SHAKESPEARE'S RICHARD III:
THE SOURCES FOR HIS CHARACTERIZATION AND ACTIONS
IN THE FIRST TETRALOGY

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Although critics have levelled reams of comment against its faults, The Tragedy of King Richard the Third has been from its first performance one of Shakespeare's most popular plays. The first quarto edition of 1597 was followed by seven other quartos before 1635. The two Folio editions, 1623 and 1632, made a total of ten different printings of the play in the first forty years of its life.¹

There are many reasons for the popularity of this play, not all of which are directly related to the play itself or to its literary value. There was, during the last decade of the sixteenth century, a revival of interest in the events of the civil wars and the last years of the Plantagenet reigns. Particularly, this interest showed itself in the writing and reprinting of many works which dealt with those turbulent days. In part, this was a result of the efforts of the Tudor monarchs, who were among the first to realize the value of history as a medium of propaganda; but it must also have been an indication of the growing trepidation with which many Englishmen viewed the last years of the aging and childless Queen Elizabeth, and the

fear that her death would result in a new series of wars for the throne, such as the Wars of the Roses had been. In addition to this play, there were many popular ballads, plays, and serious historical accounts of the strife between the rival houses of York and Lancaster. Some of these have survived the centuries between, and from them it is clear that there must have been many more such works. It is not possible to know whether Shakespeare made use of all of these, but there are some which he can definitely be shown to have consulted, and others which were so well and generally known that he could hardly have avoided some reference to them.

It is a habit of historians, in dealing with their sources, to distinguish between those works which were compiled at the time of the happenings which they record and those which were written or compiled later. Of the former, "primary sources," Shakespeare's plays were influenced by three works: The New Chronicles of England and France by Robert Fabyan, a draper in London (printed in 1516); The History of England, which Polydore Vergil wrote at the command of Henry VII and dedicated to Henry VIII (printed in 1634); and The History of King Richard III of Sir Thomas More, written 1513-1518, but printed much later. From these three works, for the most part, come all the incidents and opinions to be found in later tellings of the story.

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While he may not have had direct access to any of these primary sources, Shakespeare certainly knew of them through his use of "secondary sources." Of these, he knew and used The Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland of Raphael Holinshed (1578) and The Chronicles of England by Edward Hall (1548), primarily a revision of his earlier Union of the Houses of Lancaster and York; and he was probably familiar as well with the chronicles of Richard Grafton (1568) and John Stow (1580).3

In addition to the historical sources, Shakespeare was apparently influenced by some of the literary predecessors of his plays. He was surely aware of the anonymous play The True Tragedy of King Richard the Third, which was being performed in London about the time he was writing his version. This play was printed in 1594, possibly as a result of the success of Shakespeare's play. Shakespeare also was evidently familiar with the Mirror for Magistrates, in particular the "Induction" and "The complaynt of Henrye duke of Buckingham" by Thomas Sackville (1563). Among other sources which may have provided hints of action or detail for Shakespeare's plays, the most likely is Dr. Thomas Legge's Latin play Richardus Tertius, which had been acted at Cambridge and which was printed in 1579; and to all these must be added an inestimable amount of background from the ballads (such as "The Ballad of Lady Bessy")

3Ibid., pp. 225-227.
and tales (such as "The Babes in the Woods") and the traditions and legends which must still have been current in the counties near Leicestershire, of which Warwickshire, Shakespeare's home, was one.  

In the play of Richard III, Shakespeare draws away from the episodic character of his early historical plays, and gives to the drama a sense of unity which is lacking in the three plays of King Henry the Sixth. That this unity is achieved primarily through the dominance of a single character is frequently termed a fault in the play, and many critics blame Shakespeare's youth and the influence of Christopher Marlowe for this monopolization of the action. Certainly there is much in the play which is similar to the work of Marlowe: not only the tendency toward a "one-man play," but also the almost total prevalence of blank verse and the oratorical quality of many of the lines.

There are other evidences in the style which point up the early date at which it must have been written. In this play Shakespeare still uses the device of rhyming tags to end scenes, and the blank verse still consists primarily of end-stopped lines. While lacking the maturity and individuality of those

\[4\text{Ibid.}, \text{pp. 228-235.}\]

later villains Iago and Macbeth, Richard is nonetheless a compelling and forceful character. In his portrayal, if in no other part of the play, Shakespeare reveals the future greatness of his insight and poetry in the delineation of character and the psychology of villainy. Never, perhaps, until the development of Freudian psychology was there to be a clearer display of the effects of physical deformity and the accompanying ridicule upon the mind of a man.

Richard III is not merely a play whole in itself, it is also an integral part of the tetralogy of the Wars of the Roses (with the Henry VI plays) as well as the culmination of a series of eight plays which tell the entire story of the conflicts between the houses of York and Lancaster (the other tetralogy, written later, builds the background with the reigns of Richard II, Henry IV, and Henry V). Thus Richard must be viewed against this historical panorama. Richard, to Shakespeare, was not only a character upon his stage and a convenient villain to serve as protagonist in a play. He was an actual historical personage, whose life provided drama which could be portrayed upon the stage for the entertainment and edification of the people of London. As in most of Shakespeare's plays, he could rely on the familiarity of his audience with the main lines of the story, along with their instant recognition of Richard.

As Richard III is closely related to the former plays, so is the character of Richard himself an integral part of that
relation. By the middle of Act III, at the very latest, of The Third Part of King Henry VI, Shakespeare must have had in mind the portrayal of Richard III. From the time of his soliloquy in that third act, Richard's influence upon the action becomes consistently stronger, until, in his own play, it very nearly reaches a monopoly. In Richard III, there are only ten scenes in which Richard is not present, and in those are presented the opinions of others concerning him or the carrying out of his commands. The last scene of the play might be considered an eleventh, as it begins with Richard's death at the hands of Henry Tudor Earl of Richmond and ends with the informal crowning of the victor as Henry VII.

While he was definitely neither the first nor the last writer to describe Richard, it is assuredly Shakespeare's image of Richard which has overwhelmingly dominated in the minds of men. Despite the combined efforts of historians, novelists, and critics to remind people that the historical Richard could not possibly have been as wicked or have done as much evil as popularly thought, "everyone knows" that Richard was a hunchback, that he was ugly, and that he committed horrendous villainies, including the murder of King Henry VI and his son Edward, his own brother George Duke of Clarence, and (worst of all) his innocent nephews, one of whom should have been his king. That this condition exists, while not necessarily good, is a strong tribute to the powers of Shakespeare's art. Of course Shakespeare is not
himself culpable for this state of affairs, for he was not trying to write history, but tragedy and dramatic poetry.

The image of Richard which is the apparent centerpiece of Shakespeare’s play is reinforced by the unanimity of critics in their appraisal of his character. None seems to reject the portrait of Richard as "an ethical monster . . . who shall dare to say to his soul, 'Evil, be thou my good!' and shall prosper accordingly until the predetermined day for the thunderbolt to fall upon him." He is described by all as "an opportunist . . . with the sentiments and the intentions of a Machiavel . . . a definite program of wickedness." Shakespeare’s Richard is additionally described as the reverse of the Platonic doctrine of a fair soul in a fair body, as a good soldier, and as a statesman. Some have pointed out that Richard also serves as the tool of nemesis in destroying a number of wicked people, and that only his nephews seem really undeserving of their deaths.

Even Harold Goddard, who so frequently finds new facets and ideas in Shakespeare, seems taken in by this unanimity. He agrees with the image of Richard as "a union of ambition, intellect, and unlimited faith in force, from a mixture of blood and brains." Apparently in dealing with this play Goddard

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7Hardin Craig, An Introduction to Shakespeare (Columbia, Missouri, 1948), pp. 69-70.
has lost his ability to find in a man's speeches and soliloquies phrases which show him to be quite unlike the surface image. Perhaps this skill for finding in Shakespeare's works ideas not apparent on the surface, the "Sweet, sweet, sweet poison for the ages tooth,"\(^9\) by which Shakespeare "conceals himself as utterly from the crowd and from seekers after pleasure and power as he reveals himself to those rarer individuals who can enter his spirit"\(^{10}\) is limited in Mr. Goddard's case to finding evidence that men are not as good as they seem. He seems much more able to use Shakespeare's lines to show flaws in his heroes than he is to show good qualities in his villains.

Sir E. K. Chambers probably sums up as well as any the accepted image of Richard III in Shakespeare's plays:

Richard is a monster, like Barabbas or Aaron, and not merely an example of ordinary human frailty. He makes evil his good; \ldots not so much for the sake of the evil itself, as for sheer joy in the technique of villainy \ldots scene after scene, he goes last off the stage, twisting his misshapen body in glee, not at the fruit, but at the success of his machinations.\(^{11}\)

This image of Richard as the Machiavellian monster, who delights in villainy and deceit, misshapen in body and mind, is not uniformly seen in Shakespeare's sources, although most of them do join in giving him credit for both skill and courage in battle. Perhaps a thorough study of the progressive

\(^{9}\)Ibid., p. ix, citing Shakespeare, \textit{King John}.

\(^{10}\)Ibid.

\(^{11}\)Chambers, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 17.
development of the description of Richard in the sources of Shakespeare's play and a comparison of the results of such a study with Shakespeare's portrait may make possible a deeper and clearer understanding of the character of the man as well as some further insight into the methods of Shakespeare's art.
A modern historian who wished to write about the reign of King Richard III would seek information in a number of primary sources: grants, petitions, the records of Parliament and others. The modern historian has learned to seek truth in such obscure places as the records of household expenses, for example, and to rely on these informal sources more than upon the reports of historians who are probably biased. In Shakespeare's day, however, there was little recourse to such sources, and most of what the average sixteenth century Englishman knew of history he learned from the chronicles, many of which were published at that time. The chronicles dealing with Richard III derive nearly all their information from three sources: Robert Fabyan's *New Chronicles of England and France*, Polydore Vergil's *History of England*, and *The History of King Richard the Third* by Sir Thomas More. Of these sources, modern historians would be quite doubtful, as both More and Vergil were servants of the Tudor monarchs, and Fabyan was a resident of Tudor London.

The least influential of these sources is the *Chronicles* of Fabyan, which is also the most circumstantial and least
detailed description of the events. Since Richard is credited by Shakespeare with a number of actions which occur before the historical Richard was capable of any independent influence upon the course of history, the relations of these happenings in his sources is a part of the background of Shakespeare's plays. According to Fabyan, after her husband (Richard Duke of York) and their son (Edmund Earl of Rutland) were killed at the battle of Wakefield (1461), Cecily Neville Duchess of York sent her two younger sons, Richard and George, to safety in Utrecht in Almayne. Thus Richard was not present in England for the battles in which his brother won the crown, nor for Edward's acclamation and coronation, and he could not have slain Lord Clifford at Towton in 1461.

Fabyan records the coronation of Edward IV, June 29, 1461, at which he had his brother George created Duke of Clarence. Richard was made Duke of Gloucester on November 1, 1461. On May 1, 1464, Edward IV was secretly married to Elizabeth Woodville Gray, the widow of a Lancastrian knight killed at Towton. On May 26 of the following year, at Westminster, Elizabeth Gray was crowned Queen of England. By 1469 the Earl of Warwick, through whose help Edward had gained the throne, was in revolt. The Queen's father and brother John were slain at this time by northern rebels, the best-known of whom was Robin of Redesdale. By 1470, Fabyan reports, Warwick and Edward's own brother George had withdrawn to France and formed a pact with
Margaret of Anjou and her son Edward. In September this pact was fulfilled in the landing of Warwick and Clarence in England, proclaiming the restoration of King Henry VI. Edward was taken by surprise and fled to Flanders, and Elizabeth went into sanctuary at Westminster, where her son Edward was born on November 3. That fall, Parliament declared both Edward and his faithful brother Richard to be traitors, and named Edward a usurper.

In April 1471, Edward and Richard landed again in England and moved swiftly to the city of York. When the citizens seemed unwilling to admit them, Edward claimed that he had returned only for his dukedom of York, and not to claim the throne. They were then admitted, and went from York in peace to London. By the fourteenth of April (Easter), Clarence had been won from his father-in-law's side to join his brothers at Barnet. In Edward's victory, Warwick was slain, and King Henry VI was returned to prison in the Tower at London. When Margaret and her son finally landed, Towton had been lost, and on May 4, the last Lancastrian forces were defeated at Tewkesbury with both Margaret and her son being taken prisoner.

In Fabyan's Chronicles it is reported that Prince Edward replied proudly to Edward's taunts, that Edward slapped him with his gauntlet, and that the prince was killed by the king's servants. Fabyan does not identify these servants, although he does record a "common report" that Henry VI was stabbed by
Richard, the king's brother. This report is common to almost all the sources of Shakespeare's plays.

Fabyan reports the expedition of Edward IV to France, where he made peace almost at once. By this treaty, Edward received a large sum of money and an annuity, and the King of France also sent gifts of money to the Queen's kinsmen and to Richard and Clarence. This was the summer of 1475.

On February 8, 1478, according to Fabyan, George Duke of Clarence was secretly put to death in the Tower, drowned in a barrel of Malmsey wine.

Following the death of Edward IV at Westminster, April 9, 1483, his brother Richard removed the young prince, Edward V, from the custody of his mother's family and brought him to London. In London, Richard got the younger prince, Richard Duke of York, from his mother's care in sanctuary at Westminster and lodged both boys in the Tower.

While plans were being made for the coronation of Edward V, Richard was made Lord Protector by Parliament; at the same time Anthony Woodville Lord Scales, Richard Gray (The Queen's son by her first marriage), and Thomas Vaughan were arrested, taken to Pomfret Castle, and there executed. On June 13, 1483, after a stormy session of the Council in the Tower, William Lord Hastings, the Lord Chancellor of England, was beheaded upon a log in the courtyard. At the same time the Archbishop of York, John Morton Bishop of Ely, and Sir William Stanley
Earl of Derby were arrested. Lord Stanley was released at once.

In June of 1483, after a sermon preached by Dr. Rafe Shaa on the bastardy of Edward IV's children, Richard assumed the crown at Westminster (June 20); two days later he was proclaimed king through the city of London. At this time Richard sent north for an army, which he sent back after his coronation, with his wife Anne, on July 6. After their coronation, he and his wife went on progress in the north, and at York they had their son Edward named Prince of Wales. Fabyan records a rumor at this time of the secret murder of the young princes in the Tower. Shortly afterward, the Duke of Buckingham was in rebellion, but his troops deserted him. Richard offered a reward of one thousand pounds for him, which was accepted by Buckingham's servant Banaster, and the Duke was beheaded after his confession.

By February of 1485, Richard was in agony and doubt, fearing whom to trust. Hoping to buy loyalty, he was liberal with gifts; but many Englishmen went over to France to join Henry Tudor Earl of Richmond. A plot was laid whereby Richmond promised to marry the eldest daughter of Edward IV in return for Yorkist support for his claim to the throne. At about this time, too, the writer of a popular rhyme was hanged and disemboweled; Fabyan quotes part of the rhyme:

the catte, the ratte, and lovell our dogge;  
Rulyth all England under the hog.¹

On August 22, 1485, at Bosworth Field, Richard fought for his crown. Some of his friends (including Lord Stanley) stood aside to see the outcome before risking themselves in battle; and some left him to serve Richmond. With Richard were slain John Howard Duke of Norfolk and Sir Robert Brackenbury, Lord Constable of the Tower; Norfolk's son, the Earl of Surrey, was taken captive. Fabyan records the despoilation of Richard's corpse and the obscurity of his burial. On August 23, Henry VII went to London to be crowned King of England. On October 11, apparently of more importance to the London draper, a new visitation of the plague hit London, in which were killed two Lord Mayors.

In contrast with the minor effect of Fabyan's *Chronicles*, the *History* of Sir Thomas More was one of the most important sources used by the later chroniclers of Richard's story. The relative value of the *History* is not greatly affected by the debate over its authorship, as it was accepted as More's work by his contemporaries and by those who used it as a source. More apparently wrote separate histories in Latin and English, using information acquired from conversations with Richard's contemporaries, especially John Morton Bishop of Ely, who became Chancellor and Archbishop of Canterbury under Henry VII, and who died in 1500. More's dependence upon the stories he gathered from people who had known Richard is strongly shown
by the frequency with which he qualifies his comments with such phrases as "as menne constantly saye"\(^2\) and "Somme wise menne also weene."\(^3\) Apparently those who followed him dropped many of these qualifying phrases, for statements which More called rumors and reports are accepted by later writers as facts further sanctified by the name and reputation of Henry VIII's Chancellor and a Roman Catholic Saint and martyr.

The story Sir Thomas tells is quite similar to the generally accepted image of Richard which Shakespeare embedded in the minds of readers for all time. It is More's description of Richard, with elaboration and a certain amount of exaggeration, which Shakespeare made eternal:

Richard the third sonne . . . of Richard Duke of York was in witte and courage egall with either of them [Edward IV and George Duke of Clarence] in body and prowesse farre under them bothe, little or stature, ill fetured of limnes, croke backed, his left shoulder much higher then his right, hard favoured of visage, and such as is in states called warlye, in other menne otherwise. He was malicious, wrathful, envious, and from afore his birth, euer frowards. It is for trouth reported . . . that hee came into the world with the feete forwarde . . . and (as the fame runneth) also not untothed . . . None euill captaine was hee in the warre . . . Sundrye victories hadde hee, and sometime overthrowes, but neuer in defaulte as for his owne parsone, either of hardinesse or polytike order. Free was hee called of dyspence, and somwhat above hys power liberall, with large giftes hee got him unstodfaste friendshipe . . . Hee was close and secrete, a deepe dissimuler, lewlye of counteynaunce, arrogant of heart, outwardly coumpinable where he inwardly hated, not letting to kisse whome hee thoughte to kyll: dispitious and cruel . . . .\(^4\)

\(^{3}\)Ibid. 
\(^{4}\)Ibid., pp. 7-8.
Richard Duke of York had claimed the throne by right of law, and had been declared by Parliament the heir to King Henry VI, in spite of the claims of Edward of Anjou. The duke, however, was too impatient to wait, and so was slain at Wakefield. He left three sons: Edward Earl of March, George, and Richard, all nobly born, greedy and ambitious of authority, proud, impatient of partners. Soon afterward Edward deposed Henry VI and was acclaimed King. Richard "slew with his own handes king Henry the sixt, being prisoner in the Tower, as menne constantly saye, and that without commandment or knowledge of the king . . . ." George, either from his own ambition or from the hatred of his enemies, was set at enmity with his brother Edward, charged with treason, and drowned in a butt of Malmsey. More records the opinions of "some wise menne" that Richard, although he objected openly to his brother's death, did so more faintly than one who actually desired his welfare.

Edward, before his death, received his tribute out of France, recaptured Berwick castle from the Scots, and attempted to make peace between the nobles and his wife's family. More records a very touching scene in which Edward gathered at his bedside the chief members of both factions, and begged them to end their enmity for his sake and for the sake of his son. He pleaded for concern between them, acknowledging his neglect

5Ibid., p. 6.  
6Ibid., p. 8.
of the matter, but seeking to bring peace so that the reign of his son would not be torn by their strife, jealousy, and ambition. They all appeared to have agreed to his petition, but, as it turned out, were not in earnest.

After Edward IV's death (April 9, 1483), his son was brought from Ludlow in Wales by his guardians, the relatives of his mother. Richard had persuaded the Queen to send only a small escort to bring her son, and used that opportunity to gain possession of the lad. Richard had publicly objected to the young king being surrounded by the low-born Woodvilles, whom he accused of the death of his brother George of Clarence. Richard achieved custody of his nephew by trickery, with the help of the Duke of Buckingham; and they arrested Thomas Vaughan, Lord Rivers (the Queen's brother), and Richard Gray (her second son), and sent them to Pomfret, where they were finally executed. Upon hearing of these events, the Queen went into sanctuary at Westminster with her oldest son the Marquis of Dorset, her youngest son Richard Duke of York, and her daughters. To her, there, came the Chancellor, the Archbishop of York, who delivered to her the Great Seal with the promise that if the nobles tried to crown any king other than Edward V, he would personally crown her younger son. Later fearing the bad opinions of others for his action, the Chancellor regained possession of the Seal.
Richard, entering London, showed to the people the arms which had been taken from the young king's escort, claiming that they had been armed in order to attack him. Parliament declared Richard to be Lord Protector of the King and the realm; and he appointed Bishop Russell of Lincoln the new Chancellor, and continued Lord Hastings in the office of Chamberlain.

