

terminates his brief account of these most singular proceedings:—"The Duke of Gloucester, who was the chief of this faction," (herein he plainly intimates that the duke did not act merely on his own responsibility,) "made no obeisance to the prince, by uncovering, bowing or otherwise. He merely said that he would take heed for his safety, since he knew that those who were about him conspired against his honour and his life. This done, he caused proclamation to be made, that all the king's servants should forthwith withdraw themselves from the town, and not approach those places whereunto the king should remove, under pain of death.—These things were done at Stoney Stratford the 31st April, 1483."*

This chronicler and Rous, the antiquary of Warwick, are the only two cotemporary writers of this period, although Sir Thomas More's history, as before explained, is considered to have been derived, also, from co-existent authority. The diffuse narrative of More, despite of the romance with which it is tinctured, helps frequently to explain many facts which the Croyland annalist leaves obscure by his conciseness; and when More's explanations are confirmed by the testimony of Rous, the evidence of the three writers forms a clear and connected chain in the confused and disjointed accounts which have so long been received as the history of one of the most momentous epochs in English annals.

The whole of these authors agree upon the leading facts of Richard's junction with Edward V. at Stratford, the arrest of the royal attendants, and the possession taken of the young king's person by the Duke of Gloucester. But here "Rous" becomes invaluable; for he states, in addition, the cause of the duke's so acting, "and being, by his own authority, made protector of Edward, as protector he took the new king, his nephew, into his own keeping;"† thus clearly implying that he was possessed of some power to act definitively and upon his own judgment. In this step he was borne out by ancient usage, being first prince of the blood royal, and the only member of the House of York capable by age, or entitled by near affinity, to be guardian to his brother's heir. But Rous follows up his account by explaining farther the cause of Gloucester's assuming the protectorate on his own authority, and the reason for his removing the queen's kindred from their abuse of that ascendancy which they had acquired over the prince, and had cunningly devised to appropriate to their own purposes. "They were accused of having compassed the death of the protector," he says; and this, not on the uncertain medium of public report, not from the casual hints of mercenary informers or nameless eavesdroppers, but, as positively asserted by Rous,‡ on no less authority than that of the "Earl of Northumberland!"§ He was "their chief accuser."|| This coeval testimony of an historian so bitterly opposed to Richard of Gloucester is most important, as it fully justifies that prince in his proceedings, and exonerates him from premeditated tyranny.

* Chron. Croy., p. 565.

† Rous, p. 213.

§ By indenture, dated 1st May, 1483, Henry, Earl of Northumberland, was appointed warden of the east and middle marches, towards Scotland.—*Harl. MSS.*, 433, fol. 228. This was the second instrument issued by Edward V., and the first after Richard had so abruptly assumed the protectorate; and its occurring the very day following the seizure of the young king's person, would certainly imply that it was under the duke's auspices that a power corresponding with the last conferred upon him by his deceased brother, Edward IV., was bestowed in reward on a nobleman who was the means of divulging a plot which, if credit is to be attached to the unanimous testimony of each cotemporary writer, had been formed, and was ripening, for destroying Gloucester and the leading members of his race.

|| Rous, p. 214.

† Rous, p. 212.

He was possessed of the affection of the army, and was by royal appointment their chief commander; yet he proceeded southward accompanied merely by 600 of his own retainers. With the small addition of 300 horsemen, added to this little band the day previously by Buckingham, he nevertheless boldly seized upon the person of the young king; no opposition being made to his will, no attempt at rescue from the 2000 horsemen appointed to guard their prince, and who, as picked men, can scarcely be imagined so pusillanimous as to have tamely abandoned their trust, if unprovoked insult or unlawful violence had been exercised against their royal charge; considering, too, that their force was double that which arrested their progress, and under the influence of which they were commanded to disperse on pain of death.

