shewe thie S. 428 Earles sowle ] Earle S.



SOME FAMILY TREES

AND A MAP

## COMMENTARIES

The commentaries attempt to fulfil three functions:

- 1). To discuss textual problems where choices have been made outside the base-text, or where attractive but ultimately rejected alternatives exist in other manuscripts;
- 2). To elucidate meaning at difficult points. This cannot be done with much confidence, particularly in Scotish Feilde, where the syntax is often so unusual (by modern practices) that to render precisely what the lines mean can be almost impossible; but it is usually possible to see what the authors are getting at;
- 3). To provide background information on the people, places and events mentioned in the poem. This will often include details of marriages between the various families of the area, the intention of which is to emphasise the closely bound society which prevailed in the Lancashire/Cheshire area at the time.

Because this geographical and genealogical closeness is so frequently mentioned, the commentaries are preceded by three family trees and a map.

```

graph TD
    A[John Stanley m. Isobel Lathom  
King of Man] --- B[John Stanley, founder of Tynwald]
    A --- C[Thomas]
    B --- D[Thomas]
    C --- E[Douce Legh of Baguley]
    D --- F[John]
    E --- F
    F --- G[HUMPHREY]
    G --- H[Thomas, 1st Lord Stanley]
  
```

```

graph TD
    A[John Stanley m. Isobel Lathom  
King of Man] --- B[John Stanley, founder of Tynwald]
    A --- C[Thomas]
    B --- D[Thomas]
    C --- E[Douce Legh of Baguley]
    D --- F[John]
    E --- F
    F --- G[HUMPHREY]
    G --- H[Thomas, 1st Lord Stanley]
  
```

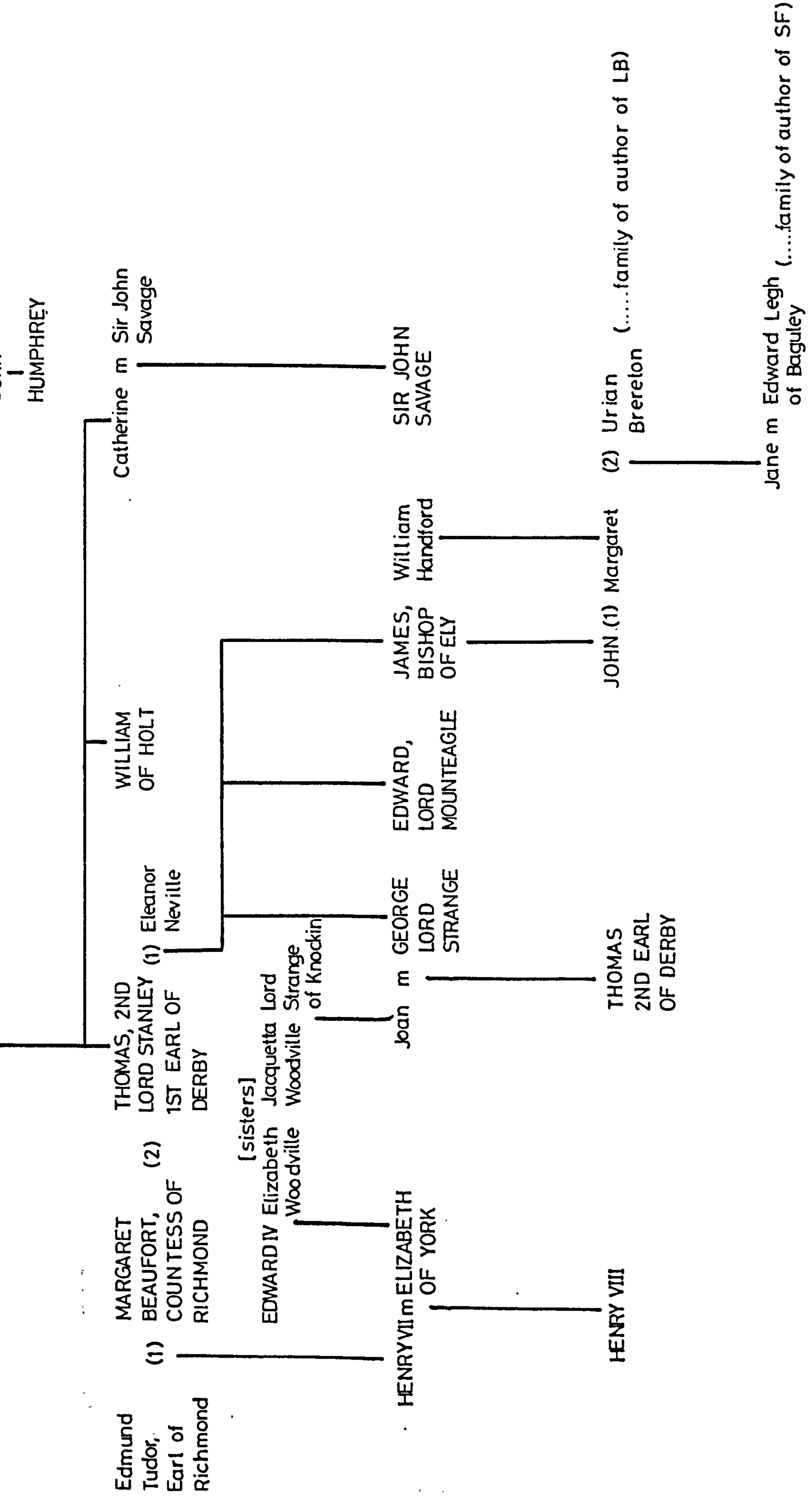
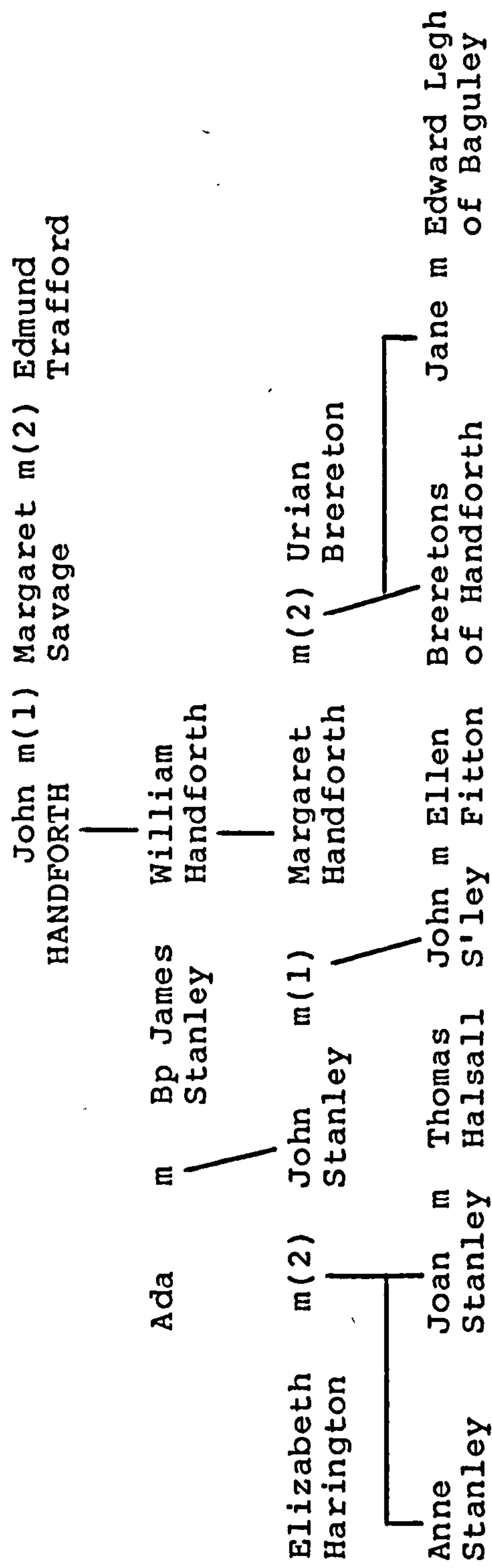






CHART showing the connection between the families of STANLEY and HANDFORTH



## References to above people in Scottish Feilde and Flodden Feilde

Bp James Stanley	S215
William Handforth	S347
Savage (Sir John)	S12, 349, F181
Trafford	F286
Sir John Stanley	S228, F155
Brereton	F69 (and ?author of <u>Lady Bessie</u> )
Halsall	F281
Fitton	F189
Legh	?author of <u>Scottish Feilde</u>

MAP showing the places referred to in the text.





C O M M E N T A R Y   O N

L A D Y   B E S S I E

- 2: blood, bone and ble: This phrase, as with so many in all these poems, is adopted for rhyming, metrical and alliterative purposes rather than for its specific meaning.
- 3: Be sober and sad: The "speaker" wishing to get a hearing, appears to be asking his "audience" to moderate their noise. 'Sad' is a synonym for 'sober' (MED).
- 4: Listen: A clear indication of the oral nature of this poem.
- 5: Lady Bessy: The eponymous heroine of this poem, better known as Elizabeth of York, eldest daughter of King Edward IV. Heywood in his edition (1829, p.viii) erroneously states that her mother was Edward's first 'wife', Lady Grey, but she was the daughter of his 'real' wife, Elizabeth Woodville. She was born in 1466 and died in 1503. Her marriage in 1486 to King Henry VII effectively put an end to the strife between the houses of Lancaster and York. See family tree, p. 273.
- 6: With the large number of "-ee" rhymes, this line is an easy reach-me-down for the poets, and occurs frequently.
- 7: the Earle of Darby: Thomas, 2nd Lord Stanley, born 1435. He married first Eleanor Neville, sister of the Earl of Warwick, and she was the mother of all his children. He then married Margaret Beaufort, the mother of Henry Tudor,

later to become King Henry VII. During the reign of Richard III (1483-1485) Stanley's position was precarious, largely owing to his stepson being a focus of rebellion, and in 1483 he was arrested, along with Hastings; unlike the unfortunate Hastings, however, he escaped execution because, according to the Great Chronicle of London (ed. 1938, p. 231), Richard feared the power of Stanley's son Lord Strange to avenge such an act. In spite of the known collaboration of his wife and sons in Buckingham's rebellion of 1483, Lord Stanley appears to have satisfied Richard that he (Stanley) was not involved. Indeed, Richard tried to court Lord Stanley's favour by making him Constable of England and a Knight of the Garter. It seems, however - and these poems attempt to state quite unambiguously - that his loyalties were with his stepson. His contribution at the Battle of Bosworth (22 August 1485) is a matter of debate: his son, Lord George Strange, was being held as a guarantee of good behaviour by Richard, so Lord Stanley had to tread delicately. Some think that he played a large part in the victory nevertheless, and in both Lady Bessie and Bosworth Feilde we are told that it was he who first entered the battle. At any rate, in recognition of his help and as an encouragement to future support, he was created Earl of Derby on 27 October 1485. He later stood as godfather to King Henry VII's eldest son, Arthur. Lord Stanley died in 1504 and was buried in the family vaults at Burscough, and a monument was erected to



him at Ormskirk.

It is sometimes thought that the title is derived from the hundred of West Derby, where the family home of Knowsley is situated (see Flodden Feilde line 213), but according to the Complete Peerage (ed. Gibbs, V., (London, 1916) vol. iv, pp. 206-7 n.) this is not so, the title being a simple resuscitation of the discontinued earldom from the 14th century. Although the title was not conferred until some months after the battle, the poet always refers to him as Earl of Derby throughout the poem, but this form of anticipation is common: Shakespeare makes the same error throughout his play Richard III. The reason is most clearly explained by N.H.Nicolas (1874, p. lv): "It was usual for early writers to allude to individuals by the designations borne by them at the time they wrote."

See D.N.B., J.Seacome (1793), W.Pollard (1868), D.Ross (1848), B.Coward (1968), P.Draper (1864), F.Espinasse (1874, vol i, pp. 1-49), Bagley (1985). Also BL MS Add 6113 fol 17b; Ricardian 9, p. 13; 19, p. 15; 39, p. 20; 43, pp. 10-11; 69, pp. 218-9 for discussion of his part at Bosworth.

- 8: fair and free: A vaguely commendatory phrase, usually used to describe people rather than words; but undoubtedly its main virtue is its alliteration and its rhyme.
- 9: beginner / ground: Bessy tries to claim that Lord Stanley is under an obligation to her because without the helping

hand of her father the Stanleys would still be 'nobodies'.

10: father: This is clearly a term of respectful endearment no more suggesting actual relationship than Shakespeare's 'coz', a modern trade unionist's 'brother', or even 'mate', and many children today have aunts and uncles who are styled in this way from politeness rather than from relationship. Both Richard III (line 687) and Henry VII (989, 1179) also refer to him as 'father'. D.C.Fowler (1968, p.149) assumes from the evidence of this poem that he really was her father. The nearest relationship between them was that her cousin was married to his son. See family tree p. 273. Henry's appellation was slightly nearer the mark: Lord Stanley was his stepfather.

11: Margaret Richmond: Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond (not Duchess, as is claimed in the next line, although, her father having been Duke of Somerset and she being his heiress, she could perhaps claim the title) and mother of Henry Tudor, the future King. b.1443, d.1509. It was through her descent from John of Gaunt rather than through his father's line that Henry made his claim to the throne. She was married three times: first to Edmund Tudor, second to Henry Stafford, son of the Duke of Buckingham, and third to Lord Stanley. She seems to have been a fairly constant thorn in Richard's side, having been married to the son of the leader of one revolt and to the father of the leader of another.



13: Lord George Strange: Eldest son (of those who survived longer than a year) of Thomas, 2nd Lord Stanley, 1st Earl of Derby, by his first wife, Eleanor Neville. He married Joan, daughter of Lord Strange of Knockin and of Jacquetta Woodville, Edward IV's sister-in-law (see family tree, p. 273). From his father-in-law he inherited the title Baron Strange of Knockin. According to a letter in the Plumpton Correspondence (ed. T.Stapleton, 1839, p. 20), Lord Strange took a leading part in Buckingham's rebellion of 1483, having, so the letter says, 10,000 men in the field. Although this number, like most early estimates of army numbers, is probably exaggerated, it nevertheless suggests that he was a man of enormous influence in the area, and Richard's fear of him (see note to line 7) may well have been justified. As reported in both Lady Bessie and Bosworth Feilde, he was held hostage by Richard III during the Battle of Bosworth and only just escaped execution, but see Ricardian 69 (1980), pp. 218-9 for some doubt on this. He died in 1497 (Heywood, in his edition of the poem (1829, p. 56) incorrectly says 1503) possibly poisoned at a dinner. As he therefore pre-deceased his father, the earldom passed in 1504 to his eldest son, Thomas. See Ross, C.D., (1979, p. 61).

14: that good lady: This seems to suggest that Lord Strange's mother was Margaret of Richmond, Lord Stanley's second wife. All his children were in fact from his first wife;



indeed, if D. Ross (1848 p.13) is to be believed, part of the marriage contract between Lord Stanley and Lady Margaret stipulated that there should be no sexual contact.

15: Harden Lands: This refers to Hawarden nine miles west of Chester. The locals still pronounce it "Harden", and in Chester there is a Harden Street. The claim that the Stanleys received Hawarden from Edward IV is rather dubious: the Inq. P.M. on Sir Thomas (1st Lord) Stanley confirms that the Castle, Manor and Lordship were received by fine from Richard Neville, Earl of Salisbury, in 1455 (Mun 1/15 p.2). That date was under Henry VI, not Edward IV. In 1469, however, the grant was confirmed on the 2nd Lord Stanley by Edward IV (Mun 6/11, p.17), which may be what Bessy was thinking of. See R.Stewart-Brown (1920); Anon, The History of Hawarden (n.d.), pp. 20-21.

15: under your hands: There is clearly a question missing, such as 'Who gave', but once these poets get a series of similar ideas going, the one verb (in this case 'married') will do for all verbs which mean 'did you a service'.

16: Moules Dale: Mold (a corruption of 'Montalt') in the area now known as Clwyd, and the dales surrounding it. The association with the Stanleys is also apparent from Flodden Feilde line 236. Tweddale (1869, p. 39) claims that Mold was first given to the Stanleys by Henry IV, but this grant, like that of Hawarden (see note to line 15), was

also confirmed by Edward IV in 1469 (Mun 6/17, p. 17).

16: under your fee: "into your control".

17: Sir William Stanley: Second son of Thomas, 1st Lord Stanley, and brother to the Earl of Derby. During the Wars of the Roses, William Stanley managed to keep his head whichever side was in power, but was perhaps more inclined to the Yorkists. Certainly he was greatly favoured by Edward IV, who in 1462 gave him extensive lands at Skipton in Craven (CPR 1461-7, pp. 115-6), but see note to Scotish Feilde line 225). It was under Edward IV that he received his lands at Holt, Chirk, and Bromyard. H.T. Evans (1915, p. 210, n.2) says that it was after Buckingham's rebellion in 1483 that he was made Chamberlain of Cheshire, in which case Bessy's claims for him would not be entirely justifiable, but M.K.Jones (1988, p. 4) says that he was made Chamberlain of Chester in 1461. He is generally assumed to have played a major part in the events leading up to Bosworth, and to have swayed the balance of the battle by leading his troops in on Henry's side. As a reward for his services he was appointed Chamberlain of the Household (Patent Rolls 1485-94, 11, pp. 39-40), which is perhaps what is meant when he is referred to in line 11 of Scotish Feilde as the "Lord Chamberlain". (In Bosworth Feilde there is also a reference to the Lord Chamberlain, which is obviously Sir William Stanley again - although a note in Furnivall and Hales' edition (p. 239) insists that



John de Vere, Earl of Oxford is meant. In Lady Bessiye, however, we are told (line 946) that the Earl of Oxford was in France with Henry Tudor, so he could not have been the one referred to.) He later became very rich and powerful, but on 16 February 1495 he was accused of being involved in the plot to make Perkin Warbeck king and was summarily executed. Polydore Vergil, ever loyal to his Tudor sponsors, suggests that William's affections were turned because he thought he should have been better rewarded; but the Stanley historians all prefer to see his execution as stemming from Henry VII's greed for more money and lands.

He had in ready money and plate at his castle of Holt 40,000 marks besides jewels, household stuff and stock of battle, had in lands -3,000 pr.ann. of an old rent, but having aspired to petition King Henry for the Earldom of Chester was not only denied but grew obnoxious to that monarch. His lands and goods were all confiscate to the King.

(BL MS Add 6298 fol 306)

Four months after the execution, King Henry was a guest at Lathom House with the Earl of Derby and was lavishly received and entertained, even if, as legend has it, some employee of the Earl cried out "Tom, remember Will". For the fullest account of his life, see M.K.Jones (1988).

18: Holt Castle: In the area now known as Clwyd, Sir William's main home.

19: Bromfield: M.K.Jones (1988, p. 8) says that he received the Welsh lands of Bromfield and Chirk in exchange for Skipton, and was 'agent' of Bromfield.



- 23: They: In these poems the name of a county often stands for the men of the county, particularly in Scotish Feilde lines 383-385. The suggestion here emphasises the Stanleys' enormous influence in the region.
- 25: Forest of Delameer: The rangership of this forest in Clwyd was given to Lord Stanley in the first year of Edward IV's reign, but in 1473 he passed it to his brother Sir William (CRO DAR/A/3/5).
- 29: knight: Thomas Stanley was made KG in 1483 just before Edward died.
- 31: my father: This time Elizabeth states who her father really is (see note to line 10).
- 32: room: i.e. in that exalted position.
- 33: Richmond: Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, Lancastrian claimant (through his mother - see note to line 11) to the throne, and later Henry VII. He had been forced to flee the country during the Yorkist years, and was, at this time in 1485, residing in Brittany.
- 33: full bare: This phrase is simply an intensifier (MED), useful here for its rhyme.
- 34: lyeth: One of many examples of an abrupt and ungrammatical

change of subject. 1980s sports commentators frequently change subject with the conjunction 'and', but one does not expect such a form as early as in these poems.

34: Brittain: The area we now call Brittany, formerly known as Britain or (as in line 840) Little Britain.

35: recover him of his care: i.e. rescue him from his misery.

36: gree: Another word (= agree) chosen for its rhyme. The sense is "if you are in favour of his cause".

39: mantaine him with might: A phrase common with writers in the alliterative tradition, it means "throw all your power into his cause".

43: make fools full faine: Lord Stanley implies that he is not such a fool as to be made glad by the kind of fair words Lady Bessy is offering.

44: "When the words are revealed as empty promises".

48: lee: among the many forms of the past tense of 'lie' given by the M.E.D. and the O.E.D., 'lee' is not included, although it is used several times in this poem. In fact the writer of this poem uses whatever past tense of 'lie' will accord with his requirement for a rhyme.

49: unckle Richard: Richard of Gloucester, soon to be Richard III, who was in the North of England preparing for an

expedition against the Scots at the time (Polydore Vergil (ed. 1894), p. 173).

50: Brakenbury: Governor of the Tower of London. According to Sir Thomas More he and Tyrrell (see l. 51) were responsible for the murder of the princes.

51: Terrill: vice-constable under Edward IV. Polydore Vergil (p. 188) says that it was he who actually carried out the murder.

52: West Countrey: The area of Stanley influence, which comprises South Lancashire, Cheshire, North Wales and part of Shropshire, which we would refer to as North West Midlands, is nearly always referred to in this poem as the West Country, a title we now reserve exclusively for the South-West. The Stanley area is also referred to as the North (line 484) and the North-West (line 433).

