

CHAPTER IV

THE WARRIORS

By the end of John's reign the great Norman Beaumonts had had their day, and all the earldoms except that of Warwick had passed out of the family. For some fifty years the dominating parts in the history of both England and France were played by the de Montforts who were descended from Robert de Beaumont (Blanchemains) 3rd Earl of Leicester through his daughter Amicia. When quite young she had married Simon, known as de Montfort through the situation of the family castle at Montfort l'Amauri. Their son Simon (c 1160-1218) is best known for the part he played in the crusade against the heretics known as Albigenses in the South of France. He carried out the campaign with the greatest ferocity, finally defeating the County of Toulouse and taking his lands. In 1207 he had claimed the earldom of Leicester in his mother's right, only to lose it again when he joined the side of John's enemy Philip Augustus of France. He was killed in 1218 while besieging Toulouse.

John had died in 1216 leaving as king his eldest son Henry, a boy nine years of age. For many years England was ruled wisely by Hubert de Burgh, but in 1227 Henry declared himself of age and five years later he dismissed Hubert from office in disgrace. From this time onward the most powerful men in the country were the king's French favourites, headed by Peter des Roches, Bishop of Winchester. In 1236 the king married Eleanor of Provence, and more and more foreigners flocked into England to take advantage of the king's weakness. Among the French nobles attending the wedding was Simon de Montfort, son of the great crusader and grandson of Amicia de Beaumont.

The story of how Simon de Montfort became "that great deliverer who made the title of Earl of Leicester the most glorious in the whole peerage of England" is too well known to be repeated in detail here. Although in 1238 he married the king's sister Eleanor, relations between him and the king were never cordial for any length of time.

In 1240 he took the Cross and was later Governor of the troublesome Duchy of Gascony. Here the severity with which he put down the rebellious lords and quarrelsome factions in the towns caused even more discontent. This reached the ears of the king and the enquiry which followed put an end to all friendship and trust between Simon and Henry. From that time on Simon was head of the baronial opposition to the king's exactions. With the Earl of Gloucester, at the head of the baronial opposition he forced on the king the Provisions of Oxford (1258) by which Henry put himself under the control of a committee of fifteen barons, only to declare three years later that he no longer wished to abide by the Provisions.

Simon agreed that the question should be submitted to the arbitration of Louis IX of France. When the French king declared that Henry was in the right Simon refused to accept the verdict and open war followed, the royal army being defeated in 1264 at the battle of Lewes in Sussex. Simon then called together a great national assembly which included besides his supporters among the barons, two knights from every shire and, for the

first time two townsmen from every borough and leading town. The French word parlement (discussion or colloquy) had often been used and from this time it came to be regularly applied to this assembly of lords and commons. In the following year Simon was killed at the battle of Evesham but the innovation he had made eventually developed into the modern system of British representative government.

Though the first Parliament was called by a descendant of the Beaumont family, there were other members of that family who were faithful to the king. One of these was Thomas de Newburg, sixth and last Beaumont Earl of Warwick. Since the death of the third Earl in 1184, the family of Warwick had remained steadfast supporters of the throne. Walteran the fifth Earl bore the Sword of State at the coronation of King John in 1199 but he took little part in the political squabbles of the day, and paid scutage - 77 marks or £51. 3s. 4d. to escape military service in Wales. His son Henry the fifth Earl was only twelve years old at the time of his father's death in 1204 and because he was a minor the king seized his estates in Gower in South Wales and gave them to another noble, William de Braose. Notwithstanding this, Henry was faithful to John and fought for him in command of the royal army. After John had died, Henry joined the other loyal barons in the struggle against the rebel barons who had called in Louis, son of the French king. He was present at the storming of Lincoln when the French were completely routed and the foremost of the barons, Robert Fitzwalter was taken prisoner. He died in 1229, leaving a son Thomas, the sixth Earl.

Thomas was as loyal a supporter of the king as the rest of his family had been. Though he had attained his majority by the time his father died, he did not get full possession of his earldom until four years later when at Whitsuntide Henry, who was at Gloucester, girded him with the sword of knighthood. In June 1236 when Henry was married, he bore the third sword of state, claiming that this duty had been done by his father and that it was his hereditary right. When Simon de Montfort sailed to subdue the rebellious province of Gascony, Thomas paid 180 marks (£120) towards the cost of the expedition, £60 more than was actually due from him in scutage money for that year.