Power is seldom attained by violence. Much as it may be misused when possessed, yet it is almost always voluntarily yielded. When, therefore, the startling events of the brief fortnight following the death of King Edward are dispassionately considered, and the whole tenour of the conduct pursued by the rival parties impartially compared, it cannot but favour the surmise, that Gloucester, acting under such disadvantages as arose from inadequate force, and from his ignorance of much that had occurred, in consequence of his absence from the conflicting scenes which led to such stern measures when they were fully made known to him, would never have so immediately attained the mastery, had not a sense of right given nerve to his actions, and a consciousness of error and duplicity awed and enfeebled his opponents.

Sir Thomas More's account corroborates the statement both of Rous and of the Croyland writer; but he narrates, in addition, that the rival lords began to quarrel on the road, when Rivers was accused by Gloucester and Buckingham of intending "to sette distance between the kyng and them;"* and that when that nobleman "beganne in goodly wish to excuse himself, they taryed not the end of his answer, but shortly tooke hym and put hym in ward;"† that on entering the king's presence, before whom the Duke of Buckingham and his attendants prostrated themselves with respectful homage, they communicated to Edward the arrest of the Lords Rivers and Grey, accusing them of conspiring, with the Marquis of Dorset, "to rule the kyng and the realm, to sette variance among the states, and to subdue and destroy the noble blood of the realm,"‡ informing him likewise that the marquis "hadde entered into the Tower of London, and thence taken out the kyng's treasure and sent menne to sea."§

The astonished prince expressed his ignorance of the part pursued by the Lord Dorset, but sought to establish his conviction of the innocence of Lords Rivers and Grey. The Duke of Buckingham, however, assuring him that his kindred "had kepte their dealings from the knowledge of his grace,"|| the remainder of the retinue, supposed to have been leagued with Rivers and Grey, were seized in the royal presence, and the king himself taken "back unto Northampton," where Gloucester and the nobles by whom he was supported "took again further counsyle."¶ And truly they had need so to do; for although the day approached in which Edward V. was to be solemnly invested with the insignia of royalty, no regency had been nominated to guide the helm of state; no protectorate appointed to watch over the interests

* More, p. 25.

† More, p. 26.

|| This assertion goes far to prove that Buckingham was the agent who infused into Gloucester's mind the conviction he entertained respecting the insincerity of the Lord Rivers; neither must it be forgotten, that Buckingham having married the sister of this latter nobleman, (and of the royal Elizabeth also,) may have had substantial grounds for making this accusation against the Wyville family.

¶ More, p. 26.

‡ Ibid.

§ Ibid.

and aid the inexperience of the royal minor; no measures taken to provide for his safety, to guard the capital from insurrection, or to secure the co-operation and attendance at the approaching ceremony of those lordly barons whose support and allegiance could alone insure stability to his throne; but a self-constituted council, at variance among themselves, and possessing, in reality, no legitimate authority to act after the decease of the monarch to whose administration they had belonged—a sovereign unfettered in his minority by restraining enactments—a faction long hated and jealously viewed by the ancient nobility, who, having obtained possession of their young prince, sought to retain it, and to exclude the surviving members of the House of York from all intervention or communion with their future ruler, until Edward should be irrevocably anointed king; these were the discordant materials, these the unpromising auspices, with which, on the approaching 4th of May, the acts of Edward V. would have been ushered in, had not his royal uncle, with the firmness and decision which the occasion justified and his own position rendered imperative, changed the whole face of affairs, and delegated to himself the office of protector, until the three estates of the realm could meet to legislate at so important a crisis. Time was requisite to mature further proceedings; but a state of things like that above described was not tolerable to a mind constituted like Richard of Gloucester, when the end of April had arrived, and four days only intervened before that appointed for the coronation. With the fixed resolution, then, and the self-possession which so peculiarly characterized this prince's actions, he hesitated not, in this case of direful emergency, to act as became the brother of Edward IV., and as befitted the natural protector of Edward V.

