eldest son. This document was, unfortunately, rendered worth­less by a flaw which gave the king eventual possession of the property. Acting on Salisbury’s suggestion, James resolved to confer the manor on Carr. The case was argued at law, and judgment was in 1609 given for the Crown. Lady Raleigh received some compensation, apparently inadequate, and Carr at once entered on possession. His influence was already such that in 1610 he persuaded the king to dissolve the parliament, which had shown signs of attacking the Scottish favourites. On the 25th of March 1611 he was created Viscount Rochester, and subsequently a privy councillor, while on Lord Salisbury’s death in 1612 he began to act as the king’s secretary. On the 3rd of November 1613 he was advanced to the earldom of Somer­set, on the 23rd of December was appointed treasurer of Scotland, and in 1614 lord chamberlain. He supported the earl of North­ampton and the Spanish party in opposition to the old tried advisers of the king, such as Lord-Chancellor Ellesmere, who were endeavouring to maintain the union with the Protestants abroad, and who now in 1614 pushed forward another candidate for the king’s favour. Somerset, whose head was turned by the sudden rise to power and influence, became jealous and peevish, and feeling his position insecure, obtained in 1615 from the king a full pardon, to which, however, the chancellor refused to put the Great Seal. He still, however, retained the king’s favour, and might possibly have remained in power for some time longer but for the discovery of the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury. Before 1609, while still only Sir Robert Carr, Somerset had begun an intrigue with Lady Essex. Supported by the king, the latter obtained a decree of nullity of marriage against Lord Essex in September 1613, and in December she married the earl of Somerset. Ten days before the court gave judgment, Sir Thomas Overbury, who apparently knew facts concerning Lady Essex which would have been fatal to her success, and had been imprisoned in the Tower, was poisoned. No idea seems to have been entertained at the time that Lady Essex and her future husband were implicated. The crime, however, was not dis­closed till September 1615. Coke and Bacon were set to unravel the plot. After four of the principal agents had been convicted and punished, the earl and countess were brought to trial. The latter confessed, and of her guilt there can be no doubt. Somer­set’s share is far more difficult to discover, and probably will never be fully known. The evidence against him rested on mere presumption, and he consistently declared himself innocent. Probabilities are on the whole in favour of the hypothesis that he was not more than an accessory after the fact. James, who had been threatened by Somerset with damaging disclosures, let matters take their course, and both earl and countess were found guilty. The sentence was not carried into effect against either culprit. The countess was pardoned immediately, but both remained in the Tower till January 1622. The earl appears to have refused to buy forgiveness by concessions, and it was not till 1624 that he obtained his pardon. He only once more emerged into public view when in 1630 he was prosecuted in the Star Chamber for communicating a paper of Sir Robert Dudley’s to the earl of Clare, recommending the establishment of arbitrary government. He died in July 1645, leaving one daughter, Anne, the sole issue of his ill-fated marriage, afterwards wife of the 1st duke of Bedford.

See the article by S. R. Gardiner in *Did. Nat. Biog.,* with authori­ties there cited, and the same author’s *History of England; State Trials* II. ; *Life and Letters of Bacon,* ed. by Spedding; *Studies in Eng. Hist.,* by Gairdner and Spedding.

