The History of King Richard the Third
by Master Thomas More
Undersheriff of London
c. 1513

(Student Edition)[1]

1. Introduction
[315, 3]*

King Edward of that name the Fourth, after he had lived fifty and three years,[2] seven months, and six days, and thereof reigned two and twenty years, one month, and eight days, died at Westminster the ninth day of April, the year of our redemption, a thousand four hundred four score and three, leaving much fair issue, that is, Edward the Prince, thirteen years of age; Richard Duke of York, two years younger; Elizabeth, whose fortune and grace was after to be queen, wife unto King Henry the Seventh, and mother unto the Eighth; Cecily not so fortunate as fair; Brigette, who, representing the virtue of her whose name she bore, professed and observed a religious life in Dertford, a house of cloistered Nuns; Anne, who was after honorably married unto Thomas, then Lord Howard and after Earl of Surrey; and Katherine, who long time tossed in either fortune – sometime in wealth, often in adversity – at the last, if this be the last, for yet she lives, is by the goodness of her nephew, King Henry the Eighth, in very prosperous state, and worthy her birth and virtue.

Death of King Edward IV, April 9, 1483

Those he left behind

This noble prince died at his palace of Westminster[3] and, with great funeral honor and heaviness of his people from thence conveyed, was interred at Windsor. He was a king of such governance and behavior in time of peace (for in war each part must needs be another's enemy) that there was never any prince of this land attaining the crown by battle so heartily beloved by the substance of the people, nor he himself so specially in any part of his life as at the time of his death.

[317, 4]

How he was regarded

1. Archaic words and punctuation have been edited.
2. In fact, Edward died when he was 40. Why, in a history that covers only three months, would More make such a glaring error in the first sentence? – especially, as will be seen, when the time of Edward's death is of major signifiance? This is the type of question that More elicits throughout this work.
3. More's Latin version of this history (apparently written for an international audience) explains where this palace is – a mile west of London.

* The first page number refers to volume 15 of *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More* (Yale UP, 1986) which gives the Latin edition of this work as well as Daniel Kinney's translation. The second page number refers to George M. Logan's edition of *The History of King Richard III* (Indiana UP, 2005).

Loved by the substance of people, esp. at his death

Even after his death, this favor and affection toward him because of the cruelty, mischief, and trouble of the tempestuous world that followed afterwards – increased more highly. At such time as he died, the displeasure of those that bore him grudge for King Henry's sake, the Sixth, whom he deposed, was well assuaged, and in effect quenched, in that many of them were dead in the more than twenty years of his reign – a great part of a long life. And many of them in the meantime had grown into his favor, of which he was never sparing.

Description of Edward IV

He was a goodly personage, and very princely to behold: of heart, courageous; politic in counsel; in adversity nothing abashed; in prosperity, rather joyful than proud; in peace, just and merciful; in war, sharp and fierce; in the field, bold and hardy, and nevertheless, no further than wisdom would, adventurous. Whose wars whosoever would well consider, he shall no less commend his wisdom when he withdrew than his manhood when he vanquished. He was of visage lovely, of body mighty, strong, and clean made; however, in his latter days with over-liberal diet[1], he became somewhat corpulent and burly, and nonetheless not uncomely; he was of youth greatly given to fleshly wantonness, from which health of body in great prosperity and fortune, without a special grace, hardly refrains. This fault not greatly grieved the people, for one man's pleasure could not stretch and extend to the displeasure of very many, and the fault was without violence, and besides that, in his latter days, it lessened and well left.

Why wantonness did not grieve the people

[319, 5]

The state of his realm

In which time of his latter days, this realm was in quiet and prosperous estate: no fear of outward enemies, no war in hand, nor none toward, but such as no man looked for; the people toward the Prince, not in a constrained fear, but in a willing and loving obedience; among themselves, the commons in good peace. The lords whom he knew at variance, he himself in his deathbed appeased.[2] He had left all gathering of money (which is the only thing that withdraws the hearts of Englishmen from the prince), nor anything he intended to take in

1. See page 6 for the importance of this point.
2. This sentence exemplifies the ironic perspective used throughout More's *History*. King Edward wished to *believe* that he so succeeded on his deathbed, but he clearly did not – as this *History* will soon show.

hand by which he should be driven thereunto, for his tribute out of France he had obtained before, and the year foregoing his death he had obtained Berwick Castle. And although throughout his reign he was with his people so benign, courteous and so familiar that no part of his virtues was more esteemed, yet that condition in the end of his days (in which many princes by a long continued sovereignty decline into a proud port from their debonair behavior at the beginning) marvelously in him grew and increased so far forth that, in the summer, the last that ever he saw, his Highness, being at Windsor hunting, sent for the Mayor and Aldermen of London to him – for no other errand but to have them hunt and be merry with him. Here he treated them not so stately but so friendly and of so familiar cheer, and sent venison from there so freely into the city, that no one thing in many days before got him either more hearts or more hearty favor among the common people, who oftentimes more esteem and take for greater kindness a little courtesy than a great benefit.

What was most esteemed

The value of courtesy

So died (as I have said) this noble king in that time during which his life was most desired. The love of his people and their entire affection toward him would have been to his noble children a marvelous fortress and sure armor[1] (having in themselves also as many gifts of nature, as many princely virtues, as much goodly ability as their age could receive), if division and dissention of their friends had not unarmed them and left them destitute, and the execrable desire of sovereignty provoked their uncle to their destruction, who, if either kind[2] or kindness had held place, must needs have been their chief defense. For Richard, the Duke of Gloucester, by nature their uncle, by office their protector, to their father beholden, to themselves by oath and allegiance bound, all the bands broken that bind man and man together, without any respect of God or the world, unnaturally contrived to bereave them, not only their dignity, but also their lives. But because this Duke's demeanor[3] ministers in effect all the whole

[321, 7]

Danger of dissension

Danger of their uncle Richard

1. See More's epigram #120, also #109, 111, 112 in *CW* 3.2. *CW* refers to *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More* (Yale UP, 1963-1997), and the number that follows indicates the volume of this collection.
2. "Kind" means both "nature" and "kin."
3. "Demeanor" can mean "manner of living"; it can also mean "outward treatment of others."

matter whereof this book shall treat, it is therefore appropriate to show you somewhat, before we further go, what manner of man this was who could find in his heart so much mischief to conceive.

Richard's father claims the crown

[321, 8]

Richard, Duke of York, a noble man and a mighty, had begun not by war but by law to challenge the crown, putting his claim into the Parliament. There his cause was either for right or favor so far forth advanced that King Henry (although he had a goodly prince)[1] utterly rejected his own blood[2]; the crown was by authority of Parliament[3] entailed unto the Duke of York, and his male issue in remainder, immediately after the death of King Henry. But the Duke, not enduring so long to tarry, but intending under pretext of dissension and debate arising in the realm, to reign before his time and to take upon him the rule in King Henry's life, was with many nobles of the realm at Wakefield slain, leaving three sons – Edward, George, and Richard.

Slaying of Richard, Duke of York (father of Richard III and Edward IV)

All three, as they were great states[4] of birth, so were they great and stately of stomach, greedy and ambitious of authority, and impatient of partners. Edward, revenging his father's death, deprived King Henry and attained the crown.

Edward usurps the throne

George, Duke of Clarence, was a goodly noble prince, and at all points fortunate, if either his own ambition had not set him against his brother, or the envy of his enemies had not set his brother against him. For were it by the Queen and the lords of her blood, who highly maligned the King's kindred (as women commonly, not of malice but of nature, hate them whom their husbands love), or were it a proud appetite of the Duke himself intending to be king, in any case, heinous treason was there laid to his charge, and, finally, were he faulty or were he faultless, attainted was he by Parliament and judged to the death, and thereupon hastily drowned in a butt of malmesey, whose death, King Edward (although he commanded it), when he knew it was done, piteously bewailed and sorrowfully repented.

Execution of George, Duke of Clarence (brother of Richard III and Edward IV)

1. The Latin version is "quam Rex innocentior esset quam sapientior": "since the king's innocence exceeded his prudence" (*CW* 15, p. 320).
2. That is, Henry VI relinquished his son's right of succession to the throne.
3. The Latin version here states, "ex senatusconsulto Parlamenti cuius apud Anglos summa atque absoluta potestas est," i.e., that Parliament's "authority in England is supreme and absolute" (*CW* 15, p. 320 or *CW* 2, p. 6). On other statements about Parliament's authority in this English version, see pages 58, 61n, 65, 68n, 69n.
4. "States" means "lords," which More puns upon in the next clause, "stately of stomach."

Richard III described

Richard, the third son, of whom we now treat, was in wit and courage equal with either of them, in body and prowess far under them both: little of stature, ill featured of limbs, crooked-backed, his left shoulder much higher than his right, hard-favored in appearance, [323, 10] and such as is in the case of lords called warlike, in other men called otherwise. He was malicious, wrathful, envious, and from before his birth, ever perverse. It is for truth reported that the Duchess his mother had so much ado in her travail to birth him that she could not be delivered of him uncut, and he came into the world with the feet forward, as men be borne outward,[1] and (as the story runs) also not untoothed. Either men of hatred reported the above for truth or else nature changed her course in his beginning – in the course of whose life many things were unnaturally committed. No unskilled captain was he in war, for which his disposition was more suited than for peace. Sundry victories had he, and sometimes overthrows, but never by fault of his own person, either of hardiness or political order. Free was he called when dispensing gifts, and somewhat above his power liberal; with large gifts he got for himself unsteadfast friendship, for which he was glad to pillage and spoil in other places, and get for himself steadfast hatred. He was close and secret, a deep dissembler, lowly of countenance, arrogant of heart, outwardly friendly where he inwardly hated, not omitting to kiss whom he thought to kill; pitiless and cruel, not for evil will always, but for ambition, and either for the surety or increase of his estate. Friend [325, 11] and foe was much the same; where his advantage grew, he spared no man death whose life withstood his purpose. He slew with his own hands King Henry the Sixth, being prisoner in the Tower, as men constantly say, and that without commandment or knowledge of the King, who would, undoubtedly, if he had intended such a thing, have appointed that butcherly office to some other than his own born brother.

His birth: A story

His disposition for war

Unsteadfast friendship

Steadfast hatred

Richard kills King Henry VI

1. "Borne outward" here refers to being carrying after death – i.e., being borne to one's grave.

Richard and his brothers

Some wise men also think that his plan – covertly conveyed – lacked not in helping his brother Clarence to his death, which he resisted openly, although somewhat (as men judged) more faintly than one who was heartily concerned for his welfare. And they who thus judged, they think he for a long time during King Edward's life forethought to be king in case the King his brother (whose life he looked to, so that evil diet should shorten it) should happen to die (as indeed he did) while his children were young. And they judged that for this reason: he was glad of his brother's death, that Duke of Clarence, whose life must needs have hindered his plans, whether the same Duke of Clarence had kept himself true to his nephew the young King, or enterprised to be king himself. But of all this point, is there no certainty, and whosoever divines upon conjectures may as well shoot too far as too short. However, this have I by credible information learned,[1] that the same night in which King Edward died, one Mistlebrook, long before morning, came in great haste to the house of one Potter, dwelling in Redcross Street without Cripplegate, and when he was with hasty rapping quickly let in, he revealed unto Potter that King Edward was departed. "By my truth man," said Potter, "then will my master the Duke of Gloucester be king." What cause he had so to think it is hard to say: whether he, being well disposed toward him, knew anything about such a thing the Duke had purposed, or otherwise he had any inkling thereof, for he was not ever likely to speak of it.

[327, 12]

Richard on Edward's diet

The night Edward died

[329, 13]

But now to return to the course of this history, were it that the Duke of Gloucester had of old planned this conclusion, or was now at first thereunto moved and put in hope by the occasion of the tender age of the young princes his nephews (as opportunity and likelihood of success put a man in courage of what he never intended), certain is it that he contrived their destruction with the usurpation of the regal dignity upon himself. And forasmuch as he well

Richard and his nephews

1. The Latin version reports: "I remember this conversation was reported to my father by a man who had heard them conversing, well before there was any suspicion of this treachery" (*CW* 15, p. 329).

knew and helped to maintain a long continued grudge and heart hating between the Queen's kindred and the King's blood, each party envying the other's authority, he now thought that their division should be (as it was indeed) a favorable beginning to the pursuit of his intent and a sure ground for the foundation of all his building,[1] if he might first, under the pretext of revenging old displeasure, abuse the anger and ignorance of the one party to the destruction of the other, and then win to his purpose as many as he could, and those that could not be won, might be lost before they looked therefore. For of one thing was he certain, that if his intent were perceived, he should soon have made peace between both parties – with his own blood.

A sure ground for destruction

King Edward in his life, although this dissension between his friends somewhat irked him, yet in his good health he somewhat the less regarded it because he thought whatsoever business should fall between them, he should always be able to rule both parties. But in his last sickness, when he perceived his natural strength so sore enfeebled that he despaired all recovery, then he, considering the youth of his children, suspecting nothing less than what would happen, and well foreseeing that many harms might grow by family debates while the youth of his children lacked discretion of themselves, and good counsel of their friends – because either party should counsel for their own advantage and by pleasant advice win themselves favor, rather than by profitable advertisement do the children good – he called some of them before him who were at variance, and especially, the Lord Marquis Dorset, the Queen's son by her first husband, and Richard[2] the Lord Hastings, a noble man, then lord chamberlain, against whom the Queen specially grudged for that great favor the King showed him, and also because she thought him secretly familiar with the King in wanton company. Her kindred also bore him dislike, as well for that the King had made him Captain of Calais (which office the Lord Rivers, brother to the Queen, claimed because of the King's former

[329, 14]

King Edward on the dangers facing his children

Why Hastings was especially disliked

1. This claim is repeated on p. 11.
2. Actually, his name was William.

promise), and for diverse other great gifts which he received that they looked for.

[331,15] When these lords with diverse others of both parties were come into his presence, the King, lifting up himself and propped up with pillows, as it is reported, after this fashion said unto them:

King Edward's deathbed speech

"My lords, my dear kinsmen and allies, in what plight I lie, you see, and I feel. By which, the less while I expect to live with you, the more deeply am I moved to care in what case I leave you, for such as I leave you, such be my children like to find you. That if they should (God forbid) find you at variance, might by chance fall themselves at war before their discretion would serve to set you at peace. You see their youth, of which I reckon the only security to rest in your concord. For it suffices not that all you love them, if each of you hate the other. If they were men, your faithfulness by chance would suffice. But childhood must be maintained by men's authority, and slippery youth supported with elder counsel, which neither they can have unless you give it, nor can you give it if you do not agree. For where each labors to break what the other makes, and for hatred of each other's person impugns each other's counsel, it must needs be long before any good conclusion go forward. And also while either party labors to be chief, flattery shall have more place than plain and faithful advice, of which must needs ensue the evil bringing up of the Prince, whose mind in tender youth infected shall readily fall to mischief and riot, and draw down with this noble realm to ruin – unless grace turn him to wisdom, which if God send, then they who by evil means before pleased him best shall after fall furthest out of favor, so that ever at length evil plans drive to nothing and good plain ways prosper.

Danger of division and flattery

[333, 16] "Great variance has there long been between you, not always for great causes. Sometimes a thing right well intended, our misconstruction turns unto worse, or a small displeasure done us, either our own

How small matters grew

affection or evil tongues aggrieve. But this I know well: you never had so great cause of hatred as you have of love. That we be all men, that we be Christian men, this shall I leave for preachers to tell you (and yet I know never whether any preachers' words ought to move you more than his words who is by and by going to the place that they all preach of). But this I desire you to remember: that the one part of you is of my blood, the other of mine allies, and each of you with the other, either of kindred or affinity; and also that spiritual kindred of affinity, if the sacraments of Christ's Church bear that weight with us that God wished they did, should no less move us to charity than the respect of fleshly consanguinity. Our Lord forbid that you love together the worse for the same cause that you ought to love the better. And yet that happens. And nowhere find we so deadly debate as among them who by nature and law most ought to agree together.

[335, 16]

Ambition: a pestilent serpent

"Such a pestilent serpent is ambition and desire of vainglory and sovereignty that among those whom he once enters, he creeps forth so far till with division and variance he turns all to mischief: First, longing to be next to the best; afterward, equal with the best; and at last, chief and above the best. For immoderate appetite of worship – and therefore debate and dissension – has caused what loss, what sorrow, what trouble within these few years in this realm, I pray God as well forget as we well remember. Such things, if I could as well have foreseen as I have with my more pain than pleasure experienced, by God's blessed Lady (that was ever his oath), I would never have won the courtesy of men's knees with the loss of so many heads.[1]

Warning of great hurt

"But since things passed cannot be brought back, much ought we the more beware by what occasion we have taken so great hurt before, that we soon afterwards fall not in that occasion again. Now be those griefs past, and all is (God be thanked) quiet, and likely right

1. Latin version has: "Would that God would as readily forget as we personally remember what a great conflagration this wicked ardor for glory has ignited and how much slaughter it has provoked in this kingdom within these last few years; and if I as a private citizen [privato] had been able to foresee and anticipate its ill effects as distinctly in thought as I later experienced them in deed, with less pleasure than pain, on my soul I would never have sacrificed so many men's heads to see men on their knees doing me honor." (CW 15, 334/19-26). See p. 56.

well to prosper in wealthful peace under your cousins, my children, if God send them life and you love. Of which two things, the less loss were they, if taken by God at his pleasure,[1] for yet should the realm always find kings, and by chance good kings. But if you among yourselves in a child's reign fall at debate, many a good man shall perish and perhaps he too, and you too, before this land find peace again.

What is at stake

"Wherefore in these last words that ever I look to speak with you, I exhort you and require you all, for the love that I have ever bore to you, for the love that our Lord bears to us all, from this time forward, all griefs forgotten, each of you love the other. Which I verily trust you will, if you anything earthly regard – either God or your King, affinity or kindred, this realm, your own country, or your own surety."