On their return to Northampton, he dispatched a messenger to the assembled lords in the metropolis, informing them, through the Lord Chamberlain Hastings, of the decisive measures he had taken, the which were fully approved by that most devoted partisan of the late king.* He likewise wrote to the leading nobles of the realm, explaining the motives by which he had been actuated, viz., "that it neyther was reason, nor in any wise to be suffered, that the young king, their master and kinsman, should be in the hands and custody of his mother's kindred; sequestered in manner from their company and attendance;† the which, "quod he, is neither honourable to hys majestie, nor unto us."‡ Gloucester, nevertheless, is represented as treating the young monarch with honour and reverence, and as behaving to his captive friends with courtesy and kindness,§ until himself and his council could meet in further deliberation relative to matters which had been privately communicated to them. The nature of this information is indicated by the result. On the following day, the royal duke consigned to imprisonment those lords whose conduct gave proof of the unworthy motives imputed to them; sending the Lord Rivers, the Lord Richard Grey and Sir Thomas Vaughan to Pomfret Castle and other fortresses in "the north parts,"|| and taking upon himself "the order and governance of the young king,"¶ whom the said lords, his counsellors, had sought to mislead, and over whom they had obtained such dangerous ascendancy. And here it is important to show that this monarch was not at his accession a mere infant—not "a child in his little

* "Now there came one not longe after midnight from the lord chamberlayn unto the Archbishop of York, then chancellor; and after communicating to his grace the arrest of the king and his attendant lords, adds, 'Notwithstanding, sir,' quod hee, 'my lord sendeth your lordship worde, that there is no fear; for he assureth you that all shall be well.'"—*More*, p. 29.

† *More*, p. 19.
‡ *Rous*, p. 212.

§ *Ibid.*

¶ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

|| *Chron. Croy.*, p. 565; *More*, p. 28.

tunic—a babe habited in loose robes," as represented in many a fanciful engraving designed to elucidate his obscure history—but a youth almost arrived at man's estate, certainly old enough to exercise judgment, and competent to discriminate in most matters in which he was personally concerned. Indeed, he had been early prepared by able preceptors for that position to which he would probably be one day elevated; and had well nigh attained, at his father's demise, that age of discretion* which would have entitled him, in accordance with the common law of the land, to claim participation in the affairs of state, however, duly controlled by the preponderating wisdom of a regency.

Edward V. was in his thirteenth year when he was proclaimed king; and the education which was ordinarily bestowed on the heir-apparent of the throne, but more especially in those heroic and momentous times, removed him at that age far beyond mere childhood, although he may still be considered as of "tender years."† The guardianship of Henry VI. was limited by his valiant parent to the age of sixteen; the office of protector of the realm ceased when he was nine; and, in his fourteenth year, this monarch was advised to remonstrate with the council of regency at being too much excluded from public business.‡

Richard II. was two years junior to Edward V. when he was crowned king; and the age of this sovereign, when, with a self-possession and determined courage that betokened a more efficient reign, he dispersed the infuriated mob assembled by Wat Tyler, was only two years beyond that which Edward had attained when his progress was stayed, and his attendants dispersed, by the authority of his uncle of Gloucester.§

But the temperament of this young prince is affectingly demonstrated in the sequel of Sir Thomas More's narrative of the proceedings at Northampton: "At which dealing hee wepte, and was nothing contente; but it booted not."||

Rous states that he had been "virtuously educated, was of wonderful capacity, and, for his age, well skilled in learning;"¶ and learned and virtuous he may have been; for Sir Thomas More bears similar testimony both as regards himself and the young Duke of York;** although he qualifies his evidence by intimating that Edward was "light of belief, and soon persuaded."††

Nevertheless, judging from the few verified details of this ill-fated monarch, together with the impression conveyed by Shakspeare,‡‡ doubtless that which then generally prevailed of his calm and submissive deportment, he would seem to have been tender, affectionate and docile, warm in his attachments,§§ confiding and unsuspecting, resembling Henry VI. in the gentle virtues that would have graced domestic life, and giving such promise of future excellence as regards erudition||| as might have rendered him the "Beauclerc" of his time. But he was clearly deficient in the hereditary manhood of his

* "A male at twelve years of age may take the oath of allegiance; at fourteen he is at discretion; and if his discretion is actually proved, may make his testament of his personal estate."—*Blackstone's Com.*, vol. i. p. 463.

