

**A HISTORICAL SKETCH OF
PERKIN
WARBECK: PRETENDER TO
THE CROWN OF ENGLAND**

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A Historical Sketch of Perkin Warbeck: Pretender to the Crown of England by Jr. Henes

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JR. HENES

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DEDICATED
(BY PERMISSION)
TO GENERAL
ALEXANDER S. WEBB, LL.D.
PRESIDENT OF THE COLLEGE OF THE
CITY OF NEW YORK

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PERKIN WARBECK

KING RICHARD III. of England had attained the throne by putting the sons of Edward IV., the young and beautiful Edward V. and Richard Duke of York into prison and later to death. Edward V. reigned less than three months and was never crowned. At the time of his father's death he was living at Ludlow Castle, surrounded by his mother's kinsmen and friends. On his road to London he was overtaken by Richard Duke of Gloucester, who had come up from the north. By a sudden stroke of treachery and violence, Richard arrested Edward and a few of his followers and sent them as prisoners into Yorkshire. Edward was then taken to London.

The poor boy, seeing his friends thus taken from him "wept and was nothing content, but it bootet not." The Queen-mother, who was accompanying Edward, as soon as she heard what had happened, fled with her youngest son, Richard Duke of York, and her five daughters to the sanctuary at Westminster. The unfortunate King was lodged in the Tower, then a palace as well as a fortress and prison. The Duke of Gloucester was then appointed Protector.

So far Richard and his followers had been united by a common hatred of the Woodvilles or Wydeviles, one of whom, Elizabeth, Edward IV. had taken to wife. But soon Richard and his supporters disagreed among themselves. Lord Hastings in particular, who had been a bitter enemy of the Queen's friends, seems to have repented and to have secretly gone over to their side. On June 13, 1485, by order of Richard, Hastings was seized at the council board in the Tower, and put to death then and there. "By St. Paul," the Protector is reported to have said, "I will not to dinner

till I see thy head off"—and a log of wood which lay nearby served as a block for the hurried execution. To justify himself, Richard made, that same afternoon, a proclamation that Hastings had conspired against his life. Richard did not stop here: the little Duke of York, who all this while was quietly living with his mother, was removed from her in the sanctuary to join his brother in the Tower, and thus Gloucester had both his nephews "under his thumb." On the following Sunday Dr. Ralf Shaw, a noted preacher and brother of the Mayor of London, preached a sermon at Paul's Cross—a cross and pulpit which then stood at the northeast corner of St. Paul's Churchyard—setting forth that the children were illegitimate on the ground that when their father married Elizabeth Wydevile he was under a pre-contract to marry some other woman. According to the ecclesiastical law this would make his marriage with Elizabeth void. Richard was pointed out by the preacher as the rightful inheritor of the crown, and on June 26th the Duke of Gloucester sat in Westminster Hall as King

Richard III. of England. So it was that the crafty plotter succeeded in obtaining the crown.

The new King and Anne his wife were crowned at Westminster, July 6, 1483, the preparations which had been made for the coronation of the nephew serving for those of the uncle. Richard then set out for York, where he and the Queen, with crowns upon their heads, walked through the streets in grand procession. He was already liked in the north, where he had lived for some time, and all his display was designed to increase his popularity. But while he was thus spending his time there arose much murmuring in the south and west at the captivity of the sons of Edward IV. And at last Buckingham, who had always been Richard's friend, led an uprising for their release. At this moment it was reported that the boys were dead. In the next reign it was stated that Sir James Tyrrel and John Dighton had confessed that on the refusal of Sir Robert Brackenbury, Constable of the Tower, to put his prisoners to death, Richard had bidden

that the keys of the Tower should be delivered to Tyrrel for a day, and that Tyrrel's groom, Dighton, together with one Miles Forrest, had smothered the sleeping boys in their bed and then buried them at the foot of the stairs. Some, however, have doubted the murder, notwithstanding the apparent confirmation of the popular belief made by a discovery a hundred and ninety-one years later of the bones of two boys, of about the same age as the young princes, lying buried in the White Tower under the staircase leading to the chapel. The King, Charles II., who was then reigning, had them removed to Henry VII's Chapel in Westminster Abbey, as the remains of Edward V. and of Richard Duke of York. So ended the life of these two unfortunate boys.

In 1484 Richard's only child, Edward, died, whereupon Richard declared his sister's son, John de la Pole, Earl of Lincoln, his heir. In the next year Queen Anne died, broken down by sorrow for the loss of her son, or as Richard's enemies afterward said, of poison given by her husband.