French and took Pontoise; but his own capture by the Maid of Orleans was what probably discouraged the English most of all in their disasters beyond sea. He was exchanged for an eminent French prisoner and a heavy ransom besides. He served also several times as lieutenant of Ireland, and in 1446 was created earl of Wexford and of Waterford, in addition to the title of Shrewsbury, which had been conferred upon him in 1442. He died in 1453, in an unsuccessful expedition for the recovery of Guienne, which had lately submitted to the French. His son John, Viscount Lisle, was slain along with him in the same fatal battle.

But, besides his martial exploits which live in history, this John claims some attention for his family alliances. His first wife Maud, a granddaughter of Thomas, Lord Furnivall, brought him the castle of Sheffield as part of her inheritance, and he was accordingly summoned to parliament in the days of Henry IV. as John Talbot of Hallamshire, otherwise Lord Furnivall, more than thirty years before he was made earl of Shrewsbury. The property remained in the hands of his descendants, and became a favourite residence of the family during the whole of the Tudor era ; and, but for the death in 1616 of Gilbert, seventh earl of Shrewsbury, without male issue, it has been remarked by Hunter that Sheffield might have remained much longer a centre of feudal magnificence rather than of commerce and manufactures. The second wife of John, earl of Shrewsbury, was Margaret, the eldest of three daughters of Richard Beauchamp, earl of War­wick, by *his* second wife, a daughter of Thomas, Lord Berkeley. By her he obtained a third part of the Berkeley property ; and, though she did not become the mother of a line of earls, her eldest son, John Talbot, was created Viscount Lisle, and it was he who fell along with his father at the disastrous battle of Chatillon in Gascony. His son Thomas, who inherited the title of Viscount Lisle, was also slain at the early age of twenty-two in a feudal contest with Lord Berkeley, arising out of a dispute as to the possession of Berkeley castle, at Nibley Green, near Wotton-under-Edge, March 20, 1470; and the title was afterwards conferred on Edward Grey, the husband of one of his two sisters.

John, the second earl of Shrewsbury, was the first earl’s son by his first wife. He had been knighted at Leicester in 1426 along with the infant king Henry VI., had served in the wars of France, and been made chancellor of Ireland during his father’s lifetime, when he was only Lord Talbot. Afterwards he was made lord high treasurer of England, and in 1459 was rewarded for his services to the house of Lancaster with a grant of 100 marks a year out of the lordship of Wakefield, forfeited by Richard, duke of York. But next year he and his brother Christopher were slain at the battle of Northampton, fighting in the cause of Henry VI. His son John succeeded him, and then his grandson George, who fought for Henry VII. at Stoke, and whom King Henry VIII. sent as his lieutenant against the rebels in that most formidable insurrection, the Pilgrimage of Grace. But perhaps the thing which most redounds to his credit is the humanity with which (as related by Cavendish) he received the fallen Cardinal Wolsey into his house at Sheffield when he was on his way up to London as a state prisoner, and endeavoured to remove those gloomy anticipations of his fate which in fact brought on his last illness.

Francis, the fifth earl, took a leading part in the invasions of Scotland under Henry VIII. and Edward VI., and was one of the two peers who alone opposed the bill for abolishing the pope’s jurisdiction under Elizabeth. His son George, who succeeded, was the earl to whom the custody of Mary Stuart was committed, his delicate and onerous task being rendered all the more difficult for him by the intrigues of his bold, ambitious second wife, Bess of Hardwick, the builder of Chatsworth, who had married three husbands before her union with him. Two sons of this last earl succeeded one another, and the title then devolved, for want of male issue, on the lineal descendants of Sir Gilbert Talbot of Grafton in Worcestershire, third son of John, the second earl. This Sir Gilbert had fought for Henry VII. at Bosworth, where he was severely wounded, was knighted on the field, and was throughout one of the first Tudor’s most trusted councillors. He fought also at Stoke against the insurgents with Lambert Simnel, was made a knight banneret, governor of Calais, and lord chamberlain.

The ninth earl, George, descended from this Gilbert, is not distinguished by any prominent actions. He died unmarried, and his brother, who followed next, was succeeded by his grandson Francis, chiefly memorable for his unhappy fate. His second wife, a daughter of the earl of Cardigan, was seduced by the duke of Buckingham, whom the outraged husband challenged to a duel. The countess, it is said, was present at the scene, and held Buckingham’s horse in the disguise of a page, saw her husband killed, and then clasped her lover in her arms, receiving blood-stains upon her dress from the embrace. Charles, the twelfth earl, son of this unfortunate nobleman, was raised by William III, to the dignity of a duke for his important diplomatic services. His position in those slippery times was altogether exceptional. Abandoning the religion of his ancestors he became a Protestant, was one of the seven who signed the invitation to William of Orange to come over, and was continually consulted by him on state affairs after he became king. Yet, being apparently of a very sensitive disposition, he seems to have at times repented what he had done, and even corresponded with James at St Germain ; yet again, in times of danger, he was as ready as ever to stake his life and fortunes in the service of his country to preserve the new settlement. It was apparently his extreme sensitiveness that caused him to be spoken of as “the king of hearts.” In 1694 he was created marquis of Alton and duke of Shrewsbury, but as he left no son these titles died along with him, and the earldom of Shrewsbury devolved on his cousin Gilbert, a Roman Catholic priest.

From this time the direct line of Sir Gilbert Talbot of Grafton began to fail. A nephew three times succeeded to an uncle, and then the title devolved upon a cousin, who died unmarried in 1856. On the death of this cousin the descent of the title was for a short time in dispute, and the lands were claimed for the infant son of the duke of Norfolk under the will of the last earl ; but the courts decided that, under a private Act obtained by the duke of Shrewsbury in the sixth year of George I., the title and estates must go together, and the true successor to the earldom was found in Earl Talbot, the head of another line of the descendants of Sir Gilbert Talbot of Grafton, sprung from a second marriage of Sir Gilbert’s son, Sir John Talbot of Albrighton. The head of this family in the beginning of the last century was a divine of some mark, who died bishop of Durham in 1730. His son Charles, who filled the office of lord chancellor, was created Baron Talbot of Hensol in Glamorganshire in 1733 ; and his son again was advanced to the dignity of Earl Talbot in 1761, to which was added that of Baron Dynevor in 1780. Then succeeded a nephew, who was also created Viscount Ingestre, and assumed by royal licence the surname of Chetwynd before Talbot, from his mother.

The Earl Talbot who successfully claimed the Shrews­bury title (as the eighteenth earl) was the present earl’s