Edward's final plea

[337, 17]

And therewithal, the King, no longer enduring to sit up, laid himself down on his right side, his face toward them, and none was there present that could refrain from weeping. But the lords, encouraging him with as good words as they could and answering for the time as they thought to stand with his pleasure, there in his presence (as by their words appeared), each forgave the other and joined their hands together, when (as it after appeared by their deeds) their hearts were far asunder.

As soon as the King was departed, that noble Prince his son drew toward London, who at the time of his father's death kept household at Ludlow in Wales.[2] Such country, being far off from the law and recourse to justice, was begun to be far out of good will and had grown up wild with robbers and thieves walking at liberty uncorrected. And for this reason the Prince was, in the life of his father, sent thither, to the end that the authority of his presence should restrain evilly disposed persons from the boldness of their former outrages.[3] To the governance and ordering of this young Prince, at his sending thither, was there appointed Sir Anthony Woodville, Lord

Prince Edward moves toward London when the King dies

Why Edward was in Wales

1. Here Edward suggests it would be better if the princes were to lose their lives "at God's pleasure" (i.e., die of natural causes), rather than have civil war.
2. More's Latin version gives this explanation: "For that region is the proper domain of successive kings' firstborn sons while their parents are still living" (*CW* 15, p. 337).
3. The Latin version has: "[S]ince that country was far from the king and thus carelessly governed, so that it had begun to revert to a sort of wild savagery, with evil men freely and safely engaging in robbery and murder, the younger Edward was sent there with a military command so the authority of the prince's [authoritate Principis] presence would check the audacity of wrongdoers" (CW 15, 336/27-338/3).

Lord Rivers, Protector of the Prince

Rivers and brother unto the Queen, a right honorable man, as valiant of hand as politic in counsel. Adjoined were there unto him others of the same party, and, in effect, every one as he was nearest of kin unto the Queen was so planted next about the Prince.

[339, 18]

2. Richard's Plan to Control Young Edward V

This plan that the Queen not unwisely devised whereby her blood might from the beginning be rooted in the Prince's favor, the Duke of Gloucester turned unto their destruction, and upon that ground set the foundation of all his unhappy building. For whomsoever he perceived either at variance with them or bearing favor to himself, he revealed to them, some by mouth, some by writing and secret messengers, that it was neither reasonable nor in any way to be suffered that the young King, their master and kinsman, should be in the hands and custody of his mother's kindred, sequestered from their company and attendance, because everyone owed the Prince service as faithful as they, and because many of them were of a far more honorable part of kin than his mother's side. "Their blood," said he, "saving the King's pleasure, was fully unsuitable to be matched with his own, which was now to be removed from the King – and therefore the less noble men to be left about him – is," said he, "neither honorable to his Majesty nor to us, and also to his Grace no surety to have the mightiest of his friends away from him, and unto us no little jeopardy to suffer our well-proved evil willers to grow overgreat in authority with the youthful Prince, who is light of belief and easily persuaded.

"You remember, I trust, King Edward himself, although he was a man of age and of discretion, yet was he in many things ruled by the Queen's faction more than stood either with his honor or our profit, or to the advantage of any man else, except only the immoderate advancement of the Queen's family, which group either sorer thirsted after their own well being, or our woe, it were hard I suppose to guess. And if some folks' friendship had not held better place with

[341, 19]

the King than any respect of kindred, they might, by chance, easily have trapped and brought to confusion some of us before now. Why, have not they done as easily to some others already, as near to his royal blood as we? But our Lord has wrought His will, and thanks be to His grace that peril is past. However, a great peril is growing if we suffer this young King to remain in our enemies' hand, who, without the King's awareness, might abuse the name of his commandment to any of our undoing, which thing God and good provision forbid – and of such good provision, none of us has anything the less need because of the late made atonement in which the King's pleasure had more place than the parties' wills. Nor none of us, I believe, is so unwise to trust too soon a new friend made of an old foe, or to think that a slight kindness, suddenly contracted in one hour, continued yet scant a fortnight, should be deeper settled in their stomachs than a long accustomed malice many years rooted."

A great peril growing

With these words and writings and such others, the Duke of Gloucester soon set afire them that were of themselves easy to kindle, and especially two, Edward[1] Duke of Buckingham and Richard[2] Lord Hastings (the chamberlain), both men of honor and of great power: the one by long succession from his ancestry, the other by his office[3] and the King's favor. These two, not bearing each to the other so much love as hatred both unto the Queen's part, on this point accorded together with the Duke of Gloucester: that they would utterly remove from the King's company all his mother's friends, under the name of their enemies. With this concluded, the Duke of Gloucester, understanding that the lords who were about the King intended to bring him up to his coronation, accompanied with such power of their friends that it should be hard for him to bring his purpose to pass without the gathering and great assembling of people and in manner of open war, the end of which he knew to be dubious, and with the King being on their side, his part should have the

[341, 20]

How Richard wins over Buckingham and Hastings

1. Actually, Henry.
2. Actually, William.
3. More's Latin version explains: "The king had appointed him keeper of the king's chamber, which is a very honorable office in England" (*CW* 15, p. 343).

face and name of a rebellion, he secretly, therefore, by diverse means caused the Queen to be persuaded and brought to believe that it neither were needed and also should be jeopardizing for the King to come up strong. For whereas now every lord loved each other and none other thing studied upon but about the coronation and honor of the King, if the lords of her kindred should assemble in the King's name many people, they should give the very same lords, between whom and them had been sometime debate, fear and suspicion, lest they should gather this people, not for the King's safeguard, whom no man impugned, but for their destruction, having more regard to their old variance than their new atonement. For which cause, they should assemble on the other party many people again for their defense, whose power she knew well far stretched. And thus should all the realm fall into a roar. And of all the hurt that thereof should ensue, which was likely not to be little, and the most harm there like to fall where she least it would, all the world would put her and her kindred in the blame and say that they had unwisely and untruly also, broken the amity and peace that the King her husband so prudently made between his kin and hers on his death bed and which the other party faithfully observed.

[343, 21]

How he persuades the Queen against protection

The Queen, being in this way persuaded, such word sent unto her son and unto her brother, being about the King; and besides that, the Duke of Gloucester himself and other chief lords of his company wrote unto the King so reverently and to the Queen's friends there so lovingly that they, nothing earthly mistrusting, brought the King up in great haste, not in good speed, with a sober company.[1]

[345, 21]

Now when the King on his way to London had gone from Northampton, then these Dukes of Gloucester and Buckingham came thither. But the Lord Rivers, the King's uncle, remained behind, intending on the morrow to follow the King, and be with him at Stony Stratford, eleven miles thence, early before he departed. So was there

The King travels to London

1. "not in good speed, with a sober company" – i.e., not quickly, with a moderate number.

made that night much friendly cheer between these dukes and the
[345, 22] Lord Rivers a great while. But immediately after that, they openly and with great courtesy departed; and while the Lord Rivers lodged, the dukes secretly, with a few of their most private friends, set themselves down in council, wherein they spent a great part of the night. And at their rising in the dawning of the day, they sent about secretly to their servants, who were in their inns and lodgings about, giving the commandment to make themselves shortly ready, for their lords were ready to ride. Upon which messages, many of their folk were attendant when many of the Lord Rivers' servants were unready. Now had these dukes taken also into their custody the keys of the inn so that none should pass forth without their approval. And besides this, on the highway toward Stony Stratford, where the King lay, they had ordered certain of their folk that they should send back again and compel to return any man who were gotten out of Northampton toward Stony Stratford, till they should give permission, because the dukes themselves intended, for the show of their diligence, to be the first that should that day attend upon the King's Highness out of that town; thus did they deceive the folk at hand.

In secret council

[347, 23] But when the Lord Rivers understood the gates closed and the ways on every side beset, neither his servants nor himself allowed to go out, perceiving well so great a thing without his knowledge was not begun for nothing, comparing this manner present with this last night's cheer, in so few hours so great a change he marvelously disliked. However, since he could not get away – and keep himself close, he would not do so lest he should seem to hide himself for some secret fear of his own fault, whereof he saw no such fault in himself – he determined, upon the surety of his own conscience, to go boldly to them and inquire what this matter might mean. Whom, as soon as they saw, they began to quarrel with him and say that he intended to set distance between the King and them and to bring

Lord Rivers entrapped

them to confusion, but this plan would not lie in his power. And when he began (as he was a very well-spoken man) in goodly manner to excuse himself, they tarried not the end of his answer, but shortly took him and put him under guard, and that done, forthwith went to horseback and took the way to Stony Stratford, where they found the King with his company ready to leap on horseback and depart forward, to leave that lodging for them because it was too small for both companies.

Lord Rivers arrested

And as soon as they came in his presence, they alighted down with all their company about them. To whom the Duke of Buckingham said, "Go before, gentlemen and yeomen, keep your rooms." And thus in a goodly array, they came to the King and, on their knees in very humble fashion, assuaged his Grace, who received them in very joyous and amiable manner, nothing earthly knowing nor mistrusting as yet. But even by and by, in his presence, they picked a quarrel with the Lord Richard Grey, the King's other brother by his mother,[1] saying that he, with the Lord Marquis[2] his brother and the Lord Rivers his uncle, had planned to rule the King and the realm, and to set variance among the lords, and to subdue and destroy the noble blood of the realm. Toward the accomplishing whereof, they said that the Lord Marquis had entered into the Tower of London, and thence taken out the King's treasure, and sent men to the sea. All of which things, these dukes knew well, were done for good purposes and necessary ones by the whole council at London, except that they must say something.

[349, 24]

The dukes quarrel with the Queen's brothers

Unto which words, the King answered, "What my brother marquis has done I cannot say. But in good faith I dare well answer for mine uncle Rivers and my brother here, that they be innocent of any such matters."

"Yea, my Liege," said the Duke of Buckingham, "they have kept their dealing in these matters far from the knowledge of your good

1. Lord Grey is the son of Elizabeth Woodville by her first husband.
2. Thomas Grey, Dorset.

Grace."

Lord Gray and Vaughan arrested

And forthwith they arrested the Lord Richard and Sir Thomas Vaughan, knight, in the King's presence, and brought the King and all back unto Northampton, where they took again further counsel. And there they sent away from the King whomever it pleased them, and set new servants about him, such as liked them better than him. At which dealing he wept and was nothing content, but it remedied not. And at dinner the Duke of Gloucester sent a dish from his own table to the Lord Rivers, praying him to be of good cheer, all should be well enough. And he thanked the Duke, and prayed the messenger to bear it to his nephew, the Lord Richard, with the same message for his comfort, who he thought had more need of comfort, as one to whom such adversity was foreign. But for himself, he had been all his days used to a life therewith, and therefore could bear it the better. But for all this comfortable courtesy of the Duke of Gloucester, he sent the Lord Rivers and the Lord Richard with Sir Thomas Vaughan into the north country to different places to prison and, afterwards, all to Pomfrait, where they were, in conclusion, beheaded.

[351, 25]

Richard's kindness to Rivers

Rivers, Gray, and Vaughan beheaded

Richard leads the King to London

In this way the Duke of Gloucester took upon himself the order and governance of the young king, whom, with much honor and humble reverence, he conveyed upward toward the city.

3. Sanctuary and Richard's Response

But as soon as the tidings of this matter came hastily to the Queen, a little before the midnight following, and that in the sorest way, that the King her son was taken; her brother, her son, and her other friends arrested, and sent to no man knew where, to be done with God knows what. With such tidings, the Queen, in great fright and heaviness, bewailing her child's ruin, her friends' mischance, and her own misfortune, damning the time that ever she spoke in opposition to the gathering of power about the King, got herself in all haste possible, with her younger son and her daughters, out of the Palace of Westminster in which she then lay, and into the sanctuary, lodging

The Queen takes sanctuary

herself and her company there in the Abbot's place.

[353, 26]

Hastings sends a messenger

Now came there in one messenger likewise, not long after midnight, from the Lord Chamberlain unto the Archbishop of York, then Chancellor of England, to his place not far from Westminster. And he showed the servants he had tidings of so great importance that his master gave him charge not to tolerate their master's rest; they denied not to wake him, nor he to admit this messenger into his bedside, from whom he heard that these dukes were gone back with the King's Grace from Stony Stratford unto Northampton.

"Notwithstanding, sir," said he, "my Lord sends your Lordship word that there is no fear, for he assures you that all shall be well."

"I assure him," said the Archbishop, "be it as well as it will, it will never be so well as we have seen it." And thereupon, by and by, after the messenger departed, he caused in all the haste all his servants to be called up, and so with his own household about him, and every man armed, he took the Great Seal[1] with him, and came yet before day unto the Queen. About whom he found much heaviness, rumble, haste and business, carriage and conveyance of her stuff into sanctuary – chests, coffers, packs, bundles, trusses, all on men's backs, no man unoccupied; some loading, some going, some discharging, some coming for more, some breaking down the walls to bring in the shortest way, and some yet drew to them that helped to carry the wrong way.

The Archbishop/ Chancellor's grave concern

The Queen herself sat alone, down on the rushes, all desolate and dismayed, whom the Archbishop comforted in the best manner he could, showing her that he trusted the matter was nothing so sore as she took it for, and that he was put in good hope, and out of fear, by the message sent him from the Lord Chamberlain.

[355, 27]

The Queen is wary of Hastings

"Ah, he is worthy of woe," said she, "for he is one of them that labors to destroy me and my blood."

"Madam," said he, "be you of good cheer. For I assure you if they

1. An engraved stamp of a government symbolizing authority or sovereignty (usually held in England by the Lord Chancellor).

The Archbishop/ Chancellor's reassurances

crown any other king than your son, whom they now have with them, we shall on the morrow crown his brother, whom you have here with you. And here is the Great Seal, which in the same way as that noble prince – your husband – delivered it unto me, so here I deliver it unto you, to the use and benefit of your son." And therewith he granted her the Great Seal, and departed home again, yet in the dawning of the day.

By which time he might in his chamber window, see all the Thames full of boats of the Duke of Gloucester's servants, watching that no man should go to sanctuary, nor none could pass unsearched. Then was there great commotion and murmur as well in other places about – especially in the city; the people all over were diversely speculating upon this dealing. And some lords, knights, and gentlemen, either for favor of the Queen, or for fear of themselves, assembled in sundry companies, and went by companies in armor, and many also, for that they reckoned this conduct attempted, not so specially against the other lords, as against the King himself in the disturbance of his coronation.

[355, 27]

But then, by and by, the lords assembled together at London. Toward which meeting, the Archbishop of York, fearing that it would be ascribed (as it was indeed) to his overmuch lightness that he so suddenly had yielded up the Great Seal to the Queen – to whom the custody thereof nothing pertained without special commandment of the King – secretly sent for the Seal again and brought it with him after the customary manner. And at this meeting, the Lord Hastings, whose loyalty toward the King no man doubted nor needed to doubt, persuaded the lords to believe that the Duke of Gloucester was sure and fastly faithful to his Prince and that the Lord Rivers and Lord Richard with the other knights were, for matters attempted by them against the Dukes of Gloucester and Buckingham, put under arrest for the dukes' safety not for the King's jeopardy and that they were

[357, 28]

The Archbishop/ Chancellor's change of mind

Hasting's indispensible role

also in safeguard and should remain there no longer till the matter were, not by the dukes only but also by all the other lords of the King's Council indifferently examined and by other discretions ordered, and either judged or appeased. But one thing he advised them beware, that they judged not the matter too far forth before they knew the truth – for by turning their private grudges into the common hurt, irritating and provoking men unto anger, and disturbing the King's coronation, toward which the dukes were coming up, they might perhaps bring the matter so far out of joint, that it should never be brought in frame again. This strife, if it should happen to come to battle, as it was likely, though both parties were in all things equal, yet should the authority be on that side where the King is himself.

Hasting's explanation

With these arguments[1] of the Lord Hastings – part of which he believed; part, he knew the contrary – these commotions were somewhat appeased, but especially because the Dukes of Gloucester and Buckingham were so near, and came so quickly on with the King, in none other manner, with none other voice or semblance, than to his coronation, causing the story to be blown about that those lords and knights who were taken had contrived the destruction of the Dukes of Gloucester and Buckingham and of other noble blood of the realm, to the end that they themselves would alone manage and govern the King at their pleasure. And for the false proof thereof, some of the dukes' servants rode with the carts of the stuff that were taken (among such stuff, no marvel, but that some of it were armor, which, at the breaking up of that household, must needs either be brought away or cast away), and they showed it unto the people all the way as they went: "Lo, here be the barrels of armor that these traitors had privately conveyed in their carriage to destroy the noble lords withal." This device, although it made the matter to wise men more unlikely, who well perceived that, if the intenders meant war, they would rather

[359, 29]
False proof

1. The Latin version comments that "this speech had a considerable influence because of the speaker's honorable reputation [*fidem magnam*]" (*CW* 15, p. 357).

have had their armor on their backs than to have bound them up in barrels, yet much part of the common people were therewith very well satisfied, and said it were like giving alms to hang them.

When the King approached near to the city, Edmund Shaa, goldsmith then mayor, with William White and John Mathew, sheriffs, and all the other aldermen in scarlet, with five hundred horse of the citizens in violet, received him reverently at Hornsey, and riding from thence, accompanied him in to the city, which he entered the fourth day of May, the first and last year of his reign.

A reverent reception

4 May 1483

But the Duke of Gloucester bore himself in open sight so reverently to the Prince, with all semblance of lowliness, that from the great obloquy in which he was so late before, he was suddenly fallen in so great trust, that at the Council next assembled, he was the only man chosen and thought most suitable to be Protector of the King and his realm, so that – were it destiny or were it folly – the lamb was given to the wolf to keep. At which Council also the Archbishop of York, Chancellor of England, who had delivered up the Great Seal to the Queen, was thereof greatly reproved, and the Seal taken from him and delivered to Doctor Russell, Bishop of Lincoln, a wise man and good and of much experience, and one of the best learned men undoubtedly that England had in his time. Diverse lords and knights were appointed unto diverse offices. The Lord Chamberlain and some others kept still their offices that they had before.

