

When his mother, in 1523, was married, by Royal consent, to Arthur Plantagenet, who soon became Viscount L'Isle in right of this wife, young Dudley was brought to court, and being of fine person and accomplishments, he attended the King's favorite, Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk in his expedition to France where he behaved very gallantly, and received special notice of his general, and procured the honor of Knighthood, Nov. 6, 1523.*

He had many relatives in great favor at court, but he was trusted and honored chiefly for his own merits and abilities. Cardinal Wolsey was his friend, whom he accompanied in an embassy to France in 19 Hen. VIII., and then, having prepared himself, and shown his qualification, he was soon after taken into the King's service. This, however, did not hinder his efforts for popular favor among the country gentry, and, in 1536, he was Sheriff of Staffordshire, where he lived in high favor with his neighbors, who appreciated his hospitality better even than after he became elevated far above them.

A little later he entered as a student of Gray's Inn, among the great lawyers, where his father had learned the law.

How much advancement he made there is not known. The court was his home and Wolsey his faithful patron, as well as Lord Cromwell; and young Dudley was made Master of the Horse to Anne of Cleves. In 1539 he was the first challenger in the great tournament at Westminster, says Stowe. He had much tact to keep the favor of the King and courtiers under all sorts of changes. His great liberality and magnificence gained him many friends; but he carried it so far as to weaken his estate, which the King seeing, prompt means were used by his highness to serve so agreeable a favorite.

In 1542, he was made Viscount L'Isle, on the death of his father-in-law, Viscount Sir Arthur Plantagenet. Soon after, at the Feast of St. George, he was elected K. G. Then, but a short time following this, came another much higher advancement, for the King, confiding in his great prudence and knowing his courage and activity, constituted him "Lord High Admiral of England for Life." The next year he proceeded to Scotland with a fleet of 200 sail, landed his forces and marched through the southern provinces of that country and completely restored tranquillity to them.†

Next he embarked for France in 1543, and 28th July appeared before Boulogne, then besieged by Hen. VIII. in person, and, by his courage and great diligence, effected with other heroes, the reduction

* Stowe's Annals, p. 519.

† Cowper, Holinshed, Strype.—Bio. Brit., Stowe's Annals.