his shockingly cruel execution, Edward sent two of his own servants to assist in the assassination of Gloucester. Be this as it may, Edward received much of the latter's lands, and with them the title of Duke of Aumarle or Albemarle,[1] as well as considerable portions of Arundel's and Warwick's estates. As Constable of England he attended Richard on his last expedition to Ireland in 1399.

According to many historians Edward's reputation as an arch-plotter was of the blackest. Hume speaks of him as "this infamous man," who became a traitor to his associates on more than one occasion, and gloried in the most savage reprisals. Thus we are told that after being instrumental in the murder of his uncle, the Duke of Gloucester, Edward carried in his own hands, on a pole, the head of one of his victims, Lord le Despenser, his brother-in-law. However exaggerated some of these harsh criticisms may have been, there can be no doubt that his conduct towards Richard, his abandonment of the latter's cause at Milford after the landing of Henry Bolingbroke, was a treacherous act. Monstrelet relates that the Count of St. Pol, who had married Maud Holand, half-sister of Richard II., ordered Rutland's effigy in his coat armour to be suspended, the feet uppermost, from a gibbet near the gate of Calais. That Shakespeare took the same view of Edward is known to every reader of the immortal bard's *Richard II.*, for our author is the hero of the dramatic incident when Edmund of York discovered the plot which his son Edward was hatching against the new King (January 1400), and of the race that father and son rode to Windsor. Though perhaps hardly necessary to point out, there is a curious inaccuracy in Shakespeare's *mise-en-scène* when he makes the Duchess of York, mother "of my dangerous cousin," be present at the memorable scene before Henry IV. at Windsor, for she had been dead for six years. The father's curse of villain and traitor hurled at his son's head was but an echo of the malediction shrieked out at Edward by the tortured Sir Thomas Blount at his blood-curdling execution at Oxford.[2]

Edward in consequence of his plotting was deprived of the Constableship, of his title as Duke of Aumarle, as well as of all the lands bestowed upon him during the last two years of Richard's reign, and, according to some authorities, he was imprisoned for a short time at Windsor. The feeling against him at Henry's first Parliament as the supposed murderer of Gloucester was most intense, twenty gages (Wylie in his "History of Henry IV." says forty) were thrown down to him, and he had to thank the King for the mildness of his punishment. Not all historians agree as to the extent of Edward's treachery at this period, those that would take a milder view of it contending that had his conduct been so vile the reconciliation with the King would not have followed so speedily. It is certain that in the following December Edward again took part at the Privy Council, and two months later Henry renewed King Richard's grant of Okeham and the

[1] "Trais. de Rich. II.," p. 139, states that this occurred in 1397.

[2] The account of this savage execution, carried out on the lines that had been "invented" for the punishment of the informer Halle, which is given in the contemporary "Chronicque de la Traison de Richard II.," gives a striking picture of the time, and as such may be worth quoting:

"Sir Th. Blount and Sir Benet Shelley were drawn from Oxford unto the place of execution, a long league or more [from the Carmelite Abbey where the King lodged], and there they were hung; they then cut them down and made them speak, and placed them before a large fire. Then came the executioner with a razor in his hand, and kneeling down before Sir Th. Blount, who had his hands tied, begged his forgiveness for putting him to death, for he was obliged to perform his office. 'Are you he,' said Sir Thomas, 'who will deliver me from this world?' The executioner replied: 'Yes, my lord, I beg you to pardon me.' The lord then kissed him and forgave him. The executioner had with him a small basin and a razor, and kneeling between the fire and the lords unbuttoned Sir Thomas, and ripped open his stomach and tied the bowels with a piece of whipcord, that the breath of the heart might not escape, and cast the bowels into the fire. As Sir Thomas was thus seated before the fire, his bowels burning before him, Sir Thomas Erpingham said: 'Now, go and seek a master who will cure you . . . ,' to which the good knight replied, suffering as he was: 'Art thou the traitor Erpingham? Thou art more false than I am or ever was, and thou liest, false knight as thou art . . . for by thee and by the false traitor the Earl of Rutland the noble knighthood of England is destroyed. Cursed be the hour when thou and he were born. I pray to God to pardon my sins, and thou traitor Rutland and thou false Erpingham I call you both to answer before the face of Jesus Christ, for the great treason that you two have committed against our sovereign lord noble king Richard and against his noble knighthood.' The executioner then asked him if he would drink. 'No,' he replied, 'you have taken away wherein to put it, thank God'; and then he begged the executioner to deliver him from this world, for it did harm to see the traitors. The executioner kneeled down and Sir Thomas having kissed him, the executioner cut off his head and quartered him and parboiled the quarters."

shrievalty of Rutland to him and his heirs male, while the Parliament of January 1401, in restoring to him his good name and estate, asserted his loyalty in strong terms. As a further proof of the King's restored confidence in him, he was appointed six months later to the important post of Lieutenant of Aquitaine, but this may, on the other hand, be construed as a sign that such a turbulent spirit was deemed safer out of England.

