THE CHARACTER AND PERSONALITY OF KING HENRY VI AS FACTORS IN THE LANCASTRIAN-YORKIST STRUGGLE

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ABSTRACT

THE CHARACTER AND PERSONALITY OF
KING HENRY VI AS FACTORS IN THE
LANCASTRIAN-YORKIST STRUGGLE

by David Erle Huyler

In practically every work concerned with Fifteenth-Century England, King Henry VI is described as a rather mindless imbecile subject to periods of insanity throughout his life, the general opinion being that he was totally incapable of decisive or determined action at any time.

The aim of this dissertation is to discover the validity, or lack of it, of this viewpoint. More generally, I hope to shed greater light on a chaotic, dimly understood, much misunderstood era in English history.

A thorough study was made of the available contemporary documents such as chronicles, private letters, Parliament Rolls, Patent Rolls, and official correspondence. In addition to these, selected modern authorities were used as guides and for comparison. I have also consulted medical authorities with regard to Henry's illnesses in 1453 and 1455.

Wherever possible the emphasis had been placed on King Henry vis-à-vis the leading magnates.

This method had led to the conclusion that, although much blame attaches to Henry for the chaos of his reign, he did exert an influence on affairs of state; he was demonstrably capable of

determined action; he was not subject to periods of insanity throughout his life. The "insanity" of 1453-1454 was rather, an acute depression or melancholy. The supposed "relapse into insanity" in mid-1455 was much more likely an acute infection stemming from the wound suffered at the first Battle of St. Albans.

In general, it can be stated that Henry VI has been brushed off as a nonentity when, in reality, he is worthy of far more attention than has been paid him in the past.

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By

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

In 1445 Henry VI had been titular king of England for twenty three years and, officially if not in fact, actual ruler of his kingdom for just over nine years.[1] His early training and education had been undertaken by Thomas Beaufort, Duke of Exeter and, at his death in 1426, Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick.[2] There is good evidence that the boy had been well educated, and was quick to learn and understand.[3] In his early years there is no indication of mental disability, slowness, retardation, even though he must have been a very lonely child after his mother's remarriage and evident departure from Court sometime around 1426.[4] Henry, it may be assumed, was probably a little below average in health because of unfortunate inheritance of the Lancastrians' physical weakness, but this did not prevent him from enjoying hunting, riding, and similar sports. The matter of his mental health will be examined in detail in the course of this thesis.

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[1] Henry was declared of age by the Council 12 November 1436. Sir Nicholas Harris Nicolas, Proccedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council (6 vols.; 1833-1837), V, 71. Rotuli Parliamentorum; ut et Petitiones, et Placita in Parliamento (6 vols.; 1767), V, 438-439. He exercised little real power for several years thereafter.

[2] Nicolas, Proceedings, III, 296-300.

[3] James Gairdner, The Paston Letters (6 vols.; 1904), II, 34-38.

[4] Agnes Strikland, Lives of the Queens of England, (12 vols.; 1850), III, 112-115.

During his childhood there was only one event that might have left a permanent mark on the mind of a sensitive and gentle child, and this one event is by no means a certainty; at the age of nine he may have been a witness of the execution of Joan of Arc at Rouen in 1431.[5] If such was the case, and I think the evidence points that way, there is no telling what such a hideous occurrence might have done to the mind of a nine year old whose guardians might well have decided that it would be edifying and toughening for the boy to see the fate meted out to the enemies of God and the king.

It is probable that the most disconcerting thing in these formative years was the constant squabbling, back-biting, and plotting that characterized the relations between the young king's great-uncle, Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester, and his uncle Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester.[6] As he grew older he must have become increasingly aware that these two magnates detested each other. Of the two, Cardinal Beaufort was the better statesman despite his monumental ambition and his most unclerical avarice.

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[5]He had been taken to France in April, 1430, and then to Rouen in July. Letters, etc., dated Rouen continue through the date of the Maid's death. He was later taken to Paris for his coronation as King of France 16 December 1431. See Joseph Stevenson, Letters and Papers Illustrative of The Wars of the English in France during the Reign of Henry VI, 2 vols. (1864), Rolls Series, II, 128, 140-142.

[6]For the background and course of this bitter feud see Sir James H. Ramsay, Lancaster and York, 2 vols. (1892), I, 326-327, 360-367.

There is every indication that his primary concern was the welfare of the kingdom and of the king. The records contain proof that time and again he loaned large sums from his personal fortune in order to fill the fiscal vacuum left by his great nephew's prodigal gifts to friends and courtiers even in the face of legislation designed to regulate grants by the king.[7]

With the death of John, Duke of Bedford, in September 1435,[8] Duke Humphrey advanced to the undisputed position of heir presumptive. At the same time the hitherto quiescent Duke of York moved one degree closer to the throne. During his lifetime Bedford had been able to hold the elements of potential upheavel at bay. At his death these forces were let loose to do what mischief they would.

Under Gloucester's urgings Parliament sanctioned not only the pursuit of the war with France but also extending the war to include England's erstwhile ally, Burgundy. This at a time when England could ill afford the expenses of a war due to a badly faltering economy and mounting debts.[9]

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[7] Statutes at Large of England, ed. Thomas Edlyne Tomlins, 20 vols. (1811), II, 491-492; Nicolas, Proceedings, VI, 86-87; Stevenson, Letters, I, 438, 440, 441, 460, 461, etc.; Rot. Parl., V, 300-320.

[8] Collections of a London Citizen (containing "Gregory's Chronicle"), ed. James Gairdner, Camden Society (1876), p. 177. Hereafter cited as "Gregory's Chronicle."

[9] For a discussion of the economy in this period see W. F. Jacob, The Fifteenth Century (Oxford, 1961), pp. 346-405.

Before this ill-advised war was concluded eighteen years later, England would lose all her French territories save Calais and, domestically, she would be on the threshold of the bloodiest and most vicious, most lawless era in her history. Duke Humphrey and his arch enemy the Cardinal would die within six weeks of each other in 1447, but not before Gloucester had been brought low and discredited through an attack on his second wife, Eleanor Cobham, which charged her with twenty-eight counts of witchcraft, heresy, and treason.[10] Her life was spared only because the twenty year old king intervened and even then she was exiled for life.[11]

In this period, as the aging cardinal's grasp on affairs of state weakened, confusion, disorder, and approaching chaos characterized the course of events.[12] The Council borrowed money from one source in order to repay a creditor, in order to borrow still more from someone else.[13] With Gloucester's disgrace following the trial and exile of his duchess, a new figure gradually rose to a

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[10] An English Chronicle of the Reigns of Richard II, Henry IV, Henry V, and Henry VI, ed. John Silvester Davies (Camden Society, 1856), p. 58. Hereafter cited as "Davies Chronicle." Also Three Fifteenth Century Chronicles, ed. James Gairdner (Camden Society, 1880), p. 63.

[11] The Brut or The Chronicles of England, Part II, ed. F. W. D. Brie, E.E.T.S. (1906-08), p. 508; Political Songs and Poems Relating to English History, ed. T. Wright, 2 vols. (Rolls Series, 1859), II, 207.

[12] Nicolas, Proceedings, V, 251-253, 258-263.

[13] For examples of financial maneuverings of the Council see Nicolas, Proceedings, V, 237, 258, 414; VI, 23.

position of leadership--William de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk, a man not without ability. By 1443 Suffolk had assumed an important role in the deliberations of the Council, which may well reflect the young king's increasing interest in affairs of state. It was he who was commissioned in 1444 to go to France and not only negotiate Henry's marriage to the beautiful sixteen year old Margaret of Anjou, but also to act as the king's proxy in the French marriage ceremony.[14]

There are indications that hitherto Henry had absented himself from the Council during Gloucester's ascendacy because he could do nothing about his dislike for his uncle so long as the older man was in a dominant position. Certainly, by 1445, when Suffolk's position was well established and Gloucester, attempting to fish in troubled waters, was trying to regain his position Henry made his dislike quite plain to the French Ambassadors who were in London to negotiate the cession of certain French territories as the price for peace and Henry's new queen.[15] As the Earl of Suffolk rose to a position of power and influence, Duke Humphrey evidently realized that the only way he could regain his former position was either to placate Suffolk or displace him. His effort at the

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[14]Thomas Rymer, Foedera, conventiones, literae, et cuisque generis acta publica inter regis Angliae et Alio, 20 vols. (1704-1732), XI, 74.

[15]Stevenson, Letters, I, 110-111.

former, it may be assumed, had failed.[16] His efforts at displacing his rival eventually bore fruit but not until it was far too late to benefit "Good Duke Humphrey," who went mysteriously to his grave three years before Suffolk's downfall in 1450.

Gloucester sowed his opposition to Suffolk in fertile ground so far as the magnates were concerned. He began with the terms insisted upon by the French before King Henry's marriage to Margaret of Anjou would be sanctioned. It was Gloucester's misfortune that Margaret and Suffolk stood high in Henry's esteem while he was on the outside trying to get in. With other rulers it might have been different, but with Henry VI those who had the royal ear had power, those who did not had none. Suffolk had been quite right in his apprehension concerning the French marriage alliance and the terms attached to it. He had foreseen all too well the unpopularity of the course he felt compelled to follow. He knew the futility of continuing the disasterous war in France, but knew, too, that the England which remembered with great pride her warrior king Henry V would be enraged at the surrender of the territories he had won in glory with English blood. It was this that had prompted his request for exoneration before the fact.

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[16]When ordered to France to negotiate for Henry's marriage to Margaret of Anjou in 1444, Suffolk evidently foresaw disaster and tried to "beg off." When this was refused he requested pre-forgiveness of any charge of malfeasance or misfeasance of his duty. Gloucester was first on his feet, agreeing to this and asking for Henry's consent--which was given. (Rot. Parl., V, 73-74; Nicolas, Proceedings, VI, 32-35.)

Humphrey of Gloucester was quite prepared and most eager to take advantage of this situation. The complexities of the manuevering that followed are not of importance to this study. The results, however, had a direct bearing on the subsequent history of the Yorkist-Lancastrian struggle.