Thomas's wife was Ella, daughter of William Longespée, a natural son of Henry II and Isabella, heiress to the Earldom and estates of Salisbury. Although Isabella had three younger brothers she inherited the family estates as the eldest child and took both them and the title to William, to whom, as a child-bride of ten years old, she was given in 1198. Isabella outlived her husband by 34 years, and although she had a son, she refused to invest him with the earldom, but held it in her own right. Until 1237 she held office as Sheriff of Wiltshire, one of the few cases in English history of a woman becoming Sheriff of a county.

Her daughter Ella, who married Thomas of Newburgh was renowned for her good deeds. In addition to grants to monasteries at Reading, Oxford, Warwick, to the Franciscans (Grey Friars) in London and to the hospital of St. Nicholas in Warwick, she gave land in 1295 to Merton College in Oxford that masses might be said for her soul, besides a 'common chest' of 120 marks (£80) out of which poor scholars might have temporary loans on condition that they gave security and repeated three Paternosters and five Aves. The chest, known as the Warwick Chest was in use up to the year 1583 and the masses for her soul were not finally discontinued until after the death of Mary I (1558).

Thomas of Newburgh died in 1242 at the early age of 34, having bequeathed money for the restoration of the Collegiate Church of St. Mary in Warwick which had been rebuilt by his great-great grandfather a century earlier. Ella, born some time before 1227, survived her husband

by nearly sixty years, dying "beloved of all for her wide charity and many virtues" in February 1300. There were no children of the marriage and the earldom of Warwick lay in abeyance for some five years when Henry conferred it on his favourite John du Plessis who was the second husband of Thomas's sister Margaret. Both died in 1263 leaving no issue and the earldom passed to another branch of the family.

Henry the fifth Earl (d. 1229) had a younger sister Alicia who died before 1263. She had married William de Mauduit, Baron Hanslope and their son William became the eighth Earl. He died in 1268. His sister Isabel de Mauduit had married William de Beauchamp of Elmley, a member of an old Worcestershire family. At the time of her brother's death Isabel appears to have adopted the religious life and the earldom of Warwick descended to her son William who thus became the ninth Earl. John Leland, the famous sixteenth century antiquary tells the story in his own quaint language:

"There was three of the Bellomontes, Eries of Warwike in order; the thirde taking issue male had a daughter. This daughter was married onto a nobleman called William de Manduit - author and he had by her a daughter the which married onto the Lorde Bechamps's sunne and heyre of Helmeley Castel by the Roote of Bredon Hille in Wicestershire and thus was the Bellomontes and the Bechamps kindred joined."

The Beaumonts and all the families with whom they were connected by marriage were strongly attached to the king in the civil war. William de Manduit, the son of Isabel defended Kenilworth Castle in an attack by the barons. The walls of the castle were destroyed, his wife was taken captive and she was only released on payment of a ransom of 1900 marks (£1233. 3s. 4d.)

Leland goes on to tell how the old Lord Beauchamp sent three or four of his sons to the battle of Evesham to help the king against Simon de Montfort. "Whereupon the eldest (son) had Bellomontes Heir Isabel, in marriage, and the residue were highly praeferred."

Thus the marriage resulted from the two families taking up the royal cause. For seven generations the Beauchamp family served the crown, providing a succession of famous soldiers and statesmen until 1449 Anne of Beauchamp brought the title to her husband Richard Neville who became the premier Earl of England and, as the 'Kingmaker' championed the Yorkist cause in the Wars of the Roses, only to quarrel in the end with his king, Edward IV and to lose his life at the battle of Barnet in 1471.

For the story of the Beaumonts in the fourteenth century we must go to another branch of the family, that of the Vicomte de Beaumont a family who were as much at home in their Angevin estates as they were in Devonshire. Richard, the second Vicomte had, as we have seen, two daughters, one of whom became ancestress of a line of Scottish kings. He also had two sons; the first, Richard, became the second Vicomte de Beaumont and the second, William, Bishop of Angers.

