

THE HISTORY OF ENGLAND

JANE AUSTEN

Edward the 4th

This Monarch was famous only for his Beauty and his Courage, of which the Picture we have here given of him, and his undaunted Behaviour in marrying one Woman while he was engaged to another, are sufficient proofs. His Wife was Elizabeth Woodville, a Widow who, poor Woman! was afterwards confined in a Convent by that Monster of Iniquity and Avarice Henry the 7th. One of Edward's Mistresses was Jane Shore, who has had a play written about her, but it is a tragedy and therefore not worth reading. Having performed all these noble actions, his Majesty died, and was succeeded by his son.

Edward the 5th

This unfortunate Prince lived so little a while that nobody had time to draw his picture. He was murdered by his Uncle's Contrivance, whose name was Richard the 3rd.

Richard the 3rd

The Character of this Prince has been in general very severely treated by Historians, but as he was a *York*, I am rather inclined to suppose him a very respectable Man. It has indeed been confidently asserted that he killed his two Nephews and his Wife, but it has also been declared that he did *not* kill his two Nephews, which I am inclined to believe true; and if this is the case, it may also be affirmed that he did not kill his Wife, for if Perkin Warbeck was really the Duke of York, why might not Lambert Simnel be the Widow of Richard. Whether innocent or guilty, he did not reign long in peace, for Henry Tudor E. of Richmond as great a villain as ever lived, made a great fuss about getting the Crown and having killed the King at the battle of Bosworth, he succeeded to it.

(From *The History of England* . . . by a partial, prejudiced, and ignorant Historian, 1791. Reprinted (by permission of Oxford University Press) from *The Works of Jane Austen*, Vol. VI, *Minor Works*, ed. by R. W. Chapman, 1954. Members will probably be aware that this year is the bi-centenary of Jane Austen's birth, she was born on 16th December 1775. Thanks are due to Mr J. W. Spence for reminding us of these refreshingly irreverent pieces.