The common sense of Suffolk's policy carried no weight in mid-fifteenth century England. Gloucester, whose only suggestion was a bellicose war policy regardless of practical considerations, hoped to discredit his rival and gain Henry's support in preventing the cession of Maine to Charles VII. In this opposition Duke Humphrey had the backing, ominous for the future, of the mightiest magnate in England--Richard, Duke of York.[17] Queen Margaret and the Duke of Suffolk, however, saw the dangers to them inherent in Gloucester's popular plans and acted at once to forestall him. With at least the tacit approval of the King they made their plans.

Margaret, not yet eighteen years old,[18] and Suffolk had to work rapidly if Gloucester was to be thwarted.[19] The Queen was

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[17]York, in 1444, had opened negotiations with France for a marriage between his son, Edward, and Princess Magdalene, fourth daughter of Charles VII (Stevenson, Letters, I, 78-86, 160, 169). This would seem to indicate that York was not quite so innocent as is generally supposed of coveting an advance in his position as a presumptive heir of the young king. This is given further credence when, as early as 1448, he revived, for the first time in 300 years, the ancient royal name of Plantagenet. (Ramsay, Lanc., II, 83.)

[18]She was born March 23, 1428. (Strickland, Lives, III, 124.)

[19]It might be well to point here to evidence that at least tends to cast doubts on the Shakespearean version of the relationship

intelligent and quick to grasp political implications. She knew full well that, once news of the cession of Maine became general, her position as a dowryless bride would become far more difficult than it was already. Contemporary writers make it clear that it was the general consensus that Margaret had already biased her husband against his uncle.[20] Henry's tacit approval for crushing Gloucester had to be obtained also, and prejudicing him against "the noble duke" was a good way to start.

By the time Parliament met, in February, 1447, at Bury St. Edmunds[21] their work had been done. The duke stupidly seems to have played into the hands of his enemies by arriving at Bury accompanied by an unnecessarily large force of eighty horse.[22] Gloucester was arrested and held in house arrest until formal charges could be brought against him. Three days later, on February 23, 1447, he was dead. Hints and suspicions among the chroniclers that his death was not natural[23] are effectively dispelled by the duke's friend, Abbot John Whethamsted, who

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between the Queen and Suffolk which several modern writers have accepted. Margaret, at less than eighteen, would find little to attract her passions in Suffolk, who was born in 1396 and was therefore over 50 in 1447.

[20]Robert Fabyan, The New Chronicles of England and of France, ed. Ellis (1811), p. 629; Johannes Wethamstede, Registrum, ed. H. T. Riley, 2 vols. (Rolls Series, London, 1872), I, 179; Edward Hall, Chronicle, ed. Ellis (1809), p. 208.

[21]Rot. Parl., V, 128.

[22]Davies' Chron., p. 116.

[23]Davies' Chron., p. 63; Gregory's Chron., p. 188.

says Humphrey died from an agony of humiliation and fear--probably a stroke.[24]

Six weeks later, the man who had been the mainstay of Lancastrian policy for nearly fifty years, Henry, Cardinal Beaufort, followed his hated rival in death.[25] Suffolk was supreme but his supremacy was in a kingdom quivering on the edge of disaster politically, militarily, diplomatically, and dynastically. His position depended on a young, dynamic, energetic queen and a gentle, naive, weak king. Up to a point Margaret could maintain him. Beyond that point there was only Henry. Suffolk was astute enough to understand that Henry would not, because he could not, prove to be a firm and steadfast protector.

For the third time in as many years, Suffolk appeared before the king in Council to appeal for exoneration, in May 1447. For a third time Henry announced himself satisfied and warned of punishment for those who continued to attack the marquess.[26] But the cession of Maine could not be buried indefinitely. The situation was not improved in 1448, when Le Mans was finally surrendered after a French siege. By 1449, the conditions in

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[24]Whethamstede, Registrum, I, 179.

[25]Gregory's Chron., p. 188; Six Town Chronicles, ed. Ralph Flenley (Oxford, 1911), p. 121.

[26]Rot. Parl., V, 447. Suffolk was created marquess 14 September 1444.

Normandy had deteriorated even further.[27] Even worse for the Lancastrian cause was the fact that the confusion over the surrender of Le Mans had brought Suffolk and Edmund Beaufort, Marquess of Dorset, into bitter conflict, thus creating a deep and dangerous split in the Lancastiran camp.

On July 31, 1449, fed up with the backing and filling of the English, Charles VII renewed the war. Had Suffolk and Edmund Beaufort, now both dukes,[28] consciously tried, they could not have served Charles VII better. Their blunders had driven his two greatest feudatories into alliance with him and had presented him with firm justification for renewing the war. Henry was a feather caught in the growing storm of discontent, avarice, and dynastic ambition. His honesty and good will could do nothing without the drive and energy to make his will obeyed, and these he did not have.

In the body of this thesis I shall examine the disintegration of the Lancastrian cause in the light of King Henry's character and his efforts, or lack thereof, in the following eleven years.

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[27] Rot. Parl., V, 147. Reginald Bowlers, on behalf of Somerset, called attention to three points--alarming attitude and preparations of the French; lack of stores, fortifications, and money in Normandy; approaching end of the truce negotiated in March 1448. (Stevenson, Letters, II, 710-715.)

[28] Calendar of Charter Rolls, 1427-1516, pp. 99-100. Suffolk was created duke 2 June 1448; the Marquess of Dorset became Duke of Somerset 31 March 1448.

CHAPTER I

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE KING'S CHARACTER AND PERSONALITY

By 1450 it may be fairly stated that the die was cast so far as the fate of Henry VI and the Lancastrian cause was concerned. The course of the next eleven years had been set by events of the previous ten years. Only the most determined efforts and the most dynamic statesmanship on the part of the king could save the realm from anarchy and the dynasty from obliteration. The fate of the kingdom and of the royal house lay with the frail and saintly Henry.

The king's character and personality were ill suited to the task to which he had been born. His education and training, first under Thomas Beaufort, Duke of Exeter, and then Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, was good.[1] He had not been spoiled or pampered or allowed to lead a soft life. He grew up perhaps more quickly than was normal for the times but was still quite a normal boy, chafing at having to study so much, objecting rather imperiously when ordered about by his tutors and guardians. The Earl of Warwick felt compelled to request clarification and amplification of his duties because

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[1] Nicolas, Proceedings, III, 296-300; Paston Letters, II, 34-38.

> the Kyng is growen in yeeres, in stature of his persone, and also in conceyte and knoweleche of his hiegh and royale auctorite and estate, the whiche naturelly causen hym . . . and shal causen hym more and more, to gruche with chastysing and to lothe it, so that . . . he wol conceyve against . . . any . . . that wol take upon hym to chastyce hym for his defautes, displesire or indignation.

The Earl requested that all the lords undertake to assist him in punishing the king when he got to be too rambunctious.[2]

As he grew older he became more reserved. His interests turned to things of the intellect and he came increasingly to resent interruptions for state affairs.[3] Despite this, there is sufficient evidence to support the belief that Henry had a good grasp of his duties and that he had the will and determination to make himself king in fact as well as in name.[4] At least one modern authority holds that

> If the whole truth were known we might find that we had underestimated Henry VI's energy. Certainly the conflict [with the Council] was waged with great vigor by the king who while still a boy began to make his power felt.[5]

Henry's marriage to the dynamic, energetic, determined Margaret of Anjou might well have been the best thing possible for the king and for England had it not been for the concessions extorted from Suffolk by the French before they would agree to the marriage treaty. The queen, as well as the duke, became

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[2] Rot. Parl., V, 433-434.

[3] J. Blacman, Life of Henry the Sixth, trans. M. R. James (London, 1919), pp. 37-38.

[4] See, for example, Rot. Parl., V, 439a, and the numerous documents bearing the royal sign manual in Nicolas, Proceedings.

[5] T. F. T. Plunkett, "The Place of the Council in the 15th Century," T.R.H.S., 4th Series, I, 181.

a center upon which popular discontent was concentrated. Margaret and Suffolk were seen as the object and cause of England's humiliation. The Chronicler Stowe makes no bones about it

> Kyng Henry by the advice of the Erle of Suffolke toke to wyfe Margaret the Kynges doughter of Sicile . . . which thing was cause of muche miserie and trouble in England, loss of Normandie, division of the lordes, rebellion of the commonalitie against the prince and finally the kyng deposed and the quene with the prince fayne to flee the reaume.[6]

Regardless of the validity of the charge, this was what people believed. Margaret could do little to combat this type of opposition. She and the duke could hope to remain comparatively secure so long as the Duke of York remained in France, where he had been named lieutenant-general for five years in the middle of 1440.[7] Three years later there occurred one of those instances of confused administration, stupid bungling, or malicious meddling that are such a sorry characteristic of Henry VI's government. John Beaufort, Earl of Somerset was created duke and appointed Captain-General of Guienne.[8] This direct infringement on York's position as Lieutenant-General of France would have been bad enough even if York and Somerset had been friendly. But they had been bitter enemies for years.[9] When the elder Somerset

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[6] John Stowe, Summerie of The Chronicles of Englande (1565), M.S.U. Library microfilm #15588, Case 60, Carton 356, Fol. 147. Also Brut, pp. 511-512; Davies' Chron., p. 61.

[7] Nicolas, Proceedings, V, 314; Stevenson, Letters, II, 585; Gregory's Chron., p. 183; Three 15th Cent. Chron., p. 63.

[8] Nicolas, Proceedings, V, 251-255.

[9] John Stowe, Annales (1592), M.S.U. Library Microfilm #15588, Case 60, Carton 356, p. 606.

died, having ended his military career in shame and defeat in Normandy, in May, 1444, his younger brother Edmund, Marquess of Dorset, succeeded to the title of Earl and to the feud with York. How much of this bungling can be attributed to King Henry is difficult to determine. The records are far too lacking in detail to make it possible to assign any given act specifically to the king, the queen, Suffolk, or anyone else.[10] There are records from shortly after 1437 onward which indicate that the king, out of his desire to please everyone, especially through his power to dispense patronage, often ended by pleasing nobody and adding confusion to a steadily worsening situation.[11] At an early date the Council felt compelled to draw up a statement of advice for Henry to follow when making grants, etc. In all letters making grants the Council suggested, among other things, that a clause be added, stating "Provided alway that the kynge hath not graunted the thinges asked to any othir persone afore that tyme."[12] In addition Henry had no sense whatever of finance.