Though Richard had a son, Philip, the title went to the daughter Agnes who became Vicomtesse de Beaumont while he, though he may later have been made a baron, is known as Sir Philip Beaumont, Lord of Highampton. He may possibly have been illegitimate. It is however Agnes with whom we are concerned.

In the mid thirteenth century, while England was occupied in the struggle between king and barons, other world-shaking events were happening abroad, for almost the whole of the known world was involved in the upheaval brought about by the Crusades. Over a period of 150 years the flower of European chivalry had been drawn by the enthusiasm of pope, saint and hermit to carry their arms eastwards to keep open the routes to the Holy Places, and pilgrims by the million had braved the Alpine passes and all the perils offered by man and nature to prostrate themselves before the Sepulchre. During the whole of this time West had met, fought and fraternised with East, causing a mingling of populations and of ideas such as the world had never before known. Warriors added to their family names those of outlandish places where their exploits had been done, or bore strange titles such as Prince of Antioch, Count of Tripoli or Lord of Tyre. Windows were opened on the world and people who had thought in terms of England and France alone were forced by the need to cooperate and to campaign together, into familiar relationship with peoples beyond the Rhine, the Danube, the Alps and the Pyrenees. This relationship cannot be better shown than in the story of the family of Brienne into which Agnes de Beaumont entered when in 1253 she married Louis de Brienne and D'Acre.

Brienne-le-Chateau is a small town on the river Aube in the Champagne country of France. Here, when the Frankish peoples swept westwards in the 6th century A.D., one of their chieftains took possession of the place and the land around it. In the mid tenth century Englebert, Count of Brienne and his brother Gerbert fought to consolidate their possessions against Louis IV of France. From that time onward the family held on to their possessions and made marriage alliances with their neighbours. A daughter of Walter I (d. 1090) married Robert, Count of Anjou, second son of Philip I of France; Erard I (c 1097) took part in the First Crusade and his son Walter joined in the second (1147) from which he did not return until 1152.

At this time, when heraldic devices were first being used, Walter adopted the lion rampant "or" which was afterwards borne by the Counts of Brienne and, through Agnes, by the Beaumonts. In the early thirteenth century Erard II, Count of Brienne claimed the whole of the vast county of Champagne for his family but, the Peers of France deciding against his claim he eventually renounced it. Erard, who married the daughter of Henry of Champagne, King of Jerusalem and had three sons. Of these three, John of Brienne, the father of Louis and therefore ancestor of seven generations of notable Beaumonts, is one of the most remarkable characters in the whole of the Middle Ages.

John was born in 1148 into a family which was well known throughout Christendom for its crusading zeal. In 1189 his brother Andrew was killed in the disastrous counter-attack of Saladin during the assault on Acre. John, who had originally been destined for the Church had shown an early preference for the more adventurous life of knighthood and chivalry. In forty years of tournaments he made for himself a great reputation and was also no mean composer of the fashionable lyrics of the day. He was already sixty years of age and a veteran before fortune called him to play his part on the stage of history.

After the First Crusade the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem had been founded, and for a hundred years it had been ruled over by crusading princes and their successors. In 1205 Amalric II (of Lusignan) died leaving as his heiress Maria, a girl of fourteen, the daughter of his wife Isabella by a previous marriage with Conrad of Montferrat. In 1208, when a husband had to be found for the girl, the Bishop of Acre was sent to France to ask for the help of King Philip Augustus. John was chosen as he

was known by all European knights to be "a brave man, wise in council and experienced in war."

There were other reasons too. It happened at the time that he had become involved in a love intrigue with Countess Blanche of Champagne which was causing scandal in the French court, and partly because of this Philip chose him for the life of a distinguished exile. To make this penniless sixty-year-old gallant acceptable to Maria's guardians, Philip and Pope Innocent III each gave him a dower of 40,000 lb of silver pennies.

Thus commenced the varied career of this elderly gentleman. He landed at Acre in 1210 and the royal pair were later married and crowned at Tyre. From comparative obscurity he had suddenly become Consort King of Jerusalem.

Saladin, the great Moslem leader had died in 1183 and his brother Malik-al-Adel had succeeded to all his dominions including Egypt and Syria. John carried on desultory fighting with the enemy including an abortive attack on Damietta before sending a message to Rome asking that a new crusade should be organised as soon as the truce he had made with the Mohammedans expired.