Richard, ostensibly to end scandal and for the greater happiness of both boys, sent to have Richard Duke of York released from his mother's custody in the sanctuary, alleging that her keeping the lad was a reflection upon the honor of both himself and the council. The council sent the Archbishop of York, after the Duke of Buckingham had made clear that if he failed to gain custody of the king's brother they might well have to remove him from his mother's care by force. When the Archbishop had explained this to the king's mother, she expressed her fears and doubts of Richard, but finally agreed to release the boy into the care of the Archbishop.

In a passage which was not included in the English account but which Rastell (the editor) translated from the Latin Historia, More speculates as to the complicity of the Duke of Buckingham in the plans of Richard. He admits that many of Richard's friends lay a large share of the plotting to the account of Buckingham, but he prefers to believe that Richard was himself the chief architect of evil and that he brought Buckingham into the plot after he had gained possession of
both princes and of their guardians. The bargain then reached
was that the Duke of Buckingham should help Richard to the
throne, that his daughter should marry Richard's son, and
that he should receive the earldom of Hertford (all other
sources say the earldom of Hereford, and it was this property
which he claimed as of right) with a great deal of treasure.

Richard, still pretending that he would have his nephew
crowned, arranged that there should be two meetings. At the
first council, Buckingham and Richard heard William Catesby
report that Lord Hastings would be firmly against any plan to
replace "his master's children" with their uncle. More doubts
Catesby's good faith in making his report, remarking that
Richard loved Hastings, and attributing the Lord Chamberlain's
fall to his trusting too much. When Lord Stanley (the Earl of
Derby, husband to the Countess of Richmond) objected to the
dual meetings, More records that Hastings reassured him by
reminding him that "my servant Catesby" was at the second
meeting and would report to him about its deliberations. More
then describes the events at the Tower:

. . . . on the friday the thirtene day of Iune
many Lords xxxx assembled in the tower, and there
sat in counsaile . . . . These lordes so sytting
togyther . . . the protectour came in among them,
fyrst about ix. of the clock, saluting them curtsily,
& excusyng hymself that ha had ben a slepe that
day. And after a little talking wt them, he sayd
unto ye Bishop of Elye: my lord you haue very good
strawberies at your gardayne in Holberne, I re-
quire you let vs have a messe of them. {Richard
withdrew while Morton sent for them} . . . .
And sone after one hower betwene \textit{x}. & \textit{xi}. he returned into ye chamber among them, al changed with a wonderful soure angrye countenaunce, knitting the browes, frowning and freting and knawing on hys lippes, and so sat him downe, in hys place: . . . .

Then when he had sitten still a while, thus he began: "Questioning what should happen to those who plotted against him, then accusing his brother's wife and Jane Shore of witchcraft, showing his withered left arm as proof. Hastings says "If . . ." and is called traitor" . . . . And therw\textsuperscript{6} as in a great anger, he clapped his fist vpon ye borde with a great rappe . . . . and in come there rushing men in harneys. . . .\textsuperscript{7}

In the ensuing hubbub, Lord Stanley was wounded, and the Lord Chamberlain was arrested. Hastings was beheaded before noon upon a log which happened to be in the yard of the Tower in preparation for some repairs. More records many warnings which Hastings had received before his fall. The Earl of Derby had on the night before sent him a secret message, advising flight. Stanley's messenger told of his master's dream that both he and Hastings were torn by a boar (Richard's cognizance was a white boar), but Hastings mocked such fears. On the way to the Tower that morning, Hastings's horse "twise or thrise stumbled wt him almost to ye falling . . . .\textsuperscript{8} Lord Hastings had also, while going to the Tower that morning, been accompanied by a knight sent by Richard to make sure that he came (More does not identify this knight, but other sources name him: Thomas Howard Earl of Surrey, later Duke of Norfolk). On their way, Hastings stopped to speak with a priest whom he had last met at the same place, when he had been imprisoned

\textsuperscript{7}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 46-48. \textsuperscript{8}\textit{Ibid.}, p.50.
through the machinations of Edward IV's wife; and the knight joked with him that he had no need of a priest yet. They also met a pursuivant whom Hastings had met before on his way to prison; and Hastings boasted to that man that those who had sent him to prison were now there, and were to die that day (meaning the Queen's kindred at Pomfret).

In order to put a fair face upon Hastings' death, Buckingham and Richard put on some old armor, such as men would only use in an extreme emergency, and declared to the people that Lord Hastings had been part of a conspiracy to kill them both. Within two hours of Hastings' death, a proclamation was made public which had obviously been written before, for it was too long and too well written to have been dashed off in haste. This document alleged that the plot included the deaths of Richard and Buckingham and a plan to rule through young Edward V. It included accusations against Hastings for his share in the licentious behavior of Edward IV, claiming that he enticed his king into evil company to his own and his country's dishonor, setting him an example in abusing the body and in lust. It specifically charged him with having lain that night with Shore's wife, who had been Edward's mistress. The proclamation accused Hastings of treason and claimed that he had been killed with great haste to prevent his friends from rescuing him. More reports that also on this day were killed the Queen's kindred at Pomfret, without trial and without their being permitted
to speak. After these executions, Sir Richard Ratliff rejoined Richard.

Richard, after being unable to prove the complicity of Jane Shore in the plots, caused her to be put to public penance for harlotry. Under the supervision of the Bishop of London, she was paraded through the streets wearing only her shift, with a lighted candle borne before her. Although many of the people pitied her, her punishment was deserved, for she had been publicly the mistress of Edward IV and of Lord Hastings, and had become the mistress of the Marquis of Dorset (Queen Elizabeth's oldest son).

Richard now, according to More, enlisted in his plots the mayor of London, Edmund Shaa, and two "spiritual men . . . both doctors of divinite, both gret prechars, both of more learning then vertue, of more fame then lerning." These men, Dr. John Shaa, the mayor's brother, and Friar Penker, Provincial of the Augustinians, preached sermons in which they flattered Richard and set forth his right to the throne. Friar Penker is reported to have been stricken with a loss of voice in the midst of his sermon; but Dr. Shaa's sermon at Paul's Cross revived the claim (made at the time of Edward's marriage to Elizabeth Gray) that Edward had been bound by a precontract to Lady Elizabeth Lucy, and could not marry the widow. Lady Lucy had denied any contract, but the claim had been revived

9 Ibid., p. 58.
when Clarence was named heir to Henry VI as part of Warwick's rebellion. Also, More says that Dr. Shaa charged the Duchess of York with adultery and attempted to brand both Edward IV and George of Clarence as bastards, leaving Richard the only true son of his father, the former Duke of York, and the only rightful claimant to the throne.

A second part of the plan, of which these sermons were the first act, involved a speech by Buckingham before the commons of London. He contrasted Richard and Edward, and pointed out that Richard would put a stop to the extortion of "benevolences," and would end the tyranny and civil strife of Edward's reign. He reminded them of the death of the Duke of Clarence (for which he blamed the Woodvilles), and of Edward's mistresses and lechery. He referred to Dr. Shaa's sermon and to Richard's title to the crown, finally urging them to petition Richard to assume the throne and prevent the evils of a regency.

Buckingham and the mayor, then, went as spokesmen to Richard. At first Richard declined to speak with them, but finally he appeared in a gallery above them to hear what the Duke of Buckingham wanted. The Duke asked Richard to seize the crown, repeating the reasons he had urged to the people; Richard admitted the truth of their arguments, but refused the crown because of his love for his brother's children, for the sake of his own honor and reputation in other lands, and because there would be more trouble than pleasure in being a king. Richard finally yielded, however, when Buckingham threatened
that if he did not take the crown they would find some other claimant rather than allow Edward's children to reign.

Soon after this, Richard assumed the title of king, first doing so by taking the king's seat in the Court of King's Bench, where he pardoned many who had offended against him personally. He began his reign on June 26, and was crowned July 6. Shortly after his coronation, Richard went on progress in the north; and from Gloucester he sent word to Sir Robert Brackenbury, Lord Constable of the Tower, to put the young princes to death. The messenger, John Greene, brought Brackenbury's reply that he would rather die himself than do so.

Richard then consulted a page, asking if there was anyone who would do the king's command. The page recommended Sir James Tyrrell, who fulfilled Richard's command and slew the lads. More records the story, not the only way he heard it, but the way he thinks most likely: that Richard authorized Tyrrell to have custody of all the keys to the Tower for one night. The princes were locked away, and no one came to them except one Will Slaughter. Sir James arranged that Miles Forrest and John Dighton (his own groom) should smother the boys in their bedclothes, about midnight. When they had shown him the naked bodies of the young princes, he had them buried at the foot of the stairs under some stones, and left to bear word to Richard. It was rumored that a priest of Brackenbury's removed the bodies and buried them in a secret place, which
he never revealed. Another rumor said that the bodies were put into a lead coffin which was sunk at sea.

More admits that there were many who doubted the story, explaining that there was so much double dealing that it was hard to know anything for sure. He also mentions the doubts of many who accepted the claims of Perkin Warbeck to be the young Duke of York. He states as truth, however, that when Sir James Tyrrell was in the Tower on a charge of treason against Henry VII, he and Dighton confessed to the murder of the princes in the above form. He also records the ends of the murderers: that Forrest "rotted" at St. Martin's, that Dighton "in dede yet walketh on a liue in good possibilitie to bee hanged ere he dye,"\(^1\) and that Tyrrell was beheaded for treason on Tower Hill. King Richard, he adds, was

\[\ldots\] slain in the fielde, hacked and hewed of his enemies handes, haryed on horsebacke dead, his here in despite torn and tagged lyke a cur dogge

\[\ldots\] And yet all the meane time spente in much pain and trouble outward, much feare anguish and sorow within. For I haue heard by credible report of such as wer secrete wt his chamberers, that after this abhominable deede done, he neuer hadde quiet in his minde, hee neuer thought himself sure. Where he went abrode, his eyen whirled about, his body priuily fenced, his hand euer on his dager, his countenance and maner like one alway ready to strike againe, he toke ill rest a nightes, lay long wakyng and musing, sore weried with care & watch, rather slumbred then slept, troubled wyth feareful dreames

\[\ldots\] \(^1\)

\(^1\) Ibid., p. 87.

\(^1\) Ibid.
Apparently Richard's doubts and fears were justified, for the rest of his reign was a continual alarm. Soon after his return to London, he was faced with conspiracy and rebellion from his erstwhile supporter, the Duke of Buckingham. More himself admits that there is no certainty as to the reasons for this revolt, although he mentions some possibilities. Buckingham, according to some reports, had begun by urging Richard to claim the throne, intending to use him to shorten his own road to the crown. Others attribute his falling away from Richard to Richard's failure to give him the lands which he claimed, which were part of the earldom of Hereford, and to the influence of the Bishop of Ely, with whose custody he had been entrusted. At any rate, his first move of rebellion was to release his prisoner, who went at once to join the Earl of Richmond in Brittany. Buckingham may even have been involved in some of the Tudor plots.

More's account ends with Bishop Morton (Ely) turning Buckingham from his loyalty to Richard, and he does not relate the outcome of the Duke's revolt or of Richmond's invasion. He does not fulfill his implied promise to relate the manner and circumstances of Richard's death, with the treatment of his body. For these items, the later chroniclers were forced to turn to the third basic source of the history of Richard's life: Polydore Vergil's History of England.
Polydore Vergil was an Italian writer of considerable fame. He was a friend and correspondent (as was More) of Erasmus, and he came to England as the deputy of his kinsman (a Cardinal) for the collection of Peter-Pence in England. He was recommended to Henry VII, and by 1508 was Archdeacon of Wells. At the request of Henry VII he undertook to write a history of England, in addition to his other duties. In October, 1510, he was naturalized, and by 1514 he was using his influence in Rome to aid Wolsey's efforts to acquire a Cardinal's hat. Apparently Vergil and his Cardinal kinsman did not work hard or fast enough, for he was in prison in 1515. By 1517, however, he was free, and he had not lost his benefices in England.

In 1534 the Latin Historia Anglia, covering the history of England through 1509, was published in Basle in twenty-six volumes, dedicated to King Henry VIII. The third edition (Basle, 1555) added a twenty-seventh book, covering the years from 1509 to 1538. Many English writers of the time criticized Vergil for falsehood and a lack of understanding of English ways of thought, and several accused him of having destroyed a number of ancient manuscripts of English history. He was also said to have borrowed manuscripts and books from Oxford and other libraries and have refused to return them. It was necessary for Henry VIII to command the librarian at the
University of Oxford to let Polydore have books when they refused to let him have any more.

Nearly all the information which they did not get from More, the sixteenth-century chroniclers found in Vergil's account. His report is stylistically concise and factual, with dates and places for most events, especially in the later books, which deal with more nearly contemporary history.

According to Vergil, in 1456 the Yorkist forces were victorious at the first Battle of St. Albans, at which Edmund Duke of Somerset and the Lord Clifford were slain. In 1458 a mutual oath of peace was sworn by both sides, but it did not last very long. After the Yorkist victory at Northampton, at which King Henry VI was captured and the Duke of Buckingham (Humphrey Stafford) was killed, Parliament passed an act acknowledging the superior claim of the Duke of York, and naming him King Henry's heir. Queen Margaret (of Anjou), naturally enough, did not approve of this measure, which disinherited her son, so she continued to lead armies against the Duke.

At the battle of Wakefield, in 1461, the Duke of York and his son Edmund Earl of Rutland were killed, and Richard Earl of Salisbury (father of the Earl of Warwick) was captured and immediately beheaded. The heads of the leaders were exhibited over the gates of the principal cities of the realm. The Queen moved at once toward the army of Richard Neville Earl of Warwick at St. Albans. Warwick, in the face of superior numbers, fled to join the army of York's heir, Edward Earl of
March. On Palm Sunday, 1461, at Towton, the Yorkist forces were victors; but the King (who had opposed giving battle on a holy day) and the Queen escaped to Scotland, where they bought safety by giving the Castle of Berwick to King James III. From there Margaret went to Anjou to gather new forces, taking her son with her.

Edward went at once to London, where he was acclaimed king. He held a parliament that same year (1461), at which he reorganized the government "as it wer of new, much for the benyfit of the commonwelth," and had all the statutes of Henry VI's parliaments repealed. In addition, Yorkist supporters were rewarded: the King's brothers (George and Richard) were made dukes of Clarence and Gloucester respectively; John Neville (Warwick's brother) was made Marquis Montacute; Henry Burcsher (brother of Thomas Archbishop of Canterbury) was created Earl of Essex and was given Edward's sister Elizabeth as his wife; and William Fawconbridge became Earl of Kent. Vergil notes and comments upon the character of the title of Gloucester:

But it seemeth, that the title of Gloceter geven unto earles and dukes for honors sake hath been fetall, and foreshewed the destruction of them who should enjoy it, forasmuch as, before this Humfrey the younger brother of King Henry V, Hugh Spencer, and Thomas of Woodstocke sonne to Edward the Thirde, thone earle, thother duke of Glocester, ended their lives by miserable violence: also, after them, king

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Richard the Thirde, duke of Glocester was slaine in bataile within the realme; so that the title thereof may as well be applied proverbially unto unfortunate personages . . . 13

Henry Duke of Somerset, despairing of the Lancastrian cause, came over to Edward; then hearing of Henry's new army, he attempted to join him in Scotland, was captured and beheaded for treason. This army of Henry's, however, was defeated at Hexham, and Henry was again captured by the Yorkists and put into the Tower. In 1464, Edward sent the Earl of Warwick to France, to arrange a marriage between Edward and the lady Bona (sister of the Queen of France). While the earl was making arrangements for a peace with France, however, word reached the French court that Edward had secretly married Elizabeth Gray, daughter of the future Earl Rivers and a widow with two sons. The marriage had been kept secret because the bride was not of Edward's social standing, and many felt that he had dishonored both himself and England because of his lustful nature. At about this time, too, Edward arranged a marriage for his sister Margaret with the heir of the Duke of Burgundy.

Warwick, upon his return, reported to Edward and then went to his own lands. In 1467, George Neville, Warwick's brother, was made Archbishop of York; and Phillip of Burgundy died. Warwick called his brothers to join him, and explained to them his reasons for turning from Edward to support Henry

13 Ibid., p. 73.
again as king. The Archbishop agreed to join him, but his brother Montacute refused to turn against Edward, although he later agreed to join with the rest when Warwick had received many signs of support. Vergil describes an important part of the conspiracy:

After these things, therle of Warwake, being a man of most sharpe wit and forecast, conceaving before hand that George duke of Clarence was for some secret ... alyenated in mynde from his broother king Edward ... discoveryd to the duke his intent and purpose, praying him to joigne therein. ... fynally, after many faire promyses, he affyancyd unto the duke his daughter ... by whose perswation and request the duke was overcom, and promysyd to do all things as he should think good. 

Meanwhile therle transportyd with the duke unto Calyce; and here, after the duke had sworne never to breake the promyse which he had made, therle placyd unto him in maryage his eldest daughter, Isabel ... they began both two ... to conferre betwixt them selves of the maner and meanes howe to deale in this warre.  

Meanwhile there was an uprising in York, raised by the supporters of the Earl of Warwick, and put down by his brother Lord Montacute, who took captive and beheaded the people's captain, and turned the mob away from the city of York. King Edward, who had begun to suspect Warwick and Clarence, sent William Herbert Earl of Pembroke to intercept the Yorkshiremen before they could reach London. Herbert was defeated by them at Northampton, and they were met by Warwick and Clarence with forces brought from Calais. Edward again sent the Earl of Pembroke against the Earl of Warwick, and followed with a small

14 Ibid., pp. 120-121
force. Warwick won at Banbury, and took Herbert prisoner. Richard Earl Rivers and his son John (who had been married to the wealthy octogenarian dowager duchess of Norfolk) were slain. While messengers were being exchanged for peace, the Earl of Warwick captured Edward and sent him to be kept prisoner in Middleham castle. Edward, however, corrupted his guards with promised rewards and escaped. 15

Edward, unable to gather an army in York, went to Lancaster and from there, with the aid of William Hastings, the Lord Chamberlain, made his way to London. After Edward's victory at Edgecote (1470), Warwick and Clarence fled to France. With the aid of King Louis of France, Warwick came to an agreement with Queen Margaret:

Fyrst of all, Anne daughter to therle of Warwick . . . was affyancyed to prince Edward; after that the earle and duke [Clarence, Edward IV's brother] promysyd by othe not to surcease the warres before the kingdom of England should be restoryd to kinge Henry or Edward his soone; fynally, the quene and prince swore to make therle and duke protectors of the commonwealth . . . till the prince should be mete and fytt by himself to undertake that charge. 16

Six months after his departure from England, Warwick returned to land at Dartmouth, and proclaimed Henry VI king of England. Edward, unprepared, fled with his brother Richard to Flanders; Queen Elizabeth went into Sanctuary at Westminster, and there bore a son whom she named Edward. Warwick went at once to London, released King Henry and had him proclaimed, and called

15 Ibid., p. 124. 16 Ibid., p. 131.
a parliament. This parliament, meeting in December, 1471, declared Henry VI king, and made Warwick and Clarence protectors. Henry Tudor, son of the Earl of Richmond, was brought by his uncle, the Lancastrian Earl of Pembroke, to London, where King Henry saw him and "ys reportyd to have sayd to the noble men ther present, 'This trewly, this is he unto whom both we and our adversaryes must yeald and geave over the domynion.'"17

Early next spring (1472) Edward returned to England. He went first to the city of York, and was admitted upon swearing that he came only to claim his heritage as Duke of York and after taking an oath of loyalty to King Henry VI. Encouraged by the failure of Marquis Montacute (Warwick's brother) to block his path, as well as by the news that the Earl himself was at home in Warwickshire, Edward moved his army into Leicestershire and toward London, possibly to join with his brother Clarence, "before he [Clarence] shoulde coome unto his late confederates, least otherwyse he might be brought from the mynde he was now in, because he knew the duke was not very constant."18 Warwick, troubled that neither his brother Montacute nor his son-in-law Clarence had joined him, sent for Clarence and suspected, when he did not come, "that he was corruptyd by his broothers . . . ."19 When Clarence's army and the forces of his brother Edward came near each other,

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17 Ibid., p. 135.  
18 Ibid., p. 140.  
19 Ibid., p. 141.
Richard Duke of Gloucester conferred secretly with each of his brothers, and finally they made peace and were reunited. Edward then went to London, where he resumed custody of King Henry VI.

