

was victorious. Richard was slain, and the queen, in mockery of his claims to sovereignty, cut off his head, decked it with a paper crown, and set it up over the chief gate of the city of York. Fortune now changed. The next year the Lancastrians were defeated with great slaughter at Towton.¹ The light spring snow was crimsoned with the blood of thirty thousand slain, and the way strewn with corpses for ten miles up to the walls of York. The Earl of Warwick, henceforth popularly known as "the king-maker," now placed Edward, eldest son of the late Duke of York, on the throne, with the title of Edward IV. Henry and Margaret fled to Scotland. The new government summoned them to appear, and as they failed to answer, proclaimed them traitors. Four years later Henry was taken prisoner and sent to the Tower of London. He may have been happier there than battling for his throne. He was not born to reign, but rather, as Shakespeare makes him say, to lead a shepherd's life, watching his flocks, until the peacefully flowing years should —

"Bring white hairs unto a quiet grave."²

356. Summary. — The history of the period is one of loss. The brilliant French conquests of Henry V. slipped from the nerveless hands of his son, leaving France practically independent. The franchise had been restricted, and the House of Commons now represented property-holders mainly. Cade's rebellion was the sign of political discontent and the forerunner of civil war. The contests of the parties of the Red and the White Roses drenched England's fair fields with the best blood of her own sons. The reign ends with King Henry in prison, Queen Margaret and the prince fugitives, and the Yorkist Edward IV. placed on the throne by the help of the powerful Earl of Warwick.

¹ For battle-fields of the Wars of Roses, see Map No. 10, p. 174.

² See Henry's soliloquy on the field of Towton, beginning, —

"O God! methinks it were a happy life
To be no better than a homely swain."

SHAKESPEARE, *Henry VI.*, Part III. Act II. Sc. 5.

EDWARD IV. (House of York, White Rose). — 1461-1483.

357. Continuation of the War; Death of Henry; Tewkesbury.

— During the whole of Edward's reign the war went on with varying success, but unvarying ferocity, until at last neither side would ask or give quarter. Some years after the accession of the new sovereign the Earl of Warwick quarrelled with him, thrust him down from the throne, and restored Henry. But a few months later, at the battle of Barnet, Warwick, who was "the last of the great barons," was killed, and Henry, who had been led back to the Tower¹ again, died one of those "conveniently sudden deaths" which were then so common.

The heroic Margaret, however, would not give up the contest in behalf of her son's claim to the crown. But fate was against her. A few weeks after the battle of Barnet² her army was utterly defeated at Tewkesbury, her son Edward slain, and the queen herself taken prisoner. She was eventually released on the payment of a large ransom, and returned to France, where she died broken-hearted in her native Anjou, prophesying that the contest would go on until the Red Rose, representing her party, should get a still deeper dye from the blood of her enemies.³

358. The Introduction of Printing. — But an event was at hand of greater importance than any question of crowns or parties, though then none were wise enough to see its real significance. William Caxton, a London merchant, having learned the new art of printing in Flanders, now returned to his native country and set up a small press within the precincts of Westminster Abbey.

There, "at the sign of the red pole," he advertised his wares as "good chepe." He was not only printer, but translator and editor.

¹ The Tower of London, built by William the Conqueror as a fortress to overawe the city, became later both a royal palace and a prison of state. It is now used as a citadel, armory, and depository for the crown jewels.

² Barnet: about eleven miles northwest of London, Hertfordshire. Tewkesbury: near Gloucester, Gloucestershire.

³ See Scott's *Anne of Geierstein*, Chapter XXX.

Edward gave him some royal patronage, and paid liberally for work which not long before the clergy in France had condemned as a black art emanating from the devil, and which many of the English clergy still regarded with no very friendly eye, especially as it threatened to destroy the copying trade, of which the monks had well-nigh a monopoly. The first printed book which Caxton is known to have published in England was a small volume entitled "The Sayings of the Philosophers" (1477).¹ This venture was followed in due time by Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales," and whatever other poetry, history, or classics seemed worthy of preservation; in all no less than sixty-four distinct works. Up to this time a book of any kind was a luxury, laboriously "written by the few for the few"; but from this date literature of all sorts was destined to multiply and fill the earth with many leaves and some good fruit.

