

**HISTORIE OF THE ARRIVALL OF
EDWARD IV IN ENGLAND AND
THE FINALL RECOUERYE OF HIS
KINGDOMES FROM HENRY VI**

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from Henry VI by John Bruce

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JOHN BRUCE

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HISTORIE

OF THE ARRIVALL OF EDWARD IV. IN ENGLAND
AND THE FINALL RECOUERYE OF HIS KINGDOMES
FROM HENRY VI. A. D. M.CCCC.LXXI.

EDITED BY JOHN BRUCE, ESQ. F.S.A.



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INTRODUCTION.

THE principal original historical authorities for the period to which the following narrative relates are, I. The Second Continuation of the History of Croyland *; II. Fabyan's Chronicle †; III. An English Chronicle from which there are large extracts in Leland's Collectanea ‡; IV. The *Anglica Historia* of Polydore Vergil §; and V. The *Memoires* of Philip de Comines ||: to these is now added, in the following narrative, a sixth authority, of greater value than any of them.

The Continuator of the History of Croyland is one of the best of our English Historians of the class to which he belongs. His name is unknown, but it appears in his work that he was a Doctor of Canon Law, was one of Edward the Fourth's Councilors, and was employed by that monarch upon a foreign mission.

* Published in Gale's *Rerum Anglicarum Script*, Vet. I. 549.

† I have used Sir Henry Ellis's edition, 4to. Lond. 1811.

‡ Vol. II. of the edition of 1774, p. 499.

§ I have used the Edition of Basil, fol. 1557.

|| My references are to the edition printed at Brussels in 1706, 4 vols. 8vo.

Thus connected with the house of York, but not writing until after the battle of Bosworth,* he holds the balance pretty evenly between the rival parties. He does not dwell much upon minute facts; but the general current of events is clearly, and, in all probability, accurately, detailed by him.

Fabyan's narrative is such an one as might be expected from a citizen and an alderman of the reign of Henry VII.; full, and no doubt correct, upon all points connected with the popular feeling and with transactions which took place in the City of London, but brief and inaccurate respecting events which passed elsewhere. *Fabyan's* bias was towards the Lancastrian party.

Of the *Chronicler from whom Leland extracted* we know absolutely nothing. The extracts contain many anecdotes and minute particulars, and the spirit and feeling of a contemporary are evident throughout, but I have not observed anything which has enabled me to identify the author. He writes with a very palpable inclination towards the party of "the innocent Henry."

From what sources *Polydore Vergil* derived his account of these events is unknown; but he has given an excellent narrative, superior in style, more abundant in facts, and more copious in description than any of those before mentioned. It of course strongly favours the house of Lancaster; and may indeed be considered as the account which that party was desirous should be believed.

* Gale, l. 675.

I have added *Philip de Comines* to the catalogue of authorities, principally with a view to his account of Edward the Fourth's proceedings on the Continent preparatory to his return into England, and his narrative of the battle of Tewkesbury; which last he seems to have received from some of those who fled from thence to the Continent.* His relation of the intermediate events is extremely inaccurate.

Upon these authorities, which in many points are most singularly contradictory, all our subsequent Chroniclers, with one exception, which will be noticed hereafter, have based their statements. Rastall abridges Fabyan; Hall translates Polydore Vergil and Philip de Comines; Stowe transcribes the Chronicle quoted by Leland; and the rest follow some one author and some another.

The present narrative has higher claims to authority than any of those I have noticed. It was written upon the spot; immediately after the events to which it relates; by some person possessed of full means of knowledge; and it will be seen that it was adopted by Edward IV. as an accurate relation of his achievements. All the other narratives either emanated from partisans of "the adverse faction," or were written after the subsequent triumph of the House of Lancaster, when it would not have been prudent—perhaps not safe—to publish any thing which tended to relieve the Yorkists from the weight of popular odium which attached to the real or supposed crimes of their leaders. We have

* Comines, I. 209, "*comment m'ont dit ceux qui y estoient.*"

here an authorised relation put forth by the Yorkists themselves, and giving their own account of the events upon which many of the heavy charges brought against their "house" have been founded.

The author says of himself, that he was a servant of Edward the Fourth, and that he "presently saw in effect a great parte of his exploytes, and the resydewe knew by true relation of them that were present at every tyme;" (p. 1.) and these assertions are corroborated, not merely by the narrative itself, which possesses all the characteristics of a relation of an eye-witness, but in a singular manner also by a communication made to the Society of Antiquaries in the year 1820, and published in the *Archæologia*, vol. xxi. p. 11. It appears from that communication, and from a MS. relating to the same subject, in the possession of Thomas Amyot, Esq. with the use of which I have been kindly favoured, that on the 29th May 1471, three days only after the termination of the following narrative, Edward IV., being then at Canterbury, addressed a letter in French to the Nobles and Burgomasters of Bruges, thanking them for the courteous hospitality he had received from them during his exile, apprising them of the great success which had attended his expedition, and referring them to the bearer of the letter for further particulars of his victories. Those "farther particulars" were contained in a very brief French abridgment of the following narrative; and in the Public Library at Ghent there is a quarto MS. volume in vellum, which contains a con-

temporary transcript of the abridgment, and of the King's letter, all written with great care, and ornamented with four illuminations, representing the battles of Barnet and Tewkesbury, the execution of the Duke of Somerset, and the attack of the Bastard Fauconberge upon London. It is probable that the Ghent MS. is a copy of the communication received from Edward IV. which was transmitted by the Citizens of Bruges to their brethren of Ghent, who were equally interested in the subject matter with themselves.

The identity of the Ghent MS. as an abridgment of the present narrative is unquestionable. Brief, meagre, and spiritless as it is, it yet contains quite enough to render the connexion indisputable. In both, the succession of events, even down to the most minute that are stated, is precisely the same; in both, whenever several persons or several facts are mentioned in one sentence, they stand in the same order; even in the re-translation from the French back into English, which alone is published in the *Archæologia*, the same epithets are frequently applied to the same events; and with the exception of some obvious mistakes in the publication in the *Archæologia*,* the same names, dates, and numbers—as, for instance, the numbers of killed in the several battles, and the numbers of the troops engaged, as to

* For example, in p. 20, for the Earl of Exeter, read the Earl of Essex. In p. 21, the death of Henry VI. is said to have occurred on the 24th of the said month of *June*; May is the only month which can be alluded to, and the

which there is the greatest discrepancy in all the other accounts, are exactly the same.

The identity of the two narratives, the one as the original, and the other as an abridgment of it, lifeless, uninteresting, and almost useless for historical purposes, but still an abridgment of the more important work now published, being established, we become secure both as to the age and authority of the present work; and if we inquire further whether its contents be of sufficient importance to justify its publication, the result will be most satisfactory.

The events to which it relates have few parallels in history. A fugitive and an exile, Edward IV. at the commencement of the year 1471, seemed to have lost all present chance of restoration. The imbecility of the actual monarch was amply compensated by the vigour of the Earl of Warwick, the principal regent, a nobleman whose importance both parties in the state had by turns seen ample reason to appreciate, and whose present measures gave sufficient indication of the energy with which he was prepared to defend the throne he had raised. The inhabitants of the eastern coast, from the Thames to the borders of Scotland, were raised and arrayed to oppose any hostile landing; the Duke of Clarence, one of Edward's brothers, was

day in our MS. is the 23d. Upon that point, it would be satisfactory if the Ghent MS. were again consulted. In p. 22, the battle of Tewkesbury is dated on the 14th of May, instead of the 4th.