From London Edward went out to fight against the Earl of Warwick at Barnet Field, where Warwick was slain. Vergil says that the city of Gloucester, during the rebellion of 1471, remained loyal to Richard and refused to give either aid or comfort to his enemies. After Warwick's death, Queen Margaret and her son arrived in England from France, where they had been delayed by bad weather. Persuaded by the Duke of Somerset, Margaret accepted battle with Edward at Tewkesbury. In the defeat, both she and her son, as well as the Duke, were taken prisoner. Somerset was immediately beheaded, but Margaret and Prince Edward were taken into the presence of King Edward. Young Edward spoke boldly before the King, and Edward pushed him away with his hand, "whom furthwith, those that wer present wer George duke of Clarence, Richard duke of Glocester, and William lord Hastinges, crewelly murderyd . . . ."²⁰ Queen Margaret was then taken to London, until arrangements could be made for her ransom. Jasper Tudor, the Earl of Pembroke, took his nephew Henry Earl of Richmond to Brittany. Edward IV then proceeded to pacify the land, and that all feare of enemies might be abolishyd, Henry the Sixt, being not long before deprryvyd of hys dyademe, was put to death in the tour of London.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 152.
The contynuall report is, that Richard duke of Gloces-
ter killyd him with a swoord, whereby his brother
might be delveryd from all feare of hostyltytie.21

Henry was then first buried at Chertsey Abbey, and his body
was later moved to Windsor.

In 1475 King Edward sent an army to join with the Duke of
Burgundy against the King of France. When his allies failed
to meet him, Edward agreed to meet with King Louis to talk of
peace. Both kings came to the appointed place with guards,
and they met on the bridge over the river Somme. They agreed
upon a truce, on the condition that Louis pay Edward fifteen
thousand crowns at once, and a thousand crowns a year as long
as Edward lived. They also agreed that Louis's son should marry
Edward's oldest daughter, Elizabeth.

Edward arranged with the Duke of Brittany that he should
hold the Earl of Richmond and not aid him in an attack on
England (after Edward had found that the Duke might by no means
be brought to slay the Earl or hand him over to Edward).

In the midst of his apparent successes, however,

... sudaynly he fell into a fact most horryble,
commandyng rashly and uppon the suddane his brother
George duke of Clarence to be apprehandyd and put
to death, who was drowned (as they say) in a butte
of malmesey ... . And as touching the cause of
his death, thoug I have enqueryd of many ...
yeat have I no certaintie thereof ... . A report
was eaven then spred amongst the common people,
that the king was afeard, by reason of a soothsayers
prophesy ... . that, after king Edward, showld
raigne soome one the first letter of whose name

21 Ibid., pp. 155-156.
should be G. . . . Others lay an other cause of his
death . . . That abowt the same time thold hatryd
renewing betwixt the two brothers . . . the duke,
being a wydower, requyryd . . . to have in maryage
Mary, thonly doughter of Charles duke of Burgoigne
and that king Edward . . . hinderyd that affynytye. 22

The king then put to death a servant of Clarence's on charges
of sorcery, and, when the duke protested, Edward committed
his brother to prison and had him executed. "But yt ys very
lykly," Polydore reports,

that King Edward right soone repentyd that dede;
for (as men say) whan so ever any sewyd for saving
a mans lyfe, he was woont to cry owt in a rage, "O
infortunate broother, for whose lyfe no man in this
world wold once make request;" affirming in that
manyfestly, that he was cast away by envye of the
nobylytie. 23

In 1482 Edward sent his brother Richard to war against
the Scots, and Lord Stanley recovered the fortress of Berwick
while Richard pushed further into Scotland. Fearing treason
from his Scottish allies, however, Richard made peace with
King James and withdrew; Polydore admits that this doubt was
"not without cause." 24

Edward fell ill, and in his will constituted his son his
heir, "whom he commytted to the tuytion of Rycherd his brother,
duke of Glocester," 25 and died in April of 1483. He was
solemnly buried at Windsor. William Lord Hastings sent word
to Richard, who was in Yorkshire, of his brother's death and

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the conditions of his will. These messengers urged Richard
to make haste in coming to the side of his nephew, who was in
Wales, and to bring him to London.

When Richard had intelligence hereof, he began to
be kyndlyd with an ardent desyre of soveraigntie;
but for that ther was no cause at all whereby he
might bring the same to passe that could carry any
colour of honestie, so much as in owtward shew and
apparance, he differryd the devise thereof presently
unto another time . . . . 26

Meanwhile Richard sent kind letters to the Queen, promising
his loyalty to her sons. He called to York all the nobles of
the district and led them in swearing obedience to prince Edward,
who was then in Ludlow (in Wales) under the tuition of his
uncle Anthony Woodville Earl Rivers, his half-brother Sir
Richard Gray, and Sir Thomas Vaughn. Henry Duke of Buckingham
met Richard at Northampton, on his way to meet Prince Edward,
and Richard told the duke of his plan to take his nephew's
crown. They met the Woodvilles and Edward at Stony Stratford,
where Richard took custody of the prince and arrested his
companions. They were sent to Pomfret Castle. When she heard
of these arrests, Elizabeth Gray took her daughters, her son
Richard Duke of York (young Edward's brother), and her oldest
son, Thomas Marquis Dorset, into sanctuary at Westminster.

Richard, arriving in London, called a council and persuaded
them to send to get the young prince (Richard Duke of York)

26 Ibid., p. 173.
from his mother's care at Westminster. Upon their successful return, Richard lodged both boys in the Tower. This caused no suspicion, since it was the custom for the king to come from the royal residence in the Tower for his coronation. But Richard, now,

. . . whose mynde partly was enflamyd with desire of usurping the kyngdom, partly was trubblyd by guyltynes of intent to commyt so haynous wickednes . . . thought afterward nothing better than to mollyfy the multitude with largesse and lyberalytie.27

He also postponed the coronation of Edward V, pretending that it was for the good of the realm. Seeing that Hastings was the most desirous to have young Edward crowned, Richard laid a trap for him at a council called to meet in the Tower. There were present, besides Richard and Hastings, the Archbishop of York, the Bishop of Ely, the Duke of Buckingham, Thomas Lord Stanley, John Lord Howard, and some others whom Richard thought to be on his side. Richard there charged that he was the victim of the Queen's sorcery. When Hastings expressed doubt, Richard charged him with treason and had him arrested, along with Stanley and the Bishops of York and Ely. Hastings was beheaded that very day, while the others were committed to prisons. Stanley was soon released, for fear his son might take vengeance; The Archbishop of York was intrusted to Sir James Tyrrell and Bishop Morton to the charge of the Duke of Buckingham. Then Richard sent word to Pomfret Castle to behead the prisoners there.

27Ibid., pp. 178-179.
Richard secretly persuaded Ralph Shaw, a preacher of some reputation, that he was the only legitimate son of his father Richard Duke of York; and asked Shaw to so instruct the people in a sermon at Paul's Cross. Shaw obeyed, calling the attention of the people to Richard's being the only son who resembled his father. "But", Polydore adds,

ther ys a common report that king Edwards children wer in that sermon caulyd basterdes, and not king Edward, which is voyd of all truthe; for Cecyly king Edwards mother . . . complanyd afterward in sundry places to right many noble men . . . of that great injury which hir soon Richard had doon hir.28

Richard next sent the Duke of Buckingham to set forth his right to the throne before the commons of London, and although they had not acclaimed him, assumed the royal seat in Westminster. He then sent to Sir Richard Ratliffe at Pomfret to bring soldiers from Yorkshire. Richard and his wife Anne were crowned at Westminster in July, 1484, without assent of the people, but merely by force and the will of the nobles.

While on progress in Gloucester, Richard sent word to Sir Robert Brackenbury, the Constable of the Tower, to kill the young princes. Richard was joyfully received in York, and from there sent young Edward Earl of Warwick (Clarence's son) to prison at Sheriff Hatton. Receiving word that Brackenbury would not kill the boys, Richard sent James Tyrrell to murder them; "but with what kinde of deathe those sely chyldren wer

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28 Ibid., pp. 184-185.
executyd yt is not certaney known."29 After allowing the rumor of the deaths of the princes to be made public, Richard called a parliament in York. Here John Howard was created Duke of Norfolk and his son Thomas Earl of Surrey, and ambassadors were sent to the Duke of Brittany that he should continue to hold Henry Earl of Richmond. "Whan these thinges wer doone the king returnyd to London, whom all the cyty for dewties sake cam furth to mete."30

Richard, according to Vergil, now began (either from fear of the people or from repentance) to act the part of a good man, with liberality and promise of good government. This did not last long, however, for the fiscal pressures which resulted from Buckingham's rebellion and the sorrow of losing his only son caused him to reimpose certain exactions which he had earlier removed. Polydore attributes Buckingham's falling away to the following causes:

... for Humfrey soomtyme erle of Hereforde ... left of his body begotten two dowghters ... his heyres ... Mary who maryed to Henry erle of Darby, theldest soon to John duke of Lancaster, who afterward ... was caulyd Henry the Fourth, and Alyenore whom Thomas of Woodstok duke of Glocester and erle of Buckingham tooke in maryage ... And so ... was therle of Herefoords inheritance devyded, thone moytie to thowse of Lancaster, thother to the bloods of Stafford, from whom the dukes of Buckingham deryve their pedygre. And after a few yeres all the rase of King Henry the Fourth faylyd in prince Edward,

29Ibid., p. 188.
30Ibid., p. 191. It is unusual that the people were so duty-bound in Richard's case, and this same duty did not keep them from standing sullenly silent at the coronation of Henry VIII's Queen, Anne Boleyn.
42

This disagreement was augmented by the influence of the Bishop of Ely, whom Buckingham was holding as prisoner for Richard. Buckingham was persuaded to join a conspiracy to replace Richard with Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond. While Bishop Morton went to Brittany, to join Richmond, Buckingham got together an army. His forces deserted him, however, and he was forced to flee. Richard offered a reward of one thousand pounds for his capture, which was claimed by his servant Banyster. Buckingham confessed his treason and was beheaded.

After an attempt was made in Brittany to kill him, the Earl of Richmond went to France. Richard's parliament declared all the exiles to be traitors and confiscated their property. Thomas Lord Stanley, Earl of Derby, was not named a traitor, although he was married to Richmond's mother. At about this same time, Richard made a truce with the Scots.

In 1485, Richard planned to marry his niece Elizabeth, to whom Richmond was to have been married if Buckingham's plot had succeeded, and as a first step, he persuaded her mother

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31 Ibid., pp. 192-193.
to come out of sanctuary. He then convinced Queen Elizabeth to write letters to her son Marquis Dorset and bring him back from Brittany to England. Richard about this time brought about the death of his wife Queen Anne, either by poison, or by the sorrow which overcame her upon learning that he had spread rumors that she was dying. In August the Earl of Richmond landed at Milford-Haven and moved through Wales toward England. Richard sought to insure the allegiance, or at least the neutrality, of the Earl of Derby by holding as hostage his son George Lord Strange.

Richard moved to meet Richmond at Bosworth, a village in Leicestershire. "Yt ys reportyd that king Rycherd had that night a terryble dreame; for he thowght in his slepe that he saw horruble ymages as yt wer of eve11 spyrytes haunting evy- dently abowt him,"32 which dream Vergil attributes to his guilty conscience. In the battle, Richard made an attack directly upon Richmond, and although Richard slew William Brandon, Henry's standard bearer, and John Cheney, a man of noted courage, yet Henry withstood him until the army of Lord Stanley, who had been standing to one side, came to his rescue. Polydore records that many who came with Richard to the battle did not fight for him, or fought only a little. John Duke of Norfolk, Sir Robert Brackenbury Lord Lieutenant of the Tower, and Sir Richard Ratliffe were among the slain. Later, William

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32 I[bid.], p. 221.
Catesby was captured and executed; Henry Earl of Northumberland and Thomas Earl of Surrey (Norfolk's son) were also taken captive.

The report is that king Richard might have sought to save himself by flight; for they who were about him . . . suspected treason, and exhorted him to fly . . . but he, who was not ignorant that the people hated him, out of hope to have any better hap afterward, said to have answered, that that very day he would make an end either of war or life . . . wherefore . . . he came to the field with the crown upon his head . . . .33

When he had achieved victory, Henry Earl of Richmond was acclaimed king by the soldiers, and he was crowned on the field by Lord Stanley with the crown that Richard had worn onto the field. "In the mean time," Polydore reports,

the body of king Rycherd nakyd of all clothing, and layd upon an horse bare with the arms and legges hanginge downe on both sydes, was browght to thabbay of monks Franciscanes at Leycester, a myserable spectacle . . . and ther was buryed two days after without any pompe or solemn Funerall.34

Vergil also describes him:

He was lyttle of stature, deformyd of body, thone shoulde being higher than thother, a short and sowe cowntenaunce, which semyd to savor of mischief, and utter evydently craft and deceyt. The whyle he was thinking of any matter, he dyd continually byte his nether lyppe . . . . Also he was woont to be ever with his right hand pulling out of the sheath to the mydest, and putting in agane, the dagger which he did alway were. Trewly he had a sharp witt, provydent and subyle, apt both to counterfayt and dissemble; his corage also hault and fearce, which faylyd him not in the very death . . . .35

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33 Ibid., p. 225.
34 Ibid., p. 226.
From these sources, then, comes almost all the knowledge of Richard III which was available to Shakespeare. From them were written the other sixteenth century chronicles, although there were other contemporary reports which have since been used by modern historians (including the Great Chronicle of London and the Continuation of the Croyland Chronicle). Only after the passage of many centuries did historians learn to seek facts in the records rather than in the reports of men. Since then, much has been learned about Richard (as well as about many other people and events) from the records of expenses and the commands of the kings. These sources, however, did not influence the image of Richard which Shakespeare drew from his sources and solidified in his plays.
CHAPTER III

THE SECONDARY HISTORICAL SOURCES

Based primarily upon the accounts of Polydore Vergil and Sir Thomas More, the later sixteenth century chronicles tell essentially the same story. Edward Hall, in his *Union of the Two Famous Houses of Lancaster and York* and the revision entitled *Chronicle: Containing The History of England*, told the story first. His report serves as the basis of the *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* of Raphael Holinshed, the chief source of Shakespeare's history, as well as the chronicles of Richard Grafton and John Stow.

The story they tell, beginning with the conflict between the Duke of York (Richard's father) and the Duke of Somerset (the favorite of Queen Margaret of Anjou), is essentially the history of the Wars of the Roses. In 1451, Richard Duke of York returned from Ireland to find the realm of England being very poorly governed, if indeed it could be said to be governed at all. The lands in France, gained by Henry V at such great cost, had been lost at equally great cost. Normandy had been captured by the French, and little was left of the English holdings except Aquitaine and the port of Calais. Seeing the weakness of the policy of Henry VI, the friends, kinsmen, and
allies of the Duke of York,

which were of no small number, began to practise
the gouernaunce of his title: Infusyng and puttyng
into mens heades secretly his right to the Crowne,
his polite gouernaunce, his gentle behauiour
too all the Irishe Nacion, affirmynge, that he which
had brought that rude and saugage nation to ciuile
fashion, and English maners, would (if he once
ruled in the realme of English) depose euill Coun-
saylors, correct euill Iudges, and reforme all
matters amisse, and vnamended. And to set open the
flood gates of these deuises, it was thought neces-
sary, to cause some great commocion and y^e risyng
of people to be made agaynst the king: so that if
they preuayled, then had the Duke of Yorke and his
complices, their appetite and desyre.1

When the Duke of York returned from Ireland, he began to
gather an army in the Marches of Wales. King Henry also
gathered forces, and sent to the Duke to learn why he was in
arms. York accused the Duke of Somerset of treasonous counsel,
offering his own advice as to what should be done in France.
King Henry refused to accept the counsel of York, but did
commit Somerset to ward after an exchange of letters with the
Duke of York. As soon as York had submitted to the King,
however, Somerset was released. The two dukes engaged in a
bout of charge and counter-charge with little result. At about
that tume, though, the people of Gascony (a former English
holding which had been recaptured by the French) sent word
that they were prepared to rebel against the French if the
English would aid them. In view of this crisis, and since
York's son Edward Earl of March was gathering an army to free

1Richard Grafton, Chronicle; or History of England (London,
his father, the Duke was released.

Sent to aid the Gascons, the Lord Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, was slain. The French retook the city of Bordeaux and all of Aquitaine, land which had been English since the time of Henry II in the twelfth century. In October, a son was born to Margaret of Anjou, Henry's wife. The King was at that time suffering from a recurrence of the insanity which he had inherited from his mother, Catherine of Valois, and he is said to have called the birth of Prince Edward a miracle. Upon his recovery, he elevated his Tudor half-brothers to the Earldoms of Richmond and Pembroke.

The following year, 1454, saw a renewal of the strife between the Dukes of Somerset and York, with York joining in an alliance with the Nevilles, the Earl of Salisbury and his son the Earl of Warwick. As a result of their efforts, Somerset was again arrested.

During an attack of the King's illness the next year, York governed England; but when Henry recovered, he (whether of his own will or at the demand of his wife) freed the Duke of Somerset and appointed him his deputy in Calais. York got together an army, as did Henry. The Duke asked redress for his wrongs, which was refused. On May 23, 1455, at St. Albans, the Yorkist forces won a victory which included the capture of King Henry. Somerset was slain, and a parliament called by York attempted to restore peace. It was agreed that Henry
was to continue to reign, but that York was to be both his heir and the protector of the realm.

Margaret, joined by the heir of the Duke of Somerset, called a council at Greenwich which deposed the Duke of York. There was rioting in London, and both the French and the Scots took advantage of the civil disorders to attack England. The French raided at Sandwich, and the Scots invaded the North. Queen Margaret's efforts to trap the Duke of York failed, but an apparent peace was arranged in 1458. The leaders of both parties attended church together, going hand-in-hand in a procession. Immediately afterward, however, an attack was made by a servant of the King's upon a servant of the Earl of Warwick, who escaped after wounding his attacker. The fellow servants of the wounded one attacked the Earl, who barely escaped. The Queen ordered the arrest of Warwick, but he escaped to Calais, of which he was captain. After consulting with the Duke of York, Warwick's father, the Earl of Salisbury, gathered an army and went to protest to the King. Margaret got up an army and sent it against the Earl, for the first time using as cognizance for herself and her son the badge of the white swan. At the ensuing battle at Bloreheath, two of Salisbury's sons were taken captive. They were brought to Chester, but fear of the Marchmen caused their keepers to set them free.
York gathered an army, and the Earl of Warwick returned from Calais, but when one of their leaders, Anthony Trollope, went over to the King's side, they withdrew. Henry VI went to York's castle of Ludlow in Wales, and sent the Duchess and her two younger sons (George and Richard) to the keeping of her sister the Duchess of Buckingham. York and his allies were proclaimed traitors, and Somerset was named Captain of Calais. When he tried to assume his post, however, the soldiers at Calais refused to admit him.

