

MURDER IN THE TOWER

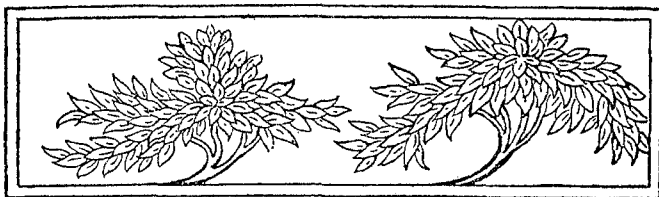
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MURDER IN THE TOWER

1

This is a mystery story, the most thrilling in the history of England. We begin with the generation that lived on the eve of the discovery of America and end with the decade in which we now are.

The subject of the story is a king of England who reigned (if we may call it so) for six weeks. He was never crowned; no parliament met in his reign; yet the name of Edward V stands unquestioned on the roll of English kings.

His father was Edward IV, of the great House of York: "the first of the 'new monarchs,'" it has been said; "the only King of England who made a private fortune out of trade." He was his own secretary of commerce and helped English trade, although London merchants did criticize his reciprocal trade agreements in the matter of German goods. On December 9, 1461, in parliament, "the bill conteynynge the hurtes and remedies of marchaundises made by the marchaunts of London was put in by the Kings owne hande and red [read]." "He was an excellent speaker, and his affable familiarity was something new in the relations between a King and a house of commons." He was also a modern general in war. He was a singularly handsome man. Historians call him vicious and cruel.

The mother of the young king was the first Queen Elizabeth. Few sovereigns have played a more important part in

English history. She was beautiful, virtuous, and able. Only last year and the year before have there appeared adequate biographies of her. They reveal one of the saddest of lives. Small joy had she in being England's queen. The intense unpopularity which is reflected in all the earlier books has puzzled me. Elizabeth Woodville's humble origin (she has been called the first commoner to reach the throne of England) and her constant pressure on the king to advance the fortunes of her brothers and other relatives have usually been given as the grounds for her disfavor, but she was as well-born as the Tudors, for both derived from royalty on the mother's side only, and the hostility toward her family as they rose in the world may be fully accounted for by the fear of the older baronage that their influence, already precarious, could not stand against a new aristocracy of the king's party. Elizabeth came of age in the year in which the Wars of the Roses began, and she died in the early summer of 1492. She is the ancestress of every reigning sovereign of England (except, of course, William of Orange) since Henry VII.

2

So much for the parents of Edward V. And now for the place of his birth. This is perhaps the most extraordinary thing of all. He was born in sanctuary.

In 1470 Edward IV's fortunes were down, and he was forced to leave England in haste. The queen, who was about to be confined, fled for refuge to the sanctuary of Westminster (not the Abbey itself, but a separate building within the precincts), and there her fourth child was born and in Westminster Abbey was baptized and given his father's name. A few months later the king was back in England, and after the Battle of Tewkesbury, which destroyed the Lancastrian dynasty, his power was never seriously questioned.

The institution of sanctuary is very old. It must have a deep foundation in religious belief; it would be impious to lay

hands upon anyone, even an escaping criminal, in a temple or other holy place. We find this idea among aboriginal tribes in Australia, in Hawaii, and in the French Congo. The precincts of Mecca enjoyed the right. The system is worked out in detail in the Old Testament, "cities of refuge" being expressly designated. There were sanctuaries at Athens and Rome. A Scottish law of the thirteenth century was entitled, "Of him quha flies to halie kirk." Holyrood (in Scotland) was a sanctuary for debtors until 1880. Sir Walter Scott, in the depth of his financial troubles, contemplated the possibility of having to take sanctuary. In England, until 1540, the privilege of sanctuary was a recognized legal right; the king's writ did not run therein. "Under a due administration of justice," says Hallam, "this privilege would have been simply and constantly mischievous. . . . But . . . the right of sanctuary might as often be a shield to innocence as an impunity to crime. We can hardly regret, in reflecting on the desolating violence which prevailed, that there should have been some green spots in the wilderness, where the feeble and the persecuted could find refuge." The institution had strong popular support, and its privileges were jealously guarded.

In the period with which we are concerned there were perhaps a thousand persons in sanctuary in England in any year. Among those who had killed, with malice aforethought, or in the heat of quarrel, or by pure misadventure (the legal consequences were in many respects the same), among robbers and debtors in sanctuary, there were sometimes men and women of high station, fleeing from their political enemies. Such a fugitive to sanctuary was the mother of the new royal baby, soon to be brought to his proper home, the palace of the king.

3

We know little of this child's life, except the formal honors conferred on him, from his birth to the death of his father, when the prince was twelve years and five months old, but

the little that we know is gracious. This is a bad period for news. A few years later every least thing would have got into print, but Edward V lived in the infancy of the printing press (although William Caxton had begun to print at Westminster, under royal patronage). It was an age, too, of the iron hand of power; men were ingenious to hide, not publish, what they knew of their superiors. (Fortunately, however, a contemporary account of the young Edward has been preserved. It was written in Latin, by Dominic Mancini, a cleric who came over to England in the last few months of Edward IV's reign, evidently with access to the court, and stayed for a few weeks after the king's death. He was a historian far in advance of his time, a man of intelligence, judicial fairness, and marked literary ability. The manuscript, intended for the eye of the author's patron, a French archbishop, lay in the municipal archives of Lille for centuries, survived the ruin of the city in the World War by having been transferred to a vault, was brought to light only in 1934, and was published for the first time in 1936, with an introduction, translation, and notes.)