53: York, Clarence: There has often been confusion over precisely whom Richard of Gloucester fetched from Ludlow. In fact it was Edward V and his half-brother, Richard Grey. The common error is to think that it was Edward and his 'real' brother, Richard, Duke of York, but our author gets both wrong: George, Duke of Clarence, was Richard of Gloucester's elder brother (see family tree, p. 273), whom Edward had had executed (in a butt of Malmsey).



56: King: Clearly the poet thinks that Prince Edward was the Duke of York. The title belonged to his younger brother Richard.

free: a survival of the vague alliterative commendatory phrase 'fair and free'. Its vague meaning is probably somewhere near the Chaucerian sense of 'generous-hearted'.

57: "A tragic game was being played."

58: doomed to dye: a common phrase of the alliterative poets, it means not 'sentenced to death', but 'killed'.

61: St Maries: The most famous St Mary's was St Mary Overies (now Southwark Cathedral), but Bessy is probably just using a typical name for any church, her complaint being (like Medea's) that her brothers had not been properly buried. Sir Thomas More records that the princes' bodies were buried at the foot of a staircase in the Tower, where two similar bodies were later discovered, but the identification of those bodies is hotly disputed.

64: disgrace: Their burial was, because not in holy ground, lacking 'grace'.

73: you had cause: = you would have cause.

93: coud me thring: i.e. embraced me.

94: window: This strange phrase may perhaps mean that he took her to some place far from listening ears, but it defies

clear explanation.

108: thy help must be: Here Bessy exerts heavy emotional pressure on Lord Stanley by suggesting that Edward's dying instruction to his daughter was to ensure that Lord Stanley 'helped' her in the family's struggle.

114: prophecy: Edward was apparently a believer in prophecies, and Polydore Vergil (p.197) reports that

A report was even then spread amongst the common people that the King was afraid, by reason of a soothsayers prophecy, and so became incensed against his brother George, which prophecy was that, after King Edward, should reign some one the first letter of whose name should be G.

Shakespeare was aware of this rumour, for he refers to

a prophecy which says that G  
Of Edward's heirs the murderer shall be.  
(I,i,39-40)

The part of the prophecy which says that Bessy shall be Queen is recorded only in this poem.

115: thereto land: The MS apparently reads 'toland', a word not known to M.E.D. or O.E.D. What is needed is some form of wealth to add to the 'tax' (money) and diamonds which must form her dowry when the time comes. Perhaps the line should read 'tax and thereto land'. The word 'thereto' is used to mean "also" in line 1142.

116: to my degree: "as appropriate to a woman in my position".

118: This doom-laden thought occurs again at line 576 when Lord Strange bemoans the changing times.

- 122: commentie: The implication here is that the Stanleys had influence with all levels of society, a point of which Richard III later shows himself to be aware (lines 688 ff.)
- 129: cannot faine: "Women are not very good at pretending" (MED feinen).
- 134: eagle's foot: The original Stanley crest was the eagle and child, after the legend of the rescue of Sir John Stanley's son and the original connection with the Lathom family. It later became an eagle's foot, which is also mentioned in Scotish Feilde line 236. See Bagley (1985, ch. 1) and the Stanley Poem.
- 148: his love: There has been much debate about the suggestion that Richard tried to seduce or marry Bessy: The Croyland Chronicle (quoted Hanham, 1975, p. 52) and the Great Chronicle (p. 234) both agree with her accusations, the Croyland Chronicle stating that
- It became common gossip that the King was bent on marrying Elizabeth at all costs: he could see no other way of confirming himself as King.
- Whether the accusation is true or not has been debated in the pages of the Ricardian (25, p. 4 and 26, p. 11); but that journal is as biased in favour of Richard as Bessy was against him.
- 149: the Queen: Anne, nee Neville, formerly wife of Henry VI's



son Edward, Prince of Wales. She was ill during the early months of 1485, and died in March that year. The rumours of Richard's threat to poison her were taken seriously by Rous, who states (quoted in Hanham, (1975, p. 121) that "Lady Anne, his Queen, he poisoned."

151: his son: Richard's only son, Edward, died on 4 April 1484. It looks as if the chronology is simply wrong in suggesting that Richard offered to get his son out of the way, unless his pursuit of Elizabeth began much earlier than is usually thought, and indeed is stated in this poem: "not three days past" (line 143).

155: or: = before. Also lines 159 and 163.

162: uncle: Bessy is emphasising that, being her uncle, Richard is too closely related to be allowed to marry her. See H.A.Kelly (1967).

162: it is no nay: "There's no denying it."

167: I were: = I would be.

172: The Ile of Man: Like so many other places mentioned by Elizabeth, the Isle of Man was originally given to the Stanleys by Henry IV: On 19 Oct 1405 it was granted to Sir John Stanley for life (CPR (Pat) 1401-5, 253, 400), and on 6 Apr 1406 to his descendants for ever (CPR 1405-8, 201-2).

173: crown: Since 1393 the Lord of Man had been allowed to

style himself King of Man, a custom which continued until it was dropped by the 2nd Earl of Derby. (See Heywood, 1825, p. 65)

179: in a disweare: in doubt as to what to do. For an explanation of the phrase, see A.Way (ed.) Promptorium Parvulorum Sive Clericum, Publications of the Camden Society 25 (1843), pp. 123-4.

188: gifts: Bateman's reading 'gift' must be for 'gifts' but the Bateman scribe does occasionally get his agreements wrong. The plural is more likely because Lady Bessy has been listing several of these 'gifts' that Lord Stanley has received.

192: for fear: Richard's caution out of respect for the Stanleys' military potential has already been mentioned: see note on line 13.

195: these words: Richard's threats to the Stanleys are also mentioned in Bosworth Feilde (lines 201-4). In The Stanley Poem he actually attacks them near Preston. Relations between Lord Stanley and the King must have been precarious.

196: Sandall Castle: near Wakefield, Yorkshire, the property, at the time, of the Dukes of York. Hammond (Ricardian, 39 (1972), pp. 12-13) suggests that owing to the enormous expenses lavished on this castle by both Edward IV and Richard III, they possibly had it in mind as their

principal residence in the North.

197: eagle: See note to line 134.

199: the Talbotts: The family name of the Earls of Shrewsbury. Sir Gilbert Talbot of Sheffield is later seen as one of the main instruments in Richard's defeat. See A.J.Pollard (1968).

204: fain: This line suggests that if Lord Stanley does not move right now, he will regret it later, when he will greatly (fain) wish he had done.

205: your brother: Sir William, see note to line 17.

207: Walsh men: E.W. Jones (1979) has much to say about the Welsh contribution to the Lancastrians' success at Bosworth. Sir William Stanley's Welsh supporters are mentioned on p.46.

209: Sir John Savage: Sir John Savage of Clifton, nephew of Lord Stanley (See family tree, p. 272). The family was also related by a marriage in 1442 to the Leghs of Baguley, one of whom was probably the author of Scottish Feilde. A major contributor to Henry's success, he was awarded lands near Macclesfield, and was made Mayor of Chester. He died at the siege of Boulogne in 1492, as mentioned by Polydore Vergil (p. 59). See Ormerod (1875-82), vol. ii, pp. 713-4.

sisters son: As C.S.Lewis points out (1954, p. 121), the



relationship between a man and his sister's son held special significance for the Anglo-Saxons. Perhaps this significance is echoed here (and in Scottish Feilde line 12).

213: Talbott: Sir Gilbert Talbot, K.G., 3rd son of John Talbot, 2nd Earl of Shrewsbury, and uncle of the 4th Earl mentioned so frequently in Flodden Feilde. He lived at Sheffield Castle (see line 621). He was made Sheriff of Shropshire in 1485 (Hutton (1788, p. 44)). His contribution to the victory, particularly stressed in Lady Bessie, is mentioned in all four poems. See A.J.Pollard (1968).

220: no right: If matters had been as simple as that, there would have been no Wars of the Roses. Certainly Henry VII's 'right' was no more secure, being based on his mother's descent from John of Gaunt, which, at least in those days, hardly counted. Perhaps Bessy wishes to imply that her brothers had a greater 'right' than her uncle.

221: can say: = said, as occurs frequently in all these poems.

224: The first occurrence of this very convenient phrase, which appears several times in all the poems except Scottish Feilde.

228: were: = would be, as occurs frequently.

231: unborne: Lord Stanley means that such an action will have

dire consequences for future generations.

236: no boot: a useless endeavour.

237: Having failed to engage Lord Stanley's support by argument, Bessy now resorts to dramatic and hysterical means - and immediately succeeds. This scene thus has similarities with Macbeth (IV, iii), where Malcolm, wholly committed to MacDuff's pronounced cause but deeply cautious because he knows that double-dealing and spying happen all the time under an unstable regime, refuses all verbal inducements, only admitting his true inclination when MacDuff breaks down and talks of suicide.

255: and/and: 'and' the first time; 'if' the second.

256: bone: In spite of the tempting association between 'death' and 'bone', this clearly means 'boon' or 'gift': Lady Bessy is trying to make Lord Stanley feel responsible for her projected suicide.

266: to women: Lord Stanley repeats a traditional medieval notion of women. Delilah, as a symbol of woman's propensity to elicit and then tell secrets, has been no friend to the feminist cause down the ages.

280: no man to write: The fact that Lord Stanley appears to need a scribe to write his letters for him is perhaps responsible for the assertion by Agnes Strickland (1843, vol iv, p. 12) that he was "illiterate". S. Wilmot

(n.d., vol. i, pp. 192-3) makes the same assertion, adding that the ability to read and write was "rare among the nobility in those unsettled times". It is later implied, however (lines 1021-22), that the Earl can read.

288: Lady Wells: Cicely, daughter of Edward IV, married to Lord John Wells.

291: write and read: This small hint has been taken up and elaborated by historians such as Wilmot (n.d., vol. i, pp. 192-3), who says, "She could read and write English, too, which proved invaluable to her in later years."

297: French: Henry was bi-lingual, and had been living in France for several years. It is not necessary to assume, however, that her communication with him was in French. Her multi-lingual literacy is the point here, not her need to write in French.

301: proceed out: A phrase invented to rhyme with 'out of doubt'.

312: Humphrey Brereton: We meet here Humphrey Brereton, who is possibly the author of the poem (see pp. 46-9).

my true esquire: Lord Stanley quite clearly states that he (Brereton) is his (Lord Stanley's) esquire, and repeats the assertion in line 324, but Halliwell in his introduction (1847, p. vi) says that he was Bessy's true esquire. Furnivall also (1867-8, vol. iii, p. 320) make



the same error, and Firth (1908, p. 25) calls him "an old servant of King Edward's". Halliwell mysteriously adds that he was "in the service of Lord Stanley". Later in the poem (443-452) Lady Bessy appears to refer to him as her man, but she might still have suggested Brereton for the task if he was Lord Stanley's esquire.

314: full tight: another more or less meaningless phrase which fills up the line.

322: disguised: The need for disguise adds to the air of danger and secrecy surrounding the whole venture.

350: Latham Castle: Lathom Castle, near Ormskirk in Lancashire, was the chief home of the Stanleys from the year (1385) of the marriage between Sir John Stanley and Isobel Lathom, until it was destroyed on Cromwell's orders during the Civil War, when they transferred to their present home, Knowsley. The castle is briefly described in Flodden Feilde lines 209-212.

351: his heart did change: This refers to a mysterious illness which caused Lord Strange to return home when they had got as far (on the way to London) as Manchester. In Bosworth Feilde there is a similar incident, also in Manchester, where Lord Stanley fell sick and had to return. Whether these are two separate incidents or a confusion about the same incident is not known.

- 360: a token: This incident, and the three following incidents described in lines 375-390, 399-416 and 423-434 are all included in the letters as 'tokens', that is, incidents of such a personal nature that only the person relating the incident would know of its existence; it therefore guarantees the authenticity of the letter, and such a guarantee was obviously necessary given the treasonable contents of the letter and the known propensity of Richard to send out decoys. Again we see the dangerous nature of the whole undertaking.
- 361: Farnfield: Farnsfield is near Mansfield, but in view of the location of the other two suggested places, perhaps the author meant Farnworth, which is in Lancashire, or even Farndale in North Yorkshire.
- 362: Coopland: Copeland Forest, in the Lake District.
- Kendall: a medium-sized town on the southern end of the Lake District.
- 365: [alw]ay: The MS reads "Bid him lay away watch and ward", which as it stands means exactly the opposite of what is clearly intended here, so an emendation is necessary. 'Watch' and 'ward' are both available as verbs or nouns, which not only helps the emendation, but also may explain the error.
- 366: mynstrels glee: This rather contemptuous reference to the kind of entertainment he might expect to come across on

his journey adds weight to the argument that these poems are not "mynstrels glee" (see pp. 41-49).

373: Sir William: See note to line 17.

376: Delameere: See note to line 25.

378: back sett: M.E.D. provides (meaning 1) the explanation that a set is an area of land set aside for hunting. Presumably there were more than one, and here the 'back' set is stipulated.

381: Darnall Park: in Cheshire.

386: and followed: This, from the sense of the next line, means that it was the greyhound, not Lord Stanley, who was following the hunt.

dree: to suffer hardship (MED 3). If Lord Stanley was lying in a pit while the others were hunting, it certainly was unpleasant.

389: draw out: These words must be spoken to some other relation standing at the top of the moss-pit; but the next line - and the key to the 'token', is spoken to Lord Stanley.

391: Carnarvon, Bew-morris: A further association between Sir William Stanley and Wales. M.K.Jones (1988, p. 6) records that these lands were granted to Sir William in 1469. (Bew-morris = Beaumaris, Anglesey.)



397: Sir John Savage: See note to line 209.

399: since: This conjunction hardly makes sense here: perhaps the adverb "once" is a better reading.

401: his: om. MS.

403: lowly: This is presumably an adverb rather than an adjective!

404: any fee: i.e. any post or lands which would generate some income.

409: [I]: The MS read 'A'. The emendation is obvious.

in Kent: Harley MSS 433 pp. 90-94 records that Sir John Savage was in the Commission of Peace in Kent. For the other gifts, the D.N.B. records that Richard III gave Savage "much preferment".

416: dayley: The implication here is that Sir John is tremendously rich and can live a very comfortable life 'daily' - all thanks to Lord Stanley. So now he can do a favour in return.

418: West Chester: The old name for Chester (of which Sir John Savage was several times Lord Mayor). J.M.Dodgson explains: "As lying more westerly than less distinguished Chesters elsewhere, it was sometimes called West Chester." ("Place-names and Street-names at Chester", Journal of the Chester Archaeological Society lv (1968), p. 29)

421: Talbott: See note to line 213.

425: prest: This is usually an adverb, meaning "quickly", but here is obviously the verb, with the sense of "attacked" (MED).

428: called: 'known to be' (MED): also in Scottish Feilde (e.g. line 27) we have several lines ending 'that doughty was called'.

435: wherefore: As with Sir John Savage, one good turn apparently deserves another: as Lord Stanley had facilitated Talbot's escape from Richard's henchmen (and perhaps even seen him back into public life - which appears to be what line 434 suggests), Talbot can now return the favour.

465: King Edward's daughter: The fact that Bessy introduces herself to Humphrey in this way should put paid to Halliwell and others' contention that Brereton was in her service (see note to line 312).

476: secrett counsell: The Ordinance of Eltham (p.155) says that esquires should be "meete and able to be sent on familiar messages". Humphrey appears to fit the bill.

483: six letters: Lord Stanley dictated only four letters, but Brereton does eventually deliver six. In the Harley and Percy versions of the poem, there are only four letters:

a). Sir William Stanley at Holt

- b). Lord George Strange at Lathom
- c). Edward and James Stanley in Manchester
- d). Sir John Savage and Sir Gilbert Talbot.

That does not solve the problem either, for it does not explain why Sir John Savage and Sir Gilbert Talbot should be found at the same address.

496: better rewarded: This promise, which occurs with each recipient of a letter and later with Henry Tudor, is perhaps similar to the Anglo Saxon scop's constant emphasis on the generosity of kings. If Humphrey is, as has been supposed, the author of the poem, he could here be 'reminding' various members of his potential audience that they promised to pay him better if things turned out all right.

504: forthought it may be: = 'it may be regretted'.

506: coud him away: The most likely explanation is that a word such as 'send' has been omitted here.

514: lately made: This could be a simple error on the author's part, getting Sir William Stanley to say that his brother was made Earl of Derby before Bosworth when in fact it was not until after (see BL Add. 6113 fol. 176); and Henry Tudor apparently repeats the same error in line 644. A far more pleasing solution is that the lines are little asides from the narrator to his audience. This, of course, would greatly enhance the case for the poem's



having been composed very soon after the events it describes.

516: what councell: i.e. How is his present standing with the King? This reinforces the idea that relations between Lord Stanley and the King were always precarious, and people knew it.

526: still in a study: this common alliterative phrase, which means 'stunned into silence', appears also in Bosworth Feilde (line 153) and in Flodden Feilde (line 41). The Percy MS scribe alters the expression to something else every time he meets it.

530: fling: or, as in the Harley MS, sling. There is so little difference in sense that it hardly matters which word one selects.

534: [ye]: The MS reads 'he', but 'ye' is clearly needed. This is not the only time there is confusion between direct and indirect speech.

543: bee hyte: This was possibly copied from dictation by someone who did not recognise the old word 'behight', promise.

- 555: me: This (with 'my' and 'me' in the next line) is one of the sections of the poem where the use of first person pronouns and adjectives suggests that Humphrey Brereton was the author. See pp. 46-9.
- 563: and brought: another abrupt change of subject introduced by 'and' (see also note to line 34).
- 573: under a cloud: Lord Strange is sad that the family's good name will be besmirched, but he has no doubt what he must do.
- 583: if I be able: Lord Strange, as has already been mentioned (line 381) is suffering from some illness which has prevented his completing the journey to London, and he is recuperating at home. His doubt as to whether he will be fit enough to make the journey makes his success even more noble when it happens. (The Harley MS version makes his illness seem more or less terminal, with its reading, "For and I live another yeare". As he lived until 1497, this caution is perhaps unnecessarily pessimistic.)
- 587: light up: indicating that it was not long after dawn.
- 588: the Warden: James Stanley, sixth (surviving) son of Lord Stanley, who was made Warden of Manchester in 1485 (see F.R.Raines, "The Rectors of Manchester and the Wardens of the Collegiate Church of that town", Publications of the Chetham Society n.s. v (1885), 34-44.) He later (1506)

became Bishop of Ely, as which he takes a significant part in the poem Scotish Feilde (see note to line 215 in that poem for later information about him).

Edward Stanley: 5th son of Lord Stanley, later Lord Mouteagle. Like his brother James, he was much more influential in the Flodden campaign, and a fuller note on him appears on Scotish Feilde line 222.

595: either: see note to line 483 for the question of how many letters Lord Stanley dictated and Humphrey delivered.

600: game and glee: another common alliterative coupling, indicating a general sense of well-being.

601: fair fare: In view of all the other greetings from all the other contestants, perhaps this should also be "fair fall", but "fair fare" makes sense.

602: stirr and rise: the phrase used by several of the contestants to mean that Lord Stanley is getting things moving.

603: Buckingham's blood: The first rebellion against Richard had been led by the Duke of Buckingham, and had been heavily supported by both Lady Margaret, Countess of Richmond, and George Lord Strange. Buckingham had been caught (not without a serious attempt at getting away in disguise) and executed in Salisbury on 2nd November 1483. The Croyland Chronicle anticipates this poem by insisting that the plan



to bring Henry Tudor back to England, to marry him to Bessy, and to crown him as King, all stemmed from Buckingham. Whether or not it was his idea in the first place, the Stanleys now see him as a symbol of their opposition to Richard, and therefore want "his blood" to be "wroken". See C.Rawcliffe (1978).

618: turned: Savage appears to think that Lord Stanley has been unadvisedly seduced into this scheme by a "wise" (i.e. devious) woman - but even so, he never thinks about refusing his support.

633: my nephew: Gilbert Talbot seems, for some reason, to be very concerned about his nephew, George Talbot, 4th Earl of Shrewsbury (who was later to play an important role in the poem Flodden Feilde). He asks to be "commended" to him, and then vows to "borrow" him from the Tower if he should happen to have been imprisoned. This precisely echoes Sir William's response when Humphrey first arrived at his house (lines 513-520), and all these poets are very fond of echoes (e.g. Flodden Feilde 33-40 and 365-372), but there is still no obvious reason for the Earl to have been imprisoned by Richard.

644: lately made: See note to line 514.

647: without any dread: As the last of the contestants willingly agrees to sign up for Lord Stanley's cause, it becomes apparent that all these men have a great sense of

loyalty and love for the man they regard as their benefactor and their lord. Lord Strange was ill - but agreed to come; Sir John Savage thought he was ill-advised - but agreed to come; and Sir Gilbert now vows to "live and dye" for him.

657: he: Although the change is not stated, this is obviously Brereton rather than Sir Gilbert.

663: was he warr: = he became aware of.

667: privy twink: This scene depends on that enjoyable sensation experienced when one conversation is interpreted in two quite opposite ways: Lord Stanley asks how his people in the West are, and Humphrey replies that they are in fine form and ready to fight - without saying for whom they are ready to fight. Lord Stanley, who has directed the whole conversation by giving his 'twink', immediately recognises the full import of Humphrey's message, while Richard is also delighted to hear what Humphrey says - for entirely the wrong reason.