In 1460, despite a letter of excuse sent by York and the Nevilles to the King, a parliament at Coventry, which began the twentieth of September. . . . attainted of high treason, Richard duke of Yorke, Edward erle of March his sonne and heire, Richard earle of Warwike Edmund earle of Rutland, Richard earle of Salisburie, Iohn lord Clifford . . . Thomas Neuill and Iohn Neuill sons of the earle of Salisburie . . . and Alice countesse of Salisburie, their goods and possessions escathed, and their heirs disherited vnto the ninth degree, their tenants spoiled of their goods, maimed and slaine; the towne of Ludlow, belonging to the duke of Yorke, was robbed to the bare walls, & the dutches of Yorke spoiled of hir goods. 2

Some said that King Henry tried to add to this bill of attainder a clause by which the accused could be pardoned if they would submit to him. An attempt at Calais to arrest them failed.

At Northampton, after a bloody battle, Edward Earl of March and the Earl of Warwick captured King Henry VI. The Tower

surrendered to Edward, and Margaret and her son fled to Scotland. The Duke of York returned again from Ireland to make known his claim to the crown:

For you all know (or should know) that the high and mighty prince kynge Richard the. ii. was the trew and indubitate heyre, to the valeant Conqueror, and renouned prince kynge Edward the iii. as sonne and heyre to the hardy knyght, and couragious capitayn, Edward prince of Wales, duke of Aquitayn and cornewall, eldest sonne to the said kyng Edward the iiij. . . .

Which kyng Richard, of that name the second, was lawfully and iustly possessed of the crowne, and diademe of this Realme and region, tyll Henry of Derby, duke of Lancaster and Herdford, sonne to Iohn duke of Lancaster, the fourth begotten sonne, to the sayd kyng Edward the. iiij. and yonger brother, to my noble auncestor Lyonel duke of Clarence, the. iii. begotten sonne of the sayd kyng Edward, by force & violence . . . wrongfully vsurped and entruded upon the royall power and high estate of this Realme and region, takyny on hym yª name, stile, & auuthoritie of kyng and gouernor of the same. And . . . compassed and accomplished, the death & destrucccion of hys naturall prince . . . After whose piteous death and execrable murder . . . the right & title of the crowne . . . was lawfully reuerted and returned to Rogier Mortimer, erle of Marche, sonne and heyre to lady Philippe, the onely child of the above rehersed Lyonel, duke of Clarence, to which Rogiers daughter called Anne, my most derest and welbeloued mother, I am the very trew and lineall heyre.3

In consideration of the years he had already reigned, parliament determined that Henry VI should continue to bear the crown for his lifetime. York was named his heir and governor of the realm.

Queen Margaret, naturally, did not accept the ruling of parliament which set aside her son as heir to the throne.

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She gathered an army and met the Yorkist forces at Wakefield. In this battle, both the Duke of York and his son the Earl of Rutland were killed. The young Earl, a mere boy, was most piteously murdered by Lord Clifford, despite his pleas for mercy and the prayers of his chaplain. Many considered Clifford to be a tyrant and less than a gentleman for slaying so young a foe, since Edmund was only twelve years old.\footnote{Grafton, Chronicle, Vol. I, p. 671.} 

But the same lord Clifford not satisfied herewith, came to the place where the dead corpse of the duke of Yorke laie, caused his head to be stricken off, and set on it a crowne of paper, fixed it to a pole and presented it on the queene, not lieng farre from the field, in great despite, at which great reioising was shewed . . . \footnote{Holinshed, Chronicles, Vol. III, p. 269.} 

The Earl of Salisbury and other prisoners were beheaded at Pomfret.

The following year, Edward Earl of March, York's heir, took up his father's claim to the throne. He defeated the King's Tudor brothers at Mortimer's Cross, at which battle he first took the cognizance of the bright sun:

\footnote{John Stow, Annales, or, A Generall Chronicle of England (London, 1631), p. 413.}
In Edward's absence, Queen Margaret defeated the Earl of Warwick in the Battle of Barnet. She regained custody of King Henry, who knighted her son Edward at her request. When the Queen sent to London for provisions, the mayor arranged to send them. The commons, however, prevented the dispatch of food, and refused to permit her troops to enter the city. This refusal was probable a wise move, and was the result of the sack of St. Albans by the northmen in the Queen's army. Learning that Edward had returned to London, however, Margaret returned into the North.

While Edward and his supporters were engaged in these battles, his mother the Duchess of York sent her two younger sons (George and Richard) to Utrecht in the county of Almayne for safety. On March fourth, Edward was "elected" and proclaimed king of England by the commons of London.

Edward Earle of March, borne at Roane, sonne and heyre to Richard, Duke of Yorke, about the age of 18. yeeres, began his raigne the 4th day of March, by the name of Edward the 4th, in the yeere 1460. after the account of the Church of England: he was a man of noble courage, and great wit: but in his time was much trouble, and unquietnesse in the Realme. 7

On Palm Sunday, at Ferrebridge, there was another major battle, in which the Lord Clifford took Edward's army by surprise and captured the bridge. Lord Fitzwater and a bastard brother of Warwick's were slain in an attempt to recover the bridge, and,

7Ibid., p. 415.
When the erle of Warwyke was enformed of this feate, he like a man desperate, mounted on his Hackeney, and came blowynge to kyng Edward saiynge: syr I praye God haue mercy of their soules, which in the beginning of your enterprise, hath lost their lifes, and because I see no succors of the world, I remit the vengeaunce and punishment to God our creator and redemer, and with that lighted doune, and slewe his horse with his swourde, saiynge: let him flie that wil, for surely I wil tary with him that wil tary with me, and kissed the crosse of his swourde.  

At the ensuing battle of Towton, Edward's forces were victorious. King Henry and Margaret escaped to Berwick, which they gave to the King of Scotland in exchange for sanctuary in his land. Margaret then took her son and went to France to seek aid from King Louis and from her father, Renier of Anjou, called King of Sicily.

On June 29, Edward was crowned at Westminster. He called a parliament which reorganized the government. He created his younger brothers George and Richard Dukes of Clarence and Gloucester respectively. Henry Duke of Somerset and Sir Ralph Percy submitted to Edward and were pardoned, but when Margaret returned from France with soldiers borrowed from King Louis, both reverted to her side. Somerset was captured and beheaded for treason, and Percy was slain in the battle of Exham Field.

In 1463, King Henry returned to England disguised as a monk, and was captured and returned to the Tower. Edward revised the coinage, and changed the names of the coins; and he

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8Hall, Chronicle, p. 253.
publicly offered pardons to all the adherents of his enemies who would disarm and submit to his rule. This action, as it was meant to do, won him the allegiance of the people.

When his realm was thus brought into a good and quite estate, it was thought meet by him and those of his councell, that a marriage were provided for him in some convenient place; and therefore was the earle of Warwike sent ouer into France, to demand the ladie Bona, daughter to Lewes duke of Sauoie, and sister to the ladie Carlot, then queene of France; which Bona was at the time in the French court.\(^9\)

In France, the Earl of Warwick was honorably received and entertained. While he was successfully completing his embassy, however, events in England were making his efforts of no value.

[... the king being on hunting in the forest of Wichwood besides Stonistratford, came for his recreation to the manor of Grafton, where the duchesse of Bedford then soiourned, wife to sir Richard Wooduile lord Rivers, on whom was then attendant a daughter of hirs, called the ladie Elizabeth Graie, widow of sir John Graie knight, slaine at the last battell of saint Albons, as before ye haue heard.]

This widow, hauing a sute to the king for such lands as hir husband had giuen hir in jointure, so kindled the kings affection towards hir, that he not onlie fauored hir sute, but more hir person; for she was a woman of a more formall countenance than of excellent beautie; and yet both of such beautie and fauour, that with hir sober demeanor, sweete looks, and comelie smiling (neither too wanton, nor too bashfull) besides hir pleasant toong and trim wit, she so alured and made subiect unto hir the heart of that great prince, that after she had denied him to be his paramour, with so good maner, and words so well set as better could not be devised; he finallie resolued with himselfe to marrie hir, not asking counsell of anie man, till they might perceiue it was of no bootie to advise him to the contrarie of that his concluded purpose.\(^10\)


\(^10\) Ibid., pp. 283-284.
On May 16, 1464, Elizabeth Gray was crowned in Westminster. Her father was made an Earl, her oldest brother was married to the heir of Lord Scales, and her oldest son (by Sir John Gray, who died fighting for Queen Margaret and Henry VI) was made Marquis of Dorset.

When news of these happenings reached the Earl of Warwick in France, he was, naturally, much displeased. He decided to hide his dissatisfaction for a time, and returned to England. He complained to his brothers the Archbishop of York and Marquis Montacute, and made an effort to draw them into revolt with him. The Archbishop was willing,

... but the Lorde Marques could by no meanes be reduced to take any part against king Edwarde, till the Erle had both promised him great rewards and high promocions, and also assured him of the ayde, and power of the greatest Princes of the Realme. Even as the Marques unwillingly, and in manner con-strayned, gaue his consent, to this unhappy conjuration, at the intisement and procuring of the Erle, so wyth a faynt harte and lease courage, he always shewed himselfe enemy to king Edwarde, except in his last day: which luke warme hearte, and double dissimulation, was both the destruction of him and hys brethren.11

Warwick, however, was more astute than many had thought. Either by a good guess or by close observation, he detected a flaw in the love between King Edward and his brother the Duke of Clarence. Choosing his time with great care, the Earl began to complain to the Duke of the ill treatment he had received from King Edward. George responded by telling the

Earl of Warwick that after all the King was as ungrateful to his own kin as to the nobles who had helped him to his throne. "But by sweete Saint George," he swore,

If my brother of Gloucester woulde ioyne with me, we woulde make him knowe, that wee were all three one mans sonnes, of one mother, and one linage discended which shoulde be more preferred and promoted, then straugUs of his wyfes bloode.  

At this Warwick began to tell George of his plots, and to bring him into them. He offered him his daughter Isabel as his wife, and they went to Calais, where the Duke swore on the Sacrament to keep his promises of aid to the Earl. Then he and Isabel were married. In the meantime there was a commotion and rioting in the city of York, a result in part of the actions of the Archbishop, who had been told by his brother to stir up trouble.

While Warwick was designing his revolt, Edward arranged the marriage of his sister Margaret to the son and heir of the Duke of Burgundy. When the trouble broke out in York, he sent an army to quell it, led by his father-in-law, Earl Rivers, and his brother-in-law, the husband of the elderly Duchess of Norfolk. The rebels won at Banbery Hill, at the battle called Edgecote, and both Rivers and his son, John, were killed by the rebel leader, Robin of Redesdale. King Edward was captured by Warwick and held prisoner for some months. From the Castle of Warwick, he was brought to Middleham Castle in Yorkshire, where he was kept by the Archbishop of York.

12 Ibid., p. 13.
Edward, by his kind words to his captors, was able to have his imprisonment lightened so that he might enjoy the hunt. One day, while he was hunting, he was met by some of his friends, among them Sir William Stanley,

... with such a great band of men, that neither his keepers would, nor once durst movre him to return vnto prison againe. Some haue thought that his keepers were corrupted with monie, or faire promises, and therefore suffred him thus to scape out of danger.  

Having made good his escape, Edward went first to the city of York, then to Lancaster, where he met his Chamberlain, Lord Hastings. They went then to London. After Edward's victory at "Losecoat" field, Warwick and Clarence fled to France. They attempted to stop at Calais, but were not allowed to come ashore, the Duchess of Clarence bearing a son outside the harbor. From Calais, the Earl and the Duke went to France, where they asked aid from King Louis. He finally agreed to help them if they would come to an agreement with Queen Margaret, which they finally did.

Warwick agreed with Queen Margaret that he should support Henry VI and restore him to the throne, and establish her son Edward as his heir. Prince Edward was betrothed or married (the sources do not agree as to which) to Warwick's younger daughter Anne. Both the Duke and the Earl swore solemn oaths to support the Lancastrian claims, and were promised the authority of protectors of the realm until Prince Edward should come

of age to govern. The crown was to be entailed, in the absence of male heirs of Henry VI or Edward, to the heirs male of the Duke of Clarence. At about this time, a young woman claiming to be of the household of the Duchess of Clarence, came to the Duke, having convinced the overlord of Calais that she came to bring overtures of peace from Edward to the Earl of Warwick,

But this damsell comming to the duke, persuaded him so much to leaue off the pursue of his con-ceiued displeasure towards his brother king Edward, that he promised at his returne into England, not to be so extreme enimie against his brother as he was taken to be: and this promise afterward he did keepe. With this answer the damsell returned into England, the earle of Warwike being thereof clearelie ignorant.14

Warwick's landing caught Edward by surprise, and forced him to flee into Flanders, to take refuge with his brother-in-law the Duke of Burgundy. He was accompanied in his flight by his brother the Duke of Gloucester, and his Lord Chamberlain, Hastings. Meanwhile, Queen Elizabeth had fled into the Sanctuary of Westminster, where she bore him a son. Warwick freed Henry from the Tower and proclaimed him King. The parliament which he summoned named Edward a usurper, and attainted him and Richard for treason. The terms of Warwick's agreement with Queen Margaret were accepted by the parliament, although Margaret and her son had been unable to reach England as yet because of bad weather. In addition, Clarence was made heir to his father, Richard Duke of York, as if he had been his eldest son.

14 Ibid., p. 296.
In 1471, however, Edward landed at Ravenspur, claiming at first that he had returned only for his dukedom of York. By the means of this ruse, he gained entry to the city of York, after having taken an oath of obedience to King Henry VI. From York he went to Nottingham, where he was reconciled to his brother of Clarence, who was "in nothing constant." While the Earl of Warwick was at his Castle of Warwick, Edward went to meet Clarence:

And least that there might be thought some fraude to be cloked betwene them, the king set his battayles in an order, as though he would fight without any lenger delay, the Duke did likewise. When eche hoste was in sight of other, Richard Duke of Gloucester, brother to them both, as though he had bene made Arbitrer betwene them, first rode to the Duke, and with him commoned very secretly: from him he came to king Edward, and with like secretnesse so vsed him, that in conclusion no vnnaturall warre, but brotherly friendship was concluded and proclaymed, and then leaving all armour and weapon asyde, both the brethren louingly embraced, and familiarly commoned together.15

Warwick's brother the Marquis Montacute failed to block Edward's progress, and the returning king went to Leicester, where he was met by an army under his Lord Chamberlain, Hastings. From there they went to Coventry and to Warwick Castle, and the Duke of Clarence made an attempt to reconcile the Earl to the King. Warwick refused, so Edward went on to London, where he was received by the commons with great rejoicing. The Tower surrendered to him, and he thus regained custody of Henry VI.

The next major battle of the Wars of the Roses, at Barnet, was the last for the Earl of Warwick. The chronicles report that "King Edward had set the Duke of Glocester in the foreward." In addition to the Earl of Warwick, the Marquis Montacute was also slain. The Earl of Oxford and the Duke of Somerset fled the field to join the Tudors in Wales. They went to fight for Queen Margaret, who had finally gotten to England, at the battle of Tewkesbury.

Margaret, upon her arrival, learned of the defeat of the Earl of Warwick at Barnet and the defection of the Duke of Clarence. When she would have fled, she found her passage blocked by the city of Gloucester. When she sent men to attempt either to frighten the people or to buy their consent to her safely passing through, she got an unexpected reply.

They that were sent, returned to her again, declaryng that the towne of Gloucester was vnder the obeisaunce of Rychard, duke of Gloucester the kyngs brother, and that although they had solicited the lord Beau-champe of Powike, which lay there in the Castell, and had the rule of the Towne, and the townesmen fyrst by rewards after by menacing, either to take their part, or peassably to suffer her to passe ouer their bridge, they were there with all, neither once moued, not once would speake cofortably to the messengers.

Finding she was refused passage, Margaret left Bristow and went to the city of Tewkesbury, on the Severne. Knowing that King Edward was following her, she meant to have crossed

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17 Hall, Chronicles, pp. 299-300.
the Severne to join Jasper Tudor, Earl of Pembroke. The Duke of Somerset, however, and her son Edward wished to meet Edward then and there in battle. Against her better judgement, Margaret yielded to their importunity and prepared to fight. Edward also arrayed his forces for the battle. The Duke of Gloucester was facing the portion of Margaret's army which was led by the Duke of Somerset, and the chroniclers attribute to Richard's policy a large measure of Edward's success that day. Commanding the bowmen and (apparently) the artillery, Richard recoiled from the attack of the Duke of Somerset and drew him beyond the line, so that his troops could be flanked. In the victory, Edward announced a reward to whoever took captive or killed Prince Edward. The Prince was captured by Sir Richard Crofts, who brought him to the King. King Edward

... demanded of him, how he durst so presumptuouslie enter into his realme with banner displaid.

Whereunto the prince boldlie answered, saieng; "To recover my fathers kingdome & heritage, from his father and grandfather to him and from him after him to me lineallie descended." At which words king Edward said nothing, but with his hand thrust him from him, or (as some saie) stroke him with his gauntlet; whome incontinentlie, George duke of Clarence, Richard duke of Glocester, Thomas Greie marquesse Dorcet, and William lord Hastings that stood by, suddenlie murdered ... .18

Another chronicler reports more sparsely: "Edward the fourth being come from London, fought with Prince Edward at Tewkesbury on the fourth of May, tooke Queene Margaret prisoner, with

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Prince Edward her son, whom cruelly hee smote on the face with his Gauntlet, and after his servants slew him."\(^{19}\)

The Duke of Somerset and others were taken and beheaded. Margaret was eventually ransomed by her father, with the help of King Louis of France. Edward then went about the task of pacifying his country. He was not able to procure the death of the Earl of Richmond, Henry Tudor, who had fled with his uncle the Earl of Pembroke to Brittany, but Edward was able to purchase from the Duke of Brittany an agreement not to aid an assault on England or to release Henry Tudor.

Poore kyng Henry the sixte, a little before deprived of his realme, and Imperiall Croune, was now in the Tower of London, spoyled of his life, and all worldlie felicitie, by Richard duke of Gloucester (as the constant fame ranne) which, to thintent that king Edward his brother, should be clere out of all secret suspicion of sodain invasion, murthered the said kyng with a dagger.\(^{20}\)

Holinshed attributed to this murder the ensuing fraternal strife among the sons of Richard the Duke of York. Warwick's brother George Neville, the Archbishop of York, was imprisoned for the rest of his life at Guisnes. John Earl of Oxford, at St. Michael's Mont in Cornwall, was induced to surrender, and was then put into prison at Hammes Castle.

In 1473, Edward offered pardons to almost all his enemies if they would submit themselves and acknowledge him King of

\(^{19}\)Stow, Annales, p. 424.

\(^{20}\)Hall, Chronicle, p. 303.
England. He made an arrangement with the Duke of Burgundy to go to war against the King of France, and in gathering money for this war he first instituted the device of benevolences. By the next year, he had crossed to Calais with a large and well-equipped army. While waiting for Burgundy to meet him according to their agreement, Edward sent a message of defiance to King Louis of France. The wily Franch King gave the herald money and won him to speak as he (Louis) desired. When Burgundy continued to postpone his arrival, the herald's words persuaded Edward to consider a peace with France. The ambassadors he sent to discuss the terms of peace were John Morton (later Bishop of Ely and still later Chancellor of England) and Lord Howard (apparently the future Duke of Norfolk).

The terms of Edward's agreement with the King of France included the payment by Louis of seventy-five thousand crowns upon Edward's departure from French soil; his promise to pay Edward an annual pension of one thousand crowns at London, every year for the rest of Edward's life; a pledge of marriage between the Dauphin Charles and Edward's oldest daughter Elizabeth, with an agreement either to settle upon them the whole Duchy of Guienne or to pay them fifty thousand crowns for nine years and then give them the duchy, in the latter

\[21\text{ Ibid., p. 312. Holinshed (Chronicles, Vol. III, p. 334) says fifty thousand.}\]
case terminating King Edward's pension. The key to the entire agreement was that Edward should leave France as soon as possible. Not all of Edward's Council approved of his action, however. The leader of this dissenting group was his brother Richard:

But the duke of Glocester & others, whose swords thirsted for French bloud, cried out of this peace; saying that all their travell, paines, & expenses were to their shame lost and cast away, and nothing gained but a continuall mocke (and) daily derision of the French king and all his minions.

