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**The Comic History
Of England
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The Comic History Of England

Gilbert Abbott A'Beckett



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CHAPTER THE FOURTH. HENRY THE SIXTH, SURNAMED OF WINDSOR (CONTINUED).



EDFORD had for some time been struggling in France under the extreme disadvantage of shortness of cash, for the council being engaged in continual quarrelling at home, had become very irregular in sending remittances. He had gone week after week without his own salary, but he never grumbled at that until he found his army, from getting short of cash, beginning to fail in allegiance. Often, while reviewing the troops, if he complained of awkwardness in the evolutions, he would hear murmurs of «Why don't you pay us?» and on one occasion an insolent fellow, who had been bungling over the easy manouvre of standing at ease, cried out, «It's all very well to say <Stand at ease,> but how is a man to stand at when he never receives his salary?» Upon another occasion, Bedford had given the word to «Charge!» when a suppressed titter ran through the ranks, and, on his demanding an explanation, he was told respectfully by one of his aides-de-camp that the troops thought it an irresistible joke to call upon them to «charge,» when, if they charged ever so much, there was no prospect of their demand

being satisfied. Bedford used to rush regularly every morning to the outpost, in the hope of finding a letter containing the means of liquidating some of the arrears of pay into which he had fallen with his soldiers. He was, however, always doomed to disappointment, for there was either no communication for him at all, or an intimation that «next week»—which never comes—would bring him the cash he was so eagerly waiting for. His repeated visits to the outpost usually ended in a shake of the head from the officer on duty, whose «No, sir; there's nothing for you,» had in it a mixture of compassion and contempt, which are not always incompatible.

Bedford, the regent, having left Paris, Charles thought that, the cat being away, the mice might be at play, and that the city would be unprepared if an attack should be made upon it. Beauvais and St. Denis opened their gates, but the Parisians were not so complaisant, and Charles, unwilling to resort to force, tried the effect of flummery. He issued proclamations, full of the most brilliant promises to his «good and loyal city,» but the inhabitants replied by hanging out an allegorical banner, representing an individual in the act of offering some chaff to an old bird, who was refusing to be caught by it. Stung by this sarcasm, Charles determined to make an attack, and on the 12th of September he commenced an assault on the Faubourg St. Honoré.

Joan threw herself against the wall, but could make no impression upon it, and she could only lament that among the French artillery there was no mortar to be brought to bear upon the bricks of the city. She then resorted to other steps—or, rather, to a ladder—and had reached every successive round amid successive rounds of applause from her followers, when she was stopped by a wound, which fairly knocked her over. A friendly ditch received the disabled Joan, who went into it with a splash, which caused all her companions to basely run away, lest they should participate in the consequences of her downfall. Drenched and disheartened, sobbing, and in a per-

fect sop, the Maid crawled out of the ditch and lay down for a little while; but suddenly rising, and giving herself a shake, she made another rush at the battlements. A few better spirits, ashamed of seeing the weakest thus a second time going to the wall, joined her in her advance, but, meeting with resistance, they rolled back like a wave of the sea, almost swamping the Maid, and carrying her violently away with them.



Joan's influence had now begun to decline, for, though a heroine is popular as long as she succeeds, a woman who fails in her performance of the part is always ridiculous.

She had also lost the favour of the soldiers by attacking them behind their backs, for she had flogged them with the flat of her sword till she broke the blade over their shoulders.

They openly called her an impostor, a humbug, and a do; so that, hurt in her feelings as well as in her neck, wounded alike in mind and body, she resolved to quit the army. She even went to the Abbey church, and, fixing up a clothes-line, hung her white armour before the shrine of St. Denis.

Charles supposed the articles had been put there to dry after the soaking the Maid had experienced in the ditch, but when he

heard that Joan, as well as her coat of mail, was on the high ropes, he determined to take her down a peg as gently as possible. She was persuaded to prolong her stay, or, rather, to renew her engagement; and though, even after her military début at the siege of Orleans, she had wished it to be her «positively last appearance on any ramparts,» Charles had the satisfaction of announcing that she had in the handsomest manner consented to remain in his company. A constant renewal of an engagement will dim the attraction of the brightest star, and Joan was evidently on the wane as a popular favourite.

In the beginning of 1430 there was a blight cessation of hostilities, and Charles remained at Bourges, where he was suffering under a severe exhaustion of his means and a general sinking in all his pockets. At this juncture, Joan met with a rival in the shape of an opposition prophetess, for it is always the fate of merit and success to become the subject of base and paltry imitation. Catherine of La Rochelle was the name of the female counterfeit who adapted her inspiration to the exigencies of the time, and, knowing the king to be short of cash, she pretended to have fits of financial foresight. She was, in fact, a visionary Chancellor of the Exchequer, running about with an imaginary budget, and transforming Charles's real deficiency into an ideal surplus. She affected to hear voices and to see visions; but the former were rude shouts of I.O.U., and the latter represented to her certain hidden treasure, which was hidden so well that it has never been found from that time to the present. She had the art of extracting money for the king's use from those who had any money to give, and a single speech from her mouth was sufficient to fill with coin any soup-plate or saucer that might be handed round to the audience. She boasted that she could talk every penny out of the purses of her hearers, and whenever she appeared, there was a general cry of «Take care of your pockets!»

Joan called her an impostor, and was called «another» in return; but it was said by a quaint writer of the period that, whatever the Maid of Orleans might have done with the sword, the tongue of Catherine would give an antagonist a more complete licking than the most formidable weapon. Charles was attracted by the financial fanatic, but, still wishing to propitiate Joan, he ennobled her family, and declared that her native village of Domremy should for ever be exempt from taxes. It thus became one of the greatest rights of this place to forget the whole of its duties. At the opening of the spring, the French king advanced again towards Paris with two prophetesses in his suite, but, as two of a trade never agree—particularly if they happen to be of the gentler sex—the two young ladies were constantly quarrelling. It is probable that the presence of Catherine was the cause of putting Joan upon her mettle, for she marched to the relief of Compiegne with all her accustomed spirit. She had made up her mind to a repetition of the hit she had made at Orleans, but Victory did not answer her call or show any disposition to wait upon her. Joan fought with valour, but her soldiers had no sooner met the foe than they agreed that the chances were against them, and that the only way to bring themselves round was to turn immediately back, a manouvre which was performed by one simultaneous movement. Joan tried to rally them, but they were too far gone, and while she kept her face to the enemy, her old disaster befell her, for she backed into one of those ditches in which all her military exploits seemed doomed to terminate. There being no humane member of society, or member of the Humane Society, to give her the benefit of a drag from the water in which she was immersed, she was soon surrounded by her enemies. Her own companions had fled into the city and shut the gates upon her, against which she had not the strength to knock, when, mournfully murmuring out, «Alas! I am not worth a rap,» she surrendered to her opponents.

The sensation created by the capture of Joan of Arc was actually prodigious. The captains ran out of their positions, and the men left their ranks to have a peep at her. Duke Philip paid her a visit at her lodgings, in the presence of old Monstrelet, who was either so deaf, or so stupid, or so thunderstruck, that he could not relate what passed at the interview. The ungrateful French made no effort to release the Maid, and, indeed, there seemed to be a feeling of satisfaction at having got rid of her. Her captors showed a strong disposition to make much of her by turning the celebrated prophetess to a profit, and the person to whom she had surrendered—the Bastard of Vendôme—sold her out and out to John of Luxembourg. Friar Martin pretended to have a lien upon her; but John, refusing to have the lot put up again, and resold—in accordance with the usual practice in cases of dispute—cleared her off to a strong castle of his own in Picardy. Another pretended mortgagee of the Maid then started up in the person of the Bishop of Beauvais, who claimed her on behalf of the University of Paris. John of Luxembourg disposed of her to his holiness for ten thousand francs, rather than have any further trouble.

Poor Joan was committed to prison on the charge of witchcraft, and as a kind of preliminary to the proceedings in her own case, a woman who believed in the Maid was burned, pour encourager les autres who might put faith in her inspiration. The fate of Joan was for some time very uncertain; but the learned doctors of the University of Paris, and other high authorities, recommended her being burned at once, which would save the trouble and expense of a previous trial. The Bishop of Beauvais, who had become the proprietor, by purchase, of the illustrious captive, recommended the adoption of regular legal proceedings. Priests and lawyers and lettered men were summoned from far and near; many of the legal gentlemen being specially retained, and all being practised in the art of cross-examination, to which Joan was subjected

by those who conducted the case for the prosecution. Her trial was, throughout, a disgraceful exhibition of forensic chicanery, for her opponents attempted to puzzle her with hard words, which, in spite of her being charged with magic spells, she had not the power of spelling.

The pleadings were shamefully complicated; but she defended herself with spirit, and occasionally confounded the doctors, who were confounded knaves, for they tried to take every advantage of her unfortunate position.

Sixteen days were consumed in taking the evidence, and Joan sometimes made a point in her own favour, when the Bishop of Beauvais, sinking the dignity of the judge in the temporary office of usher, began to call lustily for silence; and, according to the modern practice of the officer of the court, making more noise than everyone else by the loudness of his vociferations.

The bishop shouted and resorted to other gentlemanly expedients, during the entire day, to damage the cause of Joan, who, nevertheless, proceeded as if in the midst of that silence which the usher in Westminster Hall is continually disturbing by loudly calling for, It was contended, on the part of the prosecution, that there was magic in her banner; but Joan, who had served the other side with notice to produce the banner, declared there was nothing particular in any part of it.

The pole belonging to it was as plain as any other pike-staff, and the banner itself was formed of a cheap material, which Joan declared was all stuff; so that the banner was, of necessity, waived by her enemies. Her judges, nevertheless, declared there was sufficient evidence to support a charge of heresy, and began to deliberate on the manner of her punishment. While some recommended fire, others threw cold water upon it, and French, as well as English writers, have laboured to prove, that their countrymen, at least, were averse to a proceeding from which the term «burning shame» no doubt took the signification it bears at present. Having already found her guilty, her

persecutors tried their utmost to urge her to acknowledge her guilt, for in the absence of proof, it was thought advisable to get at least a confession.

At length, on the 24th of May, 1431, the Maid was brought up to hear her sentence, and the Bishop of Beauvais, taking out a pile of papers, endorsed re Joan of Arc, declared himself ready to deliver his judgment. An opportunity was, however, allowed her to stay execution, on giving a *cognovit*, or acknowledgment of every charge brought against her; and such a document being drawn up, she reluctantly permitted Joan of Arc, X, her mark—for she could not write—to be affixed to it. Her punishment was commuted to perpetual imprisonment, with «the bread of sorrow and the water of affliction,» which consisted of a stale loaf and a pull at the pump once a day, as her only nourishment.

She found very few crumbs of comfort in her daily crust, and when the water was brought to her, she declared it to be very hard, which was certainly better than soft for drinking. It was a portion of her punishment to resume her female attire, which caused her considerable annoyance, and a soldier's dress having been left in her prison, she was one morning discovered wearing it. Her jailer, on entering, charged her with «trying it on,» but added that it was anything but fitting, and told her that she would certainly be overhauled when he reported that he had seen her in a pair of military overalls.

The circumstance was instantly turned against her, and the putting on of male attire, which she had worn before, was declared to be a revival of the old suit, to which she had been liable. Her re-appearance in the soldier's dress was looked upon as a proof of uniform opposition to the authorities; and her offence was described as «relapsed heresy,» or double guilt, like the «one cold caught on the top of t'other» by the boy who had been suffering under several layers of those disagreeable visitors. Judgment was now finally entered up against the ill-used Maid, who, on the 30th of May, 1431, was brought in a

cart to the market-place and burned at Rouen.

We would gladly draw a veil over the fate of poor Joan; but we are unwilling to spare those who were accessory to it, from the odium which increases whenever the facts are repeated. Cardinal Beaufort and some of the bishops who had been instrumental to the murder of the Maid, began to whimper when the ceremony commenced, and to find it more than their susceptible natures could bear to witness. They had ordered the atrocity that was about to take place; but conscience had made them such arrant cowards, that they had not the courage to witness the carrying out of their own savage suggestions. If persons so hard-hearted as themselves could feel so much affected by the sacrifice they had ordered, we may imagine what opinion ought to be entertained of them for commanding an act of atrocity which they dared not remain to contemplate.

The conduct of Charles in not interfering on Joan's behalf, is even more cruel and despicable than that of her avowed enemies. The French king finding the Maid of no further use, came practically to a free translation of *Non eget arcu* (there is no want of a Joan of Arc), and left her to the fate that awaited her. It would have been nothing but policy to have insured her life, which he might easily have done, even when she was threatened with burning, and her case became doubly hazardous.