677: With no punctuation to guide us, it is possible that this quatrain is still part of Lord Stanley's question rather than Humphrey's answer. It is far preferable to see it as Humphrey's answer because that sets up the irony which would be missing if it were part of the question; but also because exactly the same feature - a reply without any indication like "Humphrey replied" - occurs in lines

729-732 when Bessy asks him how things are down in the West.

684: merry: This introduces more irony into the scene, as Richard now claims the loyalty of the common people; but it is Lord Stanley and not Richard who has (as we have emphatically seen) the ability to inspire loyalty, and not Richard. Furthermore, Richard engages Lord Stanley (lines 687-92) in a peculiarly friendly agreement that the two of them will work together - while all the time Lord Stanley is plotting against his life and his crown.

695: when I am King: This would suggest that Richard is not yet king; "While I am King" would make better sense.

697: task nor mize: Richard vows to impose no hardships on the common people: their love for him is worth more than any money they could pay him. From Richard's mouth, this sententious stuff must be wicked-uncle talk.

712: tell me: Bessy's agitation to know of Humphrey's success is clearly seen by her chatting away and having to ask the question three times before he can get a word in.

719: convince: This must be in the sense of 'defeat', which M.E.D. gives as a possible meaning. It would be an attractive alternative if the word could mean 'to capture or imprison' (from Latin vincio, I bind, rather than from vinco, I conquer), but MED does not support this.



721: bl[o]od: MS reads 'bllod'.

among the Standleys: Perhaps Bessy thinks that some of the Stanleys will turn against Henry and murder him; but it could also mean that she hopes that neither he nor any of the Stanleys will be murdered.

729: third of May: Such precise knowledge supports the contention that Brereton was the author of the poem.

735: prophecy: We have already seen Edward IV acting on a prophecy (line 111), and now it seems Lord Stanley also listened to soothsayers.

738/9: an/and: these are reversed on the MS.

738: an ould inn: S.A.Moore (Hist. p. 114) supposes this to have been the Swan at Golding, which was owned (Close Roll, 13 Edward IV) by Sir William Stanley. If the poet had been aware of this, he would surely have mentioned it.

739: an eagle foot: See note to line 134.

744: This line is missing from Heywood's edition (and Halliwell's, copied from it); but as they printed the poem without stanza divisions, the absence of a line would not have been so easily spotted. As the same formula occurs three more times, it is justifiable to suppose that it was also intended here.

745: The line makes sense as it is, but in view of the

formulaic repetition of lines 755, 765 and 775, it seems probable that "When" is missing here.

752: This line also fails to keep up the formulaic repetition. It just about makes sense, but "Looks towards the West Countrey" is what one would expect.

756: grew: The formula wavers between 'drew' and 'grew' (an indication of dictation?) (see lines 746, 749, 766, 776). They would possibly be better all the same and all as 'drew', but the emendation is not necessary.

787: convince: See note to line 719; here the meaning 'capture' seems even more attractive.

793: Twenty thousand eagles feet: This idea is clearly inspiring to the Stanleyite audience, and is repeated even more vigorously (if in slightly lower numbers) in Scottish Feilde line 236.

800: who doth the most: This (and the same challenge at line 823 and again in Bosworth Feilde line 383) appears at first sight to be a competition between the Stanleys to see who can provide most, but it cannot mean that, for William provides less than his brother, and Edward (line 823) provides nothing at all. What each one means is, "Remember that it is the Stanleys who are your greatest supporters."

812: to [thy love] beyond: The MS omits the words 'thy love',

but sense and rhythm demand something, and to judge by line 808 and the fact that these conversations tend to be almost identical, it appears that 'thy love' are the words omitted.

817: at home: Lord Strange counsels caution. He was not all that keen on joining the venture in the first place (line 573), and now to part with money without an obvious return on his investment seems unwelcome to him.

824: who doth the best: See note to line 800.

831: nineteen thousand pound: from the amounts so far promised, and assuming the mark to be worth 13s 4d, the total is 17,333, 6s 8d. The figures in the Harley MS version are all different and reach a different total.

835: who shall be?: With no punctuation it is impossible to be sure who asks this question: maybe Lord Stanley or one of his supporters; maybe Bessy is asking the question of herself. As conversations frequently exist without announcement of a change of speaker, I have assumed that it is someone else.

841: I dare not: Perhaps Humphrey has never travelled, or perhaps there really were pirates roaming the seas for him to be frightened of. Either way, Humphrey comes out of it well when he eventually agrees to go, and so does Lord Stanley for 'guaranteeing' his safety.



- 855: f[r]aine: MS reads 'faine', to be glad, but a verb meaning 'ask' is clearly required. The failure to read an omission mark would account for this error.
- 857: Lord Lislay: The name is almost certainly a corruption of Lord de Lyle, otherwise Edward Grey, Bessy's uncle by her mother's first marriage: she would probably have known him well enough to take this liberty with his name.
- 862: appoint: This must mean to hire or charter. The point is that he has a perfectly good ship waiting to be used.
- 866: Italians: In spite of the Percy MS reading of this word as "out-allyants", there is no difficulty in understanding it: Lord Stanley is taking the opposite line to Bessy, who wants Humphrey to go as anonymously as possible; Lord Stanley wants to make his presence so clear that the crest on his ship can be seen from the far end of France.
- 873: Liverpoole : The other MSS read 'Hyrpon', but with contractions and misreadings that is not so far away from the same word. Certainly Liverpool is by far the most likely place for Lord Stanley to have berthed his ships, if only for convenience in going to the Isle of Man.
- 875: liart: This word is clearly unsatisfactory: the word 'lyart' means 'grey', or even 'a grey (horse)' but that neither makes sense in context nor rhymes. I am unable to suggest a workable alternative reading.

- 876: he so saild: Humphrey must have sailed at the beginning of July, for there are time-limits to both the beginning and the end of his visit to Brittany. It is reported (line 946) that the Earl of Oxford was there when he arrived, and Polydore Vergil (p. 208) tells us that the Earl fled from Hammes to be with Henry Tudor at the end of June. Humphrey then had to wait three weeks while Henry tried his luck with the French King (lines 963-982), sail back and get everyone ready before meeting up with Henry Tudor a couple of days before the Battle of Bosworth, which was on August 22nd. Things are moving quickly.
- 877: Beggrames Abbey: This is likely to have been Begars Abbey on the North-West tip of Brittany, which, according to Heywood (1829, p. 75), had connections with the Earl of Richmond's estates.
- 883: me: The second section of the poem where Humphrey moves into first person narrative.
- 892: Malpas: The town in Cheshire where the Breretons lived.
- 929: full of skill: Humphrey's conversation does not show any great 'skill', but the word provides a rhyme.
- 935: then: = than.
- fair: = fere, or wife.
- 945: Lord Lee: I have been unable to identify this lord, but it may be that the text is corrupt anyway, for line 948

records that "all three" went "to counsell", and Henry Tudor, the Earl of Oxford and Lord Ferris are three already without "Lord Lee", but this is reversed when in line 963 he takes three lords with him to Paris.

946: The Earle of Oxford: John de Vere, 14th Earl. He was married to Margaret Neville, and was thus brother-in-law to Lord Stanley. As already mentioned (note to line 876), he only arrived in Brittany in late June.

947: Lord Ferris: Thomas Grey, Marquis of Dorset, son of Elizabeth Woodville by her first marriage.

954: unopened: This must mean 'opened'.

955: From here for the next few lines the text is obviously corrupt: the rhyme scheme fails; the stanza scheme fails; an abbot mysteriously jumps into the narrative with no explanation; and it is not at all clear who 'him' is in line 958. One can, however, guess the intervening part of the story. Henry decides to appeal for help to the King of France; he asks the Abbott at Begars if it is all right for Humphrey to stay there while he goes to Paris, promising him suitable rewards if he helps them; and the Abbott agrees.

961: made them knowne: i.e. appeared.

965: herriott of arms: Presumably one of the French King's close attendants, whom Henry uses to pass his request to



the King. By making him "ready", they primed him with the questions they wanted him to ask.

966: him: either the herald, or, indirectly, the King, who would actually provide the men and the money.

967: him: Henry.

989: father: or, more correctly, stepfather.

997: about Michaelmas: A poor estimate: Henry arrived in Wales on August 7th (see Chrimes, S.B., 'The Landing Place of Henry Richmond, 1485', The Welsh History Review 2.2 (1964), p. 179) and in England certainly by August 17th (see H.N.Jerman, 'The Routes of Henry Tudor and Rhys ap Thomas through Wales to the Battle of Bosworth', Archaeologia Cambria 92 (1937), pp. 167-170). The battle was on August 22nd. Michaelmas Day is September 29th.

999: Millford Haven: Henry did in fact arrive at Dale, a small cove near the mouth of the estuary which is known as Milford Haven.

999: the first towne: i.e. the first place he will go to in England (as opposed to Wales).

1002: Shrewsbury: This was in fact the route Henry took, but whether it was part of the plan from such an early date or whether the poet is being wise after the event, we cannot know.

1006: he [is] much: A word is clearly missing from the MS.

1011: none of thy gold: As has happened several times already, Humphrey establishes that generosity is a virtue, one which he shows, and one which he expects others to show in return.

1015: if every hair were a man: When Sir Gilbert Talbot used this expression (lines 645-6) it meant something; here it is rather baffling.

1025: Leicester : This conflicts with all other sources, which say that Elizabeth of York was left by Richard III at Sherriff Hutton Castle in Yorkshire, where she stayed until after the battle. The suggestion in the poem could well be a genuine case of poetic licence, for it does make a fitting conclusion to have Bessy scorning the naked and defeated body of the dead King her uncle, and then immediately marrying her distant cousin the new King.

1031: he sent: The story of Lord Strange being a hostage and being almost executed is well known. What is not well known is how Richard ever got hold of such a valuable possession. Polydore Vergil (p.212) has his explanation:

When he (= Stanley) wold have gone into his countrie, for pleasure as he sayd, but indede that he might be ready to receave erle Henry as a friend at his cooming, the King forbad him, and wold not suffer him to depart before he had left George Lord Strange his soone as a pledge in the court.

Here, however, Lord Strange is not in London to be 'left'; rather Lord Stanley 'sends' him to London from Lathom - a strange thing for a man to do who is just about to go to war against the King. There are, however, doubts about the whole story, for which see Ricardian vol 5, 19 (1980), 218-9.

1036: harts head: Sir William's crest, which is later used (line 1313) to stand for Sir William himself.

1037: tryed and trusty: i.e. tried and found to be trusty.

1039: doggs: The Talbot is a breed of dog, and is the Talbot family crest. The syntax of the sentence has to be completed by supplying the same information as in the previous stanza.

1041: fifteen: An error for fifteen hundred - see line 1167.

white hoods: the uniform adopted by Sir John Savage's men, as also seen in Bosworth Feilde line 551.

1045: Sir Rees ap Thomas: born 1449, a Welshman, as is obvious from the name, who was one of the first to join up with Henry when he landed in Wales. The Welsh have a song:

Cwncweriodd y King Hari

Y mnes drwy nerth ein meister ni.

(King Henry conquered the field through the strength of our master.) quoted by W. Evans p. 222. Sir Rhys was knighted after the Battle of Bosworth, and later took



part in Henry VIII's campaign in France - see Flodden Feilde line 259. For more details of his life, see Cambrian Register, i (1850), pp. 49-144.

1051: south-east : i.e. an ideal wind to carry Henry from Brittany to Milford Haven.

1054: into England: This indicates that for the poet there is no distinction to be observed between England and Wales, which makes the guess of Michaelmas Day (see note to line 997) even less accurate.

1061: Tydder: Clearly this word is seen as some form of insult. O.E.D. gives a noun 'tudder' which means a youngster, which might be an appropriate insult to Henry, but there is also a verb, to 'tidder' which is connected with genital activity, a far commoner and more hurtful form of insult.

1063: a wyle: The story of the invading army's inability to enter Shrewsbury is variously told, but the end result is always the same: they got in. This version, where Rowland of Warburton ties a message to a stone, is as good as any, even if the author does not trouble himself to inform us what was contained in the writing.

1069: and: again this operates an unannounced change of subject.

- 1073: Lord Percy: Henry Percy, 4th Earl of Northumberland, Warden of the East Marches. It has been questioned whether he was absolutely loyal to Richard, but this poem assumes he was.
- 1077: The Duke of Northfolk: John Howard, 1st Duke of Norfolk, who commanded Richard's vanguard at Bosworth, and was killed in the battle, as it has been supposed, by Sir William Stanley, a notion mentioned in Flodden Feilde line 142. He was known as 'Jocky of Norfolk'.
- 1079: the Earle of Surrey: Thomas Howard, son of the above Duke of Norfolk. After Bosworth he was attainted and imprisoned, but by 1489 he was in favour with Henry VII, and after the Battle of Flodden, where he led the English army, the title of Duke of Norfolk was re-instated for him. He died in 1524.
- 1083: Lord Latimer: Richard Neville, 2nd Baron Latimer, 1468-1524.
- 1083: Lord Lovell: Francis Lovell, Viscount Lovell, 13th Baron Lovell of Tichmarsh, 1454-1487. After Bosworth he continue to fight against Henry, and was a keen supporter of Lambert Simnel.
- 1084: Earl of Kent: Edmund Grey, 1st Earl of Kent, d.1489.
- 1085: Lord Ross: probably Lord Roos of Helmsley.
- 1085: Lord Scrope: John le Scrope, 5th Baron Scrope of Bolton,

1435-1498.

1087: The Bishop of Durham: Bishop Ruthal. See Fordyce (1868).

1088: Sir William Bonner: This could be Sir William Bulmer, later noted in Scotish Feilde line 159. Certainly he had close association with the Bishop of Durham.

1089: Sir William Harrington: This is the man who, according at least to this poem, later played such a great part in saving the life of Lord George Strange (line 1228). The Harrington lands at Hornby later entered the Stanley possessions when Sir Edward Stanley married the daughter of Sir John Harrington (CPR 1485-94, 267).

1091: a messenger: Richard now tries to exert pressure on all the Stanley supporters to join his side.

1093: [said]: The MS reads 'and', which is an understandable error, as 'bid' could be past tense or present imperative. 'Said' clears the confusion between direct and indirect speech (again).

1102: he: This could be Sir William himself who is threatened with death, but in view of the threats being offered elsewhere it is more likely to refer to Lord George Strange again.

1105: upon Bosseworth Field: It is far more likely that the author is being wise after the event than that Sir William issued such a precise challenge.



- 1107: a breakfast: Precisely the same threat is seen in Bosworth Feilde line 179 (and also in the poem Musselborough Field). It may have been a common threat, or a poetic invention, or maybe Sir William really did say it.
- 1113: The Tower of London: The whereabouts of Lord George Strange are not at all clear. He is reported here to have been sent to the Tower, but he was clearly on the field of battle waiting to be executed (line 1197), while other sources would have it that he was kept prisoner in Nottingham.
- 1120: Stone: For details of the movements of the various participants immediately before the Battle of Bosworth, see p. 91.
- 1130: times three: The triple kiss seems to have been a standard greeting, as in Belgium today. If so, Gairdner's complaint about its use (1879, p. 411) is ill-founded.
- 1133: royall: by nature perhaps. He had no royal connections, even if his brother was married to the future king's mother.
- 1136: the most for thee: As before (see note to line 799) this is not a personal but a family contribution Sir William is attempting to imprint on Henry's mind.

1139: then: = than.

1147: word come: This part of the story of Bosworth is the least well agreed among historians. It is the usual theory that, owing to Lord Strange being a hostage, neither Stanley army entered the battle until it was well joined, and there is even doubt as to whether Lord Stanley entered at all. Here, however, and in Bosworth Feilde, we are told that Lord Stanley began the conflict, and that William was quick to follow. The Harley MS version is even further ahead, suggesting that Lord Stanley began the conflict on Sunday evening.

1154: I: Heywood (1829) gives 'he', which makes a muddle between direct and indirect speech.

be: Heywood (1829) reads 'be done', which is clearly an error: the rhyme is lost, the sense is lost, and the word 'done' has been mistakenly copied from the line above. Halliwell (1847), who was copying from Heywood, omitted the line altogether.

1158: they cried: Heywood (1829) punctuates these lines as follows:

"All they," cried King Henry,  
"Straight to Bolesworth can they go  
In all the hast that might be."

This assumes that 'can' means modern 'can', but in this poem it usually means 'did', and clearly does here, because Heywood's version would mean that Henry was at

Lichfield, which he clearly wasn't. Halliwell (1847) recognised what had happened and punctuated accordingly, and the Harley MS and Percy MS versions of the story, with all their completely different words, agree.

1162: met: It makes sense as it stands, the 'royal company' now being the complete Stanley army; but if we read 'met he', it makes 'met' transitive, which would have been more usual. It would hardly affect the scansion.

1165: sisters son: See note to line 398.

1171: bicker with their bows: a common alliterative phrase interestingly altered in Scottish Feilde line 27.

1173: rose: Heywood (1829) reads "Ross", but as we are clearly looking at standards, Henry's Red Rose is obviously what is meant.

blew boar: Heywood (1829, p. 82) supposes this to be an error for the white boar of King Richard's standard, but throughout this section of the poem we are looking only at the Lancastrian army, and Richard's standard would be doubly out of place. What is undoubtedly referred to is the Earl of Oxford's blue boar.

1176: ten thousand spears: Either Sir Rhys ap Thomas has brought along more men than he promised, or the author has forgotten the number he fixed on first time: see line 1046.



of mighty tree: This pleasant transfer presumably means that the soldiers were mighty and had strong spears, not that the spears came from any special tree.

1180: I pray you: Henry clearly accepts, both here and in Bosworth Feilde (line 449) that Lord Stanley is the Commanding Officer.

1183: my son: as Henry calls him 'father', so Lord Stanley responds.

1184: thy mothers blessing: Henry has not seen his mother for years. Even in the heat of battle, Lord Stanley remembers to pass on her love to her son.

1186: so that: in the usual Chaucerian sense of 'as long as'.

1188: battle: This is not the conflict, but the main-battle or centre part of the army. The word could have either meaning, for in line 1194 it means 'conflict'.

1191: break the array: This means 'lead the assault'.

1195: hoveth: Lord Stanley has already 'hoved' with his army onto a hill, and it is possible that Richard could be doing the same, but at this point in the story the language of Bosworth Feilde comes very close to that of this poem, and there we read (line 497) 'King Richard looked on the mountaines hye', which makes better sense.

1196: the bould Stanley: This is clearly Sir William and not

Lord Stanley (who is anyway always referred to as the Earl of Derby), because in line 1201 Richard tells Lord Strange that he must die 'for thy uncles sake'.

1197: Lord Strange: The account of the near execution and last-minute reprieve of Lord Strange is told in very similar language in Bosworth Feilde lines 497-544. The Harley MS version, which is usually only a paraphrase of this one, is also very close over these lines.

1209: [f]ay: The MS reads 'say', but a noun is required.

1211: Lathum: In the Earl of Derby's will (Holgrave, 14), there was a family servant named Ralph Lathom.

1219: Something has happened to the text here, as this line is clearly an extra. However, this 'hiccup', with the slight hiatus at lines 957-962 does not justify denying, as Heywood (1829) did, the essential stanzaic nature of the poem.

1220: if fortune: i.e. if it should happen that.

1222: my eldest son: Thomas Stanley, later 2nd Earl of Derby, and the hero of Flodden Feilde.

1236: a block was cast: It appears that Harrington's suggestion is not taken up; in Bosworth Feilde, however, it is that suggestion rather than the imminence of battle which

saves Lord Strange (line 543).

1240: no other booty: i.e. nothing else for it.

1242: full woe: For some reason Harrington seems to want to save Lord Strange, and indeed he spirits him away a few lines later (line 1246). The link between the Harrington and Stanlay families was not made till much later.

1244: our ray breaketh: The battle has started and Richard's front line is cracking.

1256: the black raven: Sir Rhys ap Thomas's standard.

1259: went his way: Here, as in some other accounts, the Earl of Northumberland refuses to fight when the moment of battle comes.

1264: Sir John Savage: The death of the Earl of Norfolk is more usually ascribed to Sir William Stanley, as, for example, in Flodden Feilde (line 413), although by stretching relationships slightly, Sir John Savage could almost be regarded as the 2nd Earl's uncle: he was in fact his father's cousin.

1267: his son: Thomas Howard, Earl of Surrey.

1268: Lord Alroes: This name is, as it stands, a mystery. It is most likely, given the way the narrative is going, that it will be one of King Richard's supporters who was mentioned earlier (lines 1073-1090), and the nearest



approximation to that name so far unmentioned would be Lord Roos.

1278: it hath no peere: i.e. nothing will be gained by it. ('Pere' = thing of little worth (MED).)

1285: I will dye: Richard's noble sacrifice here contrasts strongly with Shakespeare's version, in which Richard utters his most famous line, "A horse, a horse, my kingdom for a horse!" Here, by contrast, Sir William Harrington offers him a horse but he refuses.

1293: head under his feet: Richard was stripped naked, and thrown on a horse with his head one side and his feet the other, and taken to Newark (part of Leicester).

1294: Bessye met him: As previously mentioned (note to line 1025), Bessy was probably in Sherriff Hutton Castle at the time of the battle, but it is known (see Nokes and Wheeler p. 3 n. 15) that after the battle Henry summoned Edward Earl of Warwick from Sherriff Hutton to come and view Richard's body. Perhaps Elizabeth came too.

1298: solace to see: a typical alliterative phrase - see, for example, Scottish Feilde line 179.

1304: married: The marriage actually took place on 18th January 1486, but events are telescoped for dramatic effect.