... the duke of Glocester; who sware, that he would never have set foot out of England, if he had not thought to have made the Frenchmen once to assaie the strength & puissance of the Englishmen: but what so ever he thought, all things were transferred unto an other end than he could imagine.22

The Duke of Burgundy, of course, was not pleased with this turn of events, either. As soon as he heard of Edward's arrangement he came to the camp of the English army. He accused Edward of falsehood, refused to have any part of the treaty (in which Edward had reserved rights for both Burgundy and the Duke of Brittany), and left the King's tents in a rage.

According to their agreement, Edward and Louis met at Amiens the thirty-first of August to exchange their oaths for the performance of the treaty. Richard refused to attend, although he did come afterwards to join his brother. Edward was accompanied by Clarence, the Earl of Northumberland,

Morton, Lord Hastings, and most of the peers of England. Louis' attitude is well illustrated in his comments to Lord Argenton, when discussing Edward's desire to visit Paris. He referred to the fact that the English had spent what he felt was too much time in Paris and Normandy, and said that if Edward went to Paris he would see such things as would make him want to return. "On this side the sea," he added, "I loue neither his sight nor his companie; but when he is at home I loue him as my brother, and take him as my friend."23

IN 9. xvj. yere of kyng Edward, there fel a sparcele of priu malice, betwene the king & his brother the duke of Clarèce whether it rose of olde grudges before time passed, or were it newly kyndeled and set a fyre by the Quene, or her bloud which were euer mistrusting and prieuely barkynge at the kynges lignage, or were he desirous to reigne after his brother; to men that haue thereof made large inquisicion, of suche as were of no small authoritie in those dayes, the certayntie therof was hyd, and coulde not truely be disclosed ....

The fame was that the king or the Quene, or bothe were troubled with a folysh Prophesye, and by reason therof bega .... to grudge agaynst the duke. The effect of which was, after king Edward should reigne, one whose first letter of hys name shoulde be a G ....

Other allege this to be the cause of his death: That of late 9 olde räcor betwene them beyng newly reuied .... the duke beyng destitute of a wyfe, by the meanes of lady Margareet duches of Burgoyn, hys syster, procured to ahue the lady Marye, doughter and heyre to duke Charles her husband, to bee geuen to hym in matrimony; which mariadge kyng Edward .... disturbed. Thys priu displeasure was openly appeased, but not inwardly forgottë, not outwardly forgeuen, for that, notwithstanding a seruaunt of the Dukes was sodainly accused .... of poysonyng, sorcery .... & therof condempned, and put to taste

23 Ibid., p. 340.
the paynes of death. The duke, whiche myght not suffer the wrongfull condemnacon of his man (as he in his conscience adiudged) dayly dyd oppugne, and wyth yll woordes murmur at the doyng thereof. The king much greued and troubled with his brothers dayly querimonye, and contynuall exclamacion, caused hym to be apprehended, and cast into the Towre, where he beyng taken and adiudged for a Traytor, was priuely drouned in a But of Maluesey. 

Some modern historians have theorized that Clarence's real offense may have been finding out about the irregularity in the marriage of Edward and Elizabeth Gray. There is still much dispute, also, as to whether the unusual manner of his death is an allegory or a literal occurrence, and if it actually happened, whether he chose the means of his death.

But sure it is, that although king Edward were consenting to his death, and destruction, yet he much did both lament his infortunate chaunce, and repent his sodayne execution. In asmuch, that when any person sued to him for pardon or remission, of any malifactor condemnpd to the punishment of death, he would accustomanle say and openly speake, 0 infortunate brother, for whose lyfe not one creature would make intercession, openly speaking, and apparauntly meaning, by the meanes of some of the nobility he was surcumuented, and brought to his confusion.

The Duke of Clarence was survived by a son, Edward Earl of Warwick, and daughter Margaret, later Duchess of Salisbury. Edward was beheaded by King Henry VII after the rebellion under Perkin Warbeck, and Margaret was beheaded by Henry VIII.

During these years, King Louis of France continually put off the marriage of the Dauphin Charles to Edward's daughter,
deceiving the King of England with "faire wordes" and promises. Meanwhile, an embassy from King James III of Scotland came to ask the hand of Edward's second daughter, Cicely, as the wife of the heir to the Scottish throne. While Edward's Council was considering this request, trouble was brewing in Scotland. James had raised to positions of trust many lowborn men, to the disadvantage of his brother Alexander and the other Scottish nobles. Alexander, Duke of Albany, interrupted his passage through England toward France to ask aid of the English in his revolt. Since the Scots had been raiding the English border again, Edward's Council agreed to Albany's request. Richard Duke of Gloucester was appointed to lead the English forces, and set forth in May 1482 to win a number of victories. By August 23, 1482, Richard had been in the city of Edinburg and had reconquered the castle and town of Berwick. In the peace agreement, Cecily's wedding was arranged with the Scottish heir.

Suddenly made aware of his approaching death, Edward called to his bedside all the nobles then in London. This group did not include Richard, who was still pacifying the North; nor did it include Anthony Woodville Earl Rivers, the Queen's brother, who was in charge of the household of the young Prince Edward at Ludlow in Wales. After many platitudes about the universality of death and the vanity which blinds men to its approach, Edward made a moving plea for unity and harmony among the nobles, and entrusted his children to their care
and guidance. He reminded them that the welfare of England would in large measure be determined by the education given the Prince of Wales while he was young. On April 9, 1483, in London, Edward IV died peacefully in his bed.

Beginning with the death of King Edward, these chroniclers become even more unanimous in their descriptions of events. Holinshed borrowed a great deal from Hall, and both Grafton and Stow borrowed from them. In dealing with the life of Edward V, Holinshed freely admits that he is quoting Sir Thomas More's History of Richard the Third. Hall and the others do not openly quote More, but they follow his account very closely. The chief difference between these reports and that of More is the omission of the qualifying phrases which marked More's information as hearsay.

All these accounts begin with the descriptions of the sons of Richard Duke of York: Edward IV, George Duke of Clarence, and Richard Duke of Gloucester. "Richard the 3 son," they report,

... was in wit & courage equal with either of them, in body and prowess far under them both, little of stature, ill featured of limbs, crooke backed, his left shoulder much higher than his right, hard favorred of visage, and such as is in states called warrely, in othermen otherwise: he was malicious, wrathfull, envious, and from afore his birth ever froward. It is for truth reported, that the Dutchesse his mother had so much ado in her travaell, that she could not be delivered of him uncut, & that he came into the world with the feet forward ... and (as the fame runneth) also not untoothed ... No euill Captaine was
he in war . . . sondry victories had he, and sometimes
overthrowes, but never in default as in his owne
person, eyther of hardinesse or politike order;
free was he called of dispence, and somewhat aboue
his power liberall . . . . He was close and secret,
a deepe dissemuler . . . 26

Following More, the chroniclers unite in attributing to
Richard the deaths of Henry VI and Edward of Anjou. All credit
him with a share in bringing about the death of his brother
George, the Duke of Clarence. They agree that there is some
doubt as to whether Richard intended from the first to kill
his nephews and seize the throne, or whether he merely grasped
the opportunity when it presented itself.

When Edward IV died, his son and heir was at Ludlow in
Wales, under the governance of the Queen's brother, Anthony
Woodville, Earl Rivers and Lord Scales. Richard, at this time,
was in the North as his brother's deputy and virtual viceroy.
Richard's first act was to order funeral rites for Edward in
York, and to call together the northern lords, whom he led in
swearing allegiance to his nephew Edward. The historians are
agreed, however, that he was merely pretending, and that he
planned to use the enmity between the old nobility and the
Woodvilles to destroy both groups and to assume his nephew's
crown. While Richard was at York, a messenger from the Duke
of Buckingham came to him with a secret message offering aid
and men. At Nottingham, Buckingham joined Richard, who had

26 Stow, Annales, p. 435.
been named as Protector in his brother's will. Reminding the nobles of the crown of Woodvilles about the young prince (as there was indeed) and of the favorites of former kings, Richard revived the strife which Edward had hoped to have ended on his deathbed.

With these persuasions and writings, the duke of Gloucester sette a fire them whiche were easie to kyndle, and in especial twain, Henry duke of Buckyngham, and William lord Hastynge, and lord Chamberlain, bothe menne of honoure and of greate power, the one by longe succession from his auncetres, thother by his offices and the kynge his fauoure. These two not bearynge eache to other so muche loue, as hatred both to $ quenes bloud, accorded together with the duke of Gloucester that thei would remoue from the kyng all his mothers frendes, vnder the name of their enemies.27

With the aid of Buckingham and Hastings, Richard arrested the escort of Edward V. He sent Earl Rivers and his nephew Sir Richard Gray, with several other leaders of the Woodville faction, to prison at Pomfret Castle, where they were eventually executed on charges of treason.

Richard, in accordance with the provisions of his brother's will, took charge of his nephew and accompanied him to London. The Queen, meanwhile, hearing of the arrests of her brother and son, hurried into sanctuary at Westminster with her youngest son (Richard, the young Duke of York), her oldest son (Thomas Marquis Dorset), her daughters, and so many boxes that her servants broke a hole in the wall in their haste to get all

27 Hall, Chronicle, p. 348.
her belongings inside the abbey. Richard soon, with the aid and approval of the Council, removed the young Duke from his mother's custody and lodged him with his brother in the royal apartments in the Tower. There remained, according to the chroniclers, only one obstacle in Richard's path to the throne: Lord Hastings, his brother's friend and Chamberlain, who would not allow harm to befall his master's children.

Whereupon, soone after, that is to wit, on the Friday, the 13. day of June, many Lords assembled in the Tower, and there sate in Councell, deuising the honourable solemnity of the Kings coronation. . . .

The Lords so sitting together communing of this matter, the Protector came in amongst them first about 9. of the clocke, saluting them courteously, and excusing himselfe that hee had beene a sleeper that day.

And after a little talking with them, hee said vnto the Bishop of Ely: My Lord, you haue very good Strawberries at your garden in Holborne, I require you let vs haue a messe of them. Glaydly my Lord (quoth hee) would God I had some better thing as ready to your pleasure as that. And therewith in all the haste hee sent his servant for a messe of Strawberries.28

The Protector then left the room. When he returned, the members of the Council were amazed at the change in his countenance:

. . . with a woonderfull soure angrie countenaunce, knitting the browes, frowning and fretting, and gnawing on his lips . . . .29

Richard angrily accused the Queen Mother and Jane Shore, the former mistress of Edward IV, of attempting to harm him through sorcery. He is said to have bared and displayed his arm,

28Stow, Annales, p. 447.

withered through the witchcraft of the two women, and when Hastings responded with doubt of their guilt Richard named him as a part of the conspiracy as well. None of the Council spoke against the accusation, though all knew that Richard's arm was as it had been from his birth. Then Richard banged upon the table, and armed men came into the chamber. After a scuffle in which the Earl of Derby was wounded upon the head, he and Bishop Morton of Ely, as well as Hastings, were arrested. Richard, fearing the retribution which might be brought upon him by Derby's son Lord Strange, released him. Bishop Morton was sent to prison in a castle belonging to the Duke of Buckingham, and Hastings was beheaded before noon on a piece of wood which chanced to be in the courtyard of the Tower.

The chroniclers agree in wondering at the number of warnings which Hastings received and ignored. First, Lord Stanley (the Earl of Derby) sent a message in which he warned that he had had a dream in which they were both ravaged by a boar (Richard wore as his cognizance a white boar), to which Hastings replied that the boar would be sure to pursue if they fled, but that Richard was his friend and would not harm them without cause. In addition, on his way to the Tower, Hastings' horse stumbled three times. In all the chronicles, Richard is credited with having arranged this meeting of the Council and Hastings' death to fall on the day that Sir Richard Ratcliffe was executing Earl Rivers and Sir Richard Gray at Pomfret.
One of the prisoners, Sir Thomas Vaughn, is reported to have said going to his death:

... A wo worthe them 9 toke the prophesie that G. should destroy kyng Edwardes childrē, meanyng 7 by the duke of Clarōce lord George which for 7 suspicion is now dead, but now remaineth Richard G. duke of Gloucester, which now I se is he 7 shall and will accomplishe the prophesie & destroye kynge Edwardes children & all their alyes & frēdes, as it appereth by vs this day ... 30

Soon after this, a preacher named Shaa, at Richard's command, preached a sermon in which he called Edward's children bastards, claiming that the King had not been legally married to their mother. For good measure, he also claimed that Richard was the only legitimate son of his father the Duke of York. In this sermon, he referred to Richard as being the image of his father, intending to draw attention to Richard as he entered the service. The next day, the Duke of Buckingham spoke to the commons of London, and put forward Richard's claim to the throne and the reasons why he would make a better king than Edward. Despite the lack of enthusiasm, Buckingham and the mayor went to see Richard, to ask him to assume the throne. At first Richard would not come to them, and when he finally agreed to hear them he came onto a gallery accompanied by two priests. When Buckingham told him what they wanted and gave their reasons, Richard admitted that he had a better claim to rule, but said that he would not claim the crown because of

30 Hall, Chronicle, p. 364.
the love which he bore toward his nephews, and because he valued his honor in other lands, and because being a king was more pain than pleasure. However, when the Duke of Buckingham threatened that they would turn to another candidate rather than be ruled by the children of Edward IV, Richard changed his mind; or, rather, the chronicles report that he pretended to have been convinced against his will to do what he had meant all along to do.

The next day the protector with a great train went to Westminster hall, & there when he had placed himselfe in the court of the Kings bench, declared to the audience, that he would take vpon him the crowne in that place there, where the king himselfe sitteth and ministreth the law, because he considered that it was the chiefest dutie of a king to minister the lawes . . . And finallie to the intent that no man should hat him for feare, and that his deceitful cleancie might get him the good will of the people, when he had declared the discommodities of discord & the commodities of concord & unitie, he made an open proclamation, that he did put out of his mind all enimities, and that he there did openly pardon all offenses committed against him.  

To prove that he meant what he said, Richard made an example of a man named Fog, who was in sanctuary. He had the man brought out and into the court, where he publicly forgave him and shook his hand.

Nevertheless, Richard is called a usurper in the chronicles from the first mention of his reign:

RICHARD the third of that name vsurped ¥ croune of Englad & openly toke vpon hym to bee kyng, the nyntene daie of Iune, in the yere of our lord, a thousand foure hundred lxxxiii. . . .

After his coronation, Richard and his wife Queen Anne (the younger daughter of the Earl of Warwick) went on progress into the northern parts of England. From Gloucester, he is supposed to have sent a message by a man named John Green, "whom he specially trusted, unto Sir Robert Brackenbury constable of the tower, with a letter and credence also, that the same Sir Robert in any wise should put the two children to death."\(^{33}\) When Green delivered his message, Brackenbury "plainly answered that he would not put them to death for the same reason."\(^{34}\)

Richard received this reply at Warwick, and in his displeasure asked his page whether he knew of anyone who would do the king's will. The page replied that there lay a knight in the outer bedchamber who would do anything to rise in Richard's eyes. This man, then, Richard selected, and to him he entrusted the murder of the young princes in the Tower.

The sons of Edward IV had been, by this time, closely imprisoned under the charge of Brackenbury, and none were permitted to enter their chamber except Will Slaughter. James Tyrrell planned their murder,

\[\ldots\] that they should be murdered in their beds and no blood shed: to the execution whereof, he appointed Miles Forest one of the four that before kept them, a fellow flesh bred in murder before time, and to him he joined one John Dighton, his own horsekeeper, a big, broad square, and strong knave.

\(^{33}\) Ibid., p. 377.

\(^{34}\) Ibid.
Then all the other beynge removed from them, this Miles Forest, and Iohn Dighton about midnight, the siely children liyng in their beddes, came into the chambre, sodenly lapped them vp amongst the clothes, and so bewrapped them, and entangled them, kepyng downe by force the fetherbed & pillowes hard vnto their mouthes, that within a while they smothered and stifled them, & their breathes faylyng, they gave vp to God their innocent soules, into the ioyes of heauen, leaung to their tormentors their bodies, dead in bed, which after the wretches perceived, first by the strangling, with the pangs of death, & after long liyng still to be thoroughly dead, they layd the bodies naked out vpon the bed, & fetched James Tyrell to see them, which when he saw them perfittely dead, he caused y murtherers to bury them at the stayre foote, metely deepe in the ground vnder a great heape of stones.

The following year, the Duke of Buckingham rebelled. Apparently he felt that Richard had not been generous enough with rewards for his aid. In particular, Buckingham claimed some property which had belonged to Henry Bolingbroke Earl of Hereford (later King Henry IV), and which the Duke felt should come to him in the right of his grandmother, Bolingbroke's mother's sister. Richard, aware of the relation of this land and these claims to the Lancastrian claims on his throne, did not want to give them to Buckingham, who was also descended from Thomas of Woodstock, the fifth son of Edward III. In addition to this claim, Buckingham was influenced by the persuasive Bishop of Ely, John Morton, who urged him to support the claim of Henry Tudor Earl of Richmond, rather than to seek the throne. Some think Buckingham helped Richard in the first

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place in order to use Richard to clear his path to the throne.

There is an interesting description of Richard at about this time:

He neuer thought himselfe sure. Where he went abroad, his eies whirled about, his bodie priuillie fensed, his hand euer vpon his dagger, his countenaunce and maner like one alwaies readie to strike againe, he tooke ill rest a nights, laie long waking and musing, sore wearied with care and watch, rather slumbered than slept, troubled with fearefull dreames, suddenlie sometime start vp, lept out of his bed, and ran about the chamber; so was his restlesse heart continuallie tossed and tumbled with the tedious impression and stormie remembrance of his abhominable deed. 36

His doubts appear to have been justified, since the man whom he most trusted was in the process of betraying him. The plots of Morton and Richmond had been, by this time, widened to include a marriage between the Tudor Earl and the oldest daughter of Edward IV. Bishop Morton left England to go to Henry's court in Flanders, and some have said that Buckingham might have succeeded if Morton had not left England. Richard learned of the conspiracy, however, and attacked Buckingham as its weakest link. When the Duke refused to come when Richard called him, the King gathered his army and went to Salisbury. The rains had made the Severn impassable, and Buckingham's army of impressed Welshmen fled. The Duke took refuge with a servant, who betrayed him when Richard offered a reward of a thousand pounds. The army which the Courteney had raised in Dorset and Cornwall retired; and the Marquis of Dorset, who had left

sanctuary (where he had been with his mother since shortly after the death of King Edward IV), fled to Brittany and joined the Earl of Richmond.

Early in 1484, Parliament attainted the Earl of Richmond and some of the nobles who were with him. In the same year a schoolteacher was hanged and quartered for a rhyme about the King:

The Rat, the Catte and Louell our dogge
Rule all Englande vnder the hogge.37

Richard's diplomacy brought about a peace with Scotland, and he persuaded the Queen Mother to leave Westminster and bring her daughters to court. She also was induced to write letters to her son Dorset which convinced him to return to England.

An attempt on the life of the Earl of Richmond, although it failed, caused the Earl to leave Brittany and go to France.

According to the chronicles, Richard now set out to block the plans of Richmond by marrying his niece (Elizabeth of York) himself. In order to do this, however, he had first to get rid of his wife, and the historians report in detail how he accomplished his desire. First, he avoided her company, then he complained to the nobles that she failed to give him a son and heir. Particularly, he recounted all this to the newly released Archbishop of York, who in turn told some of his friends that the queen was not due to live long. Richard then caused a rumor to be spread that she was dead, to see whether the

37 Hall, Chronicle, p. 398.
people would blame him when she died. When she heard the tale, Anne became very sad and went to Richard to ask why he judged her worthy of death.

