

**THE KING'S MOTHER:
MEMOIR OF MARGARET
BEAUFORT, COUNTESS OF
RICHMOND AND DERBY**

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The king's mother: memoir of Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond and Derby by
Margaret Domvile

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MARGARET DOMVILE

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MARGARET, COUNTESS OF RICHMOND.

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THE
KING'S MOTHER.

*MEMOIR OF MARGARET BEAUFORT,
COUNTESS OF RICHMOND AND DERBY.*

BY
LADY MARGARET DOMVILE.



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PREFACE.

SOME readers of Dr. Newman's "Apologia pro vita sua" may remember that, after recounting the circumstances under which the series of Lives of the English Saints was by him projected, and then dropped, the writer goes on to say that he is "glad of the opportunity of preserving what would otherwise be lost, the Catalogue of Saints I formed, which may be useful to others."

In this list, Dr. Newman tells us that he included "a few eminent, or holy persons, who, though not in the Sacred Catalogue, yet are recommended to our religious memory by their fame, learning, or by the benefits they have conferred on posterity; these have been distinguished from the Saints by printing their names in italics." Their whole number is but fourteen, and the only woman's name so honoured is that of the Countess of Richmond.

Of this lady, the only complete and connected biography that has yet been published is one written by Miss Caroline Halsted,* to whose

* Brought out by Messrs. Smith and Elder in 1839.

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previous essay on the subject the Directors of the Gresham Commemoration had awarded their annual premium. As the successful competitor, Miss Halsted was called on to publish her essay ; and it being, she tells us, her anxious desire to make the work as complete as possible, she examined attentively the Harleian, Cottonian, and Lansdowne MSS., and sought further information from many private and unpublished sources. To her painstaking industry the reviews of the period did justice, and a second edition of her book came out in 1845.

In 1874, Professor Jeb Mayor, of St. John's, Cambridge, at the request of his own and of Christ's Colleges, edited from materials left by the late learned antiquary, Charles Henry Cooper, a memoir of their foundress. This volume gives, in chronological sequence, every incident and detail which the most careful and minute research could make available for the Countess of Richmond's biography ; the Appendix has transcripts of her will and of many other documents, Latin and English, connected with her or with her foundations, while Professor Mayor, besides verifying the citations, correcting the clerical errors, and supplying Index and Glossary, has contributed some thirty pages of added or expanded matter.

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Still, Cooper's "Memoir of the Lady Margaret," not being written in narrative form, appeals only to a very limited circle of readers : as Professor Mayor mentions that it was in the main written before 1840, "though the unwearied author added ever and anon new facts and references," it is probable that Mr. Cooper originally projected a complete biography, but on the appearance of Miss Halsted's volume deferred its completion. Now, however, that Miss Halsted's work has long been out of print, the occasion has surely arisen for a fresh narrative of one of those lives which, again to quote Cardinal Newman, "would instruct us in the capabilities of the English character, and make Englishmen love their country better, and on truer grounds." The present writer does not for a moment suppose that the following pages have done this adequately ; but if they become the occasion of a more competent hand's undertaking the task, the pleasant labour they have involved will not be a useless one.

THE KING'S MOTHER.

CHAPTER I.

MARGARET BEAUFORT, born at Bletsloe, near Higham Ferrers, in Bedfordshire, in the year 1441, was the only child of John, first Duke of Somerset, by his wife Margaret, daughter and heiress of Sir John Beauchamp. Her father, who succeeded to the Earldom of Somerset on the death of his eldest brother, had won his spurs at Agincourt, and in the early years of Henry VI.'s reign he commanded the English forces in France. John Beaufort's best known exploit was the taking of Harfleur, in recognition of which he was made Duke of Somerset, and appointed Lieutenant-General of the English possessions in France, which post he held till 1436.

In 1444 Somerset, on some accusation not specified, "of having been in league with the King's enemies," fell into disgrace at Court, and died within the year, at the