The English were very anxious to get up a sensation in France by way of diverting the public mind from the fate of the Maid of Orleans. A coronation, which is always one of the best cards to play, being good for a king or queen at the least, was thought of and resolved upon. The affair was intended to eclipse the ceremony of which Charles had been the hero and Joan of Arc the heroine. Young Henry, who had been crowned already at Westminster, and had therefore rehearsed the part he would be called upon to play, was brought over to Paris with all the scenery, machinery, dresses and decorations, properties and appointments, that had been used before, so that the coronation being in the *répertoire* of costly spectacles, the expense of

its revival was moderate. The performance took place in November, 1431; but though the getting-up was very complete, the applause was scanty, and the attendance was by no means numerous. Cardinal Beaufort occupied a stall, and there was a fair sprinkling of people in the galleries; but the principal character being a spiritless and most unpromising boy of nine, the spectacle excited very little interest.

Things remaining in France in a very unsatisfactory state, Charles and Philip of Burgundy came to the resolution that it was folly to go on cutting one another's throats, and they consequently effected a compromise. Philip got the best of the bargain, which was solemnised by a great deal of swearing and unswearing; for as the parties had previously exchanged oaths of hostility toward each other, it was necessary to take the sponge and wipe out former affidavits, as well as to supply the blank with new oaths of an opposite character. There was a mutual interchange of perjury; and posterity, on looking at the respective culpabilities of the two parties, can only come to the conclusion, that they were beaucoup d'un beaucoup, or much of a muchness.

The Duke of Bedford did not live long after this treaty, but died of indigestion, and considering that he had eaten an enormous quantity of his own words, the result is by no means marvellous. He finished up his existence at Rouen, on the 14th of September, 1435, having swallowed a parcel of his own oaths, some of which are supposed to have stuck in his throat, and caused his dissolution. The English in France soon felt the fatal consequences of being without a chief, for the columns of an army, like the columns of a journal, are incomplete without a leader. Deprived of Bedford, the English soldiers could no longer hold Paris—or, rather, Paris could no longer hold them—and they were consequently forced to surrender. The Duke of York succeeded to the command in France—if he can be said to have succeeded who failed in almost everything. A succession of reverses was the only thing approaching to suc-

cess which he experienced; and a supersedeas was soon issued to overturn his commission.

Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, did something towards restoring the English ascendancy in France; but Philip of Burgundy thought he would try his hand at a siege, and fixed upon Calais as being the most convenient. The Duke of Gloucester, hearing he had a tremendous army assembled in front of the town, sent over to Philip an offer to fight him. «Only stop there till I get at you,» were Gloucester's words; to which Burgundy replied, that he should be happy to wait the English duke's convenience. Four days, however, before the latter landed, the former was seized with a panic—and, taking suddenly to his heels, his thirty thousand men scampered wildly after him. Philip, who had set the example, and must have been flighty to have commenced such an insane flight, was completely run off his legs by the ruck of fugitives in his rear; and he was swept into the very heart of Flanders, before he could ascertain what his soldiers were driving at. Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, did something towards retrieving the failing fortunes of the English; but, as both parties were getting into a nervous state—running away through sheer panics, crying out before they were hurt, and flying before they were pursued—a truce was agreed upon. It was for two years, to expire on the 1st of April, 1446,—and there could not have been a more appropriate day than that devoted to All Fools, to renew hostilities which were injurious to all parties.

Henry, of Windsor, was now twenty-four; but, though a man in years, he was still an infant in intellect. He was physically full-grown, but mentally a dwarf; and what had been in childhood the gentleness of the lamb, became in manhood downright sheepishness. His conversational powers would not have allowed him to say «bo to a goose,» had it been necessary for him to address to that foolish bird that unmeaning monosyllable. Even his mother had turned her back upon him, as a noo-

dle she could make nothing of, and had married Owen Tudor, Esquire, an obscure gentleman of Wales, who boasted, nevertheless, a royal descent, or at least maintained that the Tudors were so called from being not above Two-doors off from such illustrious lineage. The Queen-mother had died, but had left a lot of little Tudors, under the care of O. T., her bourgeois gentleman of a husband.

Henry being a mere nonentity, it was resolved to try and make something of him by finding him a wife of spirit; as if small beer could be turned into stout by mixing a quantity of gin with it. Margaret of Anjou was selected for the formation of this deleterious compound. She was one of those intolerable nuisances—a fine woman, with a great deal of decision, which means that she was decidedly disagreeable. Her father was a nominal king of Sicily and Jerusalem; but he had no real dominions, and only rented, as it were, a brass plate, or had his name up over the door of the countries specified. He was as poor as a cup of tea after the fifth water, and ruled over about as much land as he could cram into a few flower-pots which adorned the window of his lodging. He kept a minister who answered the bell and the purpose at the same time, and was accustomed to wait at table. His majesty's apartment was furnished with a sort of dresser covered with green baize, which formed a board of green cloth; and he had several sticks-in-waiting in his umbrella stand. His robe de matin was his robe of state; he had a green silk privy purse, and an ormolu cabinet. He had a keeper of the great seal which hung to his watch; and his bureau comprised a secretary for the home department, in which he kept all his washing-bills. He dispensed with a master of the horse by keeping no horse of his own, and he always had plenty of gentlemen-in-waiting, in the shape of creditors. He saved the expense of a paymaster by paying nobody; and though he issued Exchequer Bills, they were not only at very long dates, but wholly unworthy of anyone's acceptance. He was his own Chancellor of

his own Exchequer, for he used to declare, with much apparent integrity that his government should never be degraded by useless sinecures. «Whenever there is nothing to do,» he would philosophically exclaim, «I consider it my duty to do it.» He usually resided in Sicily when he was at home, but he kept in his court—at the back of his lodging—a few Jerusalem artichokes, to represent the interests of his other kingdom of Jerusalem. He used to make a financial statement every now and then, for the sake of clearing himself of his debts, which were the subject of an annual act of which he alone got the benefit. He used upon these occasions to profess a considerable anxiety to rub off as he went on, but his goings on and rubbings off were equally to his own advantage, and the cost of those who had trusted him. Never was political economy carried to such perfection as by the father of Margaret, the king of Sicily and Jerusalem.



It was hopeless to ask for a dowry with the daughter of a man who had what is vulgarly termed «a sight of money,» which means that he could have put the whole of his income into his eye without any detriment to his vision. Instead of asking

anything from a sovereign more fitted to be upon the parish than upon the throne, a trifling settlement was made upon him, that the king of England might not be said to have married the daughter of an absolute monarch and an absolute beggar. Anjou and Maine, which had been taken from him by main force, were restored to him, and a little money was advanced to him on account of his first quarter's revenue, to enable him to cut a respectable figure at his daughter's wedding.

Suffolk brought home the bride to England, where she was, of course, severely criticised. For many she was too tall, and her height was an objection that could not be overlooked very easily. The friends of the Duke of Gloucester—known as the good Duke Humphrey—declared he would have found a better queen; and Duke Humphrey paid her no attention, for he never even asked her to a family dinner, an omission which gave rise to a saying * that is still current. Dining with Duke Humphrey is a process that needs no explanation.

The good Duke Humphrey, though he gave no one a dinner, was anxious to let everyone have his desert, which made his royal highness very unpopular. His enemies began by charging his wife with necromancy, because she was in the habit of consulting the dregs of her teacup when turned out in her saucer—an act that was stigmatised as sorcery. She was also proved to have in her possession a large wax doll, resembling the king, which she was in the habit of placing before the fire for the purpose, it was said, of sweating her sovereign. This was interpreted into a desire to see him waste away, and she was accordingly sentenced to perpetual imprisonment. Had she been able to melt the king himself as she melted his effigy, she might have been pardoned; but though the wax image was soft enough, he only waxed wroth when an appeal in her behalf was made to him. Her husband now became personally an object of persecution, and was arrested on a charge of treason, on the 11th of February, 1447, when he went to take his seat

at the opening of Parliament. On the 28th of the same month, he was found dead in his bed, and of course the conclusion was that he had been murdered, though there were no signs of violence. There were various rumours as to the cause of Duke Humphrey's death, and despair, dyspepsia, apoplexy, and unhappy perplexity, or a broken heart, were equally spoken of as having occasioned his dissolution. It is strange that inanition was never thought of as a probable mode of accounting for the decease of Duke Humphrey, whose stinted diet has given to his dinners an unenviable notoriety.

The old rival and uncle of the good Duke Humphrey did not long survive his nephew, for the grasping prelate died on the 11th of April, 1447, at Winchester, where he had retired to his see, from which he was to the last straining his eyes towards the popedom.

Under the ministry of Suffolk the glory of England rapidly declined, and its possessions in France were daily diminishing. Parliament began to take the matter seriously up, and not a day passed without some awkward motion being made to embarrass the Government. At length, in January, 1450, Suffolk became so exasperated that he challenged his enemies to the proof of their accusations, which was equivalent to asking for a vote of confidence. The Commons replied by requesting the Lords to send him to the Tower, which they declared themselves most happy to do, if the Lower House would only send up a specific charge on which he might be committed. The Commons acceded with the utmost pleasure to the demand, and cooked up an accusation very promptly, for in those days such things were kept almost ready made, to be used at the shortest notice, for the purpose of knocking the head from off the shoulders of a minister. It was laid in the indictment against Suffolk, that he had been furnishing a castle with military stores; or, in other words, ordering a quantity of gunpowder to be sent in for the purpose of assisting France against England. Though the accusation was wretchedly

vague, it was sufficient foundation for a warrant, upon which Suffolk was seized by the scruff of the neck, and hurried to the Tower. Fearing that one bill of impeachment might be insufficient, his enemies published a series of supplements.

In his defence he noticed only the first set of charges, which accused him of a desire to put the crown on the head of his son; a freak that Suffolk never had the smallest idea of practising. On the 13th of March, 1460, he was brought to the bar of the House of Lords, and went down upon his knees like a horse—or rather like an ass—on the wooden pavement. He denied, ridiculed, and repudiated some of the articles in the impeachment, and accused the lords themselves of being his accomplices in some others. A proceeding which we can only characterise as a general row immediately took place, and the House of Lords became a perfect piece of ursine horticulture, or regular bear-garden.

Suffolk, though warmly defended by the court, was furiously attacked by the Commons, who declared they would not vote a penny of the supplies while the minister remained unpunished. The king, as long as it did not affect his pockets, was tolerably staunch towards his friend, but when no money came in, and the royal outgoings continued to be large, it was found expedient to throw the favourite over. Every fresh bill that was placed on the unpaid file at the palace shook the royal resolution; and when the eye of the king glanced over his huge accumulation of unsettled accounts, he began to think seriously whether it was not too great a sacrifice to lose his supplies for the sake of saving Suffolk.

The favourite was gradually getting out of favour, and was sent for by the king to a private interview, in the course of which it was intimated to the duke that he must be dropped, but that he should be «let down» as easily as possible. This private intimation kept Suffolk in a state of suspense considerably worse than certainty; for it is a well-established fact, given on the authority of those who have tried both, that a bold leap into the fire is preferable to a constant grill on the gridiron, or a perpet-

ual ferment in the frying-pan.

On the 17th of March Suffolk was again brought up in presence of the king, at a sort of judicial «at home,» given by his majesty. It took place, according to some authorities, in the sovereign's private apartments; but the chroniclers are mute as to which room—whether the two-pair back, the one-pair front, the *salle à manger*, or the *salon*—was the scene of the important interview. Suffolk threw himself once more at the feet of the king, who, it is to be hoped, had no corns; but Henry must have felt hurt at receiving a minister on such a footing. Suffolk, still at his master's feet, endeavoured to hit upon Henry's tender points, but the sovereign was on this occasion influenced by the impression made upon his understanding. He ordered Suffolk into banishment for five years, and gave him till the 1st of May to pack up for his departure.



The people were determined not to let the traitor off so easily, and no less than two thousand assembled to take his life, which he wisely abstained from placing at their disposal. He gave a farewell banquet at one of his country seats to his relatives and friends, and, upon his health being duly proposed as the toast

of the evening, he swore, of course, that he was perfectly innocent. Finding it necessary to dodge the popular indignation, he started off to Ipswich, when he embarked for the Continent. On the 2nd of May, as he was sailing between Dover and Calais, his convoy—consisting of a smack and punt for self and retinue—was hailed by a great hulking man-of-war from the hulks, which bore the name of Nicholas of the Tower. This was a sad blow to the little smack, which would have gladly gone off had it not been most vigorously brought-to by the larger vessel. The duke was ordered on board the Nicholas, and after the ship had stood off and on for three days, it turned out that the vessel was only waiting to take in an axe, a block, and an executioner. This dismal addition to the freight having at last arrived, it was immediately put in requisition, and, as Suffolk was very unpopular, nobody took the trouble to inquire what had become of him. The only account that could ever be given of him was that he had been taken away by the crew of the Nicholas, which was a very old ship, and the announcement that Suffolk had gone to Old Nick was all that was ever said concerning him.