1310: he: Which brother actually 'set the crown' on Henry's head is not clear in this poem, where either one could be

referred to, although, as the more recently mentioned, Sir William is a more logical choice, and it is often said (perhaps on the evidence of this line?) that it was Sir William. However, in Bosworth Feilde (lines 635-637) it is unambiguously said that it was Lord Stanley, who, as leader of the forces, is surely a more likely choice.

1314: the hart: This stanza refers to the execution of Sir William Stanley in 1495, but, as is explained on p. 79, it is most probably a later addition. C.Ross (1981, p. 7) also argues strongly that it is a later addition.

1318: [Queen]: The B MS reads 'King', but the rhyme here demands 'Queen', the reading of the Harley MS version. It is likely (see Flodden Feilde line 427) that the scribe would adjust the sex of the monarch mentioned in the final blessing to suit present circumstances. It has been assumed by editors of other manuscripts that the Queen here intended was Queen Elizabeth I. Assuming, however, that the poem was composed very soon after Bosworth, the Queen would be none other than Lady Bessy herself, the heroine of the poem. The rhyme-word 'shene' has already been used to describe her (line 507), and nothing could possibly be a more fitting conclusion to the poem.



COMMENTARY ON

B O S W O R T H F E I L D E



COMMENTARY - BOSWORTH FEILDE

- 1: shope: old strong preterite of 'shape'. The expression is used again at lines 155 and 595.
- 2: on: the MS appears to read 'ont' but that is clearly an error. It is most likely (at some stage in its history) a misreading of a descender from above. Line 201 'dyed on a tree' gives another possible emendation.
- 5: thou bee: an inversion of the imperative for the sake of rhyme (as in the hymn 'Be thou my guardian and my guide') rather than an unusual present indicative.
- 8: Welcome Henery! This expression (repeated in lines 16 and 24) has the appearance of an immediate welcome, and adds to the weight of evidence that the poem is early.
- rightwise: Bishop Percy glosses this as 'righteous', a meaning Furnivall and Hales (1867-8, vol. iii, p. 236) endorse with an etymological reference to Anglo-Saxon 'rihtwis'; but the MED meaning 'legitimate' is surely more likely. See also line 43.
- 11: grounded with grace: Although this is a common alliterative phrase of the sort that one gets used to reading without paying close attention to meaning, perhaps here the author is suggesting that Henry's claim to the throne is well 'grounded' and has God's approval or 'grace'.

- 13: wend: an old strong preterite from 'wene', to think. Here, we must take the meaning as "Who would have thought ...?"
- 17: [Now]: The MS reads 'How', but that is also in the next line. 'Now' makes far better sense over the two lines.
- had: not an auxiliary verb indicating past tense, but in the sense 'we had better ...'
- 18: is transported: No author writing many years after the event is going to make this sort of comment: it is a direct expression of gratitude that the bad days are over.
- 20: martyrdome: This reference to the death of King Henry VI (1471) as a 'martyrdom' is a further indication of the author's stance in this poem. It has been supposed, and Shakespeare adds his weight to the supposition, that Henry VI was killed by Richard of Gloucester (later Richard III).
- 21: demed to dye: an alliterative phrase which (as in Lady Bessye line 58) simply means 'kill'.
- 26: Edward: When the author holds up King Edward who reigned 'some time' as a role-model for Henry VII, the question "Which King Edward?" springs to mind. His virtues as a soldier and a religious man are extolled, which suggests perhaps Edward III. It could be almost any Edward from the Confessor to Edward IV, although Edward IV is less likely, as the author claims that his knowledge is second-hand (line 27), whereas Edward IV would have been (if the poem

was composed early) of very recent memory. Furthermore, Edward IV could hardly be said to have a world-wide reputation for military success.

30: these examples: i.e. Henry VI and Edward, whichever one it was.

him: Henry VII.

35: bought and sold: This could refer to the attempts made by Edward IV and Richard III to persuade with bribes the French King to extradite Henry Tudor, for which see Polydore Vergil (ed. 1894, pp. 164, 191 and 205).

36: gold and fee : These words always seem to go together (Lady Bessye lines 886-7, 1011-2, Bosworth Feilde line 356) like pounds, shillings and pence.

37: he: who? As this stanza is more or less a repeat of lines 29-32, maybe it shouldn't be here at all. If it is here, who served Jesus, and who should say (which must mean 'take') this as an example? If Henry VI was the one who was 'bought and sold' (and there is nothing to say that he was) then why should Henry VII take that as an example? It is easier to assume that lines 37-40 have been re-copied in error in the wrong place, and carry on.

42: gray: an adjective apparently chosen for its rhyme; line 49 offers 'streames stray' which is palaeographically confusable but no more sensible.



50: Milford Haven: See note to Lady Bessiye line 999.

51: all his lords: When Henry landed he had only a small army, which included, according to Lady Bessiye lines 945-7, three lords (Earl of Oxford, Lord Ferris, Lord Lee).

royal: This adjective could be careless, simply meaning splendid (as Sir William Stanley in Lady Bessiye is several times referred to as 'a royal knight'), or it could be a deliberate choice indicating Henry's determination (see line 56) that he is the true 'royal' person.

53: England: As in Lady Bessiye (line 1054) Milford Haven is spoken of as being in England. Carelessness over the names of countries has always happened, and still does: most people still refer to U.S.S.R. as 'Russia' and to U.S.A. as 'America', and for some reason 'England' often includes Wales (but not Scotland).

56: and loose: As was observed many times in Lady Bessiye, the subject frequently changes unannounced. Here Henry clearly means "I'll become King if it kills me".

59: the love of the Lord Stanley: The author of this poem is clearly unaware of the details recounted in Lady Bessiye (although it has been suggested that the two poems are different versions of the same poem). Here Henry is unaware of Lord Stanley's commitment to his cause, and later (line 67) that of his brother Sir William Stanley,

whereas in Lady Bessiye the whole venture was begun by the Stanleys. Furthermore, the author here calls Lord Stanley by his more correct title. For details of Lord Stanley, see note to Lady Bessiye line 7.

60: he marryed my mother: See note on Margaret Countess of Richmond, Lady Bessiye line 11.

65: had I: With a full-stop after line 64 (as Furnivall prints it), 'had I' must here mean 'Would that I had', for there is otherwise no apodosis. Without such a full-stop, however, the apodosis could be "I shall maintain" (line 63). The sense then is: "I shall succeed in looking after my mother if I have the Stanleys on my side", which is the sort of thing these poems frequently say.

65: array: For the pronunciation of Stanley as Stan-lay see p. 117.

67: Sir William: See note on Lady Bessiye line 17.

75: misfortune: This poet, like the Anglo-Saxon poets, likes to forecast doom where it is due.

77: It could be that Richard drew near wicked counsel or that wicked counsel drew near Richard. As Richard is supposed to be responsible for his own misfortune (line 76), the former is preferable, but normal usage suggests the latter.

82: man dye: Bishop Percy glosses this as Lord Stanley being condemned to death: man dye = maun (must) dye, but it

is unlikely to mean that Richard condemned him: merely that the 'wicked counsel' advised it. Richard, aware of the power of the Stanleys, sends messages to Lord Stanley telling him what he wants, but never condemns him to death. These two stanzas deal with Lord Stanley's excellent qualities, such as his triumph at the siege of Berwick in 1482 (also mentioned in Scotish Feilde line 366).

83: well seene: i.e. that Lord Stanley was 'the flower', not that he must die.

90: the West Countrey: See note to Lady Bessiye line 52.

96: and ye will: = if you want to.

97: is le[f]t: MS reads 'lent', which Halliwell (Furnivall and Hales (1867-8, vol. iii, p. 239, n.) glosses as 'dwells', but 'is left' captures the sense of annoyance exactly.

98: Lord Strange: See note to Lady Bessiye line 13.

98: the Chamberlaine: G.E.A[dams] notes (Furnivall and Hales, 1867-8, vol. iii, p. 239) that this was John de Vere, Earl of Oxford. But see note to Lady Bessiye line 21, which explains that Sir William Stanley is the one intended.

99: upon a day: = one day sometime in the future.

114: with royaltye: This could be Lord Stanley riding with royalty (i.e. splendour), or Richard's royalty to which he is riding.



- 115: he fell sicke: In Lady Bessiye (lines 351-359) it was Lord Strange who fell sick at Manchester and returned home to Lathom, but that was at a different part in the story a long time before Bosworth. Either there are two separate journeys, or the same story has become confused in the mind of one or other of the authors. In both poems Lord Strange is sent from Lathom to King Richard, whereas some sources have it that Lord Stanley was only allowed home from London if he left Lord Strange there.
- 120: to witt the will: (to find out what Richard wants), a phrase also found in Scotish Feilde line 76.
- 129: The following two stanzas contain a serious moral reflection on Richard's devious conduct, which would be surprising if this were a 'normal' ballad. See also Scotish Feilde lines 396-399.
- 138: to ward: to be kept under guard: the subject has imperceptibly changed from Richard back to Lord Strange.
- 152: in danger of our King: i.e. his life is in the King's hands.
- 153: in a study: This means 'stunned with amazement', as in Lady Bessiye line 526 and in Flodden Feilde line 41.
- 156: noe trecherye: If the events of the early part of Lady

Bessiye are anything to go by, Lord Stanley is in peril of his soul! Alternatively this could be another indication (see note to line 59) that the author of this poem was unaware of Lady Bessiye. Yet the similarity of the sections describing Lord Strange as hostage and his speech to his servant Lathom puts this in doubt.

159: against him: In Lady Bessiye Lord Stanley is secretly against Richard from early on, but stays apparently on his side until the end of the battle. Here he is only forced against Richard by the threat to kill Lord Strange, but then becomes openly hostile.

168: your King: Sir William apparently announces to the messenger that Richard is no longer King as far as he is concerned.

176: if he bee Kinge: He is King, but Sir William means that if he wants to go on being King he is going to have to fight for it. The same applies to lines 184 and 192.

177: may: = maiden.

179: breakfast: See note to Lady Bessiye line 1007.

186: with royaltye: Again (see note to line 114) the alliterative association of 'Richard' and 'royaltye' has proved more powerful than the sense: is it Richard or the messenger who displays royalty? Presumably Richard is intended, but the syntax suggests otherwise.

- 188: so greeved men are not: i.e. "You won't find men more put out anywhere in the world."
- 196: the Great Turke: Richard now threatens to take on all comers, the Great Turk, Prester John, and the Sultan of Syria if necessary - but he will stay King.
- 203: Lancaster to Shrewsburys: Just the area where the Stanleys influence was strong. Richard's threat to remove the Stanleys is also mentioned in Lady Bessie (lines 197-8), but that refers to a time considerably earlier than this.
- 205: [rife]: The MS reads 'riffe', but 'rife' restores something of the rhyme, and (with the sense of 'great' (MED)), makes good sense.
- 209: Holy-head to St David's: i.e. the whole of Wales, from Anglesey in the north to Pembrokeshire in the south. The Stanleys had power in the north through Sir William's lands there, but not in the south. Wales, however, was always against Richard and in favour of Henry, whom they saw as fulfilling the ancient prophecies about the heirs of Cadwallader (See E.W.Jones, 1979). Sir Rhys ap Thomas had already collected a large Welsh contingent and was marching alongside Henry Tudor, as reported in Lady Bessie lines 1175-6.

(225-336 THE LIST OF RICHARD'S SUPPORTERS)



Most of the already identified names on this list are in W.E.Hampton (1979). CFR (1485-1509, 1-7) provides a certain amount of independent corroboration of the names of those who fell in the battle. The most detailed examination of this list has been made by P.Corbett, who has identified about two thirds of the names, but his work is not yet published. As this edition is biased in favour of the Lancastrians, no further details of this long list are given.

340: 2 shires against all England: This is one of the key ideas contained in all four poems, that the Stanley supporters are a breed apart, far stronger and more capable than any amount of opponents. The two shires are, of course, Lancashire and Cheshire.

348: a Munday: 15th August 1485.

355: Newcastle (and all other towns mentioned over the next stanzas): For the routes leading to Bosworth, see p. 91.

358: Holt: Sir William Stanley's home in what is now called Clwyd. See note to Lady Bessiye line 18.

369: he/him: Sir William/Henry.

372: he/him: Sir William/Henry.

373: he: Henry or Sir William. Either was glad to see the other.

- 374: he/him : Henry/Sir William.
- 375: thy [bro]ther: The MS reads 'father', but as Adams pointed out (Furnivall and Hales, 1867-8, vol. iii, p.249, n.2) 'this should be "brother"', Sir William's father having been dead since 1458. The man referred to is, of course, Lord Stanley.
- 376: continue king: Henry clearly regards himself as being king already, and so (line 378) does Sir William, who, as we have already seen (line 168), does not acknowledge Richard as his king.
- 383: who doth: see note to Lady Bessiye line 800.
- 389: Saturday: 20th August.
- 392: they: Sir William's men.
- 394: answerable : a poor word, which probably means 'up to the job', but is chosen for its alliteration.
- 398: min: to rhyme with 'Kinge' one might expect 'minge' (see, for example, line 454), but both words mean 'to say', whereas here the word 'min' means 'less' (MED). C.Ross (1981, p. 237) uses this word (on the authority of Prof. V.J.Scattergood) to support an early date for the poem.
- 405: his enemy nye: This messenger, still on Saturday (the

battle was not until Monday) is a little premature in his estimate for the start of the fighting.

409: That would I not: Sir William's response on hearing that his brother is just about to start the battle is identical in Lady Bessiye: line 1151.

417: that night: Still Saturday 20th August.

422: his sonne: Lord Stanley's son, not Sir William's.

Sir Edward: See note on Lady Bessiye line 588. The line-up is approximately as in Lady Bessiye except that there Sir John Savage is in command of the wing rather than Sir Edward Stanley.

430: brake the ray: led the charge.

433: affray: This would seem to suggest that there was a small squabble between Henry's men and the Stanleys' men, but it obviously came to nothing.

443: I understand: it would make more sense but less good rhyme for Henry to say 'I undertake'.

444: that day: i.e. the day on which the people would be 'quitt' or avenged, when Henry became undisputed King.

449: desired: As in Lady Bessiye (line 1180), Henry acknowledges Lord Stanley's superiority and asks him for a position.



- 457: Sir Robert Tunstall: of Thurland, Cumbria. See W.H.Chippindall (1928).
- 459: Sir John Savage: See note to Lady Bessiye line 397. According to Lady Bessiye (line 1190) Sir John Savage had command of a wing of the army, but here he is in the centre.
- 461: Sir Humphrey Stanley: This is Lord Stanley's second cousin, Sir Humphrey Stanley of Elford (Staffordshire), d. 1505.
- 473: he: It looks as though this should be Sir William, as he was the one mentioned in the previous stanza, but when, in line 497, Richard looks at the mountain, he sees the banner of the Lord Stanley. In Lady Bessiye it is definitely Lord Stanley who goes to the mountain (line 1193), but when Richard looks there he sees the 'banner of the bold Stanley' which is probably (see note to Lady Bessiye line 1196) that of Sir William Stanley. If one of these poets is using the other's lines, he is not always clear which Stanley is which, and, with all the confusions over 'he' and 'him' and 'his', it is not surprising.
- 479: at need: as was necessary? The phrase does not need to mean anything as long as it rhymes with 'gleed'.
- 482: Erle of Shrewsburys: Adams (Furnivall and Hales, 1867-8, vol. iii, p. 253,n.) says that he fought on Henry's side. As Sir Gilbert Talbot was a chief Lancastrian supporter it is likely that his nephew (Shrewsbury) also was. But the author of Bosworth Feilde thinks he was on Richard's side

(line 228).

- 484: Oxford: The Earl of Oxford was on Henry's side and fought alongside Henry in the van (see note to Lady Bessiye line 1174). He had been in Brittany with Henry (see Lady Bessiye line 946 and Polydore Vergil p. 208).
- 488: Richard our Kinge: The author is not consistent over who is King, for in line 496 he refers to 'Henery our Kinge'.
- 499: Lord Strange: This section is very similar to the section describing this event in Lady Bessiye, often using the same words. The similarity is such that either the one must have read (or heard) the other or there must be a common source for this part of the narrative.
- 524: [me]: MS reads 'may', possibly confused from earlier in the line. 'Me' is correct here.
- 531: my eldest sonne: Thomas, later 2nd Earl of Derby.
- 537: a knight: This man is named in Lady Bessiye (line 1089) as Sir William Harrington.
- 551: white hood: These are the crests of Sir John Savage also mentioned in Lady Bessiye line 1041.
- 556: lowe to light: to land low, a periphrasis for 'die'.
- 561: his army: Harley MS 542 (an account of the battle copied from Bosworth Feilde) reads 'a marris', which is probably what has given rise to the legend that the battle took

place on boggy ground.

562: 40,000 and 3: This is to be understood as 43,000 rather than 40,0003, although with estimates of army numbers being as inaccurate as they were, neither figure is guaranteed to be anywhere near the actual size of his army.

566: breakfast: Remembered from line 179 (and see Lady Bessiye line 1107).

567: downe att a backe: i.e. he went 'round the back' of Richard's army (see MED 'at a bak').

569: sad and sore: A phrase chosen for its alliteration, but 'sad' is likely to be adverbial ('vigorously' (MED)) and 'sore' in its emphatic sense, as in 'he was sorely tried'.

571: fell and farr: another alliterative phrase. 'Fell' means 'strong(ly)'.

575: swee: not a word known to O.E.D. or M.E.D., but C.Ross uses it (see note to line 398) to support the case for an early date.

576: their King: Not so long ago (line 488) Richard was 'our' King; now he is defeated, he becomes theirs.

577: our archers: Up to now the author has been moderately detached from the action, but now, as Richard has become 'their' King (line 576), so the Lancastrian archers have



become 'our' archers. .

578: were growden: However it comes to mean it, this line must mean that the archers abandoned their bows, and engaged in close combat. Furnivall and Hales (1867-8, vol. iii, p. 256) suggest that the weapons were 'grounded', which is a possible emendation. It does not, however, explain the word 'with', the grammar of which suggests that the archers 'were growden with' weapons, rather than that the weapons were 'grounded'. Also the word 'joyned' suggests that the weapons being spoken of are not the wooden bows, which may well have been grounded, but the metal ones which 'ring' on their opponents' helmets.

582: can the thringe: They (Henry's men) knocked them (Richard's men) to the ground.

585: a knight: Lady Bessiye identifies this knight as Sir William Harrington again (line 1277). Salazar claims (Wheeler and Nokes, 1972, p. 2) that it was himself.

600: if/if : One 'if' too many: the sense must be, 'If he lost his life, at least he lost it as King'.

605: Lord Ferrers: According to line 242, there were two Lord Ferrers who fought for Richard. Lord Ferrers of Chartley died at Bosworth.

606: boldlye: An adverb chosen for its alliteration: boldness is no longer needed when the battle is over.

- 611: Sir William Conyas: = Conyers, of Stockton, Durham (Hampton, (1979), p. 53).
- 612: Sir Robert Brackenbury: of Denton, Durham. Constable of the Tower (see Lady Bessiye line 50). Other sources (e.g. Croyland Chronicle, and Harley MS 433 fol. 56) also record that he died at Bosworth.
- 614: Sir Richard Chorlton: born in Edmonton, died at Bosworth (Hampton, p. 114). According to J.W. Hardwick-Jones (Hardwicke of Hardwicke and Burcott (1911), p. 33) a Richard Chorlton was the son of Robert Chorlton of Apley Castle, Sheriff of Shropshire, but Hardwick-Jones says that he fought for Henry at Bosworth.
- 619: Sir William Brandon: Henry's standard-bearer (See p. 50).
- 625: Sir Percivall Thriball: Richard's standard-bearer (See p. 50).
- 636: Lord Stanley: In Lady Bessiye it is not clear whether Lord Stanley or Sir William actually placed the crown on Richard's head, and the fact that it could be read as meaning Sir William has led to other claims that Sir William it was. This version makes quite clear what the other is not so clear about.
- 645: Newarke: Part of Leicester where the Greyfriars' Abbey was. It is also mentioned in Scotish Feilde (line 35) as the place where Richard was taken after the battle. As

for where he was buried, J. Gairdner (1892) p. 310 quotes five contemporary references which agree that he was buried in Leicester, but according to J. Thompson (Liverpool and Its Neighbourhood in Ye Olden Times (Liverpool, 1894), p. 46), Richard's bones were dug up about fifty years later and dumped in the river.

647: thus fortunes raignes: The same tone ("That's what happens if you don't behave properly") is seen also in Scotish Feilde lines 396-9.

656: James: See p. 80.



C O M M E N T A R Y   O N

S C O T I S H      F E I L D E

## COMMENTARY - SCOTISH FEILDE

1 - 2: The syntax of these lines admits of several possible interpretations: is 'this time' adverbial or is it the direct object of 'grant'? Depending on the answer to that question, is 'that I may say' a noun clause object ("Grant that I may say"), or is it a clause of purpose ("Give me time, so that I may say")? Is the infinitive 'to please' dependent on 'say' ("May I speak in order to please you"), or on 'cease' ("before I cease to please you")? Furthermore, does 'say' mean 'say' ("recite this poem"), or does it mean, as suggested in a marginal note by Bishop Percy (fol. 79), 'assay' ("try")? These problems are typical in the loose syntax, obscure vocabulary, and idiosyncratic style of alliterative poems (see pp.132-5). As it must be assumed that these lines are the opening to a recitation, the most satisfactory way to understand them is something like: "Lord, provide this time for me so that I can recite this poem which will, by the time I have finished, be pleasing to You."