† *More*, p. 51.

‡ *Turner's Middle Ages*, vol. iii. p. 34.

§ "They sente awaie from the kynge whom it pleased them, and sette newe servantes about him, such as lyked better them, than hym."—*More*, p. 27.

|| *More*, p. 27.

¶ *Hist. Ang.*, p. 212.

** "Having in themselves also as many gifts of nature, as many princely virtues, as much goodlye towardness, as their age could receive."—*More*, p. 5.

†† *More*, p. 20.

‡‡ See *Rich. III.*, Act III. Sc. I.

§§ *More*, p. 64.

|| *Rous*, p. 212.

race,* and sympathized not in the fierce and stormy passions which marked the age. Devoid of energy,† of “weak and sickly disposition,”‡ meek rather than courageous, studious rather than enterprising,§ the reign of Edward V. thus bade fair to revive those fearful calamities which had characterized that of Edward II., owing to the intrigues of the queen mother, a factious administration, an irritated and discontented nobility, and the ascendancy exercised over a too yielding disposition by unpopular and unworthy favourites.

The accounts at this period are, at the best, too obscure and too concise to afford a clear exposition even of the leading events by which it was distinguished; but sufficient may be gathered to form a tolerable estimate as to the true cause of Richard's proceedings, and to comprehend many startling facts which resulted from his conduct. Ardently devoted to his country, and politically, if not personally, opposed to the queen and her kindred, it was Gloucester's object to save the one from the threatened evils likely to ensue from the uncontrolled ambition of the other; but he acted towards the young prince, his nephew, with the greatest tenderness and compassion.|| and is represented as having besought him on his knees to banish fear and apprehension, to place confidence in his affection, and reliance on the necessity of those summary measures which occasioned him such deep affliction.

Had the young Edward so acted, had he confided in his father's brother, his natural guardian, and possessed sufficient moral courage and energy of character to co-operate manfully with one so fitted to guide, and so implicitly trusted by his deceased parent, instead of affectionately but effeminately weeping¶ for those who had misdirected the inexperience of his youth, the unhappy but amiable successor of King Edward IV. might have ascended in tranquillity and retained quiet possession of that throne which his father had won in his minority, and twice secured by his valour; and thus have perpetuated a dynasty, which, from the brilliancy of its commencement, bid fair to shine as one of the most glorious of any recorded in British history.

But so peaceful a state of affairs was neither in accordance with the unruly passions which hastened the downfall of the Plantagenets, nor the turbulent era in which that kingly race flourished, and at last became utterly extinct.

The annalist of that epoch will best narrate, in his own brief manner, the result of the proceedings at Stoney Stratford, and the miserable state of disunion into which the metropolis was already plunged, owing to the kingdom being without a head, and the realm without an acknowledged leader. On the following night after the capture of the Lords Rivers and Grey, rumours having reached London of “the king's grace” being in the hands of the Dukes of Gloucester and Buckingham, Queen Elizabeth betook herself to the Sanctuary at Westminster, with her children. “You might have seen, on that morning, the fautors of one and the other party, some truly, others feignedly, as doubtful of the events, adhering to this or that side; for some congregated and held their assemblies at Westminster, in the queen's name; others at London, under the shadow of Lord Hastings,”*** who was the lead-

* Sir Thomas More states, that when Edward V. was told that his uncle was crowned king, he began to sigh, and said, “Alas! I would my uncle would let me have my life, though I lose my kingdom.”—*More*, p. 130.

† “After which time the prince never tyed his points, nor ought wrought of himself, but with that young babe hys brother lingered in thought and heaviness.”—*More*, p. 130.

‡ Buck, lib. iii. p. 85.

§ Lingard, vol. v. p. 240.

** Chron. Croy., p. 566.

§ More, p. 27.