Richard becomes Protector

Russell becomes Lord Chancellor

Hastings remains Chamberlain

Now all was such that the Protector so sore thirsted for the finishing of what he had begun – though he thought every day a year till it were achieved – yet he dared no further attempt as long as he had but half his prey in hand, well knowing that if he deposed the one brother, all the realm would fall to the other, if he either remained in sanctuary or should by chance be shortly conveyed farther away to his liberty.

[361, 30]

Wherefore straight away at the next meeting of the lords at the Council, he proposed unto them that it was a heinous deed of the

Richard's speech against the Queen

Queen, and proceeding from great malice toward the King's counselors, that she should keep in sanctuary the King's brother from him, whose special pleasure and comfort were to have his brother with him. And that by her such was done to no other intent, but to bring all the lords in obloquy and murmur of the people, as though they were not to be trusted with the King's brother – they who were, by the assent of the nobles of the land, appointed as the King's nearest friends for the protection of his own royal person.

"The prosperity whereof stands," said he, "not all in keeping from enemies or ill viands,[1] but partly also in recreation and moderate pleasure, which he cannot in this tender youth take in the company of elder persons, but in the familiar conversation of those who be neither far under nor far above his age, and nevertheless of state appropriate to accompany his noble majesty. Wherefore with whom rather than with his own brother? And if any man think this consideration light (which I think no man thinks who loves the King), let him consider that sometimes without small things, greater cannot stand. And verily it redounds greatly to the dishonor both of the King's Highness and of all us that have been about his Grace, to have it run in every man's mouth, not in this realm only, but also in other lands (as evil words walk far), that the King's brother should be glad to keep sanctuary. For every man will suppose that no man will so do for nothing. And such evil opinion, once fastened in men's hearts, hard it is to wrest out, and may grow to more grief than any man here can divine.

[363, 31]
Richard's proposal

"Wherefore I think it were not worst to send unto the Queen for the redress of this matter some honorable trusty man, such as both values the King's welfare and the honor of his Council, and is also in favor and credible with her. For all which considerations, none seems to me more suitable than our reverent father here present, my Lord Cardinal,[2] who may in this matter do most good of any man, if it please him to take the pain. Which I doubt not of his goodness he

1. Literally bad food, but suggesting the possibility of poison.
2. Thomas Bourchier, Archbishop of Canterbury.

will not refuse, for the King's sake and ours, and the well being of the young Duke himself, the King's most honorable brother, and after my Sovereign Lord himself, my most dear nephew, considering that thereby shall be ceased the slanderous rumor and obloquy now going about, and the hurts avoided that thereof might ensue, and much rest and quiet grow to all the realm.

"And if she be perchance so obstinate, and so precisely set upon her own will that neither his wise and faithful instruction can move her, nor any man's reason content her, then shall we, by mine advice, by the King's authority, fetch him out of that prison, and bring him to his noble presence, in whose continual company he shall be so well cherished and so honorably treated that all the world shall to our honor, and her reproach, perceive that it was only malice, audacity, or folly, that caused her to keep him there. This is my mind in this matter for this time, except any of your lordships anything perceive to the contrary. For never shall I by God's grace so wed myself to mine own will, but that I shall be ready to change it upon your better advice."

[365, 32]

The Council agrees

When the Protector had spoken, all the Council affirmed that the motion was good and reasonable, and to the King and the Duke his brother, honorable, and a thing that should cease great murmur in the realm, if the mother might be by good means induced to deliver him. Such a thing the Archbishop of Canterbury, whom they all agreed also to be thereto most appropriate, took upon himself to move her, and therein to give his uttermost best effort. However, if she could be in no way entreated with her good will to deliver him, then thought he and such others as were of the clergy present that it were not in any way to be attempted to take him out against her will. For it would be a thing that should turn to the great grudge of all men, and high displeasure of God, if the privilege of the holy place should now be broken, which had so many years been kept, and which both kings

Sanctuary debate begins

and popes so good had granted, so many had confirmed, and which holy ground was more than five hundred years ago by Saint Peter, his own person come in spirit by night, accompanied with great multitude of angels, so specially hallowed and dedicated it to God (for the proof whereof they have yet in the Abbey Saint Peter's cloak to show) that from that time forward was there never so undevout a king who dared that sacred place to violate, or so holy a bishop that dared presume to consecrate.

"And therefore," said the Archbishop of Canterbury, "God forbid that any man should for any earthly enterprise break the immunity and liberty of that sacred sanctuary that has been the safeguard of so many a good man's life. And I trust," said he, "with God's grace, we shall not need it. But for any manner need, I would not we should do it. I trust that she shall be with reason contented, and all things in good manner obtained. And if it happen that I bring it not so to pass, yet shall I toward it so far forth do my best, that you shall all well perceive that no lack of my dutiful efforts, but the mother's dread and womanish fear, shall be the impediment."

The Archbishop defends sanctuary

[367, 33]

"Womanish fear, nay womanish perversity," said the Duke of Buckingham. "For I dare take it upon my soul, she well knows she needs no such thing to fear, either for her son or for herself. For as for her, here is no man that will be at war with women. Would God some of the men of her kin were women too, and then should all be soon at rest. However, there is none of her kin the less loved for that they be her kin, but for their own evil deserving. And nevertheless, if we loved neither her nor her kin, yet were there no cause to think that we should hate the King's noble brother, to whose Grace we ourself be of kin. Whose honor, if she as much desired as our dishonor and as much regard took to his well being as to her own will, she would be as loath to suffer him from the King as any of us be.

Buckingham attacks the Queen's actions

"For if she have any wit (as would God she had as good will as she

has shrewd wit), she reckons herself no wiser than she thinks some that be here, of whose faithful mind, she nothing doubts, but verily believes and knows that they would be as sorry of his harm as herself, and yet would have him from her if she abide there. And we all, I think, are satisfied that both be with her, if she come thence and abide in such place where they may with their honor be.

Buckingham accuses Queen of perversity

"Now then, if she refuse in the deliverance of him, to follow the counsel of them whose wisdom she knows, whose truth she well trusts, it is easy to perceive that perversity hinders her, and not fear. But go to, suppose that she fear (as who may let her to fear her own shadow), the more she fears to deliver him, the more ought we fear to leave him in her hands. For if she cast such fond doubts that she fear his hurt, then will she fear that he shall be fetched thence. For she will soon think that if men were set (which God forbid) upon so great a mischief, the sanctuary would little impede them, for good men might, as I think, without sin somewhat less regard it than they do.

[369, 34]

"Now then, if she doubt lest he might be fetched from her, is it not likely enough that she shall send him somewhere out of the realm? Verily, I look for none other. And I doubt not but she now thinks with great exertion on it, even as we consider the hindrance of sanctuary. And if she might happen to bring that to pass (as it were no great accomplishment, we letting her alone), all the world would say that we were a wise sort of counselors about a King – we that let his brother be cast away under our noses. And therefore I assure you faithfully for my mind, I will rather defy her plans, fetch him away, than leave him there, till her perversity or fond fear convey him away.

"Defy her plans"

"And yet will I break no sanctuary therefore. For verily since the privileges of that place and other like have been of long continued, I am not he that would be about to break them. And in good faith if they were now to begin, I would not be he that should be about to

make them. Yet will I not say nay, but that it is a deed of pity that such men of the sea or their evil debtors have brought in poverty, should have some place of liberty, to keep their bodies out of the danger from their cruel creditors. And also if the Crown happen (as it has done) to come in question, while either part takes the other as traitors, I will well there be some places of refuge for both. But as for thieves, of which these places be full, and which never fall from the craft after they once fall thereto, it is pity the sanctuary should serve them. And much more murderers whom God bade to take from the altar and kill them, if their murder were willful. And where it is otherwise there need we not the sanctuaries that God appointed in the old law. For if either necessity, his own defense or misfortune draw him to that deed, a pardon serves which either the law grants of course, or the King of pity may.

Buckingham: on the intent of sanctuary

"Then look me now how few sanctuary men there be whom any favorable necessity compelled to go thither. And then see on the other side what a sort there be commonly therein, of them whom willful prodigality has brought to nought. What a rabble of thieves, murderers, and malicious, heinous traitors, and that in two places specially: the one at the elbow of the city, the other in the very bowels.[1] I dare well avow it. Weigh the good that they do with the hurt that comes of them, and you shall find it much better to lack both, than have both. And this I say, although they were not abused as they now be, and so long have been, that I fear me ever they will be while men be afraid to set their hands to the amendment: as though God and Saint Peter were the patrons of ungracious living. [371, 35]

"Now prodigals riot and run in debt upon the boldness of these places; yea, and rich men run thither with poor men's goods; there they build, there they spend and bid their creditors go whistle them. Men's wives run thither with their husbands' money, and say they dare not abide with their husbands for beating. Thieves bring thither their [373, 36]

Abuses of sanctuary

1. Westminster Abbey and St. Martin le Grand Church were the two principal places of sanctuary.

stolen goods, and there live thereon. There devise they new robberies; nightly they steal out, they rob and pillage and kill, and come in again as though those places gave them not only a safeguard for the harm they have done, but a license also to do more. However, much of this mischief, if wise men would set their hands to it, might be amended with great thanks to God and no breach of the privilege. The residue, since so long ago I knew never what pope and what prince more piteous than prudent has granted it, and other men because of a certain religious fear have not broken it, let us take a pain therewith, and let it in God's name stand in force, as far forth as reason will. Which is not fully so far forth as may serve to prevent us from fetching forth this noble man to his honor and wealth, out of that place in which he neither is nor can be a sanctuary man.

[373, 36]

"A sanctuary serves always to defend the body of that man that stands in danger abroad, not of great hurt only, but also of lawful hurt. For against unlawful harms, never pope nor king intended to privilege any one place. For that privilege has every place. Know you any man any place wherein it is lawful for one man to do another wrong? That no man unlawfully take hurt, that liberty, the King, the law, and very nature forbid in every place and make to that regard for every man a sanctuary every place. But where a man is by lawful means in peril, there needs he the protection of some special privilege, which is the only ground and cause of all sanctuaries. From which necessity this noble prince is far. His love to his King, nature and kindred prove, whose innocence to all the world his tender youth proves. And so sanctuary as for him, neither none he needs, nor also none can have.

What was never intended

The only reason for sanctuary

[375, 37]

"Men come not to sanctuary as they come to baptism, to require it by their godfathers. He must ask it himself that must have it. And what reason – since no man has cause to have it but whose conscience of his own fault makes him feign need to require it – what

reason then will yonder babe have? which, even if he had discretion to require it, if need were, I dare say would now be right angry with them that keep him there. And I would think without any scruple of conscience, without any breach of privilege, to be somewhat more homely with them that be there sanctuary men indeed. For if one go to sanctuary with another man's goods, why should not the King, leaving his body at liberty, satisfy the part of his goods even within the sanctuary? For neither king nor pope can give any place such a privilege that it shall discharge a man of his debts, being able to pay."

And that diversity of the clergy that were present, whether they said it for his pleasure or, as they thought, agreed plainly that by the law of God and of the church the goods of a sanctuary man should be delivered in payment of his debts, and stolen goods to the owner, and only liberty reserved him to get his living with the labor of his hands. [377, 37]

The clergy agree with the Duke

"Verily," said the Duke, "I think you say very truth. And what if a man's wife will take sanctuary because she wishes to run from her husband? I would think if she can allege none other cause, he may lawfully – without any displeasure to Saint Peter – take her out of Saint Peter's church by the arm. And if nobody may be taken out of sanctuary that says he will abide there, then if a child will take sanctuary because he fears to go to school, his master must let him alone. And as simple as that example is, yet is there less reason in our case than in that. For therein, though it be a childish fear, yet is there at the leastwise some fear. And herein is there none at all. And verily I have often heard of sanctuary men. But I never heard before of sanctuary children. And therefore, as for the conclusion of my mind, whosoever may have deserved to need it, if they think it for their safety, let them keep it. But he can be no sanctuary man that neither has wisdom to desire it nor malice to deserve it, whose life or liberty can by no lawful process stand in jeopardy. And he that takes one out of sanc-

Buckingham concludes

tuary to do him good, I say plainly that he breaks no sanctuary."

When the Duke had done, the laymen entire and a good part of the clergy also, thinking no earthly hurt was meant toward the young babe, agreed in effect that, if he were not delivered, he should be fetched. However, they all thought it best, in the avoiding of all manner of rumor, that the Lord Cardinal should first attempt to get him with her good will. And thereupon all the Council came unto the Star Chamber at Westminster. And the Lord Cardinal, leaving the Protector with the Council in the Star Chamber, departed into the sanctuary to the Queen with diverse other lords with him – were it for the respect of his honor, or that she should by presence of so many perceive that this errand was not one man's mind, or were it for that the Protector intended not in this matter to trust any one man alone, or else, if she finally were determined to keep him, some of that company had perhaps secret instruction immediately, despite her mind, to take him and to leave her no chance to take him away, which she was likely to plan after this matter was revealed to her, if her time would in any way serve her.

The Lord Cardinal agrees to be spokesman

Possible reasons the Protector wanted others to accompany the Cardinal

[379, 39]

When the Queen and these lords were come together in presence, the Lord Cardinal showed unto her that it was thought by the Protector and the whole Council that her keeping of the King's brother in that place was the thing which highly sounded, not only to the great rumor of the people and their obloquy, but also to the unbearable grief and displeasure of the King's royal majesty; to whose Grace it were as singular comfort to have his natural brother in company, as it was to both their dishonor and all theirs and hers also, to suffer him in sanctuary – as though the one brother stood in danger and peril of the other. And he showed her that the Council therefore had sent him unto her to require her the delivery of him that he might be brought unto the King's presence at his liberty, out of that place that they reckoned as a prison. And there should he be treated according to his

The Cardinal's argument

estate. And she in this doing should both do great good to the realm, pleasure to the Council and profit to herself, assistance to her friends that were in distress, and over that (which he knew well she specially valued), not only great comfort and honor to the King, but also to the young Duke himself, for both of them great wealth it were to be together, as well for many greater causes, as also for their both entertainment and recreation; which thing the lords esteemed not slight, though it seem light, well pondering that their youth without recreation and play cannot endure, nor find any stranger according to the propriety of both their ages and estates so suitable in that point for any of them as either of them for the other.

[379, 40]

The Queen's answer

"My lord," said the Queen, "I say not nay, but that it were very appropriate that this gentleman whom you require were in the company of the King his brother. And in good faith I think it were as great advantage to them both, as for yet a while, to be in the custody of their mother, the tender age considered of the elder of them both, but especially the younger, who besides his infancy that also needs good looking to, has awhile been so sore diseased, vexed with sickness, and is so newly rather a little amended than well recovered, that I dare put no earthly person in trust with his keeping but myself alone, considering, that there is, as physicians say, and as we also find, double the peril in the relapse that was in the first sickness, with which disease – nature being forelabored, forewearied and weakened – grows the less able to bear out a new excess of the illness. And although there might be found another who would by chance do their best unto him, yet is there none that either knows better how to order him than I that so long have kept him; or is more tenderly like to cherish him than his own mother that bore him."

"No man denies, good Madam," said the Cardinal, "but that your Grace were of all folk most necessary about your children, and so would all the Council not only be content but also glad that you were,

The Cardinal's response

if it might stand with your pleasure to be in such place as might stand with their honor. But if you appoint yourself to tarry here, then think they yet more apt that the Duke of York were at his liberty honorably with the King – to the comfort of them both than here as a sanctuary man to both their dishonor and obloquy. Since there is not always so great necessity to have the child be with the mother, but that occasion may sometime be such that it should be more expedient to keep him elsewhere. Which in this well appears that, at such time as your dearest son, then Prince and now King, should for his honor and good order of the country, keep household in Wales far out of your company, your Grace was well content therewith yourself."

[383, 42]

The debate continues

"Not very well content," said the Queen, "and yet the case is not like: for the one was then in health, and the other is now sick. In which case I marvel greatly that my Lord Protector is so desirous to have him in his keeping, where if the child in his sickness miscarried by nature, yet might he run into slander and suspicion of fraud. And where they call it a thing so sore against my child's honor and theirs also that he abides in this place, it is all their honors there to suffer him abide where no man doubts he shall be best kept. And that is here, while I am here, which as yet I intend not to come forth and jeopardize myself after the fashion of my other friends, who, would God, were here in surety with me rather than I were there in jeopardy with them."

"Why, Madam," said another lord, "know you anything why they should be in jeopardy?"

"Nay, verily, Sir," said she, "nor why they should be in prison neither, as they now be. But it is, I trust, no great marvel, though I fear lest those that have not omitted to put them in duress without falsity will omit as little to procure their destruction without cause."

The Cardinal made a countenance to the other lord that he should harp no more upon that string. And then said he to the Queen that he

nothing doubted but that those lords of her honorable kin, who as yet remained under arrest should, upon the matter examined, do well enough. And as toward her noble person, neither was nor could be any manner of jeopardy.

"Whereby should I trust that?" said the Queen. "In that I am guiltless? As though they were guilty. In that I am with their enemies better beloved than they? When they hate them for my sake. In that I am so near of kin to the King? And how far be they away, if that would help, as God send grace it hurt not. And therefore as for me, I purpose not as yet to depart hence. And as for this gentleman my son, I mind that he shall be where I am till I see further. For I assure you, because I see some men so greedy without any substantial cause to have him, this makes me much the more further from delivering him." [385, 43]

Why she will not leave

"Truly, madam," said he, "and the further that you be to deliver him, the further be other men to suffer you to keep him, lest your causeless fear might cause you farther to convey him. And many be there that think that he can have no privilege in this place, who neither can have will to ask it, nor malice to deserve it. And therefore they reckon no privilege broken, though they fetch him out, which, if you finally refuse to deliver him, I verily think they will (so much dread has my Lord, his uncle, for the tender love he bears him), lest your Grace should by chance send him away."