3: his mother that: "the mother of him who"

5: a king: The MS abbreviation K would usually be expanded to 'king'. Previous editors have read it as 'kings', but that is as much of an emendation as to read 'a king', and 'a king', partly in view of the verb 'was' in line 6, and partly because for the immediate future the author does only talk about one king, seems the better expansion.

6: that was: The antecedent of 'that' is still 'king' rather than the nearer 'land'.

8: Milford: Milford Haven, Pembrokeshire. For details of Henry's landing, see note to Lady Bessiye line 999.

9 - 10: lite ... but ...: The sense is: "There were hardly any ... apart from ..."

10: Derby: Thomas Stanley, 2nd Lord Stanley, 1st Earl of Derby. For details of his life and contribution to the victory at Bosworth, see note to Lady Bessiye line 7.

11: the Lord Chamberlaine: Sir William Stanley, brother of the Earl of Derby. See note to Lady Bessiye line 17.

12: Savage, his sisters sonne: Sir John Savage of Clifton, son of the Earl's sister Catherine Stanley (see family tree, p. 272). The Savage family was related by a marriage in 1442 to the Leghs of Baguley, one of whom (see pp. 41-6) was probably the author of the poem. For more details of Sir John Savage, see note to Lady Bessiye line 397.

13: Gylbert: Sir Gilbert Talbot, third son of the 2nd Earl of Shrewsbury and uncle to the 4th Earl, who is mentioned in line 68 and frequently in Flodden Feilde.

10 - 14: The selection of these four men for their part in Henry's victory is almost certainly a legacy from Lady Bessiye, where these same four are the ones who master-mind



the invasion.

14: all Lancashire: The object of the sentence, 'these ladds' the subject.

. att their will: i.e. at the will of the people of Lancashire. This, together with line 15, emphasises the popularity of these leaders, with the intention that their position as leaders may be favourably contrasted with that of Edmund Howard (lines 266-271), who was (as the author would suggest, ill-advisedly) put in charge of the Lancashire troops at the Battle of Flodden.

16-17: The syntax of these lines is difficult. Somehow it must mean that the Lancashire troops had won great fame in many lands so that their name was honoured. (The emendation 'fele' for the MS 'few', suggested by Child (Furnivall and Hales, 1867-8, vol. i, p. 213, n.) seems important.) As it stands the line can be understood as "They have won much worship in war; there was (much worship) of their names." A further possible emendation would be to omit the words 'have the woone', which would not only clear the syntax, but also help the rhythm.

18: Brute: A common feature of alliterative historical poems is an attempt to relate the material back to Britain's

earliest 'history', the founding by Brutus after the siege of Troy. Brutus is here forced into the poem rather unnaturally, as the fame of four sixteenth-century soldiers is unlikely to have been bruited that long ago. What it probably means is, "No-one has ever been as famous since ..."

19: Sir James Blunt: Third son of Walter Blount, 1st Baron Mountjoy, Sir James Blount was captain of the castle at Hannes in Northern France in 1485, until he left there to join Henry Tudor in Brittany. Polydore Vergil (ed. 1950, pp. 208-213) records that he left his wife at Hannes, which Richard III then attacked. Henry sent a force to relieve the inhabitants, 'and especially the wife of Sir James, the captain thereof'. Sir James died in 1493.

bowed to their hands: "put himself under their command". The phrase is seen again at line 137.

20: Sir Edward Poynings: Born in 1459, he had 'proved' his Lancastrian sympathies early by leading a rising in Kent in support of the Duke of Buckingham's insurrection of 1483. He fled to France when the rebellion failed, and joined Henry in Brittany. He continued to play an important part in public life after Bosworth, and is particularly remembered for his dealings in Ireland. He died in 1521.

21: Sir John Biron: The Biron family were from Clayton,

Manchester, and later settled at Newstead, Nottinghamshire. Sir John was a direct ancestor of the poet Byron.

afraid: Constructions after verbs of fearing are notoriously wayward in English of all ages. In these poems the negative (like Latin 'timeo ne ...') is frequently, but not invariably used. We would say "never afraid of any ..."

25: dragon: a dragon gules is one of the supporters of Henry's crest. One of his badges is the Red Dragon, emblem of Cadwallader, the last British King, who was consoled for the loss of his lands by a prophecy that one day his descendants would rule England. Rouge Dragon, one of the four pursuivants of the College of Arms, is named after this emblem. After the Battle of Bosworth, Henry offered three standards in St Paul's Cathedral, one of which was a fiery red dragon beaten upon a white and green sarcenet, the livery colours of the House of Tudor. Here, as in line 27 and in Lady Bessie line 1173, the emblems stand for the men. (Information from Scott-Giles and Brooke-Little (1966, pp. 210-11); Franklyn (1967, p. 349); Pine (1952, p. 41); Cussans (1893, p. 226); Millington (1858, p. 307).)

26: rayled: It is not clear whether it is the bank, the men, the standards, or the dragon which were 'rayled with roses'. Perhaps it is best to assume it was the bank.



27: bore: One of Richard III's badges was 'boar argent, unguled and bristled, or'. Among the supporters of his crest are 'two boars, argent'. At his coronation he ordered 13,000 boars wrought in fustian for his retainers. The modern society dedicated to clearing his name from the accusation that he murdered the Princes in the Tower was until recently known as the White Boar Society. (Information from Cussans (1893, p. 225); Scott-Giles and Brooke-Little (1966, p. 210); Millington (1858, p. 306); Pine (1952, pp. 34-5).)

called: This is a frequent phrase in alliterative poems, and means "was known as ..."

28: Richard: Richard III, brother of Edward IV, reigned 1483-5 (see family tree p. 273). He is the 'villain' of Lady Bessiye and Bosworth Feilde.

29: kidde: A better reading than the Percy 'held', partly because it maintains the alliteration better, but also because of the older vocabulary in a poem which deliberately strives for archaism.

30: formen: Furnivall conjectures 'foemen', but 'formen' ("men in the front line") is satisfactory. See, however, line 169.

31: beronen: The Percy MS reads 'berouen', which Furnivall takes to mean "riven", but the precedents for 'beronen' should persuade us of its correctness: J.P.Oakden (1935

vol. ii, p. 269) lists fourteen other instances.

32: This line is not in the Percy MS at all, and, although it is visible with effort on the Lyme MS, no previous editor mentions its existence, the reason for which can be found on p. 24. Miss Hugon (unpublished papers in the Bodleian Library), who was looking at it eighty years ago when it might have been more legible, suggests that the last word may read 'forwarde', but 'foe' completes the sense.

34: and cast him: The subject has imperceptibly changed after 'and'. This happens frequently not only in this alliterative poem, but in the other three as well (see, for example, Lady Bessiye line 563).

Liester: Polydore Vergil (p.226) reports that Richard's body was stripped, flung on a horse with the arms and legs hanging down, and taken to the Franciscan house in Leicester.

35: Newarke: See note to Bosworth Feilde line 645.

36: deare: Could be adjectival, qualifying 'him', but the word-order suggests adverbial.

37: had: The Percy MS reading 'said' is meaningless. Furnivall's suggestion 'seized' is worth consideration, but such a long, strong syllable would unbalance the half-line and not accord with the alliteration. The Lyme MS reading 'had' is satisfactory.

- 38: riches enough: This could be the innocent comment it appears, but it could be a veiled reference to Henry's seizure of all Sir William Stanley's wealth and lands in 1492 (see p. 79).
- 39: fower and twenty yeeres: 1485-1509.
- 40: Frenche men: The details of Henry VII's French campaign are dismissed briefly in three lines, being of little interest to the Stanleyite audience. It is mentioned, apparently, to account for Henry VIII's presence in France in 1513, but in fact the second invasion had no connection whatever with the first (see pp. 99-100). The suggestion that it did, however, forges a link between the first moment of Stanley triumph at Bosworth and the second at Flodden.
- 41: tolde: past participle of 'tell', to add up, not a main verb.
- 44: lord: The reading 'wight' suggested by Bishop Percy and adopted by Furnivall would result in excessive alliteration. 'Lord' is better.
- 45: with saints enough: The phrase 'with ... enough' is a common alliterative line-filler, and a meaning, as here, is often vague.
- 50: Henry Theight: 1509-1547. The H of 'Henry' alliterates <sup>the</sup> with vowel of 'eight'.



52: and faire: Again (see note to line 34) the subject imperceptibly changes after 'and'.

53: tene: The Percy MS reading 'traine' makes no sense, while the Lyme reading is a good traditional alliterative word. Robson says that the Lyme MS reads 'lem', and Oakden provides a note on the word, but the word is 'tene'.

55: their/their: the English/the French. This reason for Henry's refusal to make peace is not the real one: see p 100.

sure: The initial letters 's' and 'f' are easily confused by scribes (see, for example, note on 'settle' and 'fettle', line 256), and the Percy MS reading is preferable here owing to both sense and alliteration.

57: was: The almost indiscriminate use of 'was' and 'were' is puzzling, but common in all the poems (see, for example, Flodden Feilde lines 146-7).

fowertie thowsande: Attempts to estimate the sizes of mediaeval armies are notoriously inaccurate. Whether the Lyme 40,000 is any more accurate than the Percy 15,000 is doubtful. The confusion could have arisen by mistaking XLM for XVM (or vice versa).

58: at their free will: a doubtful assertion, but again (see note to line 14) the insistence on an army's willingness to serve good leaders will emphasise the contrast when the

Stanley troops are asked to serve under a Howard (line 266).

60: Surrey: Thomas Howard, Earl of Surrey, born 1443, died 1524, fought at Bosworth (see note to Lady Bessie line 1079), where he was captured and attainted, but re-instated by 1489. He became one of Henry VII's more valued statesmen, being sent, for example, in 1503 to arrange the marriage between Henry's daughter Margaret and King James IV. In 1510 he was made Earl Marshall, and in 1514, after his success at Flodden, he was given the title of Duke of Norfolk and recovered his father's possessions. His tomb is at Thetford Priory, Norfolk. (See Brenan and Statham (1907, vol. i, pp. 60-116) and M.J.Tucker (1964).)

saddest of all other: This formula, 'of all other' after a superlative adjective, is common alliterative practice.

62: yf: "in case".

63: his: The common practice in alliterative poems of keeping paratactic phrases going over several lines favours the retention of the Lyme reading 'his' rather than the Percy 'our'.

66: Buckingham: Edward Stafford, 3rd Duke of Buckingham, born 1478. His mother was Catherine Woodville, sister-in-law of Edward IV. His father had led an unsuccessful rebellion in 1483 and been executed. The 3rd Duke served with distinction in France, and is, with the Earl of Shrewsbury,

the main supporter of the Earl of Derby in Flodden Feilde. In 1521 he was tried for treason by his peers, including the Earl of Derby and the Duke of Norfolk (ex-Earl of Surrey) whose own son was married to Buckingham's daughter, found guilty, and executed on 17 May 1521. (See D.N.B., and C.Rawcliffe (1978).)

66 - 67: These lines are examples of how the Lyme MS maintains the 'real' alliterative word-order while the Percy MS does not.

67: Derby: Thomas Stanley, 2nd Earl of Derby, son of George Lord Strange, grandson of the 1st Earl. Lord Strange died in 1497, pre-deceasing the 1st Earl by seven years. Little is apparently known about the 2nd Earl: Pollard (1868, p. 33) says, 'Beyond his being a courtier there is nothing particularly noteworthy in the Earl's career.' He was in France with the English army in 1513, where he was the 'hero' of the poem Flodden Feilde. At Knowsley Hall there is a poem in manuscript in which it is stated that the Earl was very kind to the poor and helped soldiers who were in difficulty; whether Flodden Feilde is the source of that information or merely an example of it, we cannot know. Having taken part in the shameful trial of his friend the Duke of Buckingham (see note to line 66), the Earl died soon afterwards: 23 May 1521. At his death his titles were: Earl of Derby, Viscount Kynton, Lord Stanley, Lord Strange, Lord of Knockyn, Mohun, Basset, Burnal, Lacy, Lord



of Man and the Isles. He had dropped the title 'King of Man' preferring, as it was said, 'to be a great Lord than a petty king'.

68: Shresburie: George Talbot, 4th Earl of Shrewsbury, born 1468, died 1538. He held important positions under Henry VII, serving with him in France in 1492. Under Henry VIII he rose to greater heights, being commander of the English forces in France in 1513 until the arrival of the King himself. He plays an important role in Flodden Feilde.

69: wyndeth with the vaward: Shrewsbury left for France in charge of the first division of the English army in May, 1513. The other divisions followed later in May and in June.

70: Northumberland: Henry Algernon Percy, 5th Earl of Northumberland, born 1478, died 1527. He was known as 'The Magnificent' because of his colourful dress and expensive entourage. In 1503 he went with Surrey to Scotland to arrange the marriage between Margaret, Henry VII's daughter, and King James IV. See Brenan (1902, vol. i, pp. 136-71).

71: at their will: Another mention of the willingness of English soldiers to serve under good leaders (see notes to lines 14 and 58).

them: As the impersonal construction is favoured on every other occasion in the poem (e.g. lines 109, 123), the Percy

MS reading 'them' is to be preferred to the Lyme MS 'they'.

73: sailes: As this word is clearly more sensible than the Percy MS reading 'saylor', the rest of the Lyme line is also adopted.

74: comely: The Lyme MS reading maintains the alliteration, so is preferred. The Percy MS reading 'seemly' is probably copied in error from the previous line.

79: to: The Lyme MS reading adds force to the verb, and indicates "suggested he went to", while the Percy 'of' is ordinary.

Tirwin: Therouanne, a town in the departement of Pas de Calais about twenty miles south of St Omer.

80: assaied with emperour: a reference to the year 1479, when the town was besieged by the Emperor Maximilian I. Although he won an infantry battle outside the town, he lost so many men that he had to abandon the siege and withdraw into Flanders.

81: [wee]: The MS reading 'Weede' is almost certainly an error for 'wee', the normal Lyme word for 'man' when the alliterating letter is 'w'. The Percy MS varies its vocabulary, most often using, as in this line, 'way'.

85: seaven daies: This boast is probably an invention of the author's, as is King James's answering boast (line 203) that he will conquer England within three weeks. Such a

boast, or gilpcwide is a common device of epic poetry, pleasantly grafted onto this more recent event.

86: The Percy MS reading of this line is meaningless.

helpe: Although the Percy MS reading 'leave' maintains the alliteration better, it is not necessary, as the line already has some alliteration, and the Lyme MS 'helpe' makes far better sense.

87: leedes: This emendation seems to be a 'solution' to the MS argument: it could easily lead to the Lyme MS reading 'letees', and the Percy scribe often substitutes the synonym 'lord', which he recognises, for 'leede', which he apparently doesn't (as in line 65 and several times in Flodden Feilde). Previous editors have preferred 'lord' singular, possibly persuaded by the singular in the following line; but there is certainly an 's' on the MS, and line 205 provides another example.

90: The Percy MS reading of this line is meaningless.

92: our: The author uses 'we', 'our', 'us' of the English armies both in France and in Scotland (but see p. 98). It is a typical feature of all military writing from Caesar onwards (see, for example Bosworth Feilde line 577).

93: The Lyme MS maintains the traditional word-order - and therefore the traditional rhythm - in the b-line.

95 - 96: These lines are problematical: if 'fell' is the



transitive verb 'fell' ("knock down"), it would be easier, but surrounded as it is by several verbs in the past tense a sudden present tense seems unlikely (perhaps it is an error and we could read 'felde'). Or it could be the past tense of the intransitive verb 'fall', in which case the stones would be the subject. This would improve the case for accepting the Percy 'there' rather than the Lyme 'they', but as the lines stand they can be understood (just about) to mean: "There a large amount of stones that had never moved before (they) fell, so strongly (i.e. noisily) did our men shoot."

never: This is the expansion of an abbreviation which could easily be (and by the Percy scribe frequently was) mistaken for 'new'.

98: the Frenche Kinge: Louis XII, 1498-1515.

100: piked: The Lyme MS retains the alliteration. The Percy scribe has again translated from this ancient word to a word he recognises.

for things: This vague phrase could mean "to arrange things" or "in case bad things" or "to see what things".

103: counter: The Lyme MS retains the alliteration.

106: King of Scotts: James IV, born 1473. His reign was characterised by continual scuffles along the border; furthermore, he had been a supporter of Perkin Warbeck.

In 1503, as an attempt to heal the rift between the two countries, a marriage was arranged between James and Margaret, daughter of King Henry VII. From 1511 onwards, however, it became clear that war was inevitable. After the Battle of Flodden (where he was killed), James's body was taken to London, and buried at Shene in Surrey - although there were rumours, as there often are, that he had escaped alive after the battle. According to an account by a contemporary observer, Don Pedro de Ayala, he was a reckless and extravagant man, which could easily (Don Pedro guesses) account for his failure to capitalise on all his advantages at Flodden. (See Mackie (1958).)

110 - 112: There seems no reason why an extra (or a missing) line should occur here, but somehow the two manuscripts, for the only time in the poem, diverge significantly.

111: fayre: The Lyme scribe appears to have written a formulaic b-line, and the Percy reading is clearly right. This constant emphasis on the weakness of the English forces serves to emphasise the glory of the eventual victory.

114: Sir de la Mote: M. de la Mothe de Fenelon was the French ambassador to Scotland in 1512, and he went there three times to attempt to cement the crumbling relationship between France and Scotland. The message he was sent with on 5 March 1513 was actually asking James to delay his attack on England; it was Scotland's ambassador to France, James Ogilvy, who brought a letter of 8 May asking for re-inforcements and suggesting that James attack

England. By that time no English soldiers were yet in France, so the author, who assumes that Louis' request was because his towns were being 'halched' (line 99), has got his chronology wrong. M. de la Mothe actually fought (for Scotland) and died at Flodden. (See Brewer (1862, no. 3412); Wood (1933, pp. 44-69).)

115: bid buske and bowne: A common alliterative phrase (see Oakden (1935), vol. ii, p. 272). The link is seen in Bosworth Feilde lines 113 and 121.

119: the letter: Clearly better than the Percy MS reading.

123: weld: The Percy reading 'worke' is not senseless, but 'weld' ("rule") is more attractive as a bait to James.

125 - 126: Again (see note to line 111) the emphasis on how unprepared the English defences were.

127: the gome: The Percy reading 'he gan' is likely to be the error.

129: cossen: This is not quite the Shakespearian use of the word, when it can refer to anyone: James and Louis were, in fact, second cousins.

131: should be: The Percy reading (for once) has the better word-order, and also contains the idea of waiting until the army is ready, but L is satisfactory.

Blacator: Previous editors have taken this to be



Boroughmuir, near Edinburgh, where other sources say the Scots troops mustered. Bishop Percy noted, however (fol. 82), that Blackwater was a place in the Merse (South-east Scotland), and it was known as 'Blacator'. Lord Home's son Sir David Home, who was killed at Flodden, was known as 'The Laird of Blacater'. There is a river Blackadder which runs through Berwickshire, which probably gave rise to the name. (See Brennan (1902, vol. i, p. 164); Brewer (1862, no. 805).)

133: they come: Although the Percy reading 'there came' is what we would be more likely to say, the alliterative poets frequently provided a pronoun as subject and elucidated it later. The past tense 'come' for 'came' is also well-attested. The inference must be that the Percy scribe has once again modernised his text.

134: Orkenche: The Percy reading 'Orkney' is obviously the place referred to, but the ancient word 'inch' ("island") is an attractive reason for preferring the Lyme reading (which is 'Orkenche' and not 'Akenche' as Robson reads).

135: a gay lord: This will have been Archibald Douglas, 5th Earl of Angus, known as 'Bell the Cat', one of whose titles was 'Lord of Galloway'. He deserted just before the battle. His son, the 6th Earl, became Queen Margaret's second husband. (See Maxwell (1902, vol. i, p. 181).)

- 139: nyne score thousande: There are so many estimates of the size of the armies at Flodden that it is impossible to know how inaccurate this one is. It is certainly one of the largest, but it is in the interest of the English author to make the Scots army seem as daunting as possible.
- 140: tounge: The Lyme MS reading 'towne' is clearly an error.
- 141: light at a lotte: The precise meaning of this phrase is obscure, but it clearly has the approximate meaning "decided". Oakden, in his note (p. 19), examines the possibility of 'lotte' being a decision arrived at by lot, but remains unconvinced by his own conjecture.
- 142: Lord Mackesfelde: The person who actually led the Ill Roade (or Ill Raid), as this small expedition was called, was Alexander, 3rd Baron Home. How the name became corrupted to 'Mackesfelde' (which for the Lancashire/Cheshire audience would only mean the town of Macclesfield) or 'Maxwell' (Percy MS reading) is something of a mystery. There were border raids conducted by John, 4th Baron Maxwell, but they were not until the late 1530s, and all other evidence points to a date of composition far earlier than that (see pp. 93-4). The m-alliteration of the line more or less guarantees the authenticity of a name which at least begins with M.
- 142: move: The Lyme reading 'meane' is clearly unsatisfactory.

145: They rested: 'They' are the remainder of the Scots army who did not go with Lord Home.

rincks: As with 'leedes' in line 87, this word 'solves' the differences in the manuscripts: in 16th century hands, 'k' and 'r' (written more like our 'R') are very similar, and once it is assumed that the word being copied begins with 'k', the word looks approximately like 'knights' and that word makes good sense. The Percy scribe reads 'r', but is unfamiliar with the ancient word 'rincks', so writes 'riggs'. This problem occurs four times in the poem (here and lines 170, 174, 224), of which the Percy scribe gets it 'wrong' twice and the Lyme scribe twice.