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[10] Only when a document bears the royal sign manual is it possible to state with certainty that the contents have been approved, disapproved, or seen by the king. A document over any of several signets is almost equally a certainty. This does not mean, however, that documents without the above characteristics were not from the king. See J. Ottway-Ruthven, The King's Secretary and Signet Office in the XVth Century (Cambridge, 1929), and Nicolas, Proceedings, VI, ccxiv.

[11] See, for example, Nicolas, Proceedings, VI, 168, 265-267, and Letters of Bishop Thomas Beckyngton, ed. G. Williams, 2 vols. (Rolls Series, 1872), I, 155-159.

[12] Nicolas, Proceedings, VI, 316.

He was evidently totally incapable of refusing any request for money; export licenses; farm rights; exemptions from fees, taxes, and fines. It is a rather pathetic commentary on the king's character that amidst all this prodigality in this most exorbitant court, the well-spring of all the luxury used none for himself. All his life Henry's own wants were meagre to the point of frugality.[13] He was far more devoted to the enrichment of his mind and spirit than to his own bodily adornment or even the filling of his kingdom's treasury. His proudest and most lasting achievement was the founding of two schools--St. Mary's College, Eton, and the College of St. Mary and St. Nicolas at Cambridge,[14] which later came to be known as King's College.

There were only a few areas of human activity in which Henry could be aroused, and even in these he could be strangely selective. He detested personal cruelty and injustice. On at least one occasion he came face to face with the mutilated remains of a traitor stuck on a pike above the gates of a city. When told what it was, he ordered, "Take it away. I will not have any Christian man so cruelly handled for my sake."[15] He repeatedly intervened to save the lives of men condemned to death regardless

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[13]Blacman, Henry VI, pp. 31-33.

[14]Beckyngton, Letters, II, 270-293; Nicolas, Proceedings, VI, 129.

[15]Blacman, Henry VI, p. 39.

of the cause.[16] Yet the cruelties that his kingdom was subjected to in the later years of his reign he did little or nothing to alleviate, although he must have been aware of at least a part of them. Perhaps it was because he knew there was little he could do, aware as he must have been, of his own limitations.

The other area where Henry could be aroused, and in which he was deeply interested, was the Church. Again and again we find letters, orders, minutes indicating his anger at improper ecclesiastical appointments,[17] thanking the Pope for good appointments, for punishment of a priest for "opinions prejudicial to God and the King."[18] In this area, too, there is an example of one of the major symptoms of what was wrong with Henry's rule, although, in this case, Henry should not be held personally responsible.[19] The minutes of the Council for 30 March and 1 April, 1454, contain a recommendation to the Pope for ecclesiastical appointments ending with a memoranda that George Neville, brother of "The King Maker," was to be recommended for the next bishopric to fall vacant. Twenty months later,

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[16]Early in his personal reign the Council felt compelled to "speke unto the kyng to be warr how that he graunteth pardons or . . . how that he causeth them to be ammended" since this results in great disservice to him. Nicolas, Proceedings, V, 88.

[17]Beckyngton, Letters, I, 23. A letter of Feb. 6, 1440, from Henry to Pope Eugenius IV expressing his outrage at the appointment of a sixteen year old boy as Abbot of St. Severus.

[18]Nicolas, Proceedings, VI, 40-42.

[19]When the promise was made to Neville, Henry had been victim of a severe mental disorder for nearly a year. Although exonerated in this particular incident, Henry, on more than one occasion, had appointed two men to the same position. See above, p. 4, Nicolas, Proceeding, VI, 331-332.

on 4 December 1455, Henry was forced to write the Pope requesting him to cancel the appointment of John Hals to the See of Exeter. The king had forgotten the promise to George Neville when he requested the appointment of Hals and the canons of Exeter had already elected Neville.[20] Henry's government came more and more to be characterized by this sort of confusion, which stemmed from the king's desire to please everyone. He was, it seems, incapable of rejecting any request or petition. Like a mirror, he reflected the wishes and desires of the last person to have audience with him. This is not to imply that Henry VI was mindless. There will be sufficient evidence in this thesis to indicate that the generally accepted view of Henry is, at least, open to doubt. With few exeptions modern historians have accepted without question John Hardyng's estimate, ". . . but of his symplehead he could little within his brest conceyve; The good from eivill he could uneth perceyve."[21] The last part of this description may certainly be interpreted to mean that Henry was naive in the extreme and, since he himself was good, he believed those around him when they told him <u>they</u> were good and others were evil. Naivete in a king was bad enough but it does not indicate that for fifty years England was ruled by a simpleton, as is too generally thought.

That Henry was not one to forget kindness is indicated by several entries in the Patent Rolls between 1436 and 1458 concerning

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[20]Nicolas, <u>Proceedings</u>, VI, 168, 265; <u>Foedera</u>, XI, 367.

[21]John Hardyng, <u>Chronicle with Continuation of R. Grafton</u>, ed. H. Ellis (1812), p. 394.

his childhood nurse, Joan Asteley. On 11 December 1436, probably not long after her services were ended, she was granted two tuns of Gascon wine "at pleasure"; on 12 July 1438 a grant of £40 yearly was made to her in lieu of a like grant which, for some reason, she had surrendered; on 30 October 1444 she received an additional £20 yearly because "she has released 100 marks due her by the King's mother"; an act of resumption in 1450 deprived her of the two tuns of Gascon wine and her £40 annuity; and so, on 17 March 1452, the king made a new grant of 50 marks a year. Again, an act of resumption deprived the poor woman, now a widow, of her income. She must have tried to get along as best she could without the king's bounty, but by late 1457 she had run up a sizeable debt of £17.19s. 1 3/4d. with a London grocer, Guy Ketrych, who appealed her before the Justices of the Bench. For some reason unexplained, she failed to appear to answer the charges, for on 6 November 1457 the king pardoned her for her failure to appear. For over a year filled with the turmoil of civil war, the matter must have bothered Henry's conscience because on 23 November 1458 one last entry appears, specifying that a grant for life be made to "Joan Asteley, widow, late the king's nurse, of 50 marks yearly . . . in lieu of a grant by letters patent . . . annulled by act of resumption in Parliament . . ."[22]

A mind that could remember with kindness, in the midst of civil strife, the care a child had received nearly a quarter of

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[22] Calendar of Patent Rolls of Henry VI, (6 vols.), 1436-1441, pp. 36, 127; 1441-1446, p. 319; 1452-1461, pp. 379, 463.

of a century before is certainly not feeble or simple in the modern sense.

That Henry was a romantic with some little imagination is revealed in a charming story related by Rafaello de Negra in a letter to Bianca Maria Visconti, Duchess of Milan, dated 28 October 1458.[23] He tells of the young king's eagerness to see his bride when she landed in England in 1445.

> . . . the king dressed himself as a squire, the Duke of Suffolk doing the same, and took her a letter which he said the king had written. When the queen read the letter the king took stock of her, saying that a woman may be seen overwell when she reads a letter, and the queen never found out that it was the king because she never looked at him in his squire's dress who remained on his knees all the time.

Margaret was not pleased when the duke told her who the young squire was after he had gone "because she had kept him on his knees." Again, this prank does not fit with the general idea of a feebleminded simpleton.

The sources of most, if not all, the unfavorable views of Henry's mentality are found to be the chronicles, letters, dispatches of those who. for a variety of reasons, were pro-Yorkist. John Hardyng, whose reference to King Henry's simple-mindedness has already been noted,[24] wrote two versions of his chronicle. One, completed in 1457. was dedicated to Henry VI. Unsatisfied with the pension granted him after Cardinal Kempe intervened to

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[23] Calendar of Milanese Papers, 1417-1509, pp. 18-19.

[24] Above, p. 7. The following section of this thesis is derived from C. L. Kingsford, English Historical Literature in the Fifteenth Century (Oxford, 1913, reprint by Burt Franklin, New York), pp. 140-149.

prevent its collection Hardyng set about a revision, which he completed in 1464 and dedicated to Richard, Duke of York. In this later version all references to Suffolk are appreciably less favorable. It is here that the hostile opinion of Henry's mentality is found. All in all, the second version can be regarded as the author's rather fawning effort to ingratiate himself with the Yorkists, who were then in power. The unflattering descriptions of King Henry, unfortunately have been accepted at face value by modern writers.

A most derogatory story thus accepted by, among others, Paul Murray Kendall,[25] as proof of the king's imbecility, concerns his actions at the second Battle of St. Albans in February, 1461. The story states that, following the battle, Henry was found under a tree laughing and singing. A thorough search of the obvious sources has failed to disclose a single reference to this incident.[26] The only source, apparently, is in a letter from the Milanese ambassador to the Court of France, Prospero di Camulio, sent to Francesco Sforza, Duke of Milan, on 9 March 1461. In this dispatch Camulio states, "The King [was] placed under a tree a mile away where he laughed and sang . . ."[27] Thus a second or third hand

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[25] In Warwick the Kingmaker (New York, 1957), p. 95.

[26] The sources examined were: Davies' Chronicle; The English Brut; Three 15th Century Chronicles; Collections of a London Citizen, ed. Gairdner; Flenley's Six Town Chronicles; Whethamstede's Registrum; Stowe's Chronicle and Annales; Paston Letters: C. L. Kingsford, London Chronicle (London, 1905); Ingulph, Chronicle of Abbey of Croyland (1854).

[27] Cal. Mil. Papers, 1385-1618, pp. 54-55.

account of an incident occurring two hundred miles away, given by a biased correspondent,[28] has entered many authoritative works as fact. It is interesting to note that a letter, dated 19 February, from C. Gigli in London to Michele Arnulfini gives details of the battle of St. Albans and makes no mention whatever of this supposed incident.[29]

It is Camulio, too, who is responsible for the story that Henry disclaimed paternity of young Prince Edward by attributing the event to the Holy Ghost--another story found quite often in modern works. This is found in a dispatch to Sforza, dated 27 March 1461. "They say here . . . King Henry abdicated in favor of his son though another time he said he must be the son of the Holy Spirit."[30] This seems to be pure slander in the light of a grant of an annuity of £40 "because Richard Tunstall, squire, made unto us the first comfortable relation and notice that our most dearly beloved wife the Queen was enciente to our most singular consolation."[31] The only contemporary comment that even hints at irregularity, is found in Robert Bale's Chronicle where, after telling of Edward's birth, he adds, "of whoos birth the peple

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[28]On several occasions Camulio declares his hope for a Yorkist victory (Cal. Mil. Papers, 1385-1618) and joy at the successes of young Edward of York, and his own hostility toward England (pp. 57,60).

