

p. 237). This may reflect a desire to confirm his position after the death of his wife, or merely a desire to consolidate his position in the Tudor world.

George Duke of Clarence

Into the brief life of the Duke of Clarence (he was only 28 when he died) much activity was packed, and he took part in many stirring events. Despite this, not a great deal has been written about this enigmatic figure. In recent years progress has been made towards remedying this, and two useful items have recently been obtained for the Society's Library. The first is an article by J. R. Lander entitled "The Treason and Death of the Duke of Clarence: a Re-interpretation" (Canadian Journal of History, Vol. 2, 1967, pp. 1-28), a study of Clarence's last few months, and the second a thesis, "George Plantagenet, Duke of Clarence, 1449-1478" by Avril Kirby (Southampton University, 1967). The thesis, containing some 150 pages, covers the whole of Clarence's life. In addition to biographical chapters there is one on his character, and two analysing his estates. It is recommended.

BOOK REVIEWS

EDWARD IV, by Charles Ross. Eyre Methuen. xvi, 479 pages. 1975. £9.50.

The appearance of this book is a major event for students of the late fifteenth century. It is the first serious biography of Edward IV since Miss C. L. Scofield's exhaustive study was published in 1923, and takes its place beside that meticulous work. During the past fifty years much work has been carried out on the government of England in late mediaeval times, exposing the prejudices and misunderstandings of past generations of historians. Ross remarks (p. xi) that Edward IV is the only fifteenth century king whose reputation stands higher now than it did at the beginning of that period (he ignores the reputation of Richard III), and the Victorian historians in particular were very prejudiced against him. Charles Plummer, the editor of Sir John Fortescue's "Governance of England" in 1888, even describes him as "*probably the worst king and certainly the worst man who had occupied the throne since John*". There is an interesting discussion of changing attitudes towards Edward on pages 418 to 420. Ross believes that present day historians understand far better the problems of governing England in the late fifteenth century, and in the present book he re-appraises Edward IV in the light of this modern

research. He describes Edward's struggle to re-assert the power of the throne after the weakening effects of the reign of Henry VI, and the methods by which he maintained his own, very personal, authority.

This is mainly a political biography, dealing chiefly with the political, diplomatic and financial affairs which occupied Edward during his reign. However it does not neglect more personal matters, such as the marriage of Edward to Elizabeth Woodville. Although Ross refuses to speculate on the reasons for this, he remarks (p. 87) that Edward's motives "*remain a matter for awestruck speculation*"; he discusses fully the circumstances surrounding it, and the political consequences. He ascribes the success of Richard's assumption of the throne in 1483 to the general unpopularity of the Woodvilles, and sees this event as the major paradox of Edward's life. Why was so successful a king unable to secure the peaceful succession of his son? He was the only king in English history in possession of his throne when he died who failed to do so. Ross's solution to this paradox is not unfavourable to Richard, he sees Gloucester's approach to the throne as "*almost involuntary*" (p. 425), although he does not mention Eleanor Butler or the precontract at all. Perhaps wisely he does not go beyond the death of Edward IV to the question of the fate of Edward V.

Members will see from the above that the attitude of Dr. Ross towards Richard of Gloucester is in accordance with that of most modern historians. Three of the "crimes" of Richard are covered by this book, the deaths of Edward of Lancaster, of Henry VI and of the Duke of Clarence. Regarding the first of these Ross merely remarks that "*all immediately contemporary sources agree that he was killed in the fighting*" (p. 172), of the second that although Richard (as Constable of the Tower) may have been present when Henry died, the responsibility for Henry's death lay with the King. For the death of Clarence he is even more explicit, "*there is no evidence at all to support later charges that Duke Richard of Gloucester brought about his brother's downfall*" (p. 244).

There is very little to criticise in this book, except for minor details. Edward, the son of Clarence, is twice called Earl of Salisbury (pp. 333 and 336) which he surely was not even when the death of Anne Neville made him the sole heir of his great-grandfather. Another small criticism is that for the battle of Tewkesbury Ross follows the account of J. D. Blyth (Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, Vol. 80, 1961); an account which I believe I have shown to be quite incorrect ("Battle of Tewkesbury 4th May 1471" by P. W. Hammond *et al.*, 1971). These minor criticisms are made partly to show that it is only in such small details that the book can be faulted. It is easy to read, and immense scholarship is shown throughout. There are a large number of footnotes (and it is good to see these at the foot of the page where they belong), and the book is well illustrated. The five appendices include a most interesting one describing the narrative sources available for this reign. There is a very full bibliography.

This book will take its place as the standard biography of Edward IV. I can thoroughly recommend it to members.

P. W. HAMMOND

FOTHERINGHAY AND THE HOUSE OF YORK, written and published by Geoffrey Wheeler (1975). 24 pages; 36 illustrations and a genealogical chart. Price 30p (available from the author, 195 Gloucester Place, London, N.W.1).

This little booklet was published in order to commemorate the dedication of the Fotheringhay Window—the memorial to the House of York. The material includes brief biographies of the first three Dukes of York, the Earl of Cambridge and Richard III in so far as he was connected with Fotheringhay. Also included are short accounts of the church, the college and the village together with its castle. The very nature of the memorial brings heraldry to the fore in this booklet and, here again, the author has provided his reader with sufficient basic information in order to fully appreciate the significance of the various arms and badges incorporated into the window. Viewed as a simple guide to the Window the author has clearly achieved his objective in a clear and concise style, but what is both surprising and disappointing is the very poor quality of the printing which has robbed many of the otherwise fine illustrations of much of their detail. Despite this fault the booklet still represents excellent value for money.

HOWARD SHEARRING

Some Recently Published Novels

THE ROSE AT HARVEST END, by Eleanor Fairburn. Robert Hale, January 1975. £1.80.

The third instalment in the saga of Cecily Neville, covering events from the coronation of her son Edward in 1461 to his death in 1483. Cecily is now a bystander, watching powerless as her children struggle for survival and supremacy amongst themselves and against the enemies of the House of York.

REQUIEM FOR RICHARD, by Freda M. Long. Robert Hale, March 1975. £2.

This novel covers events from 1470 to 1485 seen in flashback between the stages of the coronation ceremony of Richard and Anne in 1483. It shows how the lure of the crown gradually changes Richard from a loyal supporter of his brother Edward to the usurper of his nephew's throne.

Gloucester's Charter of Incorporation, by Gwen Waters. A correction

In the above article in the March Ricardian it was stated (p. 12) that there is no record as to whether or not Gloucester had to pay for its Charter in 1483. Mrs. Waters has now discovered that in fact Gloucester did not have to pay. Richard ordered that the letters patent granting the new Charter be delivered without "fine or fee" (B.M. Harl. MS.433, f.111). Another example of his generosity towards the town.

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