Of the young prince, Mancini wrote:

In word and deed he gave [many] proofs of his liberal education, of polite, nay rather scholarly, attainments far beyond his age. . . . There is one thing I shall not omit, and that is, his special knowledge of literature. . . . He had such dignity in his whole person, and in his face such charm, that however much they might gaze he never wearied the eyes of beholders.

Shakespeare presents this boy in a few lines of his *Richard III*. I need quote only part of a brief colloquy between the young king and the Duke of Buckingham as they come to the fatal Tower:

Prince. I do not like the Tower, of any place:
[that is, "of all places"]
Did Julius Caesar build that place, my Lord?

Buck. He did, my gracious Lord, begin that place,
Which since-succeeding ages have re-edified.
[“edify” in its root-meaning of “build”]

Prince. Is it upon record? or else reported
Successively from age to age, he built it?

Buck. Upon record, my gracious Lord.

Prince. But say, my Lord, it were not register’d,
Methinks the truth should live from age to age,
As ’twere retail’d to all posterity,
Even to the general ending day.

4

When Edward IV died, on April 9, 1483, the prince was far from London. It was important for his mother’s friends to bring him to the city at the earliest possible time. But with many or few retainers? And with a high-riding program of ruthlessness or with the olive branch of conciliation? It is useless to speculate. Richard, Duke of Gloucester (Edward’s brother), and the Duke of Buckingham took hold at once. They complained to the prince about the late king’s ministers (who were of the queen’s party) and asked the new king to get rid of them and let Richard act alone.

The youth [says Mancini] possessing the likeness of his father’s noble spirit, besides talent and remarkable learning, replied to this, saying that he merely had those ministers whom his father had given him; and relying on his father’s prudence, he believed that good and faithful ones had been given him. He had seen nothing evil in them and wished to keep them unless otherwise proved to be evil. . . . Finally, the youth, perceiving their intention, surrendered himself to the care of his uncle, which was inevitable, for although the dukes cajoled him by moderation, yet they clearly showed that they were demanding rather than supplicating.

In the event, the leaders of the queen’s party were promptly arrested and executed, and Richard, with a clear assurance

on his part of absolute loyalty to the new king, was in control of the king's person. On May 4, the day that had been fixed for the coronation before Richard gained control, Edward entered the capital, but without any of his mother's friends. In the meanwhile she had fled again into the sanctuary at Westminster, taking with her the second son, Richard, Duke of York, and also her daughters, all of whom were young. Gloucester and his party decided that the king should go to the Tower, not then thought of as a place of fear but rather as a king's residence, for which use it had been built; and Buckingham took the young king there. (The next King Edward, sixty-four years later, was taken to the Tower by his Protector uncle, three weeks before his coronation.)

5

When Richard rode through the streets of London, Buckingham rode by his side. The two dukes were thought to be capable of any act of daring. They had twenty thousand of their armed retainers, it was said, in a city whose normal population could not have been over forty or fifty thousand, although I should suppose that its numbers were very likely swelled at this time by crowds of people who came to see the great doings. Buckingham was twenty-nine years old; Richard thirty-one. The city was sullen, but resistance obviously was idle. The coronation was postponed to June 22, and parliament called for June 25 (to confirm Richard as lord protector, it seemed).

A council meeting was held in the White Tower (the great central "keep" of the Tower of London) on Friday, June 13. Richard came in, saluting the lords courteously and excusing himself for being late. After a little while he said to one of them, the Bishop of Ely (John Morton), "My Lord, you have very good strawberries in your garden at Holborn. I require you let me have a mess of them." "Gladly, my Lord," quoth he, and with that in all haste he sent his servant for a dish

of strawberries. Richard then excused himself and came back again in an hour or two, all changed in countenance, very angry and frowning. Suddenly he denounced the lord high chamberlain, Hastings, one of his most intimate friends, called in soldiers, and had Hastings taken out and executed in the Tower yard the same afternoon.

In his attack on Hastings, he had accused him of protecting the famous beauty Jane Shore, who with the queen by sorcery and witchcraft had wasted his arm, "and therewith he plucked up his sleeve to the elbow and showed a withered left arm. And thereupon every man's mind misgave him, well perceiving that this matter was but a quarrel. Also there was no man there but knew that the king's arm was ever such, since the day of his birth."

We now have before us the most sinister figure in English history. Crooked in body and mind, say the historians, intellect without conscience, pure evil, Richard, Duke of Gloucester, walks the boards, resourceful, far-seeing, masterful, hated by all men, fearing no man.