There was no need for his appeal, for crusading fever had already reached its height. Even the children were affected by it in 1212 thousands of children left their homes and flocked southwards over the Alpine passes into the Italian Plain in the vain hope of reaching the Holy Land, only to die of disease or starvation or to be sold into slavery. Within three years European Chivalry was again on the move in the Fifth Crusade, the goal being Egypt to which the centre of Mohammedan power had shifted. John was one of the leaders in the capture of Damietta and had his advice against an advance on Cairo been taken, the crusade might have had better fortune. As it was, the Christian armies were rolled back and a treaty had to be signed by which all gains were given up. The Fifth Crusade was over.

By this time John had lost his young wife in childbirth and had married Princess Stephanie of Armenia while still ruling the kingdom of Jerusalem for his young daughter Yolande. In 1219 Stephanie died, it is said, as a result of a beating he gave her for attempting to poison her step-daughter. A few weeks later their small son also died, and he thereby lost all claim to the throne of Armenia.

He still hoped, however, to gain help for his kingdom of Jerusalem and in 1223 he journeyed to Italy where he met Pope Honorius and the young Emperor Frederick II. Here a marriage was arranged between Yolande and the Emperor on a promise from Frederick of armed assistance and from the Pope that John should be Regent of the Kingdom of Jerusalem for life. It did not work out that way. In 1225 Frederick married Yolande who was in Acre, by proxy and a second marriage took place on her arrival in Italy. Shortly afterwards Frederick demanded that John renounce his title, and declared to all that he and he alone was King of Jerusalem.

John, now 77 years of age, having married twice and lost two crowns, continued his life of adventure. In 1223, while on a pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostella in Spain he had met and married Berengaria, sister of King Ferdinand of Castile, and from the Pope he received the lordship of Tuscany which of old had been part of the Empire but was still claimed by the Papacy. Here John did something to revenge himself on his arrogant son-in-law who by this time had been excommunicated by the Pope.

for alleged laxity in pursuing the crusading campaign. John commanded the Papal troops in an attack on southern Italy while Frederick, as King of Jerusalem was away on the Sixth Crusade.

When he was 80 he embarked on his last great exploit. One of the results of the Fourth Crusade (1202-4) had been the capture of Constantinople together with most of the Eastern Empire, and the foundation of a new Roman Empire of the East ruled by Baldwin, Count of Flanders, one of the eleven years old. Here again a regent was needed, and the barons of the Empire approached John who by this time was again the father of a daughter Maria aged four and a son, Louis, named after his friend and patron Louis VIII of France. The conditions were that John should become Emperor, and that Baldwin should marry Maria and succeed him. The marriage contract was carried out in 1234 and in the following year hordes of Greeks and Bulgarians advanced and laid siege to the city.

Joseph Michaud's History of the Crusades gives a glowing account of the old man's exploits:

"John of Brienne, whom fortune had made for a short period King of Jerusalem was called to the tottering throne of animated by the ardours of pillage were at the gates of the Capital. Their fleets penetrated to the port, their numerous battalions were preparing to scale the ramparts, but the new Emperor fought several battles with them, and obtain possession of their ships and dispersed their armies. These victories added greatly to his renown."

To compare him with Hector, Roland or Judas Maccabeus as a 13th Century French poet did, was an exaggeration, but to point him out as a typical knight-errant of his day, and, though often penniless and unfortunate, as a leader whose wisdom could have saved a crusade, is not saying too much. Thrice married, hero of numerous battles and tournaments, twice a king, once an emperor, whose wanderings led him all over Europe and the Middle East, this notable ancestor of the Beaumonts should not be forgotten. He died in the habit of a Franciscan friar in 1238 in his ninetieth year.

The agreement he had made was carried out. Baldwin became Emperor but his life was spent almost entirely as a suppliant, relying on foreign kings, especially Louis IX of France to prop up his tottering empire. Louis, John de Brienne's son returned to France and met, probably at the French court, Agnes, daughter of Richard, Third Vicomte de Beaumont. She was a relative of Isabella, daughter of Philip of Guienne and afterwards wife of Edward II.

