

## Research Notes and Queries

### An Invective against Treason

Lorraine Attreed has sent the following:—

In her recent article (Lord Morley's Statements about Richard III, *Albion*, vol. 15, 1983, pp.173-78), Retha M. Warnicke examined the image of Richard III current in the mid-sixteenth century. In 1554, Henry Parker Lord Morley presented to Queen Mary a manuscript which included descriptions of Richard as a man unable to hear Holy Mass before the Battle of Bosworth because of 'his horrible offence comytted Against his brothers children.' Dr. Warnicke concluded that not only was such a disparaging image current in the 1550's, but that even those who knew the late King's loyal servants believed in his guilt. The first part of her conclusions receive added support from a popular ballad of 1553, written and published probably in late July of that year. The ballad is printed in black-letter facsimile in Richard Garnett's edition and translation of Spanish merchant Antonio de Guaras' contemporary account, *The Accession of Queen Mary* (London 1892). It was an edition limited to 350 copies, and not the most likely place one would look for information about Richard III. The ballad, now in the British Library, is entitled 'A ninuective [sic] agaynst Treason'. It is signed only with the initials T. W., and said to have been printed by Roger Madeley at the Sign of the Star in St. Paul's churchyard. Research in the traditional guides (e.g., A. W. Pollard and G. R. Redgrave, *Short-Title Catalogue*, London 1926, p.585; E. Gordon Duff, *A Century of the English Book Trade*, London 1905, p.97; and Joseph Ames, *Typographical Antiquities*, 4 vols., London 1810-19, vol. 4, p.456) reveals very little about either author or printer. T. W. is likely to have been Thomas Waterstoune (or Watertoune), about whom nothing more is known. Madeley is known only for 'An Invective'; and the Sign of the Star had been occupied in the 1540's and early 1550's by Thomas Raynald, a well-known printer and physician (E. Gordon Duff, *Handlist of English Printers*, London 1913, n.p.; *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 16, p.790).

The ballad celebrates Mary's victory over the forces of John Dudley, Earl of Northumberland. The writer recalls how the Earl's father, Edmund Dudley, and 'olde Hemson' (i.e. Richard Empson) had been executed as traitors for their money-grabbing behaviour under Henry VII. Son followed in father's villainous footsteps, and plotted against Mary; but justice prevailed and London celebrated the accession of the rightful Tudor Queen on 19 July. The ballad was probably composed a week or two later, after Dudley had been brought to the Tower and before his death on 3 August. Religion is not an issue with the writer: Edward VI is as fully praised as Mary, who is not yet suspected of planning religious change.

The subject of the piece is treason and the danger it brings to crowned monarchs. In three stanzas written loosely in Rhyme Royal structure (printed below), the writer takes the example his audience would have known best: the envious machinations of Richard III. Richard is here accused of murdering his two nephews; plotting against Elizabeth Woodville; killing his brother Clarence; and slaying Henry VI in the Tower. Henry is described as being done away with by means of a short dagger; in Clarence's case, the tale of drowning in the butt of malmsey is a story said to be 'ryght playne, . . . aswel was known', or in other words at the forefront of the public imagination. But for Richard, justice also prevails in the end, although not as happily so as for Mary, for 'lyke a noughty false traytour at Boseworth was he slayne' (a refrain that concludes each of the three stanzas about Richard).

The ballad, meant to be printed and distributed widely, uses stories about Richard that had received attention in the previous decade from More, Hall, and Harding, and repeats them for a popular audience. In histories as well as in popular poetry (the latter perhaps to be compared with advertising jingles of today), Richard had achieved an iron-clad image as the archetypal murderer and dissembler, 'cruel of heart, ambitious by nature, envious of mind . . .' (A. M. Kinghorn, *The Chorus of History*, London 1971, p.266, citing Sir Thomas Wilson, *The Art of Rhetoric*, 1553-60). So also had tales of drowning in malmsey and gentle Henry dispatched in the Tower passed into the public consciousness, as examples of discord and treason of the Wars of the Roses, brought to an end by the lawful reign of Tudor monarchs represented by the recently restored Mary.

What moved the Duke of Glocester, Edward the fourthes brother  
Of his two natural Nevewes, by lyneall descent  
Sekyng of them distruccion, and also of the queene their mother,  
But that he the ryghtfull rayne of them, he falsely myght prevent  
Styll workyng tyl he had brought to passe his false and yil entent  
by murtherynge the innocentes, that he him selfe myght raygne  
Yet lyke a noughty false traytour, at Boseworth was he slayne.

He never rested tyll he had made away his owne naturall brother  
George the good duke of Clarence, that noble prince truly  
Causyng the kynge to graunt therto, for it wolde be none other  
For which wycked fact sone afterwarde, the kynge was ryght sory  
That in a but of Malmsey the man was first to dye  
Within the towre aswel was knowen, the story is ryght playne  
Yet at the last this ranke traytour, at boseworth was he slayne.

He eke slewe with a short dagger, that mylde Henry the sext  
Remaynyng in the towre thyl his lyfe he did there end  
That he to were the crowne therby myght surely be the next  
Thus to murther and false treason he dyd him selfe extende  
Untyll suche tyme most ryghtfully god brought him to his ende  
Levyng hym in tyranny, no lenger for to raygne  
But at the last for his desartes, at Boseworth was he slayne.