146: hattell: an obvious emendation. The words 'him' and 'he' in the next line obviously signify a person rather than an event, not to mention the alliteration.

150: light on: This phrase usually has a neutral tone. Here, however, it is loaded with a sense of doom.

152: com[ing]: The manuscript reading 'comon', is possibly attracted from 'comons' earlier in the line. What is needed is the verbal noun 'coming'.

153: they/they: the Scots/the English.

154: Lord Dacres: Thomas, Lord Dacres of Gilsland, Warden of the Marches between England and Scotland, and therefore



the man responsible for border security. His cowardice here 'sets him up' for his later role as the scapegoat when the Cheshire men flee in line 332. Flodden was not the last time Lord Dacres was involved in border incidents. He died in 1523. (See Brewer (1862), nos. 2029, 2035; Ferguson (1890), p. 245.)

157: those men: The incomplete Lyme reading of this line could have been 'this meany', as in line 160.

159: Sir William Bowmer: Sir William Bulmer of Brancepeth. He probably fought for Richard III at Bosworth (the name Sir William Bonner (Lady Bessiye line 1088) has not been otherwise identified). As the Earl of Surrey was engaged in gathering troops in Yorkshire, he (Surrey) asked Bulmer to deal with Lord Home's raid. Bulmer set an ambush and attacked the raiders, who thought they had been most successful, as they were returning to Scotland. Before the Battle of Flodden he was one of the signatories to Surrey's letter to King James, an indication of his importance in the English army. After the battle he was made Sheriff of York. (See Brewer (1862), nos. 696, 4457, 4460; Weber (ed.) The Battle of Floddan Field, 162.)

that bold hath bene ever: As frequently happens, the Lyme MS word-order retains the old alliterative pattern while the Percy changes to natural word-order.

160: this: Combines the best features of both readings. See

also line 157.

163: Hearne: John Heron of Ford Castle (The Bastard Heron), was implicated in the murder of Sir Robert Ker, a Scots border guard, and James IV had unsuccessfully applied for his extradition. He helped Bulmer to see off the Ill Roade, and also took his part in the victory at Flodden. (His exploits are described in The Battle of Floddan Field, ed. Weber (1808), lines 410-27 and notes pp. 140, 190-1.)

bashed: The Percy MS reading 'bastard' is clearly wrong, as he definitely was illegitimate - but he had never been 'bashed' ("defeated").

166 - 167: The numbers are probably, as usual, exaggerated.

168: they: The subject of this sentence is the English forces, not, as might appear, both armies. This becomes clear when we read of the request for Mary's blessing on them in the b-line.

170: rincks: See note to line 145.

172: s[catell]: Neither of the MS words is known, so the word 'scatell', also used in 245, is adopted here. Perhaps 'schachlech' is a pun of sorts on the name 'Schlochlach', from which comes the Breretons of Schochlach and Malpas?

176 - 9: A short nature-description like this is a typical feature of alliterative battle-poetry. It is repeated, with additions, at lines 308-15.

182: egerly: The Lyme reading maintains the (vocalic) alliteration.

183: skochen: The Lyme reading has the advantages of an older word and a more precise alliteration with 'sk'.

193: In the Percy MS there is a break and the second Fitt starts at this line. The existence of the phrase 'as ye may heare after' is not necessarily the indication of a break (see, for example, line 151), although it is the sort of phrase which precedes breaks in some of the longer poems. In such poems, however, the fitts are much longer than 192 lines.

Mackesfeld : See note to line 142.

196: my: The Lyme reading 'his' gets the comparative sizes of the armies confused: 'my' must be correct.

198: witt wanteth: The Lyme text appears to provide a participle where a main verb is required, so the Percy reading is adopted. It is just possible, though difficult, to understand the Lyme reading as long as 'and' in the next line is omitted and 'wanted' is understood to mean 'wonted'. The Percy reading has the added advantage of better rhythm.

199: the sooth: an obvious emendation from a phrase which might mean something in a different context but is completely out of context here.



- 201: care mote ye happen!: "May trouble come to you!"
- 202: wynde you to wreke: "go to avenge you". The Percy reading seems to understand 'send' rather than 'wend' (or 'wynde').
- 203: And lying: What James means is that it won't take him long: he will only have to 'lie' (i.e. remain) in England for three weeks.
- 207: Noram: Norham Castle was the northernmost outpost of the Bishop of Durham. It had been unsuccessfully attacked by the Scots in 1497, and was thought to be virtually impregnable. In 1513 it capitulated within six days (23 to 29 August). After taking Norham, James also captured the local castles of Ford, Etal, and Wark, 'dallying', according to the famous legend, with the mistress of Ford Castle before moving on to Flodden.
- 210: This line appears to be a cliff-hanger: Will they be rescued in time? In fact, the next time we see James, the castle has already capitulated and his army is on Flodden Edge ready for battle.
- 214: into: As the man is riding from Yorkshire, 'into' seems a necessary emendation.
- a man: Ralph Purser was 'the man' who rode from 'Pomfret' into Lancashire. The letter is in Pat. Henry VIII, vol ii, m. 8d (also printed in Baines (1888), vol i,

p. 200). (See Brewer (1862, no. 4375).)

215: The Bishopp of Eley: James Stanley, 6th son of the 1st Earl of Derby. (For his contribution to the Bosworth campaign, see note to Lady Bessiye line 588.) He was made Warden of Manchester in 1485 and Bishop of Ely in 1506. He built the rectory at Somersham, near Ely, where, according to the vitriolic account of him by Bishop Godwin of Exeter, he spent most of his time with 'a certain woman'. This woman was Ada Ireland of the Hut (in Lancashire), by whom the Bishop had two children, John, much mentioned in this poem, and Margaret, who married first Henry Halsall and second John Osboldeston, both mentioned in Flodden Feilde (lines 281, 283). Rev. E.F.Letts tries to find an alternative and legitimate line of ancestry for Sir John Stanley, but to no avail. The Bishop seemed to spend most of each winter in Lancashire with either his father or one of his brothers, hence his presence there at the time of Surrey's summons. (See Letts (1888); Godwine (1601, pp. 223-4); Timbs and Gunn (1940, pp. 152-3); Raines (1885, pp. 34-44).)

219: standart: The standard of Ely would have been that of St Audrey (see note to line 370).

220: a captaine: As explained in line 228, this was Sir John Stanley, the Bishop's son.

222: Edward: Sir Edward Stanley, 5th son of the 1st Earl of

Derby. For his contribution to Bosworth, see note to Lady Bessiye line 588. He was appointed Sheriff of Lancaster in 1501, a position he held until his death. He was an early favourite with Henry VIII, who was attracted, says Seacome, 'by his martial spirit'; he was also very musical. After his exploits at Flodden he received a letter from Henry VIII and was elevated to the peerage as Lord Mouteagle. Towards the end of his life he had differences with his nephew, the 2nd Earl. He founded a religious house at Hornby, Lancashire, where he died in 1523. (See Seacome (1793), pp. 111-7.)

epe: The word 'rape' (a possible misreading if there was an omission mark) is meaningless, and the Percy 'epe' is used several times, alliterating both with vowels, as here, and with 'y', which betrays its origin as 'yepe'.

223: A difficult line, whatever reading one adopts. It is, firstly, an odd metaphor to talk of Sir Edward as a 'stalk'; perhaps it is a branch of the metaphor we use when we talk of a family tree, simply implying that he was a member of the family. 'Stepe' seems to be a noun (Robson suggests that it could mean "stalk" from the Latin 'stipes') denoting some kind of relationship, in which case 'him selven' must refer to the Bishop.

225: Skypton in Crane: Skipton in Craven, in West Yorkshire, formerly the property of Sir William Stanley (see note to line 11), but at the time of Flodden owned by Lord



Clifford.

- 228: Sir John Stanley: Natural son of James Stanley, Bishop of Ely, and of Ada Ireland. He led the Bishop's troops at Flodden, after which he was knighted. He seems to be a particular favourite of the author's, which may stem from his association with the family of Handforth, which is obviously special to the author (or the scribe) as it is in capital letters on the manuscript (line 347). He died in 1530.
- 234: 3: Although the Lyme text makes sense, the Percy reading here undoubtedly provides exactly the meaning that is required, and must be preferred: the Stanley crest was an eagle's foot with three crowns. For the origin of the crest see note to Lady Bessiye line 134.
- 239: hatell: The Percy MS reading 'batell' adds weight to the argument in the note to line 146.
- in hast that he might: "as quickly as he could"
- 240: Bolton in Glendowre: The three villages of Bolton, East Bolton, and West Bolton, are situated in Glendale to the west of Alnwick, Northumberland. This, according to Hall, is where the English army assembled, and where Admiral Thomas Howard, who had sailed round the coast, joined the army.
- 246: raked: The Lyme reading 'dayled' loses the alliteration

and is meaningless in context. 'Rayled' is an emendation of which Kane would approve, providing grounds for both variants, but The Percy MS 'raked' is the usual verb of 'going' alliterating with r, and is therefore preferred.

248: ungracious : The O.E.D. gives a meaning 'unfortunate', quoting this line as an example. The point, however, is that their position on Flodden Edge was not so much unfortunate as unfair: it was so good that the English could not possibly attack it from the front. As Sir Charles Oman said (1937, p. 301), 'The only defect of the Scottish position was that it was too strong for any reasonably-minded enemy to attack.' The choice of such a ground in a pre-arranged battle is surely 'ungracious' in the most normal sense of the word.

250 - 1: This is one of very few sentences in the poem with a dependent clause structure. It means: "Nobody could attack the Scots without being killed before he could get to the top of the mountain."

252: them: This pronoun is ambiguous: it could refer retrospectively to the 'sedges' of line 247, or, less likely, to the 'cloes' of line 251.

254: "If we had been beaten by those men, I would not have blamed us." This is a rather more subtle form of literary preparation than usual, and similar to the form used occasionally in Anglo-Saxon poems.

255: our: see note to line 92.

256: fettled: The confusion between 'settle' and 'fettle' is one that occurs several times in the manuscripts, best resolved by reading according to the alliteration. Here, 'settled' would suggest that they slept well, whereas 'fettled', the preferred reading, would mean they spent the night in a state of readiness.

258: There is no other evidence to support this threat by the captains.

259: [f]ettle: See note to line 256.

261: who might: The syntax is cloudy, though the meaning is obvious: "He was a lucky man who could get any water to drink."

264: Lord Howard: Thomas, eldest son of the Earl of Surrey, born 1473. When his brother Edward, Admiral of the English fleet, was killed off Brest in April 1513, Thomas replaced him as Admiral. He had been largely responsible for the mission against the pirate brothers Barton in the North Sea, which was one of the causes of James's declaration of war. After Flodden, when his father became Duke of Norfolk, he became Earl of Surrey. He died in 1544.

266: Sir Ewarde Howarde: Sir Edward Howard was, as stated above (note to line 264) killed in action off Brest in April



1513. The person meant here is Edmund Howard, third son of the Earl of Surrey. He is to be the scapegoat for the later retreat of the Cheshire forces, whence their lamentation at his appointment as their leader (lines 267-271 and Flodden Feilde line 60). He died in 1538.

267 - 8: The punctuation of these lines offers several possibilities, but it is easiest to take 'theire chance was the worse!' as a parenthetical interjection.

270: w[ee]: The (Percy) MS reading 'way' is the usual Percy substitution for 'wee', which is therefore adopted.

271: lanke: This could be from 'lang', "long-standing", implying that the decision to appoint Sir Edmund Howard as leader of the Cheshire troops caused long-term losses; Oakden, in his note on the line, says that the line means "Now meagre is their fame", but that is not what the Stanley poet would want to say, nor does it appear to be what the words say.

272: Lord Lumley: John, 6th Baron Lumley, born 1493. Lumley Castle is at Chester-le-Street, County Durham. His grandmother was the natural daughter of Edward IV by Lady Elizabeth Lucy. Hall mentions that he was at Flodden, but not that he carried St Cuthbert's banner. In 1536 Lord Lumley carried the banner in the Pilgrimage of Grace, so maybe the family had some right in the matter. (See Hutchinson (1785-94, vol ii, pp. 399-409); Benham (1904,

pp. 26-7.)

273: St Cutberd's banner: In Bishop Ruthal's letter to Wolsey after the battle, he says, 'All believe that it (the victory) was wrought by the intercession of St Cuthbert.' Certainly the banner had a history of successful intervention, for C.F.Battiscombe (1956, pp. 70-71) says of it:

It was dedicated to holy St Cuthbert of intent and purpose that the same should always be after presented and carried to any battle as occasion should serve, and which was never carried or shewed at any battle but by the especial grace of God Almighty and the mediation of holy St Cuthbert it brought home the victory.

It is also recorded that the banner was successful at Falkirk (1298), and Neville's Cross (1346). The banner was supposed to be impervious to fire, but when Mrs William Whittingham, wife of the dean in 1536, put it to the test, she found that it was not.

274: Lord Clifford: Henry de Clifford, 14th Lord Clifford, 10th Baron of Westmoreland, 1st Lord Vesci, born 1455. When Edward IV achieved his triumph in the Wars of the Roses, the Clifford lands at Skipton were confiscated because the Cliffords had been staunch Lancastrians, and given to Sir William Stanley. They were returned under Henry VII. Because of the Yorkist victory, young Henry Clifford spent his childhood as a fugitive, mostly at a farm in Threlkeld, Cumbria. He is said to have grown up more or less illiterate, but made up for this in later life by

retiring as a recluse to his home in Barden, Yorkshire, and devoting his time to study. He fought at Bosworth and, at the age of sixty, he led the Craven troops to Flodden, from which he carried off the Scots' most famous ordinance, the 'Seven Sisters'. He married Joan Stanley, sister of the 2nd Earl of Derby. He died in 1523. (See Brewer (1862), nos. 1179, 4439, 5561; Ward (1891), pp. 43-48; Dawson (1882), pp. 218-224; Whitaker (1878), pp. 324-7; Nicolson and Burn (1777), pp. 285-7.)

275: Sir William Percy: Second brother of the Earl of Northumberland, who was in France with Henry VIII (see line 70). He was a signatory of Surrey's letter to James IV. Holinshed reports his presence at the battle, and that he was knighted afterwards. He was greatly admired by the Percy historian, who calls him 'honest William'. (See Brenan (1902), vol. i, pp. 150-151 and 168.)

276: Sir William Bawmer: See note to line 159.

279: freekes: The Percy MS reading 'tokens' looks like an attempt to increase alliteration. It makes little sense in this context.

280: Surrey: See note to line 60.

281: Lord Scroupe: Henry, 7th Lord Scrope of Bolton (Yorkshire). He married Margaret, daughter of Lord Dacres. His son, John, married Catherine Clifford, and his daughter Joan married Lord Lumley. He died in 1533.



(See Hutchinson (1785-94), vol ii, p. 383; Whitaker (1823) vol i, pp. 378-83; Foster (1874, vol ii).

282: yf ye: This is a conditional clause which the Percy MS fails to conclude.

283: a bishop: James Stanley of Ely. See note to line 215.

283: Lathum: The chief seat of the Earls of Derby until it was burnt down in the Civil War (when Charles Stanley, the famous 7th Earl, was executed). See note to Lady Bessiye line 350. The word 'Lathum' is one of two words (Honforde in line 347 being the other) which appears in capital letters on the manuscript. It would not be surprising for there to be some connection between the poet and the house, it being the chief seat of the Stanley family. (See Thompson (1894), pp. 42-3.)

285: an egg: An odd image, but a possible one, meaning, by metaphorical extension, "an offspring". The transferred alliteration (as if 'a negg') is not uncommon in alliterative poems. The Percy reading 'and nere of blood' is fairly attractive as an alternative, but the repetition of 'nere of' in the next line weighs against it.

286: the Nevills: James Stanley's mother was Eleanor Neville, sister of the Earl of Warwick ('the Kingmaker'). The Percy reading must be preferred, partly because of the maintained alliteration, but also because of its historical precision.

296: Sir John Stanley: See note to line 228.

298: Lord Munteegle: Sir Edward Stanley. See note to line 222.

302: grounde: The Percy reading 'land' results in excessive alliteration.

304: night: The Lyme scribe is this time the one who sleeps (see note to line 173).

307: besides Barwick: This is Barmoor Wood, four miles east of Flodden, where, according to most sources, the English army spent the night of Thursday 8th September.

308 - 15: A longer version of the nature interlude already seen in lines 176-9. That it is a literary convention is seen in the fact that other sources record that the weather was dreadful.

309: cast up: 'God' is the subject of this verb, 'cloudes' the object.

311: leames: The Percy reading retains the alliteration.

316 - 20: The precise order of events is not clear from the poem. What other sources say actually happened is that the English marched northwards; the Scots, persuaded that the English were going to ravage the south of Scotland, burnt camp and set off after them; having succeeded in drawing the Scots down off the hill, the English then

wheeled round to face them.

319: mothers: This appears to be a hurried, careless, unpoetic phrase. But it could be an abbreviated form of the praise bestowed by Hrothgar on Beowulf (lines 942-6).

320: and we: The Lyme MS retains a subject for the sentence, which is lost in the Percy reading.

322: shalmes this word appears at first to be a subject, but the syntax only 'works' if it is the second object of 'triden'.

325: gunnes: Oman (1937, p. 314) says, 'There can have been only a few rounds fired on either side.'

326: arrowes: Oman (1937, p. 320) says, 'Arrows played no part in the decision. It is more often suggested that archers were almost wholly responsible for the victory, e.g. Churchill (1956, vol. ii, p. 29): 'The English archers once again directed upon these redoubtable masses a long, intense and murderous arrow-storm.'

327: put many over: This could mean that they put many spears over (i.e. threw them), or that they put many men over (i.e. killed them). In view of the next line, the second meaning seems better.

328: harnes: The Percy reading, 'harnish', seems to be an attempt at the word 'harness', but what is intended, and understood by the Lyme scribe, is the ancient word



'harnes', meaning "brains".

332: a checke: This is the crucial moment of the battle, and, more importantly, of the poem.

333: was: The Percy 'with' is redundant.

335: away: The Percy reading, 'kered away', is attractive, but 'kere' is not usually transitive. It seems like a scribal attempt to regularise the alliteration.

339: swyers: This could be a form of 'squires', as the Percy reading obviously believes, but the better interpretation is that here we have an old word 'swyers' meaning "necks".

swapped: A better reading than the Percy 'snapped' because the alliteration is on the consonant cluster. Ironically, the meaning of 'snapped' fits well with "necks", but as 'swapped' means "cut off" that is even better.

340: Sir John Booth: The Booths held the manor of Barton (on the north-west edge of Manchester) from 1292 until 1550. Sir John was the second son of Sir Thomas Booth. The first son, Thomas, married Anne Assheton (under Lyne), and their son, Robert, was the last Booth of Barton. The hall was demolished in 1879. Sir John Booth married Eleanor Byron of Newstead. He died at Flodden. (See Brewer (1862, no. 4462); W. Booth, 'The Booths of Barton' unpublished thesis now in the Public Library in Eccles.

343: Sir William Warkehoppe: This is probably an error for Sir

Robert Warcop, who was certainly at Flodden. Sir Robert was Receiver General of Crown Lands in Westmoreland and Cumberland in 1513.

344: Sir William: The prefix 'fitz', perhaps because of its improper associations, seems to cause some difficulty with scribes: even in the State Papers (Brewer (1862, no. 4632)), we read Fythwilliam. The Scottish Feilde variants, 'Sir' and 'figh' are further examples, as also are the attempts at the name 'Fitzwater' in Flodden Feilde, lines 257 and 277. Referred to here is undoubtedly Sir Thomas Fitzwilliam of Aldwark, Wadworth and Steveton. Wadworth is just east of Rotherham, which helps the identification. He is mentioned in the Commission of Array for the West Riding, and died at Flodden. (See Brewer (1862, nos. 3735, 3358); Foster (1874, vol i, sub. 'Fitzwilliam').)

346: the barne of Kinderton: Sir Thomas Venables of Kinderton (east of Middlewich, Cheshire). The Venables family was one of the oldest in Cheshire, and was related to many of the other families. Sir Thomas was married to a daughter of Sir John Dutton (Flodden Feilde line 185). He and his son, William, were both killed at Flodden. (See Ormerod (1882, vol. iii, pp. 187-200).)

347: HONFORDE: The capital letters of this name in the Lyme MS are an indication of something significant, perhaps the author's own connection with the family. His obvious

favouring of Sir John Stanley could be important, for Sir John married Margaret, daughter of William Handforth of Handforth (south of Manchester). In Cheadle Church there is a window commemorating Sir John and Margaret, and two effigies thought to be of Sir John (Stanley) and Sir William Handforth, although the identity of the second is debated. An inscription reads, 'Pray for the souls of Sir John Stanley, knight, and the Lady Margaret, his wife, and William Hanford ... 1530.' Sir William's father, John Handforth, married Margaret Savage of Clifton, so the family was doubly related to the Stanleys. Sir William Handforth was born in 1476 and died at Flodden. (See Ormerod (1882, vol. ii, p. 686); Croston (1883, pp. 185-6); Moss (1894, pp. 76-9). And see family tree, p. 272.)

