

**THE COMPLETE WORKS OF WILLIAM  
SHAKESPEARE, WITH A LIFE OF THE  
POET, EXPLANATORY FOOT-NOTES,  
CRITICAL NOTES, AND A GLOSSARIAL  
INDEX. IN TWENTY VOLUMES, VOL. IX**

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**WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE & HENRY N. HUDSON**

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War. "But Henry now shall wear the English crown,  
And be true king indeed; true but the shadow."

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**Harvard Edition.**

BY THE  
REV. HENRY N. HUDSON, LL.D.

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*IN TWENTY VOLUMES.*

VOL. IX.

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## KING HENRY VI. PART THIRD.

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THE Third Part resumes the history just where it paused at the close of the Second, and carries it on from the first battle of Saint Alban's, May, 1445, till the death of King Henry, which took place in May, 1471. And the connection of this play with the preceding is much the same as that between the First Part and the Second; there being no apparent reason why the Third should begin where it does, but that the Second ended there. The parliamentary doings, which resulted in a compromise of the two factions, are here set in immediate juxtaposition with the first battle of Saint Alban's, whereas they were in fact separated by an interval of more than five years. Nevertheless the arrangement is a very judicious one; for that interval was marked by little else than similar scenes of slaughter, which had no decisive effect on the relative condition of the parties: so that the representing of them would but have encumbered the play with details without helping on the author's purpose. Not so, however, with the battle of Wakefield, which followed hard upon those doings in Parliament: for this battle, besides that it yielded matter of peculiar dramatic interest in itself, had the effect of kindling that inexpressible rage and fury of madness which it took such rivers of blood to slake. For the historians note that from this time forward the war was conducted with the fiercest rancour and exasperation, each faction seeming more intent to butcher than to subdue the other. The cause of this demoniacal enthusiasm could not well be better presented than it is in the wanton and remorseless savagery displayed at the battle in question. And the effect is answerably told in the next battle represented, where the varying fortune and long-doubtful issue served but to multiply and deepen the horrors of the tragedy.

The result of the battle of Towton, fought March 29, 1461,



left the Yorkists to the divulsive energy of their own passions and vices; for in their previous contests had been generated a virulence of self-will that would needs set them at strife among themselves when they had no common antagonist to strive against. The overbearing pride and arrogance of Warwick would not brook to be crossed, and the pampered caprice of Edward would not stick to cross it: the latter would not have fought as he did, but to the end that he might be king; nor would the former have done so much for him, but that he might have a king subject to his control. It is remarkable that the causes of the deadly feud between the king-maker and his royal creature have never been fully explained. History having assigned several, the Poet, even if he had known better, was amply warranted in taking the one that would be made to tell most on the score of dramatic interest. And the scene at the Court of Louis justifies his choice, it being, in point of sound stage-effect, probably the best in the play; while the representation, however untrue to fact, is true to the temper, the motives, and character of the parties concerned.

The marriage of King Edward with the Lady Elizabeth Grey took place in May, 1464, something more than three years after the battle of Towton. The Queen's influence over her husband, resulting in the preferment of her family, gave apt occasion for those discontents and schisms in the faction which, in whatever line of conduct he had followed, could not have been long without pretexts. The effect of such schisms was to rally and strengthen the opposite faction into a renewal of the conflict. The capture of Edward by Warwick occurred in the Summer of 1469, and was followed by the restoration of Henry, who had been over five years a prisoner in the Tower. The domineering and dictatorial habit of Warwick was not less manifest in his alliance with Henry than it had been with Edward. The Earl had given his oldest daughter to Clarence; and, as she was to inherit her father's immense estates, he thus seemed to have a sure hold on her husband. But the Duke appears to have regarded the marriage as offering him a prospect of the throne; so that the main cord between Clarence and Warwick was broken when the latter gave his second daughter to the son of Henry.

In October, 1470, Edward made his escape to the continent. The following March he returned, and in about a month was fought the battle of Barnet, where he recovered the throne in spite of Warwick, and therefore had a better chance of keeping it. For this success he was much indebted to the perfidy of Clarence, who, having raised a large body of men by commission from Henry, but with the secret purpose of using them for Edward, threw off the mask a few days before, openly renouncing his father-in-law, and rejoining his brother. The death of Warwick at the battle of Barnet left Edward little to fear; and his security was scarce disturbed by the arrival of Queen Margaret, on the very day of that battle, with aid from France; which aid, together with what remained of Henry's late army, was dispatched a few days after in the battle of Tewksbury.

As to the authorship of this dramatic series, perhaps enough was said in connection with the preceding play. But it may not be amiss to add that, if we study the three parts of *King Henry the Sixth* together with *King Richard the Third*, we shall find them all to be so connected that each earlier member of the series is a necessary introduction to the following, and each later one a necessary sequel to the preceding; that is to say, they will appear to be four plays only because too long to be one, or two, or three. So manifest and so perfect is the unity and continuity of plan, purpose, matter, action, interest, and characterization running through them, that, if they had all come down to us anonymous, we should naturally have assorted them together as the undoubted workmanship of one and the same hand. This argument for identity of authorship might be pursued to almost any length: but I could add but little to what has been presented by Mr. Grant White, and so must dismiss the subject by simply referring the curious or inquisitive reader to his able and interesting *Essay*.