We are soon about to enter upon those Wars of the Roses which planted so many thorns in the bosom of fair England. It is strange that out of couleur de rose should have emanated some of the most sombre and melancholy hues that ever darkened the pages of our history. «Coming events cast their shadows before,» and the shade in this instance was one Cade, familiarly called Jack Cade by various authorities. This celebrated individual was a native of Ireland, who had served in France in the English army, so that he may be called a kind of Anglo-Irish-Frenchman, a combination that reminds us of the celebrated poly-politician, who, being desirous of being thought «open to all parties,» with the vow of being ultimately influenced by one, gave himself out as a conservative-whig-radical. Jack Cade was a jack-of-all-trades, or, at all events, a jack of two, for he had been a doctor first and a soldier afterwards. Some have ironically contended that the change from

a medical to a military life was only an extension of the same business, and that, in resigning the bolus for the bullet, the powders for the gunpowder, and the lancet for the sword, he was only enlarging the sphere of his practice. With that remarkable deference for the aristocracy they pretend to despise, which is only too common amongst demagogues, Cade tried to claim relationship even with royalty, and, giving himself out as a relation of the Duke of York, he assumed the name of Mortimer.

That Cade was a decayed scion of an illustrious stock may be doubted, and some, who have not been ashamed of an anachronism for the sake of a sneer, have gone so far as to say that the Cades were the earliest cads of which there are any records.

It has been well remarked somewhere, by somebody, that the men of Kent, though living near the water, were always very inflammable, and the Kentish fire is to this day proverbial for its intensity. Cade threw himself among these men, who made him their captain, and inarched with him to Blackheath, from which he commenced a long correspondence with the Londoners. The Government, alarmed at an assembly of fifteen or twenty thousand men at a place where large assemblies were unusual, sent to enquire the reason of the good men of Kent having quitted their homes in such large numbers. Cade, who among his other restless habits, appears to have been troubled with a cacoethes scribendi, took upon himself to answer for the whole, and embodied their reasons in a document called the «Complaint of the Commons of Kent,» which was of a somewhat discursive character. It commenced by alluding to a report that Kent was to be turned into a hunting forest, and remonstrated against the people being made game of in such a fearful manner; it then proceeded to abuse the Government in general terms, which have since been the stereotyped phraseology of nearly all the friends of the people; it complained of others fattening on the royal revenue, which forced the king to supply the deficiency by robbing his subjects, and to take their provisions wholesale as well as retail,

without paying a penny for them. Allusion was then made to the lowness of the company admitted to court, though this seems to have been rather over-nice on the part of Jack and his followers. The document then came to the point, by intimating that the men of Kent had been subjected to extortion and treated with contempt, so that they had been, at the same time, overtaxed and under-rated.

When the court received this elaborate catalogue of ills, it was intimated to Cade and his companions, that it would take some time to prepare the answer; but the authorities thinking that powder and shot would answer better than pen and ink, set to work to collect troops and ammunition in London. Cade could not resist his propensity to scribble, and sent in a second paper, headed «The Requests, by the captain of the great assembly in Kent.» In his new manifesto Jack required an entire re-arrangement of the royal household even down to the minutest domestic arrangements; and it was even said, that not a pie came to the king's table without Jack wishing to have a finger in it.

The court was now prepared with an answer in the shape of a large army, which advanced upon Blackheath, and caused Cade to be taken so regularly aback, that he jibbed as far as Sevenoaks. Here he halted, and waited the attack of the royal army, a detachment of which came up and went down like a pack of cards, though as they had lost all heart there is something defective in the comparison. When the main army at Blackheath heard the fate of the detachment at Sevenoaks, the soldiers suddenly began to object to fighting against their own countrymen. The Court then found it time to make concession, and commenced by sending a few of its own party to the Tower, in order to propitiate the malcontents. Lord Say, an obnoxious minister, who was not merely a say, but a tremendous do, was at once locked up with some others who had rendered themselves unpopular.

Cade now made himself master of the right bank of the Thames from Greenwich to Lambeth, both inclusive, and made the cel-

ebredated incision into the latter, which retained the name of the New Cut to a very distant period. Cade took up his own quarters in Southwark, but went into London every morning, where he and his followers behaved very quietly for a few days, returning home regularly every evening to their lodgings in the Borough. Their first act of violence was to insist on the trial of Say, who was not allowed to have his say in his own defence, but was hurried off to Cheapside and beheaded. As too frequently happens with the promoters of the public good, Cade's followers could not keep their hands off private property, and a little pillage was perpetrated. Even Jack himself, who sometimes set a good example to his followers, was tempted to plunder the house at which he usually dined; and the citizens, feeling that as the spoons were beginning to go, their turn would probably be next, became indignant at the outrage. They consequently refused admission to Cade the next morning when he came to transact his city business as usual.

It was next determined by the court to delude the rebels by an offer of a pardon; and Cade caught at the bait with a simplicity less characteristic of a Jack than of a gudgeon. In two days, however, he altered his mind, and refused to lay down his arms or walk off his legs, until Government gave a guarantee for the fulfilment of its promises. With the customary hatred of each other, which too often prevails among the lovers of their country, the patriots commenced quarrelling. Cade began to fear that some disinterested friend of freedom would sell him for the thousand marks that were offered for his head; and Jack, from the idea of being apprehended, was thrown into a constant state of apprehension. Sneaking quietly downstairs in the night, he found his way to the stable, where he mounted a clever hack, and using what spurs he could to the animal's exertion, put him along at a slapping pace towards the coast of Sussex. He had not proceeded very far, when turning to look back on what he had gone through, he saw at his heels Al-

exander Iden, Esq. Jack had scarcely got out the words, «Is that you, Alick?» when a lick from Iden's sword revealed the purpose of his mission. «No, you don't!» cried Cade, parrying an attempt to plant a second blow, and putting in a slight poke with his battle-axe very efficiently. Were we to borrow the graphic style of the sporting chroniclers, in describing a fight, we should say that Iden came up smiling, and evidently meaning business, which he transacted by enumerating one, two, three, in rapid succession on Jack's chest, followed up by four, five, six, on the face, and seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve, in the stomach. Cade endeavoured to rally, but every effort failed; and Alexander Iden, Esq., claimed the thousand marks that had been advertised. The amount was large for a head with very little in it; but the tail, consisting of the riff-raff led on by Cade, formed the real value of the article.

A dispute now commenced between persons of higher degree; or, rather, it is to be suspected that Cade and his men had been used as the tools of some more exalted malcontent. It very frequently happens that political agitators in an humble rank of life are either cunningly or unconsciously playing the game of a political schemer of more exalted station; and while they are supposed to be working for the overthrow of one tyrant, they are preparing the way for the establishment of another.

The Duke of York was the individual who, endeavouring to profit by the recent revolt, left Ireland, of which he had been Lieutenant, and forced himself into the king's presence. «Now then, what is it?» cried Henry, annoyed at the sudden intrusion; when York replied he had come to extract something from the mouth of the sovereign. «A tooth, perchance?» ironically remarked the king; but his majesty was informed that a promise to summon a Parliament was the utmost that York required. This was acceded to, and, when Parliament met, one of the members proposed declaring the Duke of York heir apparent to the throne, but the proposer was indignantly coughed down,

unceremoniously pulled out, and promptly committed to the Tower. The duke, discouraged at having a minority of one, which imprisonment had reduced to none, in his favour, repaired to his castle at Ludlow, where he collected a large army; but, by way of proving that he had no evil intentions towards the king, he took, every now and then, the oath of allegiance. This periodical perjury had very little effect, for York was better known than trusted, and an army was sent against him. As the forces went one way to meet him, he came up to London by another road, but the gates of the City were slammed in his face just as he came up to them. «Well, I'm sure!» was the indignant murmur of York, to which, according to an Irish chronicler who came from Ireland in the duke's suite, «You can't come in,» was the only echo. Foiled in this attempt, he went to Kent, expecting Jack Cade's followers would rally round him, but beyond some half-dozen seedy scamps, belonging to the class excluded from kitchens under the general order of «No followers allowed,» there were no adherents to York's banner. When Henry came up with him at Dartford, both of them, like two little boys who have met to fight and don't know how to begin, were anxious to negotiate. This was agreed to, and the duke having disbanded his army, by which, as the papers say when a theatre closes prematurely, «an immense number of persons were thrown out of employ,» he went to Henry's tent for a personal interview.



The meeting was very unpleasant, for Somerset happening to be seated there, had the bad taste to assail York with a volley of vulgar abuse, which the latter repaid with interest. «You're a felon and a traitor, sir!» cried Somerset, as York came in, which elicited, by way of reply, «You're an old humbug,» and other taunts, among which «Who embezzled the taxes?» was rather conspicuous. As the duke was about to depart, a tipstaff tripped up to him, and, begging his pardon, intimated that he was in custody. Somerset would have applied for speedy execution, but York compromised the affair by a little more perjury, for he swore a good batch—sufficient to last him a whole year—of truth and allegiance. He then retired to his castle, where he may have amused himself with playing at «Beggar my Neighbour» with his porter, as far as we can tell, for his employment while in seclusion at Wigmore is not recorded in history.

Henry's utter incapacity to hold the reins, which were literally dropping out of his hands, began to give great uneasiness to the Parliament. York was wanted back, and Somerset was sent to the Tower, for the two rivals were like the two figures in the toy for indicating the weather. What brought one out sent the other in, and a storm was the signal for the entrance of York, while political sunshine was favourable to Somerset. On the 14th of February, 1454, York opened Parliament as commissioner for the king, who was personally visited at Windsor by a deputation of peers, desirous of ascertaining his exact condition. They found Henry perfectly imbecile, and incapable of understanding a word or uttering a syllable. The deputation conceiving it possible that his majesty might be merely muddled, retired to give him time to come to, but on their return they found him in the same state as before, and ditto repeated on a third visit. The deputation, resolving unanimously that «this sort of thing would never do,» reported the facts to Parliament, and Richard, Duke of York, was elected «Protector and Defender of the realm of England.» In about nine months

Henry was declared to have recovered his senses, such as they were, and the court claimed for him the return of the reins, which had been taken out of his hands by reason of his incapacity. York was instantly put down, and Somerset again taken up to occupy the box-seat as heretofore.

The ex-protector retired to Ludlow as before, but got together some troops, and poor Henry was put, or carried, or propped up, at the head of an opposing army. The duke having no fear of a force under such a tumble-down leader, met him near the capital, and sent a message, full of loyalty, to the king, but insisting on Somerset being sent back by return, to be dealt with in the most rigorous manner. An answer was returned in the king's name, declaring his determination to perish rather than betray his friend; but it was the friend himself who assigned to his majesty this very disinterested preference. The sovereign was indeed so imbecile that he knew not what he said, and understood nothing of what was said for him, so that when he asked if he would not rather die in battle than hand Somerset over to the foe, an unmeaning grin was the only reply of the royal idiot. A fight of course ensued, and York got the best of it. Somerset was among the slain, and the poor king, who was as innocent of the use of a sword as a child in arms, got a wound in the neck, which sent him howling and reeling away till he took refuge in a tanyard. York found him hiding among the hides, and pulling him out with gentleness, conducted him to the Abbey of St. Alban's. Every care was taken of the wounded monarch, whose neck was duly poulticed, and whose feet were put in hot water, though indeed they were seldom out of it.

When Parliament met after this affair, theoretical allegiance was sworn to the king and prince, but practical contempt of their position was exercised. York was declared protector until Edward, the heir to the throne, attained his majority; but Henry was superannuated at once, for he was liable, like a hare in the month of March, to fits of insanity. He was sometimes sensible enough, but

no one could elucidate the date of his lucid intervals; and as the sceptre is little better than a red-hot poker in a madman's hands, he was very properly deprived of that powerful instrument.

Things had been thus arranged, when, on the meeting of Parliament, in 1456, after the Christmas recess, Henry, to the surprise of everyone, rushed in, exclaiming—»I'll trouble you for that crown!» and «Oblige me with a catch of that ball!»—alluding to the orb which forms part of the regalia. No one disputed his restoration to sanity, and York resigned the protectorate, looking unutterable things, as if he had just been engaged in a speculation by which he had made a profit of eightpence and incurred the loss of a shilling.

