

Rolls, 1485-1509, Vol. 2, HMSO (1956) no. 209). He is said to have died in the Tower.

Gairdner was therefore correct in assuming that the first marquess dined with Suffolk. The date most commonly accepted for Dorset's death—20th September, 1501—is certainly incorrect.

ANNE BEAUCHAMP, COUNTESS OF WARWICK

The Countess of Warwick is a little known and shadowy figure, knowledge of whose personality and character may be thought to be lost beyond recall. However Mrs Alwyn Allen has sent the following note, based on an unremarked note in Gairdner, which does seem to throw some light on these aspects of Anne Beauchamp.

This lady has been overshadowed by others, notably Margaret Beaufort, Margaret of Anjou and Elizabeth Woodville not to mention her flamboyant husband, 'the Kingmaker.' I believe, too, that she has been greatly underestimated. It should be remembered that she was the daughter and eventual heiress of that illustrious knight, Richard, 5th Earl of Warwick, a man of both military and administrative talents. It is difficult to believe that all Richard's strength of character completely by-passed his daughter. The Countess, for all her tribulations, lived to about the age of 66 years which alone seems to show a remarkably resilient nature and to belie the few references made to her.

James Gairdner, in his *'Life and Reign of Richard III.'* (London, 1898, p.22), says: 'for the weak and friendless, law sometimes exists in vain.' It is interesting, however, that Dr Gairdner, in a fairly long footnote (3) to the same page, tells us something about Lady Anne which is oddly at variance with her being 'weak' even if 'friendless.' Indeed she makes a very spirited and courageous defence of her rights in her petition to Parliament written while in sanctuary at Beaulieu. She does not hesitate to accuse King Edward himself of injustice towards her. She admits to writing, in her own hand, a positive spate of letters to every member of the Royal Family from the King downwards. This latter scriptorial industry (one can imagine the tone of it) by the good lady would have been quite sufficient to account for Edward's initial impatience with her. He probably did not take kindly to women lodging complaints which, in any way, implied criticism of himself.

However, it seems unlikely that, had the Countess any real fear for her safety, she would have pursued so firm and persistent a course. It is more probable that she wished to gain as much publicity as she could to strengthen her case so that her property would be restored to her to dispose of as she wished. As we know, she did not succeed in this, but her actions in trying reveal something of the woman behind the name and titles.

Book Reviews

THE MYSTERY OF THE PRINCES An Investigation into a Supposed Murder, by Audrey Williamson. Alan Sutton, 1978, £5.95. 215pp. 16 plates.

Audrey Williamson has nurtured a hybrid bloom! In this book she bravely seeks to hold the difficult ground between academic and popular readers. The work is not a biography of the princes (there would be scarcely

enough material for this) or even of their notorious uncle, although it necessarily follows the chronology of his life and subsequent events. In the Prologue the author states: 'This book is a first full-length attempt . . . to correlate the extensive material on the period now available . . . and discuss it from new angles as well as old.' The result is a well-planned piece of easily digestible and occasionally racy historical analysis and correlation. Her total absorption in the whole subject enables her to discuss the many points of controversy in Richard's life and reign.

The viewpoint of this book is unashamedly personal and partisan but then there is an ancient imbalance to redress! In order to avoid tedious repetition of biographical and background material, the author necessarily assumes a degree of familiarity with events and main characters. There are, in any case more than enough introductory works on 'the life and times.' Faults are minor but irritating and should be corrected in a second edition—spelling errors and the occasional obscurely worded sentence which should have been corrected by independent proof-reading. The references and notes are extensive, including welcome use of *The Ricardian* but some references are incomplete and do not cite the primary source. There are several instances of new information unreferenced, e.g. Richard signing numerous documents with 'Loyaultie me Lie' (p.51) and details of Stillington's record as Chancellor (p.59).

M/s Williamson has strong views on a number of theories which have gained ground over the years including cogent reasons why John Russell may not have been the writer of the Continuation of the Croyland Chronicle.

The chapter on Hastings deals fully with the possible reasons for his sudden death and the vexed question of the date of his execution. She points out that not a single *official* record of the Council meeting and the subsequent execution of the Lord Chamberlain of England appears to exist and her explanation may well account for the disappearance of the Council and numerous other records of the reigns of Edward IV and Richard III. In this connection she describes Mórton as 'the Nemesis that pursued Richard to his death at Bosworth Field and beyond.'