- 348: Fullsewise: J. Croston (1887, pp. 178-9) is convinced that this is Robert Fouleshurst of Crewe, who was killed at Flodden. He was married to Joan, sister of William Molyneux of Sefton. (See Croston, p. 189.)
- 349: Christopher Savadge: The fifth of nine brothers of whom the eldest was Sir John (line 12). Christopher was Mayor of Macclesfield in 1513, and he and many of the men he took with him from that town were killed at Flodden. (See Croston (1887, pp. 178-9).)
- 350: John Lawrens: Probably John Lawrens of Dun, noted in Trewe Encountre as having been at Flodden.



our Lord have: The Percy reading of this line lacks both rhythm and alliteration.

351: for feare that: The syntax is cloudy but the meaning is clear. See note to line 21.

354: joyning: This could be the joining of two divisions of the Scottish army; or maybe the Percy reading 'joyinge', suggesting exuberance, would be better.

355: King: The Percy addition 'keenlie' is possibly through concern for alliteration, but the word 'Scotts' already provides the alliterating sound.

355 - 74: The listing of standards of the opposing forces is a feature of Wynnere and Wastoure (lines 143-87).

362: Sir Thomas Jared: Sir Thomas Gerard of Bryn (near Wigan). He was distantly related to the Stanleys, his mother being Margaret Stanley of Hooton. Foster (1873, sub. 'Gerard') records that

At Flodden, both armies engaging, Sir Thomas behaved himself with great valour, and to the Lancashire archers the fame of that great victory is generally owned.

His son married Jane Legh of Lyme, and his three daughters married into the families of Legh of Lyme, Bold of Bold, and Assheton of Middleton. Sir Thomas died in 1523.

363: Sir William Molynex: of Sefton (Liverpool), born 1483, son of Thomas Molyneux and Anne nee Dutton. William was one

of the signatories to Surrey's letter to James IV just before Flodden. He was clearly a hero in the battle, for he was one of few who received personal letters from the King. The inscription to him in St Helen's Church, Sefton, reads,

William Molyneux Knight and Lord of Sefton was thrice sent against the Scots when Henry VIII was King in England, and acquitted himself bravely, but especially at Flodden, where he captured with his own hands two standards of arms of the Scots who were most strongly resisting.

He had two sons and two daughters, who by their several marriages united with the families of Ratcliffe, Bold, Osboldeston, and Halsall (all mentioned in Flodden Feilde as being families close the Earl of Derby). (See Horley (1893, pp. 22-32); Lofthouse (1972, pp. 61-6.)

for feare of no weapon: The double negative again (see note to line 21) with verbs of fearing.

365: sticke: The Percy reading 'strike' is passable, but 'sticke' in the sense of "stay" is better.

366: bashed: As this refers to the previous military engagement at Berwick (1496) and not to Barmoor Wood, which was erroneously called Berwick in line 307, the Lyme reading is clearly preferable to the Percy 'busked' ("prepared").

367: the bird: This is the subject of the sentence, the elucidation of the pronoun 'he' in the a-line. The Percy scribe, apparently thinking it was the object of 'baters and beates', changed the sex of the bird and wrote 'her

wings'.

- 370: St [Audrey]: Previous editors (Oakden, and Robson, who because of his peculiar numbering is commenting on what he calls line 546) have tended to assume that this is a simple error for the standard of St Cuthbert (mentioned in line 273). A more logical explanation is that St Towder and St Tander are misreadings of St Audrey ('St' is often written as 'S'), whose banner was the standard of the Bishop of Ely.
- 372: Mountegle: Sir Edward Stanley. See note to line 222.
- 373: Lord Dakers: As Lord Dacres of Gilsland has already received such a bad press (lines 154 and 333), it is unlikely that the author is now going to heap praise on him. This is possibly a reference to Sir Thomas Darcy, a Yorkshire knight who distinguished himself at the battle. (See Brewer (1862), nos. 4439 and 4441.)
- 389: the banner of a bishopp: This (see note to line 370) would have been the banner of St Audrey from Ely. Tradition has it that King James was killed by Thomas Stanley, son of Sir Edward Stanley.
- 394-5: The scribes appear to have understood the syntax of these lines differently; the Percy version is right.
- 397: their blessed King: This line appears to refer to a truce between James and Henry.
- 403: Brymstone: An error (or a pun?) for Branxton, the actual



site of the battle.

406: tithandes: It was this message, sent by Surrey to King Henry in France, that caused the anguish in Flodden Feilde.

408: rescowed: the Percy reading 'restored' is attractive, but not a necessary emendation, as 'rescowed' makes good sense.

410: of his kindness: "out of kindness". The Lyme reading, which omits 'of', could be for 'his highness'.

412: to my name: Furnivall assumes this is part of the King's speech, and that the 'noise' was 'to my name', i.e. to the glory of Henry's name, which is perhaps safe; but the verb in the next line is in the past tense, which suggests that it may be the author describing the noise that was made, with 'to my name' meaning "to my knowledge". The verb 'nimen', to understand (MED) is a possible source for this (?) corruption.

419: ye see: If this text is right (and the Percy reading is quite different but no more explicit), the word 'see' suddenly suggests the poem is to be read rather than heard; it is an isolated example, and all other internal information tends to suggest oral delivery.

421: old: The Lyme reading 'long' is probably attracted from the same word later in the line. The Percy reading is better sense and also maintains the alliteration.

C O M M E N T A R Y   O N

F L O D D E N      F E I L D E

## COMMENTARY - FLODDEN FEILDE

1: nowe: As with the longer poem The Battle of Floddan Field (ed. H. Weber (Edinburgh, 1808)), the opening lines appear to be a continuation from somewhere else.. It could perhaps be that both poems were originally parts of longer poems, but this assumption is not necessary, particularly if the poem is to be read aloud.

the mounte of Floden: Flodden Edge, the hill which has given its name to the battle, although the battle actually took place on Branxton Hill. These hills are in Northumberland about five miles from the Scottish border.

2: suche: It is not clear what this refers back to. If the poem is, as line 1 suggests, a continuation, the previous lines could have been discussing previous successes, in which case the line could mean, "We had the same sort of luck there." If the poem is not a continuation, the reciter might be saying, "Now we have an opportunity to talk about it."

3: tythandes: This is probably intended to be the message that Surrey sent at the end of Scotish Feilde (line 406). It even repeats the word 'tythandes' from that line. There are reports that a wrong account of the battle did reach Henry at Tournai, but there is no evidence that Surrey was the man responsible for that account. It is also possible that the report in other sources is based on this poem. The letter that did come from Surrey, and which was



forwarded with the Queen's letter (whereas this poem says the Queen's letter arrived later to correct the false impression given by Surrey's letter - see lines 354-372), is in Brewer (1862, no. 4451).

the Earle of Surrey: See note to Scotish Feilde line 60.

- 4: our Kynge: Henry VIII, who was, at the time of the Battle of Flodden, fighting a different campaign in Northern France. We tend to think of Henry VIII as the large, middle-aged man of the Holbein painting and the six wives, and it is salutary to remember that while leading this campaign in France he was but twenty-two years old.
- 9: after: This at first appears to be a conjunction, but must be an adverb.
- 11: Tyrwyn: Therouanne, near St Omer in the Pas de Calais departement. That town had surrendered on 13th August, and the English army had moved on to besiege Tournai, a fact apparently unknown to the English army at Flodden, for there is mention of 'Tirwin' in Scotish Feilde (lines 79, 92), and after the battle, Surrey sends his report to the King at Therouanne.
- 14: layne: past tense of 'lie' rather than past participle of 'lay'. Previous editors, who had (incorrectly) read 'tayne' in one of the manuscripts, seemed to think that these were English soldiers who had been captured; but the English had won the town, so the soldiers there would

probably have been a garrison.

15: Torney: Tournai, the second town the English besieged. All the action in this poem takes place outside the walls of this town.

16: the Emperour of Almayne: Maximilian I, born 1459, son of Frederick III. He became King of Germany in 1486, Emperor in 1493. In 1511 he joined the Holy League, in which most Western European countries united against France. In 1513 he helped Henry VIII to win the Battle of the Spurs. Whether Maximilian was in (or outside) Tournai in 1513 is not known. He died in 1519.

19 - 20: This phrase becomes a formula: see lines 54, 91-2, 293-4, 355-6.

20 - 21: "May Christ be your speede (i.e. help) this day!"

25: fares: Furnivall says that this is an old northern plural. What happens in several of these poems is that instances occur where we would say there is lack of grammatical agreement. It may be a dialectal feature.

29: to venter your chance: "to give it a try". Now that James has been defeated at Flodden, there is nothing to hold Henry back if he should need to stay longer in France.

30: brother: James IV of Scotland had married Henry VIII's sister Margaret in 1503. In earlier times the distinction between blood relations and in-laws was not always as

rigorously upheld as nowadays. Even so, later in this poem (line 362) the precise nature of the relationship is given. For details of James IV, see note to Scotish Feilde line 106.

31: at London: Although there is some doubt as to the final resting-place of James IV's body, Shene Abbey near Richmond in Surrey is the best attested.

32: in the presence of the: ('the' for 'thee', as usual). This harmless-looking phrase cannot mean what it says: by the time Henry returns to England, possibly many months later, James's body will not still be in his 'presence', either in the normal sense of the word, or in its technical sense: 'presence' is a room in a palace. It seems more likely that the phrase is a respectful nod from the messenger, similar, perhaps, to our 'saving your presence'. The phrase occurs again in line 364.

34 - 6: These questions are precisely repeated when the second messenger arrives (lines 366-8). The whole of this scene carries an ironic tone, as the slur here cast on the Lancashire and Cheshire troops will be entirely reversed in the later scene. This technique of playing a scene twice, the second time with variations, is used several times.

37 - 8: For an explanation of what actually happened at Flodden, see pp. 103-8.

39: the Earle of Derby: Thomas Stanley, 2nd Earl of Derby, the



hero of the poem. For details of his life, see note to Scotish Feilde line 67.

41: still in a study: This phrase, commonly used in Lady Bessiye, means "astounded".

44: red: R.H.Evans (1810, note to this line) glossed this as 'blushed', but it means "read".

47: Kynge of Man: See note to Lady Bessiye line 172 for an explanation of the Stanleys' connection with the Isle of Man.

53: Sir Rauphe Egerton: Ralph Egerton (pronounced 'Edge-erton'), second son of Philip Egerton of Egerton (Cheshire). He was a successor to Sir William Stanley as Ranger of Delameer Forest, served served with great distinction in France, being knighted at Tournai, and was given the office of Standard-Bearer to the King for life. J. Croston (1887, pp. 134-6) unaccountably uses this line of this poem as evidence that Sir Ralph fought at Flodden. In 1514 he was granted the lands of Ridley (near Egerton), a gift which is the foundation of the 85-line interpolation in the Percy MS version of this poem. He was married to Elizabeth Warburton and died in 1528. (See Brewer (1862, nos. 3885, 4237, 4306, 4307, 4314, 4636, 4468, 4748); Ormerod (1882, vol. ii, p. 301 and pp. 620-8).)

60: for wante of their captayne: This excuse for the flight of the Cheshire troops is also used in Scotish Feilde

lines 336-7.

61 - 64: The syntax here is loose, but the sense of the stanza is fairly clear.

65: so yt proved well: The King seems to have a taste for sarcasm in this poem: see also lines 96-8.

69: Wylliam Breerton: Son of Andrew Brereton, brother and heir of the previous William Brereton of Brereton (near Middlewich, Cheshire). He was knighted at Tournai, and in 1516 was made Chief Justice and Lord High Marshal of Ireland. He died in 1541. His cousin, Sir Randle Brereton of Malpas, was also at Flodden. Randle's brother, Humphrey Brereton of Malpas, is the probable author of Lady Bessiye.

Randle's son Urian married Sir John Stanley's ex-wife Margaret (nee Handforth), thus founding the Breretons of Handforth. (See Ormerod (1882, vol. ii, p. 686 and vol. iii, pp. 81, 639); Angus- Butterworth (1932, p. 18.)

74: and: There is a strong case for omitting this word, as it is the Earl's leadership rather than the soldiers' courage which is in question; but as all three manuscripts have the word, and as some sense can be made of the line, it is perhaps safer to retain it.

76: borne: We still use the idiomatic expression 'true-born'; here we see its opposite, 'false-born'.

77: Compton: Sir William Compton, a Warwickshire gentleman and

a very successful man under Henry VIII. When he died he held land in eighteen counties. He was knighted at Tournai.

78: righte: This word is used three times within twelve lines with three different meanings.

85: a: Inserted partly on the grounds of sense, but also because the phrase is repeated at line 108. It also appears in The Hunting of the Cheviot line 121.

besyde the ground: This much repeated phrase means "from the spot".

88: returned hym: Reflexive, with the meaning "turned on his heel".

89: came: The Earl of Derby now arrives, conveniently breaking up the quarrel, in response to the King's summons delivered in line 47.

112: noe more helpe: The Earl asks for an opportunity to wreak destruction on these places with no forces other than his own Lancashire and Cheshire men.

120: on the roode: However the stanzas are divided, and however one looks for simple emendations, the rhyme fails here. Only a major alteration could rescue it.

123 - 4: "Even cowards will fight bravely if the rewards are great enough." Henry refuses the Earl's offer, believing



that the test would not be under fair conditions.

127: The Earl now recalls the most famous previous exploit of the Lancashire and Cheshire men, that of Bosworth, well celebrated, as far as the Stanleys were concerned, in Lady Bessiye and Bosworth Feilde. For Henry's landing at Milford Haven, see note to Lady Bessiye line 999.

128: It seems easiest to take this line as a parenthetical explanantory comment by the author rather than as part of the Earl's speech: Henry VIII would hardly need to be reminded of his own father's name, whereas an audience might.

129: towne of Fortune: Previous editors have suggested emending this to 'turn of Fortune' (Weber even calls the emendation 'obvious'); but there is no need or justification for this: it is clear that a geographical description of the route from Milford Haven to Shrewsbury is being given, however much of a double meaning 'Fortune' may, whether intentionally or not, suggest. Furnivall & Hales and Evans both mention Forton in Staffordshire, but that would be a very roundabout way from Wales to Shrewsbury. As there is a small town called Forton just west of Shrewsbury, it is hard to see why it has caused such a problem.

132: Richard: Richard III, 1483-5.

demed to dye: = "killed".

- 134: returned hym: As in line 88, this means "stalked off".  
'In same' ("together", MED), presumably with his entourage.
- 136: Duke of Bokingham: See note to Scotish Feilde line 66.
- 137: brother: However many times Buckingham calls Derby 'brother' (lines 145, 204, 381), it is not so.
- 138: thyng: In view of the further repetitions of this phrase (lines 198, 382), where 'tithandes' is the word used, it is probable that 'tithandes' was the original word in this line. It is easy to see how 'tithandes' could have led to 'tythings' and that to 'things'.
- 141: King Richard feylde: The field of King Richard, i.e. Bosworth, where it is supposed that Sir William Stanley ('thyne uncle') killed the Duke of Norfolk ('his father').
- 144: Sir Christofer Savage: The Savage who played the most important role at Bosworth was Sir John, Christopher's eldest brother, who may be meant here, but it may be that Sir Christopher was the one to capture the standard. He received a reward from Henry after the battle, as is recorded in W. Campbell, (1873, vol. i, p. 10). He is

mentioned later in this poem for his likely death at Flodden (line 181) and also in Scotish Feilde line 349.

away: The Percy reading 'always' is a nonsense, as it would imply that Savage was on the other side.

151: Sir Edward Stanley: See note to Scotish Feilde line 222.

157: Kyghley: See note to Scotish Feilde line 361.

159: Lathum: See note to Scotish Feilde line 283.

161: Towneley: Sir John Towneley of Towneley (east of Burnley, Lancashire), son of Sir Richard Towneley and Jane nee Southworth (of Samlesbury). He married Anne Radcliffe. Lofthouse (1972, p. 213) records that he was knighted on the field of battle. He died in 1540. (See Espinasse (1877, p. 240); G.C.Yates, (1892), pp. 86-91.)

162: Hashton of Mydelton: The Assheton family had held Middleton (northeast of Manchester) since 1438, when the manor was conveyed by marriage to Ralph, known as the Black Knight of Ashton. Sir Richard Assheton, the one referred to here, is a direct descendant of the Black Knight. Foster (1873, sub. 'Ashton') writes that Sir Richard

received the honour of knighthood for his valiant bearing on the celebrated field of Flodden, where he took the Scottish standard-bearer's sword and made Sir James Foreman, the Scots' monarch's serjeant-porter, prisoner.

Sir Richard also received from the King a letter of thanks



(now in the Chester archives) for the contribution the Middleton archers made to the victory. In 1524 Sir Richard re-built Middleton Church as a thank-offering, consecrating it, relevantly, on 9th September. The window to the south of the altar commemorates the victory, and bears the inscription:

Orate pro bono statu Ricardi Assheton et eorum qui hanc fenestram fieri fecerunt, quorum nomina et imagines ut supra ostenduntur. Anno domini MCCCCCV.

(Pray for the good estate of Richard Assheton and of those who caused this window to be made, whose names and pictures are shown as above. A.D. 1505)

The date is, for some reason, quite wrong and should read MCCCCXXIV. Sir Richard and his wife and eighteen named archers appear represented on the window. There are in the church a banner, reputedly carried at Flodden but now thought to be more modern; and a helmet thought to have been captured from a Scottish soldier. Sir Richard was born in 1484 and died in 1549. (See J. Dean, A History of Middleton (Oldham, n.d.), and the many relics, charts and documents in St Leonard's Church, Middleton.)

163: Sothewarke: The Southworth family occupied Samlesbury Hall (east of Preston), but Moore (1894, p. 5) records that it was granted to the Earl of Derby in 1488 and also (p. 10) that it was among the properties of the 2nd Earl at his death. At Flodden were Sir John Southworth, son of Sir Christopher Southworth and Isabel nee Dutton; and Sir John's 16-year-old son Thomas, who later married Margaret

Butler. (See W.A.Abram, (1899), pp. 659-60; J.Croston, (1871)).

165: Hashton under Lyne: Sir Thomas Assheton, son of Sir John Assheton and Mary nee Biron (of Clayton). Of him W. Bowman (1960, pp. 253-5) writes:

It may be that Sir Thomas Assheton IV, last of his line, led his brave Ashton men to meet the Scottish invaders. There can be little doubt that Sir Thomas would join forces with his relative Richard Assheton of Middleton, ..., and that they would lead their respective tenantry to meet Earl [sic] Stanley's gathering of Lancashire and Cheshire troops at Hornby.

He was knighted in 1492. His daughter Elizabeth married Ralph Assheton of Middleton. He died in 1516. (See W. Bowman, (1960), pp. 252-5; W. Glover, (1884), pp. 48-73; Ormerod (1882, vol. iii, pp. 866-7).)

166: Mollenax: See note to Scotish Feilde line 363.

169: Aderton: In view of the reading 'Anderton' in MS S, which is nearly always right on names when he corrects from H, there is a possibility that this is a reference to one of the several Anderton families of the area. However Hope (1892, pp. 3-4) explains that 'Atherton' has many spellings, of which 'Aderton' and 'Adderton' are two. Robson originally suggested (Furnivall and Hales, 1867-8, vol. i, p. 325 n.) that Atherton was the place meant here. In 1513 Atherton Hall was the property of George Atherton of Atherton, who married first Anne, daughter of Richard Assheton of Middleton, and second Anne, daughter of Sir



Thomas Butler of Bewsey. He died in 1518. A second possibility is that the Earl of Derby is referring to Sir Thomas Atherton of Bickerstaffe, who must have been a close friend of his, being named as an executor of his will. (See Draper (1864, p. 42); T.H.Hope, (1892, pp. 3-4.))

mall: The B MS reading 'wall' is an obvious error. The 'mall' or hammer is, according to Hope, the Athertons' armorial device.

171: at: To take leave 'at' has dictionary support as an alternative to 'of', but a copying error is possible, as in early hands the words 'of' and 'att' are very similar.

173: Sir John Boothe: See note to Scotish Feilde line 340.

176: schunte: This formula occurs five times (lines 154, 168, 176, 184, 192) but the verb, which is necessary to the sense, is unaccountably omitted from the manuscripts on the last three occasions. It must be replaced.

177: Butteler: Sir Thomas Butler of Bewsey, 15th Baron of Warrington, a cousin of the 2nd Earl of Derby: his mother, Margaret, was a sister of the 1st Earl. His father was the Sir John Butler who caused such a stir in the annals of the Stanleys by his quarrel and near murder, as recorded in the poem Sir John Butler. Sir Thomas founded the Boteler Grammar School in Warrington, and in the early records of that establishment is mention of the



fact that he fought at Flodden. By the marriages of his children his family became related to the families of Legh, Bold, Booth, Brereton, Atherton, Southworth, and Keighley. He died in 1522. (See W.Beamont (1872, pp. 333-421).)

Sir Bode: Sir Richard Bold of Bold (north of Widnes). He married Margaret, daughter of Sir Thomas Butler, so the associating of the two names in one line has more than alliterative conjunction. His son married a daughter of Sir Thomas Gerrard of Bryn. He died in 1529. (See M.Gregson, (1824, p. 188).)

180: This line must mean, "If you were still alive", but the scribes found it difficult to understand, to judge by their different readings.

181: Christofer Savage: See note to line 144.

185: Dutton: Sir Piers Dutton of Dutton, who, as Mayor of Chester in 1513, would have been required to furnish troops for the battle. The Dutton family is one of the most important in the early history of Chester. He died in 1546. (See Ormerod (1882, vol. i, pp. 643-51 and vol. ii, pp. 792-6); R.H.Morris, (1894, pp. 581-2); G.B.Morgan, (1901, pp. 17-29).)