[29]Ibid., pp. 48-51.

[30]Ibid., p. 58.

[31]Rot. Parl., V, 318.

spake stranngely."[32] Since Margaret and Suffolk were detested by a sizeable segment of the population, it is not surprising that rumors were widespread. The fact that the king had suffered a serious mental breakdown three months earlier made the rumor seem that much more reliable. Camulio's personal hostility toward Henry VI and his rumor-mongering are well demonstrated by his dispatch of 15 March 1461, in which he states: "They say here that after King Henry abdicated the queen gave the king poison. At least he has known how to die if he did not know what to do else."[33] With few exceptions this has come to be the generally accepted opinion of Henry.

Ill suited as he was for the task of ruling a kingdom, especially in such tumultuous times, Henry VI nevertheless was not the total cipher that he is so often depicted as. Above average in intelligence, he led a life the more tragic because he must have been fully aware that most, if not all, the turmoil and horror of the era was the result of his own shortcomings. His loyalty to those around him, his refusal to think ill of any man until too late, his prodigality to those who served him, his unwillingness to take firm action until the time for firm action was passed--these were the sources of almost all his troubles. A less moral, less kindly, more selfish man would have had few of his problems--as witness the success of Edward IV and Henry VII.

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[32] In Flenley, Six Town Chron., p. 141.

[33] Cal. Mil. Papers, 1385-1618, p. 58.

The character and personality of Henry VI were the determining factors in the affairs of the kingdom during the middle quarter of the century. But

> This Henry was of nature gentle and meek; he loved better peace than war, quietness of mind than business of the world; honestie than profit; rest and ease than trouble and care. All injuries that ever happened to him, which were many, he suffered them patiently and reputed them to be worthily sent of God for his offenses.[34]

Prior to about 1450, affairs might have been arrested and then reversed, and the House of Lancaster might well have maintained its possession of the crown. It would have required cooperation among the magnates of England, a redirection of Englishmen's pride toward domestic affairs to overcome the humiliation engendered by the losses in France, reestablishment of English credit at home and abroad,[35] and, perhaps most important of all, recognition by all factions that, for better or worse, Henry VI was king.

By 1450, however, serious doubts were being raised as to the validity of Lancastrian possession of the crown. As early as 1448 Richard of York had revived the Plantagenet name certainly with an eye toward a possible future claim; and there was the matter of York's negotiation for a French princess as wife for

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[34]Stowe, Annales, p. 585.

[35]The sorry state of English credit abroad is illustrated by a decree of the Venetian Senate, of 21 March 1449, forbidding further loans to the English King without license of the Signory. (Calendar of Venetian Papers, I, 71-2.) Domestic economy and finances are described most unfavorably in Davies' Chron., p. 79.

his young son Edward, in 1444.[36] Again, we find a chronicler stating categorically for the year 1448: "York began secretly to allure his friends of the nobility and privilie declare to them his title to the crown,"[37] and two years later "those that favored the Duke of York and wished the crown upon his head, procured a commotion in Kent."[38]

The uprising of the "Captain of Kent"--following so hard upon the uproar, culminating in the removal, exile, and murder of William de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk--began tolling the death knell of the House of Lancaster and of King Henry VI.

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[36] Above, p. ix, n. 17; also in Gregory's Chron., p. 189; Three 15th Cent. Chron., p. 170. Plantagenet is applied to no other person save the Count Geoffrey of Anjou.

[37] Stowe, Annales, p. 627.

[38] Ibid., p. 630.

CHAPTER II

SUFFOLK

It has already been observed (p. vii) that Duke Humphrey had laid the groundwork for Suffolk's destruction prior to his own death in 1447, by stirring up opposition to the king's proposed marriage, and by spreading hostile insinuations against Suffolk.[1] With the queen's ardent support, however, Suffolk was able to act first, but not before Gloucester's seeds of doubt had taken root. His anti-peace policy, dating at least from the ransoming of the Duke of Orleans from his twenty-five years of captivity in 1440, had wide popular appeal. Suffolk's course of government was based upon peace which could not be obtained from France without the cession of Maine and Anjou. Gloucester coupled these two points and pointed an accusing finger at William de la Pole, Earl and Marquess of Suffolk. From the release of Orleans, through the French marriage and the loss of Maine and Anjou, there developed in England a vicious, powerful, and blindly stupid hatred of peace with the French which may be traced to the Duke of Gloucester's demagogic appeal to the baser aspects of English sentiments. Even more dangerous to the dynasty was the fact that the hostility toward the peace policy of the government included Queen Margaret and Suffolk, the instruments and agents

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[1] Nicolas, Proceedings, VI, 32; Stevenson, Letters, I, 123.

of that policy.[2] Even with the Duke of Gloucester in his grave the damage was done, but so long as King Henry gave his confidence to Suffolk the duke was safe. The queen would not stand passively aside and watch Suffolk pulled from his position of influence by men who detested her and her influence with her gentle and tractable husband. Judged by her extant letters, for the first few years of her marriage the queen did little if any meddling in affairs of state.[3] These letters reveal a lively, happily married young woman interested in clothes and jewels, asking favors for her friends and servants. The closest thing to even an interest in affairs of the realm is a letter written in December, 1445, to her uncle, Charles VII of France. Most of it is devoted to her thanks for his letters and expressions of good will. Toward the end she states,

> and as to the deliverance which you desire to have of the County of Maine, and other things contained in your letters, we understand that my said lord has written to you fully and plainly, and nevertheless we shall do the best we are able for your pleasure . . .[4]

It was only when she saw, or thought she saw, a threat to herself and her husband that Margaret acted, realizing that King Henry would not move without prodding by someone he trusted. Thus Margaret persuaded the king that Gloucester posed a threat to the

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[2]English Brut, pp. 511-512; Davies' Chron., p. 61; Stowe, Annales, p. 622; Ingulph, Croyland Cont., pp. 403-404.

[3]See The Letters of Margaret of Anjou, ed. C. Monro (Camden Society; 1863).

[4]Stevenson, Letters, I, 164-167.

kingdom. It may be that the danger to Suffolk, and hence to herself, was not fully appreciated by the queen until it was too late effectively to counteract the animosity toward the duke and herself. She was just barely twenty in a new and strange land. In France, where she had grown up, the clamor of the commonalty meant nothing. When she realized that in England this was not the case it was already too late to save the duke.

Suffolk bore the onus of the loss of Maine although King Henry was not only aware, as early as 1445, of the agreement but on several occasions urged its prompt fulfillment and added his own personal promises and assurances to Charles VII.[5] In this letter Henry makes the revealing statement, " . . . favoring also our most dear and well beloved companion the queen, who has requested us to do this many times . . . " But the people of England throughout his long reign were always reluctant to blame their gentle king for the sins of his government. Suffolk had made the treaty in order to get Margaret and this was enough for the opposition. Despite the king's efforts to have done with the whole wretched affair the local commanders at Le Mans and other fortresses in Maine delayed, raised obstacles, and balked at every chance.[6] Exasperated with the English

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[5]Worcester's Annales in Stevenson, Letters, II, 638-642, 666-669, 692, 696, 700, 702, et seq. See also Nicolas, Proceedings, VI, xiii. See above p. xi, and Rymer, Foedera, XI, 53, 106, 211, for letters bearing the signet and sign manual all concerned with the details of the peace terms.

[6]Worcester's Collection in Stevenson, Letters, II, 710-718; Stevenson, Letters, I, 102; II, 361; Nicolas, Proceedings, VI, 64.

delaying tactics, outraged at an unprovoked and stupid attack on the French fortress of Fourgeres in Brittany in which Suffolk seems strongly implicated,[7] the French king declared war on 31 July 1449.[8]

There followed disaster upon disaster. Each ship from France brought news of additional English losses, defeats, humiliations. Popular clamor against the Duke of Suffolk rose steadily.[9] Indignation at the losses suffered across the Channel only added to the growing hostility against him.[10] On every side he was accused of treasonously engineering the loss of Normandy and England's other French possessions.[11] That the duke's policy of peace with France was an intelligent one, indeed, the only one which could help the king and the realm, was of no moment. He had brought disgrace and humiliation to the kingdom and for this he would never be pardoned. The enmity and bitterness between Suffolk and Somerset, added to an already deplorable state of affairs. It was the first rupture among the Lancastrians.[12]

Whatever efforts Suffolk may have made to win popular support, those efforts failed. That he had at least tried is indicated by a curious passage in one of the chronicles concerning

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[7]Ramsay, Lanc., II, 91-92, iii.

[8]Stevenson, Letters, I, 243-264.

[9]Wright, Pol. Poems, II, 231.

[10]Ibid., II, 221-222.

[11]Flenley, Six Town Chron., p. 127; Gregory's Chron., p. 188; Davies' Chron., p. 66; English Brut, p. 516; Stowe, Annales, pp. 628-629.

[12]Above, p. xii.

the fate of several of "Good Duke Humphrey's" men in 1447. This passage states that these men were hanged, but the ropes were severed and they were taken down still alive and "the Duke of Sowthefolke brought them alle yn generalle pardon and grace from our lorde and soverayne Kynge Harry the VI^te."[13] If it were an attempt to sponge out part of his unpopularity it failed. All that was needed was a leader and an excuse and Suffolk could be eliminated. Neither was long in appearing.

The most obvious potential leader of any opposition, the Duke of York, had been put on ice in 1448 by the simple expedient of sending him to Ireland as Lord Lieutenant for ten years.[14] There were others ready to take the lead, however. The ground was trembling under Suffolk's feet. Lawlessness, riots, looting, rape, murder, all were becoming more and more commonplace between 1443 and 1450. The records of the Privy Council contain innumerable ordinaces, commands, to magnates and gentry to keep the peace,[15] and efforts to put an end to seditious mumbling, discussions on resistance to collection of civic dues in London.[16]

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[13] Gregory's Chron., p. 188. See also Kingsford, London Chron., pp. 157-158.

[14] Nicolas, Proceedings, VI, 89. His commission is dated 30 July--exactly the time that the Marquess of Dorset (Duke of Somerset) had been given command in France thus supplanting York. Gregory's Chronicle p. 189, states he was "exsylyde in to Irland for hys rebellyon . . ."