¶ More, p. 27.

ing adviser of the late king, and the member of his council most inimical to the queen and her kindred.

The Marquis of Dorset, awed by the determination which was evinced at this critical juncture by the Duke of Gloucester, abandoned the Tower, and the unjustifiable assumption of authority which he had there exercised as its governor, and fled for refuge to the same sacred asylum whither his mother had again sought refuge, and where both herself and her infant progeny were secure from personal violence, and the evils that had already overtaken a portion of their race. “After the lapse of a few days,” continues the annalist,* “the aforesaid dukes brought the new king to London,” conveying him thither with every testimony of respect; and on the 4th of May, the ill-omened day originally fixed for his coronation, the youthful prince entered the metropolis in state, escorted by Gloucester, Buckingham, and a suitable retinue, all habited in deep mourning, except the monarch himself,† who was clothed in his kingly mantle of blue velvet. A short distance from the city, the royal cavalcade was met by the civic authorities, and 500 citizens sumptuously attired;‡ followed by whom, and preceded by the Duke of Gloucester,—who, uncovered, rode before his nephew, and in passing along said with a loud voice to the people, “Behold your prince and sovereign”—the king was conducted to the bishop's palace at St. Paul's; where he was lodged with every accompaniment of regal state and etiquette. There his uncle, acting as his guardian, forthwith compelled the lords spiritual and temporal, and the mayor and aldermen of the city of London, to take the oath of fealty to their lawful and legitimate sovereign;§ which, it is recorded, “as the best presage of future prosperity, they did most willingly.”||

Perfect tranquillity was the consequence of this unanimous feeling; and the legislature and municipal powers fully co-operated with Gloucester in carrying out measures which had restored confidence to all parties, and allayed the feverish excitement of the populace.¶ “The laws were administered,” says Rous,** “money coined, and all things pertaining to the royal dignity were performed in the young king's name, he dwelling in the palace of the Bishop of London from his first coming to London.” The exigences of the state required the immediate assemblage of a general council, which was as speedily summoned by the protector, to give sanction to proceedings which had been already carried into effect, and to guard against future embarrassment arising from the king's minority; some executive power, legally constituted, being essential, not merely up to the period of his coronation, but until such time as he should be of age to govern on his own responsibility. “This council assembled daily at the bishop's palace, because there the young Edward was sojourning; but as this imposed upon the prince unnecessary restraint, it was suggested that he should be removed to some more free place of abode.”††

Various dwellings were proposed. “Some recommended the Priory of St. John, others the Palace of Westminster; but the Duke of Buckingham naming the Tower, it was agreed to, even by those who disliked it.”‡‡ Pre-

* Chron. Croy., p. 566.

† Buck, lib. i. p. 11.

§ Chron. Croy., p. 566.

¶ “Then was there greate commotion and murmur, as well in other places about, as specially in the city.”—*More*, p. 31.

** Rous, p. 212.

†† Chron. Croy., p. 566.

† More, p. 34.

‡ Ibid.

‡‡ Ibid.

justice has been unduly exercised against this decision, from the Tower of London being better known in modern times as a state prison than as the ancient palace of the English sovereigns, which it really was during the middle ages;* and also because at an epoch a full century removed from the period under present consideration, a feeling of undefinable terror was associated with this gloomy pile, in consequence of the dark and terrible deeds said to have been perpetrated therein. But, as regards Edward V., this idea is erroneously entertained. In his day, it was the king's palace, the metropolitan citadel, which guarded alike the treasure of the kingdom, and protected the person of its monarch, whenever the safety of the latter was likely to be endangered. Examination into the history of this ancient national fortress will show that, from the accession of Henry III., who first made it the regal abode and almost exclusively dwelt there, the Tower of London was the dwelling-place, during some portion of their reign, of every succeeding monarch who intervened between that king and the youthful Edward V.;† the unsettled state of the kingdom at this period of its history rendering a fortified abode as indispensable for the security of the monarch, as of the great feudal barons their subjects.