Edward set sail for Guienne on September 23, 1401, in the *Trinite de la Tour*, and it is interesting to note that among the stores and arms he took with him there were: 2 large cannons and 1 small cannon, "*pur pelottes with le stuf*, i.e., 40 *lbs. of powder*, 40 *stones* (cannon balls), 40 *tampons*, 2 *touches* (for firing off the pieces), 1 *martel*, 1 *peire de suffles*, 20 *pelottes pur les cannons*." (Wylie, iv. 232.)

In the following August his father, Edmund of Langley, Duke of York, died, the news of the event and of his succession to the dukedom reaching Edward in Aquitaine.

On his return to England in the following year he received (November 29, 1403) the appointment to the onerous post of Lieutenant of South Wales. His Welsh command brought with it a lot of desultory fighting and was in some respects a very ungrateful task, for he was kept so ill provided with funds that his troops became mutinous, the castles of Carmarthen, Cardigan, and other strong places being sorely threatened by the revolt of their garrisons. He had to sell and pledge his gold and silver plate to pay his soldiers, and in June 1404 we hear he was at Glastonbury begging a loan from the abbot, to whom he pledged all his estates in Yorkshire. To show in what an exceedingly primitive manner these border wars were conducted, and at what a low ebb English finances stood in his day, the example of Kidwelly may be cited. For the garrison of this stronghold, according to the accounts quoted by Wylie (vol. ii. p. 7), it appears that the requisite arms were sent from London by cart *via* Bristol. The articles sent consisted of breast-plates, basnets, vanbraces, gauntlets, lances, poleaxes, &c., for six men-at-arms, together with six arblasts (crossbows), a windlass with a belt, two small cannon costing 12*s.* each, 40 lbs. of gunpowder in a cask and a bag, 40 bows, 80 sheaf of arrows, 2000 quarrels (crossbow bolts), and 12 dozen bowstrings packed in pipes, pruskists, and barrels."

Partial relief, in the shape of a sum of £3433 scraped together from the customs receipts at London, Boston, and Southampton, at last reached him,[1] but the mischief was probably already done, his discontent at this treatment proving too strong for his loyalty, and he joined his sister, Lady le Despenser, in her attempt to carry off from Windsor Castle their two young kinsmen, the Mortimers, the elder of whom was the heir-presumptive to the throne. The plot failed, as did one hatched by the same dangerous plotter to assassinate the King while he was holding his Christmas Court some weeks previously. Both Edward and Lady le Despenser were arrested and brought before the Council at Westminster (February 17, 1405), where a dramatic scene ensued, for Lady le Despenser denounced her brother as the chief instigator of the plot. At first the Duke, who appears to have been the centre of the conspiracy, "tried his old familiar methods and denied all knowledge of the affair." Lady le Despenser called vehemently for a champion to do battle for her, offering that if he should be worsted in the lists on her behalf, she would give herself up to be burnt alive. An esquire, William Maidstone, took up her cause and flung down his hood to the Duke in the presence of the King. The Duke accepted the challenge, but, as Wylie remarks, he was a fat man and probably would have got the worst of the encounter. A more prosaic course was pursued. The Duke was arrested by his cousin Prince Thomas, the King's son, and taken to the Tower. The Council met again on March 1, and when the Duke was brought up he confessed not only that he had a knowledge of the whole plot, but that he himself supplied the King with the means of thwarting it. Possibly there may have been some truth in this defence, but anyhow he was sent as a prisoner to Pevensey Castle and all his estates in England and the Channel Islands were confiscated by the Crown. Historians have pointed out that Henry IV.'s policy towards members of the royal house that were mixed up in treasonable plots was always one of mercy, and this instance certainly showed none of that inhuman vindictiveness that marked the treatment of

[1] In 1404 the soldiers received the following pay: bannerets 4*s.*, knights 2*s.* 3*d.*, esquires 1*s.*, and archers 6*d.* per day.