The central issue is of course the fate of the princes and to this debate the author has added some refreshingly new theories, a little evidence, and suggested some lines of enquiry which should be pursued. To elaborate further would pre-empt the book; sufficient to say that those hereditary scapegoats of England—the Tyrells—come in for some scrutiny.

A number of questions are asked which no one else so far seems to have considered, including: 'Where did the formidable Cecily, Duchess of York, Richard's mother, stand in any supposed murder of her grandsons?'

The final chapter deals with the Bones in Westminster Abbey and here she assembles all the available evidence and presents recent medical opinions.

In the Epilogue the author makes her claim that 'the ascription of the murder of the princes to Richard III is totally without any factual evidence whatever that would be accepted in any Court of Law.' She concludes with a plea for all historians of the period and subject to consider seriously the evidence and recent material contained in her book and suggests that it should be considered 'as a starting point for new and deeper research into the subject both in this country and abroad.'

Audrey Williamson, already a valued and respected member of the Richard III Society, has earned our gratitude and inspiration with this comprehensive new work.

R. C. and P. B. HAIRSINE

THE PRINCES IN THE TOWER, by Elizabeth Jenkins. Hamish Hamilton Ltd., 1978, 238 pages, 19 illustrations, £6.95.

This book, with a very promising title, is in the event something of a disappointment. This is because the princes do not really play a very large part in the narrative. The book is in fact a competent summary of the Wars of the Roses period. It is very readable, and is not entirely based on the standard histories, some original papers have been read, and up to date information incorporated, e.g. the controversy over the date of Lord Hastings' death (p.165).

However, this being said, it must be admitted that the book suffers from two main faults. While it is a very readable account of the period, there is no shortage of these, and the work as a whole betrays the fact that Miss Jenkins is not really familiar with the period. There are very many errors, both large and small, scattered throughout the book, which destroys confidence in the work. For example, the story of the murder of the Earl of Rutland by Lord Clifford is given as fact, as are many other equally discredited legends. Among these are the Countess of Desmond dancing with Richard, Anne Neville dying of consumption, and a horse called White Surrey being mentioned in *Harleian MS.433*. We are told that Rous omitted the drawings in the second version of his Roll, a fact which will surprise the College of Arms to whom it belongs. It is also rather irritating to find that frequently no page numbers are given in the references.

One could perhaps regard these (and many other) errors as irritating but minor. The major criticism to be levelled against the book is in its treatment of what is, after all, the major reason for writing it, the discussion of the mystery surrounding the disappearance of the Princes. For this the author accepts virtually the whole of the version given by More. This necessarily leads her into some illogicality. For example, she states that when More says that he described their death by the most likely story he had heard (p.192), he meant that he had sifted the evidence as the brilliant lawyer he undoubtedly was. This may well be true, but why did he not just give Tyrell's confession, which Miss Jenkins accepts as undoubtedly true? She further says that John Dighton was executed with Tyrell, this is most certainly not true. There is no evidence that they were even in the Tower together.

Richard III is accepted as the murderer of his nephews, with what might be called extenuating circumstances. The possibility that Buckingham did so is briefly discussed, but dismissed as a modern accusation. This is of course absurd, Commynes names the Duke as a possible culprit, to give only one source. The bones in Westminster Abbey are accepted as those of the Princes on the evidence of Tanner and Wright, with only a brief dismissive reference to recent doubts (p.200). In a book of this nature surely more than this is called for? The doubts do not go away by being ignored.

In all, not a good book. Not because of its conclusion though: Miss Jenkins believes that Richard is a maligned man driven to procure the murder

of his nephews through force of circumstances; this conclusion has been reached by others. The main fault of this book lies in its unreliability, and lack of anything new to say. A book to be read with caution. P. W. HAMMOND

Notices of Books and Articles

THE FOLLOWING list consists of recent books and articles, mainly published within the last twelve months, although earlier publications may be included. The appearance of an item in this list does not preclude its subsequent review.

BOOKS

R. F. Hunnisett and J. B. Post (general editors), *Medieval Legal Records*, edited in memory of C. A. F. Meekings, 560 pages, 1978. HMSO, £40.