[15] Nicolas, Proceedings, V, 90, 241, 290-305; Stowe, Annales, p. 387.

[16] Nicolas, Proceedings, V, 247, 278, 290, 294, etc.

A climax came 9 January 1450 at Portsmouth. A group of soldiers and sailors on their way to Calais had been detained at this port for a considerable time, as often happens to soldiers of all countries and times. With much spare time on their hands, they began looting, pillaging, and making themselves generally unpopular.[17] Adam Moleyns, Bishop of Chichester, was sent to Portsmouth to pay their arrears in wages.[18] Never popular, Moleyns evidently enraged the men with his haggling over account. "Ande fore hys covetysse, as hyt was reportyde . . ." the bishop was murdered on the spot by the sailors "and sum mys-a-wysd men of the sowdyers holpyn welle there-to."[19]

One month before this, Moleyns, emulating another of Suffolk's men, Marmaduke Lumley, Bishop of Carlisle, in attempting to flee the wrath to come, had resigned his office of Keeper of the Privy Seal.[20] There was no surer sign than this that Suffolk's ship was going down.

Just one more nail in Suffolk's coffin was the rumor that Bishop Moleyns had, in his last moments, let slip information implicating Suffolk in treasonous activities during the negotiations

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[17] Ramsay, Lanc., II, 104, citing Giles Chronicle, p. 37.

[18] Davies' Chron., p. 64; Worcester's Annales in Stevenson, Letters, II, p. 766.

[19] Gregory's Chron., p. 189.

[20] Lumley, Treasurer since 1446, resigned in September. (Maurice Powicke and E. B. Fryde, Handbook of British Chronolgy, 2nd Ed.; London; 1961; pp. 92, 102.)

over Maine.[21] This was all that was needed for Suffolk's enemies to go into action.

Ralph, Lord Cromwell and the duke had clashed angrily the preceeding fall when one of Suffolk's retainers, William Tailbois, assaulted Cromwell in Westminster Hall. Cromwell accused Suffolk of attempting to murder him and the Council, at the insistence of Commons, sent Suffolk's man to the Tower. A jury later sentenced the man to pay an indemnity of £3000 to Lord Cromwell.[22] It was Cromwell who, from that time, had assumed the lead of those opposing the duke. He now took up the rumors of Moleyns' dying accusation of Suffolk.[23]

Suffolk certainly must have been aware of the political vultures gathering because when Parliament resumed on 23 January 1450 he immediately rose in his own defense. He "besought the Kynges Highness" for permission to exonerate himself from "the grete infamie and defamation" he had been subjected to since "a certain confession of the Keper of youre Prive Seall . . . shuld have made at his deth, as it is seid." He reminded those present of the long and honorable service which his family had given the kingdom; that his father and three brothers had been killed fighting for England and her king; that a fourth brother died while a prisoner of the enemy; that he himself had been taken

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[21] Rot. Parl., V, 176.

[22] Ibid., pp. 181, 200; Worcester's Annales in Stevenson, Letters, II, 766.

[23] Worcester's Annales in Stevenson, Letters, II, 766-767.

prisoner. Was it reasonable to believe, he asked, in view of all this "yif for a Frensh mannes promisse . . . for covetyse of an erthely good or behest [that I] shuld be either falss or untrue to your high estate or to this lande that I am born of . . ."?[24] He then requested that he be confronted by whomever it was that was making the charges against him.

Four days later, on 26 January, the Commons petitioned that, since the duke had admitted there had been "hevy rumor and noyse of sclaunder and Infamie" against him, he be taken into custody persuant to the law.

Suffolk's supporters, and particularly the queen, had evidently been working behind the scenes to save the duke and themselves. This seems evident from the fact that the next day the Lords declared that rumor, slander, noise, and infamy were not enough to warrant committing a man to ward unless the "specialte were declared and shewed."[25]

Commons immediately set about producing a bill of particulars in which they "sheweth and piteously compleyneth" that the Duke of Suffolk "falsely and traiterously hath ymagined, compassed, purposed, forthought, doon, and commetted dyvers high, grete, heynous, and horrible treason . . . in maner and fourme ensuyng."[26]

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[24] Rot. Parl., V, 176.

[25] Ibid., V, 176-177.

[26] Ibid., p. 177. The eight articles against Suffolk are found in full in the Parliament Rolls, V, pp. 177-179. They are also printed in Gairdner's edition of The Paston Letters, II, 120-127.

There followed a list of eight specific acts which the Commons attributed to Suffolk. Six of these were of greatest importance.

1. He had attempted to depose the king and place his own son on the throne;
2. He had conspired to set free the Duke of Orleans;
3. He had delivered "Maunce and Mayne" to the king's enemies for "grete rewardes and lucre";
4. He had disclosed the king's defense plans to the French thus causing the loss of Normandy;
5. He had helped to arm and fortify the king's enemies;
6. He had given information to the French on the state of English preparedness.

On 12 February the formal charge was placed before the king who was requested to order that a copy be sent to the justices for action. However, Henry was not about to sacrifice his chief councilor and friend on the basis of such obviously trumped up charges. On 12 March he ordered the matter delayed until he had more information.[27] It is quite possible that Queen Margaret, with her quicker grasp of things and her more agile mind, had persuaded her husband to this course of action.

Henry's action was deemed tantamount to a full pardon. Margaret Paston reflected this belief in a letter to her husband on 12 March in which she says, "Wyllyam Rutt . . . kom hom from London zesterday, and he seyd pleynly to his master and to many

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[27] Rot. Parl., V, 179.

other folks that the Duke of Suffolk is pardonyd, . . . and is in the kyngs gode grase . . ."[28]

The hatred of Commons, however, was not so easily to be put off. Evidently anticipating the king's decision, they decided that the duke should "come to his answere" before Parliament, and on 9 March, Lords and Commons, meeting together at the request of the latter, heard read a Bill of Attainder indicting the Duke of Suffolk for "misprisons, and horrible offences."[29] In it he was accused of eighteen separate treasonous acts running from malversation, misuse of funds, and embezzling, through procurement of offices for unworthy persons, delaying of justice, and procuring pardons for murderers (specifically, William Tailbois),[30] to attacking the king's allies.[31]

Later that same day the duke was brought from the Tower, by Henry's writ, to the Parliament where the accusations were laid before him. He asked the king that he be provided with copies of all accusations for study. Henry readily agreed and furthermore ordered that Suffolk was to be placed under guard at the Palace of Westminster rather than returning him to the Tower of London "that he might by the more redyer and ner to come to his answer." (And probably to assure Suffolk of the king's immediate protection.)

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[28] Paston Letters, II, 136.

[29] Rot. Parl., V, 179. See also Croyland Chron., pp. 410-411, for the popular hatred of Suffolk.

[30] See above, p. 21.

[31] The Bill of Attainder can be found in full in Rot. Parl., V, 179-182.

Four days later, on the 13th, Suffolk appeared to answer the charges against him. In moderate and intelligent words he refuted each of them as "fals and untrue." He scoffed at several as "ympossible", adding that those who made such accusations "can not fynd the meanes howe to make it possible." He accused his accusers of distorting his words, and referred them to the records of the Council. As for Maine and Anjou, he told them to look at the Act concerning the affair, and reminded them that others were just as privy to the negotiations as he.

Over the weekend (the 13th was a Friday) it can be assumed, I think, that Henry and his queen discussed the crisis. They possibly even included the duke since he was under guard in the palace. That some sort of agreement had been reached would seem to be indicated by the way things went on Tuesday, the 17th, when Henry summoned all the barons, lay and ecclesiastical, "thenne beying in towne," to his "Innest Chamber, with a Gavill wyndowe over a Cloyster." The king then summoned the duke who immediately knelt and stayed on his knees throughout the proceedings. He was again asked to answer the accusations. He replied that he hoped he had answered them sufficiently well since he had denied the "days, the yeres, the places, and the communications hadde, which were never thought nor wrougnt." He reiterated that they were false, untrue, and impossible. He then submitted himself completely to the king's mercy.[32]

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[32] Rot. Parl., V, 182-183.

Speaking for the king, the Chancellor, John Kemp, Archbishop of York, announced that the king held Suffolk "neither declared nor charged"[33] of the crimes imputed to him. Kemp went on to say, in such a manner that would seem to indicate that this session had been pre-arranged, that as to the other charges which were not criminal and since the duke had submitted to the king's mercy, the king had made his own decision without consulting the lords for their advice. Henry obviously realized that the only hope for Suffolk's safety lay in the exercise of his own regalian powers. The Chancellor, still speaking for the king, emphasized that his decision was not a judgment, "for he is not in place of judgment." He then exiled the duke for a span of five years. Suffolk was also admonished, probably as a sop to his enemies, that he was to do "noo malice, evill wille, harme ne hurt to any persone . . . for any thing doon to you in this said Parlement or elles where."

Lord Beaumont, as a matter of form, on behalf of the lords, protested that this was the king's decision alone and they, the lords, neither advised it nor assented to it.

The duke hastily set about removing himself from the dangers lurking for him in London. The king's mandate, significantly under

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[33]This may be Henry's version of the Scottish "not proven" but more probably it signifies his rejection of all charges. See William Stubbs, Constitutional History of England, (3 Vols; Oxford; 1874-1878), III, 148.

his signet, for Suffolk's discharge from custody is dated 19 March,[34] and the duke at once headed for territory less hostile to him. The populace had eagerly anticipated his demise at the news of his arrest:

> Now is the fox drevin to hole; hoo to hym,
> Hoo! Hoo!
> Ffor and he crepe out, he will yowe alle undo.
> .....
> God save the kynge, and God forbede
> That he suche apes any mo fede.[35]

Once the Londoner realized he was gone, two thousand of them vented their rage on his servants, his house at Holborne, and even his horse.[36]

Another political poet had warned Henry that he didn't know all that was going on and that

> Yef the commyns of Englande
> Holpe the kynge in his fonde
> Suffolk wolle bere the crowne.
> .....
> Be warre, kynge Henre, how thou doos;
> Let no lenger thy traitours go loos.
> .....
> O rex, si rex es, rege te,
> Vel eris sine re rex.
> Nomen habes sine re, nisi
> Te recte regas.[37]

The king had given Suffolk six weeks to set his affairs in order before the sentence of exile became effective 1 May. The duke evidently realized that his chances of seeing his family again were slim because on the day of his departure, 30 April, he wrote a moving

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[34] Stevenson, Letters, I,515-516.