Cardinal repeats Buckingham's argument

"Ah, sir," said the Queen, "has the Protector so tender zeal to him that he fears nothing but lest he should escape him? Thinks he that I would send him hence, which neither is in the plight to send out, and in what place could I reckon him sure, if he be not sure in this the sanctuary, whereof there was never tyrant yet so devilish that dared presume to break. And, I trust God, the most holy Saint Peter – the guardian of this sanctuary – is as strong now to withstand his adversaries as ever he was. [387, 43]

The Queen asks about the Protector

"But my son can deserve no sanctuary, and therefore he cannot have it. Forsooth he has found a goodly gloss by which that place that may defend a thief may not save an innocent. But he is in no jeopardy nor has no need thereof. Would God he had not. Trusts the Protector (I pray God he may prove a protector), trusts he that I perceive not whereunto his painted process draws?[1] He says it is not honorable that the Duke abide here and that it were comfortable for them both that he were with his brother because the King lacks a playfellow. Be you sure. I pray God send them both better playfellows than him who makes so high a matter upon such a trifling pretext – as though there could none be found to play with the King unless his brother, who has no lust to play because of sickness, come out of sanctuary, out of his safeguard, to play with him. As though princes as young as they be could not play but with their peers, or children could not play but with their kindred, with whom for the most part they agree much worse than with strangers.

[389, 44]

"But the child cannot require the privilege – who told him so? He shall hear him ask it, if he will. However, this is a gay matter: Suppose he could not ask it; suppose he would not ask it; suppose he would ask to go out. If I say he shall not, if I ask the privilege but for myself, I say he that against my will takes out him, breaks the sanctuary. Serves this liberty for my person only, or for my goods too? You may not hence take my horse from me, and may you take my child from me? He is also my ward, for as my learned Council shows me, since he has nothing by descent held by knight's service,[2] the law makes his mother his guardian. Then may no man, I suppose, take my ward from me out of sanctuary, without the breech of the sanctuary. And if my privilege could not serve him, nor he ask it for himself, yet since the law commits to me the custody of him, I may require it for him – unless the law give a child a guardian only for his goods and his lands, discharging him of the care and safekeeping of his body, for which

The Queen invokes the law

1. *painted process draws* – cunning process leads
2. The boy does not hold legal status as an adult.

only both lands and goods serve.

‡[1] "And if examples be sufficient to obtain privilege for my child, I need not far to seek. For in this place in which we now be (and which is now in question whether my child may take benefit of it) mine other son, now King, was born and kept in his cradle and preserved to a more prosperous fortune, which I pray God long to continue. And as all you know, this is not the first time that I have taken sanctuary, for when my lord, my husband, was banished and thrust out of his kingdom, I fled hither being great with child, and here I bore the Prince. And when my lord, my husband, returned safe again and had the victory, then went I hence to welcome him home, and from hence I brought my babe the Prince unto his father, when he first took him in his arms. And I pray God that my son's palace may be as great safeguard to him now reigning, as this place was sometime to the King's enemy. In which place I intend to keep his brother. ‡ [389, 45]

She gives a personal example

"Wherefore here intend I to keep him because man's law serves the guardian to keep the infant. The law of nature wills the mother keep her child. God's law privileges the sanctuary, and the sanctuary my son, since I fear to put him in the Protector's hands that has his brother already; and if both princes failed, the Protector were inheritor to the crown. The cause of my fear has no man to do but examine. And yet fear I no further than the law fears, which, as learned men tell me, forbids every man the custody of them by whose death he may inherit less land than a kingdom. I can no more, but whosoever he be that breaks this holy sanctuary, I pray God shortly send him need of sanctuary, when he may not come to it. For taken out of sanctuary would I not my mortal enemy were."

The Queen invokes the law of nature and of God

The Lord Cardinal, perceiving that the Queen grew ever longer the further off and also that she began to kindle and chafe and speak sore, biting words against the Protector, and such as he neither be- [391, 46]

1. The following paragraph was translated from the Latin version of this history and included here by William Rastell, the editor of More's 1557 *English Works*.

lieved and was also loath to hear, he said unto her for a final conclusion that he would no longer dispute the matter. But if she were content to deliver the Duke to him and to the other lords there present, he dared lay his own body and soul both in pledge, not only for his safety but also for his estate. And if she would give them a resolute answer to the contrary, he would forthwith depart therewithal, and manage whosoever would with this business afterward; for he never intended more to move her in that matter in which she thought that he and all others, save herself, lacked either wit or truth – wit, if they were so dull that they could nothing perceive what the Protector intended; truth, if they should procure her son to be delivered into his hands, in whom they should perceive toward the child any evil intended.

The Cardinal pledges his body and soul

[393, 46]

The Queen with these words stood a good while in a great study. And forasmuch to her seemed the Cardinal more ready to depart than some of the remnant, and the Protector himself ready at hand, so that she verily thought she could not keep him there, but that he should immediately be taken thence; and to convey him elsewhere, neither had she time to serve her, nor place determined, nor persons appointed, all things unready because this message came on her so suddenly, nothing less expecting than to have him fetched out of sanctuary, which she thought to be now beset in such places about that he could not be conveyed out untaken, and partly as she thought it might fortune her fear to be false, and so well she knew it was either needless or without remedy to resist; wherefore, if she should needs go from him, she thought it best to deliver him. And over that, of the Cardinal's faith she nothing doubted, nor of some other lords neither, whom she there saw, which as she feared lest they might be deceived, so was she well assured they would not be corrupted. Then thought she it should yet make them the more warily to look to him and the more circumspect to see to his safety, if she with her own

The Queen deliberates

hands gave him to them of trust. And at the last she took the young Duke by the hand, and said unto the lords: [395, 47]

"My Lord," said she, "and all my lords, I neither am so unwise to mistrust your wits, nor so suspicious to mistrust your truths. Of which thing I purpose to make you such a proof that, if either of both lacked in you, might turn both me to great sorrow, the realm to much harm, and you to great reproach. For, lo, here is," said she, "this gentleman, whom I doubt not but I could here keep safe if I would, whatsoever any man say. And I doubt not also but there be some abroad, so deadly enemies unto my blood, that if they knew where any of it lay in their own body, they would let it out.

"We have also had experience that the desire of a kingdom knows no kindred. The brother has been the brother's bane. And may the nephews be sure of their uncle? Each of these children is the other's defense while they be asunder, and each of their lives lies in the other's body. Keep one safe and both be sure, and nothing for them both more perilous than to be both in one place. For what wise merchant ventures all his goods in one ship?

"The desire of a kingdom knows no kindred"

"All this notwithstanding, here I deliver him and his brother in him – to keep into your hands – of whom I shall ask them both before God and the world. Faithful you be, that know I well, and I know well you be wise. Power and strength to keep him, if you wish, neither lack you of yourself, nor can lack help in this cause. And if you cannot elsewhere, then may you leave him here. But only one thing I beseech you for the trust that his father put in you ever, and for trust that I put in you now, that as far as you think that I fear too much, be you well wary that you fear not as far too little."

Her decision

Her one request

And therewithal she said unto the child: "Farewell, my own sweet son. God send you good keeping. Let me kiss you once yet before you go, for God knows when we shall kiss together again." And therewith she kissed him, and blessed him, turned her back and wept

and went her way, leaving the child weeping as fast.

[397, 48]

When the Lord Cardinal and these other lords with him had received this young duke, they brought him into the Star Chamber where the Protector took him in his arms and kissed him with these words: "Now welcome, my Lord, even with all my very heart." And he said in that of likelihood as he thought. Thereupon forthwith they brought him to the King, his brother, into the Bishop's Palace at Paul's, and from thence through the city honorably into the Tower, out of which after that day they never came abroad.

O dissimulation

‡[1] When the Protector had both the children in his hands, he opened himself more boldly, both to certain other men, and also chiefly to the Duke of Buckingham, although I know that many thought that this Duke was privy to all the Protector's counsel, even from the beginning.

Buckingham's role questioned

4. Richard Extends His Control

And some of the Protector's friends said that the Duke was the first mover of the Protector to this matter, sending a private messenger unto him, straight after King Edward's death. But others again, who knew better the subtle cunning of the Protector, deny that he ever opened his enterprise to the Duke until he had brought to pass the things before rehearsed. But when he had imprisoned the Queen's kinsfolks and gotten both her sons into his own hands, then he opened the rest of his purpose with less fear to them whom he thought meet for the matter, and specially to the Duke, who being won to his purpose, he thought his strength more than half increased.

[399, 49]

The matter was broken unto the Duke by subtle folks, and such as were masters of their craft in the handling of such wicked devices, who declared unto him that the young king was offended with him for his kinsfolks' sakes, and that if he were ever able, he would revenge them, who would prick him forward thereunto if they escaped (for the Queen's family would remember their imprisonment). Or else if his kinsfolk were put to death, without doubt the young

Reasons given to Buckingham

1. The following two pages were translated from the Latin version of this history and included here by William Rastell, the editor of More's 1557 *English Works*.

king would be sorrowful for their deaths, whose imprisonment was grievous unto him. And that with repenting the Duke should nothing avail: for there was no way left to redeem his offense by benefits, but he should sooner destroy himself than save the King, who with his brother and his kinsfolks he saw in such places imprisoned, as the Protector might with a nod destroy them all; and that it were no doubt but he would do it indeed, if there were any new enterprise attempted. And that it was likely that as the Protector had provided private guard for himself, so had he spies for the Duke and traps to catch him if he should be against him, and that, perchance, from them whom he least suspected. For the state of things and the dispositions of men were then such that a man could not well tell whom he might trust or whom he might fear. These things and such like, being beaten into the Duke's mind, brought him to that point where he had repented the way he had entered, yet would he go forth in the same; and since he had once begun, he would stoutly go through. And therefore to this wicked enterprise, which he believed could not be avoided, he bent himself and went through and determined that since the common mischief could not be amended, he would turn it as much as he might to his own advantage.

[401, 50]

Richard and Buckingham's agreement

Then it was agreed that the Protector should have the Duke's aid to make him king, and that the Protector's only lawful son should marry the Duke's daughter, and that the Protector should grant him the quiet possession of the Earldom of Hertford, which he claimed as his inheritance and could never obtain it in King Edward's time. Besides these requests of the Duke, the Protector of his own mind promised him a great quantity of the King's treasure and of his household stuff. And when they were thus at a point between themselves, they went about to prepare for the coronation of the young king as they would have it seem. And that they might turn both the eyes and minds of men from perceiving their plans, the lords, being sent for

from all parties of the realm, came thick to that solemnity.

But the Protector and the Duke, after that, once they had set the Lord Cardinal, the Archbishop of York (then Lord Chancellor), the bishop of Ely,[1] Lord Stanley, and Lord Hastings (then Lord Chamberlain) with many other noble men ‡[2] to commune and devise about the coronation in one place, as fast were they in another place contriving the contrary, and to make the Protector king. To which council, although there were admittedly very few, and they very secret, yet began there, here and there about, some manner of muttering among the people, as though all should not long be well, though they neither knew what they feared nor wherefore: Were it that before such great things, men's hearts of a secret instinct of nature misgives them, as the sea without wind swells of itself sometime before a tempest; or were it that some one man haply somewhat perceiving, filled many men with suspicion, though he showed few men what he knew. However, somewhat the dealing itself made men to muse on the matter, though the council was closed. For little by little all folk withdrew from the Tower and drew to Crosby's Place in Bishopsgate Street where the Protector kept his household. The Protector had the people appealing to him; the King was in manner alone. While some for their business made suit to them that had the doing, some were by their friends secretly warned that it might haply turn them to no good to be too much attendant about the King without the Protector's appointment, who removed also many of the Prince's old servants from him, and set new ones about him. Thus many things coming together – partly by chance, partly by purpose – caused at length not only common people who wave with the wind, but also wise men and some lords as well, to mark the matter and muse thereon, so far forth that the Lord Stanley, who was afterwards Earl of Darby, wisely mistrusted it and said unto the Lord Hastings that he much disliked these two several councils.

[401, 51]

The Protector's secret council

Stanley's warning to Hastings

1. John Morton, who was undoubtedly one of More's chief sources of information in writing this history, appears again at the end of this book. More gives his advisor and friend a prominent role both in this work and in book one of *Utopia*.
2. Here Rastell's addition from the Latin ends.

"For while we," said he, "talk of one matter in the one place, little know we whereof they talk in the other place."

"My Lord," said the Lord Hastings, "on my life, never doubt you. For while one man is there who is never thence, never can there be things once minded that should sound amiss toward me, but it should be in mine ears before it were well out of their mouths."

[403, 52]

Catesby, and his special trust

This meant he by Catesby, who was of his near secret counsel and whom he very familiarly used, and in his most weighty matters put no man in so special trust, reckoning himself to no man so dear, since he well knew there was no man to him so much beholden as was this Catesby, who was a man well learned in the laws of this land, and by the special favor of the Lord Chamberlain in good authority and much rule bore in all the county of Leicester where the Lord Chamberlain's power chiefly lay.[1] But surely great pity was it that he had not had either more truth or less wit. For his dissimulation alone kept all that mischief up. If the Lord Hastings had not put so special trust in Catesby, the Lord Stanley and he had departed with diverse other lords and broken all the dance,[2] for[3] many ill signs that he saw, which he now construed all to the best, so surely thought he there could be none harm toward him in that council intended where Catesby was. And of truth the Protector and the Duke of Buckingham made very good semblance unto the Lord Hastings and kept him much in company. And undoubtedly the Protector loved him well and loath was to have lost him, saving for fear lest his life should have quelled their purpose. For which cause he moved Catesby to prove with some words cast out afar off, whether he could think it possible to win the Lord Hastings to their part. But Catesby, whether he tried him or questioned him not, reported unto them that he found him so fast and heard him speak so terrible words that he dared no further say. And of truth the Lord Chamberlain, with great trust, showed unto Catesby the mistrust that others began to have in the matter.

[405, 53]

Catesby reports on Hastings

1. The Latin version adds: "nor was he a man it would ever be hard to advance. For besides his great mastery of British law, he possessed an imposing physique and a face that was fair to behold, so that his competence seemed to extend beyond pleading in court to performing great deeds; his intelligence was so great that one might have wished it were less in a person of such little faith [*fide*]" (*CW* 15, p. 405).
2. "broken all the dance" means "disrupted all the plans"
3. because

And therefore he, fearing lest their motions might with the Lord Hastings diminish his credibility, whereunto only all the matter leaned, procured the Protector hastily to get rid of him. And much the rather, for that he trusted by his death to obtain much of the rule that the Lord Hastings bore in his country, the only desire whereof was the enticement that induced him to be partner and one special contriver of all this horrible treason.

Recommends death

[407, 54]

Whereupon soon after, that is to wit, on the Friday, the thirteenth day of June, many lords assembled in the Tower, and there sat in Council, devising the honorable solemnity of the King's coronation, of which the time appointed so near approached that the pageants and subtleties were in making day and night at Westminster, and much victual killed therefore that afterwards was cast away. These lords so sitting together speaking of this matter, the Protector came in among them, first about nine of the clock, saluting them courteously, and excusing himself that he had been from them so long, saying merrily that he had been asleep that day. And after a little talking with them, he said unto the Bishop of Ely: "My Lord, you have very good strawberries at your garden in Holborn, I require you, let us have a mess of them."

The Council in the Tower 13 June 1483

Richard asks Bishop Morton for strawberries

"Gladly, my Lord," said he. "Would God I had some better thing as ready to your pleasure as that." And therewith in all the haste he sent his servant for a mess of strawberries.

The Protector set the lords fast in talking, and thereupon praying them to spare him for a little while, departed thence. And soon after one hour, between ten and eleven, he returned into the chamber among them, all changed with a wonderful sour, angry countenance, knitting the brows, frowning and frothing and gnawing on his lips, and so sat him down in his place, all the lords much dismayed and sore marveling of this manner of sudden change, and what thing should him ail. Then when he had sat still awhile, thus he began: "What were they

Richard's dramatic change

worthy to have that plan and imagine the destruction of me, being so near of blood unto the King, and Protector of his royal person and his realm?"

[409, 55]

At this question, all the lords sat astonished, musing much by whom this question should be meant, of which every man knew himself clear. Then the Lord Chamberlain, as he that for the love between them thought he might be boldest with him, answered and said that they were worthy to be punished as heinous traitors, whosoever they were. And all the others affirmed the same.

"That is," said he, "yonder sorceress, my brother's wife, and others with her," meaning the Queen.

He accuses the Queen

At these words many of the other lords were greatly abashed that favored her. But the Lord Hastings was in his mind better content that it was caused by her than by any other whom he loved better; although his heart somewhat grudged that he was not before made of counsel in this matter, as he was of the taking of her kindred and of their putting to death, which were by his assent before devised to be beheaded at Pomfret this selfsame day, in which he was not aware that it was by others devised that he himself should the same day be beheaded at London.

Then said the Protector: "You shall all see in what way that sorceress and that other witch of her counsel, Shore's wife, with their affinity, have by their sorcery and witchcraft wasted my body." And therewith, he plucked up his doublet sleeve to his elbow upon his left arm, where he showed a shriveled, withered and small arm – as if it were ever otherwise. And thereupon every man's mind sore misgave them, well perceiving that this matter was but a quarrel, for well they knew that the Queen was too wise to go about any such folly. And also if she would, yet would she of all folk least make Shore's wife of council, whom of all women she most hated, as that concubine whom the King her husband had most loved. And also no man was there present

Shore's witchcraft

but well knew that the Protector's arm was ever such since his birth.

[411, 56]

Nevertheless the Lord Chamberlain (which from the death of King Edward kept Shore's wife, on whom he somewhat doted in the King's life, he saving his affection, as it is said, during that time and resisting her out of reverence toward his King, or else of a certain kind of fidelity to his friend) answered and said: "Certainly, my Lord, if they have so heinously done, they be worthy heinous punishment."

"What?!" said the Protector. "Thou serve me, I know, with 'ifs' and with 'ands.' I tell thee they have so done, and that I will make good on thy body, traitor." And therewith as in a great anger, he clapped his fist upon the table a great rap. At which token given, one cried treason outside the chamber. Therewith a door slammed, and in come there rushing men in armor, as many as the chamber might hold. And at once the Protector said to the Lord Hastings: "I arrest thee, traitor."

Lord Hastings arrested

"What me, my Lord?" said he.

"Yea, thee, traitor," said the Protector.

