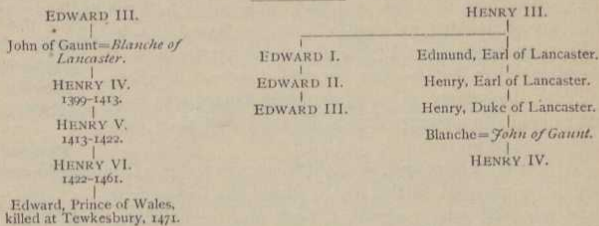


## HOUSE OF LANCASTER.



## CHAPTER XXVI.

PLANTAGENET LINE: HOUSE OF YORK.—EDWARD IV.  
1461 to 1483 A.D.

1. Edward IV. was twenty years of age at his accession. The claims of descent on which he based his right to the throne have already been indicated. Few princes have been more gifted by nature than Edward; few have rendered themselves more odious by their vices. He was a winning courtier, a bold soldier, and a skilful general. On the other hand, he was inordinately fond of pleasure, and in pursuing it he broke through all moral restraints without scruple.
 

**Character of Edward IV.**
2. The Lancastrians were not prepared to submit without a struggle. Margaret soon gathered an army of sixty thousand men in Yorkshire. Edward was ready to accept the challenge, and marching northward in company with Warwick, inflicted a terrible defeat on the ex-Queen's army at Towton, near Tadcaster, on the 29th of March 1461. Henry and Margaret fled to Scotland, leaving more than twenty thousand of their followers dead on the field.
 

**Battle of Towton.**
3. Edward returned to London, where he was crowned in the following June. Parliament having been summoned, his hereditary right to the throne was declared by statute, and an Act was passed making Henry, Margaret, and their chief followers guilty of treason.
 

**Edward crowned.**
4. In 1464, Margaret, having obtained help from France, was able to take the field again. Her army, however, suffered several defeats, notably at Hexham, where it was almost annihilated. Somerset, her chief general, was captured and beheaded. Margaret herself, with her young son, escaped to France; but her unfortunate husband, who remained in England, soon fell into the hands of Edward, and was confined in the Tower.
 

**Battle of Hexham.**