In 1263 she and Louis were married. Children were born in France, and the couple must have been quite elderly when they came to England and took up residence at Charnwood in Leicestershire. The reason for their coming is not difficult to find. Through his mother Berengaria, Louis was first cousin to Edward I, who became King of England in 1272, and they might well expect royal favour for their sons and daughters. In this hope they were not disappointed. Their children, though Louis's name was de Brienne and D'Acre assumed their mother's better-known surname of de Beaumont. Four of them Theobald, Archbishop of Paris, Jeanne, Marie and John, who ultimately inherited the French estates and founded another branch of the family, settled in France. The other three, Henry, Louis and Isabel remained in England.

Louis, born in France, probably came to England as a child with his

mother and father. He is said to have been lame in both legs, and this, a disqualification for an active military career may have influenced his decision to enter the Church. Backed by the king, who was his second cousin, he rose high in preferment, from the Treasurership of Sarum (Salisbury) in 1293 to the post of Prebendary of the ancient Church of Caine, Wiltshire in 1303. Here he obtained the grant of a Saturday market and a three days' fair at the feast of St. Mary Magdalene. This, giving a monopoly of trade to the Borough while the fair lasted, was an important concession.

In 1317 he was nominated by the king to the Bishopric of Durham, where he remained the rest of his life. "Nobly born and of kingly and knightly origin," runs his epitaph in Latin; "Stop as thou goest past; remembering how great he was, how worthy of Heaven, righteous, pious and kindly, bountiful and cheerful; always hostile to the wicked."

His memorial brass, once one of the finest in England measured more than fifteen feet by nine. It showed him "most excellently and lively pictured, as hee was a customed to singe or say masse, with his mitre on his head and his crossier's staffe in his hand" surrounded by images of angels and apostles, with the figures and arms of his ancestors, lions under his feet and a white lion on the breast of his vestment surrounded by the fleur-de-lis of France, all "being most artificially wrought and sett forth all in brasse." This brass he laid down in his own lifetime, ordering his tomb and composing his own epitaph, resolved to be as splendid in death as he was in life, like Browning's Bishop of St. Praxed's:

"And then how shall I lie through the centuries,
And hear the blessed mutter of the mass,
And see God made and eaten all day long,
And feel the steady candle-flame, and taste
Good strong thick stupefying incense-smoke!"

His was a life of strife and ostentation. His election to the see of Durham was not without trouble, for the king, who had another candidate in mind was persuaded by the Queen to drop him and put Louis forward. Although the monks of the Cathedral monastery did not want him, the barons came into the church during the election and dared them to choose anybody else. In spite of the monks they sent their candidate Henry of Stamford to Rome to get the Pope's confirmation, but he was too late, as John XXII had already assented to the election of Louis.

This was the year 1317. Edward II had been on the throne ten years and had by this time shown himself to be a weakling and a fool, unstable and open to the domination of unscrupulous favourites. Bannockburn had been lost, the kingdom was already in peril from the Scots and gangs of desperadoes were already infesting the highways. In March, 1318 Louis was consecrated at Westminster by Cardinals Gaucelin of Fauze and Luca Fieschi. On their way to Durham for the enthronement they were waylaid near Darlington by one of these bands led by Sir Gilbert Middleton of Mitford Castle (near Morpeth, Northumberland). They were robbed, captured and imprisoned, regaining their liberty only on payment of a large ransom, £2000 of which Louis had to borrow from the Prior of Durham. For once the government acted. Proclamations were everywhere made, Sir Gilbert was captured, taken to London and executed as a traitor in the presence of the two Cardinals. But the new Bishop had other enemies. Shortly afterwards Sir Goseline Deinwill and his brother Robert went with attendants dressed as friars to several of his castles and stole his valuables. They too were later captured and hanged at York.

Louis lived in Durham in almost regal splendour. Within his palace he had a mint, and the silver pennies struck there are still in existence with the Beaumont coat-of-arms shown over the head of the king. On the obverse is the inscription "EDWAR-R-ANGL-DNS-HYB" and on the reverse "CIVITAS DUNELM." No doubt this mint was necessary in regions so liable to Scottish raids.