And another[1] let fly at the Lord Stanley, who shrunk at the stroke and fell under the table, or else his head had been cleft to the teeth; for as shortly as he shrank, yet ran the blood about his ears. Then were they all quickly bestowed in diverse chambers, except the Lord Chamberlain, whom the Protector bade speed and shrive[2] him at once, "for by Saint Paul," said he, "I will not to dinner till I see thy head off." It remedied him not to ask why, but heavily he took a priest at random and made a short confession, for a longer one would not be suffered, the Protector made so much haste to dinner, which he might not go to till this were done for the saving of his oath.

Lord Stanley wounded

[413, 57]

So was he brought forth into the green beside the chapel within the Tower, and his head laid down upon a long log of timber, and there stricken off, and afterward his body with the head interred at Windsor beside the body of King Edward, both of whose souls our Lord

Hastings beheaded

1. See *CW* 15 pp. 410/24-412/3 for the motive of this would-be assassin.
2. To make one's confession and be absolved of sin.

pardon.

A marvelous case is it to hear either the warnings of what he should have avoided or the tokens of that he could not avoid. For the same night next before his death, the Lord Stanley sent a trusty secret messenger unto him at midnight in all the haste, requiring him to rise and ride away with him, for he was disposed utterly no longer to remain at home, he had so fearful a dream, in which he thought that a boar with his tusks so slashed them both by the heads that the blood ran about both their shoulders. And forasmuch as the Protector gave the boar for his coat of arms, this dream made so fearful an impression in his heart that he was thoroughly determined no longer to tarry, but had his horse ready, if the Lord Hastings would go with him to ride so far yet the same night, that they should be out of danger before day. [415, 57]

Warnings received

Stanley's dream

"Ay, good Lord," said the Lord Hastings to this messenger, "leans my Lord thy master so much to such trifles and has such faith in dreams, which either his own fear fancies or do rise in the night's rest by reason of his day thoughts? Tell him it is plain witchcraft to believe in such dreams, which, if they were tokens of things to come, why thinks he not that we might be as likely to make them true by our going if we were caught and brought back (as friends fail those who flee), for then had the boar a cause likely to slash us with his tusks, as folk that fled for some falsehood; wherefore, either is there no peril, nor none there is indeed; or if any be, it is rather in going than abiding. And if we must fall in peril one way or other, yet had I rather that men should see it were by other men's falsehood than think it were either our own fault or faint heart. And therefore go to thy master, man, and commend me to him, and pray him be merry and have no fear, for I assure him I am as sure of the man that he knows of, as I am of my own hand."

Hasting refuses

"God send grace, sir," said the messenger, and went his way.

Other warnings

Certain is it also, that in the riding toward the Tower, the same morning in which he was beheaded, his horse twice or thrice stumbled with him almost to the falling, which thing, although each man knows well daily happens to them to whom no such mischance is aimed, yet has it been of an old rite and custom observed as a token oftentimes notably foregoing some great misfortune.

[417, 58]

Now this that follows was no warning, but an enemy's scorn. The same morning before he were up, came a knight unto him, as it were of courtesy to accompany him to the Council, but of truth sent by the Protector to haste him thitherward, with whom he was of secret confederacy in that purpose, a mean man at that time, and now of great authority.[1] This knight, when it happened that the Lord Chamberlain by the way to stay his horse and talk awhile with a priest whom he met in the Tower Street, revealed his tale and said merrily to him: "What, my Lord, I pray you, come on; whereto talk you so long with that priest? You have no need of a priest yet." And therewith he laughed upon him, as though he would say, "You shall have soon." But so little knew the other what he meant, and so little mistrusted, that he was never merrier nor never so full of good hope in his life, which is the very thing often seen a sign of change. But I shall rather let anything pass me than the vain security of a man's mind so near his death.

Never merrier nor full of hope

Lord Hastings speaks to a messenger named Hastings

Upon the very Tower wharf so near the place where his head was off so soon after, there met he with one Hastings, a messenger of his own name. And of their meeting in that place, he was put in remembrance of another time, in which it had happened to them before, to meet in like manner together in the same place. At which other time the Lord Chamberlain had been accused unto King Edward by the Lord Rivers, the Queen's brother, in such a way that he was for the while (but it lasted not long) far fallen into the King's indignation, and

1. This most likely refers to Thomas Howard, a knight, who afterwards became Duke of Norfolk.

stood in great fear of himself. And forasmuch as he now met this messenger in the same place, and that jeopardy so well past, it gave him great pleasure to talk with him thereof, with whom he had before talked thereof in the same place while he was therein.

And therefore he said: "Ah, Hastings [the messenger], art you remembered when I met thee here once with a heavy heart?"

"Yea, my Lord," said he, "that remember I well, and thanks be God they got no good, nor you none harm thereby."

"Thou would say so," said he, "if thou knew as much as I know, which few know else as yet, and more shall shortly." By that meant he the lords of the Queen's kindred that were taken before and should that day be beheaded at Pomfret, which he well knew, but was nothing aware that the axe hang over his own head. "In faith, man," said he, "I was never so sorry, nor never stood in so great dread in my life, as I did when thou and I met here. And lo how the world is turned; now stand mine enemies in that danger (as thou may by chance hear more hereafter) and I never in my life so merry, nor never in so great safety."

[419, 61]

O good God, the blindness of our mortal nature: when he most feared, he was in good surety; when he reckoned himself most sure, he lost his life, and that within two hours after. Thus ended this honorable man, a good knight and a gentle one, of great authority with his prince,[1] of living somewhat dissolute, plain and open to his enemy, and secret to his friend, easy to beguile, as he that of good heart and courage forestudied no perils; a loving man and passing well beloved; very faithful, and trusty enough, trusting too much.

Description of Lord Hastings

Now flew the fame of this lord's death swiftly through the city, and so forth further about like a wind in every man's ear. But the Protector, immediately after dinner, intending to set some color[2] upon the matter, sent in all the haste for many substantial men out of the city into the Tower. And at their coming, he himself with the Duke

Richard's pretense

1. The Latin version explains that Hastings was "especially dear to the king on account of his trustworthiness [*fidem*]."
2. "Color" can mean either "to give a pretext" or "to falsify"; both meanings apply here.

of Buckingham stood armed in old ill-faring body armor, such as no man should suppose that they would have put upon their backs, except that some sudden necessity had constrained them. And then the Protector showed them that the Lord Chamberlain and others of his conspiracy had contrived to have suddenly destroyed him and the Duke there, the same day, in the Council. And what they intended further was as yet not well known. Of which their treason he never had knowledge before ten of the clock the same day before noon. Which sudden fear drove them to put on for their defense such armor as came next to hand. And so had God helped them that the mischief turned upon them that would have done it. And this he required them to report. Every man answered him fair, as though no man mistrusted the matter, which of truth no man believed.

[423, 62]

Yet for the further appeasing of the people's mind, he sent immediately after dinner in all the haste, one herald of arms, with a proclamation to be made through the city in the King's name, containing that the Lord Hastings with diverse others of his traitorous purpose had before conspired the same day to have slain the Lord Protector and the Duke of Buckingham while sitting in the Council, and after to have taken upon them to rule the King and the realm at their pleasure, and thereby to pillage and spoil whom they pleased, uncontrolled. And much matter was there in the proclamation devised to the slander of the Lord Chamberlain, as that he was an evil counselor to the King's father, enticing him to many things highly redounding to the diminishing of his honor and to the universal hurt of his realm, by his evil company, sinister procuring, and ungracious example, as well in many other things, as in the vicious living and inordinate misuse of his body, both with many others, and also especially with Shore's wife – who was one also of his most secret counsel in this heinous treason, with whom he lay nightly, and, namely, the night last past before his death – so that it was the less marvel if ungracious living brought him

The Protector's proclamation

to an unhappy ending, which he was now put unto, by the most dread commandment of the King's Highness and of his honorable and faithful Council, both for his demerits, being so openly taken in his falsely conceived treason, and also lest the delaying of his execution might have encouraged other mischievous persons and partners of his conspiracy to gather and assemble themselves together in making some great commotion for his deliverance; whose hope now being by his well deserved death prudently repressed, all the realm should by God's grace rest in good quiet and peace.

Now was this proclamation made within two hours after he was beheaded, and it was so curiously composed and so fair written in parchment in so well a set hand, and therewith of itself so long a process, that every child might well perceive that it was prepared before. For all the time between his death and the proclaiming could scant have sufficed unto the bare writing alone, had it all been but in paper and scribbled forth in haste at random. So that upon the proclaiming thereof, one that was schoolmaster of Paul's, who was by chance standing by and comparing the shortness of the time with the length of the matter, said unto them that stood about him, "Here is a gay goodly cast, foul cast away for haste."[1] And a merchant answered him that it was written by prophecy.

What every child could perceive

[425, 63]

Now then, by and by, as if it were for anger and not for covetousness, the Protector sent into the house of Shore's wife (for her husband dwelled not with her) and spoiled her of all that ever she had, above the value of two or three thousand marks, and sent her body to prison. And when he had a while laid accusations unto her for the sake of appearances – that she went about to bewitch him, and she was of counsel with the Lord Chamberlain to destroy him – in conclusion, when no pretext could fasten upon these matters, then he laid heinously to her charge the thing that she herself could not deny, that all the world knew was true, and that nevertheless every man laughed

Shore's wife

1. The schoolmaster is punning upon the many senses of "cast" ("trickery," "thrown," "to give out as" or "to appear as such," "to find or declare guilt," "to receive fortune" as in "casting lots," or "performance"). The point is, of course, the schoolmaster recognizes that such a document could not possibly have been written during the short time between Hasting's supposed treason and its public announcement.

at to hear it then so suddenly so highly taken, that she was wicked with her body. And for this cause (as a goodly continent prince, clean and faultless of himself, sent out of heaven into this vicious world for the amendment of men's manners), he caused the Bishop of London to put her to open penance, going before the cross in procession upon a Sunday with a taper in her hand.

More sarcasm

During which procession, she went in such countenance and pace demure and so womanly, and although she went without all attire save her outer petticoat alone, yet went she so fair and lovely, that, namely, while the wondering of the people cast a comely redness in her cheeks (of which she before had been most missing), her great shame won her much praise among those that were more amorous of her body than curious of her soul, and many good folk also, that hated her living and glad were to see sin corrected, yet pitied they more her penance than rejoiced therein, when they considered that the Protector procured it more of a corrupt intent than any virtuous affection.

Her public penance

[425, 64]

This woman was born in London, with worthy friends, honestly brought up, and very well married (saving somewhat too soon), her husband an honest citizen, young and goodly and of good substance. But forasmuch as they were coupled before she were well ripe, she not very fervently loved for whom she never longed. Which was perchance the thing that more easily made her incline unto the King's appetite when he required her. However, the respect of his royalty, the hope of gay apparel, ease, pleasure and other wanton wealth was soon able to pierce a soft tender heart. But when the King had abused her, at once her husband (as he was an honest man and one that could know his own good, not presuming to touch a King's concubine) left her up to him all together. When the King died, the Lord Chamberlain took her, who in the King's days, although he was sore enamored upon her, yet he endured her absence, either for reverence or for a

Jane's marriage to William Shore[1]

1. Curiously, the first names of Shore and his wife are never given by More.

certain friendly faithfulness.

Description of Shore's wife

[427, 65]

Attractive she was and fair; nothing in her body that you would have changed, but if you would, you might have wished her somewhat higher. Thus say they that knew her in her youth. Although some that now see her (for yet she lives) judge her never to have been a beauty, whose judgment seems to me somewhat as though men should guess the beauty of one long before departed by her scalp taken out of a house for the dead; for now is she old, lean, withered and dried up, nothing left but wrinkled skin and hard bone. And yet, being even such, whosoever well observed her appearance might guess and devise which parts, how filled, would make it a fair face.

Yet she delighted not men so much in her beauty as in her pleasant behavior. For a proper wit had she, and could both read well and write, merry in company, ready and quick of answer, neither mute nor full of babble, sometimes taunting without displeasure, and not without play.

King Edward's three concubines

[429, 66]

The King would say that he had three concubines in whom three diverse qualities differently excelled: one the merriest; another the wiliest; the third the holiest harlot in his realm, as one whom no man could get out of the church lightly to any place, but it were to his bed. The other two were somewhat greater personages, and, despite their humility, remained content to be nameless and to forego the praise of their qualities. But the merriest was this Shore's wife, in whom the King therefore took special pleasure. For many he had, but her he loved, whose favor, to speak truth (for sin it were to belie the devil), she never abused to any man's hurt, but to many a man's comfort and relief: where the King took displeasure, she would mitigate and appease his mind; where men were out of favor, she would bring them in his grace; for many who had highly offended, she obtained pardon; of great forfeitures she got men remission; and finally, in many weighty suits, she stood many men in great stead either for none or

Jane's motive

very small rewards, and those rather gay than rich – either because she was content with the deed itself well done, or because she delighted to be sued unto and to show what she was able to do with the King, or because wanton and wealthy women be not always covetous.

I doubt not some shall think this woman too slight a thing to be written of and set among the remembrances of great matters, which they shall specially think, that by chance esteem her only by what they now see. But to me seems the change so much the more worthy to be remembered, in how much she is now in the more beggarly condition – without friends and worn out of acquaintance – after good substance, after great favor with the Prince, after great suit and seeking to by all those that those days had business to speed, as many other men were in their times, who be now famous only by the infamy of their ill deeds. Her doings were not much less, although they be much less remembered because they were not so evil. For men use, if they have an evil turn, to write it in marble; and whosoever does us a good turn, we write it in dust,[1] which is not worst proved by her, for at this day she begs of many at this day living, that at this day had begged if she had not been.

Why remember Shore's wife?

[431, 67]

5. Richard's Next Step to the Crown

Now was it so devised by the Protector and his Council that the same day in which the Lord Chamberlain was beheaded in the Tower of London, and about the same hour, was there – not without his assent – beheaded at Pomfret the before mentioned lords and knights that were taken from the King at Northampton and Stony Stratford. Which thing was done in the presence and by the order of Sir Richard Radcliff, knight, whose service the Protector specially used in the Council and in the execution of such lawless enterprises, as a man that had been long secret with him, having experience of the world and a shrewd wit, short and rude in speech, rough and boisterous of behavior, bold in mischief, as far from pity as from all fear of God. This knight, bringing them out of the prison to the scaffold, and

Lord Rivers and others beheaded

Sir Richard Radcliff

1. Compare with Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*, 4.2.45-46: "Men's evil manners live in brass, their virtues / We write in water."

showing to the people about that they were traitors, not suffering them to speak and declare their innocence lest their words might have inclined men to pity them and to hate the Protector and his part, caused them hastily, without judgment, process, or manner of order to be beheaded, and without other earthly guilt, but only that they were good men, too true to the King and too close to the Queen.

[433, 68]

Now when the Lord Chamberlain and these other lords were thus beheaded and rid out of the way, then thought the Protector that, while men mused what the matter meant, while the lords of the realm were about him out of their own strengths, while no man knew what to think nor whom to trust, before ever they should have space to dispute and digest the matter and make parties, it were best hastily to pursue his purpose and put himself in possession of the crown, before men could have time to devise any ways to resist. But now was all the study by what means this matter, being of itself so heinous, might be first broken to the people, in such a way that it might be well taken. To this counsel, they took diverse opinions, such as those thought suitable to be trusted, likely to be induced to the part, and able to stand them in position, either by power or policy.

The Protector pursues possession of the crown

Among whom, they made of counsel Edmund Shaa, knight, then Mayor of London, who upon trust of his own advancement, whereof he was of a proud heart highly desirous, should frame the city to their appetite. Of clergy men they took such as had intelligence and were in authority among the people for opinion of their learning, and had no scrupulous conscience.

Shaa and those framing the city to their appetites

Among these had they John Shaa, clerk, brother to the Mayor, and Friar Penker, Provincial of the Augustine Friars, both doctors of divinity, both great preachers, both of more learning than virtue, of more fame than learning. For they were before greatly esteemed among the people, but after that never.

Doctor Shaa, Friar Penker – no scrupulous conscience

Of these two, the one had a sermon in praise of the Protector

before the coronation, the other after; both so full of tedious flattery that no man's ears could abide them. Penker in his sermon so lost his voice that he was glad to leave off and come down in the midst. Doctor Shaa by his sermon lost his honesty and soon after his life, for very shame of the world, into which he dared never after come abroad. But the friar cared not for shame, and so it harmed him the less. However, some doubt and many think that Penker was not of counsel of the matter before the coronation, but after the common manner fell to flattery afterwards; namely, because his sermon was not immediately after it, but at Saint Mary's Hospital on the Easter after. But certain is it that Doctor Shaa was of counsel in the beginning so far forth that they determined he should first break the matter in a sermon at Paul's Cross, in which he should, by the authority of his preaching, incline the people to the Protector's ghostly purpose.

Losing voice

Losing honesty

[435, 69]

But now was all the labor and study in the device of some appropriate pretext for which the people should be content to depose the Prince and accept the Protector for king, for which diverse things they devised. But the chief thing, and the most weighty of all that invention, rested in this: they should allege bastardy, either in King Edward himself, or in his children, or both, so that he should seem unable to inherit the crown by the Duke of York, and the Prince by him. To lay bastardy in King Edward sounded openly to the rebuke of the Protector's own mother, who was mother to them both; for in that point could be none other color, but to pretend that his own mother was one adulteress, which, not withstanding, to further his purpose he omitted not; but nevertheless, he would the point should be less and more favorably handled, not even fully plain and directly, but that the matter should be touched upon, craftily, as though men spared, in that point, to speak all the truth for fear of his displeasure. But the other point, concerning the bastardy that they devised to surmise in King Edward's children, that would he be openly declared

Alleging bastardy to King Edward's children

and enforced to the uttermost. The color and pretext whereof cannot be well perceived but if we first repeat to you some things long before done about King Edward's marriage.