Within the precincts of the Tower, Joanne, Queen of Scotland, eldest daughter of King Edward II., was born;‡ and Elizabeth, sister to the young prince under present consideration, and eventually the queen of Henry VII., died within its walls in giving birth to the Princess Katherine of the line of Tudor.§ The father of Edward V. resided there before he was driven from his throne, and in that stronghold his mother was left for protection when her royal consort was compelled to fly the kingdom.||

Whatever, then, may have been the after consequences as regards his youthful successor, it is a most mistaken notion to suppose that, when it was suggested by his council that Edward V. should be removed to "some more free abode,"¶ one apart from the necessary business of state, the Tower was selected either as a place of captivity, or because it was less accessible to his partisans than the bishop's palace at St. Paul's, the priory of St. John's, Clerkenwell, the regal dwelling at Westminster, or any other metropolitan abode.

The Tower of London was, moreover, by ancient usage, the ordinary abiding place of English monarchs preparatory to their coronation: and as the chief point for which the council had been assembled was to deliberate and determine upon the earliest fitting day for the celebration of that important ceremony, not only were those counsellors who proposed the Tower as the temporary residence of Edward V. justified in their selection of it, but it was the abode established by precedent,** as well as, under the embarrassing circumstances in which the son of Elizabeth Wydville ascended the throne, the one best calculated to insure his personal safety, and inspire confidence in the citizens. Both these points were objects of great importance; for all ranks in the metropolis had betrayed extreme agitation at the rumours which had preceded the public entry of the young prince; and it required the most strenuous exertions on the part of the Lord Hastings to appease the multitude, and to justify the strong measures that had occasioned so much apprehension.

* See Bayley's Hist. of the Tower.

† See Appendix PP.

‡ Holinshed, p. 709.

§ Chron. Croy., p. 566.

** "It had for a long while been the custom of the king or queen to take up their residence at the Tower for a short time previous to their coronations, and thence they generally proceeded in state through the city, to be crowned at Westminster."—*Bayley's History of the Tower*, vol. ii. p. 263.

‡ Sandford, book iii. p. 155.

|| Sandford, book v. p. 337.

The wavering conduct of Rotheram, Archbishop of York, and lord chancellor, tended greatly to increase the fears which were entertained by the populace* of impending evil; for on receiving private intelligence, about midnight, of the arrest of the Lords Rivers and Grey, he "thereupon caused, in all haste, his servants to be called up, and so, with his own household about him, and every man weaponed, he took the great seal with him, and came yet before day unto the queen,"† delivering unto her hands this important badge for the "use and behoof of her son.‡

Repenting him, however, of the imprudence which he had committed in voluntarily resigning the signet of state to the queen, "to whom the custody thereof nothing pertained without especial commandment of the king,"§ he secretly sent for the seal again on the ensuing day, and brought it with him to the council chamber, when summoned by his compeers in the late administration to assist them in allaying the public ferment, which had assumed so alarming an aspect that the citizens went "flock-mele in harness,"|| and open insurrection was hourly apprehended.

The appearance, however, of Edward V. in royal progress at this crisis, and the respectful homage displayed by the Duke of Gloucester, when, bare-headed, he pointed out their young king to the multitude, set all fears at rest;¶ and the great council of state, assembled by this prince in his sovereign's name, forthwith commenced their deliberations in tranquillity, and carried out their measures without interruption.