The king now endeavoured to effect a reconciliation between the rival parties, who affected to make it up, but started at once to their respective castles, for the purpose of looking up materials and men for the renewal of hostilities. York sent his sword to the grinder's, his armour to the tin-plate-worker's, to be let out, pieced, and otherwise repaired—while the Lancastrian chiefs were, on their side, resorting to similar arrangements. At length they came to a battle, in September, 1459, and the Yorkists were in the better position, when Sir Andrew Trollop—either from blockheadism, or bribery, or both—deserted, with all his veterans, to the standard of Henry. York, taking a series of hops, skips and jumps over the Welsh mountains, fled into Ireland. He ran so fast, that the muscles of his leg were contracted; and it was said at the time, that the York hams had as much as they could do to keep ahead of the Bath chaps, many of whom were engaged in the battle, from having lived not far from the neighbourhood. Warwick escaped to Calais, where he was exceedingly popular, and he soon collected forces enough to admit of his landing in Kent, where he stuck up his banner with the view of collecting a crowd, and then tout-ing for followers. The project was successful, and by the time he reached Blackheath he had got thirty thousand men at his

heels, according to the old chroniclers, who, it is only fair to say, have a peculiar multiplication table of their own, and who, whatever may be their aptitude at facts, certainly present to us some of the very oddest figures.

Warwick's reception was very enthusiastic. The archbishop ran out of Canterbury to meet him and shake him by the hand, Lord Cobham clapped him amicably on the shoulders, and five bishops, taking off their mitres, waved them as he passed in token of welcome. Warwick made at once for the midland counties, carrying with him the young heir of York, and meeting the Lancastrians at Northampton, a battle was fought which ended in the defeat of the latter. Henry was taken prisoner; but his wife Margaret of Anjou escaped with her son Edward, and encountered one of those adventures which season with a spice of romance the sometimes insipid dish of history. The story we are about to relate is offered with a caution to our readers, but it is too good to be omitted, and we are, moreover, afraid that were we to leave it out for the sake of correctness, we should be blamed for the omission. Use is second nature in literature as well as in anything else; and the public, being accustomed to falsehood, would regard the absence of even the most flagrant hoax as a curtailment of the fair proportions of history. It is, however, only under protest that we can lend ourselves to the gratification of this very morbid appetite, and we therefore advise the following story on the authority of De Moleville, to be taken not merely *cum grano salis*, but with an entire cellar of that very wholesome condiment.

The anecdote runs as follows: Margaret fled with her son into the recesses of a forest, like one of those which we see on the stage, where cut woods, canvas banks, and trees growing downwards from the sky-boarders, furnish an umbrageous recess of the most sombre character. We fancy we see her advancing to slow music, laying her child on a canvas bank, and listening to the rattle of peas accompanied by the shaking of sheet iron, which form the rain and thunder of theatrical life,

when suddenly a whistle is heard, and two figures enter whose long black worsted hair, wash-leather gauntlets, drawn broadswords, and yellow ochre countenances, bespeak that they are robbers of the worst complexion. The queen has, of course, all her jewels blazing about her, which the two men proceed to appropriate, and while they are quarrelling about the division of her booty, she contrives to escape.

This brings us to another part of the same forest, where the scenery is not quite so elaborate, but where Margaret, leading on her infant son, stumbles upon a sentimental robber with a drawn sword in his hand, a tear of sensibility in his eye, and in his mouth a claptrap. She appeals to his generosity in favour of a «female in distress;» he replies with some cutting allusions to the «man who—» compares himself to a melon, or a cocoa-nut, or anything else with a rough exterior, but with some sweetness or milk of human kindness within, and by way of climax, she exclaims, «Here, my friend, I commit to your care the safety of the king's son.»



The honest fellow—by whom we mean, of course, the professional thief and casual cut-throat—goes down upon one knee in a fit of loyalty, and according to the scholastic versions of this little incident he is «recalled to virtue by the flattering confidence reposed in him.» * He went also a step further, and at

once devoted himself to the service of the queen, magnanimously offering to share her fortunes, which considering the desperate nature of his own, was a proposition equally indicative of self-love and loyalty. Her majesty accepted the offer, and embarked for Flanders, of course paying all the expenses of her friend the sentimental robber, who became the companion of her flight, and a pensioner on her pocket.

* See Pinnock's edition of Goldsmith's History of England, p. 143 of the thirty-second edition.

Fighting between the adherents of York on one side, and of Lancaster on the other, continued with unabated fury, until York having gained a victory at Northampton, called a Parliament, and walked straight up to the throne. He took hold of the hammer-cloth, as if to mount, and looked round as much as to say, «Shall I?» but no «hears,» «cheers,» or «bravoes,» encouraged him to proceed. Another battle was fought soon after at Wakefield Bridge, when Richard, Duke of York, was killed, and his son Edward succeeded to the title, which was very shortly afterwards exchanged for that of king, at a packed meeting of citizens.

The question was put whether Henry was fit to reign, and the «Noes» had it as a matter of course, when a motion that Edward of York should ascend the throne, was carried by a large majority. Thus he who was not yet of age, and who had been recently nothing more than Earl March, was in early March, 1461, voted to the sovereignty by the acclamation of the people. Rushing into the House of Lords, he vaulted in a true spirit of vaulting ambition on to the throne, from which he delivered a discourse on hereditary right, making out every other right to be wrong, and maintaining his own right to be the only genuine article.

Poor Margaret made a futile attempt to rouse the loyalty of the citizens of London in a letter which she addressed to them, * but the style is so exceedingly vague, that we do not wonder at the document having proved ineffectual. As far as it is possible to collect the meaning of the epistle to which we have referred, it

trounces the Duke of York in a style of truly female earnestness. It calls him an «untrue, unsad, and unadvised person,» who is «of pure malice, disposed to continue in his cruelty, to the utterest undoing, if he might,» of the fair letter-writer and her offspring. Poor Margaret's state of mind may have accounted for the tremendous topsy-turviness—to use a familiar expression—of her sentences. The bursting heart cannot trammel itself by those fetters which grammarians and rhetoricians have forged to restrain language within its proper limits. That Margaret of Anjou was a woman of business is evident from a copy of one of her wardrobe books now, in a state of perfect preservation, in the office of the Duchy of Lancaster. This private ledger of the royal lady would be a model for the accounts of modern housekeepers.

This letter, which is to be found in the Harleian MSS., No. 543, Fol. 147, is also given in Mary Anne Wood's interesting collection of Letters of Royal and Illustrious Ladies of Great Britain. The letter of Margaret of Anjou forms the thirty-eighth in the first volume of the work alluded to.

It comprises a journal of payments even down to the accuracy of pence; and her gardener's wages, put down at a hundred shillings a year, may be considered a fair criterion of the average scale of her expenditure. She laid out little in clothes, though she kept twenty-seven valets as well as a number of ladies-in-waiting, and «ten little damsels,» whose salaries and persons were no doubt equally diminutive. That her economy must have been wonderful, is evident from the fact that she did it all for seven pounds a day, which she regularly paid to the treasurer of the king's household. It has not often been our lot to begin with a new sovereign until we have finished with the old; but in the present instance we must drop Henry the Sixth before his death, according to the example set us by his ungrateful people. We have, perhaps, lingered too long over the downfall of Henry, and we are warned by a sort of mental shout of «Edward the Fourth stops the way,» that we must drive on with our history.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH. EDWARD THE FOURTH.



EDWARD, like the individual who having got such a thing as a crown about him, fully intended keeping it, lost no time in going into the provinces to enforce his claims. After killing twenty-eight thousand Lancastrians, and threatening a lesson on the Lancastrian system to anyone who might continue to oppress him, he returned to town, and was crowned on the 29th of June, 1461, in the usual style of magnificence.

Poor Henry, the deposed sovereign, was carried about at the head of his adherents, to give them something to rally round; but they might just as well have had a maypole, or any other inanimate object, for the ex-king was utterly imbecile.

He could only be compared to a guy in the hands of the boys on the 5th of November; and sometimes, when his adherents were forced to run for it, they set him down to escape as he could, by which he was occasionally on the point of being taken prisoner. Edward assembled a Parliament, which cut short all objections to the line of York by declaring that the three last kings of the line of Lancaster were intruders, and the grants they had made

were of course reversed, in order to raise a fund for laying in a large supply of new loyalty.

Poor Henry, to whom peace and quietness were necessary, would have been very well satisfied to retire into private life, had not his impetuous wife, the tremendous Margaret, dragged him about with her at the head of a few proscribed and desperate nobles. Shortness of cash cramped the efforts of this impetuous female, who ran over to France, with the intention of begging and borrowing from all her relatives.

The Duke of Brittany gave her a trifle, but Louis the Eleventh pleaded poverty, and even produced his books to show that he had not a penny beyond what he required for his own necessities. When, however, she talked of surrendering Calais, he produced twenty thousand crowns, which he had probably put by in an old stocking, and lent her the sum, with a couple of thousand men, under Peter de Brezé.

With this assistance Margaret burst into the northern counties, and, pushing poor Henry before her wherever she went, thrust him through the gates of a small series of castles which she had taken by surprise. These were soon taken back again, and Margaret, being obliged to fly, lost all her borrowed money in a storm at sea, which washed all her property in one direction and herself in another. After a few minor transactions, the 15th of May, 1464, was rendered famous by the battle of Hexham, at which the hiding or tanning of the Lancastrians was so complete, that Hexham tan is to this day a leading article of commerce. Margaret escaped to her father's court, but poor Henry, after wandering about the moors of Lancashire, had found his way to Yorkshire, where he had gone out to dine at Waddington Hall, when a treacherous servant, or a traitor waiter, delivered him up to his enemies. The unhappy Henry was turned into the Tower, which, under all the circumstances, was the best place for him.

Edward, now adopting the sentiment of the vocalist, who, wishing to introduce a tender song in the character of a hero,

modulates into a softer feeling by exclaiming, «Farewell, glory; welcome, love,» resolved on paying those devotions to the fair which a necessity for encountering the brave had hitherto rendered impossible. He had intended to marry some foreign princess, and Warwick had engaged him to a young lady named Bona, daughter of the Duke of Savoy and sister to the Queen of France; but the king denied that he had ever given instructions to sue, and declined being bound by the act of his solicitor, who had solicited for him the hand of the fair princess. The truth was, that his majesty had formed other views, or, rather, other views had been formed for him by an old match-making mother, who exhibited all those manoeuvring qualities which constitute, in the present day, the art of getting a daughter off to the best advantage.



The king, while hunting at Stony Stratford, pursuing a stag, came suddenly upon a pretty dear, who literally staggered him. The young lady was the widow of Sir Thomas Gray, and the daughter of Jacquetta of Luxemburg by her second husband, Sir Richard Woodville, afterwards Earl of Rivers. There is not the smallest doubt that Lady Gray and her mamma had arranged together this accidental interview. The young lady,

who seems to have been a finished pupil in the school of flirtation, entreated the king to reverse the attainder passed on her late husband, to which Edward replied, that «he must be as stonyhearted as Stony Stratford itself if he could refuse her anything.» This rubbish ripened into a real offer of marriage, which was, of course, accepted, and Lady Gray was crowned Queen of England in the year following.

Warwick was rather nettled at being, as he said, «made a fool of» by his royal master, and grew particularly jealous of the influence of the king's wife, who got off her five unmarried sisters upon the heirs of as many dukes or earls. He intrigued with the king's brother, the Duke of Clarence, and both of them, being denounced as traitors, were obliged to go abroad upon an order to travel. They visited France, where King Louis not only supplied them with board and lodging, but put Warwick in the way of a negotiation with Queen Margaret, which, it was thought, would be advantageous to all parties. It was arranged that another push should be made to push Henry on to the throne, but, as Warwick never did business for nothing, he stipulated for the marriage of his daughter with the queen's son, Edward.

Having reduced everything to writing, Warwick took his standard out of his portmanteau for the purpose of planting it, and on the 13th of September, 1479, he landed at Plymouth with a select but sturdy party of malcontents. The people, whose motto was, «Anything for a change,» were soon persuaded to join in a cry of «Long live King Henry,» and he was taken out of the Tower for the purpose of being dragged about as a puppet to give a sort of legitimacy to Warwick's projects. This nobleman had got the name of the king-maker from a knack he had of manufacturing the royal article with a rapidity truly astonishing. He could coin a sovereign to order with a dispatch that the mint itself might fairly be jealous of. He could provide a new king at the shortest notice, like those victuallers who profess to have «dinners always ready;» and Edward having

got into «very low cut,» Henry was «just up» as the latest novelty from the cuisine of the ingenious Warwick.