[437, 70]

After King Edward the Fourth had deposed King Henry the Sixth and was in peaceful possession of the realm, determining himself to marry, as it was requisite both for himself and for the realm, he sent over in embassy the Earl of Warwick with other noble men in his company unto Spain to entreat and conclude a marriage between King Edward and the king's daughter of Spain. In which thing the Earl of Warwick found the parties so toward and willing that he speedily, according to his instructions, without any difficulty brought the matter to a very good conclusion.

King Edward's marriage

Now it happened in the meanwhile that there came to make a suit by petition to the King, Dame Elizabeth Gray, who was after his Queen, at that time a widow born of noble blood, specially by her mother, who was Duchess of Bedford before she married the Lord Woodville, Elizabeth's father. However, this Dame Elizabeth, herself being in service with Queen Margaret, wife unto King Henry the Sixth, was married unto one John Gray, a squire, whom King Henry made knight upon the battlefield where he had fought on Shrove Tuesday at Saint Albans against King Edward. And little while enjoyed he that knighthood, for he was at the same field slain. After he had died, and the Earl of Warwick being in his embassy about the before mentioned marriage, this poor lady made humble suit unto the King that she might be restored unto such small lands as her late husband had given her during their marriage. Whom when the King beheld and heard her speak, as she was both fair, of a good favor, moderate of stature, well made and very wise, he not only pitied her, but also grew enamored with her. And taking her afterward secretly aside, began to enter into talking more familiarly. Whose appetite, when she perceived it, she virtuously denied him. But that did she so

Dame Elizabeth Gray

[439, 71]

King Edward's appetite

wisely, and with so good manner, and words so well set, that she rather kindled his desire than quenched it. And finally after many a meeting, much wooing, and many great promises, she well spied the King's affection toward her so greatly increased that she dared somewhat the more boldly say her mind, as to him whose heart she perceived more firmly set than to fall off for a word. And in conclusion she showed him plain that as she knew herself too simple to be his wife, so thought she herself too good to be his concubine. The King, much marveling at her constancy, as he that had not been wont elsewhere to be so stiffly told nay, so much esteemed her continence and chastity that he set her virtue in the place of possession and riches. And thus taking counsel of his desire, determined in all possible haste to marry her. And after he was thus resolved, and there had between them an agreement been assured, then asked he counsel of his other friends, and in such manner, as they might easily perceive it remedied not greatly to say nay.

Taking counsel of desire

[441, 72]

Notwithstanding, the Duchess of York, his mother, was so sore moved therewith that she argued against the marriage as much as she possibly might, alleging that it was in his honor, profit, and surety also, to marry in a noble progeny out of his realm, whereupon depended great strength to his estate by the affinity and great possibility of increase of his possessions, and that he could not well otherwise do because the Earl of Warwick had so far moved already, who was not likely to take it well, if all his voyage were in such ways frustrated and his agreements dashed. And she said also that it was not princely to marry his own subject, no great occasion leading thereunto, no possessions, or other commodities depending thereupon, but only, as it were, a rich man that would marry his maid only for a little wanton dotage upon her person. In which marriage many more commend the maiden's fortune than the master's wisdom. And yet therein she said was more honesty than honor in this marriage, forasmuch as

The King's mother objects

there is between no merchant and his own maid so great difference, as between the King and this widow. In whose person, although there was nothing to be disliked, "yet was there," she said, "nothing so excellent, but it might be found in diverse others that were more suitable," said she, "for your estate, and maidens also, whereas the widowhood of Elizabeth Gray alone, though she were in all other things convenient for you, should yet suffice, it seems to me, to restrain you from marriage, since it is an improper thing and a very blemish and high disparagement to the sacred majesty of a prince, who ought as nigh to approach priesthood in purity as he does in dignity, to be defouled with bigamy[1] in his first marriage." [443, 73]

The King's answer to his mother

The King, when his mother had spoken, gave her answer – part in earnest, part in play merrily – as he that knew himself out of her rule. And although he would be glad if she should take it well, yet was at a point in his own mind, whether she should take it well or otherwise. However, somewhat to satisfy her he said that, although marriage, being a spiritual thing, ought rather to be made for the respect of God where His grace inclines the parties to love together, as he trusted it was in his case, than for the regard of any temporal advantage, yet nevertheless to him it seemed that this marriage, even worldly considered, was not unprofitable. For he reckoned the amity of no earthly nation so necessary for him as the friendship of his own, which he thought likely to bear him so much the more hearty favor in that he disdained not to marry with one of his own land. And yet if outward alliance were thought so requisite, he would find the means to enter thereinto, much better by other of his kin, where all the parties could be contented, than to marry himself to a woman whom he should by chance never love and, for the possibility of more possessions, lose the fruit and pleasure of this that he had already. "For small pleasure takes a man of all that ever he has beside, if he be wived against his appetite."

Respecting God's plan for marriage

Not to be wived against his appetite

1. According to the law of that time, "bigamy" also meant marriage to a widow, which was considered disgraceful, as indicated in "Seduc'd . . . / To base declension, and loath'd Bigamie" (Shakespeare's *Richard III*, 3.7.188-189).

"And I doubt not," said he, "but there be, as you say, others that be in every point comparable with her. And therefore I hinder not them that like them to wed them. No more is it reasonable that it mislike any man that I marry where it likes me. And I am sure that my cousin of Warwick neither loves me so little to grudge at that I love, nor is so unreasonable to look that I should in the choice of a wife rather be ruled by his eye than by mine own, as though I were a child that were bound to marry by the appointment of a guardian. I would not be a king with that condition – to give up mine own liberty in the choice of my own marriage.[1] As for possibility of more inheritance by new affinity in foreign lands, it is often the occasion of more trouble than profit. And we have already title by that means to so much wealth as suffices to get, and keep well, in one man's days. That she is a widow and has already children, by God's blessed Lady, I am a bachelor and have some too; and so each of us has a proof that neither of us is like to be barren. And therefore, Madam, I pray you be content. I trust in God she shall bring forth a young prince that shall please you. And as for the bigamy, let the bishop hardly lay it in my way when I come to take orders. For I understand it is forbidden a priest, but I never knew it yet that it was forbidden a prince."

[447, 74]

The Duchess, with these words nothing appeased, and seeing the King so set thereon that she could not pull him back, so highly she disdained it that under pretext of her duty to God, she devised to disturb this marriage, and rather to help that he should marry one Dame Elizabeth Lucy, whom the King had also not long before gotten with child. Wherefore the King's mother objected openly against his marriage, as it were in discharge of her conscience, that the King was betrothed to Dame Elizabeth Lucy, and her husband before God. By reason of which words, such obstacle was made in the matter that either the bishops dared not, or the King would not, proceed to the solemnizing of this wedding till these same matters

Betrothed to Elizabeth Lucy?

1. The Latin version has: "I would rather be a free [liber] private citizen [privatus] than a king in a state of such servitude that a wife should be forced on me at another's direction without my consent" (CW 15, 444/17-19). See p. 9.

were clearly purged and the truth well and openly testified.

Whereupon Dame Elizabeth Lucy was sent for. And although she was by the King's mother and many others filled with good encouragement – to affirm that she was betrothed unto the King – yet when she was solemnly sworn to say the truth, she confessed that they were never betrothed. However, she said his Grace spoke so loving words unto her that she verily hoped he would have married her, and that if it had not been for such kind words, she would never have showed such kindness to him, to let him so kindly[1] get her with child.

This examination solemnly taken, when it was clearly perceived that there was no impediment, the King, with great feast and honorable solemnity, married Dame Elizabeth Gray and her crowned queen that was his enemy's wife, who many times had prayed full heartily for his loss. In which God loved her better than to grant her petition.

The King marries Dame Gray

But when the Earl of Warwick understood of this marriage, he took it so highly that his embassy was deceived by mockery that, for very anger and disdain, he assembled a great power against the King at his return, and came so fast upon him, before he could be able to resist, that the King was glad to leave the realm and flee into Holland for assistance, where he remained for the space of two years, leaving his new wife in Westminster in sanctuary, where she was delivered of Edward the Prince, of whom we before have spoken.

[449, 75]

The King flees

Prince Edward born in sanctuary

In the meantime, the Earl of Warwick took out of prison and set up again Henry the Sixth, who was before by King Edward deposed and that, much by the power of the Earl of Warwick, who was a wise man and a courageous warrior and of such strength – what for his lands, his alliances, and favor with all the people – that he made kings and put down kings almost at his pleasure; and it was not impossible to have attained the crown himself, if he had not reckoned it a greater thing to make a king than to be a king. But nothing lasts always, for, in conclusion, King Edward returned, and with much

King Henry VI returned to power by Warwick

1. "Kind," "kindness," and "kindly" illustrate the use of polyptoton, whereby the base word—"kind" in this case—is repeated by adding different suffixes. This word play suggests that not only was Dame Lucy kind (intimate) with the King, but she was also "kindly" (naturally) impregnated by him, and all of it because of his "kind" (warm) words to her.

Warwick slain

less number than Warwick had, at Barnet on the Easter Day field, slew the Earl of Warwick with many other great lords of that party, and so stably attained the crown again that he peaceably enjoyed it until his dying day; and in such plight he left the crown that it could not be lost but by the discord of his very friends, or falsehood of his feigned friends.

[449, 76]

Why Edward's marriage has been treated at such length

I have rehearsed this business about this marriage somewhat the more at length because it might thereby the better appear how slippery a ground the Protector built his pretext, by which he pretended King Edward's children to be bastards. But that invention, simple as it was, it liked them to whom it sufficed to have something to say, while they were sure to be compelled to no larger proof than they themselves pleased to make.

Now then as I began to show you, it was by the Protector and his council concluded that this Doctor Shaa should in a sermon at Paul's Cross signify to the people that neither King Edward himself nor the Duke of Clarence were lawfully begotten, nor were the very children of the Duke of York, but gotten unlawfully by other persons by the adultery of the Duchess, their mother – and that also Dame Elizabeth Lucy was verily the wife of King Edward, and so the Prince and all his children were bastards that were gotten upon the Queen.

Doctor Shaa's sermon

According to this device, Doctor Shaa, the Sunday after, at Paul's Cross in a great audience (as always assembled great numbers to his preaching), he took for his theme *Spuria vitulamina non agent radices altas,*[1] that is to say, "bastard slips shall never take deep root." Thereupon, when he had showed the great grace that God gives and secretly grants in right generation after the laws of matrimony, then declared he that commonly those children lacked that grace and, for the punishment of their parents, were for the most part unhappy, who were begotten in bastardy and especially in adultery. Of which, though some by the ignorance of the world and the truth hid from

Effects of bastardy

1. Wisdom 4:3.

knowledge inherited for the time other men's lands, yet God always so provides that it continues not in their blood long, but the truth coming to light, the rightful inheritors be restored, and the bastard slip pulled up before it can be rooted deep. And when he had laid for [451, 77]
the proof and confirmation of this sentence certain examples taken out of the Old Testament and other ancient histories, then began he to descend into the praise of the Lord Richard, late Duke of York, calling him father to the Lord Protector, and declared the title of his heirs unto the crown, to whom it was, after the death of King Henry the Sixth, entailed by authority of Parliament. Then showed he that his very right heir, of his own body lawfully begotten, was the Lord Protector alone. For he declared then, King Edward was never lawfully married unto the Queen, but was before God husband unto Dame Elizabeth Lucy, and so his children bastards. And besides that, neither King Edward himself, nor the Duke of Clarence, among those that were secret in the household, were reckoned very surely for the children of the noble Duke, as those that by their favors more resembled other known men than him, from whose virtuous conditions he said also that King Edward was far off. But the Lord Protector, he said, that very noble prince, the special pattern of knightly prowess, as well in all princely behavior as in the lineaments and favor of his appearance, represented the very face of the noble duke, his father. "This is," said he, "the father's own figure; this is his own countenance, the very print of his visage, the sure undoubted image, the plain express likeness of that noble duke." [453, 79]

Richard as "very right heir"

Protector's "cue"

Now was it before devised that in the speaking of these words the Protector should have come in among the people during the sermon, to the end that those words, meeting with his presence, might have been taken among the hearers as though the Holy Ghost had put them in the preacher's mouth and should have moved the people even there to cry, "King Richard! King Richard!" – that it might have

been afterwards said that he was specially chosen by God and in manner by miracle.

Preacher and Richard miss their cue

But this device failed, either by the Protector's negligence, or the preacher's overmuch diligence. For while the Protector delayed along the way lest he should arrive before those words, and while the Doctor, fearing that the Protector should come before his sermon would come to those words, hasted his matter thereto, the preacher came to them and past them and entered into other matters before the Protector came. When the Doctor beheld his coming, he suddenly left the matter with which he was in hand, and without any deduction thereunto, out of all order, and out of all frame, began to repeat those words again: "This is the very noble prince, the special pattern of knightly prowess, which as well in all princely behavior, as in the lineaments and favor of his appearance, represents the very face of the noble Duke of York, his father. This is the father's own figure, this his own countenance, the very print of his visage, the sure undoubted image, the plain express likeness of the noble Duke, whose remembrance can never die while he lives."

[455, 80]

While these words were in speaking, the Protector, accompanied with the Duke of Buckingham, went through the people into the place where the doctors commonly stand in the upper story, where he stood to hear the sermon. But the people were so far from crying "King Richard" that they stood as they had been turned into stone, for wonder of this shameful sermon. After which once ended, the preacher got himself home and never after dared look out for shame, but kept himself out of sight like an owl. And when he once asked one that had been his old friend what the people talked of him, although his own conscience well showed him that they talked no good, yet when the other answered him that there was in every man's mouth spoken of him much shame, it so struck him to the heart that within few days after, he withered and consumed away.

Stone silence

Preacher Shaa dies for shame

6. Final Steps to the Crown

Then on the Tuesday following this sermon, there came unto the Guildhall[1] in London the Duke of Buckingham, accompanied with diverse lords and knights, who more than by chance knew the message that they brought. And there in the east end of the hall where the Mayor keeps the Court of Hustings, the Mayor and all the Aldermen[2] being assembled about him, all the commons of the city gathered before them, after silence commanded upon great pain in the Protector's name, the Duke stood up, and (as he was not unlearned and of nature marvelously well spoken) he said unto the people, with a clear and a loud voice, in this manner the following: [455, 81]

Buckingham's speech at the Guildhall

"Friends, for the zeal and hearty favor that we bear you, we come to reveal unto you, a matter right great and weighty, and no less weighty than pleasing to God and profitable to all the realm, nor to no part of the realm more profitable than to you, the citizens of this noble city. Why? That thing that we know well you have long time lacked and sore longed for, that you would have given great good for, that you would have gone far to fetch – that thing we come hither to bring you, without your labor, pain, cost, adventure, or jeopardy.

What the citizens supposedly long for

"What thing is that? Certainly, the surety of your own bodies, the quiet of your wives and your daughters, the safeguard of your goods: of all which things in times past you stood ever more in doubt. For who was there among you that would reckon himself lord of his own goods, among so many snares and traps as was set, among so much pillaging and extortion, among so many taxes and arbitrary ones at that – of which there was never end and oftentimes no need, or if any were, it rather grew of riot and unreasonable waste than any necessary or honorable charge? So that there was daily, pillaged from good and honest men, great substance of goods to be squandered out among prodigals so far forth that fifteenths sufficed not, nor any of the usual names of

1. More's revised Latin text uses "forum" here (*CW* 15, p. 454, line 17; cp. CW 2, p. 69, line 4).
2. The Latin reads: "nobilibus et senatu Londinensi" (ibid, line 19).

known taxes; but under an easy name of "benevolence and good will" the commissioners so much of every man took, as no man would with his good will have given – as though the name of "benevolence" had signified that every man should pay, not what he himself of his good will pleases to grant, but what the King of his good will pleases to take, who never asked little, but everything was hiked above the measure: adjudged punishments turned into fines, fines into ransoms, small trespass to imprisonment, imprisonment into treason.

[459, 82]

Burdet cruelly beheaded by Edward

Chief Justice Markham resigns

"Whereof I think no man expects that we should remind you of examples by name, as though Burdet were forgotten, who was for a word spoken in haste, cruelly beheaded by the misconstruing of the laws of this realm for the Prince's pleasure; with no less honor to Markham, then Chief Justice, who left his office rather than assent to that judgment or to the dishonesty of those who either for fear or flattery gave that judgment. What about Cook, your own worshipful neighbor, alderman and mayor of this noble city? Who among you is either so negligent that he knows not, or so forgetful that he remembers not, or so hardhearted that he pities not that worshipful man's loss? What? Speak we of loss? His utter spoil and underserved destruction, only because it chanced those to favor him whom the Prince favored not. We need not, I suppose, rehearse these any more by name, since there be, I doubt not, many here present that either in themselves or their close friends have known as well their goods, as their persons, greatly endangered, either by feigned quarrels or small matters aggravated with heinous names.

Mayor Cook destroyed

"Yet also there was no crime so great of which there could lack a pretext. For because the King, preventing the time of his inheritance, attained the crown by battle, it sufficed in a rich man a pretext of treason to have been of kindred or alliance, near familiarity or

slight acquaintance with any of those that were at any time the King's enemies, who were at one time and another, more then half the realm. Thus were not your goods in safety, and yet they brought your bodies in jeopardy, not to mention the common adventure of open war. And such war, although it is ever the will and occasion of much mischief, yet is it never so mischievous as where any people fall at division among themselves, nor in none earthly nation so deadly and so pestilent as when it happens among us, and among us never so long continued dissension, nor so many battles in the season, nor so cruel and deadly fought, as was in the days of the King who died, God forgive his soul.

Dangers to citizens

"For in his time and by his actions, the getting of the garland, keeping it, losing and winning again, have cost more English blood than has twice the winning of France. In such inward war among ourselves has been so great effusion of the ancient noble blood of this realm that scarcely the half remains, to the great enfeebling of this noble land, besides many a good town ransacked and spoiled by them that have been going to the field or coming from thence. And peace, long afterwards, was not much surer than war. So that no time was there in which rich men for their money, and great men for their lands, or some other for some fear or some displeasure were not out of peril. For whom trusted he that mistrusted his own brother? Whom spared he that killed his own brother? Or who could perfectly love him, if his own brother could not?