Caxton's patrons though few, were choice, and when one of them, the Earl of Worcester, was beheaded in the wars, he said of him, "The axe did then cut off more learning than was left in all the heads of the surviving lords." Recently a memorial window has been placed in St. Margaret's Church within the Abbey grounds, as a tribute to the man who, while England was red with slaughter, introduced "the art preservative of all arts," and preservative of liberty no less.²

359. Edward's Character. — The king, however, cared more for his pleasures than for literature or the welfare of the nation.

¹ "The dictes or sayengis of the philosophres, enprynted by me william Caxton at westmestre, the year of our lord MCCCCLxxvii."

It has no title-page, but ends as above. A copy is preserved in the British Museum. "The Game and Play of the Chess" is supposed by some to have been published a year or two earlier, but as the book has neither printer's name, place of publication, nor date, the time of its issue remains wholly conjectural.

² "Lord! taught by Thee, when Caxton bade
His silent words forever speak;
A grave for tyrants then was made,
Then crack'd the chain which yet shall break."

EBENEZER ELLIOTT, *Hymn for the Printers'
Gathering at Sheffield, 1833.*

His chief aim was to beg, borrow, or extort money to waste in dissipation. The loans which he forced his subjects to grant, and which were seldom, if ever, repaid, went under the name of "benevolences." But it is safe to say that those who furnished them were in no very benevolent frame of mind at the time. Exception may perhaps be made of the rich and elderly widow, who was so pleased with the king's handsome face that she willingly handed him £20 (a large sum in those days); and when the jovial monarch gallantly kissed her out of gratitude for her generosity, she at once, like a true and loyal subject, doubled the donation. Edward's course of life was not conducive to length of days, even if the times had favored a long reign. He died early, leaving a son, Prince Edward, to succeed him.

360. Summary. — The reign was marked by the continuation of the Wars of the Roses, the death of King Henry VI. and of his son, with the return of Queen Margaret to France. The most important event was the introduction of the printing-press by William Caxton.

EDWARD V. (House of York, White Rose). — 1483-1483.

361. Gloucester appointed Protector. — Prince Edward, heir to the throne, was a lad of twelve. He was placed under the guardianship of his ambitious and unscrupulous uncle, Richard, Duke of Gloucester, who had been appointed Lord Protector of the realm until the boy should become of age. Richard protected his young nephew as a wolf would a lamb. He met the prince coming up to London from Ludlow Castle, Shropshire, attended by his half-brother Sir Richard Grey, and his uncle Lord Rivers. Under the pretext that Edward would be safer in the Tower of London than at Westminster Palace, Richard sent the prince there, and soon found means for having his kinsmen Grey and Rivers executed.

362. Murder of Lord Hastings and the Two Princes. — Richard shortly after showed his object. Lord Hastings was one of the

council who had voted to make the duke Protector, but he was unwilling to help him in his plot to seize the crown. While at the council-table in the Tower Richard suddenly started up and accused Hastings of treason, saying, "By St. Paul I will not to dinner till I see thy head off." Hastings was dragged out of the room, and without either trial or examination was beheaded on a stick of timber on the Tower green. The way was now clear for the accomplishment of the duke's purpose. The queen-mother (Elizabeth Woodville, widow of Edward IV.) took her younger son and his sisters, one of whom was the Princess Elizabeth, of York, and fled for protection to the sanctuary¹ of Westminster Abbey, where, refusing all comfort, "she sat alone, low on the rushes."² Finally, Richard half persuaded and half forced the unhappy woman to give up her second son to his tender care. With bitter weeping and dread presentiments of evil she parted from him, saying, "Farewell, mine own sweet son! God send you good keeping! Let me kiss you once ere you go, for God knoweth when we shall kiss together again." That was the last time she saw the lad. He and Edward, his elder brother, were soon after murdered in the Tower, and Richard rose by that double crime to the height he coveted.

363. Summary. — Edward's nominal reign of less than three months must be regarded simply as the time during which his uncle, the Duke of Gloucester, perfected his plot for seizing the crown by the successive murders of Rivers, Grey, Hastings, and the two young princes.

RICHARD III. (House of York, White Rose). — 1483-1485.

364. Richard's Accession; he promises Financial Reform. — Richard used the preparations which had been made for the murdered Prince Edward's coronation for his own. He probably gained over an influential party by promises of financial reform.

¹ See Paragraph No. 131.

² "On the rushes": on the stone floor covered with rushes.

