

**THE ALDINE EDITION OF THE
BRITISH POETS. THE POEMS
OF HENRY HOWARD, EARL
OF SURREY**

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The Aldine Edition of the British Poets. The Poems of Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey by Henry Howard Surrey

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LONDON
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1831

MEMOIR OF HENRY HOWARD
EARL OF SURREY.

" I write of him whose fame for aye endures."

Turbervile's Epitaph on Surrey.

DISTINGUISHED alike by his talents and rank, HENRY HOWARD EARL OF SURREY has attracted considerable attention; and as the first writer who attempted to refine our language, and to rescue English poetry from the grossness for which the productions of his predecessors are remarkable, he is worthy of the extraordinary research which his latest biographer has displayed in collecting particulars respecting his history. Dr. Nott affords a very creditable example of industry, and it is no slight praise to say that he appears to have exhausted every available source of information; hence, until a change takes place in the present disgraceful state of the public muniments, it is in vain to hope that any new light can be thrown on the life of this eminent person. The following Memoir has, therefore, been drawn up almost entirely from materials collected by Dr. Nott, an admission which it would be disingenuous to withhold; but con-

siderable difference will be found with respect to the inferences which that writer has drawn from some of the facts he has brought to light; and it is from this circumstance that these sheets derive their claim to attention. The most interesting of the letters which occur in the appendix to Dr. Nott's edition are here introduced into the Memoir, and though the present narrative is destitute of those pleasing speculations which distinguish that biographer's *Life of Surrey*, the loss may, perhaps, be borne with, when it is remembered that it is as dangerous for a biographer as for an historian to indulge his *imaginative* powers.

Although the Earl of Surrey owes but little of the respect which is felt for his memory to the adventitious splendour of his birth, it is necessary to speak of his genealogy with some minuteness, because it was from circumstances arising out of his pedigree that he became one of the victims of Henry the Eighth.

Doubts have been expressed as to the remote antiquity of the family of Howard, but it is beyond dispute that they descend from Sir William Howard, the Chief Justice of the Common Pleas in the reigns of Edward the First and Second, whose son, Sir John, was a Knight Banneret as early as 1307. His great great grandson, Sir Robert Howard, married Margaret Mowbray, daughter of Thomas, Duke of Norfolk and Earl Marshal, whose mother was Elizabeth, daughter and heiress

of John Lord Segrave the grand daughter and heiress of Thomas de Brotherton, Earl of Norfolk, a younger son of King Edward the First. Sir John Howard, K. G. the eldest son of Sir Robert by the Lady Margaret Mowbray, was created a Baron in 1470; and on the extinction of the Mowbrays, Dukes of Norfolk, about the year 1480, he became, in right of his mother, the eldest coheir of that house, which entitled him to quarter whatever arms were borne by them, a fact, as will afterwards appear, of some importance. Sir John Howard was raised to the dukedom of Norfolk by Richard the Third, who at the same time created his eldest son, Thomas, Earl of Surrey. These titles were forfeited after the battle of Bosworth, in which the "Jockey of Norfolk" gallantly fell in the cause of his sovereign and benefactor.

Thomas Howard, his son, was restored to the earldom of Surrey in 1489; and in reward of his services at Flodden Field he was created Duke of Norfolk in February 1514. Dying in 1524, he was succeeded by his son Thomas, third Duke of Norfolk, who was twice married—first to Anne, daughter of King Edward the Fourth, by whom he had no issue that survived their childhood, and secondly to Elizabeth Stafford, daughter of Edward, Duke of Buckingham, by whom he was father of the Poet. His second marriage, which proved an unhappy one, took place about Easter in 1513; the Duchess was twenty years younger

than her husband, and was then the object of an attachment, which was reciprocal, to the Earl of Westmorland.

The exact date of the birth of the Earl of Surrey has not been ascertained, but it may be assigned to some time between 1516 and 1518; nor has it been determined where it occurred, though many circumstances render it probable that it took place at Framlingham in Suffolk.

It would be idle to follow the most elaborate of Surrey's biographers in his speculations on the Earl's education, for nothing positive is known of him, until his fifteenth year, excepting that he was cupbearer to the King in 1526, and that in July, 1529, he accompanied his father on a visit to the Prior of Butley, in Suffolk. Early in 1532 he married Frances Vere, daughter of John, fifteenth Earl of Oxford, the settlement being dated on the 13th of February, in that year, at which time he could not have been more than sixteen. According to several writers Surrey and the Duke of Richmond, the natural son of Henry the Eighth, visited Paris together in that year, and joined the King in October, on his Majesty's landing at Calais, whilst others, with more reason, consider that they left England as part of the King's retinue. In the account of the ceremonials which occurred at the interview between Henry and the King of France, at Boulogne on this occasion, the Duke of Richmond and the Earl of Surrey are mentioned as

having been present. Richmond went to Paris to complete his studies, and it is supposed that Surrey accompanied him, but his stay could not have been of long duration, for at the coronation of Anne Boleyn, in June, 1533, he bore one of the swords which were carried in the procession. Richmond, who returned to England with the Duke of Norfolk in the autumn of that year, was, in September, affianced to Lady Mary Howard, Surrey's only sister, but as the parties were related within the fourth degrees of consanguinity, a dispensation was necessary. The young Duke was placed at Windsor, whilst his bride continued to live with her father, and it was at this time, and not, as had been previously supposed, in his childhood,* that Surrey was the companion of Richmond at Windsor. Speaking of this period of his life, Surrey says,

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“ — proud Windsor, where I in lust and joy,
 With a Kinges son, my childish years did pass,
 In greater feast than Priam's sons of Troy.
 Where each sweet place returns a taste full sour.
 The large green courts, where we were wont to have,
 With eyes cast up into the Maiden's tower,
 And easy sighs, such as folk draw in love.
 The stately seats, the ladies bright of hue.
 The dances short, long tales of great delight;
 With words and looks, that tigers could but rue;
 Where each of us did plead the other's right.

* Nott's Life of Surrey.