[461, 83]

Civil war

"What manner of folk this King most favored, we shall for his honor spare to speak of; however, this know you well all, that whoso was best favored, bore always least rule, and more suit was in his days made unto Shore's wife, a vile and abominable strumpet, than to all the lords in England, except unto those that made her their advocate; and such a simple woman was well named and honest till the King, for his wanton lust and sinful affection, bereft

Theft of Shore's wife

her from her husband – a right honest, substantial young man among you.

[463, 84]

"And in that point, which in good faith I am sorry to speak of, saving that it is in vain to keep in counsel that thing all men know,

Edward's greedy appetite

the King's greedy appetite was insatiable and everywhere over all the realm intolerable. For no woman was there anywhere, young or old, rich or poor, whom he set his eye upon, in whom he anything liked, either person or favor, speech, pace, or countenance, but without any fear of God or respect of his honor, murmur or grudge of the world, he would urgently pursue his appetite, and have her, to the great destruction of many a good woman, and great suffering to their husbands, and their other friends, who, being honest people of themselves, so much regard the purity of their house and the chastity of their wives and their children that they would rather lose all that they have beside than to have such a villainy done them.

Villainy

"And with all of it done, with this and other unbearable dealing, the realm was in every part annoyed, yet specially you here, the citizens of this noble city, as well because among you is most plenty of all such things as those who minister matter to such injuries, but also because you were nearest at hand, since near here was commonly his dwelling place. And yet, be you the people whom he had a singular cause well and kindly to treat as well as any part of his realm, not only because the Prince, by this noble city (as his special chamber and the special well-renowned city of his realm) receives much honorable fame among all other nations, but also because – with your great cost and sundry perils and jeopardies in all his wars – you bore ever your special favor to his part, which your kind minds carried to the house of York. Since that King has nothing worthily requited, there is of that house he whom now, by God's grace, better shall be – which, to show you, is the whole

Injuries to Londoners

sum and effect of this our present errand.

"It shall not, I know well, need be that I rehearse to you again [465, 85] what you have already heard from him who can better tell it, and of whom I am sure you will better believe it. And reasonable is that it be so. I am not so proud to expect, therefore, that you should reckon my words with the great authority as the preachers of the word of God, namely, like that preacher so intelligent and so wise that no man better knows what he should say, and so good and virtuous that he would not say the thing that he knew he should not say[1] in the pulpit – the very place into which no honest man comes to lie. This honorable preacher, you well remember, substantially declared unto you at Paul's Cross, on Sunday last, that the right and title unto that most excellent Prince Richard, Duke of Gloucester, now Protector of this realm, has to the crown and kingdom of the same.

Richard's right to the crown

"For as that worshipful man thoroughly made clear to you, the [467, 86] children of King Edward the Fourth were never lawfully begotten, forasmuch as the King (while his true wife, Dame Elizabeth Lucy, was still living) was never lawfully married unto the Queen, their mother, whose blood, except that he set voluptuous pleasure before his honor, was fully unsuitable to be matched with his; and the mingling of their bloods together has been the effusion of the greater part of the noble blood of this realm. Whereby it may well seem that the marriage was not well made, out of which there is so much mischief grown. For lack of such lawful coupling, and also of other things which the said worshipful Doctor rather signified than fully explained, and which things shall not be spoken by me as the things wherein every man forbears to say because he knows to avoid the displeasure of my noble Lord Protector, who bears, as nature requires, a filial reverence to the Duchess his mother, for these causes before mentioned, I say, that is, for lack of other issue

Edward's children illegitimate

1. According to the plan, Dr. Shaa would not explicitly say that the Protector's mother was an adultress, but only touch upon the issue along the way in showing Edward's sons were bastards.

lawfully coming of the late noble Prince Richard, Duke of York, to whose royal blood the crown of England and of France is by the high authority of Parliament entailed, the right and title of the same is by the just course of inheritance, according to the common law of this land, handed down and come unto the most excellent Prince, the Lord Protector, as the very lawfully begotten son of the remembered noble Duke of York.

Parliament and common law invoked

"Which thing well considered, and the great knightly prowess pondered, with manifold virtues which in his noble person singularly abound, the nobles and commons also of this realm, and specially of the north parts, not willing any bastard blood to have the rule of the land, nor the shameful violations used before in the same way to continue, have agreed and fully determined to make humble petition unto the most powerful Prince, the Lord Protector, that it may like his Grace, at our humble request, to take upon him the guiding and governance of this realm, to the wealth and increase of the same, according to his very right and just title. Which thing, I know it well, he will be loath to take upon him, as he whose wisdom well perceives the labor and study, both of mind and of body, that shall come therewith to whosoever so well occupies that office, as I dare say he will if he take it. Which position, I warn you well, is no child's office. And the great wise man well perceived this when he said: *Veh regno cuius rex puer est* – 'Woe is that realm that has a child for their King.'[1]

Richard's many virtues

Richard reluctant

[467, 87]

"Wherefore so much the more cause have we to thank God that this noble personage, who is so righteously entitled thereunto, is of such a mature age that great wisdom is joined with so great experience; who, although he will be loath, as I have said, to take it upon him, yet shall he to our petition in that behalf more graciously incline if ye, the worshipful citizens of this the chief city of this realm, join with us nobles in our said request. Which for your own

1. Ecclesiastes 10:16.

The citizens' own benefit

benefit we doubt not but you will, and nevertheless I heartily pray you so to do, whereby you shall do great profit to all this realm, both in choosing them so good a king and in providing yourself special advantage, as those for whom His Majesty shall ever after bear so much the more tender favor, considering how much he shall perceive you more prone and benevolently minded toward his election. Wherein, dear friends, what mind you have, we require you plainly to show us."

When the Duke had spoken, expecting that the people (whom he [469, 88] hoped that the Mayor had framed before) should after this proposition have cried, "King Richard! King Richard!" – all was hushed and mute, and not one word answered thereunto. Wherewith the Duke was marvelously abashed, and taking the Mayor near to him, with the others that were about him privy to that matter, said unto them softly, "What means this that this people be so still?"

The people are mute

"Sir," said the Mayor, "perchance they perceive you not well."

"That shall we mend," said he, "if that will help."

Buckingham repeats his speech

And by and by, somewhat louder, he rehearsed to them the same matter again in other order and other words, so well and ornately, and nevertheless so evidently and plain, with voice, gesture, and countenance so comely and so proper that every man much marveled that heard him, and thought that they never had in their lives heard so evil a tale so well told. But were it for wonder or fear, or that each expected that another should speak first, not one word was there answered of all the people that stood before, but all was as still as midnight, not so much as whispering among them by which they might seem to confer what was best to do.

Complete silence

When the Mayor saw this, he with other partners of that counsel drew about the Duke and said that the people had not been accustomed there to be spoken unto except by the Recorder,[1] who is the mouth of the city, and perhaps to him they will answer.

1. More's Latin version explains: "The Londoners use the title 'recorder' for a mayoral assistant well trained in the laws of his country who prevents any erroneous judgments from being given through ignorance of the law" (*CW* 15, p. 471).

[471, 88]

With that, the Recorder, called Fitzwilliam, a wise man and an honest one, who was so new come into that office that he never had spoken to the people before – and loath was he with that matter to begin, not withstanding being commanded to by the Mayor – made rehearsal to the commons of what the Duke had twice rehearsed to them himself. But the Recorder so tempered his tale that he showed everything as the Duke's words and no part of his own. But all this made no change in the people, who altogether stood as if they had been men amazed.

Fitzwilliam recounts the same speech

Amazed silence

Whereupon the Duke whispered unto the Mayor and said: "This is a marvelous obstinate silence."[1]

Buckingham speaks again

And therewith he turned unto the people again with these words: "Dear friends we come to move you to that thing which perchance we not so greatly needed, but that the lords of this realm and the commons of other parts might have sufficed, except that we such love bear you and so much set by you that we would not gladly do without you that thing in which to be partners is your well-being and honor, which, as it seems, either you see not or weigh not. Wherefore we require you give answer one or other: whether you be minded, as all the nobles of the realm be, to have this noble prince, now Protector, to be your king, or not."

Buckingham demands an answer

[473, 89]

At these words the people began to whisper among themselves secretly; the voice was neither loud nor distinct, but, as it were, the sound of a swarm of bees; till at the last, in the nether end of the hall, an ambush of the Duke's servants and of Nesfield's, and others belonging to the Protector, with some apprentices and lads that thrust into the hall among the crowd, began suddenly, at men's backs, to cry out as loud as their throats would give: "King Richard! King Richard!" and threw up their caps in token of joy. And they that stood before, cast back their heads, marveling thereof, but nothing they said. And when the Duke and the Mayor saw this manner, they wisely

The "ambush"

1. The Latin adds this telling qualification, "Sed Dux tametsi displicebat illud quod nullum honestum civem" ("But though the duke was unhappy that he could not see any honorable citizens in that party...," *CW* 15, p. 472).

turned it to their purpose and said it was a goodly cry and a joyful to hear, every man with one voice, no man saying nay.

"Wherefore, friends," said the Duke, "since that we perceive it is all your whole minds to have this noble man for your king, whereof we shall make his Grace so effectual report that we doubt not but it shall redound unto your great well-being and advantage. We require that you tomorrow go with us, and we with you, unto his noble Grace, to make our humble request unto him in the manner before mentioned."

And therewith, the lords came down, and the company dissolved and departed, the most part all sad, some with glad semblance who were not very merry, and some of those who came thither with the Duke, not able to hide their sorrow, were glad, at his back, to turn their face to the wall while the sadness of their hearts burst out of their eyes.

Sadness burst out

Then on the morrow after, the Mayor with all the Aldermen and chief commoners of the city,[1] in their best manner appareled, assembling themselves together, resorted unto Baynard's Castle where the Protector lay. To which place repaired also, according to their appointment, the Duke of Buckingham with diverse noble men with him, besides many knights and other gentlemen. And thereupon, the Duke sent word unto the Lord Protector of there being a great and honorable company[2] to move a great matter unto his Grace.

[475, 90]

Assembly at Baynard's Castle

Whereupon the Protector made difficulty to come out unto them unless he first knew some part of their errand, as though he doubted and partly distrusted the coming of such number unto him so suddenly without any warning or knowledge, whether they came for good or harm. Then the Duke, when he had showed this unto the Mayor and others, that they might thereby see how little the Protector expected this matter, they sent unto him by messenger such loving message again, and therewith so humbly besought him to graciously condescend so that they might come into his presence and propose

Richard's reluctance

1. The Latin version has "nobiles civesque" (*CW* 15, p. 474).
2. Historic perspective and irony are added in the Latin version by using these Roman terms: "proceres omnes senatum populumque Londinensem" (*CW* 15, p. 474).

their intent, of which they would unto none other person any part disclose, that at the last he came forth from his chamber, and yet not down unto them, but stood above in a gallery over them, where they might see him and speak to him, as though he would not yet come too near them till he knew what they meant.

Buckingham's petition to speak freely

And thereupon the Duke of Buckingham first made humble petition unto him, on behalf of them all, that his Grace would pardon them and give them permission to present unto his Grace the intent of their coming without his displeasure, without which pardon obtained, they dared not be bold to move him of that matter. In which, although they meant as much honor to his Grace as wealth to all the realm beside, yet were they not sure how his Grace would take it, whom they would in no way offend.

[477, 91]

Then the Protector, as if he was very gentle himself and also longed sore to know what they meant, gave him leave to propose what he liked, verily trusting, because of the good mind that he bore them all, none of them would intend anything toward him wherewith he ought to be grieved.

When the Duke had this leave and pardon to speak, then grew he bold to show him their intent and purpose, with all the causes moving them thereto, as you before have heard, and finally to beseech his Grace that it would like him of his accustomed goodness and zeal unto the realm, now with his eye of pity, to behold the long continued distress and decay of the same, and to set his gracious hands to the redress and amendment thereof by taking upon him the crown and governance of this realm,[1] according to his right and title lawfully descended unto him, and to the praise of God, profit of the land, and unto his Grace so much the more honor and less pain, in that never a prince reigned upon any people that were so glad to live under his rule as the people of this realm under his.

For the good of the realm

By right and law

[477, 92]

When the Protector had heard the proposition, he looked very

1. Latin version says that Richard is needed to "rebuild a respublica" as a "skilled pilot" (parito gubernatore) at the "helm of a ship" in a storm (CW 15, 476/10-14).

strangely thereat and answered that although he partly knew the things by them alleged to be true, yet such entire love he bore unto King Edward and his children, that he so much more regarded his honor in other realms than the crown of any one, of which he was never desirous, that he could not find in his heart in this point to incline to their desire. For in all other nations, where the truth was not well known, it should perhaps be thought it were his own ambitious mind and device to depose the Prince and take for himself the crown. With such infamy he would not have his honor stained for any crown – a crown that he had ever perceived held much more labor and pain than pleasure to him that so would so use it, and he who would not use it were not worthy to have it. Not withstanding, he not only pardoned them the motion that they made him, but also thanked them for the love and hearty favor they bore him, praying them, for his sake, to give and bear the same to the Prince, under whom he was and would be content to live; and with his labor and counsel, as far as should the King like to use him, he would do his uttermost duty to set the realm in good state, which was already in this little while of his protectorship (the praise given to God) well begun, in that the malice of such as were before occasion of the contrary – and of new intended to be – were now, partly by good policy, partly more by God's special providence than man's provision, repressed.

Richard declines the crown

Upon this answer given, the Duke, by the Protector's permission, a little whispered as well with other noble men about him, as with the Mayor and Recorder of London. And after that, upon like pardon desired and obtained, he showed aloud unto the Protector, for a final conclusion, that the realm[1] was resolved King Edward's line should not any longer reign upon them, both because they had gone so far that there was now no safety to retreat, and because they thought it for the common good to take that way, although they had not yet begun it. Wherefore, if it would please his Grace to take the crown

[479, 93]

Buckingham pleads again

1. The Latin version reads: "patribus populoque" (*CW* 15, p. 479). See notes on pages 4, 61, 68, 69, 72. Throughout their speeches neither Buckingham nor Richard uses the word "subject," but rather "people" (*populo*) or citizens (*cives*) – as Thomas More does in his Latin epigrams (e.g. *CW* 3.2, #112, 121, 198).

upon him, they would humbly beseech him thereunto. If he would give them a resolute answer to the contrary, which they would be loath to hear, then they must needs seek, and should not fail to find, some other noble man that would.

[481, 93]

These words much moved the Protector, who else, as every man may know, would never of likelihood have inclined thereunto. But when he saw there was none other way, but either he must take it or else he and his both must go from it, he said unto the lords and commons: "Since we perceive well that all the realm is so set – whereof we be very sorry they will not suffer in any way King Edward's line to govern them, whom no earthly man can govern against their wills – and because we also perceive well that no man is there to whom the crown can by so just title appertain as to ourself as very right heir, lawfully begotten of the body of our most dear father, Richard, late Duke of York – to which title is now joined your election, the nobles and commons of this realm, which we of all titles possible take for most effectual – we be content and agree favorably to incline to your petition and request, and according to the same, here we take upon us the royal estate, preeminence, and kingdom of the two noble realms, England and France: the one from this day forward by us and our heirs to rule, govern and defend; the other, by God's grace and your good help, to get again and subdue and establish forever in due obedience unto this realm of England[1] – the advancement whereof we never ask of God longer to live than we intend to procure."

Richard agrees to the people's will

With this there was a great shout, crying, "Richard! King Richard!" And then the lords[2] went up to the King (for so was he from that time called) and the people departed, talking diversely of the matter, every man as his fancy gave him.

"King" Richard from that time on

[483, 94]

But much they talked and marveled of the manner[3] of this dealing, that the matter was on both parts made so strange, as though neither had ever communed thereof with the other before, when that they

1. Latin version: "I regard only the management of these realms as my own, but the title and the profit and the ownership as totally your own -- as a genuine commonwealth" (CW 15, 480/18-20).
2. The Latin uses the term "proceres" here (*CW* 15, p. 480), meaning those who are the "leading" or "most celebrated" people.
3. *manner* – custom or habitual practice.

themselves well knew there was no man so dull who heard them, but he perceived well enough that all the matter was made between them. However, some excused that again and said all must be done in good order. And men must sometimes for the sake of manner not acknowledge what they know. For at the consecration of a bishop, every man knows well by the paying for his bulls that he purposes to be one, even though he pay for nothing else. And yet must he be twice asked whether he will be bishop or not, and he must twice say nay, and at the third time take it as compelled thereunto by his own will. And in a stage play all the people know right well that he who plays the sultan is perchance a shoemaker. Yet if one should be so foolish as to show out of turn what acquaintance he really has with him, and call him by his own name while he acts as his majesty, one of his tormentors might, by chance, break his head, and do so rightly for marring of the play. And so they said that these matters be kings' games, as it were, stage plays, and for the most part played upon scaffolds, in which poor men be but the on-lookers. And they that wise be, will meddle no further. For they who sometimes step up and play with them, when they cannot play their parts, they disorder the play and do themselves no good.

As in a stage play

King's games played upon scaffolds

‡[1] The next day the Protector with a great train went to Westminster Hall and there, when he had placed himself in the court of the King's Bench, declared to the audience that he would take upon him the crown in that place there, where the king himself sits and ministers the law, because he considered that it was the chiefest duty of a king to minister the laws. Then, with as pleasant an oration as he could, he went about to win unto him the nobles, the merchants, the artificers, and, in conclusion, all kinds of men, but specially the lawyers of this realm. And finally, to the intent that no man should hate him for fear, and that his deceitful clemency might get him the good will of the people, when he had declared the disadvantages of discord and the

At Westminster Hall
[483, 95]

The king's chief duty: to minister the laws

1. The following two paragraphs were translated from the Latin version of this history and were included here by William Rastell, the editor of More's 1557 *English Works*. The Latin again uses the word "forum" to refer to this meeting place (*CW* 15, p. 482, line 25). See p. 61n.

advantages of concord and unity, he made an open proclamation that he did put out of his mind all enmities, and he there did openly pardon all offences committed against him. And to the intent that he might show a proof thereof, he commanded that one Fogge, whom he had long deadly hated, should be brought then before him. Who, being brought out of the sanctuary nearby (for thither had he fled for fear of him) in the sight of the people, he took him by the hand. Which thing the common people rejoiced at and praised, but wise men took it for a vanity. In his return homeward, whomsoever he met, he saluted. For a mind that knows itself guilty is in a manner dejected to a servile flattery.