Their first act was to appoint the Duke of Gloucester protector of the king and his realm. "He was fallen in so great trust," observes Sir Thomas More,** that he was "the only man chose and thought most mete" to be nominated to this responsible office; and the Chronicler of Croyland,†† corroborating this fact, adds, that "Richard received the same power as was conferred on Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, during the minority of Henry VI., with the title of Protector;" and likewise that "this authority he used by the consent and good pleasure of all the lords, commanding and forbidding in every thing like another king, as the case required."‡‡ A meeting of the senate, as constituted under the late reign, was convened for the immediate dispatch of business; and a new parliament was summoned for the 25th of the ensuing month, (June,) as shown by an ancient document preserved in the Lambeth register.§§ On the 16th of May, the Archbishop of York, after being severely reproved for having delivered up the great seal to the queen, the which act had spread such alarm in the city, was deprived of his office; and Dr. Russel, late privy seal and Bishop of Lincoln, was appointed high chancellor in his place; "a wise manne and a good, and of much experience,"||| as testified by Sir Thomas More, "and one of the best learned men, undoubtedly, that England had in hys time."¶¶ Divers other lords and knights were displaced, and new councillors appointed in their stead; but the Lord Hastings, late chamberlain of the household, the Lord Stanley, the Bishop of Ely, and other personal friends of the deceased monarch, kept still "theyr offices that they had before."***

Various grants were issued by the youthful Edward; the functions of government were orderly and wisely executed; and the feast of St. John the Baptist (22d June) having been fixed as the day whereon the king's coronation was without fail to take place, all now hoped and expected the peace and prosperity of the realm.†††

* More, p. 29.

† Ibid., p. 31.

** More, p. 34.

§§ Royal Wills, p. 347.

*** Ibid.

† Ibid., p. 31.

‡ Ibid., p. 34; and Fabyan, p. 513.

†† Chron. Croy., p. 566.

‡‡ More, p. 35.

††† Chron. Croy., p. 566.

‡ Ibid.

¶ Ibid.

|| Ibid.

||| Ibid.

§ Ibid.

The 19th of May was decided upon for the presentation of the new monarch to the estates in Parliament assembled, when, being conducted by his uncle to Westminster, he delivered a speech from the throne,* claiming their fealty and asserting his royal prerogative and right of succession. "First to you, right noble lords spiritual and temporal; secondly to you, worshipful syres, representing the commons, God hath called me at my tender age to be your king and sovereign."†

He then appeals to their liberality to make the usual grants for the "sure maintenance of his high estate,"‡ and after eulogizing "the right noble and famous prince, the Duke of Gloucester, his uncle, protector of the realm, in whose great prudence, wisdom and fortunes restyth at this season the execution of the defence of his realm," and noticing the dangers to be apprehended from the opposing party, "as well against the open enemies as against the subtle and faint friends of the same," the royal speech concludes by urging "thys hygh court of Parliament" to confirm the Duke of Gloucester in the protectorate, to which he had been previously nominated by the council of state.§ "The power and authority of my lord protector is so behoffull and of reason to be asserted and established by the authority of this hygh court, that among all the causes of the assemblyng of the Parliament in thys tyme of the year, thys is the greatest and most necessary to be affirmed."||

And truly it was so, as regards the necessities of the state, and the factious spirit that pervaded the court. This Richard felt; and he wisely desired that the kingly authority, which, as lord protector, had temporarily devolved upon him, should be confirmed, beyond all controversy, by legislative enactment.

His title to be so confirmed was admitted by all parties. The early death of the young Edward's natural parent had left his uncle, as stated in the speech from the throne, "next in perfect age of the blood royal to be tutor and protector"¶ to his royal nephew; and his unblemished character up to this unlooked-for exaltation is demonstrated by his being proposed to the young monarch at the ratification of his protectorate by the assembled peers, as an example of "majoral cunning [mature wisdom.] felicity, and experience."**

Gifted as he was with the distinguishing merits of his time, invincible courage and profound military sagacity and skill, it had been better, perhaps, for Richard of Gloucester had circumstances not conspired to elevate him to so lofty a position in the government of his country; for he was endowed with qualifications that led to greatness, and he was superior to the times in which he lived—times, be it remembered, when morality was at a very low ebb, and when the virtues of private and domestic life were little estimated, in comparison with brilliant exploits, daring courage, and warlike renown.