6

Richard's first thought was to get the second prince (the other male heir to the crown) out of sanctuary and into the Tower, where his elder brother already was. He sent a cardinal to Queen Elizabeth to persuade her to let the boy go. The story of this scene has been written by Thomas More, whom Dr. Johnson chose for special praise for his literary style and the Catholic church has canonized for his goodness. More was seven years old in 1483, and he was brought up in the household of Bishop (afterward Cardinal) Morton, who got the strawberries from his garden for Richard, and who was in touch with all public affairs, so that More's account is almost that of a contemporary. Lawyers may still praise the queen's quickness of thought and her steadfast resistance, for

she was fighting for her child's life. But she yielded at last: the young king was not well, and he needed his brother's company to sustain him; and it was made clear to the queen that force would be used if she did not give way, sanctuary or no sanctuary. Mancini says:

In England these places of refuge are of ancient observance, so that up to those times, either from religious awe or from fear of the people, none had dared to violate them. For whatever reason a man may be accused or disliked, it is not lawful even for kings to drag him thence against his will. In the same sanctuary the queen had given birth to the young Edward when King Edward had been ejected following the occupation of the realm by Henry, with whom he was contending for the crown. Nevertheless no violence was done to the queen by King Henry, who at that time had everything under his control. Since then, whether religion has declined, or the people's power diminished and that of the sovereigns vastly increased, sanctuaries are of little avail against the royal authority.

So mother and child parted; he was not yet ten years old.

And there withall she said unto the child: Farewel, my own sweete sonne, God send you good keeping, let me kis you ones yet ere you goe, for God knoweth when we shal kis together agayne. And therewith she kissed him, and blessed him, and turned her back and wept and went her way, leaving the childe weping as fast.

7

The coronation of the young king was now reset by Richard for November 2. But Richard was meditating other things. In those days there were no newspapers, radio addresses, or mass meetings, but there was the preaching at Paul's Cross. Many a cause was launched there; the Earl of Essex, a century later, there played his last desperate card. On Sunday, June 22, Richard caused a sermon to be preached at Paul's Cross by the lord mayor's brother, upon the text (Book of Wisdom

4:3, in the Apocrypha), "Bastard slips shall not take deep root," in which Edward IV's marriage to Elizabeth Woodville was declared to be void, as Edward was said to have entered into a precontract with another woman, an impediment ranking on a par with a former marriage in all countries having the Teutonic tradition. Thus the children of Edward and Elizabeth were illegitimate, the preacher said, and Richard, Duke of Gloucester, the rightful king. The citizens were not impressed. Nor did the Duke of Buckingham have better success with the burgesses whom he addressed on the Tuesday at the Guildhall along similar lines. On June 25 an assembly met (not a parliament, although it looked like one, and Mancini refers to it as such), and a deputation from this assembly, with the lord mayor and citizens, went to Richard and asked him to assume the crown, which he did thrice (or at least one or two times) refuse; was this ambition? Finally he accepted and was crowned, and Edward V's reign ended. This was on May 25. The monkish chronicler at Croyland, up in the fens of Lincolnshire, wrote in the record-book of his monastery that "iste homo" ("that fellow") on the next day intruded himself into the marble chair in Westminster Hall. Later, Richard's title to the crown was fully confirmed by parliament. Those nobles, who, like Hastings, when sounded out by Richard's agents, had recoiled from his design, were out of the way. The queen's father and brothers had been put to death.

Why Edward IV had named Richard as the guardian of the heir apparent to the throne (as he seems to have done) is not clear, but after one lapse from duty Richard, during his brother's lifetime, gave no further uneasiness on the score of loyalty. Between them they took the life of the third brother, George, Duke of Clarence. The cause of Edward IV's death, at forty-one years of age, has been given differently. Only one chronicler has suggested foul means. The thought has been expressed in recent years that Richard knew his brother

the king's manner of life and that he could not long survive; Richard had only to wait for the prize to fall into his hands. Others take a kinder view and say that Richard did not at once form the plan of seizing the throne.

8

The *Great Chronicle of London* (only now being printed, I believe) has this entry:

During this mayris yere [which ended October 29]. The chyldyr of kyng Edward were seen shotyng and playing in the gardyn of the Towyr by sundry tymys.

This is the only contemporary reference to their being seen alive after they entered the Tower. Within a few days of Richard's assumption of the crown, Mancini wrote to his patron concerning young Edward:

I have seen many men burst forth into tears and lamentations when mention was made of him after his removal from men's sight; and already there was a suspicion that he had been done away with. Whether, however, he has been done away with, and by what manner of death, so far I have not at all discovered.

Defenders of Richard have said that there was no suspicion of the princes' death at the time. Mancini now has disproved this, and there is more evidence to the same effect. Within six weeks Louis XI, king of France (he died on August 30), heard that Richard "had put his neviews to scilence and usurped the crowne upon them with great tyranny." In the following January the French chancellor, De Rochefort, when addressing at Tours the assembly of the States-General, boldly accused Richard III of murdering the princes; he may possibly have heard this from Mancini, who was just dating his book at a city near where the court was being held. The Cely people were wool merchants, and a considerable inter-departmental correspondence has been preserved, including

what the editor of this material designates as a "document, we cannot call it a letter." Internal evidence shows that it was written between June 13 and June 25 or 28, 1483. "The style," says the editor, "is so guarded as to be very obscure." The paper hints darkly at the death of the princes: "There ys grett romber [rumor] in the reme [realm]," etc.

This, by the way, is the only reference in the Cely papers to the civil disturbances of the time. The mass of the population cared little for York and Lancaster and still less for constitutional theory. It had always been so and would so continue; Shakespeare in *King John* does not mention Magna Carta (as Professor Smith has observed). The Yorkists respected constitutional principles as little as they did the right of sanctuary. The Lancastrians believed in both but were too weak to sustain an orderly government. In the brief patent roll of Edward V several of the entries are for the reappointment, ostensibly by him, really of course by Richard the lord protector, of the judges who were on the bench in the late king's time, and the same judges were continued by Richard when he became king. The well-known English economic historian, Thorold Rogers, examined several hundred financial accounts of such people as stewards of manors in the period, without finding a single allusion to the Wars of the Roses. Things went on about as usual. But the fate of the children in the Tower was a different thing, and Richard had something new to reckon with. An old chronicler wrote in his book: "He also put to deth the II children of Kyng Edward for which cawse he lost the hertes of the people."