When Edward saw what was going on he thought it high time for himself to be going off, and, with a few adherents who had not a change of linen in their trunks nor a penny in their purses, he got into a ship bound for Holland. The king himself had no money to pay his passage, and offered the captain, says Comines, «a gown lined with martens,» as a remuneration for his services. Edward fled to Burgundy, where he persuaded the duke to advance a trifle in the way of ships, money, and men, with which the ousted monarch landed at Ravenspur. On his first arrival the people held back, saying, «Oh, here's the old business over again. We've had enough of this,» and employing other expressions of discouragement. He, however, declared he had no intention of unsettling anything or anybody—except his bills, which remained unsettled as a matter of course—and was allowed to enter the capital, where he was once more proclaimed sovereign. It is an old commercial principle in this country, that debt is a sign of prosperity, and Edward's success has been attributed to the fact of his owing vast sums to the London merchants. They were, of course, interested in the well-being of their debtor, and the hypothesis was thus proved to be true, that he who is worse off is in a better position than he who is well-to-do, and the man whose circumstances are tolerably straight, is not so eligibly situated as the individual whose affairs are materially straightened. Edward, though not in clover, was obliged to be in the field, for Warwick fell upon his rear with alarming vehemence. They fought at Barnet on the 14th of April, 1471, in the midst of a mist, when poor Warwick was not only lost in the fog, but many of his friends were killed, and Edward obtained a decisive victory. The particulars of this battle have never been very accurately given, for the fog and the old chroniclers were almost equally dense; and between them the affair is involved in much obscurity.



It is easier to quell sixty thousand men than to subdue one troublesome woman, and Queen Margaret still gave «a deal of trouble» to the conqueror. She, however, ultimately fell into his hands, together with her son—one of the «rising generation» of that time—who, on being asked by Edward what he meant by entering the realm in arms, replied pertly, «I came to preserve my father's crown and my own inheritance.»—»Did you, indeed, you young jackanapes?» cried Edward, «then take that,» and he flicked the boy's nose with the thumb of a large gauntlet. The child set up a piercing yell, but this was not the worst of it, for some attendants, excited by the brutal example of their master, gave the lad a blow or two, which finished him. Edward returned to town, and sent Henry, with his queen, to the Tower, from which the latter was ransomed by her relatives; but the former having no friends to buy him off or bail him out, remained in custody. He died a few weeks after his committal, and his death is attributed to the Duke of Gloucester, who from the peculiar conformation of his back, had shoulders broad enough to bear all the stray crimes for which no other owner may have been forthcoming. Accordingly, every piece of iniquity that can be traced to no one in particular, is usually added to Gloucester's huge catalogue of delinquencies.

The Lancastrians were now regularly down, and every opportunity was taken for hitting them. Some were driven into exile, others were got rid of by more decided means, and a few, whose talents were worth saving, got purchased at a valuation, more or less fair, by the now Government.

Sir John Fortescue, the Chief Justice to Henry the Sixth and the greatest lawyer of his time, was sold in this disreputable manner; for the judges of those days, unlike the pure occupants of the bench in our own, were as saleable as railway shares, and had their regular market price for anyone by whom such an investment was desired.

The prosperity of the House of York was now only marred by a quarrel between the Dukes of Gloucester and Clarence.

The latter had married Warwick's eldest daughter, and claimed the whole property of his father-in-law, of which Gloucester naturally wanted a slice, and he struck up to Anne, a younger daughter, in order to derive some claim to a share of the family fortune. Clarence, anxious to baffle his brother, sent the young lady out to service as a cook, in London, when Gloucester disguised probably as a policeman—found her out, and ran away with her.



He won her by alleging his heart to be incessantly on the beat, and by promising her the advantages of a superior station. He

lodged her in the then rural lane of St. Martin's, and the king ultimately arranged the difference between his brothers by assigning a handsome portion to Lady Anne, and leaving Clarence to take the rest; while the widowed Countess of Warwick, who had brought all the money into the family, was obliged to leave it there, without touching it, for she got nothing.

In 1475 Edward began to form ambitious projects with regard to France, and sent off to Louis the Eleventh one of those claims for the crown which some of the preceding kings of England had been in the habit of forwarding. The letter was written in terms of marvellous politeness, and Louis having read it, desired the herald who brought it to step into the next room, where he was treated with great affability.

Louis complimented the letter-carrier in the most fulsome manner, recommending him to advise his master to withdraw his claim as futile and ridiculous. «Bless you, he don't mind me,» was the modest reply of the herald; but Louis remarked that the words of such a sensible fellow must have considerable weight, and slipped three hundred crowns into his pouch, with a wink of intense significance. The herald was regularly taken aback, and his bewilderment increased when his majesty, observing, «Dear me, what a shabby cloak you've got on,» ordered three hundred yards of crimson velvet to be cut off from the best piece in the royal wardrobe. Garter—for such was the herald's rank—promised to do the very best he could; for the velvet had softened him down, or smoothed him over, to the side of Louis. Edward nevertheless made extensive preparations to smash the French king, and strained every nerve to get the sinews of war, which he did by insinuating himself into the favour of his people. He emptied their pockets with considerable grace, and was the first to give the attractive name of Benevolences to those grants which were mercilessly extracted from the Parliament. Edward and Louis, though hating each other with the utmost cordiality, thought it prudent to negotiate—the former from mercenary motives, and the latter for the sake of peace and quiet. An inter-

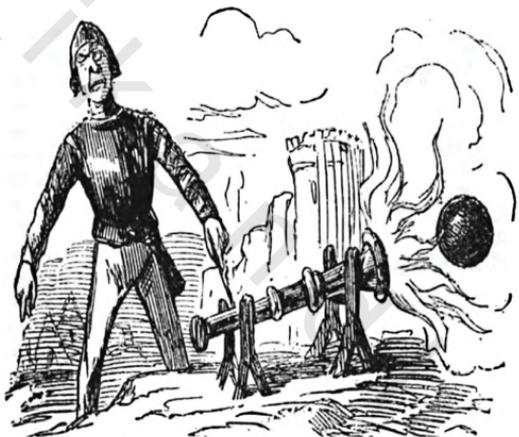
view was at last agreed upon, to take place at the bridge of Picquigny, near Amiens, across which a partition of railings had been thrown, to prevent treachery on either side. Louis came first, and looked through the bars, when Edward tripped gracefully up to the other side, bowing to within a foot of the ground, and paying a few commonplace compliments. Louis invited Edward to Paris, they shook hands through the bars, and the English king received a sordid bribe through the grating, «which,» says the incorrigible Comines, «was exceedingly grating to the feelings of some of his nobles.»

Several cruelties disgraced the latter part of Edward's reign; and one of the worst of his enormities was his treatment of Stacey and Burdett, two officers of the household of the Duke of Clarence. Stacey was accused of having dealings with the devil; but if he had, it was only the printer's devil; for Stacey was a priest of the order of Whitefriars, and learned in the typographic art, which had recently been discovered. No proof unfavourable to Stacey could be produced, but he was put to the torture by being made to set up night and day, which made him curse the author of his misery. Thomas Burdett, another gentleman of Clarence's household, was tried as an accomplice to Stacey, and these unfortunate men, having had their heads cut off, «died,» according to the Chroniclers, «protesting their innocence.» Clarence himself was the next victim, and on the 16th of January, 1478, he was brought to the bar of the House of Lords on a charge of having dealings with conjurors. It seems hard, in these days, when tricks of magic are exceedingly popular, that a person suspected of conjuring should be pursued with the vengeance of the law; and the hardship of the affair is particularly great in the case of Clarence, who was never known to make a plum-pudding in his hat, or perform any other of the ingenious tricks which have gained money and fame for the wizards of the present era. The unfortunate duke met all the charges against him with a flat denial, but he was found guilty, and sentence of death was passed upon him,

on the 7th of February, 1478. His execution was never publicly carried out, and rumour has accordingly been left to run riot among the thousand ways in which Clarence might have undergone his capital punishment. The usual mode of accounting for his death is by the suggestion, that his brothers left the matter to his own choice, and that he preferred drowning in a butt of Malmsey wine to any other fatal penalty. The only objection to this arrangement appears to be that which occurred to an excellent English king of modern times, when he wondered how the apple got into the dumpling. However capacious the butt may have been in which Clarence desired to be drowned, it is obvious that he never could have entered the cask through its only aperture, the bunghole. When we witness the marvel of an individual getting into a quart-bottle, we shall begin to have faith in the story that Clarence met his death in the manner alluded to. If the wine was already in the cask before Clarence was immersed, there could have been no admission, even on business, except through the bunghole, and it is not likely that the vessel could have been empty before the duke took his place for the purpose of undergoing a vinous shower-bath.

Edward led for some time a life of luxury, which was now and then disturbed by wars with Scotland, though he never thought it worth his while to take the field in person, but always got his big brother, Richard Duke of Gloucester, to fight for him. Matters nevertheless took a fresh turn when the Duke of Albany, brother of James the Third, came over and declared he was entitled to the Scotch throne in preference to his elder relative. «I mean to swear he is illegitimate,» said Albany, and he offered to give up Berwick to Edward, on condition of an army being lent to depose the reigning sovereign. A marriage with one of the English king's daughters was also proposed by Albany, who «thought it right to mention that he had two wives already;» but he did not seem to anticipate any objection on that account. Albany and Gloucester were successful in most of their joint

undertakings, but they did not fight very frequently, for a treaty was soon concluded. Until this arrangement was carried out, Albany made every warlike demonstration, and produced a wholesome terror by the exhibition of a tremendous piece of artillery, familiarly known to us in these days as a cannon of the period. Its chief peculiarity was its aptitude—according to the engravings we have seen of it—for carrying cannon-balls considerably larger than the mouth of the piece itself, for we have often feasted our eyes upon very interesting pictures of a cannon-ball issuing from a cannon not half the circumference of the projected missile.



Whether it is that in those days expanding ammunition was provided, which increased in bulk twofold after leaving the cannon's mouth, we are unable to say at this period; but the illuminations of the time undoubtedly present this striking phenomenon. The dust of ages lies unfortunately on many of our facts, and though we might, it is true, take up a duster and wipe the dust of ages off, there is a pleasure in the imaginative which the actual could never realise, Edward having been duped by his allies in France, on some matters almost of a private character, took the deception so much to heart, that he put himself into a violent passion, and died of it with wondrous rapidity. Instead of a raging fever, he caught the fever of rage, and died on the 6th of April, 1483, in

the forty-first year of his age, and twenty-first of his reign. The assassination of sovereigns was then so common, that Edward the Fourth lay in state for some days, to show that he had not come to his death by any but fair means, for he was a king that merited severe treatment, at least as much as some of his predecessors; and it was, therefore, presumed that he might have come in for his share of that fatal violence which it was usual to bestow on kings in the early and middle periods of our history. In concluding our account of this reign, we may, perhaps, be expected to give a character of Edward the Fourth; but, *ex nihilo nihil fit*, and upon this principle we are unable to furnish a character for one who had lost in the lapse, or rather in the lap of time, whatever he may once have possessed of that important article.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH. EDWARD THE FIFTH.



AD the crown been always adapted to the head on which it devolves, the diadem would have been in very reduced circumstances when it descended on the baby brow of the fifth Edward. Almost bonneted by a bauble considerably too large for his head, and falling over his eyes, it was impossible that the boy-king could enjoy otherwise than a very poor look-out on

his accession to the sovereignty. He had been on a visit to his maternal uncle, the Earl of Rivers, at Ludlow Castle, but he was now placed under the protection of his paternal uncle, Richard, Duke of Gloucester, as a sort of apprentice to learn the business of government. Richard, who was at the head of an army in Scotland at his brother's death, marched with six hundred men to a maison de deuil, where he insisted on having ready-made mourning for his followers. The astonished tradesman, exclaiming, in the language of one of our modern poets, "Five minutes' time is all we ask To execute the mournful task," prepared at once the melancholy outfit. Richard led his adherents to York, where a funeral service was performed, and the troops, looking like so many mutes, completely dumbfounded the populace. Their conduct and their clothes combined—for their designs seemed to be as dark and mysterious as their habits—obtained for these soldiers the unenviable name of the black-guards of the Duke of Gloucester. Richard's next care was to swear loyalty and fealty to his young nephew—which went far towards proving the absence of both; for those who wish a little of anything to go a great way, generally make the utmost possible display of it. Notwithstanding the continued show of attachment evinced by the uncle for the nephew, it soon began to be noticed that Richard was a good deal like a snowball, for he picked up adherents wherever he moved; and as he went rolling about the country, he soon swelled into a formidable size with the band that encircled him. He, however, calmed suspicion by declaring that he was only collecting supernumeraries for his nephew's coronation. The fact is, that Richard was all the time plotting with that discontented fellow Buckingham, the well-known malcontent, of whom it has been justly said that he liked nothing nor nobody. Gloucester arrived at Northampton on the 22nd of April, 1483, about the same time that Rivers and Gray had "tooled" the baby-king by easy stages as far as Stony Stratford. The two lords came to Northampton to salute Richard, who asked them to supper

at his hotel, when Buckingham dropped in and joined the party. The four noblemen passed the evening together very pleasantly, for the song, the sentiment, the joke and the jug, the pitcher and the pun, were passed about until long after midnight. Stretchers for two were in readiness, to take home Gray, who looked dreadfully blue, and Rivers, who was half-seas over, while the two dukes, who had kept tolerably sober, remained in secret debate, for they did "Not go home till morning, Till daylight did appear."