But the Duke of Gloucester had no competitor for the kingly office to which he was elected. He stood alone in his just pretensions to the uncontrolled exercise of that dangerous power which had so suddenly dawned upon him; and the sole guardianship of Edward V. having been committed to his charge by the unanimous voice of the legislature, he yielded to the lofty feelings of his race and henceforth issued the vice-regal mandates under the high-sounding titles of "Duke of Gloucester, brother and uncle of kings, protector and

* Sharon Turner, vol. iii. p. 419.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid. The whole of this interesting document, a copy of which was preserved by Sir Robert Cotton in his invaluable collection of MSS., is still extant, although much defaced by the great fire which, in the commencement of the last century, destroyed so many records in his ancient library then deposited at Westminster.

§ Cott. MSS., Vitel. E. 10.

¶ Cott. MSS., Vitel. E. 10.

§ Ibid.

¶ Ibid.

** Ibid.

defender of the realm, great chamberlayne, constable and Lord High Admiral of England."* It is, however, but justice to this prince to observe, that in adopting a style so invariably adduced as a proof of his vain-gloriousness and intolerable pride, that Richard only adhered to the precedent afforded by Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, who held the same office in a former reign and whose protectorate was the example given when the same power with which he was invested was now conferred upon the uncle of Edward V.†

The removal of this monarch from the bishop's palace, at St. Paul's, to the regal apartments occupied by his predecessors in the Tower, appears, by his signature to certain instruments,‡ dated from both those places, to have occurred somewhere between the 9th and the 19th of May; during which brief period many weighty appointments were made by the young king, the most remarkable of which was the nomination of the Duke of Buckingham to those high military commands in South Wales and the English counties adjoining§ which had so recently been possessed by his uncle, the Lord Rivers, and which it must have caused Edward extreme pain to have bestowed upon another.|| This fact, however, joined to the circumstance before named, of the Earl of Northumberland's investiture with corresponding authority in the north,¶ clearly demonstrates who were the parties that incited the Duke of Gloucester to the severe measures he adopted; owing to the alleged plot for the destruction of himself, which is detailed by all cotemporary writers, and the particulars connected with which, there can be no doubt, were communicated to Richard by the two lords, thus speedily recompensed with such powerful and honourable offices. One thing connected with these is remarkable: that although the appointments above named, and all others, indeed, that were made by Edward V. after his removal from Stoney Stratford,—the very day subsequent to which, it should be noticed, Northumberland's indenture is dated, viz., 1st of May, 1483,**—must have been executed by the advice, if not at the instigation, of his uncle of Gloucester; and although Richard's assumption of the protectorate was confirmed within a few days by the council of state, and the election of these councillors ratified before the close of the month by the higher authority of Parliament, yet his name never appears in any of the official documents issued by his royal nephew,†† until after his formal introduction into that high preferment by the lords spiritual and temporal duly convened for that purpose by Edward V.‡‡ From that day, however, all and each instrument issued in the young king's name§§ concluded with the words "by the advice of our dearest uncle, the Duke of Gloucester, protector of our realm of England during our youth,"||| and the almost despotic power which

* Chron. Croy., p. 566; also *Fœdera*, xii. p. 184, and *Drake's Ebor.*, p. 115.

† The titles used by the uncle of King Henry VI., after his nomination to the protectorate, were "Humphrey, by the grace of God, son, brother and uncle to kings, Duke of Gloucester, Earl of Henault, &c., Lord of Friesland, great chamberlain of the kingdom of England, protector and defender of the said kingdom and church of England."—*Sandford*, book iv. p. 308.

‡ See Harl. MSS., 435, p. 221.

§ *Fœdera*, vol. xii. p. 180.

¶ Harl. MSS., 433, p. 228.

** Royal Wills, p. 347.

†† Whatever difference of opinion may have prevailed relative to the motives or conduct of Richard, Duke of Gloucester, he has ever been considered a fast and steady friend. This is curiously instanced in the first occasion on which he signed himself protector. By an instrument bearing date the 19th of May, 1483, his early companion and associate in arms, the Lord Lovell, was appointed to the valuable office of chief butler, which had been bestowed by Edward IV. on the Lord Rivers. The nomination is thus expressed in the original grant:—"Viscount Lovell, appointed