The king answered hir with faire words, and with smiling and flatterling leanings comforted hir, and bid hir be of good cheere, for (to his knowledge) she should have no other cause. But howsoever that it fortuned, either by inward thought and pensiuenesse of hart, or by infection of poison (which is affirmed to be most liklie) within a few daies after the queene departed out of this transit-orie life . . . .

When the rumors of the King's plan to marry his niece became known, however, the people were so horrified that Richard was forced to make a public denial of the whole idea.

In 1485, the Earl of Richmond landed at Milford-Haven with an army borrowed from the French King. He had been promised aid by the Welsh, and as he passed through their land he was joined by his uncle Jasper Tudor Earl of Pembroke, and by Rhys ap Thomas. Richard, from Nottingham, sent for armies under the Duke of Norfolk (Thomas Howard), his son the Earl of Surrey, the Earl of Northumberland, and Sir Robert Brackenbury (the Lord Lieutenant of the Tower). Richmond advanced to Lichfield, and Richard came to Leicester. Many of Richard's men left him to join Richmond, and the chroniclers are at great pains to explain that Richmond's step-father, William Stanley Earl of Derby, did not go to Henry's aid because Richard held hostage another of his sons, George Lord Strange. The armies finally came

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together at the village of Bosworth in Leicestershire, and the records agree in describing Richard's state of mind:

The fame went, that he had the same night a dreadful and terrible dreame: for it seemed to him being asleepe, that he did see diverse images like terrible diuels, which pulled and haled him, not suffering him to take anie quiet or rest. The which strange vision not so suddenlie strake his heart with a sudden feare, but it stuffed his head and troubled his mind with manie busie and dreadful imaginations. For incontinent after, his heart being almost damped, he prognosticated before the doubtful chance of the battel to come; not using the alacrity and mirth of mind and countenance as he was accustomed to doo before he came toward the battell. And least that it might be suspected that he was abashed for feare of his enimies, and for that cause looked so pitiouslie; he recited and declared to his familiar freends in the morning his wonderful vision and fearefull dreame. 39

After making long speeches to their armies, which are reported at length in the chronicles, Richard and Richmond confronted each other on the field of battle. Richard, personally and almost single-handed, attacked Richmond's standard. He killed the standard bearer, Sir William Brandon, and nearly killed the Earl himself. He was rescued, however, by Lord Stanley, whose army had been at one side watching the outcome, and Richard was slain. The Earl of Northumberland also fought lazily, but his honor and his promise to Richard impelled the Duke of Norfolk to fight to the death, despite the message he found in his tent:

Iacke of Norfolke be not to bolde, For Dickon thy maister is bought and solde. 40

Norfolk's son, the Earl of Surrey, was captured; and when he was brought before Richmond and asked why he had fought for a tyrant such as Richard, he answered that he had fought for him because he was the legally acclaimed King of England. He said that he would have fought for a post so acclaimed, and added that he would fight as well for Henry when he should be lawfully crowned. This he did, dying finally for Henry VIII.

Richard, the historians say, might have escaped from the battle, for when his attendants saw how faint-heartedly his soldiers were fighting, they began to suspect treason. They advised Richard to save himself and flee, to fight another day.

And when the losse of the battell was imminent and apparent, they brought to him a swift and a light horse, to conueie him awaie. He which was not ignorant of the grudge and ill will that the common people bare toward him, casting awaie all hope of fortunate successse and happie chance to come, answered (as men saie) that on that date he would make an end of all battels, or else there finish his life.41

Thus determined to live or die as King of England, Richard went forth to battle and died.

When therle had thus obteigned victorie and slain his mortal enimie, he kneled doune and rendred to almightie God his harty thakes w deoute & Godly orisons, besoehyng his goodnes to sende him grace to auaunce and defende the catholike fayth & to mayntaine justice & cōcorde amōgest his subjectes and people, by God now to his gouernauce cōmitted & assigned: Which praier finyshed, he replenyshed w incomperable gladnes, ascended vp to the top of a littell mountaine, where he not only prayesd & lawded his valiaunt spuldours, but also gaue vnto theim his harty thankes, w promyse of cōdigne recompence for their fidelite & valiaurent factes,

willing & commandyng al the hurt & wounded persons to be cured, and the dead carcases to be deliver'd to ye sepulture. Then 7 people reioyseyd & clapped hādes cryyng vp to heauen, kyng Henry, kyng Henry. When the lord Stanley sawe the good will and gratuito of the people he toke the crowne of kyng Richard which was founde amongst the spoyle in the felde, and set it on the rles hed, as though he had byne elected king by the voyce of the people as in aun-cient tymes past in diuers realmes it hath been accustomed, and this was the first signe and token of his good lucke and felicite.42

King Henry then knighted some of his followers, and moved his camp to Leicester. "In the meane season," the chronicles report,

the dead corps of King Richard was as shamefully carried to the Towne of Leycester, as hee gorgeously the day before with pompe departed out of the same Towne: for his body was naked to the skinne, not so much as one clout about him, and was trussed behind a Pursiuant of arms, like a Hogge or Calfe, the head and arms hanging on the one side of the horse; and the legges on the other side, and all sprinkled with myre and blood, was brought to the Gray-Friars Church within the Towne, and there homely buried . . . .43

42 Hall, Chronicle, p. 420.
43 Stow, Annales, p. 470.
CHAPTER IV.

THE LITERARY SOURCES

Of the materials available to Shakespeare, the most difficult to isolate are the narrative and dramatic sources which made no pretense to historical accuracy. There were so many ballads and plays dealing with the parts of the story of Richard the Third that it would be nearly impossible to determine positively which influenced Shakespeare's play. Two works, however, were so well-known and so generally available that it would be very hard to imagine that Shakespeare had not read them. One of the most influential books of the century was The Mirror for Magistrates (1559), a collection of narrative poems which relate the lives of princes. It is in the form of a series of complaints to the printer by nobles whose falls have been noteworthy in England since the time of Richard the Second. A second edition, issued in 1563, contained a number of new stories, including those of several people whose lives interlocked with that of Richard III.¹

The story of Richard's father, the Duke of York, includes the death of Edmund Earl of Rutland at the hands of Lord Clifford. It blames the ruthlessness of Clifford, who ignored the pleas of both the Earl and his tutor in killing the twelve-year-old child of his enemy. The Duke's ghost also complains of Clifford's

treatment of the body of York, which he beheaded, sending the head (crowned with paper) to Queen Margaret. Clifford, when his turn comes to speak, confirms these stories of his cruelty, and attributes them to his desire to avenge his father (killed at the first battle at St. Albans). He also describes his own death:

This find I true, for as I lay in stale
To fight agaynst duke Richardes eldest sonne,
I was destroyed not far from Dintingdale:
For as I would my gorget haue vnadoen
To event the heat that had me nye vnadoen,
An headles arrow strake me through the throte
Wherthrough my soule forsooke his filthy coate.2

In the prose introduction to the life of Richard Neville Earl of Warwick (called the "kingmaker") are described his capture of King Edward at Woulney, and Edward's subsequent escape (some say release), during the attempted restoration of King Henry VI. Warwick explains how he was sent to France to arrange a marriage for Edward with the French King's daughter. While he was achieving this aim, however, Edward secretly married the widow of a Lancastrian knight. Upon his return to England, the Earl won to his cause the King's brother George Duke of Clarence, and gathered so large an army that Edward was forced to flee to the court of his friend and brother-in-law the Duke of Burgundy. With his help, Edward gathered an army and returned to his kingdom. By a ruse

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2Ibid., pp. 194-195.
claiming that he was returning for his inheritance of York), Edward gained admission to the city of York. Then he went to London, where he was welcomed by the people. Meanwhile, his sister Margaret had succeeded in winning the unsteady allegiance of Clarence back to his brother's cause. At Barnet the reunited house of York was victorious, and Warwick was killed.

The tragedy of King Henry the Sixth begins with the death of Warwick and the capture of Margaret and her son Edward at the Battle of Tewkesbury. When Edward replied boldly to the challenge of King Edward the King struck him in the face with his gauntlet, and the King's brothers slew him. Henry summarizes the exchange of battles between his wife and the Duke of York and the rebellion of the Earl of Warwick. He describes the death of his son: "For there mine only sonne, not thirtene yere of age,/ Was tane and murdered strayte, by Edward in his rage. . . ."\(^3\)

One of the longest and most important histories in the work is that of King Edward's brother George, the Duke of Clarence. He begins with the death of his brother John (Edmund) at the hands of Lord Clifford at Wakefield, and accuses Edward of forgetting his kin and friends when he had acquired the crown. Clarence tries to shift the responsibility for his treason to others, saying that the Earl of Warwick determined to restore King Henry VI, and "knowing me to be the chiepest

\(^3\)Ibid., p. 218.
My brother had, he did me undermine/ To cause me to his treasons to encline."4 After giving his reasons for discontent with his brother, George adds of Warwick that he offered him his daughter as his wife, and "He stole my heart, that erst unstedy was:/ For I was witless, wanton, fonfe, and younge,/ Whole bent to pleasure, brittle as the glass. . . ."5

Clarence then attempts to place the blame for his betrayal of Warwick upon others:

But when at length I came unto my mind,
I saw how lowly lightness had me led,
To seek with pain the peril of my bed:
For had King Henry once been settled sure,
I was assured my days could not endure,

And therefore though I bound myself by oath
To help King Henry all that ever I might,
Yet at the treaty of my brethren both,
Which reason granted to require but right,
I left his part, whereby he perished quite. 6

After relating Warwick's death at Barnet, Clarence goes on to his own. He claims to have been imprisoned and accused without cause, and to have been executed without due process. He attributes his murder to Edward's reaction to an old document in which "A prophesy was found, which sayd a G/, Of Edwardes children should destruction be."7 The way the Duke tells it, he was urged by his sister Margaret to remarry, his wife being dead. It was at her suggestion that he sought to marry the heiress of her husband the Duke of Burgundy, but

4Ibid., 223.  
5Ibid.  
6Ibid., p. 224.  
7Ibid., 227.
King Edward objected. Clarence's faithful servant was then accused of sorcery and executed, and when Clarence protested to his brother the King, he was himself put into the Tower on charges of treason. His younger brother Richard, he says, desiring the crown and expecting Edward to die early because he lived so unwisely, caused him by his lies to conspire through false witnesses to have Clarence attainted and condemned. Richard then attempted to strangle his brother in the Tower, and failed because of his struggles; "And in a butte of Malmesey standing by, Newe Christned me, because I should not crie."8

Most of the men whose tragedies were added in the 1563 edition were contemporaries of Richard III. In the complaint of Anthony Woodville Earl Rivers and Lord Scales, the brother of Elizabeth Gray, is described the marriage of Elizabeth and King Edward, and her desire to help her brothers and sisters find wealthy marriages. The Earl of Warwick had never approved of Edward's marriage, and the Duke of Clarence joined him in his enmity. After the death of Warwick, there were strong feelings between the old nobility (led by Clarence and Richard Duke of Gloucester) and the relatives of the Queen. The children of Edward and Elizabeth were governed and taught by Rivers. When Clarence's anger at his brother reached the stage that he was put into the Tower by the Council, Richard made use of his

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8 Ibid., p. 233.
opportunity to have him killed. Woodville claims that he consented reluctantly to the death of the Duke of Clarence, but did not approve of it.

Lord Rivers describes the hypocrisy of Richard:

Although this brother queller, Tyraunt fell
Envyed our state as much and more than he (Clarence):
Yet dyd hys clokyng flattery so excell
To all our frendesward, chiefly vnto me,
That he appeared our thrusty stay to be:
For outwardly he wrought our state to furder,
Where inwardly he mynded nought save murder.9

Rivers also describes the luxury of King Edward's life, and his death. When Edward IV died, the young Prince of Wales was at Ludlow, under the governance of his uncle Woodville. Upon hearing of the King's death, Rivers gathered an army to escort the Prince to London, but he dispersed them at the Queen's command. At Northampton he was met, arrested, and imprisoned by Richard, who was accompanied by the Duke of Buckingham and Lord Hastings, Edward's Lord Chamberlain. Richard then seized custody of his nephew at Stony Stratford, arresting several of his attendants, including his half-brother, Sir Richard Gray. Richard made himself Protector, and had the King's relatives who were his prisoners slain at Pomfret Castle.

Shakespeare, in writing his play, seems to have read a number of accounts of the history of William Lord Hastings. Hastings, in the Mirror, admits having been a pander to the

9Ibid., p. 257.
lusts of King Edward IV, to which he attributes the hatred
which the Woodvilles felt for him. As Chamberlain, he had
worked with Shore's wife, Edward's mistress. When Edward
had been captured by the Earl of Warwick, Hastings fled with
him after his escape. He came back with him and fought at
Barnet and Tewkesbury, where they captured Margaret of Anjou
and her son, whose death Hastings describes:

When Crofts a Knyght, presented Henryes heyre
To this our prync, in furyous mood enquere
Of hym he gan, what folye of phrensye vayne,
With armes forsd hym to invade his realme?
Whome answeryng, that he claymd his fathers ryght:
With Gauntlet smitt, commaunded from hys syght:
Clarence, Glocester, Dorcet, and I Hastyngs slewe.10

Ascribing his own fall to the guilt incurred by his part
in the death of Edward of Anjou, Hastings proceeds to describe
that fall. He gave his support to Richard against the Woodville
faction, and helped him in the arrests of Lord Rivers, Sir
Richard Gray, and Sir Thomas Vaughn, to whose deaths he con-
sented. When Richard called two separate councils, Hastings
attended the one at Baynard Castle, trusting to his friend
William Catesby for a report upon the second meeting. While
those at Baynard were planning the coronation of King Edward
V, however, the meeting at Crosby Place was plotting to make
the Protector King. Catesby reported at that meeting that
he had tested the loyalty of Hastings, and that the Chamberlain

10 Ibid., p. 276.
could not be taken into the plots. As a result of that report, a meeting was scheduled for June 15, to be held in the Tower.

Ignoring all warnings, Hastings attended that meeting, where he was arrested and slain. John Morton Bishop of Ely (later Chancellor under King Henry VII) and Henry Lord Stanley Earl of Derby were made prisoners, but were not executed. The first warning which Hastings had received was from Stanley:

Hastynges away, in slepe the Gods foreshew
By dreadfull dreame, fell fates vnto vs two.
Me thought a Boare with tuske so rased our throate,
That both our shoulders of the bloud dyd smoake.
Aryse to horse, strayght homewarde let vs hye.
And syth our foe we may not mate, o flye.\(^{11}\)

Scorning this advice, Hastings looked upon the other events as mere coincidence. Before the death of King Edward, the Woodvilles had had Hastings arrested and imprisoned in the Tower, whence he had been saved by the influence of Mistress Shore. On his way to the Tower at that time, he had met a priest and a pursevant named Hastings. On the day of his death, he had met both these two again and had spoke with them about the previous meeting. In addition, his horse had stumbled three times on the way.

At the Tower, Richard arrived late, apologised for his tardiness, and praised the strawberries of Morton's house at Holborne. He requested that the Bishop send for some, which he did, and Richard left the meeting for a time.

\(^{11}\)Ibid., p. 282.
Shortly afterwards he returned:

Frownyng he enters, with so chaunged cheare,
As for myld May had chopped fowle Januere.
And lowryng on me with the goggle eye,
The whetted tuske, and furrowed forhead hye.
His Crooked shoulder bristellyke set vp,
With frothy lawes, whose foame he chawed and suppd,
With angry lookes that flamed as the fyre:
Thus gan at last to grunt the grymest syre.

What earned they, whoe me, the kyngdomes staye,
Contrvyed have counsell, trayterously to slaye?
Abashed all sate. I thought I mought be bolld,
For conscyence clearnesse, and acquayntaunce olld.
Theyr hyre is playne quoth I. Be death the least,
To whom so seekth your grace so to molest.
Withouten staye: the Queene, and the whore Shores wyfe,
By witchcraft (quoth he) seeke to wast my lyfe.

Loe here the wythered and bewytched arme,
That thus is spent by those .ii Sorceresse charme.
And bare his arme and shewed his swynyshe skynne.

To all the howse the colour was to playne.
Nature had gyven hym many a maymed marke,
And hit amonges, to note her monstrous warke.

My doubtfull hart distracted this replye.
For thone I cared not. Thother nypped so nye
That whyst I could not. But forthwith brake forth.
Yf so hit be, of death they are doutlesse worth.
Yf, traytoure quod he? playest thou with yfs and ands?
Ile of thy body avowe it with these hands.
And therwithall he myghtley bounced the bord.
In rushd hys byllmen . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

But Elye, Yorke [the Archbishop], and I, were taken
strayght.
Imprysoned they: I should no longer wayt,
But charged was to shryue me, and shyft with hast.
My lord must dyne, and now midday was past.
The boares first dyshe, not the boares head should be.
But Hastyninges heade the boaryshe beast would see.12

12Ibid., pp. 289-290.
Basting's death was afterwards justified in a well-written and lengthy proclamation—so long, indeed, that its length betrayed its premeditation.

"The complainyt of Henrye duke of Buckingham" is one of the best parts of the *Mirrour*, and one of the few whose author is known. Thomas Sackville, in the person of Henry Stafford, relates first the duke's nobility of blood (he was descended from Thomas of Woodstock, the youngest son of King Edward III, and his mother was a daughter of Edmund Duke of Somerset). Although he was of Lancastrian persuasion (his grandfather was taken at Tewkesbury and executed, while his father was slain at the second battle of St. Albans), he joined with Richard against the Woodvilles. He had some basis for hatred, for he felt that he had been married beneath his rank in being forced (as a ward of King Edward IV) to marry the sister of Elizabeth Woodville. After helping Richard to kill his enemies, including Lord Hastings, and to become king, Buckingham began to fear for his own life. He claims to have come to hate Richard's tyranny when he killed the young princes, and to have left when Richard's favor to him seemed to be waning.

At his castle of Brecknocke, with the advice and help of his prisoner Morton (he was holding the Bishop of Ely for Richard), he plotted rebellion. The army he had raised abandoned him, however, and he was forced to flee. Seeking shelter with a servant, he found his trust was misplaced. The man
turned his master over at once when Richard offered a reward of one thousand pounds. Buckingham was taken to Salisbury and there beheaded upon his own confession.

One of the most interesting stories in the Mirrour is that of the poet Collingbourne. It was probably put into the work as a reminder to princes and magistrates to be lenient with poets who might dispraise them. Collingbourne had written a poem in which was a rhyme:

The Cat, the Rat and Lovel our Dog,
Do rule al England, vnder a Hog.\(^{13}\)

which he explains as having merely meant:

The kyng him selfe of most was held accurst,
Both for his owne and for his faultours faultes,
Of whom were three, the naughtiest of all naughtes.

The chyefe was Catisby whom I called a Cat,
A crafty lawyer catching all he could.
The second Ratclife, whom I named a Rat,
A cruel beast to gnawe on whom he chould.
Lord Lovell barkt & byt whom Rychard would.
Whom therfore ryghtly I dyd terme our Dog,
Wherewyth to ryme I cleped the Kyng a Hog.

Tyll he vsurped the crowne, he gave the Bore,
In whych would God he had deceased,
Than had the realme not ruyned so sore.
His Nephews raygne should not so soone have ceassed,
The noble blud had not bene so decreased.
His Rat, his Cat, and Bloudhound had not noyed
So many thousandes as they have destroyed.\(^{14}\)

For his rhyme, Collingbourne was hanged, drawn, and quartered.

The tragedy of Richard Duke of Gloucester is one of the most important of the stories, although he makes no attempt

\(^{13}\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 349.}\)  \(^{14}\text{Ibid.}, \text{pp. 349-350.}\)
to defend himself or to justify his crimes. Made Protector of King Edward V and the realm by consent of Parliament, he sought the crown in his own name and caused his nephews to be slain. For these wrongs he confesses himself to have lived tormented by terrors. He admits having killed his brother the Duke of Clarence, and describes the death of the young King (Edward V) and his brother the young Duke of York. He repeats the story of Buckingham's revolt, admitting that the Duke was killed without due process of the law.