Sir Downe: Sir Richard Done (pronounced to rhyme with 'stone') of Utkinton, Cheshire. The Dones of Utkinton had been for many years Foresters of Delamere, and were,

according to Moss (1901, p. 20), a savage and vindictive family. Sir Richard fought at Flodden, married into the family of Gerard of Bryn, and died in 1517. (See Ormerod (1882, vol. ii, pp. 136 & 244, and vol. iii, p. 898); R.H.Morris, (1894, p. 66.))

187: the Baron of Kynderton: See note to Scotish Feilde line 346.

189: Seton of Gowsewurthe: This, as is correctly indicated in MS S, should be Fitton of Gawsworth (south-west of Macclesfield). The reference is to Edward Fitton, who was captured at Flodden by the Scots. The Fittons apparently had a reputation as soldiers, for they were known as 'The Fighting Fittons'. (See Ormerod (1882, vol. iii, pp. 547-52); Beamont (1872, p. 387; R. Richards, (1957, p. 20); H.E.Polehampton, (1924, p. 149).)

194: the Duke and the Earl: Still the Duke of Buckingham and the Earl of Derby, whose conversation has now been going on for over fifty lines.

195: Talbot: See note to Scotish Feilde line 68.

196: and: All the manuscripts include this word, but as 'Talbot' and 'the Earl of Shrewsbury' are one and the same person, it must be an error which entered the manuscript history at an earlier date.

197: sonne: As in line 137 (and elsewhere), relationship is

claimed without justification.

199 - 200: The Earl of Shrewsbury tries to comfort the Earl of Derby by suggesting that he will be able to use his special influence with Henry to regain favour for him.

201: he: The Earl of Derby.

205: Lancaster: In 1488 the lands in Lancaster of Viscount Lovell, which had been forfeited to the crown, were given to the Earl of Derby. The 2nd Earl, at his death, held two manors there. (See Moore (1894, pp. 6-10).)

208: There is apparently some corruption in this line. The rhyme fails, but so does the sense. Robson (see Furnivall's note on this line) suggests 'When in the lane they weeping lie', which restores the rhyme, but does not explain why poor people should be lying in the lane (or lawn, if the B MS reading is preferred).

209: Lathum: See note to Lady Bessiye line 350.

212: This would seem to mean that there have been three royal visits there rather than that the house is large enough to accommodate three kings at once.

213: Knoweslay: Knowsley Hall, now the principal seat of the Earl of Derby, but in 1513 of second importance after Lathom. Knowsley had been a possession of the Lathom family, and the Stanleys gained it in 1385 when Sir John Stanley married Isabella de Lathom. The Hall and the Park



lie between Liverpool and St Helens.

- 217: Tockestaffe: Toxteth Park, which gives its name to one of the Liverpool parliamentary constituencies, is now mostly Sefton Park, the Molyneux family having at one time owned it. The custody of the park was in 1447 given to Sir Thomas Stanley, and this office descended in the family until 1596. It was among the possessions of the 2nd Earl of Derby at his death. (See Moore (1894, p. 10); H.O.Aspinall, (1923, p. 9).)
- 218: rever: The only river running near Toxteth is the Mersey, but there is a large lake in the grounds of the park.
- 221: Byrkhead: R.Stewart-Brown (1925, pp. 93-4) quotes these lines from Flodden Feilde about the Earl of Derby being born in Birkenhead, but says he can find no other evidence to support it. He surmises that it may have been a port of call on the regular journey between Lathom and Bidston, but that is only conjecture. According to a Royal Commission of 1534 the Earl of Derby was the founder of the Abbey, but Stewart-Brown thinks this too may not be true.
- 224: Beeston: Although there is a Beeston in Cheshire, it has no connection with the Earls of Derby, and this reference is almost certainly an error for 'Bidston', now a small village north-west of Birkenhead, but in 1513 the most important hunting-manor of the Earls of Derby. Sir John

Stanley purchased the manors of Bidston, Moreton, and Saughall Massie from the Strange family of Knockyn (ironically the title inherited by the 2nd Earl's father) in 1397. (See R. Stewart-Brown, op. cit.; J. Brownbill, (1936, pp. 177-86; Moore (1894, p. 8).)

225: Westchester: = Chester. See note to Lady Bessiye line 418.

226: the Water Gate: Chester has four main gates as well as several minor ones, and these gates used to be privately owned. Water-Gate, the main gate on the west side of the city, was owned by William de Doncaster in 1345 and in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries (until 1788) by the Earls of Derby, but as R.H. Morris explains (1894, p. 225), 'It is not known how it passed from the Doncaster family to the Stanleys.' (See also F.Simpson, (1910, p. 36).)

227: sergeant: The duties of the Sergeant of the Water-Gate included accompanying the Mayor on his visits westward. (See Morris (1894), p. 225.)

230: Edward: Later Edward, 3rd Earl of Derby, born 1509. He married Dorothy Howard in 1528, thus, one assumes, healing (if it hadn't already been healed by then) the rift between the Stanleys and the Howards which is such a feature of these two Flodden poems.

231: Westharden: = Hawarden. See note to Lady Bessiye line 15.

myn: This is a perfectly well attested verb meaning "call", but that does not necessarily invalidate the reading of the Percy scribe, 'may call thee myn', where 'myn' becomes a possessive adjective, although the most obvious explanation for that reading is that the scribe is following his frequent practice of emending what he fails to understand.

233: white bokes: O.E.D. says these are books of official records, bound in white, from mediaeval Latin 'liber albus'. It seems that in this context the books have some charitable connection.

235: Hope: The manor of Hope (also known as 'Hope Owen', north of Wrexham, North Wales) was granted to Sir John Stanley in 1401, and this grant was confirmed by Richard III in 1484. See Moore (1894, p. 3); S.G.Jarman, (1909, pp. 13-14).)

236: Mould: = Mold, North Wales. See note to Lady Bessiye line 16.

241: James Garsyde: No mention of this incident occurs in any other source, and the whole incident may be the author's invention, although there certainly was a yeoman of the (King's) guard called James Gartside. (see Brewer (1862, nos. 3254, 3468.) The incident shows the Earl of Derby in an excellent light, and is thus in tune with the mood and purpose of the poem. At Knowsley Hall there is an



unpublished MS poem (in the volume entitled 'Stanley MSS') in which we are told that the 2nd Earl used to help soldiers who were in difficulty. It is possible that Flodden Feilde and the Garsyde incident in particular may have been responsible for that remark.

249 - 50: "There was a time when I could have got you off any punishment even if you had killed thirty men."

257: Feighwater: Robert Radcliffe, born 1483, son of John Radcliffe, Lord Fitzwater, who had been executed in 1496. Young Robert was a childhood friend of the young Henry VIII, and perhaps because of this the barony, forfeited in 1496, was returned to Robert, now therefore Lord Fitzwater, in 1505. He married the widow of George Lord Strange, and was thus, by 1513, the Earl of Derby's step-father. In early 1513 he was in charge of the ships at Brest, but he was also with the King at Therouanne and Tournai. He died in 1542. (See Brewer (1862, nos. 3750, 4070, 4253, 4347, 5137); C.P.Hampson (1940, pp. 47-50).)

258: Wyllabee: William, Lord Willoughby of Eresby, fought with distinction in France in 1513. (See Hon. E. Willoughby, (1896, pp. 79-82).)

259: Sir Rhys ap Thomas: See note to Lady Bessiye line 1045.

271: This line is to be regarded as in parenthesis, so the sense of the sentence is: "I hope he is not in such a thunderous mood by the time we catch up with him."

- 279: Cobham: Thomas Brooke, 8th Baron Cobham, was with the King at Tournai, and was knighted in 1514. He was later one of the judges at the trial of the Duke of Buckingham. He was related to the Stanley family through his connection with the Strange family of Knockyn. (See Brewer (1862, nos. 4070, 4253, 4468); Burke's Peerage; unpublished 'Stanley MSS' at Knowsley.)
- 281: Hassall: Probably Sir Henry Halsall of Halsall (near Ormskirk, Lancashire), son-in-law of James Stanley, Bishop of Ely. The Stanley family was further connected to the Stanleys in that Sir John Stanley's daughter Joan married Sir Henry Halsall's son Thomas. (See Ormerod (1882, vol. iii, pp. 294-7).)
- 282: Lealand: Probably Sir William Leyland of Morleys Hall (near Leigh, Lancashire), son of Sir John Leyland and Eleanor nee Molyneux. He was knighted in 1513, and died in 1547. (See J.Gillow, (1907, p. 46 .))
- 283: Sir Allexander Osboston: Sir Alexander Osboldeston of Osboldeston (north-west of Blackburn). He was knighted in 1513 and married Anne, daughter of Sir John Southworth of Samlesbury. His son, Sir John Osboldeston, married twice, both times to grand-daughters of the 1st Earl of Derby. His daughter married the son of Sir Henry Keighley. He was appointed Sheriff of Lancaster after Sir Edward Stanley (Lord Mounteagle), a post he held until his death in 1543. (See Abram (1877, pp. 601-2); 'Stanley MSS' at

Knowsley, p. 36.)

- 285: Ratcliffe: Sir Alexander Radcliffe, son of Sir John Radcliffe of Ordsall and of Elizabeth nee Brereton. He married Alice Booth (of Barton). He grew up and served his military training with his cousin Robert Lord Fitzwater (line 257). He served with distinction in France and was knighted at Lille after the Battle of the Spurs in 1513. (See C.P.Hampson, (1940, p. 148).)
- 286: Trafforde: Probably Edmund Trafford, son of Edmund Trafford and of Elizabeth nee Savage, widow of Sir John Handforth. Edmund Trafford father died in August 1513, so although he could not have fought at Flodden, the Earl of Derby would not have known that. This would be a very realistic touch - or the Trafford referred to could be his son (also Edmund), born 1485, married the sister of Sir William Handforth, dies 1533. (See Lofthouse (1972, pp. 30-1).)
- 287: Werberton: Sir John Warburton of Warburton (east of Warrington) and Arley (south-east of Warrington, Lancashire), son of Sir Piers Warburton and of Ellen nee Savage. He was knighted in 1504 and married Jane Stanley of Holt (Sir William's grand-daughter). He fought in France in 1513 and died in 1524. J.Croston (1887, pp. 227-8) criticises Flodden Feilde for saying that Sir John was at Flodden. Not for the first time it appears that Croston did not read the poem very carefully. (See



also N. Warburton, (1970, p. 59).)

292: unsett: Sir Rhys ap Thomas's action here seems rather dangerous in view of Henry's mood at the time and his reputation.

297: Again (see note to line 65) the King shows a taste for sarcasm.

308: that: The word is syntactically redundant.

317: Grenwiche: Greenwich Palace was originally built by Humphrey Duke of Gloucester in the reign of Henry VI. Henry VIII was born there, and it remained a favourite home of his. N. Williams (1971, p. 19) says:

Most of the significant events of his early life took place within its walls, and in the first half of his reign he was in residence here for longer periods than at any other palace.

324: be: This seems not the correct word to describe a bow breaking, as the scribes of MSS S and P recognised; but neither of their readings is a great improvement.

336: my charter: The King unreservedly forgives the young yeoman.

345 - 8: This stanza seems mis-placed here: the punctuation is difficult, but as it stands it is intended to indicate a brief disagreement as to what will happen if the King does (or does not) make a pronouncement about teasing Lancastrians (which apparently was then, as it is now, a dangerous game). The narrative would proceed far more

easily if this stanza were omitted.

354: the Queene: Katharine of Aragon, the first of Henry's six queens, who had been left as Regent while Henry was in France. The letter referred to came from the Queen at Woburn on 16 September 1513. With her letter she enclosed one from the Earl of Surrey. (See Brewer (1862, no. 4451).)

364: in the presence of the: See note to line 32.

366 - 8: A repeat of lines 34-6, but how different the reply! This is the technique the author uses to extract maximum glory for the Stanleys.

369 - 72: For a discussion of the truth of this statement, see pp. 103-5.

386: leaden: There should be an intransitive verb here, as the A scribe seems to have recognised.

402: and ever: The King's 'if' is really a threatening 'when'.

413: yf: The Earl is not applying a condition to the fact of the killing as much as to the trial itself: "If he were trying me in the same circumstances ..."

427: prynces: This is likely to be a scribal emendation made because at the time he was copying a queen was on the throne, and is not to be used as evidence of the date of original composition, for which see p. 95.

428: sowle: For the same reason as that in the note to line 427, the scribe, writing long after the Earl of Derby died (1521), prays for his soul, whereas the original writer would have prayed for the Earl himself.



I N D E X   N O M I N U M

A N D

I N D E X   L O C O R U M

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## G L O S S A R Y



## GLOSSARY

In this glossary I have tried to give, for each entry, up to eight pieces of information, though not all are relevant or necessary for each entry:

1). the entry-word, with all spelling variants, as found in the text(s);

2). the part of speech:

n = noun

pn = pronoun

adj = adjective

adv = adverb

p = preposition

c = conjunction

v = verb

vpt = verb in past tense

vpp = past participle of verb

va = verbal adjective (present participle)

vn = verbal noun (gerund);

3). the word, if not already obvious, under which the entry-word may be found in a dictionary (given in brackets);

4). the spelling by which the entry word might be recognised by a modern reader (signified by = );

5). the modern meaning;

6). if a verb, whether (if confusion might occur) it is used transitively, intra/sitively, reflexively, or impersonally;

7). if the OED has any unusual information about the entry-word;

8). its location in the poems:

L = Lady Bessiye

B = Bosworth Feilde

S = Scotish Feilde

F = Flodden Feilde

If a word is used more than three times in any poem, the sign '&' follows the number of the first occurrence.

By the very nature of these poems, where the author of Scotish Feilde is constantly searching for synonyms which will accord with his alliteration, and where the other authors, none of them wordsmiths of anything above average power, are constantly searching for words which will accord with their rhyme, precision in verbal analysis is neither necessary nor possible. The writer of Scotish Feilde, for example, needs a great many words for 'man', 'go', 'bold', 'said' and other ideas which must of necessity occur frequently while describing a military action. It would perhaps be a very scholarly practice to distinguish shades of meaning among these words, but it would be scholarly activity for its own sake rather than for the sake of illuminating the poems. The fact that 'carp', for example, means, in its strictest sense, "boast", is not only unhelpful: it genuinely obstructs understanding. The author saw it as just a word meaning 'talk' that happened to begin with the sound 'k', and that is a far more 'correct' understanding of the word than whatever its etymology may demand. In this glossary, therefore, if a word means "man", it is glossed as 'man'.

Likewise, the authors of the rhyming poems 'solve' their rhyming requirements by some fairly devious means: 'fair and free' is a pleasant alliterative phrase to describe a person, or even a place, but these authors use it to describe almost

anything. To suggest that in such a context 'free' means "not bound" or "generous" would again obstruct understanding rather than aid it. 'Fair and free' simply means "nice".

The most difficult word to define has been 'right', which occurs extremely frequently. I began by trying to distinguish among the many possible meanings offered by the dictionary, trying as well to get clear in my mind whether it was being used as an adverb or an adjective (and sometimes it is a noun, especially in Bosworth Feilde), but as new meanings multiplied I began to worry that perhaps the one twenty lines back should also come under that heading, and even perhaps ... But the attempt to be precise was, as with the alliterative vocabulary, unhelpful, futile, and in the end positively obstructive. The author wanted a rhyme for 'fight' or 'sight', and some vague phrase with 'right' was good enough. The word 'right' does not, therefore, appear in the glossary.



# GLOSSARY

A, pn, he, L739  
 adventure, n, danger/chance of loss, F372  
 affore, p, before, F272,275,293  
 affray, n, disturbance, B433  
 aliaunt/allyaunt, n, alien, B146, S62  
 ancetrye, n, high rank, B127  
 and, c, if, L131,255, B96&, S377, F72,402  
 anon/anonright, adv, immediately, B371, S207, F77  
 answerable, adj, sufficient, B394  
 apply, v, = apply himself to, L660  
 aright, adv, straightaway, S204  
 array, v, set out, B173  
 array/arreye, n, martial order, B51, F62  
 as, c, = as if, L257  
 assaied, vpp, attacked, S80  
 assay, n/v, attack, B233&  
 attilde/atylde, vpt (atyl), made preparations (reflexive), S182,320  
 aunter/aventure, v, take a chance, S62,108  
 avanted, vpt, advanced (transitive), B481  
 avow, n, = vow, B177,501  
  
 backe, n, see note to B567  
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 belive, adv, with haste, S214,225  
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 betide, vpt, occurred, S332  
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 dowed, vpp, respected, B27  
 dread, adj/vpp, feared, B27, S25,50,64  
 dree, v, put up with hardship, L386, B588  
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 Droughten, n, God, S36  
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 fell, adj, valiant, S40,348  
 fell, adj, destructive, B436,571 S95  
 fellye, adv, with destructive effect, S123  
 ferden, vpt (fare), behaved, S153  
 fere/fair/feere, n, wife, L149&  
 fettle, v, vpt, prepare (reflexive), S185&  
 feylde, n, = field (i.e. not "battle"), F268  
 finde, n, = fiend, the Devil, S396  
 fleet, n, watercourse, L1224  
 forcast, v, plan, conspire, L278,318  
 formen, n, men in front line  
 forward, n, = front ward, front line, S337  
 fothir, n, large quantity, S95  
 fourthe, adv, = forth, F419  
 frain, v, ask, L855



freak/freke, n, man, L867, S51&  
 froward, adj, deceitful, B130  
 frythes, n, woods, B212  
 fuerse, adj, = fierce, S30&

ganged, vpt, went, F419  
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 gay, adj, finely apparelled, S35  
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 hent, vpt (hende), take, grasp, L354, B377  
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 hett, vpt (hight), promised, B566  
 hie, v, hurry, S239, F11  
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 kere/kyre, v (cair), go, S156, 194, 349  
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 ladds, n, men of valour, S14  
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 lay, v, wager, F57,106,139  
 layden, vpt, struck out with vigour, S385  
 layke, n, battle [OED last usage], S382  
 layne, vpt (lie), = lay, F14  
 leames, n, rays of light, S311  
 leassing, vn, telling lies, F353  
 leaver, adv, rather, F333  
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 lee, vpt (lie), lay, L48&  
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ment, vpt (min), see 'min', L19  
mickle, adj, great, L549, B69,79  
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on, adj, one, F273  
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other, adj, next, S400, F353  
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peare, n, = peer, equal, L641  
peareles, adj, = peerless, without equal, S49  
peer, n, thing of small worth, L1278 (see note)  
perlous, adj, strong, dangerous, L428  
pertly, adv, promptly, S128,200  
picke, v, pitch, hurl, F316  
piked, vpt, hurried, S100  
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pryce, n, great worth, F259  
pusance, n, armed force, S374

quitt, v, requite, B443  
quod, vpt, = quoth, said, S201

radly, adv, quickly, S174&, F44  
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sad, adj, sober, L3 (see note)  
 sad, adj, steadfast, B332&, S60,68  
 sad, adv, vigorously, B569  
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 scaped, vpt, = escaped, S399  
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 scatell/skatell, adj, harmful, S172,245  
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 skatell, adj, see 'scatell'  
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 souleknell, n, death-song, S411  
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states, n, senior people, B442  
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 sterre, n, see 'sette on sterre',  
 sticke, remain, S365  
 stidde, n, see 'steede'  
 still, adj?, motionless, F41  
 stirre, v, move (transitive), F320  
 stoute, adj, brave, S228,296  
 stray, n, see not to B49  
 streymer, n, triangular flag, S369  
 studye, state of astonishment, L526, B153, F41  
 sturne, adj, resolute, S228,296  
 stycked, vpt, stabbed to death, F244  
 styffe, adj, steadfast, S360  
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 sure, adv, securely, S78  
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 sythe, adv, subsequently, F15  
 sythen, p+adv, = since then, F329

tair, vpt, = tore, L240  
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 tane, vpp, = taken, L1017, B372  
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 tenyslye, adv, = teenfully i.e. angrily [cp. 'tene'], S53  
 then, c, = than, L1275, F334  
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 throwe, vpp, thrown down/?pierced, B607  
 tight, adv, see note to L314  
 toe, adv, = too, L599  
 tolde, vpp (tell), added up, S41  
 triden, vpt, tried, ?blew, S321  
 tried, vpp, selected, S143  
 trow, v, suppose, S370  
 tryed, vpp, tested and found to be, L1037  
 tunne, n, vat, L153  
 tythe, n, tax for support of clergy, F224

umclosed, vpt, surrounded, S208  
 umstrode, vpt, rode [OED last use 1400!], B68  
 unclose, v, open, F43  
 unfayne, adj, displeased, F58



ungracious, adj, see note to S248  
 unmette, adj, unequal, S168  
 unsette, vpt, disturbed [OED first usage 1602!], F292  
 unwittlye, adv, unwisely, B95  
 upbrayded, vpp, reproached, 308,347  
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 uttered, vpt, shot, S326  
  
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 warr, adj, = aware, L663  
 way, n, manner, S270  
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 weede, n, error for 'wee'?, S81  
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 weld, v, rule, S88&  
 wend, v, suppose, B13  
 wend/wind/wynde, v, go, L490&, S69&  
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 with, p, at the hands of, B520  
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 wynges, n, flight, S333  
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 wyte, v, blame, F216  
  
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 yerded, vpp (erde), dwelled [OED last usage 1400!], S421  
 ylke, adj, = ilk, same, S284  
 yorne, adj (yern), active, S383



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