Louis owed a great deal to the patronage of the king and queen and was put in a very difficult position when Edward became embroiled in quarrels with Isabella and with the barons owing to his taking of favours and his negligence in defending the borders. In 1321 he was called with other bishops and magnates by Thomas of Lancaster to a meeting to consider defence against the Scots and Edward's irregularities and ex-tortions. While the bishops promised to do all they could to defend the realm it was probably largely to his prompting that they asked for the second matter to be deferred to the next Parliament. In the following year when the Scots again ravaged the north, Louis was one of those who, despairing of any help from the king, entered into negotiations with them. From this point of time relations between the Beaumonts and the king began to worsen, and this is more clearly seen in the career of Louis's younger brother Henry.

Like the rest of his family, Henry enjoyed royal favour from the very beginning. When in 1296 Edward I invaded Scotland and Henry, although only thirteen years of age, went with the army, and later in the year the king granted him the manor of Barton-on-Humber together with those of Edenham and Folkingham (near Grantham) which had reverted to the king through the death of a former tenant. The grant was confirmed together with that of two more manors by Edward I in the first years of his reign "in consideration of the good services which our beloved and faithful kinsman Henry de Bellomonte has rendered to the lord Edward, our father of illustrious memory, late king of England, and will render to us in future." Henry lived to serve the three Edwards for another thirty years. Later he built a castle at Folkingham and the manor continued in the family until 1707 when it passed to the Earl of Norfolk. He also had a seat at Borthby Hall near Grantham where John I, king of France was confined for a time after the Battle of Poitiers in 1356. In 1326-7 Edward III granted him the Beaumont Park in Charnwood Forest, Leicestershire where he built a castle. In one of the windows of a chapel he built at Woodhouse nearby is his coat-of-arms, while some of the bench-ends bear the family badge, the elephant and castle.

In 1303 Henry accompanied Edward I in his advance from Roxburgh to make a complete conquest of Scotland. In a battle at Dunfermline he led the English in a night foray across the river Forth and, falling on the Scots unawares, utterly routed them. During the winter Edward's court was held in the Abbey of Dunfermline and after his departure most of the buildings were burned down.

During the last years of Edward I, Henry served in the household of the Prince of Wales, on whose accession to the throne in 1307 honours were heaped on the whole Beaumont family. His sister Isabel, who was a member of the queen's household received grants of many manors and the custody of Bamborough Castle, and his brother Louis, largely through intrigues within the court, became Bishop of Durham. But the greatest honours accrued to Henry himself. These consisted mainly of the guardianship of border castles such as Jedburgh, Dumfries and Roxburgh, and of offices connected with the defence of the realm against Scottish attack. In March 1309 he was summoned to Parliament as Baron Beaumont. In 1310 he married Alice, daughter and heiress of Sir Alexander Comyn and heiress of John Comyn, Earl of Buchan, a title which he claimed

through his wife throughout the rest of the Scottish wars and by virtue of which in 1334 he was summoned to a parliament of Edward III. In the same year as his marriage Edward granted to him for life the lordship of the Isle of Man with all the revenues of the island, and virtual sovereign powers.

In 1311 his good fortunes suffered a temporary check. The King had grievously offended the barons by summoning back to England Piers Gaveston, the young rake who had done so much to corrupt him and to estrange him from his father. In June 1311 Edward was forced to agree to his power being limited, and to the appointment of a committee of twenty-one lords to draw up ordinances for the government of the realm. This Parliament named Gaveston and three others for condemnation. The most important of the three was Henry, Baron Beaumont, who lost his revenues from the Isle of Man.

Gaveston did not long survive this attack, for he was captured and barbarously beheaded by his two greatest enemies, Lancaster and Warwick a year later. Henry Lord Beaumont's star was, however, soon again in the ascendant.