9

And there was yet one more thing for Richard to meet. As he had been charged in men's minds with the deaths of the Duke of Clarence, Henry VI, and the two princes, so now he was suspected of planning his wife's death. She was one of the two daughters and coheirresses of the vast estates of

Richard Neville, the great Earl of Warwick, the "King-maker." These young girls were therefore the two great prizes of the day. The elder was given to the Duke of Clarence; the second became the child bride of Henry VI's young son, the prince that "came wand'ringly, a shadow like an angel, with bright hair dabbled in blood," to the Duke of Clarence in his hour of agony, and shrieked out aloud, at sight of him "who stabbed me in the field by Tewkesbury." Richard coveted the rich dowry of this Anne Neville and sought her in marriage. She fled from him, as the murderer of her husband's father and the moving force in her husband's death, and took refuge (it is said) in a kitchen, as a scullery maid. But Richard found her out and married her; and now she was dying, no one doubted how, and Richard was already, in her lifetime, paying court to his own niece, the sister of the two young princes who had disappeared in the Tower: Elizabeth, daughter of Edward IV and Elizabeth Woodville, whose betrothal to Henry Tudor, Duke of Richmond, was the crowning act of policy which should unite the Yorkists and Lancastrians in one dynasty. And thus indeed it came out; but Richard saw the danger, no man so clearly, and attempted this one more master-stroke. The princess Elizabeth escaped him, however, and the only result for Richard was a new wave of popular anger. Henry landed at Milford Haven in Wales and met Richard at Bosworth Field, in the heart of England, where Richard fell, fighting with superhuman valor. He had reigned two years and three months.

10

We begin the trial of Richard with all our views strongly colored by what Shakespeare has written. I must now give attention to this element in the case, although, as Thomas Fuller (in his "Worthies") quaintly observed, "I know that the Affidavit of a Poet carrieth but a small credit in the Court of History."

16

We touch here another branch of the law of sanctuary. The puritanical city authorities of London detested actors and plays as children and works of the devil, respectively, and would allow no theaters. But the "Liberties" of London gave Burbage and Shakespeare their chance. These were sites of old churches, destroyed during the Reformation, or former royal residences, now in private hands but with the old privileges still attaching: that is to say, the city authorities had no jurisdiction. So in the Blackfriars (the name explains itself) in 1596 was built the Globe Theater. Probably Shakespeare's *Richard III* was already on the stage, in Holywell or one of the other "Liberties." It may be noted, as a point of curious interest, that the eldest son of John Knox played Hastings in a Latin play, *Richardus Tertius*, in the hall of St. John's College, Cambridge, some time between 1579 and 1588, to the Richard of a future Dean of Peterborough. Of course, the play's being in Latin, and given at one of the universities, would make a difference.

A learned editor of Aristotle's *Poetics* applies to Shakespeare's play the Greek standard:

It needs the genius of a Shakespeare to portray this potent and commanding villainy. It was a perilous task to concentrate the whole interest of a play round a character such as Richard III; and we may doubt whether Shakespeare himself would have ventured on it in the maturer period of his genius. The ancient drama offers nothing comparable to this great experiment—no such embodiment of an entirely depraved will, loveless and unhuman, fashioning all things with relentless adaptation to its own ends, yet standing sufficiently aloof from life to jest over it with savage humour.

Incidentally, the history of this play is the history of the development of costume, stage effects, scenery, and all the equipment of the theater. Little attention was paid to these things in Shakespeare's time, except for the martial scenes,

which were more elaborately staged. Ben Jonson, in a prologue, wrote of those who

.... with three rusty swords,
And help of some few foot and half-foot words,
Fight over York and Lancaster's long jars.

11

Richard the Third is "the longest of Shakespeare's plays, except *Hamlet*. . . . Richard speaks 1,161 lines, a greater number than any other character in Shakespeare's plays, except *Hamlet*." Richard is on the stage most of the time.

I must hurry through the stage history of the play. . . . The best known of all the revisions of Shakespeare's plays is Colley Cibber's *Richard III*, first given in 1700. . . . The play, as Shakespeare wrote it, was off the stage for more than a hundred and fifty years. . . . Almost all the great actors have played in Cibber's version. . . . "Conscience, avaunt! Richard's himself again!" is Cibber's, as well as "A weak invention of the enemy" (for "A thing devised by the enemy") and the famous "Off with his head! so much for Buckingham!" Instead of Shakespeare's opening—the soliloquy of Richard, with a jeering play upon words in the very second line—

Now is the winter of our discontent
Made glorious summer by this sun of York—

Cibber begins with a scene from *Henry VI, Part 3*, where news is brought of the Battle of Tewkesbury. Richard enters and makes known his intention of putting King Henry out of the way. Scene 2 gives the murder of the King in the Tower. . . . Cibber was an actor, and a second-rate one, and in general an indifferent writer, but his version of *Richard III* will probably hold the boards for an indefinite time. . . . Goodman's Fields Theater had lost its license, so it adopted the device (used afterward also in America) of giving concerts,

with a play thrown in free. On October 19, 1741, it published this announcement:

At the late Theatre there will be a concert in two parts.
... N.B. Between the two parts of the concert, will be presented an Historical Play called, *The Life and Death of King Richard the Third*. . . . The part of King Richard by a Gentleman (who never appeared on any stage). . . .