[35] Wright, Pol. Poems, II, 224-225.

[36] Worcester's Annales in Stevenson, Letters, II, 767; Stowe, Annales, 387; Flenley, Six Town Chron., pp. 128-129.

[37] Wright, Pol. Poems, II, 229-231.

and tender letter to his eight year old son. The boy is admonished to give his faith and loyalty, next only to God, to the king; and "to love, to worshepe youre lady and moder . . . and to beleve hyr councells." His final farewell is one of the most lovely in the English language:

> And last of alle, as hertily and as lovyngly as ever fader bless his child in erthe, I yeve you the blessing of oure Lorde and of me which of his infynite mercy encrece you in alle vertu and good lyvyng. And that youre blood may by his grace from kynrede to kynrede multeplye in this erthe to hys servise, in such wyse as after the departyng fro this wreched world here, ye and thei may glorefye hym eternally amongs his aungelys in hevyn.[38]

This letter, to all but the most cynical, is the strongest proof of the innocence of William de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk, of the charges against him. It is difficult to believe that a man capable of composing such a sensitive and perceptive letter could, under any circumstances, be capable of the crimes attributed to him by his enemies.

He sailed for Calais the same day with the hope that his friend the Duke of Buckingham would give him refuge in the fortress of which he was Captain.[39] Almost as soon as he had left the harbor the duke's ship was stopped in the Channel by a ship of the royal navy, the Nicholas of The Tower, whose master had been fully informed of Suffolk's movements. Furthermore, he must also have had at least the tacit approval of someone in high places.

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[38] Paston Letters, II, 142-143.

[39] Rot. Parl., V, 206.

The twenty year old Henry Holland, Duke of Exeter, was hereditary Admiral of England.[40] Although during Exeter's minority, Suffolk, ironically, had served as Admiral, it may be assumed that he had been required to surrender the post upon his exile. Significantly, at about this time young Exeter had been contracted to marry Anne of York, the duke's eldest daughter. Although Exeter did not receive livery of his father's lands until 23 July 1450,[41] it can be assumed, I think, that, with the backing of someone like York, he could exercise de facto if not de jure jurisdiction over the fleet, especially for a covert plot such as developed in the Channel between April thirtieth and May second.

The matter of who was the instigator aside, there is no doubt as to what happened. Suffolk was told that he must talk to the master of the Nicholas of The Tower if he wanted any information. With two or three of his men he went aboard the Nicholas where he was greeted with an ominous, "Welcome, traitor!" The men accompanying him, asked if they supported him, replied, "they wold not yn noo wyse."[42]

For two days Suffolk remained a captive, during which time he evidently was tried by a kangaroo court on the basis of the articles of his impeachment in Parliament.

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[40] Powicke and Fryde, Handbook of British Chronology, p. 132; Cal. Pat., 1446-1452, p. 212.

[41] Cal. Pat., 1446-1452, p. 333.

[42] This entire account of Suffolk's detention and subsequent murder is based on William Lomner's letter of May 5 to John Paston, in Paston Letters, II, 146-148.

On 2 May the duke was taken into a rowboat alongside the Nicholas of The Tower where, with the gunwale as a block, a sailor using a rusty sword hacked off the wretched man's head, "withyn halfe a doseyn strokes." The corpse, stripped of clothes, was tossed on the beach at Dover where the sheriff of Kent kept guard over it until his messengers to the authorities and to King Henry returned to tell him what to do with the remains of the man who had ruled England in the ing's name for five years.

Word of his death spread rapidly. An exultant shout rose from English throats that "Jack Napes" was no more:[43]

> Monkes, chanons, and prestis, with all ye clergy,
> Prayeth for hym that he may com to blys,
> And that never such another come after thys.
> His interfectures blessed mot they be,
> And graunt them to reygne with aungellis,
> For Jake Napys sowle placebo and dirige.[44]

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[43]The Duke of Suffolk was history's first "Jackanapes."

[44]The entire "dirge" on Suffolk's death, running to some 116 lines of vicious glee, may be found in Three 15th Cent. Chron., pp. 99-103. See also Croyland Chron., pp. 410-411.

CHAPTER III

CADE

"The death of the Duke of Suffolk brought not the realm in quiet."[1] Too much had been endured for the frustrations and anger to be assuaged by one man's murder. For several months prior to Suffolk's fall civil rumblings had been heard which would soon increase in violence to the proportions of a major explosion. As already related, Bishop Moleyns had suffered the consequences of unpopularity coupled with disintegrating central control. In the same month, January, "oon calling hym self Queen of the feyre yede into Kent" and although he "did noon oppression nor hurt to any persone"[2] the implication is that he was considered an expression of popular unrest. The same chronicler indicates that there was a general feeling of potential danger to King Henry for he says, "the same tyme was grete wacche aboute the kynge and in the citee of london every nyght. And the peple wer in doute and feer what shuld fall for the lordes com to Westminster and to the Parliament wt greet power as men of werr."[3] Further evidence of this unease and apprehension is found in a letter from John Crane to John Paston dated 6 May:

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[1] Stowe, Annales, p. 630.

[2] Flenley, Six Town Chron., p. 127.

[3] Ibid.

> . . . upon the iiiith day of this monthe, the Erle of Devenshire come hydre with iii^{c} men wel byseen.
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> and upon the morow after my Lord of Warrewyke with iiii^{c} and moo, &c., ... God save the Kyng, and sende us pees, &c.[4]

At the same time (January, 1450) a man was hanged and drawn "for woordes that he said ageinst the rule of the lordes."[5] In February, another popular leader calling himself William "Blewberd" was hanged for attempting to raise a following "to have hadde a rule among the lordes."[6]

Before the end of February the final agonies of the English in Normandy resulted in their expulsion from "ffraunce Normandy and Angeoy" and the return to England of great numbers of the defeated soldiers "in greet mysery and poverte." They descended upon the southern counties like a swarm of locusts where they attempted to live on public charity. "But many of them drewe to theft and misrule and noyed sore the cominalte of this land spiritual and temporell and many of theym afterward hanged."[7]

The ugly mood of many in London is indicated by Robert Bale in his Chronicle under the date "Satirday the xxix day of March"

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[4] Paston Letters, II, 148-149.

[5] Flenley, Six Town Chron., p. 128.

[6] Ibid., English Brut, p. 516; Stowe, Annales, p. 387. A traitor who called himself the "Heremyte Blewberd" is referred to in Calendar of Charter Rolls, 1427-1516, p. 123.

[7] Flenley, Six Town Chron., p. 128.

where he states that John Ramsey, servant of a London vintner, was executed for saying that "london shall put the kyng from his crown."[8]

This series of ominous events on top of the brutal murder of Adam Moleyns evidently convinced Henry, quite possibly at the urging of the queen, that the larger urban areas, particularly London, were no longer safe for him or his beloved wife. His proclamation of mid-February against riotous meetings and seditious handbills[9] had had little effect. Thus on 30 March the Chancellor, speaking on behalf of the king, announced his decision that, due to the insalubrious airs at Westminster Palace and adjacent areas, after the Easter hiatus Parliament would be adjourned to Leicester, traditionally strong in Lancastrian sympathies.[10] Although the chroniclers make no definite statement of cause and effect, their juxtaposition of accounts of riots, lawlessness, etc., to statements of the adjournment to Leicester leave little doubt that the "insalubrious airs" were far more political than hygenic.[11]

Hardly had this Parliament assembled when news was brought to Henry and Margaret of the murder of the Duke of Suffolk. No concrete evidence can be found which implicates York, but circumstantial evidence such as that referred to on page 29 would seem, at least, to put York under a cloud. If the royal pair thought

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[8]Flenley, Six Town Chron., p. 129.

[9]Nicolas, Proceedings, VI, 90-91; Rymer, Foedera, XI, 268.

[10]Rot. Parl., V, 172.

[11]See English Brut, p. 516; Gregory's Chron., p. 189; Flenley, Six Town Chron., p. 153; Three 15th Cent. Chron., p. 66.

that Richard of York, still in Ireland, or his henchmen had instigated the removal of his detested rival an all but unbridgeable chasm would now separate Yorkist and Lancastrian.

The royal party, however, did not have long to ponder this question. The Parliament at Leicester accomplished very little save the enactment of a money bill after an Act of Resumption was emasculated by 186 clauses of exceptions.[12] The money bill, unlike the usual subsidy, provided for a graduated income tax on all elements of the population including the nobility. Those with incomes between £1 and £20 yearly were to pay 6d. on the pound; those with £20 to £200 yearly were obliged to pay 12d. on the pound; and those with over £200 annually were taxed at 2s. on the pound.[13]

Before much additional legislation could be enacted, the session was hastily dissolved and the Court rushed back to London to confront a major crisis.

The dissident elements in the southern counties had found a leader in the person of John Aylmer or John Amende-All, but better known as Jack Cade who, to win the support of the Yorkists, assumed the name of Mortimer.[14] Cade was generally thought to be an Irishman of some substance but rather shady reputation. Some said he was a physician married to a squire's daughter.[15] Stowe quotes a government

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[12] Rot. Parl., V, 183-199.

[13] Ibid., 172-174.

[14] Davies' Chron., p. 64; Kingsford, Engl. Hist. Lit., (A Yorkist Collection), p. 365.

[15] Kingsford, Engl. Hist. Lit., p. 365.

proclamation against him to the effect that a year or two prior to this rebellion Cade, while living with Sir Thomas Dacre in Sussex, had caused a woman's death and had been compelled to leave the country.[16] Regardless of his origins and background, Cade must have had the talent of leadership. This, plus a program based upon intolerable grievances, was all that was required to provide the spark that would set England aflame.

He based his revolt on the fact that

> thanne and longe before the reme of England hadde be rewlid be untrew councelle, wherfore the commune profit was sore hurte and decresid; so that alle the commune peple, what for taxes and tallages, and other oppressions myght not live by thair handwork and husbandrie, wherfore they gruccid sore ayen thaym that hadde the gouernaunce of the land.[17]

The depth of public discontent is attested to by the numbers that rallied to the "Captain of Kent" as the chronicles usually refer to him.