In their address to him at his accession Parliament said, "Certainly we be determined rather to adventure and commit us to the peril of our lives . . . than to live in such thralldom and bondage as we have lived long time heretofore, oppressed and injured by extortions and new impositions, against the laws of God and man, and the liberty, old policy and laws of this realm, wherein every Englishman is inherited."¹

365. Richard's Character. — Several attempts have been made of late years to defend the king against the odium heaped upon him by the older historians. But these well-meant efforts to prove him less black than tradition painted him, are perhaps sufficiently answered by the fact that his memory was so thoroughly hated by those who knew him best that no one of the age when he lived thought of vindicating his character.

We must then believe, until it is clearly proved to the contrary, that the last and worst of the Yorkist kings was what common report and Shakespeare have together represented him, — distorted in figure, and with ambition so unrestrained, that the words the poet puts into his mouth may have been really his: —

"Then, since the heavens have shap'd my body so,
Let hell make crookt my mind to answer it."²

Personally he was as brave as he was cruel and unscrupulous. He promoted some reforms. He abolished "benevolences," at least for a time, and he encouraged Caxton in his great work.

366. Revolts; Buckingham; Henry Tudor. — During his short reign of two years, several revolts broke out, but came to nothing. The Duke of Buckingham, who had helped Richard to the throne, turned against him because he did not get the rewards he expected. He headed a revolt; but as his men deserted him, he fell into the king's hands, and the executioner speedily did the rest. Finally a more formidable enemy arose. Before he gained the crown

¹ Taswell-Langmead, Constitutional History of England.

² Henry VI., Part III. Act V. Sc. 6.

Richard had cajoled or compelled the unfortunate Anne Neville, widow of that Prince Edward, son of Henry VI., who was slain at Tewkesbury,¹ into becoming his wife. She said with truth, "Small joy have I in being England's queen." The king intended that his son should marry Elizabeth of York,² sister to the two princes he had murdered in the Tower. By so doing he would strengthen his position, and secure the succession to the throne to his own family. But Richard's son shortly after died, and the king, having mysteriously got rid of his wife, now made up his mind to marry Elizabeth himself.

The princess, however, was already betrothed to Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, the engagement having been effected during that sad winter which she and her mother spent in sanctuary at Westminster Abbey, watched by Richard's soldiers to prevent their escape. The Earl of Richmond, who was an illegitimate descendant of the house of Lancaster, had long been waiting on the continent for an opportunity to invade England and claim the crown. Owing to the enmity of Edward IV. and Richard toward him, the earl had been, as he himself said, "either a fugitive or a captive since he was five years old." He now determined to remain so no longer. In 1485 he landed with a force at Milford Haven, in Wales, where he felt sure of a welcome, since his paternal ancestors were Welsh.³

Advancing through Shrewsbury, he met Richard on Bosworth Field, in Leicestershire.

367. Battle of Bosworth Field (1485). — There the decisive battle was fought between the great rival houses of York and Lan-

¹ See Paragraph No. 357.

² See Paragraph No. 362.

³ Descent of Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond.

Henry V. (House of Lancaster) married Catharine of France, who after his death married **Owen Tudor**, a Welshman.
Henry VI.

Edmund Tudor (Earl of Richmond) married Margaret Beaufort, a descendant of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster [she was granddaughter of John, Earl of Somerset, see p. 163].

Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond (also called Henry of Lancaster).

caster. Richard went out the evening before to look over the ground. He found one of his sentinels slumbering at his post. Drawing his sword, he stabbed him to the heart, saying, "I found him asleep and I leave him asleep." Going back to his tent, he passed a restless night. The ghosts of all his murdered victims seemed to pass in procession before him. Such a sight may well, as Shakespeare says, have "struck terror to the soul of Richard."¹ At sunrise the battle began. Before the attack, Richard, it is said, confessed to his troops the murder of his two nephews, but pleaded that he had atoned for the crime with "many salt tears and long penance." It is probable that had it not been for the treachery of some of his adherents the king would have won the day. When he saw that he was deserted by those on whose help he had counted, he uttered the cry of "treason! treason!" and dashed forward into the thick of the fight. With the fury of despair he hewed his way into the very presence of the earl, and killing the standard-bearer, flung the Lancastrian banner to the ground. But he could go no further. Numbers overpowered him, and he fell. During the battle he had worn his crown. After all was over, it was found hanging on a hawthorn-bush² and handed to the victor, who placed it on his own head. The army then gathered round Henry thus crowned, and moved by one impulse joined in the exultant hymn of the *Te Deum*.³ Thus ended the last of the Plantagenet line. "Whatever their faults or crimes, there was not a coward among them."⁴

368. End of the Wars of the Roses; their Effects. — With Bosworth Field the Wars of the Roses ceased. During the thirty years they had continued, fourteen pitched battles had been fought, in a single one of which (Towton) more Englishmen lost

¹ Shakespeare's Richard III., Act V. Sc. 3.