On the morrow, the whole party started off, apparently very good friends, towards Stony Stratford, to meet the young king, who was immediately grasped by his uncle Gloucester.

The royal infant naturally gave a sort of squeak at the too affectionate clutch of his uncle, who, pretending to think that Gray and Rivers had alienated the boy's affection from himself, ordered them both into arrest, when Gloucester and Buckingham fell obsequiously on their knees before the child, whom they saluted as their sovereign. Their first care was to ascertain who were his favourites, for the purpose of getting rid of them. Two of the royal servants, Sir Thomas Vaughan and Sir Richard Hawse, were dismissed not only without a month's warning, but, as they were sent off to prison at once, "suiting themselves with other situations" was utterly impossible. Young Edward was kept as a kind of prisoner, and Elizabeth, his mother, when she heard the news, set off to Westminster, with her second son and the five young ladies—her daughters—after her. The queen-mother had no party in London, and her arrival with her quintette of girls created no sensation.

In a few days young Edward entered the city, but more as a captive than as a king, and lodgings were immediately taken for him in the Tower, where he was to be boarded, and, alas! done for by his loving uncle. Gloucester was named protector to the youthful sovereign, and moved to No. 1, Crosby Place, Bishopsgate (the number on the door), where, instead of behaving himself like a gentleman "living private," he held councils, while Hastings, who began to doubt the duke's loyalty,

gave a series of opposition parties in the Tower. At one of these, Richard, who had never received a card of invitation, walked in, and voted himself into the chair with the most consummate impudence. In vain did Hastings intimate that it was a private room, or that Gloucester must have mistaken the house for there he sat, exclaiming, "Oh no, not at all," begging the company to make themselves at home, as he fully meant to do. He was particularly facetious to the Bishop of Ely, asking after his garden in Holborn, and proposing to the prelate to send for a plate of strawberries.



These were soon brought, and Richard indulged in "potations pottle deep" of strawberries and cream, declaring all the while that the fruit was capital, and that of all wind instruments there was none he liked to have a blow out upon so much as the haut-boy. The Protector having gone away for a short time, returned in a very ill humour, with his countenance looking exceedingly sour, as if the strawberries he had eaten had disagreed with him and the cream had curdled. He gave his lips several severe bites, and altogether appeared exceedingly snappish. Presently he asked what those persons deserved who had compassed or imagined his destruction. Hastings observed, "Why, that is so completely out of my compass that I can scarcely guess, but I

don't mind saying off-hand that death is the least punishment they merit." The Protector declared his brother's wife—meaning the queen—and Mrs. Shore had between them twisted his body, which would, indeed, have been doing him a very bad turn; and, pulling up his sleeve, he exhibited his left arm, declaring there was something not at all right about it. The council agreed that the limb was a good deal damaged, and Hastings added that "if Mrs. Shore and the queen had really had a hand in Richard's arm, they certainly deserved grievous punishment." "What!" roared the Protector, "do you answer me with 'ifs'?" I tell you they have, and no mistake." Whereupon he banged his fist down upon the table with tremendous violence, giving himself as well as Hastings a frightful rap on the knuckles. Thereupon a door opened, and "men in harness came rushing in," according to More, and, being in harness, they proceeded to fix the saddle on the right horse immediately. The Protector exclaimed "I arrest thee, traitor," and pointed to Hastings, who cried out "Eh! What! Oh! Pooh! Stuff! You're joking! Arrest me? What have I done? Fiddlestick!" To pursue the elegant description given by More, we must add that "another let fly at Stanley," who bobbed down his head and crawled under the table.



The officers, after some trouble, pulled him out by the leg having first drawn off his boot in a futile attempt to secure him and carried him away in custody, Richard then had another turn at Hastings, who was in a sort of hysterical humour, at one moment treating the matter as a joke, and at another not knowing exactly what to make of it. "You may laugh," at length roared Richard, "but I'll tell you what it is, my Lord Hastings, I've ordered my dinner to be ready by the time I get home, but by St. Paul I'll not touch a mouthful and I own I'm deuced hungry until I've seen your head."

Hastings replied that such a condition was easily fulfilled, and thrusting his head into Richard's face exclaimed "There, my lord, you've seen my head, so now go home as soon as you like, and get your dinner." The Protector pushing him aside, expressed contempt for the paltry quibble, and amended the affidavit by inserting the word "off" after the word "head," and exclaiming "I'll see Hastings' head off before I touch a bit of dinner."

"Hastings was seized, and the purveyors for the Protector soon brought him the avant goût which he had required as a provocative to his appetite. Richard's violence had thus come suddenly to a head, and Earl Rivers, with Sir Thomas Vaughan and Sir Richard Hawse, were executed on the same day at Pontefract.

A few days after these executions, Richard went to the sanctuary at Westminster, arm-in-arm with the Archbishop of Canterbury, and called for the little Duke of York, who, they said, would be wanted for the coronation. Consent was somewhat unwillingly given, and Richard having got the child away, made him a prisoner in the Tower. An affecting anecdote is told of the ruse that was resorted to by Gloucester and his friend, the archbishop, to entrap their juvenile victim into going quietly with them towards the gloomy scene of his destined captivity. They lured him on from place to place by pretending that they were going to treat him to some wonderful show, and they took all sorts of roundabout ways to prevent him from suspecting the point they were really driving at. When the poor child was

becoming tired of his walk, and surrounding objects had lost the attraction of novelty, he began crying after his mamma, with that filial force which is peculiar to the earliest period of infancy. Gloucester began to fear they should get a mob after them, if, as he savagely expressed himself, "the brat continued to howl," and the little fellow was promised, for the purpose of "stopping his mouth," that he should see his mother immediately. After walking him nearly off his little legs through back streets and alleys, they brought him out upon Tower Hill, and Richard, no longer disguising the fact that he was acting the part of the cruel uncle, snatched up in his arms the trembling child, who presently found himself in one of the gloomy apartments of the Tower. Richard's next artifice was to practise the "moral dodge," which seldom fails to tell upon an indiscriminating multitude. Jane Shore, who had been seduced by the late king, was fixed upon as a mark for plunder and persecution by Richard, who first robbed the poor woman of all she had and then sent her to prison. He professed to be so shocked at some of the incidents of her past life, that, as a moral agent or acting member of society for the suppression of vice, he could not allow her to escape without some heavy punishment. She was proceeded against in the Ecclesiastical Courts, and ordered to walk about London with a lighted rushlight in her hand and wearing nothing but a pair of sheets or a counterpane. The Hammersmith Ghost and Spring-heeled Jack are the only legitimate successors of Jane Shore in this remarkable proceeding, and might have cited her case as a precedent for their own unlawful practices.

Richard also entered into an arrangement with Doctor Shaw, a popular preacher, who was to preach down, or, as it was then called, depreachiate the two young princes. The Reverend Doctor then threw a doubt on their legitimacy, and declared their late father Edward was not a bit like his reputed father, the Duke of York, and pulling out two enormous caricatures from under his gown he asked the crowd whether any like-

ness could be traced between them. "Instead of the eyes," he exclaimed, "being as like as two peas, these eyes are not even as like as two gooseberries!" He then asked his hearers to compare noses by comparing the noses of the two portraits he held in his hand; and, pointing to the picture of Richard, Duke of York, he reminded them that the bridge of the nose was exactly like that of Richard, Duke of Gloucester.

"There, my friends," he roared, "there is a bridge that I think there is no possibility of getting over!" The allusion created a laugh, but no conviction; and the failure was rendered more annoying by the Protector not arriving in time, as had been previously arranged, to enable Dr. Shaw to point out the striking likeness. By some mistake Richard missed the cue for his entrance, and did not come in until the comparison had passed, when upon Shaw endeavouring to recur to it, the trick was so obvious that the people only stared at each other, or passed their right thumbs significantly over their left shoulders. The Protector vented his disappointment and anger on the preacher, whom he denounced as an old meddler who did not know what he was talking about, and Doctor Shaw sneaked off, amid derision, shouts of "Pshaw! Pshaw!" and the jeers of the populace. On the following Tuesday Richard got his friend Buckingham to go down to Guildhall to give him a regular good puff, at a meeting of the citizens. Buckingham's speech was listened to with a deal of apathy, and there were numerous cries of "Cut it short," responded to with a faint shout of "Hear him out," and an occasional ejaculation of "Now then, stupid!" Buckingham persevered, and at the close of his address somebody threw up a bonnet, exclaiming "Long live King Richard!" The bonnet belonged evidently to a person of straw, and excited little more than ridicule.

The speech of Buckingham to the citizens assembled in Guildhall, was a rare specimen of the eloquence of humbug; and it evidently formed a model for the discourses sent forth by auctioneers from the rostrum at a later period, The whole system,

indeed, pursued by the Duke of Buckingham on the memorable occasion of his putting up the claim of Richard to the suffrages of the bystanders, was evidently in accordance with that by which bad lots are frequently got off at the highest prices. When there was a faint snout of "Long live King Richard," from a solitary individual, Buckingham adroitly multiplied the exclamation by declaring that he heard it "in two places," though he knew perfectly well that a solitary puffer, in his own employ, had been the only one who raised a shout for Gloucester. "What shall I say for Richard?" he lustily vociferated. "Look at him, gentlemen, before you bid. There's nothing spurious about him. Come, gentlemen, give me a bidding." At this juncture, one of the duke's touters cried out, from the bottom of the hall, "I'll bid a crown," and a slight titter arising, Buckingham took advantage of the circumstance to assert, that "a crown was bid for Richard in several places at once;" whereupon the tyrant was said to have been accepted at that price, and the business of the day concluded.



On the next day a deputation was got up to wait on Richard at his lodgings, when he at first declined seeing them. His servant returned to say the gentleman particularly wished an interview, and Gloucester desired they might be shown up,

when Buckingham and a few of the deputation were admitted to his presence, They handed him a paper, inviting and pressing him to accept the crown; but he observed, with assumed modesty, "that if he had it, he really should not know what to do with it" "Clap it on your head, of course," said Buckingham; and, suiting the action to the word, he thrust the bauble on the brow of his friend, observing, "Upon my honour, he looks well in it, don't he, Shaw?" and he turned to the Lord Mayor for approval, Richard, however, shook his head, and remarked that "he could not think of it;" when Buckingham, by a happy turn, suggested that "they had thought of it for him, and therefore, he might as well do it first and think of it afterwards."

"But the little princes," remarked Richard, "whom I love bo much." This caused Buckingham to say, in the name of all present, that "they had determined not to have the little princes at any price." Upon this, Gloucester replied, "that he must meet the wishes of the people, and if they must have him, they must, but he, really, had a good deal rather not;" when, amid a quantity of significant winking on all sides, an end was put to the conference.

This scene was enacted on the 24th of June, 1483, which was the last day of the nominal reign of the fifth Edward. It is impossible to give any character of this unfortunate king, whose sovereignty was almost limited to the walls of his own nursery.

He might sometimes have played at sitting on a throne and holding a sceptre in his hand, but he never exercised the smallest power. He may, upon one or two occasions, have been allowed to dissolve Parliament; but it was only in the form of the cake so called, which he might, perhaps, be permitted to dissolve by the force of suction.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH. RICHARD THE THIRD.



RICHARD, on coming to the throne, rushed into Westminster Hall, and took his seat on a sort of marble slab or mantel-piece, between the great Lord Howard and the Duke of Suffolk. The precious trio looked like a set of chimney ornaments, of which Richard formed the centre. He declared that he commenced his reign in that place, because it had been once a judgment-seat, and he was anxious to administer justice to his people. Ten days after, on the 6th of July, he was crowned in Westminster Abbey, and to prevent any murmurs at his usurpation, he was lavish of gifts, promotion and bribery.

The Duke of Norfolk, the celebrated jockey mentioned by Shakspeare, who had put Richard in training for the throne, became Earl Marshal, and his son was created Earl of Surrey, in honour, perhaps, of the surreptitious manner in which the crown had been obtained for his master Richard.