The extent of the Duke of York's involvement, if any, in Cade's insurrection will probably never be known. Whether he was or not, however, it was generally assumed at the time, especially by the Lancastrians, that he was. John Stowe in his Chronicles states catagorically that there was a "commotion" begun by the Duke of York in Kent.[18] Even were York not behind the upheaval,

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[16] Literae Cantuariensis, (3 Vols.; Rolls Series; 1889), III, 208.

[17] Davies' Chron., pp. 64-65.

[18] Stowe, Summarie, Folio 150; Annales, p. 630.

his name was linked to it by Cade's brazen assumption of kinship through his use of the Mortimer name and his public pronouncements.

York and Somerset, then Marquess of Dorset, had struggled bitterly between 1445 and 1447 over the lieutenancy of France. That Dorset won the appointment and York was, to all appearances, exiled to Ireland in 1447 for ten years is, with some justification, attributed to Queen Margaret and Suffolk. York most certainly realized that the death of Suffolk would avail him little since Suffolk's place was almost at once filled by York's detested rival, Somerset. Thus, there is good circumstantial evidence of York's interest, if not participation, in the upheaval led by Jack Cade. Knowing the men of the Captain of Kent had "more favyr unto the Duke of Yorke thenne unto the kynge"[19] and that it was well known that"[Somerset] would be altogether against the Duke of York in his claim to the Crown"[20] made it possible for Duke Richard to remain in Ireland during the crisis, thus providing himself with a convenient alibi if things went wrong.

This is, of course, conjecture, but conjecture based on valid evidence is about all that is possible under the circumstances.

The insurrection had begun on Trinity Sunday which in 1450 fell in the last week of May. Before it ended it had spread through Kent, Sussex, Salisbury, Wiltshire, "and other places, and dide

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[19]Gregory's Chron., p. 196.

[20]Stowe, Annales, p. 639. There is also the evidence questionable though it may be, in York's Attainder of 1459 which implicates him as a confederate of Cade. (Rot. Parl., V, 346)

moche harme to meny persones."[21] Within two weeks Cade had raised an appreciable army of relatively well disciplined men with a formal set of demands. Evidently appreciating the effect it would have on what today would be called his "public image" Cade "compellyd alle the gentellys to a-rysse wythe hem."[22]

In two weeks time Cade had led his rebel army to the outskirts of London where he encamped at Blackheath on June 12.[23] Evidently as soon as word of the approaching rebel army reached King Henry at Leicester he took steps to deal with the situation. Parliament was dissolved and the king and Court rushed to London about a week before Cade established himself at Blackheath.[24]

Henry realized at once the serious nature of the crisis. He commanded the nobility to "gadder all the puysaunce that they couth to go wt hym ayenst the kentyshmen."[25] He obviously must have known that a rebel army would find much sympathy among the Londoners, especially when they heard, if they had not already, that the "sotill" Captain of Kent was claiming that they came only

> forto redresse and refourme the wrongis that were don in the reme, and to withstande the malice of thayme that were destroiers of the comune profit; and forto correcte and amende the defautis of thaym that were the kyngis chief counselours.[26]

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[21] Davies' Chron., p. 65.

[22] Gregory's Chron., p. 190.

[23] Flenley, Six Town Chron., p. 129.

[24] Documents bearing the king's signature or seal are dated at Leicester through 6 June, after that at Westminster. Stevenson, Letters, II, 520.

[25] Flenley, Six Town Chron., p. 153.

[26] Davies' Chron., p. 65.

Not only did Cade have a popular set of grievances, but unlike so many who "view with alarm" Cade had a concrete set of demands which he purposed to lay before the king. It may be assumed that the major purpose of the march on London was to obtain an audience with the king in order to do this.

Arriving in London King Henry sent both spiritual and temporal lords to Cade "to wytte and to have knowleche of that grette assembelynge and gaderyng of thet grete and mysavysyd feleschyppe"[27] and to "bydde the Capitaigne of Kent wt his peple there gadered to wt drawe theym."[28] Cade's camp, however, was so well fortified that the delegation could not get near them.

Late that afternoon Henry ordered the Earl of Northumberland, Lord Scales, and Lord Lisle to head a "grete ffelowship of speres and 'bowes," to make a new attempt to see Cade. They evidently had little better success.

The next day Henry decided to try himself. He planned to take the Dukes of Exeter and Buckingham along with other magnates and retainers, possibly to make a show of force. The Council, however, feared for the king's safety and advised Henry to send a new delegation to treat with the rebel. The Cardinal Archbishop of York (John Kempe), and Archbishop of Canterbury (John Stafford), the Duke of Buckingham, the Bishop of Winchester (William Waynflete),

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[27]Gregory's Chron., p. 190.

[28]Flenley, Six Town Chron., p. 129. The following account of the activities between Westminster and Blackheath on 15 and 16 June is based on the account in Flenley which contains several details not found in the other chronicles.

and Lord Beaumont were finally allowed into Cade's camp where the rebel leader, properly humble, told them that he and his followers were only petitioners and meant to harm no one. The delegation agreed, at least in general terms, that all grievances would be redressed.

It was probably at this time that Henry first saw the formal list of complaints, fifteen in number, and the five formal requests.[29]

The relative strength of the two sides is indicated by the fact that the king's delegation felt compelled to promise redress, even if in the vaguest terms, while Cade, knowing the strength of his position, seems to have given them what amounted to an ultimatum: "[the Lords] shuld be promyse bring or send to the same Captaigne by a certen hour assigned from the King a conclusion of the same appointemente."[30] To many the demand seemed to be "rightful and resonable."[31] The Council and the king, probably stiffened by Margaret, did not. Appealing to the rebels' professed loyalty to him, Henry sent several lords to order "alle the kyngys lege men of Englande" to void the field.[32] This they refused to do.

Henry thereupon took the field against the rebels at the head of an appreciable army after the Council had made ready artillery

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[29] See Stowe's Annales, pp. 631-634, for these complaints and requests. c.f. Cade's Proclamation dated 4 June printed in Three 15th Cent. Chron., pp. 94-99, and Kingsford's Engl. Hist. Lit., pp. 360-362, ("Collections of a Yorkist Partisan").

[30] Flenley, Six Town Chron., p. 130.

[31] Davies' Chron., p. 65.

[32] Gregory's Chron., pp. 190-191; Stowe, Annales, p. 634.

for use against the insurgents.[33] "The kynge rode armyd at alle pecys . . . throughe London; and whythe hym the moste party of temporalle lordys . . . in there beste raye."[34] Word of the king's approach with an army evidently alarmed Cade who had not looked for a direct clash with a royal army--especially one led by King Henry himself. "The seid Captaigne havyng therof witing wt drewe him and all his peple in the nyght and fledde and toke wt theym their stakes and ordinances."[35] By the time Henry arrived at Blackheath the rebels were gone. By advice of the Council the advanced guard of Henry's army, led by Sir Humphrey Stafford and his cousin William Stafford, pursued the rebels.[36] The loyalty of the already unenthusiastic army of the king was badly shaken when word was received that this force had fallen into an ambush and been cut to pieces by Cade's men. The two Staffords were among the slain. Despite reinforcements from as far away as Lancaster and Cheshire[37] there arose

> a grete variaunce Amonges the lordes men and the comon peple beyng on Blak-Heth Ayens the lordes and Capitayns sayng playnly that thei wold go to the Capitayn of Kent, to Assist and help him but if thei might have execucion of the traytoures beyng About the King.[38]

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[33]Nicolas, Proceedings, VI, 94.

[34]Gregory's Chron., p. 191.

[35]Flenley, Six Town Chron., p. 131. See also Three 15th Cent. Chron., p. 67, and English Brut, p. 517.

[36]English Brut, p. 516; Flenley, Six Town Chron., p. 131; Gregory's Chron., p. 191; Three 15th Cent. Chron., p. 67; Davies Chron., p. 66.

[37]Flenley, Six Town Chron., p. 131.

[38]Ibid., pp. 131-132; English Brut, p. 517.

Still hoping to save his friends and counselors Henry catagorically refused.[39] Many of the lords realized that the king's position was untenable in the face of their troops' threat to desert to Cade. They evidently were able to persuade Henry to see that the only intelligent and safe way out of the mess was to accede to the rebels' demands.

Cade had demanded the removal from the king's circle of advisors the Treasurer, James Fiennes, Lord Saye and Sele; William Aiscough, Bishop of Salisbury who had married Henry and Margaret six years earlier; John Sutton, Lord Dudley, a member of the King's Council since 1440; Reginald Bowlers, Abbott of Gloucester also of the Council; Thomas Daniel; and several local officials of Kent who had earned the hatred of Cade's people.[40] All these, "the fals progeny and affynyte of the Dewke of Suffolke," whose "noysing" had caused the exile of the "hyghe and myghty prynce the Duke of Yorke."[41]

News of the disaster to the Staffords had further dimmed whatever loyalty remained among Henry's troops which had assembled again on the 18th for a foray into Kent. They now turned mutinous and demanded the heads of Saye, Dudley, and the others. Probably as much to protect Saye and his son-in-law as to appease the soldiers, the King ordered their arrest and sent Saye to the Tower and Crowmer to the Flete. Henry himself returned unhappily to London.[42]

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[39] English Brut, p. 517.

[40] Stowe, Annales, p. 634; English Brut, p. 517.

[41] Three 15th Cent. Chron. ("Stowes Memoranda"), p. 97.

[42] English Brut, p. 518.

The troops, however, had had a taste of their potential power in seeing their king give in to their demands. Hourly they became more surly and restive until "the king nor his lordes durst not trust their oun household menys."[43] They made their sentiments plain "that they wolde not figte ayens thaym that labourid forto amende and refourme the comune profit; and whanne the lordis here this thay lefte thair purpoz;"[44] and "rood home in to hyr countraye."[45]

Left thus alone without even grudging support from those who owed most to him, Henry had no alternative but to retreat. He had done what he could under the circumstances. He had not wrung his hands in indecision or floundered in helpless apathy as had often been assumed. The political cancer had spread too far and eaten too deeply for any curative measures that a man of Henry's character might devise. The Mayor of London, Thomas Chalton[46] and the commons of the city "came to the Kynge beseckynge him that he wolde tarye in the cite and they wolde lyve and dye with him."[47] The frightened civic officials, usually so reluctant to part with their hard earned money, even promised to "pay for his costes of the householde on halff yere."[48] Without the support of many of his lords, his army openly mutinous, aware that much of London was more or less

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[43] English Brut, p. 517; Kingsford, Chron. of London, p. 159.