² An ancient stained-glass window in Henry VII.'s Chapel (Westminster Abbey) commemorates this incident.

³ "Te Deum laudamus": We praise Thee, O God. A Roman Catholic hymn of thanksgiving, now sung in English in the Episcopal and other churches.

⁴ Stubbs' Constitutional History of England.

their lives than in the whole course of the wars with France during the preceding forty years. In all, eighty princes of the blood royal and more than half of the nobility of the realm perished.

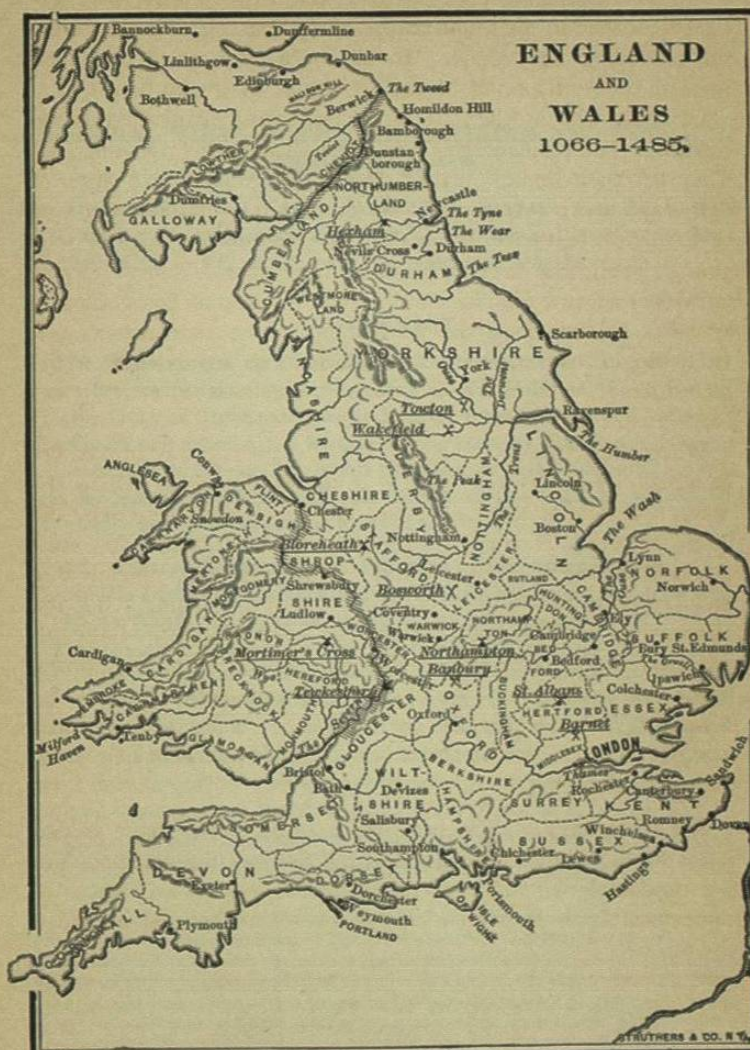
Of those who escaped death by the sword, many died on the scaffold. The remnant who were saved had hardly a better fate. They left their homes only to suffer in foreign lands. A writer of that day¹ says: "I, myself, saw the Duke of Exeter, the king of England's brother-in-law, walking barefoot in the Duke of Burgundy's train, and begging his bread from door to door." Every individual of two families of the great houses of Somerset and Warwick fell either on the field or under the executioner's axe. In tracing family pedigrees it is startling to see how often the record reads, "killed at St. Albans," "slain at Towton," "beheaded after the battle of Wakefield," and the like.²

When the contest closed, the feudal baronage was broken up. In a majority of cases the estates of the nobles either fell to the crown for lack of heirs, or they were fraudulently seized by the king's officers. Thus the greater part of the wealthiest and most powerful aristocracy in the world disappeared so completely that they ceased to have either a local habitation or a name. But the elements of civil discord at last exhausted themselves. Bosworth was a turning-point in English history. When the sun went down, it saw the termination of the desperate struggle between the White Roses of York and the Red of Lancaster; when it ushered in a new day, it shone also on a new king, who introduced a new social and political period.