Having set watches upon the coast to warn of Richmond's approach, Richard went to Nottingham to wait. Henry Tudor Earl of Richmond soon landed in Wales, and moved toward the center of England. Richard gathered his army, and they met at Market Bosworth, in Leicestershire. Richard was slain in the battle, and Richmond became King as Henry VII. Richard describes the treatment to which his body was left:

My body it was hurryed and tugged like a Dogge,
On horsebacke all naked and bare as I was borne.
My head, handes, & feete, downe hanging like a Hogge,
With dyrt and bloud besprent . . . . . . . . . . .
With greuous woundes bemangled most horrible to see.15

The only woman in the first two groups of complainants in the Mirrour, Jane Shore, complains against Richard that he forced her to do public penance for harlotry. She attempts to justify her having become Edward's concubine by explaining

15 Ibid., p. 370.
that she was forced to marry when she was too young. In addition, she claims that Richard took all her property.

The history of Edmund Duke of Somerset is out of its chronological order in the book, relating events which are primarily in the three plays of *King Henry the Sixth*. Of Lancastrian descent, he assented to the death of Humphry Duke of Gloucester, and thereby opened the way of Richard Duke of York to a position of prominence. He accuses York of having aimed at the throne from the first, and describes the Battle of St. Albans, where he Somerset died. He was killed by the Earl of Warwick beneath the sign of an inn, The Castle. He had been warned to beware of castles, but had not thought of the inn. At the same battle were also slain Lord Clifford, Lord Stafford, and the Earl of Northumberland. Henry VI was taken into the custody of the Duke of York.

After the Battle of St. Albans, Parliament made the Duke of York Protector of the realm and proclaimed him the heir of Henry VI, admitting the superior right of York to the throne. Somerset disputes this right:

> From the heyre female came Yorke and his lede, And we of Lancaster from the heyre male, Of whom three kings in order dyd succeede, By iust discent... 16

Another version of the story of Richard III with which Shakespeare must surely have been familiar was the anonymous play *The True Tragedy of Richard the Third*, which was being

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performed in London at the time when Shakespeare was writing his play. The earlier play was printed in 1594, possibly as a result of the popularity of Shakespeare's version.

The True Tragedy begins with an introduction by Truth, which is, in effect, the Prologue. Truth relates the background of Richard Duke of York's claim to the throne and the agreement in the twenty-second year of the reign of King Henry VI whereby York was made the successor to the throne and the protector of the realm. When he was slain at Wakefield, he left three sons: Edward, George, and Richard. Edward suppressed King Henry and became king, imprisoning Henry in the Tower, where Richard murdered him. George, Truth adds, was falsely accused of treason, imprisoned in the Tower, and drowned by Richard in a butt of wine. Truth then, at the request of Poetry, describes Richard:

A man ill shaped, crooked backed, lame armed, withall, Valiantly minded, but tyrannous in authoritie. 

The play itself begins in the twenty-second year of the reign of King Edward IV, who knows himself to be dying. Edward, on his deathbed, seeks to reconcile the nobles with the members of his wife's family. At his plea, Hastings and Marcus (Queen Elizabeth's oldest son, the Marquess of Dorset) swear friendship. The young prince Edward is at Ludlow, in Wales, with a company of his mother's relatives; and Edward in dying names his brother Richard protector.

Richard, in a soliloquy, expresses his desire for the crown, and determines to do away with his nephews. He receives a message from the Duke of Buckingham, advising him to remove the sons of Edward IV from their mother's custody, and offering his army plus the forces under Lord Hastings. Richard is shown hypocritically mourning his brother, then resolving to renew the conflict between the Woodvilles and the older nobility. He reveals how greatly he desires the throne:

Why so, now Fortune make me a King, Fortune give me a kingdom, let the world report the Duke of Gloster was a King, therefore Fortune make me King, if I be but King for a yeare, nay but halfe a yeare, nay a moneth, a weekke, three dayes, one day, or halfe a day, nay an houre, swoues half an houre, nay sweete Fortune, clap but the Crowne on my head, that the vassays may but once say God save King Richards life, it is inough.18

Prince Edward comes from Wales, Buckingham raises an army, and many of the nobles flee the realm. Among those who leave are Marcus and the Earls of Westmoreland and Northumberland. In the next scene, the governors of the household of Edward V are shown decreasing his train, lest Richard think they are coming in malice toward him. Lord Rivers, the King's uncle, disapproves, but yields to his sister's insistence. He leaves the company at Stony Stratford, and goes to meet Richard at Northampton.

In the following scene, Richard carries out his plan to get the young King from the custody of his mother's kin. He

18 Ibid., p. 17.
has Earl Rivers and those who are with him locked in their rooms by their "Oste." Rivers reacts violently, and in his talk with Richard makes what may well be the only attack upon Gloucester's courage:

A brayd you me as traitor to your grace:
No altho a prisoner, I returne defiance in thy face.
The Chronicles I record, talk of my fidelitie, & of my progeny,
Wher, as in a glas you maist behold, thy ancestors & their trechery,
The wars in France, Irish conflicts, & Scotland knowes my trust,
When thou hast kept thy skin vnscard, and let thine armor rust:19

Rivers is sent, nevertheless, to Pomfret Castle, while Richard and the Duke of Buckingham go on to join the young Prince at Stony Stratford.

In the following scene, Richard arrests Sir Thomas Vaughn, Sir Richard Gray (Queen Elizabeth's second son), and Lord Hapce on charges of high treason. He also charges them with an attempt to replace him as protector, and accuses Richard Gray of taking money from the treasury. Young Edward's pleas in their behalf, especially for his half-brother Gray, are denied. The ensuing scene portrays the grief and fear of the Queen upon hearing of the arrests, and the combination of assurances and threats by means of which the Archbishop of York removes from her keeping her youngest son, Richard Duke of York.

The eighth scene begins with the deaths of the prisoners

19 Ibid., p. 22. Frequently the single letters "I" and "A" are used to represent "Aye" and "Ah" respectively.
at Pomfret, tells that the Earl of Oxford has been imprisoned at Hame Castle, and records the sermon by which Dr. Shas proved that the two young princes were not the legitimate sons of their father, King Edward IV. The Lord Mayor and the Aldermen of London, at Baynard's Castle, offer Richard the crown, which he refuses, albeit faintly. This same scene reports the happenings in the meeting of the Council in the Tower, when Richard accuses Lord Hastings, the Queen, and Mistress Shore of conspiracy against him and of sorcery. They drag Hastings away from the meeting at Richard's command:

Come bring him away, let this suffice, thou and that accursed sorceresse the mother Queene hath bewitched me, with assistance of that famous strumpet of my brothers, Shores wife: my withered arm is a sufficient testimony, deny it if thou canst, . . .

Hastings attempts to deny the charge, beginning his sentence with "If," but Richard interrupts him:

If villain, feedest thou me with Ifs & ands, go fetch me a Priest, make a short shrift, and dispatch him quickly. For by the blessed Saint Paule I sweare, I will not dine till I see the traytors head, away Sir Thomas, suffer him not to speake, see him executed straight & let his copartner the Lord Standly be carried to prison also, tis not his broke head I haue giuen him, shall excues him.

The scene concludes with Richard's discussion with a page, wherein he asks the advice of the young boy as to which of his followers would compass for him the deaths of his nephews. The page recommends Sir James Tyrrel, to whom Richard entrusts the

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20 Ibid., p. 33.  
21 Ibid.
task. The disposition of Jane Shore is reported: she has been put to public penance for harlotry, her possessions confiscated, and spies set to make sure that no one gives her money or helps her in any way.

In the following scene, Mistress Shore is shown seeking aid from those for whom she had done large favors; but none will help her, or even remain in her company. His son having died, Richard names his nephew, John Earl of Lincoln, his heir. Buckingham revolts against the king in whose behalf he had been previously so energetic.

The tenth scene is the murder of the young princes in the Tower. Sir Robert Brackenbury, the Lord Lieutenant of the Tower, gives the keys into the keeping of James Tyrrel, upon receiving a letter from Richard commanding him to do so. Brackenbury, a former servant of Edward IV, had refused to carry out the murder. One Miles Forrest has procured for Tyrrel two murderers: Will Slater and Jack Douton (or Denton), and they are told that it is the king's pleasure that there be no blood spilled. After some discussion, Tyrrel commands that the boys be smothered in their bedclothes. The princes enter, and Forrest, in speaking to them refers to Richard as the King. Young Edward notices this and asks him, "am not I King?" Forrest, in The True Tragedy, responds: "I would have said my Lord your uncle the Protector."
Shakespeare apparently remembered this slip when he was writing his play, for when Brakenbury turns away those who would visit the princes, he says that "The King hath strictly charged the contrary." When they ask him what King, he says, "I mean the Lord Protector."\(^\text{24}\)

One of the murderers, Denton, nearly weakens, but he restores his own resolution. Then in the delivery of four speeches, the crime is accomplished:

**Will.** Come we are readie, by the masse they are a sleepe indeed.

**For.** I heare they sleep, and sleepe sweet Princes, neuer wake no more, for you have seene the last light in this world.

**Jack.** Come presse them downe, it bootes not to cry againe, Iack upon them so lustily. But Maister Forest now they are dead what shall we do with them?

**For.** Why goe and bury them at the heape of stones at the staire foote, while I goe and tell Maister Terrell that the deed is done.\(^\text{25}\)

Forrest then reports the deed of Tyrrell, who says that he will see to the removal of the bodies, so that no one will know where they have been buried.

The Duke of Buckingham, turned over to the King's men by his own servant (for a reward of a thousand pounds), attempts to kill his betrayer. Arrested for treason, Buckingham claims that he would have made good his escape, if the Bishop of Ely had not fled. In a speech during which he calls the Earl of Richmond the rightful king, he says that Henry Tudor will land at Milford-Haven, kill Richard, become King, and marry Elizabeth


\(^{25}\) The True Tragedy, p. 44.
of York, Edward IV's eldest daughter.

In the following scene, Catesby reports the execution of the Duke of Buckingham at Salisbury. Richard, knowing that the Earl of Richmond is in Brittany and aware also of the plots of Richmond's mother the Countess (who was also the wife of Lord Stanley), attempts to have him slain. The effort fails; and when Stanley tries to depart from Richard's court, he is required to leave behind his son George Lord Strange as a hostage. Meanwhile, Richard has sent Lord Lovell to the Queen Mother, asking for the hand of her daughter Elizabeth. Both ladies consent. The scene ends with the reports of messengers with word that the Scottish nobles have agreed to the marriage of Richard's niece (the sister of the Earl of Lincoln) and a Scottish Earl, and that Captain Blunt and his prisoner the Earl of Oxford have fled to join the Earl of Richmond.

In the next scene Richmond avows his claim to the throne, and his mission to avenge the innocents slain by Richard. Having invaded England with the aid of the King of France, Richmond moves through Wales gathering strength. At Lichfield, he organizes his forces for battle:

But now my Lords touching the placing of our battell best,  
And how we may be least indangered,  
Because I will be foremost in this fight,  
To incounter with that bloodie murtherer,  
My selfe wil lead the vanward of our troope,  
My Lord of Oxford, you as our second selfe,  
Shall haue the happie leading of the reare,  
A place I know which you will well deserue,  
And Captaine Blunt, Peter Landyse and you,  
Shall by in quarters as our battels scowtes,  
Prouided, thus your bow-men Captaine Blunt,
Must scatter here and there to gaul their horse, 26

Meanwhile, in the next scene, Richard is described by his page:

For now he hath obtain'd the Diademe,
But with such great discomfort to his minde,
That he had better liued a private man, his lookes are gasty,
Hidious to behold, and from the priuie sentire of his heart,
There comes such deep fetcht sighes and fearefull cries,
That being with him in his chamber oft,
He moves me weep and sigh for company,
For if he heares one stirre he riseth vp,
And claps his hand vpon his dagger straight,
Readie to stab him, what so ere he be . . . 27

Richard's men are shown leaving him to serve the Earl of Richmond, and in the next scene Richmond goes alone to his step-father, the Earl of Derby, who explains why he cannot openly support him. Here he receives word of the desertions among Richard's followers, and decides that the battle will be fought at Market Bosworth.

There is a strong suggestion for the dream sequence in Richard III in Richard's soliloquy at the beginning of scene xvi:

The hell of life that hangs vpon the Crowne,
The daily cares, the nightly dreams,
The wretched shewes, the treason of the foe,
And horror of my bloodie practise past,
Strikes such a terror to my wounded conscience,
That sleep I, wake I, or whatsoever I do,
Meethinkes their goasts come gaping for reuenge,
Whom I haue slaine in reaching for a Crowne.
Clarence complaines, and crieth for reuenge.
My Nephues cloudes, Reuenge, reuenge doth crie.
The headlesse Peeres come preasing for reuenge.
And every one cries, let the tyrant die.
The sunne by day shines hotly for reuenge.
The Moone by night eclipseth for reuenge.
The Stars are turned to Coments for reuenge.
The Planets claunge their courses for reuenge.
The birds sing not, but sorrow for reuenge.

26 The True Tragedy, p. 27. 27 Ibid., p. 58.
The silly lambes sit bleating for revenge.  
The screeking Rauen sits croaking for revenge.  
Whole heads of beasts comes bellowing for revenge.  
And all, yea all the world I thinke,  
Cries for revenge, and nothing but revenge.  
But to conclude, I haue undesued revenge. 
In company I dare not trust my friend,  
Being alone, I dread the secret foe:  
I doubt my food, least poysone lurke therein.  
My bed is vnooth, rest refraines my head.  

When Stanley refuses to obey his summons, Richard orders the execution of Stanley's son Lord Strange, but is persuaded to wait until after the battle. Offered a chance of flight to save his life, Richard decides to fight and die King of England:

Flie villaine, looke I as tho I would flie, no first shall this dull and senselesse ball of earth receive my bodie cold and void of sence, you watry heauens rowle on my gloomy day and darksome cloudes close vp my cheerfull sownde, downe is thy sunne Richard, neuer to shine againe, the birdes whose feathers should adorne my head, houers aloft & dares not come in sight, yet faint not man, for this day if Fortune will, shall make thee King possest with quiet Crowne, if Fates deny, this ground must be my graue, yet golden thoughts that reache for a Crowne, danted before by Fortunes cruell spight, are come as comforts to my drooping heart, and bids me keepe my Crowne and die a King.

Richmond enters at this cue, and kills Richard in single combat. A page reports the results of the battle, and the names of those who died as Richard, John Duke of Norfolk, and Sir Robert Brackenbury. Lord Lovell is here called dead, though he actually escaped. Catesby is taken and executed. 

The last scene shows the victorious Richmond sending to redeem the pledges he left in France for the King of France's

\[28\] Ibid., pp. 61-62.  
\[29\] Ibid., pp. 64-65.
loans, and being proclaimed King, He deals with the messengers who claim to have saved the life of George Lord Strange, and he commands the treatment of Richard's body:

I will it be proclaime presently, that traytous Richard Be by our command, drawne through the streets of Lester, Starke naked on a Colliers horse let hime be laide . . . .

He arranges to fulfill his pledge to marry Edward IV's daughter, planning the wedding for "The two and twentieth day of August next," (the date of the Battle of Bosworth field is recorded as August 23, 1485), and the play ends with the messenger summarizing the Tudor dynasty, with elaborate praises of Queen Elizabeth.

\[30\text{ Ibid., p. 69.}\]
\[31\text{ Ibid., p. 70.}\]
By far the most influential of the sources which Shakespeare consulted in writing the plays which deal with Richard III was Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland*. Since this chronicle and most of the others of that time were based on the histories of Sir Thomas More and Polydore Vergil, there is a great deal of material which Shakespeare could have gotten from many sources. The description of Richard himself, for example, is repeated by the chroniclers from More's:

... little of stature, ill fetured of limnes, croke backed, his left shoulder much higher then his right, hard fauored of visage ... hee came into the world with the feete forward ... and ... not untothed ...  

and from Vergil's portrait:

He was lyttle of stature, deformyd of body, thone shoulder being higher than thother, a short and sowre cowntenaunce, which semyd to savor of mischief, and utter evydently craft and deceyt.  

Even the *Mirror for Magistrates* and *The True Tragedy* repeat this image:

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A man ill shaped, crooked backed, lame armed, withall,
Valiantly minded, but tyrannous in authoritie.\(^3\)

Shakespeare not only retains this picture of Richard, but

**even puts it into Richard's own mouth:**

But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks,
Nor made to court an amorous looking glass;
I, that am rudely stamp'd, and want love's majesty
To strut before a wanton ambling nymph;
I, that am curtail'd of this fair proportion,
Cheated of feature by dissembling nature,
Deform'd unfinished, sent before my time
Into this breathing world, scarce half made up,
And that so lamely and unfashionable
That dogs bark at me as I halt by them:
Why, I, in this weak and piping time of peace,
Have no delight to pass away the time,
Unless to spy my shadow in the sun,
And descant on mine own deformity:\(^4\)

In many other places, too, Richard attributes his villainy
to his physical looks. "Since I cannot prove a lover," he
declares, "I am determined to prove a villain."\(^5\) Later
having won the grudging acceptance of his suit from the Lady
Anne, Warwick's younger daughter, he almost doubts his ugliness:

My dukedom to a beggarly denier,
I do mistake my person all this while:
Upon my life, she finds, although I cannot,
Myself to be a marvellous proper man.
I'll be at charges for a looking-glass,
And entertain some score or two of tailors,
To study fashions to adorn my body:
Since I am crept in favor with myself,
I will maintain it with some little cost.\(^6\)

It is perhaps an interesting sidelight that, while Richard's
enemies constantly refer to his deformity, his family and friends

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\(^3\) The True Tragedy of Richard the Third (London, 1844), p. 5.

\(^4\) The Aldus Shakespeare: Richard III (New York, 1967),
Act I, scene i, lines 14-27. All quotes from Richard III in
this chapter are from this edition.

\(^5\) Ibid., 28-30.

\(^6\) Ibid., 252-260.
rarely do. Queen Margaret, in particular, harps upon that string in nearly every reference to Richard. She calls him "that valiant crookback prodigy,/ . . . that with his grumbling/ was wont to cheer his dad in mutinies?"7 and "foul misshapen stigmatic,/ Marked by the destinies to be avoided/ As venom toads or lizards' dreadful stings"8 and a cacodemon,9 and "the troubler of this poor world's peace!"10 Margaret's son, Prince Edward, copies his mother, calling Richard "misshapen Dick,"11 and likening him to Aesop, another famous hunchback.12 Perhaps Shakespeare intended to show the antipathy toward Richard which had been developed in Edward IV's sons, when he made young Richard Duke of York mock his uncle Gloucester's appearance, in which case there was no innocent among the people who died at the hands or the command of Richard.

Richard, in the tetralogy which deals with his life, is

7G. B. Harrison, editor, Shakespeare: The Complete Works (New York, 1952), King Henry VI, Part III, I, iv, 75-77. In this chapter, all quotes from the Henry VI plays will be from this edition.
8Ibid., II, ii, 135-138.
9Ibid., III, I, iii, 144.
10Ibid., I, iii, 221.
11Ibid., II, v, 35.
credited with the deaths of a number of people. He kills the Duke of Somerset (actually Richard was only four years old when the Duke died) and Lord Clifford, who had slain Richard's brother (Edmund Earl of Rutland, at the age of twelve) and had mocked their father the Duke of York with Rutland's death, in battle. After battle, when he had been captured, young Edward of Anjou was stabbed by the king's servants, whom other sources name as Richard Duke of Gloucester, George Duke of Clarence, Richard Lord Hastings, and Thomas Marquiss Dorset. Shakespeare limits this to Richard and George, and Richard gives as his motive the securing of Edward's throne. Henry VI, who was also a threat to the security of Edward's reign, Richard stabbed 'with his own hands,' according to More, in the Tower. Shakespeare's portrayal of this scene ends with Richard soliloquizing:

13 Ibid., II, iv.
16 Henry VI, V, v, 25-46.
What, will the aspiring blood of Lancaster Sink in the ground? I thought it would have mounted. See how my sword weeps for the poor King's death! Oh, may such purple tears be always shed From those that wish the downfall of our house!  