The name of this gentleman was not given, but it proved to be David Garrick. The performance "created an unprecedented sensation." Mrs. Siddons was the most famous actress of the day, yet once she forgot her lines, as she played the poor Lady Anne to Garrick's Richard, and could not go on, for the fearful malignity of his look. Garrick played the part for thirty-five years.

Edmund Kean, they say, was the best *Richard III* of the nineteenth century; Coleridge said it was "Shakespeare read by flashes of lightning."

With Henry Irving's performance of the play at the Lyceum in 1877 "a new kind of Richard made his appearance, and the Shakespearean text received a fuller vindication than had been possible before." Irving never put the play on in America.

12

As for the United States, Miss Cook, whose *Stage History of King Richard the Third* I have been using, tells us that the first playbill in existence in this country is for a performance of *Richard III* on March 5, 1750. "This is the first recorded dramatic performance [of any kind] in New York and . . . the initial Shakespearean performance in America of which we have any account." Later on, English actors all opened their American engagements with *Richard III*.

With the appearance of Edwin Booth [says Miss Cook], a new era began in the history of this play in America, for our greatest actor gave the newer conception of the character

study of Shakespeare, and was the first to make a successful restoration of the original text to our stage.

But the version may have been William Winter's.

Fifty years ago Richard Mansfield was playing *Richard III* at the Globe Theater in London, England. It is a whole story in itself. Mansfield had never seen *Richard* played; Sir Morell Mackenzie had given him a warning about his throat; he was unknown in England, but had come the previous summer, at Henry Irving's generous suggestion, though it was the off-season and he was to succeed Sarah Bernhardt, and, before her, Irving himself; and he was \$60,000 in debt for his ambitious theatrical projects. On March 16, 1889, he presented *Richard III*. It was a tremendous success, and it ran several weeks. Mansfield had triumphed in the role of which almost every great British actor, including Irving, was an exponent; but he never acted in England again.

Returning to this country, Mansfield played *Richard III* in Philadelphia, early in the 1889-90 season, to poor houses; he wrote to a friend that he was thinking of inserting an advertisement: "Mr. Richard Mansfield is sorry to disturb the inhabitants of Philadelphia, but he begs to announce that he appears every evening as King Richard III."

His biographer, Paul Winstock, proceeds:

Undaunted by the lack of popular interest in his Richard . . . Mansfield held his company together and secured the capital to proceed to Chicago. He resumed his interrupted season there at the Columbia Theatre with *King Richard III*. It was received with unalloyed enthusiasm. Then as always Mansfield found in that great-hearted city the support and inspiration which sustained him in many a crisis.

13

Mansfield published his acting version of *Richard III*, with a prefatory note on the history of this king, in which he expressed "grave doubts" that Richard murdered the princes,

intimating the possibility that Henry VII may have done the act.

William Winter, in his life of Mansfield, has a chapter on *Richard the Third*, which begins thus:

Richard was guiltless of most if not all of the crimes which have been laid to his charge, but his reputation has been blackened by historians and by Shakespeare, and the world accepts him, not as he was in life, but as he stands in Shakespeare's play. . . .

One may ask, "Who gave the right of appeal from historians to a New York dramatic critic?" But critics, like all other scholars, have a right to their opinions. Another writes:

In truth, More's account of Richard is as purely a figment of the imagination as his *Utopia*. Whether he or Cardinal Morton is to be held responsible for it, grosser, and in all probability more baseless, calumnies have never been circulated about an English prince.

On February 6, 1888, James Nevins Hyde, a distinguished physician and an honored member of the Chicago Literary Club, read a paper before the Club entitled, "Some of the Consequences of Eating Historical Strawberries." (You will recognize the allusion.) The essay was privately printed in Chicago in December, 1903 (130 copies on Italian handmade paper; 42 pages). Dr. Hyde wrote a number of papers for our predecessors and he is mentioned several times in Mr. Gookin's history of the Club. He was elected president of the Club just fifty years ago, in May, 1889, the year following the reading of his paper.

The essay mentions "the lies of Lancastrian historians," and goes on to say of More's *History of Richard III* that "it should be intitled 'Sir Thomas More's Narrative of the Tale Confided to Him by Cardinal Morton, Late Bishop of Ely.'"

Henry Cabot Lodge, in a magazine essay, accepted the

view that Richard murdered the two princes. This is what Lodge says about it:

We can only fall back on general reasoning. There is no proof that they survived Richard; the rumor of their death started in his time, and it was to his interest to have them out of the way, as movements were on foot among the nobles to assert Edward V's claim to the crown. The fairest inference is that they were put to death by Richard's order, and, in the darkness that covers the whole business, an inference is all we have.

Yet Lodge concludes:

The importance of his [Richard's] place in history is plain enough to those who care to look into it with "considerate eyes." ["Considerate" here has the archaic meaning of "deliberate," "thoughtful."] The ability of the man, his greatness as a soldier, his wisdom as a statesman are also clear. These things were his alone; while his crimes and his overmastering ambition, although his own too, were also the offspring of his times, of which he, like other men, was the child and prototype.