369. Summary. — The importance of Richard's reign is that it marks the close of thirty years of civil war, the destruction of the predominating influence of the feudal barons, and leaves as the central figure Henry Tudor, the sovereign who now ascended the throne.

¹ See the Paston Letters.

² Guest's Lectures on English History.



To face page 174.

The battle-fields of the Wars of the Roses are underlined: thus, Towton (in Yorkshire).

GENERAL VIEW OF THE LANCASTRIAN AND YORKIST
PERIOD (1399-1485).

I. GOVERNMENT.—II. RELIGION.—III. MILITARY AFFAIRS.—IV.
LITERATURE, LEARNING, AND ART.—V. GENERAL INDUSTRY AND
COMMERCE.—VI. MODE OF LIFE, MANNERS, AND CUSTOMS.

GOVERNMENT.

370. Parliament and the Royal Succession.—The period began with the parliamentary recognition of the claim to the crown of Henry, Duke of Lancaster, son of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, fourth son of Edward III. By this act the claim of Edmund Mortimer, a descendant of Edward III. by his third son, Lionel, Duke of Clarence, was deliberately set aside, and this change of the order of succession eventually furnished an excuse for civil war.¹

371. Disfranchisement of Electors; Benevolences.—Under Henry VI. a property qualification was established by act of Parliament which cut off all persons from voting for county members of the House of Commons who did not have an income of forty shillings (say £40, or \$200, in modern money) from freehold land. County elections, the statute said, had "of late been made by a very great, outrageous, and excessive number of people . . . of which the most part were people of small substance and of no value." Later, candidates for the House of Commons from the counties were required to be gentlemen by birth, and to have an income of not less than £20 (or say £400, or \$2000, in modern money). Though the tendency of such laws was to make the House of Commons represent property-holders rather than the freemen as a body,

¹ Before the accession of Henry III., Parliament made choice of any one of the king's sons whom they considered best fitted to rule. After that time it was understood that the king's eldest son should be chosen to succeed him; or in case of his death during the lifetime of his father, the eldest son of the eldest son, and so forward in that line. The action taken by Parliament in favor of Henry IV. was a departure from that principle, and a reassertion of its ancient right to choose any descendant of the royal family they deemed best. See genealogical table, Paragraph No. 309.

yet no apparent change seems to have taken place in the class of county members chosen.

Eventually, however, these and other interferences with free elections caused the rebellion of Jack Cade, in which the insurgents demanded the right to choose such representatives as they saw fit. But the movement appears to have had no practical result. During the civil war which ensued, the king (Edward IV.) compelled wealthy subjects to lend him large sums (seldom, if ever, repaid) called "benevolences." Richard III. abolished this obnoxious system, but afterward revived it, and it became conspicuously hateful under his successor in the next period.

Another great grievance was Purveyance. By it the king's purveyors had the right to seize provisions and means of transportation for the king and his hundreds of attendants whenever they journeyed through the country on a "royal progress." The price offered by the purveyors was always much below the real value of what was taken, and frequently even that was not paid. Purveyance, which had existed from the earliest times, was not finally abolished until 1660.

RELIGION.

372. Suppression of Heresy.— Under Henry IV. the first act was passed by lords and clergy (without assent of the House of Commons), punishing heretics, by burning at the stake, and the first martyr suffered in that reign. Later, the Lollards, or followers of Wycliffe, who appear in many cases to have been socialists as well as religious reformers, were punished by imprisonment, and occasionally with death. The whole number of martyrs, however, was but small.

MILITARY AFFAIRS.

373. Armor and Arms.— The armor of the period was made of steel plate, fitting and completely covering the body. It was often inlaid with gold and elegantly ornamented. Firearms had not yet superseded the old weapons. Cannon were in use, and also clumsy hand-guns fired with a match. The long-bow continued to be the chief arm of the foot-soldiers, and was used with great dexterity and fatal effect. Targets were set up by law in every parish, and the yeomen were required to practise at contests in archery frequently. The principal wars were the civil wars and those with France.

LITERATURE, LEARNING, AND ART.