During all the time these baronial feuds were going on, the Scots were rapidly gaining ground, driving the English out of their fortresses and raiding the northern counties. In 1314 an English army of 24,000 men crossed the border into Scotland but the Earl of Lancaster and others refused to join it. Henry de Beaumont, traditionally loyal, was one of the commanders which approached Stirling Castle with the army. On the afternoon of Sunday, June 24th, together with Lord Robert Clifford, he led a detachment across the fields to the east of the Scottish position, with the probable object of reinforcing the English garrison of Stirling Castle. Some of the Scots under the Earl of Moray lay in ambush in a wood and a violent action took place in which one of their number, Sir Thomas Gray was taken prisoner. They only reached the English camp again after great difficulty after having suffered a discouraging reverse. Henry survived the battle and lived to repel a Scottish invasion at Hattfield the following year and a further one in 1319. The Scottish victories, however, meant that he was Earl of Buchan in name only and this probably accounts for his implacable enmity towards the Scots. On one occasion when the King's advisers in the Privy Council had recommended the conclusion of a truce, he refused to give an opinion knowing that his advice would not be followed, whereat the King commanded him to leave the Council Chamber. He left in anger, exclaiming that he would rather be gone than listen to the disgraceful counsel that was being offered. The guard was called and he was arrested, committed to Kenilworth Castle and his estates sequestered. He was only released on bail being offered by his friends Henry de Percy and Ralph de Neville.

His main quarrel was, however, with Lancaster, because of the latter's lukewarm attitude towards the hostility of Scotland, and his arrogance. A wanton assault on his cousin Queen Isabella by members of Lancaster's baronial clique must have weighed with him still more to throw in his lot with the King. For this reason he marched north with Edward, occupying the enemy strongholds and eventually catching up with Lancaster's forces at Boroughbridge. At that battle Lancaster was completely defeated and he and his chief followers beheaded.

From this time onwards the attitude both of Henry and his brother Louis of Durham began to change. The King, who was easily led, was now under the influence of the Despencers, father and son, who were cordially hated for the way in which they enriched themselves. Meanwhile the rift between the King and Queen had grown serious and she

took the first opportunity to go to France to do homage on her husband's behalf for Gascony. With her went Henry de Beaumont, the Earl of Richmond and two bishops. Then she persuaded Edward to send his young son to join her and he foolishly agreed. Before long the anti-royal party took shape, with the Queen and Roger Earl of Mortimer at its head together with other exiled nobles including Henry Lord Beaumont. Invasion followed. In September 1326 the Queen's company sailed from Dordrecht and landed next day at the mouth of the Orwell in Suffolk. Drayton describes the scene:

"When she for England fairly setting forth,
Spreading her proud Sayles on the Watrie Playne
Steereth her course directly to the North,
With her young Edward, Duke of Aquitaine;
With other three, of speciall name and worth,
(The destin's scourges of King Edward's raigne)
Her Souldier Beaumont, and the Erie of Kent,
With Mortimer, the Mightie Malcontent."

The defeat, capture and murder of Edward II followed. England was set on a new course.

Thus it happened that, through the marriage of an old French courtier and soldier of fortune to a young princess of the House of Castile, an English family was eventually lifted from comparative obscurity to the very pinnacle of wealth and power. In the aristocracy of the Middle Ages the marriage of sons and daughters was quite as important to a family as the management of its estates, for since an heiress brought both possessions and prestige to her husband, marriage was a matter of detailed negotiation and accounting. In the case of Henry and Louis, sons of Agnes and Louis de Brienne, the prize was not so much wealth as the valued family relationship with the English royal family, and we see in the early career of both how it brought them ample rewards, setting them in the right direction towards bishopric and peerage.

From the earliest of the Norman Beaumonts, marriage had been employed as a means of family aggrandisement, and there was nothing reprehensible in this, for it was common throughout Christendom. In this way Roger de Bellomonte (1015-96) added Meulan and Melant to his family estates and Robert the Third Earl of Leicester through marrying Petronilla, daughter of Hugh de Grantmesnil, Lord High Steward of England and became Lord of Hinckley and Grantmesnil besides the French estates he already had from his ancestors. The genealogical tables of the Beaumonts are sprinkled with the names of the principal families of Norman England - Warenne of Surrey, Longespee of Salisbury, de Waer of Norfolk, Percy of Northumberland, the de Harcourts of Brionne, and even their own kin, descendants of Elizabeth of Leicester by King Henry I. Moreover before 1350 they had already, through marriage, helped to lay the foundations on which arose the eminent families of de Montfort (Leicester), de Beauchamp (Warwick) and de Courtenay, for though men in diplomacy and war may have travelled far, women through marriage migrated and settled in places far from their family homes. Thus it came about that the six sisters of Robert le Bossu, second Earl of Leicester came to be dispersed to various parts of England and Normandy. These ladies, and other from numerous families of rank took with them their ways of speech and dress, their manners and customs. In this way they were one of the principal factors in leavening the lump of medieval society, spreading ideas and culture throughout western Europe. A man might go to war, visit distant estates or take part in a Crusade, but his home was that of his fathers and to it he returned. A woman was not tied in the same way. She might one year be a younger daughter with her own family, and the next taken