A century ago a learned historian wrote:

Man is wise, virtuous, and humane, or silly, vain, and wicked, in comparison with his contemporaries. He must be estimated, not by the standard of morality erected several centuries after his death, but by the standard of the age and country in which he lived.

As to which I content myself with saying that I prefer Lord Acton on the permanence of moral standards:

I exhort you never to debase the moral currency or to lower the standard of rectitude, but to try others by the final maxim that governs your own lives, and to suffer no man and no cause to escape the undying penalty which history has the power to inflict on wrong.

Mansfield was not the first, or the last, to take a favorable

view of Richard. "Richard is not the villain he has been painted," says the author of the biographical sketch in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. "Richard was no monster," says another historian of our day.

The real beginning of this more favorable view was about two centuries ago. In 1768 there was "printed for J. Dodsley in Pall Mall" a small book, *Historic Doubts on the Life and Reign of King Richard the Third*, by Mr. Horace Walpole. The position of the great littérateur and dilettante may be seen in a few sentences from the Preface:

It occurred to me some years ago, that the picture of Richard the Third, as drawn by historians, was a character formed by prejudice and invention. . . . Many of the crimes imputed to Richard seemed improbable. . . . As it was easy to perceive, under all the glare of encomiums which historians have heaped on the wisdom of Henry the Seventh, that he was a mean and unfeeling tyrant, I suspected that they had blackened his rival. . . . We have either no authentic memorials of Richard's crimes, or, at most, no account of them but from Lancastrian historians. . . .

In the library of the University of Michigan I saw a short time ago a copy of a French translation of Walpole's work, printed at Paris in 1800, from a manuscript said to be entirely in the handwriting of Louis XVI, who (the editor suggests) may perhaps have been interested in a book which attempted to rehabilitate the reputation of one accused of being a bad king.

Walpole's *Historic Doubts* were answered by Hume and Gibbon, and Walpole replied to Hume. There are two significant remarks of Hallam in his *Middle Ages*, which came out in 1818, about twenty years after Walpole's death. After discussing "the intentional confusion and odious misuse" of statutory language by Henry VII, in dealing with the three previous reigns, to make Henry's legal position look better, Hallam says:

These were points, which, *like the fate of the young princes in the Tower*, he [Henry] chose to wrap in discreet silence.

And a little later, speaking of Richard III, he says :

Whatever difficulty there may be, *and I confess it is not easy to be surmounted*, in deciding upon the fate of Richard's nephews after they were immured in the Tower, the more public parts of the transaction bear unequivocal testimony to his ambitious usurpation.

15

It is a fascinating period that we are discussing, just on the extreme nearer edge of the strange continent of the Middle Ages. Did those ages end with the fall of Constantinople in 1453, and the dispersal among the nations of the earth of the men who could read the precious seed-bearing Greek manuscripts? or did the modern world begin with the discovery of America? I may adapt Frederick Maitland and say that we might as well ask the date of English law. But interest in those years never dies down. Men and women are writing still on Richard, and Anne Neville, and the princes. One of the popular novelists of today, Philip Lindsay, has declared himself a "Richard-lover." His biography of Richard, entitled *The Tragic King* (1934), is, as he puts it, "not so much a history as a chronicle." Lindsay has since written a novel on the period, *The Duke Is Served*. Patrick Carleton's exciting story *Under the Hog* came out only a few months ago. It is wholeheartedly for Richard. The death of the princes is treated in a new, and to me absurd, way. While we are speaking of novelists, Carola Oman Lenanton's *Crouchback* (1929) is an excellent piece of work, a novel that holds the interest, with the attention to facts which one would expect from a daughter of the well-known medieval historian, Sir Charles Oman. Mrs. Lenanton writes down Richard as a villain. C. E. Lawrence's novel of those days, *The Gods Were Sleeping*, was published year before last. Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Black Arrow* also deals with Richard III, and there are some interesting opinions in his letters, written from

Sydney, Australia, in 1890 and 1891, to a young Frenchman who proposed to translate his work. Stevenson thought Shakespeare's Richard "spirited," but "not possible"—the work of "a man who had the world, himself, mankind, and his trade still to learn." Bulwer-Lytton's *The Last of the Barons* is of this period, or a little earlier.

Let me add here that the decade in which we are living has developed more important material on Richard III than any other period of similar length since Bosworth Field.

In 1906 Sir Clements Markham, a respectable authority, published a book entitled *Richard III: His Life and Character, Reviewed in the Light of Recent Research*, the theme of which is thus stated in the Preface:

There are periods of history when the greatest caution is called for in accepting statements put forward by a dominant faction. Very early in my life I came to the conclusion that the period which witnessed the change of dynasties from Plantagenet to Tudor was one of these. The caricature of the last Plantagenet King was too grotesque, and too grossly opposed to his character derived from official records. The stories were an outrage on common sense. . . . My own conclusions are that Richard III must be acquitted on all the counts of the indictment. . . .

16

And now, having given the setting, and some account of what has been said of Richard III, on both sides, I am ready to discharge my duty of reporting the solution of the mystery; for it has been solved, in our own day.

