

**THE FIRST AND
SECOND PARTS OF
KING EDWARD IV**

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The First and Second Parts of King Edward IV by Thomas Heywood

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THOMAS HEYWOOD

**THE FIRST AND
SECOND PARTS OF
KING EDWARD IV**

THE
FIRST AND SECOND PARTS
OF
KING EDWARD IV.
HISTORIES
BY
THOMAS HEYWOOD.

REPRINTED FROM THE UNIQUE BLACK LETTER FIRST
EDITION OF 1600, COLLATED WITH ONE OTHER
IN BLACK LETTER, AND WITH THOSE OF
1619 AND 1626.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES,
BY BARRON FIELD, ESQ.

"If I were to be consulted as to a Reprint of our Old English Dramatists,
I should advise to begin with the collected plays of Heywood."

CHARLES LAMB.



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INTRODUCTION.

The following plays are interesting not only in themselves, but inasmuch as they run parallel with certain parts of Shakespeare's historical series. We have either seen or heard of no fewer than five editions of them; but they are all now so scarce, that the modern reader may be said to have here, for the first time, an opportunity of comparing the similar scenes of the Duke of Gloucester's hypocrisy and cruelty, in the two writers. He will doubtless come to the conclusion of the late Charles Lamb, that Heywood was but a *prose* Shakespeare; but he will remember that these plays are meant only to be "histories," not comedies or tragedies; that plot and poetry are not essential to them; and he will close even this specimen with a conviction that Thomas Heywood was a very practised and clever playwright, as (to be sure) the writer or assistant in two hundred and twenty plays, and an actor, to boot, could scarcely fail of being.

Perhaps Shakespeare would not have left untouched so pathetic a tragedy as that of *Jane Shore*, if he had

not seen it so well handled by Heywood. Steevens has this note on "Richard the Third:"—

"In the books of the Stationers' Company, June 19, 1594, Thomas Creede made the following entry: 'An enterlude intituled the tragedie of Richard the Third, wherein is shown the death of Edward the Fourth, with the smotheringe of the two princes in the Tower, with the lamentable end of Shore's wife, and the contention [conjunction]^a of the two houses of Lancaster and Yorke.' This could not have been the work of Shakespeare, unless he afterwards dismissed the death of Jane Shore, as an unnecessary incident, when he revised the play."

In the "True Tragedy of Richard the Third," which was acted before Shakespeare's play of that title, and which is reprinted (though incompletely) in Boswell's edition of the great poet, there are a few poor scenes in which Jane Shore appears, but her end or death is not exhibited.

King Edward the Fourth, too, would have made a character worthy of Shakespeare's pen; and though our great poet would doubtless have surpassed Heywood in the tragedy of the Shores, yet he could not well have excelled him in the manner in which he has dramatized the old ballad of the King and the Tanner of Tamworth. So dramatically, indeed, is this done, that the late Mr. Waldron made a two-act piece of it, under the title of "The King in the Country," and it was acted at Richmond and Windsor, in 1788, after the return of the very different King George the Third from Cheltenham.

And yet perhaps Shakespeare saw the difficulty and

^a Weber's Beaumont and Fletcher, vol. i. p. 148, and Collier's Shakespeare, vol. v. p. 343.

delicacy of representing on the stage a starved woman—a situation, however pathetic in reality, which even the taste of Rowe, more refined than that of Heywood, was not able to make probable to the theatrical spectator. Rowe professed, in his questionable tragedy of “Jane Shore,” to imitate Shakespeare; but to imitate Shakespeare is more easily talked of than done: he has only borrowed a scene from Shakespeare’s “Richard the Third,” and has been much more indebted to Heywood’s “Edward the Fourth.”

A writer in the “Retrospective Review”^b says, that this play is “a long and tedious business,” but praises the scenes and characters of the Shores. These I am inclined to think equal in execution (as they resemble them in story) with those of the same author’s “Woman kill’d with Kindness,” which the Retrospective Reviewer extols so highly. He adds, that “the author has made ‘Richard III.’ a very vulgar villain.” Some of his “asides” are certainly gross; but they are scarcely worse than the following, in the third part of “King Henry the Sixth,” whoever wrote it:—

“*Glos.* And that I love the tree from whence thou sprang’st,
Witness the loving kiss I give the fruit.

(*Aside.*) To say the truth, as Judas kissed his Master,
And cried *All hail!* whenas^c he meant *All harm!*”

If the reader will refer to Dr. Percy’s Reliques and Ritson’s “Antient Popular Poetry,” he will see how Heywood has improved upon the old ballads of the King

^b Vol. xi. p. 126.

^c This is one word, and had better be so printed: it means little more than *when*, just as *whereas* is often used for *where*, and *vice versâ*.