[485, 96] *Richard crowned, July 6, 1483*

When he had begun his reign, the twenty-sixth day of June, after this mockish election, then was he crowned on the sixth day of July. And that solemnity was furnished for the most part with the self same provision that was appointed for the coronation of his nephew. ‡[1]

[End]

7. Murder of the Young Princes

Now fell their mischief thick. And as the thing evilly got is never well kept, through all the time of his reign there never ceased cruel death and slaughter, till his own destruction ended it. But as he finished his time with the best death and the most righteous, that is to say, his own, so began he with the most piteous and wicked: I mean the lamentable murder of his innocent nephews – the young King and his tender brother, whose death and final misfortune has nevertheless so far come in question that some remain yet in doubt whether they were in his days destroyed or not. Not only because Perkin Warbeck – by many folk's malice, and more folk's folly, so long a time spoiling the world – was reputed and taken for the younger of those two, among princes as well as among the poorer people, but also because all things were in late days so covertly managed, one thing pretended and another meant, that there was nothing so plain and openly proved; but yet for the common custom of close and

1. The Latin version of this history ends here.

covert conduct, men ever inwardly had suspected the murders, just as many well-counterfeited jewels make the true ones mistrusted. However, concerning that opinion, with the occasions moving either party, we shall have place more at large to treat, if we hereafter happen to write the history of the late noble prince of famous memory, King Henry the Seventh, or perchance that history of Perkin in any compendious account by itself.

But in the meantime, for this present matter, I shall rehearse you the sorrowful end of those babes, not after every way that I have heard, but after that way I have so heard by such men, and by such means, as I think it were hard but it should be true.

[97]

King Richard, after his coronation, taking his way to Gloucester to visit in his new honor the town of which he bore the name of his old, devised, as he rode, to fulfill that thing which he before had intended. And forasmuch as his mind misgave him that, his nephews living, men would not reckon he could have right to the realm, he thought, therefore, without delay to be rid of them, as though the killing of his kinsmen could amend his cause and make him a kindly king.

Richard's plan

Whereupon he sent one John Green, whom he specially trusted, unto Sir Robert Brakenbery, Constable of the Tower, with a letter and credentials also, that the same Sir Robert should in any way put the two children to death. This John Green did his errand unto Brakenbery, kneeling before a statue of Our Lady in the Tower, who plainly answered that he would never put them to death, even if he had to die, with which answer John Green, returning, recounted the same to King Richard at Warwick, still on his way.

Constable of the Tower refuses

[98]

Wherewith he took such displeasure and thought, that the same night, he said unto a secret page of his: "Ah, whom shall a man trust? Those that I have brought up myself, those that I had thought would most surely serve me, even those fail me and at my commandment will do nothing for me."

"Sir," said his page, "there lies one outside in your bedchambers who, I dare well say, to do your Grace pleasure, the thing were right hard that he would refuse," meaning by this Sir James Tyrell, who was a man of right goodly personage and for nature's gifts, worthy to have served a much better prince, if he had well served God and by grace obtained as much truth and good will as he had strength and wit.

James Tyrell recommended

The man had a high heart and sore longed upward, not rising yet so fast as he had hoped, being hindered and kept under by the means of Sir Richard Radcliff and Sir William Catesby, who, longing for no more partners of the Prince's favor, and namely, none for him, whose pride they knew would bear no peer, kept him by secret plans out of all secret trust. Which thing this page well had marked and known. Because this occasion offered very special friendship with the King, the page took this time to put him forward and, by such a way, do him such good that all the enemies he had, except the devil, could never have done him so much harm.

Authority loves no partners

[99] For upon this page's words King Richard arose (for this communication had he sitting on the stool,[1] an appropriate court for such a council) and came out into the bedchambers, where he found in bed Sir James and Sir Thomas Tyrell, of person alike and brethren of blood, but nothing of kin in qualities. Then said the King merrily to them: "What, sirs, be you in bed so soon?" and calling up Sir James, revealed to him secretly his mind in this mischievous matter, in which he found him nothing unfriendly.

Wherefore on the morrow, he sent him to Brakenbury with a letter, by which he was commanded to deliver Sir James all the keys of the Tower for one night, to the end he might there accomplish the King's pleasure in such thing as he had given him commandment. After which letter was delivered and the keys received, Sir James appointed the next night to destroy them, devising before and preparing the means.

The Constable gives Tyrell the keys

1. stool – privy or commode.

The Prince, as soon as the Protector had left that name and took himself as King, had it showed unto him he should not reign, but his uncle should have the crown. At which word the Prince, sore abashed, began to sigh and said: "Alas, I would my uncle would let me have my life yet, though I lose my kingdom." Then he that told him the tale, spoke to him with good words and put him in the best comfort he could. But forthwith were the Prince and his brother both shut up, and all others removed from them, only one, called Black Will or William Slaughter, set to serve them and see them safe. After which time the Prince never tied his laces, nor took care of himself, but with that young babe, his brother, lingered in thought and heaviness till this traitorous death delivered them of that wretchedness.

The Princes' plight

[100]

For Sir James Tyrell devised that they should be murdered in their beds. To the execution whereof, he appointed Miles Forest, one of the four that kept them, a fellow hardened in murder before that time. To him he joined one John Dighton, his own housekeeper, a big, broad, square strong knave. Then all the others being removed from them, this Miles Forest and John Dighton about midnight (the innocent children lying in their beds) came into the chamber, and suddenly lapped them up among the bedclothes – so bewrapped them and entangled them, keeping down by force the featherbed and pillows hard unto their mouths, that within a while, smothered and stifled, their breath failing, they gave up to God their innocent souls into the joys of heaven, leaving to the tormentors their bodies dead in the bed.

The young king and his brother murdered

Which after that the wretches perceived, first by the struggling with the pains of death, and after long lying still, to be thoroughly dead, they laid their bodies naked out upon the bed, and fetched Sir James to see them. Who, upon the sight of them, caused those murderers to bury them at the stair-foot, suitably deep in the ground, under a great heap of stones.

Then rode Sir James in great haste to King Richard and showed him all the manner of the murder, who gave him great thanks and, as some say, there made him knight. But he allowed not, as I have heard, the burying in so vile a corner, saying that he would have them buried in a better place because they were a king's sons. Lo, the honorable nature of a king! Whereupon they say that a priest of Sir Robert Brakenbury took up the bodies again and secretly buried them in a place that only he knew and that, by the occasion of his death, could never since come to light.

Tyrell knighted

Very truth is it, and well known, that at such time as Sir James Tyrell was in the Tower – for treason committed against the most famous prince, King Henry the Seventh – both Dighton and he were examined and confessed the murder in manner above written, but to where the bodies were removed, they could nothing tell. And thus, as I have learned of them that much knew and little cause had to lie, were these two noble princes – these innocent, tender children, born of most royal blood, brought up in great wealth, likely long to live, to reign, and rule in the realm – by traitorous tyranny taken, deprived of their estate, swiftly shut up in prison, and privately slain and murdered, their bodies cast God knows where by the cruel ambition of their unnatural uncle and his merciless tormentors.

Murderers confess

[101]

Such things on every part well pondered, God never gave this world a more notable example, either in what insecurity stands this worldly state, or what mischief works the proud enterprise of a high heart, or finally, what wretched end ensues from such pitiless cruelty. For, first, to begin with the ministers: Miles Forest at Saint Martin's piecemeal rotted away; Dighton, indeed, walks on alive in good possibility to be hanged before he die; but Sir James Tyrell died at Tower Hill, beheaded for treason. King Richard himself, as you shall hereafter hear, slain in the field, hacked and hewed of his enemies' hands, dragged on horseback dead, his hair spitefully torn and tugged like a

Never a more notable example

cur dog. And this mischief he received within less than three years of the mischief that he did.

[102]

The outward and inward troubles of tyrants

And yet all the meanwhile King Richard spent in much pain and trouble outward; much fear, anguish, and sorrow within. For I have heard by credible report from such as were secret within his chambers that, after this abominable deed done, he never had quiet in his mind – he never thought himself safe.

Where he went abroad, his eyes whirled about; his body, secretly defended; his hand, ever on his dagger; his countenance and manner, like one always ready to strike again. He took ill rest at nights, lay long waking and musing, sore wearied with care and watch, rather slumbered than slept, troubled with fearful dreams – suddenly at times he would start up, leap out of his bed, and run about the chamber; so was his restless heart continually tossed and tumbled with the troubling impression and stormy remembrance of his abominable deed. Now had he outward no long time in rest.

8. Buckingham's Conspiracy

For hereupon, soon after, began the conspiracy, or rather good confederation, between the Duke of Buckingham and many other gentlemen against him. The occasion whereupon the King and the Duke fell out is by different folk, different ways presented. This duke, as I have for certain been informed, as soon as the Duke of Gloucester, upon the death of King Edward, came to York and there had solemn funeral service for King Edward, sent thither, in the most secret way he could, one Percival, his trusty servant, who came to John Ward, a chamber-man of like secret trust with the Duke of Gloucester, desiring that in the most close and covert manner he might be admitted to the presence and speech of his master. And the Duke of Gloucester, informed of his desire, caused him in the dead of the night, after all other folk left, to be brought unto him in his secret chamber, where Percival, after his master's recommendation, showed him what his master had secretly sent him to show him that in this

[103]

Secret meeting with Richard

new world he could take such part as he would, and Buckingham would wait upon him with a thousand good fellows if need were. The messenger, sent back with thanks and some secret instruction of the Protector's mind, yet he met him again with further message from the Duke, his master, within a few days after at Nottingham, to where the Protector from York with many gentlemen of the north country, up to the number of six hundred horse, was coming on his way to London. And after secret meeting and communication had, at once departed. Whereupon at Northampton the Duke met with the Protector himself, with three hundred horse, and from there still continued with him, partner of all his devices, such that after his coronation they departed, as it seemed, very great friends at Gloucester.

From whence, as soon as the Duke came home, he so lightly turned from him and so highly conspired against him that a man would marvel whereof the change grew.

A marvelous change

[104]

And surely the occasion of their variance is of different men differently reported. Some I have heard say that the Duke – a little before the coronation, among other things – required of the Protector the Duke of Hereford's lands, to which he pretended himself just inheritor. And forasmuch as the title that he claimed by inheritance was somewhat interlaced with the title to the crown by the line of King Henry VI, before deprived, the Protector conceived such indignation that he rejected the Duke's request with many spiteful and threatening words, which so wounded his heart with hatred and mistrust that he never after could endure to look aright on King Richard, but ever feared his own life, so far forth that when the Protector rode through London toward his coronation, he feigned himself sick because he would not ride with him. And the other, taking it in evil part, sent him word to rise and come ride, or he would make him be carried. Whereupon he rode on with evil will and, that notwithstanding, on the morrow rose from the feast feigning himself sick, and

Richard's indignation

King Richard said it was done in hatred and contempt of him. And they say that ever after, continually, each of them lived in such hatred and distrust of other that the Duke verily looked to have been murdered at Gloucester, from which, nevertheless, he in fair manner departed.

Hatred and distrust

But surely some right from those days' secrets deny this; and many right wise men think it unlikely (the deep dissimulating nature of both those men considered, and what need in that green world the Protector had of the Duke, and in what peril the Duke stood if he fell once in suspicion of the tyrant) that either the Protector would give the Duke occasion of displeasure, or the Duke the Protector occasion of mistrust. And men in fact think that, if King Richard had any such opinion conceived of the Duke, he would never have suffered him to escape his hands.

Another theory

[105]

Very truth it is, the Duke was a high-minded man and could ill bear the glory of another, so that I have heard of some who said they saw it that the Duke, at such time as the crown was first set upon the Protector's head, his eye could not abide the sight thereof, but turned his head another way. But men say that he was, of truth, not well at ease, and that to King Richard was both well known and not ill taken, nor any demand of the Duke's discourteously rejected, but he with great gifts and high promises both, in most loving trusty manner departed at Gloucester. But soon after his coming home to Brecknock,[1] having there in his custody by the commandment of King Richard, Doctor Morton, Bishop of Ely, who as you heard before was taken in the Council at the Tower, growing familiar with him, whose wisdom deceived his pride – to his own deliverance and the Duke's destruction.

The question of Buckingham's motive

The Bishop was a man of great natural wit, very well learned, and honorable in behavior, lacking no wise ways to win favor. He had been loyal to the part of King Henry while that part was in wealth,

Bishop Morton described

1. Buckingham's castle in Wales.

and nevertheless left it not, nor forsook it in woe, but fled the realm with the Queen and the Prince,[1] and while King Edward had the King[2] in prison, he never came home but to the battlefield.[3] After this loss, and that part was utterly subdued, King Edward, for Morton's steadfast faith and wisdom, not only was content to receive him, but also wooed him to come and had him from thence forth both in secret trust and very special favor, in which he nothing deceived. For he was, as you have heard, after King Edward's death, first taken by the tyrant for his loyalty to the King, but found the means to turn this Duke to his plans, joining gentlemen together in the aid of King Henry,[4] devising first the marriage between him and King Edward's daughter,[5] by which he declared his faith and good service to both his masters at once, with infinite benefit to the realm, by the conjunction of those two bloods in one, whose several titles had long left the land without quiet. Afterwards, he fled the realm, went to Rome, never minding more to meddle with the world till the noble prince, King Henry the Seventh, got him home again, made him Archbishop of Canterbury and Chancellor of England, whereunto the Pope joined the honor of Cardinal. Thus living many days in as much honor as one man might well wish, ended them so godly that his death, with God's mercy, well changed his life.

Ends War of the Roses

[106]

This man, therefore, as I was about to tell you, by long and often alternate proof, as well from prosperity as adverse fortune, had gotten by great experience, the very mother and mistress of wisdom, a deep insight in political, worldly drifts.

Morton's wisdom and Buckingham's pride

Whereby, perceiving now this Duke glad to come with him, he fed him with fair words and many pleasant praises. And perceiving by the process of their communications the Duke's pride now and then to let slip a little outburst of envy toward the glory of the King, and thereby feeling him easy to fall out if the matter were well handled, he craftily sought the ways to prick him forward, taking always the occa-

1. Morton fled with Queen Margaret of Anjou and Prince Edward of Wales.
2. King Henry VI.
3. Battle of Tewkesbury, 1471.
4. King Henry VII.
5. This marriage of 1486 between Henry VII and Elizabeth of York, which Morton is said here to have arranged, ended the Wars of the Roses by uniting the Lancaster and York families.

sion of his coming, and so keeping himself close within his bonds that he rather seemed to follow him than to lead him. [107]

Their conversation

For when the Duke first began to praise and boast of the King and show how much profit the realm should take by his reign, my Lord Morton answered, "Surely, my Lord, folly it were for me to lie, for if I would swear the contrary, your Lordship would not, I know, believe it, but that, if the world would have gone as I would have wished, King Henry's son had had the crown and not King Edward. But after God had ordered him to lose it, and King Edward to reign, I was never so mad that I would with a dead man strive against the living. So was I to King Edward faithful chaplain, and glad would have been that his child had succeeded him. However, if the secret judgment of God has otherwise provided, I propose not to spurn against a spur, nor labor to set up what God pulls down. And as for the late Protector and now King. . . ." And even there he left off, saying that he had already meddled too much with the world and would from that day meddle with his book and his beads alone, and no further.

Buckingham longs to hear advice

Then longed the Duke sore to hear what he would have said because he ended with the King and there so suddenly stopped, and so exhorted him familiarly between them to be so bold to say whatsoever he thought, whereof he faithfully promised there should never come hurt and perchance more good than he would know, and that he himself intended to use his faithful, secret advice and counsel; this counsel, he said, was the only cause for which he procured of the King to have him in his custody, where he might reckon himself at home, or else had he been put in the hands of them with whom he should not have found the like favor.

[108]

The Bishop right humbly thanked him and said, "In good faith, my Lord, I love not much to talk much of princes, as things not all out of peril even though the word be without fault – forasmuch as it

shall not be taken as the party meant it, but as it pleases the prince to construe it. And ever I think on Aesop's tale, that one in which the lion had proclaimed on pain of death that no horned beast should abide in that wood. Then one who had on his forehead a lump of flesh fled away at great pace. The fox who saw him run so fast asked him why he made all that haste. And he answered: 'In faith, I neither know nor care, so I were once hence because of this proclamation made about horned beasts.'

Aesop's fable

"'What, fool!' said the fox. 'Thou may abide well enough; the lion meant not thee, for it is no horn that is on your head.'

"'No, marry,' said he. 'That know I well enough. But what if he call it a horn? Where am I then?'"

Buckingham laughs

The Duke laughed merrily at the tale, and said, "My Lord, I warrant you, neither the lion nor the boar[1] shall find any problem with anything here spoken, for it shall never come near their ear."

[108]

"In good faith, Sir," said the Bishop, "if it did, the thing that I was about to say, taken as well as before God as I meant it, could deserve but thanks. And yet taken as I know it would, might happen to turn me to little good and you to less."

He longs to hear more

Then longed the Duke yet much more to know what it was. Whereupon the Bishop said: "In good faith, my Lord, as for the late Protector, since he is now King in possession, I propose not to dispute his title. But for the welfare of this realm, whereof his Grace has now the governance and whereof I am myself one poor member, I was about to wish that to those good abilities, whereof he has already right many, little needing my praise, it might yet have pleased God for the better store to have given him some of such other excellent virtues suitable for the rule of a realm, as our Lord has planted in the person of your Grace."

1. The lion and the boar were on the coat of arms of Richard III.

The History of King Richard III

(*c.* 1513)

by Thomas More

Student Edition

Edited by Gerard B. Wegemer and Travis Curtright

www.thomasmorestudies.org