On July 17, 1674, nearly two centuries after Bosworth, some workmen clearing the White Tower from contiguous buildings, and digging under the stairs which led up to the chapel in that tower, found about ten feet in the ground the bones of two youths. These have been accepted by all historians as the remains of the two princes. Sir Thomas More's

original account (in 1513) said that the two had been buried "at the stayre foote, metely [fairly] deep in the ground under a great heape of stones." (More believed, however, that they had later been moved.) King Charles caused the bones to be inclosed in an urn and placed in Henry VII's chapel in Westminster Abbey.

Six years ago, on July 6, 1933, the urn was opened in the presence of the Dean of Westminster; Lord Moyrihan, the distinguished surgeon; Professor William Wright, dean and professor of anatomy in the London Hospital Medical College; Lawrence E. Tanner, historian and archaeologist; and several other persons, and the bones carefully examined. The result was reported at a meeting of the Society of Antiquaries of London on November 30, 1933, and printed in the next volume of their proceedings. Professor Wright wrote the anatomical part, and Tanner the historical part. They worked independently and arrived at the same conclusion.

There was a precedent for such an examination, from 1910, when King Edward VII gave permission to open a coffin in St. George's Chapel in Windsor, to determine the identity of the remains, thought to be those of Henry VI, another of Richard's supposed victims, which had been lost for centuries.

Let me remind you that Edward V was born on November 2, 1470, and Richard, his brother, "almost certainly" on August 17, 1473. If they were murdered by their uncle, it seems likely to have been between August 7 and 15, 1483. "If this is so Edward V was twelve years and nine months old and Richard . . . was within a few days of his tenth birthday at the time of their murder," as Tanner observes.

Professor Wright says:

An examination of the contents of the urn proved beyond all doubt that there were only two human beings represented: that the bones were those of children differing some two or three years in age as judged by the length of their bones, and

that the elder child was still in the puberty period, since the elements forming the sockets of the shoulder and hip joints showed no signs of union.

An attempt to fix the age of the elder child more precisely was rewarded by the discovery of two bones which furnished the necessary evidence—an axis or second cervical vertebra and a first sacral vertebra.

The axis was without the apical part of its odontoid process, a state which makes it possible to say with every confidence that it belonged to a child who had not yet attained the age of thirteen. . . .

Corroborative evidence of some value . . . was obtained from the first sacral vertebra. . . . The laminae of this vertebra were still half an inch or so apart, indicating a probable age of less than thirteen. . . .

Of all methods of determining the age of children none is more helpful and reliable than the examination of the teeth. So impressed was I of the importance of the method that I at once sought the assistance of one of the leading authorities on the dentition of children, Dr. George Northcroft, an ex-President of the British Society of Orthodontics and the immediate ex-President of the British Dental Association. . . .

17

Dr. Wright "now presumes" to call the younger child Richard. He gives the data as to Richard's teeth:

These data taken separately and together, after making all due allowance for deviation from the normal, permit of the determination of Richard's age as being about mid-way between nine and eleven.

Then we are given the data as to Edward's teeth; and, similarly, Edward's age was fixed as "somewhere between the ages of twelve and thirteen."

In seeking to identify the remains, evidence of consanguinity obviously has considerable weight. Such evidence, drawn as it must be solely from the examination of the bones,

is naturally difficult to obtain. I would refer, however, to two features of no small significance—the presence of Wormian bones of unusual size and of almost identical shape in the lambdoid sutures of both Edward's and Richard's crania, and the absence of the upper second premolars in Edward, and of the lower second deciduous molar in Richard ["the absence of the last-named tooth is excessively rare"]. . . . If we assume that the second deciduous molar was absent in Richard [as the discussion just preceding would indicate] we would have an instance, not only of tooth suppression in both children, but of tooth suppression in the same regional plane.

The examination showed that Edward suffered from extensive disease of both sides of the lower jaw.

The disease was of a chronic nature and could not fail to have affected his general health. It may well have accounted, in part at least, for the depression from which he is said to have suffered, for the relief of which his mother is said to have agreed to part with her younger son.

A remarkable feature of Edward's facial skeleton was an extensive stain reaching from just below the orbits to the angles of the lower jaw. The stain was of a distinctly blood-red colour above, of a dirty brown colour below, and was obviously, as shown by the gradual fading away of its margins, of fluid origin. I have no doubt that it was a blood stain. Its presence, together with the complete separation of the facial skeleton, lends support to the traditional account of the manner of the brothers' death—suffocated "under feather bed and pillows, kept down by force hard unto their mouths."

Suffocation by such means is well known to be associated with intense congestion of the face. . . .

The evidence that the bones in the urn are those of the princes is in my judgment as conclusive as could be desired, and definitely more conclusive than could, considering everything, have reasonably been expected. Further, their ages were such that I can say with complete confidence that their

death occurred during the reign of their usurping uncle, Richard III.

We must then find Richard, Duke of Gloucester, guilty of the cruel murder of the young princes. The problem waited long for a solution, but "history is the avenger of innocent blood," and history and science, working together, have proved that Richard is indeed the monster we have had represented to us.

The learned and skilful surgeon whose testimony made the verdict inevitable ended his report with this lofty thought:

Many years ago a Latin poet, meditating on the strange and varied fortunes of the dead, reflected that while 'Licinus a freedman sleeps in a marble tomb, Cato had a small one, Pompey none.' Where, he asks, are the gods? To which in Delphic fashion may we not reply that while the bones of Richard III have long since disappeared, trampled into common clay, those of the princes . . . rest secure, in the company of those of their mighty ancestors, at the very heart of the national shrine?