Even accepting Shakespeare's picture of Richard plotting the death of his brother Clarence, based apparently upon a hint in More's account:

Some wise men also ween that his drift, covertly conveyed, lacked not in helping forth his brother Clarence to his death: which he resisted openly, howbeit somewhat (as men deemed) more faintly than he that was heartily minded to his welfare.  

it is hard to feel compassion for the notoriously unstable "false, fleeting; perjured Clarence" Also, the blame for Clarence's death must be shared by Edward, who signed a warrant for his brother's doom, and whose remorse is shown in both the History of Sir Thomas More (Edward is quoted as saying, "O infortunate brother, for whose lyfe no man in this world wold once make request") and in Shakespeare's play, where Edward is given these lines:

Have I a tongue to doom my brother's death, And shall that tongue give pardon to a slave? My brother slew no man; his fault was thought, And yet his punishment was cruel death. Who sued to me for him? who, in my rage, Kneel'd at my feet and bade me be advised? Who spake of brotherhood? who spake of love?

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18 Henry VI, V, vi, 61-65.  
19 More, pp. 8-9  
20 Richard III, I, iv, 55.  
21 Vergil, p. 168.  
22 Richard III, II, i, 102-108.
After the death of King Edward IV, Richard had arrested and executed the guardians of the young Prince of Wales. He claimed in both the sources and in the play that they were attempting to prevent his exercise of his rightful place as protector of the young King Edward V, his nephew, and of England, according to the will of his brother Edward. These men included the brother and son of the Queen, Anthony Woodville Lord Rivers and Sir Richard Grey, and also Sir Thomas Vaughn. These men were executed at Pomfret Castle upon Richard's order and Grey at least recognized that they had deserved death:

Now Margaret's curse is fall'n upon our heads,
For standing by when Richard stabb'd her son.23

Lord Hastings, who had also been present at the death of Edward of Anjou and cursed by Margaret, was executed in haste and without trial in the courtyard of the Tower, also at Richard's command.24

In addition to the apparent antipathy which his nephews felt for Richard, he must certainly have been aware of the fates of former royal uncles. That he knew the ominous character of his title, Shakespeare shows when Edward announces that he is creating his brothers dukes of Clarence and Gloucester. Richard objects:

Let me be Duke of Clarence, George of Gloucester,
For Gloucester's dukedom is too ominous.25

23Ibid., III, iii, 15-16.  24Ibid., III, iv, 90ff.  
which echoes the chronicles and Polydore Vergil:

But it seemeth, that the title of Gloucester given unto earles and dukes for honors sake hath been fetall, and foreshewed the destruction of them who should enjoy it, forasmuch as, before this Humfrey (the younger brother of King Henry V), Hugh Spencer, and Thomas of Woodstocke sonne to Edward the Thirde, thone earle, thother duke of Glocester, ended their lives by miserable violence: also, after them, king Richard the Thirde, duke of Glocester was slaine in battaille within the realme; so that the title thereof may as well be applied proverbially unto unfortunate personages . . . .26

Richard must surely have been aware of the especially violent deaths of the previous dukes of Gloucester: Thomas, the son of Edward III, murdered with the knowledge and approval (if not at the command) of his nephew King Richard III; and Humphrey, brother of Henrý V, murdered at the command of Queen Margaret, if not of her husband King Henry VI (Duke Humphrey's nephew). In the light of these events, he may have felt the deaths of Edward and young Richard to have been necessary.

The Duke of Buckingham, executed upon his own confession of treason and rebellion, had been in revolt against Richard as the crowned and accepted King of England.27

In addition to their offenses against Richard or his family, most of these victims had been cursed by Queen Margaret, who plays in Richard III almost the role of a chorus. Although

26 Vergil, p. 73.

27 Richard III, V, i.
Margaret died (historically) before most of the events of the play, Shakespeare gives her several long passages of commentary upon the action. She instructs Richard to play the Nemesis for her and slay all her enemies and then to die the worst death himself:

Live each of you the subjects to his [Richard's] hate,
And he to yours, and all of you to God's! 28

She is not softened to pity even by the appeals of Queen Elizabeth and Cecily Neville, Richard's mother, when they beg her to teach them to curse Richard. In speaking to them, she compares their sorrows to hers, and blaming Richard for their deaths, reminds the Duchess of York:

From forth the kennel of thy womb hath crept
A hell-hound that doth hunt us all to death:
That dog, that had his teeth before his eyes,

Thy womb let loose, to chase us to our graves.
O upright, just, and true-disposing God,
How do I thank thee, that this carnal cur
Preys on the issue of his mother's body,
And makes her pew-fellow with others' moan!

Richard yet lives, hell's black intelligencer,
Only reserved their factor, to buy souls
And send them thither: but at hand, at hand,
Ensues his piteous and unpitied end:

Cancel his bond of life, dear God, I pray,
That I may live to say The dog is dead! 29

In addition to the basic description of Richard, Shakespeare takes a great deal of the play directly from his sources. In particular, there are several scenes which are

taken from More and Holinshed with little or no change. Among these are several of the best scenes of the play, such as the reconciliation scene at Edward's deathbed, where Shakespeare merely adds to those present Richard, who was in the north as his brother's deputy, and Lord Rivers, who was actually in Ludlow, in Wales, acting as head of the young Prince of Wales' household and as his governor. Edward's speech, in which he laments his having allowed their enmity to go so long unchecked, and begs the nobles to end their differences and support his son with the unity which must accompany his successful reign, is nearly identical with the words attributed to him in the play's sources. The hypocrisy and falsehood of the nobles is likewise directly from the chronicles.

The scene of the Council in the Tower, too, Shakespeare keeps almost unchanged from his sources. It begins with Richard arriving late, and apologizing for his having overslept; and includes his request to the Bishop of Ely (John Morton): "my lord you have very good strawberries at your gardayne in Holborne, I require you let vs haue a messe of them," which Shakespeare renders: "When I was last in Holborn,/ I saw good strawberries in your garden there:/ I do beseech you send for some of them." The wording of Richard's accusation against Queen Elizabeth and Jane Shore is also near that of the sources, and when Hastings begins to reply

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30 Ibid., II, i.  
with "If," Richard's response is as sharp and accusatory as that in the chronicles. Shakespeare even retains the length of the too-well-worded proclamation by which Richard sought to justify the death of Lord Hastings', and the warning which Hastings ignored. In both the sources and in Shakespeare's play, Hastings receives a warning from Lord Stanley (the Earl of Derby, stepfather of Henry of Richmond).

Hastynges away, in slepe the Gods foreshew
By dreadfull dreame, fell fates vnto vs two.
Me thought a Boare with tuske so rased our throate,
That both our shoulders of the bloud dyd smoake.33

In Shakespeare the wording is very similar:

. . . he sends you word
He dreamt to-night the boar had razed his helm:

Therefore he sends to know your lordship's pleasure,
If presently you will take horse with him toward the north,
To shun the danger that his soul divines.34

The other warnings—Hastings' horse stumbling three times on the way to the Tower and the meetings with the Pursuivant and the priest whom he had met before, when being taken to the Tower as prisoner under the wishes of Queen Elizabeth (when Mistress Shore had gotten his release)—are included too; and he is credited with the recognition that he should not have rejoiced at the deaths of his enemies, the kindred of Queen Elizabeth.


34 Richard III, III, ii, 10-18.
The deaths of the young princes in the Tower are based quite clearly upon More's account. More recorded the story, not in the only way he heard it, but in what he felt was the most likely to be true. This happened to be the official version finally made public by King Henry VII: that when Sir Robert Brackenbury, Constable of the Tower, refused to obey Richard's command to kill the children, Richard sent a man named Tyrrell with papers entitling him to hold the keys of the Tower for one night. Tyrrell, aided by Miles Forrest, John Dighton, and "Black Will" Slaughter, smothered the sons of Edward IV in their bedclothes and buried their bodies at the foot of the stairs. In Shakespeare's play, Tyrrell describes the murder:

Dighton and Forrest, whom I did suborn
To do this ruthless piece of butchery,
Although they were flesh'd villains, bloody dogs,
Melting with tenderness and kind compassion
Wept like two children in their deaths' sad stories.

"We smothered
The most replenished sweet work of nature
That from the prime creation e'er she framed."35

Shakespeare also took a number of details from his sources without major alteration. He kept the description of the death of Clarence (secretly drowned in a butt of Malmsey) and the prophecy "that G/ Of Edward's heirs the murderer shall be."36 In addition, he quotes the prophecy that Richard would not live long after seeing Richmond,37 and the message left in the

35Ibid., IV, iii, 4-19. 36Ibid., I, i, 39-40.
37Ibid., IV, ii, 105-110.
tent of John Howard Duke of Norfolk: "Jockey of Norfolk, be not so bold, / For Dickon thy master is bought and sold.". 38

Even the habit of Richard's biting his lip when angry or in deep thought, described by both More and Vergil, is included in an aside by Richard's follower Catesby: "The king is angry: see, he bites the lip." 39

Of the changes which Shakespeare makes, the most obvious is the manner in which he compresses time, a change which was necessary in most, if not all, the history plays. In addition, he expands the field of Richard's active participation in the events backwards almost to the time of Richard's birth. By this expansion, he combines Richard's life and the period of the Wars of the Roses and uses them to reinforce each other as unifying forces in the tetralogy. While it alters some relationships in the play (particularly, making Richard seem older than his brother Edmund Earl of Rutland), this expansion of Richard's action does not essentially affect the character of Richard or the major path of history. Even Shakespeare's expansion of Richard's military career and the credit to him of the deaths of Clifford and Somerset does not damage the basic historical authenticity of the character. While Richard did not, actually, kill either of these men, he

38 Ibid., V. iii, 304-305.
39 Ibid., IV, ii, 27.
was a good general and a bold and capable soldier, and he did
kill many a famous warrior, including Sir William Brandon,
Henry Tudor's standard bearer at Bosworth Field. Even his
enemies do not deny Richard's martial prowess, except in one
place, in The True Tragedy, where Earl Rivers is quoted as
accusing Richard:

The Chronicles I record, talk of my fidelitie, &
of my progeny,
Wher, as in a glas yu maist behold, thy ancestors & their trechery.

The wars in France, Irish cōflicts, & Scotland knowes
my trust,
When thou hast kept thy skin vnsçard, and let thine
armor rust:40

This, however, seems to be an error in printing the play, since
these lines do not apply to Richard, and could very easily
have been spoken by him. The incident at which they were
spoken took place shortly after Edward's death, when Richard
arrested Rivers and several others for trying to withhold
from him the custody of young Edward; and prior to this he
had fought in Scotland with such success that he had recovered
the castle and city of Berwick, which Henry VI and Queen
Margaret had yielded to Scotland in return for safety from
the Yorkist forces. In France, too, Richard had objected to
the peace which Edward had made and had been one of very
few to refuse the "annuities" which the King of France offered.

40 The True Tragedy, p. 22. Frequently the single letter "I" is used to represent "aye."
His government in Ireland was one of the best and most accepted for several centuries (into and beyond the time of Shakespeare, in fact, for Elizabeth was forced to send armies to put down rebels, as was Queen Anne).

As the playwright of The True Tragedy had done before him, and probably for the same reasons, Shakespeare heightens the dramatic effect of the final scenes by placing Richard and Richmond in personal conflict. In the sources, Richard, almost single-handed, fights his way to the standard of Henry Tudor and even kills his standard bearer before the army of Stanley sweeps down from their vantage on the hill to rescue Henry. This change, and the addition of parallel dreams for Richmond on the night before the battle are necessary to make of him a sufficiently strong character to be the sympathetic hero of a play so dominated by another. The dreams, which apparently were suggested by one of Richard's speeches in The True Tragedy:

Meethinkes their ghoasts come gaping from reuenge,
Whom I haue slaine in reaching for a Crowne.
Clarence complains, and crieth for reuenge.
My Nephues bloods, Reuenge, reuenge doth crie.
The headlesse Peeres come preasing for reuenge.
And every one cries, let the tyrant die,

in Shakespeare's version are shown upon the stage. One by one, the ghosts of those whom Richard has murdered appear to remind him of their deaths and bid him "Tomorrow in the battle think on me,/ And fall thy edgeless sword: despair,

Ibid., pp. 61-62.
and die!" Some of the changes which Shakespeare makes merely enhance traits of Richard's which are part of his sources. For example, Richard's capabilities as a strategist were famous, and he is credited in the plays with having conceived and carried out the plan to rescue Edward from the captivity in which he was held by Warwick. The chronicles record that Edward, by his kind words, won from the Archbishop of York (his jailor) freedom to ride and hunt, accompanied by a guard. One day, they say, he met a number of his friends, and because they outnumbered his guards, Edward was freed. Some versions of the story tell of horse races, and of Edward's mounting the only fresh horse and outriding his captors. Shakespeare, however, shows Richard explaining to Hastings and Stanley:

Now, my Lord Hastings and Sir William Stanley,
Leave off to wonder why I drew you hither
Into this chiefest thicket of the park.
Thus stands the case: you know our King, my brother,
Is prisoner to the Bishop here, at whose hands
He hath good usage and great liberty,
And, often but attended with weak guard,
Comes hunting this way to disport himself.

42 Richard III, V, iii, 134-135. 43 Ibid., V, iii, 118-176.
I have advertised him by secret means
That if about this hour he make this way
Under the color of his usual game,
He shall here find his friends with horse and men
To set him free from his captivity.45

In addition, Richard is credited with a neat piece of
sophistry in which he justifies to his father the Duke of York
the resumption of wars against Henry VI on the grounds that
Henry, since he is a usurper, has no authority to require an
oath from his rightful king. Another revelation is his plan
for Edward to regain the city of York, the ruse by which Edward
claimed only to be after his dukedom and even swore an oath of
obedience to King Henry.47

A wide view of Richard's character is shown in three scenes
wherein women are wooed to become wives. The first of these is
that where Edward seeks to win the widow of a Lancastrian knight
(Sir John Grey) to be his mistress. Richard's comments to his
brother George reveal his awareness of Edward's lecherous nature
and his plans for the lady.48 In the next scene, Richard woos
and wins Lady Anne Neville beside the coffin of her father-in-law
King Henry VI. In the beginning, Anne spurns Richard's suit and
calls him such names as his enemies used ("dreadful minister of
hell,"49 "foul devil,"50 "defused infection of a man,"51 and
"devilish slave,"52 for

47 Ibid., IV, vii, 1-64.
49 Richard III, I, ii, 46.
51 Ibid., I, 78.
46 Ibid., I, iii, 22-27
48 Ibid., III, ii.
50 Ibid., line 47.
52 Ibid., I, 90.
examples), but by the end of their exchange he has so glibly excused himself for the murders of Edward of Anjou and Henry VI (Anne's husband and father-in-law) that she consents to take his ring and allows him to show his penitence by accompanying the corpse of Henry to his new place of burial.53

In the third scene, Richard is on his way to war against Buckingham, and comes upon Queen Elizabeth, Queen Margaret, and his mother the Duchess of York. They have been cursing him, and wailing the losses of which they know him to have been the cause, and he speaks there with Elizabeth, wooing her for the hand of her daughter (also named Elizabeth). Again his sophistry and his wit seem to have overcome the hatred and scorn of a woman,54 but Elizabeth has not been swayed. She arranges for her daughter to marry Henry Tudor. In the sources, Elizabeth is recorded to have come out of sanctuary, to have permitted her daughters to attend parties at Richard's court, and to have written her son Marquiss Dorset and persuaded him to return to England and make peace with Richard.

Few of the other changes which Shakespeare makes have so much effect upon the plot and action of the plays, but he makes two which seem to cross purposes. In the sources, Edward is reported to have seen a vision before one of his battles, and there is no mention made of anyone else partaking of the scene.

... in a faire plaine neere to Mortimers Crosse, beside Ludlow, not farre from Hereford east, on Candlemas day in the morning, at which time the sun (as some write) appeared to the Earle of March like three sunnes, and suddenly joyed together in one, upon which sight hee tooke such courage, that hee fiercely setting on his enemies put them to flight: and for this cause men imagined he gave the sun in his full brightnesse for his badge or cognizance.55

In Shakespeare's tetralogy, however, Richard not only shares the vision, but describes the phenomenon:

Three glorious suns, each one a perfect sun,
Not separated with the racking clouds,
But severed in a pale clear-shining sky.
See, see! They join, embrace, and seem to kiss,
As if they vowed some league inviolable.
Now are they but one lamp, one light, one sun.56

On the other hand, Richard is credited in the chronicles with having played a major role in the reuniting of Edward and Clarence during Warwick's rebellion. He is pictured as meeting secretly with Clarence and with Edward before the two came together and joined to attack the Earl of Warwick. Shakespeare makes no mention of this activity, but credits the change of sides to Clarence's own repentance.57

Two other minor changes which Shakespeare makes are in having Richard actually promise to Buckingham the lands of the Earldom of Hereford (in the sources, he is shown as claiming and hoping for them) "when I am king,"58 and in his moving the consultation between Richard and the page (which results

55Stow, Annales, p. 413.
56Henry VI, II, i, 26-31.
57Ibid., V, i, 80-102.
58Richard III, III, i, 191-198.
in the appointment of Tyrrell to murder the princes) from a "closet" to the audience chamber of King Richard.\textsuperscript{59}

While there must be many other changes of less importance, these seem to be the most important ones from the standpoint of their effect upon the apparent character of Richard III.

\textsuperscript{59}\textit{Ibid.}, IV, ii, 28-41.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

While he made few changes, on the whole, in his sources, in dealing with the character of Richard III, Shakespeare did make a number of alterations in order to heighten the dramatic effect and strengthen the unity of the plays which deal with this king, especially in the play of Richard III. The compression of time and the introduction of Richard into the major events of the tetralogy at a time when the actual historical Richard was still too young to figure prominently, makes his actions parallel the Wars of the Roses and increases the climactic importance of his death at Bosworth Field.

On the other hand, at least two changes are effected in order to strengthen another character at Richard's expense: both by giving Richmond a share of Richard's dream before the battle at Bosworth, and by changing his sources to permit him to fight Richard in personal combat and kill him with his own hands, Shakespeare strengthens the otherwise unimportant character of the future King Henry VII.

By allowing Richard to share and almost to absorb Edward's vision of the three suns becoming one, and by other changes which emphasize Richard's strength, Shakespeare gives to the 126
two plays (Henry VI, Part III, and Richard III) a unity which the earlier history plays lack. In particular, Shakespeare uses all materials which increase or accentuate Richard's villainy, intellect, courage, military skill, and desire for the throne. He also adds scenes, however, which have little effect upon the action of the play, but which imply that even the deaths of the young princes might not have been without cause.

In essence, however, Shakespeare's image of Richard is a classic example of the effects of physical deformity and inferiority upon the mind and actions of a person of strong mind. Richard, the "runt" of a physically superior family, lacking the perfection of appearance which his brothers shared, attempts to compensate for this lack by becoming the best at what he can do—especially in warlike accomplishments, where attractiveness has little value. Because of this, he is ill-at-ease when martial skills cease to gain awards, and so he dislikes times of peace.

Shakespeare, working with little except his own observation and the reports of historians, has created a masterpiece of psychological interpretation. Richard almost acknowledges this when he says, "... since the heavens have shaped my body so, / Let Hell make crooked my mind to answer it."^1

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There were to be few other such portraits until the development of Freudian psychology and the case histories of psychotic and neurotic individuals. Freud himself, even, acknowledged his debt to Shakespeare and admitted that most of his psychology was expressed earlier in Shakespeare's plays.
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