The last two essays deal with a Wiltshire Sheriff's notebook in 1464-5, and with a series of Chancery writs for 10-11 Edward IV.

Roger Milton, *Heralds and History*, 160 pages, 1978. David and Charles, £4.95.

An explanation of heraldic terms, and how the interpretation of an individual coat of arms can provide useful historical knowledge.

Robert S. Gottfried, *Epidemic Diseases in Fifteenth Century England*, 276 pages, 1978. Leicester University Press, £10.

A discussion of the various diseases involved (including influenza), and a study of how the numbers dying affected the population, e.g. in marriage.

Colin Platt, *Medieval England: a social history and archaeology from the Conquest to 1600 A.D.*, 256 pages, 167 illustrations, 1978. Routledge and Kegan Paul, £8.50.

A very well-illustrated survey, covering all aspects of life.

ARTICLES

A. R. Myers, A Parliamentary Debate of 1449, *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, Vol. 51, No. 123, 1978, pp. 78-83.

Further information on the records of this debate, with comment on an article by Professor Dunham (see *The Ricardian*, Vol. 4, No. 57, p.26).

A. Cameron, Complaint and Reform in Henry VII's Reign: The origins of the Statute of 3 Henry VII c.2?, *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, Vol. 51, No. 123, 1978, pp. 83-88.

The possible origin of this statute, against the abduction of women, in the kidnapping and forcible marriage of Jane Sacheverell in 1485.

Daniel Williams, The Hastily Drawn-up Will of William Catesby Esq., 25th August 1485, *Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society Transactions*, Vol. 51, 1975-6, pp. 43-51.

A discussion of the rise and fall of Catesby, with some comments on his will, of which there is a transcript.

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CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE RICARDIAN

These are welcomed from all members on any subject relevant to the aims of the Society. These may be illustrated by photographs (glossy prints showing good contrast) or by line drawings. All contributions, including advertisements and letters, must be typewritten, with double spacing and adequate margins, on one side of the paper only. Permission must be obtained for the use of copyright material, but this is not usually necessary for short quotes. References and footnotes must be given in one sequence at the end of the article. They must take the form similar to the following examples:

J. H. Ramsay, Lancaster and York, Vol. 2, Cambridge (1892), pp.485-6.

B. P. Wolfe, When and why did Hastings lose his head? English Historical Review, Vol. 89 (1974), pp.835-844.

Details need not be given in full for second and subsequent references to the same source.

Contributions for the March *Ricardian* or *Bulletin* must reach P. W. Hammond, 3 Campden Terrace, Linden Gardens, London W4 2EP, by 31st December.

ERRATUM

We wish to apologise for an unfortunate omission from page 19 of Mr Hampton's article in the September *Ricardian*. The sentence beginning on line 13 should have read 'This was the daughter of Edmund de la Pole, . . .'

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

Classified advertisements can be accepted at 4p per word. It would be appreciated if advertisers forwarded remittances together with copy to be inserted to Jill Gunsell (Advertisement Manager), 29 Castelnau, Barnes, London, S.W.13. Cheques or postal orders should be crossed and made payable to the Richard III Society.

Other advertisements can be accepted for publication in the *Ricardian* and anyone interested in taking space—full, half or quarter page—should contact the Advertisement Manager.

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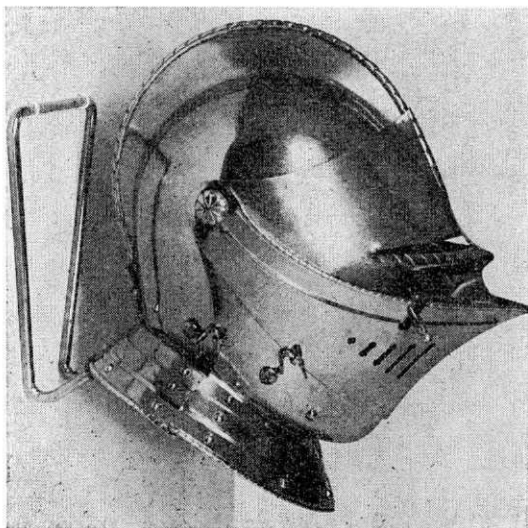


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