

Just before the young Isabella arrived in England, the duke of Lancaster thought fit to give his princely hand to Katherine Rouet, who had been governess to his daughters, and was already mother to those sons of the duke so celebrated in English history as the Beauforts. Serious were the feuds this mis-alliance raised in the royal family. "When the marriage of the duke of Lancaster was announced to the ladies of royal descent in England, such as the duchess of Gloucester and the countess of Arundel (who was a Mortimer of the line of Clarence), they were greatly shocked, and said, 'The duke had disgraced himself by marrying a woman of light character, since she would take rank as second lady in the kingdom, and the young queen would be dishonourably accompanied by her; but, for their parts, they would leave her to do the honours of the court alone, for they would never enter any place where she was. They themselves would be disgraced if they permitted such a base-born duchess, who had been mistress to the duke, both before and after his marriage with the princess Constance, to take precedence of them, and their hearts would burst with grief were it to happen.' Those persons of the royal family who were the most outrageous on the subject, were the duke and duchess of Gloucester."¹ Thus was the court of king Richard in a state of ferment with the discontents of the princesses of the house of Plantagenet, just at the time when he required them to assemble for the purpose of receiving his infant bride. While these ladies were settling their points of precedency, the princess Isabella was espoused in Paris by the earl-marshal, as proxy for his royal master. "She was from that time," says Froissart, "styled the queen of England. And I was at the time told it was pretty to see her, young as she was, practising how to act the queen."

About this time the king of France sent to England the count St. Pol, who had married Richard's half-sister, Maud Holland, surnamed 'the Fair.' King Richard promised his brother-in-law that he would come to Calais and have an interview with the king of France, when his bride was to be

¹ Froissart.