off to the Scottish border, then again being left a widow, have another husband found for her in Normandy or Aquitaine. Matilda, daughter of Henry I of England spent eleven years in Germany as wife of the Emperor Henry V, and the rest of her life married to Geoffrey of Anjou, fighting to conquer Normandy and to win the crown of England for her son Henry. On a lower level may be considered the career of Elizabeth de Beaumont the eldest daughter of Robert, first Norman Earl of Leicester, mistress of Henry I to whom she bore three of his many illegitimate children. She was afterwards married, first to Gilbert de Clare (Strongbow), Earl of Pembroke and then to Herve de Montmorency, Constable of Ireland. In the 250 years which followed the Conquest the Beaumont ladies alone connected the family with those of the earldoms of Cornwall, Pembroke, Derby, Northampton, Gloucester, Winchester, the de Vesci family and the Percies of Northumberland, besides the Scottish royal family.

NOTES

1. Countess of Warwick 1.60
2. Countess of Warwick 1.62
3. Countess of Warwick 1.64
4. Charlotte Carmichael Stopes. English Freewomen (Swan Sonnenschein. 1894)
5. H.F. Percival. Foundation Statutes. Merton
6. Dugdale. Baronage 1.72
7. Michaud. Hist. des Croisades. 11.288
8. Philip Mouskes. d. 1274
9. "Rites of Durham" (16th Century)
10. Arch. Ael. VI. 66
11. Capgrave. Chron. of England 1. 182
12. Archaeologia XXIV. 148
13. H.W.C. Bell. Social Hist. and Antiq. of Barton p.16
14. Bardney, Cartulary. Cotton MSS. Vespasian E.XX
15. For list of manors granted to him see Dugdale Baronage 11. 50
16. Arch. Ael. 3 S XII 237. Close Rolls 1302/7
17. Drayton. "Barons' Warres". Canto IV, Stanza 19

THE DESCENDANTS OF HENRY

FIRST BARON BEAUMONT (created 1309)

(surviving children only)

HENRY married ALICE co-heir of Sir Alexander Comyn and heir

of John Comyn Earl of Buchan

JOHN (1318-42) THOMAS d. 1349 ELIZABETH JOAN m. ISABEL d. CATHERINE
 Second Baron Beau- fought at d. 1400 Lord 1361 m David
 mont m Eleanor 5th Crecy and m Nicholas Fitz- Henry Strabolgi
 da. of Henry Plant- Calais 3rd Baron Warine of 3rd Earl of
 agenet Earl of Lancaster
 HENRY 1340-69 or 1370 3rd MAUD b. 1340 m (1) Ralph BLANCHE 1341-69 m.
 Baron m Margaret da. of John son of Earl of Stafford John of Gaunt 3rd
 de Vere, E. of Oxford (2) William 5th d. of son of Edward III
 King of England

HENRY IV King of England PHILLIPPA b. 1360 m. (1387) John I, King of Portugal
 HENRY V King of England HENRY VI King of England
 EDWARD, killed at Tewkesbury 1461

HENRY 1381-1413 EDWARD PETER HENRY Duke FERDINAND ISABELLA
 5th Baron m. King of Duke of of Visco "the Con" 3rd wife of
 Elizabeth da. of Lord Willoughby as Henry the Navigator
 JOHN 6th Baron 1410-1460 m. 1 Elizabeth da. of Sir William Phillip 2 Katharine
 da. of Ralph Neville Earl of Westmoreland

Mary m. The Emperor Maximilian of Hapsburg
 Archduke Philip of Austria m. Joanna da. of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain
 CHARLES V. Emperor
 PHILIP II, King of Spain

The Hapsburg Kings of Spain
 The Hapsburg Emperors of Austria (The Holy Roman Empire)
 FERDINAND, Emperor