

**A JOURNAL BY ONE OF THE SUITE OF
THOMAS BECKINGTON, AFTERWARDS
BISHOP OF BATH AND WELLS, DURING AN
EMBASSY TO NEGOCIATE A MARRIAGE
BETWEEN HENRY VI. AND DAUGHTER OF THE
COUNT OF ARMAGNAC A. D. MCCCCXLII**

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A Journal by One of the Suite of Thomas Beckington, Afterwards Bishop of Bath and Wells, during an Embassy to Negociate a Marriage between Henry Vi. And Daughter of the Count of Armagnac A. D. MCCCCXLII by Thomas Beckington

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THOMAS BECKINGTON

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BY ONE OF THE SUITE OF

THOMAS BECKINGTON,

AFTERWARDS BISHOP OF BATH AND WELLS,

DURING AN EMBASSY TO NEGOCIATE

A MARRIAGE BETWEEN HENRY VI.

AND A

DAUGHTER OF THE COUNT OF ARMAGNAC.

A. D. MCCCCXLII.

WITH NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS,

BY

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TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE
SIR GORE OUSELEY,
BARONET;

ONE OF HIS MAJESTY'S MOST HONORABLE PRIVY COUNCIL;
KNIGHT OF THE ORDERS OF ST. ALEXANDER NEWSKI
OF RUSSIA, AND OF THE SUN AND LION OF PERSIA, OF
THE FIRST CLASS;

THIS VOLUME IS INSCRIBED,

IN TESTIMONY OF THE EDITOR'S

GRATITUDE AND RESPECT.



PREFACE.

It has been generally remarked that materials for a history of the reign of Henry the Sixth are extremely scanty ; and that though the times of earlier English monarchs are capable of being minutely illustrated, one of the most eventful periods in our annals can only be described in a cursory and imperfect manner. This observation is not, however, so strictly correct as has been hitherto supposed ; but the lamentable state of most of the public libraries, and more particularly in those places where they might be expected to be best arranged ; the difficulty which often exists of obtaining access to them ; and the want of proper catalogues, have combined to conceal many important manuscripts from the knowledge of our historians.

During a search in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, the volume from which the Journal in the following pages has been printed, accidentally fell under the Editor's notice ; and the remarks which he has prefixed to it, prove that every writer who has treated on the period to which it relates, ought to have been ac-

quainted with its contents, since it throws considerable light on an event of great importance in the history both of this country and of France, and affords much interesting biographical and antiquarian information. Sufficient having been said in the introduction, and in the notes, to establish the claim of this document to the attention of all who profess to write or read English history, it is only necessary to state that the original, which is written partly in English, partly in French, and partly in Latin, is in the volume in the Ashmolean Museum, marked No. 789, that the Latin and French are here translated, and that the English is printed literally.

It having been just said that materials for a history of the reign of Henry the Sixth are much more extensive than has been hitherto supposed, it may be desirable to refer to such of them as have occurred to the Editor in preparing this work for publication. The volume in which the Journal is preserved, contains also other historical documents of the fifteenth century, all of which, are it is presumed, inedited. In the British Museum are contemporary copies of the acts, decrees, and ordinances of the Privy Council, from the 10th to the 36th year of that reign,¹ as well as of the reigns of many preceding

¹ Cottonian MSS. Cleopatra, F. iv. and F. v.

and subsequent monarchs, which abound in the most accurate notices of public affairs. Among the records in the tower, numerous original letters and other undoubted evidence will be found; and the library of the College of Arms contains at least one volume of documents of equal value. Bishop Beckington has also illustrated two diplomatic transactions besides that to which this Journal relates; his diaries of an embassy to Arras in Artois, to negotiate a peace with France, in June 1435, and of his mission for a similar purpose, as well as to treat for the release of the Duke of Orleans in May 1439, being still extant.¹

These sources of information on the affairs of England in the middle of the fifteenth century, are probably not a tithe of what exist; but even of these, historical writers have not availed themselves. General historians cannot be expected to peruse all manuscripts connected with their labours, scattered as they are throughout the kingdom, often without either catalogues or indexes, and written in characters which require the practice of many years to decypher. To some of these manuscripts he cannot obtain access without incurring a personal favour; and

¹ Harleian MSS. 4763.