**SOMERSET, LORD ROBERT EDWARD HENRY** (1776-1842), British soldier, was the third son of the 5th duke of Beaufort, and elder brother of Lord Raglan. Joining the 15th Light Dragoons in 1793, he became captain in the following year, and received a majority after serving as aide-de-camp to the duke of York in the Dutch expedition of 1799. At the end of 1800 he became a lieutenant-colonel, and in 1801 received the command of the 4th Light Dragoons. From 1799 to 1802 he represented the Monmouth boroughs in the House of Commons, and from 1803 to 1823 sat for Gloucestershire. He commanded his regiment at the battles of Talavera and Busaco, and in 1810 received a colonelcy and the appointment of A.D.C. to the king. In 1811, along with the 3rd Dragoon Guards, the 4th Light Dragoons fought a notable cavalry action at Usagre, and in 1812 Lord Edward Somerset was engaged in the great charge of Le Marchant’s heavy cavalry at Salamanca. His conduct on this occasion (he captured five guns at the head of a single squadron) won him further promotion, and he made the remain­ing campaigns as a major-general at the head of the Hussar brigade (7th, 10th and 15th Hussars). At Orthes he won further distinction by his pursuit of the enemy; he was made K.C.B., and received the thanks of parliament. At Waterloo he was in command of the Household Cavalry Brigade, which distinguished itself not less by its stern and patient endurance of the enemy’s fire than by its celebrated charge on the cuirassiers of Milhaud’s corps. The brigadier was particularly mentioned in Wellington’s despatches, and received the thanks of parliament as well as the Maria Theresa and other much-prized foreign orders. He died a general and G.C.B. in 1842.

**SOMERSETSHIRE,** a south-western county of England, bounded N. and N.W. by the Bristol Channel, N. and N.E. by Gloucestershire, N.E. and E. by Wiltshire, S.E. by Dorsetshire, S.W. and W. by Devonshire. The area is 1630·3 sq. m. In shape the county resembles an ill-drawn crescent, curving inward where Bridgwater Bay bends south-west and broader at its eastern than at its western horn. It falls into three natural divisions, being in fact a broad alluvial plain bordered by two hill-regions. The Mendip range, breaking off from the high ground near Wiltshire, extends north-west towards the channel, where it ends with Brean Down; while the island of Steep Holm stands as an outpost between the heights of Somerset and Glamorgan. The summit of the Mendips is a long table-land, reaching an extreme height, towards the western end, of 1068 ft. in Black Down, sloping away gently towards the lower hills of the north, but rising on the south in an abrupt line, broken by many coombes or glens; the most striking of which are the cliffs of Ebbor Rocks, near Wells, and the gorge of Cheddar (*q.v.*), which winds for nearly a mile between huge and fantastic rocks. South of the Mendips lies a broad plain watered by the Parrett and the Brue, and known generally as Sedgemoor, but with different names in different parts. This plain, intersected by ditches known as. *rhines,* and in some parts rich in peat, is broken by isolated hills and lower ridges, of which the most conspicuous are Brent Knoll near Burnham, the Isle of Avalon, rising with Glastonbury Tor as its highest point, and the long low ridge of Polden ending to the west in a steep bluff. West of Sedgemoor the second great region of hills extends from Devonshire to the sea. It consists of the Black Down, Brendon and Quantock hills, with Exmoor Forest *(q.v.)* in the extreme west. This entire district is famous for the grandeur of its bare and desolate moors, and the bold outlines and height of its mountains; the chief of which are Dunkery, in Exmoor (1707 ft.); Lype Hill, the westernmost point of the Brendon range (1391 ft.); and Will’s Neck, among the Quantocks (1261 ft.). The two principal rivers of Somerset are the Avon and the Parrett. The Avon, after forming for a short distance the boundary with Wiltshire, crosses the north-eastern corner of the county, encircling Bath, and forms the boundary with Gloucestershire till it reaches the sea 6 m. beyond Bristol. It is navigable for barges as far as Bath. The Parrett from South Perrott in Dorset, on the borders of Somerset, crosses the centre of the county north-westwards by Bridgwater, receiving the Yeo and Cary on the right, and the Isle and Tone on the left. Among other streams are the Axe, which rises at Wookey Hole in the Mendips and flows north­westward along their base to the Bristol Channel near Blackrock; the Brue, which rises to the east of Bruton, near the borders of Wiltshire, and enters the Bristol Channel near the mouth of the Parrett; and the Exe (with its tributary the Barle), which rises in Exmoor forest and passes southward into Devon. Some of the Somersetshire streams, especially the Exe and Barle, are in high favour with trout fishermen. Weston-super-Mare is a flourishing seaside resort, and Minehead and other coast villages are also frequented.