374. Introduction of Printing; Books.— The art of printing was introduced into England about 1471 by Caxton, a London merchant. Up to that time all books had been written on either parchment or paper, at an average rate of about fifty cents per page in modern money. The age was not favorable to literature, and produced no great writers. But Caxton edited and published a large number of works, many of which he translated from the French and Latin. The two books which throw most light on the history of the times are the Sir John Paston Letters (1424-1506), and a work by Chief Justice Fortescue, on government, intended for the use of Prince Edward (slain at Tewkesbury). The latter is remarkable for its bold declaration that the king "has the delegation of power from the people, and he has no just claims to any other power than this." The chief justice also praises the courage of his countrymen, and declares with honest pride that "more Englishmen are hanged in England in one year for robbery and manslaughter than are hanged in France in seven years."

375. Education.— Henry VI. took a deep interest in education, and founded the great public school of Eton, which ranks next in age to that of Winchester. The money for its endowment was obtained by the appropriation of the revenues of alien or foreign monasteries which had been erected in England, and which were confiscated by Henry V. The king watched the progress of the building from the windows of Windsor Castle, and to supplement the course of education to be given there, he furthermore erected and endowed the magnificent King's College, Cambridge.

376. Architecture.— A new development of Gothic architecture occurred during this period, the Decorated giving place to the Perpendicular. The latter derived its name from the perpendicular divisions of the lights in the arches of the windows. It marks the final period of the Gothic or Pointed style, and is noted for the exquisite carved work of its ceilings. King's College Chapel, Cambridge, St. George's Chapel, Windsor, and Henry VII.'s Chapel (built in the next reign), connected with Westminster Abbey, are among the most celebrated examples of this style of architecture, which is peculiar to England.

The mansions of the nobility at this period exhibited great elegance. Crosby Hall, London, at one time the residence of Richard III., and still standing, is a fine specimen of the "Inns," as they were called, of the great families and wealthy knights.

GENERAL INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE.

377. Agriculture and Trade.—Notwithstanding the civil wars of the Roses, agriculture was prosperous, and foreign trade largely increased. The latter was well represented by Sir Richard Whittington, thrice mayor of London, who, according to tradition, lent Henry V. large sums of money, and then at an entertainment which he gave to the king and queen in his city mansion, generously cancelled the debt by throwing the bonds into the open sandal-wood fire.

Goldsmiths from Lombardy had now settled in London in such numbers as to give the name of Lombard Street to the quarter they occupied. They succeeded the Jews in the business of money-lending and banking, and Lombard Street still remains famous for its bankers and brokers.

MODES OF LIFE, MANNERS, AND CUSTOMS.

378. Dress.—Great sums were spent on dress by both sexes, and the courtiers' doublets, or jackets, were of the most costly silks and velvets, elaborately puffed and slashed. During the latter part of the period the pointed shoes, which had formerly been of prodigious length, suddenly began to grow broad, with such rapidity that Parliament passed a law limiting the width of the toes to six inches. At the same time the court ladies adopted the fashion of wearing horns as huge in proportion as the noblemen's shoes. The government tried legislating them down, and the clergy fulminated a solemn curse against them; but fashion was more powerful than church and Parliament combined, and horns and hoofs came out triumphant.

VIII.

"One half her soil has walked the rest
In heroes, martyrs, poets, sages."

O. W. HOLMES.

POLITICAL REACTION. — ABSOLUTISM OF THE CROWN, — THE ENGLISH REFORMATION AND THE NEW LEARNING.

CROWN or POPE?

HOUSE OF TUDOR. — 1485-1603.

Henry VII., 1485-1509.

Edward VI., 1547-1553.

Henry VIII., 1509-1547.

Mary, 1553-1558.

Elizabeth, 1558-1603.

379. Union of the Houses of Lancaster and York.—Before leaving the continent, Henry Tudor had promised the Yorkist party that he would marry Elizabeth, eldest daughter of Edward IV., and sister to the young princes murdered by Richard III. Such a marriage would unite the rival houses of Lancaster and York, and thus put an end to the civil war. A few months after the new king's accession the wedding was duly celebrated, and in the beautiful east window of stained glass in Henry VII.'s Chapel, Westminster Abbey, the Roses are seen joined; so that, as the quaint verse of that day says:—

"Both roses flourish — red and white —
In love and sisterly delight;
The two that were at strife are blended,
And all old troubles now are ended."