18

"The bones of Richard III have long since disappeared, trampled into common clay."—Let us see.

Richard's three hated agents were Catesby, Ratcliff, and Lord Lovell. The familiar couplet, nailed by the author on the door of St. Paul's—it cost him his life, or at least made his conviction and execution for treason a certainty—ran:

The catte, the ratte and Lovell our dogge
Rulyth all England under a hogge.

The "catte," of course, was Catesby, and the "ratte" Ratcliff. Lovell's crest had a dog thereon, and Richard's a wild boar. Ratcliff was killed at Bosworth. Catesby was in the battle and was executed immediately thereafter. Lovell was also in the battle, but escaped, and lived to fight again, two

years later, at the Battle of Stoke, in 1487, the last flaring-up of the Wars of the Roses, from which battle he was seen fleeing, and in difficulty swimming his horse across the river Trent. Nothing more was heard of him for two centuries. In 1708 a skeleton, supposed to be his, was found walled up in a secret vault in his old home, Minster Lovell, in Oxfordshire, seated at a table, with a book, pen, and paper. On the admission of air, all crumbled into dust.

This leaves only Richard for us to consider.

Bosworth Field is a few miles from the city of Leicester. Richard III on Saturday, August 20, 1485, rode all day with his army from Nottingham, and slept that night at Leicester, in the Blue Boar Inn. Bosworth was fought the next day, Sunday. That night the body of the slain king was carried naked, over a horse's back, into Leicester, and exposed for two days in a church or some other public place. This was not an uncommon practice: it was a last dishonor to the fallen foe, and it closed the possibility of stories later that the foe was still alive. Richard's body was then buried in the Grey Friars' Church. Ten years afterward, "Henry VII is supposed to have erected a tomb for Richard; but Bacon, in his life of Henry, hints a doubt of this." The church was dismantled and destroyed at the Reformation, and the site divided and built over; it has long been in the business section of Leicester. There are different stories of what happened to Richard's body. One is that it was thrown over Bow Bridge. At any rate, when the bridge was rebuilt in 1863, the corporation of the city of Leicester placed a tablet upon it, bearing the legend, "Near this spot lie the remains of Richard III, the last of the Plantagenets." And in this uncertainty the matter was left, it was supposed forever.

19

But it may be that we are not yet done with Richard. In the *London Times* of September 6, 1935 (four years ago), there was printed the following dispatch:

Interesting discoveries have been made during excavations for the new wing of the Leicester College of Arts and Technology. The site is that of the former church of St. Mary of the Newarke, built in 1353, but destroyed during the Reformation. The actual site had been lost, but arches of the old church have been found and also a leaden coffin containing a skeleton which Mr. L. W. Kershaw, principal of the college, thinks may possibly be that of Richard III. . . . It was understood that he was buried in this church, but some historians have recorded that later his body was unearthed and his bones thrown by a mob over Bow Bridge into the river. . . . [It is of some interest that the natural and most direct route from the Grey Friars to Bow Bridge is by Friar Lane, crossing High Street, and thence along the tract called the Newarke (diagonally across from the Grey Friars) by St. Mary's Church Lane.] Mr. Kershaw says the skull has a receding forehead and a projecting jaw, the very attributes of King Richard.

Has the earth, then, given up its secret? We cannot answer this question until history and science, once united for a few hours, as we have seen, fall to working together again. A journalist wrote to the *Times* ten days later, declaring it "inconceivable" that these could be the remains of Richard III, for (he said) there is no record of Richard's burial (*final* burial he must mean) in this or any other church (but how about the Abbey Church at Leicester, where Wolsey was laid to rest, only forty-five years after Bosworth Field, and those who hated him called it "the sepulture of tyrants," because they said Richard also was buried there?—but, of course, there is no *record* of this), and besides (said the journalist) Richard's portraits, later than his time, but supposedly derived from some lost original, painted from life, show him a handsome man; and why should he not have been fine-looking, as he was the son of the same father and mother as the handsome Edward IV? His repulsive features are only "one of Shakespeare's characteristic libels." . . . "Characteristic libels!"—

when Shakespeare wrote only what everybody in his day said and believed, and what More and Rous and Hall and Holinshed and all previous chroniclers had written as the truth! A kind correspondent in Leicester calls this "an authoritative letter" and writes me that it "seems to dispose of the question." Can we admit this? Or have we not here perhaps another partisan in this age-old controversy? Leaden coffins were for the great, and they disappeared from sight and memory when no one any longer cared, when the name of the dead called forth only curses. Shall we not wait for that patient, profound searching for the facts that we saw devoted to Richard's victims a year or two before?

But even now we can go back again to Shakespeare and give the last word to the noble young boy, king for a few brief days, as he enters the Tower that is to be his tomb for two centuries:

Prince. I do not like the Tower, of any place:
Did Julius Caesar build that place, my Lord?

Buck. He did, my gracious Lord, begin that place,
Which since-succeeding ages have re-edified.

Prince. Is it upon record? or else reported
Successively from age to age, he built it?

Buck. Upon record, my gracious Lord.

Prince. But say, my Lord, it were not register'd,
Methinks the truth should live from age to age.

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