The Archbishop of York and the Bishop of Ely were set at liberty, "which caused them to dance with joy," according to one of the chroniclers, though we cannot imagine a pair of prelates indulging in Terpsichorean diversions on their release from prison.

In the course of the summer, Richard made a royal progress, and was enthusiastically received, though it is believed that much of the enthusiasm was got up by frequent rehearsals with a set of supernumeraries, who were sent on before from town to town, to give a reception to the new sovereign.

If Richard was expected to arrive anywhere at two, the populace would be called at one, to run through—in rehearsal—the cheers and gestures of satisfaction that were required to give brilliance to the usurper's entry. When he arrived at York, a wish was expressed by the inhabitants to see a coronation; and though the ceremony had already been performed in London, it was announced that the spectacle would be repeated, "by particular desire of several families of distinction."

While Richard's starring expedition was most successful in the provinces, things in London were by no means looking up, for conspiracies were being formed to release the two young princes from the Tower. The usurper, not relishing these proceedings, sent a certain John Green—whose unsuspecting innocence has made viridity synonymous with stupidity ever since—as the bearer of a message, the purport of which he was wholly unconscious of. It was addressed to Sir Thomas Brackenbury, the governor of the Tower, requesting him to put to death the two royal children, by smothering them—in onions, or anything else that might be found convenient.

Brackenbury refused the commission, not so much out of regard to the little princes as from fear on his own account, and he sent back the monosyllable "No" as an answer to the sovereign. Green, who knew not the purport of the message, returned with the curt reply, and upon his reiterating "No" as all he was desired to say, Richard angrily desired him "not to show his nose again at court for a considerable period.

"The tyrant was not, however, to be daunted, and he called his Master of the Horse, Sir James Tyrrel, whom he desired to go and lock every door in the Tower, and put the keys in his pock-

et. One night in August, Tyrrel took with him a fellow named Miles Forrest, a professional assassin, and John Dighton, an amateur, a big, broad, square, and strong knave, who, notwithstanding his squareness, was living on the cross for a long period. The precious trio went together to the Tower, and Tyrrel waiting at the door, Miles Forrest entered with John Dighton, who jointly smothered the children in the bedclothes.

Dighton and Forrest entered with savage earnestness into this horrible transaction, and conducted themselves after the cruel fashion of a clown and pantaloon in a pantomime when an infant falls into their formidable clutches. Dighton danced on the bed, while Forrest flung himself across it with fearful vehemence. Tyrrel, who was standing outside, acted the part of an undertaker in this truly black job, and buried the princes at the foot of the staircase. Various accounts have been given of this atrocious deed, and antiquarians have quarrelled about the form of the bed the princes used to sleep upon. Some declare it was a turn-up, in which the children were suddenly inclosed; whilst others affirm that the princes had the thread of their existence cut on that useful form of bedstead familiarly known as the scissors. Thus, to use the language of the philosopher, a feather-bed and pillows were made to bolster up the title of Richard, who from his artifice was exceedingly likely to have recourse to such a downy expedient.

We may be excused for adding from the same high authority we have taken the liberty to quote, that this assassination on a palliase was an act that nothing could palliate.

Richard, by whom the outward decencies of life were very scrupulously observed, in order to make up for the inward deficiencies of his mind, determined to go into mourning for the young princes and repaired to the same maison de deuil which he had honoured with his patronage on a former occasion, when requiring the "trapping of woe" for himself and his retainers on the death of his dear brother.



Another competitor now appeared for the crown, in the person of Henry Tudor, Esquire, commonly called the Earl of Richmond, who came with a drawn sword in his hand and a pedigree already drawn up in his pocket.

He was considered to represent the line of Lancaster by right of his mother, who was a great-granddaughter of John of Gaunt, whose extreme tallness proved him to be a worthy scion of the house to which the title of Lanky-shire as it then might have been spelled was obviously appropriate.

In order to strengthen Richmond's party and give him a spice of Yorkism, a marriage was proposed with Elizabeth, of York, on the same principle that beef is sometimes cut with a hammy knife to give it a flavour.

Richmond was joined by several nobles hitherto favourable to Richard, and even Buckingham, who had been indebted to him for wealth and office, suddenly turned against him.

When Richard heard the news he put a price on the heads of all the leaders of the insurrection; and Buckingham's head, though a very empty one, was ticketed at a considerable figure.

Henry, Earl of Richmond, appeared with a fleet off Devonshire, but finding no one on the coast to meet him, he sailed back to St. Malo. Buckingham, who ought to have been on the look-out, was

blundering about the right bank of the Severn, which he was unable to cross in consequence of the rains, when his army, finding themselves short of rations, declined continuing such a very irrational enterprise. Buckingham was left without a man, except his own servant a fellow of the name of Banister upon whose fidelity he threw himself.

He soon found that he had been leaning upon a fragile prop, for this Banister broke down and betrayed his miserable master. Buckingham was accordingly captured, and sneakingly solicited an interview with Richard the Third, who, on hearing of his being taken, coolly drew on his glove and roared with a stentorian voice, "Off with his head!—so much for Buckingham!"

Richard now came to town, and summoned a Parliament, which was exceedingly complaisant; declaring him the lawful sovereign, by birth, by election, by coronation, by consecration, and by inheritance. Thus the usual attempt was made to make up by quantity for the deficiency as to quality in the title of the usurper, and the Princedom of Wales was settled on his boy Edward.

Attainders were dealt out pretty freely among Richard's opponents, who were pronounced traitors in the usual form, which was kept to be filled up with the name of the unsuccessful party; while oaths of loyalty were always to be had—in blank—for the use of that numerous class which followed the crown with the fidelity of the needle to the pole,—the pole being the head that happened to be wearing—*pro tem*.—the precious bauble.

Richard, being afraid that Richmond would gain strength by the project of marriage with Elizabeth of York, determined on marrying the young lady himself; an idea which both herself and her intriguing old mother most indelicately jumped at.

The king being already married, difficulties arose, but it was proposed to poison Lady Anne, which, as quack medicines had not been yet invented, was a somewhat difficult process. There was no specific then in existence for curing every disease, or the matter might have been arranged at once; nor had the fatal art of punning become known, or Richard might have placed the author

of the triple jeu de mot in attendance upon the Lady Anne, to be, in time, the death of her. The quarrelsome and cat-like disposition of this unhappy female may account for the tenacity of life which she exhibited; and the young Elizabeth kept continually writing up to inquire why the queen took so much time in dying. It was now the middle of February, 1484, and Lady Anne was still alive; but her obstinacy was soon cured by her husband, and in the course of March she was got rid of. Richard immediately opened to his friends and admirers his scheme for marrying Elizabeth; but they strongly opposed it, and he then pretended that he had never meant anything of the sort, but that the minx for as such he stigmatised the young lady had for some time persisted in setting her cap at him.



Henry was now preparing to make a descent upon England, when Richard did all he could to damage him by proclamations, in which Richmond was alluded to as “one Tudor,” and his adherents were stigmatised as cut-throats and extortioners. Had this been the fact, it was certainly a case of pot pitching into kettle; and the usurping saucepan poured out its sauce with wondrous prodigality. Numerous were the expedients resorted to for the purpose of damaging the cause of Henry Tudor. Descriptions of his person were issued, and the people were warned against admitting to their confidence the individ-

ual of whom a caricature representation, or rather misrepresentation, was sent abroad, to give an unfavourable idea of Richmond's exterior. Among other schemes to obtain popularity, Richard affected the character of a practical man, and personally attended to the administration of justice in a few cases, where, having no interest of his own to serve, he gave somewhat fair decisions. His efforts were now directed to putting the country in a state of defence, and he sent his friends to the coast to bear the brunt of the first attack, while he smuggled himself up pretty comfortably in the middle of a large army in the centre of the kingdom. Several of his friends betrayed him, while others sent excuses on the score of ill health, and Stanley apologised in a coarse note, declaring he was confined to his bed by "a sweating sickness." Richard merely muttered, "Oh! indeed, and I suppose he sends me a wet blanket to prove the fact;" but he, nevertheless, ordered Stanley to be closely looked after. Henry landed at Milford Haven on the 7th of August, 1484, with about five thousand men, and on the 21st of the month the two armies met in a field near Bosworth.

There a battle was fought, of which Shakespeare has furnished a series of pictures, which, on the stage, attempts are frequently made to realise. The contest, according to this authority, appears to have been carried on amid a mysterious flourish of drums and trumpets, to which soldiers, on both sides, kept running to and fro, without doing any serious mischief. Richmond's people, to the extent of about ten, then encountered about an equal number of Richard's adherents, and striking together, harmlessly, the tips of some long pikes, the two parties became huddled together, and retired in the same direction, apparently to talk the matter over and effect a compromise. The field then seems to have become perfectly clear, when Richard ran across it, fearfully out of breath, fencing with a foil at nothing, and calling loudly for a horse in exchange for his kingdom, though there was not such a thing as a

quadruped to be had for love or money. He then seems to have shouted lustily for Richmond, and to have asserted that he had already killed him five different times, from which it is to be inferred that the crafty Henry had no less than half a dozen suits of armour all made alike to mislead his antagonist. Richard then rushed away, with a hop, skip and jump, after some imaginary foe; and Richmond occupied the field; when Richard, happening to come back, they stood looking at each other for several seconds. We may account for Gloucester's temporary absence by referring to the historical authorities, for he had probably chosen the interval in question to make Sir John Cheney bite the dust, a most unpleasant process for Sir John, who must have ground his teeth horribly with a mouthful of gravel.

The two competitors for the throne then stood upon their guard, and a beautiful fencing-match ensued, to which there were no witnesses. A few complimentary speeches were exchanged between some of the home thrusts, and the combatants occasionally paused to take an artistical view of each other's gallant bearing. Business is, however, business in the long run, which, in this instance, ended in Richard being run through by the victorious Richmond. The soldiers of the latter, who appear to have been waiting behind a hedge to watch in whose favour fortune might turn, ran forward at the triumph of their master being complete, and formed a picture round him, while Stanley, taking the battered crown which Richard had worn in battle, placed it in its smashed state looking like a gilt-edged opera hat on the head of Richmond. The manner in which Stanley became possessed of the ill-used bauble is quite in accordance with the dramatic colouring that tinges and tinfoils this beautiful period of our history. It is said that an old soldier kicked against something in an adjacent field, and began actually playing at football with the regal diadem. Placing his foot inside the rim, he sent it flying into the air, when a ray of sunshine, lighting on one of the jewels, revealed

to him that it was no ordinary plaything he had got hold of. Running with it as fast as he could to Stanley, the honest fellow placed it in his lordship's hands, with a cry of "See what I have found!" after the manner of the pantaloons under similar circumstances in a pantomime. Stanley was about to put it in his pocket, when another noble roared out, "Oh, I'll tell!" and a cry of "Somebody coming!" being raised, the diadem was ingeniously dropped on to the head of Richmond.

The crown was fearfully scrunched by the numerous heavy blows its wearer had received, and Henry the Seventh, taking it off for a moment to push it a little into shape, exclaimed—half mournfully, half jocularly—"Well, well, to the punishment of the usurper this indenture witnesseth.

The Duke of Norfolk our old friend the jockey shared his master's fate, or rather had a similar fate all to himself, though as he received the fatal crack, he expressed a wish that he might be allowed to split the difference.

The fierce and interesting battle we are now speaking of was one of those short but sharp transactions, which leave their marks no less upon posterity than upon the heads and helmets of the warriors engaged in the fearful contest. The great importance of the event deserves something more than the prosaic narrative in which we have recorded it; and having sent our boy to the Pierian spring with a pitcher, for the purpose of getting it filled with the source of inspiration, we proceed to attempt a poetical account of the Battle of Bosworth. The celebrated Mr.

Thomas Babington Macaulay has, we acknowledge, kindled our poetic fire, by his "Lays of Ancient Rome;" and our imagination having been once set in a blaze it must needs continue to burn, unless, by blowing out our brains, we put a suicidal extinguisher on the flame. Philosophy, however, teaches us that "L'ame est un feu qu'il faut nourrir" (Voltaire) and *alere flammam* is a suggestion so familiar to our youth, that we do not scruple to throw an entire scuttle of the coals of encouragement upon the

incipient flame of our poetic genius. We know that poetry is often an idle pursuit, and that he is generally lazy who addicts himself to the composition of lays, but the Battle of Bosworth Field is an event which fully deserves to have poetical justice done to it. Following the example of the illustrious model, whose style we consider it no humility, but rather an audacity, to imitate, we will suppose the recital to be made some time after the event has occurred, and we will imagine some veteran stage manager giving directions for, or superintending the rehearsal of, a grand dramatic representation of one of the grandest and if we may be allowed the privilege of a literary smasher in coming a word the dramaticest battles in English history.

“Ho! trumpets, sound a note or two! Ho! prompter, clear the stage!
A chord, there, in the orchestra: The battle we must wage.

Your gallant supers marshal out— Yes, I must see them all;

The rather lean, the very stout, The under-sized, the tall:

The Yorkites in the centre, Lancastrians in the rear,

Not yet the staff must enter— The stage, I charge ye, clear

Those warriors in the green-room Must have an extra drill;

Where’s Richard’s gilt-tipp’d baton? They charged it in the bill.

Those ensigns with the banners Must stand the other way,

Or else how is it possible The white rose to display?”

Thus spoke the old stage manager, The day before the night

Richard and Richmond on the field Of Bosworth had to fight.

And thus the light-heel’d call-boy Upon that day began

To read of properties a list— Twas thus the items ran

“Four dozen shields of cardboard, With paper newly gilt,

Six dozen goodly swords, and one With practicable hilt;

The practicable hilt, of course, Must be adroitly plann’d,

That when ‘tis struck with mod’rate force,

‘Twill break in Richard’s hand. Eight banners four with roses

white, And four with roses red— Six halberds, and a canopy

To hang o’er Richard’s head; A sofa for the tyrant’s tent,

An ironing-board at back, Whereon the ghosts may safely stand,

Who come his dreams to rack; A lamp suspended in the air
By an invis'ble wire, And for the ghosts to vanish in
Two ounces of blue fire.”

Thus spoke the gallant call-boy, The boy of many fights;
Who'd seen a battle often fought Fifty successive nights.
The moment now approaches, The interval is short,
Before the fearful battle Of Bosworth must be fought;
Now Richmond's gallant soldiers Are waiting at the wing,
Expecting soon that destiny Its prompter's bell will ring;
Now at the entrance opposite The troops of Richard stand,
Two dozen stalwart veterans— A small but gallant band.
Hark I at the sound of trumpets, They raise a hearty cheer,
Their voices have obtained their force From recent draughts of beer.
Their leader, the false Richard, Is lying in his tent,
But ghosts to fret and worry him Are to his bedside sent.
Convulsively he kicks and starts, He cannot have repose,
A guilty conscience breaks his rest, By tugging at his toes.
A gentleman in mourning, With visage very black,
When the tent curtain draws aside, Is standing at the back;
And then a woman—stately, But pale as are the dead
Stood, in the darkness of the night, To scold him in his bed.
There came they, and there preached they, In most lugubrious
way Delivering curtain lectures Until the east was grey;
Or rather, till the prompter, Who has the proper cue,
Had quite consumed his quantity Of fire, so bright and blue.
The conscience-stricken Richard Now kicks with greater force,
Bears up, and plunges from his couch, Insisting on a horse;
When, hearing from the village cock A blithe and early scream,
He straightway recollects himself, And finds it all a dream.
Now, on each side, the leaders Long for the battle's heat,
But, by some luckless accident, The armies never meet;
We hear them both alternately Talking extremely large,
But never find them, hand to hand, Mixed in the deadly charge.
“March on, my friends!” cries Richmond, “True tigers let us be;

Advance your standards, draw your swords On,
 friends and follow me!" "Tis true, they follow him indeed, But
 then, the way they go is just the way they're not at all Likely to
 meet the foe So Richard, with his "soul in arms," Is "eager for
 the fray," But, with a hop, a skip, and jump, Runs off—the other
 way ,He's to the stable gone, perchance, Forgetting, in his flurry,
 He has kept waiting all this time His clever cob, White Surrey.
 The brute is "saddled for the field," But never gains the spot,
 For on his way Death knocks him down In one the common lot.
 Richard, a momentary pang , At the bereavement feels;
 But, being thrown upon his hands, Starts briskly to his heels.
 And now the angry tyrant , Perambulates the field,
 Calling on each ideal foe , To fight him or to yield.
 What, ho!" he cries, "Young Richmond!
 But, 'mid the noise of drums, Young Richmond doesn't hear him
 At least he never comes Now louder, and still louder, Rise from
 the darken'd field The braying of the trumpets. The clang of
 sword and shields But shame upon both armies!
 For, if the truth be known, Tis not each other's shields they smite
 The clang is all their own; For six of Richmond's people
 Are standing in a row (Behind the scenes), and with their swords
 They give their shields a blow.
 Wild shouts of "Follow, follow!"
 Are raised in murmuring strain, To represent the slayer's rage,
 The anguish of the slain But now, in stem reality, The battle
 seems to rage; For Catesby comes to tell the world , How fiercely
 they engage He gives a grand description, And says the feud runs
 high: We won't suppose that such a man , Would stoop to tell a
 lie , He says the valiant king "enacts , More wonders than a man;
 "In fact, is doing what he can't, Instead of what he can.
 That all on foot the tyrant fights, Seeks Richmond,
 and will follow him Into the very "throat of Death" No wonder
 Death should swallow him!
 Now meeting on a sudden, Each going the opposite way,

Richard and Richmond both advance, Their valour to display.
 Says Richard, "Now for one of us, Or both, the time is come."
 Says Richmond, "Till I've settled this, By Jove, I won't go home."
 One, two, strikes Richard with his foil, When Richmond,
 getting fierce, Repeats three, four, and on they go,
 With parry, quatre, and tierce.
 Till suddenly the tyrant ,Is brought unto a stand;
 His weapon snaps itself in twain, The hilt is in his hand.
 The gen'rous Richmond turns aside, Till someone at the wing
 Another weapon to the foe Good-naturedly doth fling.
 Richard advances with a rush; Richmond in turn retires;
 Their weapons, every time they meet, Flash with electric fires.
 Posterity,that occupies , Box,gallery, and pit, Applauds the pair
 alternately,As each one makes a hit.
 Now "Bravo, Richmond!" is the cry, Till Richard plants a blow
 With good effect, when to his side Round the spectators go.
 As fickle still as when at first, The nation, undecided,
 Was 'twixt the Roses White and Red Alternately divided,
 So does the modern audience Incline, with favour strongest,
 To him who in the contest seems ,Likely to last the longest.
 Then harsher sounds the trumpet, And deeper rolls the drum,
 Till both have had enough of it, When Richard must succumb.
 Flatly he falls upon the ground, Declaring, when he's down,
 He envies Richmond nothing else, Except the vast renown
 Which he has certainly acquired By being made to yield
 Himself, that had been hitherto ,The master of the field.
 And then the soldiers, who have stood Some distance from the
 fray, Bush in to take their portion of The glory of the day.
 And men with banners in their hands, At eighteen-pence a night,
 Some with red roses on the flags,And some with roses white,
 By shaking them together, The colours gently blend,
 And the Battle of the Roses Is for ever at an end.



The Battle of Bosworth Field terminated the War of the Roses, or rather brought the roses into full blow, and cut off some of the flower of the English nobility. Richmond was proclaimed king on the field, as Henry the Seventh; and as the soldiers formed themselves into a tableau the curtain descended on the tragedy of the War between the Houses of York and Lancaster.

Richard had reigned a couple of years and a couple of months when he received his quietus on the field of Bosworth. If ever there was a king of England whose name was bad enough to hang him, this unfortunate dog has a reputation which would suspend him on every lamp-post in Christendom. The odium attaching to his policy has been visited on his person, and it has been asserted that the latter was not straight because the former was crooked. His right shoulder is said by Rouse, who hated him, to have been higher than his left; but this apparent deformity may have arisen from the party having taken a one-sided view of him. His stature was small; but in the case of one who never stood very high in the opinion of the public, it was physically impossible for the fact to be otherwise. Walpole, in his very ingenious "Historic Doubts," has tried to get rid of Richard's high hump, but the operation has not been successful, in the opinion of any impartial umpire. Imagination, that tyrant which has such a strange method of treating its subjects, has had perhaps more

to do than Nature in placing an enormous burden on Richard's shoulders. His features were decidedly good-looking; but on the converse of the principle that "handsome is as handsome does," the tyrant Gloucester has been regarded as one of those who "ugly was that handsome didn't."

It is a remarkable fact that Richard the Third during his short reign received no subsidy from Parliament, though we must not suppose that he ruled the kingdom gratuitously; for, on the contrary, his income was ample and munificent.

He got it in the shape of tonnage and poundage upon all sorts of goods, and when money was not to be had he took property to the full value of the claim he had upon it. The result was that his treasury became a good deal like an old curiosity shop, a coal shed, or a dealer's in marine stores, for anything that came in Richard's way was perfectly acceptable. The principle of poundage was applied to everything, even in quantities less than a pound, and he would, even on a few ounces of sugar, sack his share of the saccharine. If he required it for his own use he never scrupled to intercept the housewife on her way from the butcher's and cut off the chump from the end of the chop; nor did he hesitate, when he felt disposed, to lop the very lollipop in the hands of the schoolboy. This principle of allowing poundage to the king was in the highest degree inconvenient. It rendered the meat-safe a misnomer, inasmuch as it was never safe from royal rapacity. It has been said of Richard, that he would have been well qualified to reign, had he been legally entitled to the throne; or, in other words, that he would have been a good ruler if he had not been a bad sovereign. To us this seems to savour of the old anomaly a distinction without a difference.

He certainly carried humbug to the highest possible point, for he exhibited it upon the throne, which serves as a platform to make either vice or virtue as the case may be conspicuous.

The trick by which he obtained possession of his nephew, the young King Edward, whose liberty was likely to prove a stum-

bling-block in Richard's own path to the throne, is remarkable for its cunning, and for the intimate knowledge it displayed of the juvenile character. Proceeding to the residence of the baby monarch's mamma, he began asking after "little Ned" with apparently the most affectionate interest.

He had previously provided himself with a lot of sweetstuff as he came along, for it was his deep design to intoxicate with brandy-balls the head of the infant sovereign "Where is the little fellow?" inquired Richard, who would take no excuse for his nephew not being produced, but declared that being in no hurry, he could wait the convenience of the nursery authorities.

Finding further opposition useless, Elizabeth reluctantly ordered the boy to be brought down, when Richard asked him "Whether he would like to go with Uncle Dick?" and got favourable answers by surreptitiously cramming the child's mouth with lollipops.

Whenever the little fellow was about to say "He would rather stay with his mamma," the Protector called his attention (aside) to a squib or brandy-ball, and York consented at last to go with his uncle. "Oh! I thought you would," cried the wily duke, as he clutched his little nephew up and jogged with him to the Tower. Such was the artful scheme by which the tyrant originally got possession of the subsequent victim of avuncular cruelty.

It has been urged in extenuation of his cruel murder of the little princes, that their deaths were a necessary sequel to those of Hastings and others; but it would have been a poor consolation to the victims had they known that they were only killed by way of supplement, We cannot think that any portion of the catalogue of Richard's crimes should be printed in colours less black because it formed a continuation or an appendix to his atrocities; nor can we excuse of a horribly bad work because Part I. has rendered it unavoidable.

It is urged by those writers who have defended him, that the crimes he committed were only those necessary to secure the crown; but this is no better plea than that of the highwayman

who knocks a traveller on the head because the blow is necessary to the convenient picking of the victim's pockets. Richard's crimes might have been palliated in some trifling degree, had they been essential to the recovery of his own rights, but the case is different when his sanguinary career was only pursued that he might get hold of that which did not belong to him. It is true he was ambitious; but if a thief is ambitious of possessing our set of six silver tea-spoons, we are not to excuse him because he knocks us down and stuns us, as a necessary preliminary to the transfer of the property from our own to our assailant's possession.

The palliators of Richard's atrocities declare that he could do justice in matters where his own interest was not concerned; but this fact, by proving that he knew better, is in fact an aggravation of the faults he was habitually guilty of. It has been insinuated that when he had got all he wanted, he might have improved, but that by killing him after he had come to the throne, his contemporaries gave him no chance of becoming respectable.

It must be clear to every reasonable mind that the result, even had it been satisfactory, would never have been worth the cost of obtaining it, and that in tolerating Richard's pranks, on the chance of his becoming eventually a good king, his subjects might well have exclaimed *le jeu n'en vaut pas la chandelle*.

In the vexata questio of the cause of the death of the princes, the guilt has usually been attributed to Richard, because he reaped the largest benefit from their decease; but this horrible doctrine would imply that a tenant for life is usually murdered by the remainder-man, and that the enjoyer of the interest of Bank Stock is frequently cut off by the reversioner who is entitled to the principal.

We admit there is a strong case against Richard upon other more reasonable evidence: and thus from the magisterial bench of History do we commit him to take his trial, and be impartially judged by the whole of his countrymen.

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