[44] Davies' Chron., p. 65.

[45] Gregory's Chron., p. 191.

[46] Ibid., p. 357.

[47] Three 15th Cent. Chron., p. 67.

[48] Ibid.

openly sympathetic to Cade or at least his demands, and certainly urged by his queen to consider his own, and her, safety, King Henry retired in the direction of Kenilworth sometime between the twentieth and the twenty-second of June.[49]

It is a fairly good indication that Cade wished to avoid any appearance of threatening the king that it was not until a week later that he returned to Blackheath. It seems obvious that he waited until word of Henry's departure was received and he had time to confirm this before moving his rebels back to the vicinity of the capital.

The Londoners regarded Henry's departure as desertion, and having been "at that tyme fulle fauorable and frendly" toward Cade[50] offered little resistance when the rebel mob appeared across the river at Southwark where they occupied most of the taverns and other houses.

Three days later (3 July) "be fauour of some of the men of London he came in to the cite."[51] It was not long, however, before the Londoners bitterly regretted this hasty action. Cade had promised in public proclamations "that no man shold robb ne take no mannes gode bot if he payd for it."[52] It would seem that this was merely for public show, although it may be that he was unable

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[49] Bales' Chron., says 20 June, Gough's London Chron., says 22 June. (Both in Flenley, Six Town Chron.)

[50] Davies' Chron., p. 65.

[51] Ibid.

[52] English Brut, p. 518; Flenley, Six Town Chron., p. 155.

to control his men once the riches of the kingdom's largest city were seen. Whatever the truth may be all chroniclers agree that the rebels, some even name Cade among them, once inside the city fell to looting, pillaging, and robbing. Cade himself took on the trappings of nobility. He rode about London armed like a knight with gilt spurs and helmet, robed in a gown of blue velvet, and had his sword borne in front of him wherever he went.[53] Many wealthy Londoners were imprisoned until they agreed to pay "notable summez of money to save thair livis."

The next day Cade ordered Lord Saye brought from the Tower to the Gildhall where he planned to try him before the justices. Further evidence that he was losing, if he had not already lost, control of his men is to be found in the fact that they refused to allow a formal trial according to law. Some kind of kangaroo court sentenced Saye to death in short order. He was dragged to the standard in Cheapside and there beheaded. As his corpse was dragged about the city his son-in-law, Crowmer, was taken from the Flete to Mile End where, without even the farcical trial accorded Lord Saye, he was beheaded. Both heads were placed on London Bridge.

Word of the rebellion had spread rapidly across the southern counties. Violence flared in many spots during the last days of June and early July. William Aiscough, Bishop of Salisbury, sometime between 14 June and 2 July was dragged from the altar in the

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[53]This account of Cade's activities in London is based upon Davies' Chronicle, pp. 66-68, unless otherwise noted.

church at Edington to a hill outside the town. There, in all his vestments, the townspeople "slow him horribly . . . and spoillid him unto the nakid skyn, and rente his blody shirte into pecis . . . and made bost of thair wickidnesse."[54]

In London the rapine continued. Two Aldermen, Philip Malpas and Robert Horn, and several others who had earned the hatred of many managed to escape the city, their homes and possessions suffering in their stead. Others were not so fortunate. John Bale was beheaded at White Chapel;[55] at Cade's tavern headquarters in Southwark Richard Hayward suffered the same fate after being dragged from sanctuary.[56] It would seem that Cade became bloodthirsty as he drank, for one chronicler states "he and his peple cam agein into Chepe and drank ther at a tavern called the Crown," then returned to Mile End for Crowmer's death along with "a nother clept William Bailly."[57] The next day, Sunday, evidently to please the men of Essex who had recently joined the rebels, Cade ordered a gentleman of Colechester, Thomas Mayne, to be beheaded.[58]

Meanwhile, the robbery, extortion, and looting had convinced the civic officials that they would have to act if they were to

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[54]Davies' Chron., p. 64.

[55]Gregory's Chron., p. 192.

[56]"Et ad tabardum in Suthwerk fecit decapitari Ricardum Haywarden qui venit ad ipsum de sanctuario sancti Martini le graunt." ("Rawlinson B355") in Flenley, Six Town Chron., p. 106.

[57]Flenley, Six Town Chron., p. 133.

[58]Ibid.

save anything. The hope that they could do business with the rebel leader had been drowned in blood and starved by the draining away of their possessions. During church services on Sunday, 5 July, the mayor, aldermen, and commons of London met to "set a rule and ordenance that the seid capitaigne shuld no more entree into the city."[59] During the day they had made contact with the Constable of the Tower, Thomas, Lord Scales, who had remained at his post when the king had left, and with Mathew Gough, one of the few soldiers returning from the disasterous campaign in Normandy with an honorable reputation.[60] Before evening the next day this fine old warrior, who had survived long years of war in Normandy, was to be killed by Englishmen while defending the kingdom's capital.

They waited until nightfall when Cade returned to his headquarters in Southwark and then fell upon the rebels still rampaging through the streets of London. These were driven from the city by the officials aided by Lord Scales' men and those led by Gough. The gates of the city were closed and the draw-bridge on London Bridge was raised.

Cade, realizing what was happening as the rebels streamed into Southwark, sent out a call to all his men to rally to him fully armed. Once assembled Cade ordered an attack on London Bridge where Scales, Gough, and the city men met them head-on at

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[59]Flenley, Six Town Chron., p. 133.

[60]Gregory's Chron., p. 193; English Brut, p. 519.

about 9 P.M.[61] The Battle of London Bridge went on all night back and forth across the bridge.[62] In desperation Cade finally set fire to the drawbridge, at which point the Chancellor, Cardinal Kempe, John Stafford, Archbishop of Canterbury, and William Waynflete, Bishop of Winchester, evidently coming from Henry, approached the combatants to negotiate a truce. They bore with them a general pardon from the king for both the Captain of Kent and his followers.[63]

Nothing reveals more clearly the character and extent of Cade's rebellion than the names and occupations of those to be pardoned upon request.[64] Many are identified as "gentilman," esquire, constable of a hundred. There were not only laborers and "husbondmen" but parish clerks, chaplains, goldsmiths, parsons, grocers, haberdashers. At several points in this lengthy list of pardonees there occur such phrases as "all others of the said town," "the rest of that hundred," and "all of that parish."

By far the most interesting thing about the entry in the Patent Rolls, however, is the opening statement: "General Pardon to John Mortymer at the Queen's request . . ." (italics mine). It is quite possible that Margaret saw this as the only way to

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[61] Flenley, Six Town Chron., p. 156.

[62] Davies' Chron., (p. 67) says from 9 P.M. to 10 A.M.; English Brut, (p. 519) says "all the night" til 9 A.M.; Gough, in Six Town Chron., (pp. 155-156) says from 9 P.M. til 8 A.M.; Gregory's Chron., (p. 191) says 10 P.M. til 8 A.M.; Three 15th Cent. Chron., (p. 68) says from 9 P.M. til 9 A.M.

[63] Cal. Pat., 1446-1452, p. 338; the pardon, in Latin, is printed in full in Literae Cantuarienses, III, 205-207.

[64] Cal. Pat., 1446-1452, pp. 338-374.

end a mortally dangerous situation. If the pardon, in addition to stopping the fighting, spread dissension among the rebels, as well it might, so much the better. Most certainly she must have urged Henry to this action although the gentle king probably needed very little urging. He had not, evidently, gone all the way to Kenilworth when he retreated from London a week before.[65] At Westminster, or somewhere close by, the king must have received reports of the events in London and Southwark. News of the butchery of Lord Saye and his son-in-law and all the others would surely have had a terrible effect on the man who so hated bloodshed and cruelty. This followed so soon by reports of the night long fighting on London Bridge would be reason enough for him to try anything that might bring an end to the horror. There is also the possibility that, by stating that the pardon was at his queen's request, he hoped to dull some of the animosity that he could not help but know about, which was being directed against her.

Whatever the reasons may have been, Henry offered full and free pardon to all on condition that each man would sue out letters of pardon which he promised would be granted without payment of any fee.

Cade must have realized that, at least for the time being, power had slipped from his grasp. He loaded all the loot he could lay his hands on into a barge and sent it to Rochester.[66] He evidently hoped to buy back the support of those who were quietly

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[65] Ramsay, Lanc., II, 129, n.3. The pardon is dated at Westminster, 7 July.

[66] Davies' Chron., p. 67.

applying for pardon, then slipping back to their homes. That he immediately began stirring up new trouble is evidenced by a second royal statement issued a few days after the general pardon. The statement, in English so that all could understand it, amounts to a confirmation of the earlier pardon.[67] The rebel leader, it seems, had been bruiting the rumor that the king's pardon was bogus because Parliament would have to act upon each pardon before it was considered valid. The confirmation refutes all hints of this nature and goes on to state some discreditable facts concerning Cade, obviously to undermine whatever authority remained to him. With only a few supporters Cade fled south toward Kent, perhaps with the idea of raising a new force or possibly hoping to get to the Channel and thence escape abroad.

On 12 July, perhaps realizing that Cade had no intention of asking for his pardon, the king issued orders to the Treasurer, Lord Beauchamp, authorizing the seizure of all Cade's moveables in London.[68] Two days later, when it became known that Cade had sent most of his loot to Rochester, a second authorization was issued for the confiscation of all his clothes, gold, and other possessions in Rochester.[69] On the 12th also, Cade was formally proclaimed traitor to the king in various places throughout London and the rest of the kingdom.[70] As an incentive to quick action the king's

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[67] Literae Cant., III, 207-210.

[68] Nicolas, Proceedings, VI, 96.

[69] Nicolas, Proceedings, VI, 96.

[70] Three 15th Cent. Chron., p. 68; Gregory's Chron., p. 194.

proclamation offered one thousand marks to anyone who would bring Cade to the Council. Within a very brief period the offer produced results. On 15 July 1450, King Henry issued orders to the Treasurer and Chamberlains of the Exchecquer that all goods and jewels confiscated from Cade were to be sold and from the proceeds one thousand marks paid to "oure trusty and welbeloved squier Alexandre Iden, Shirrief of our said countee of Kent . . . [who] brought our said councail the body of the said John Cade."[71] A minor irony of history lies in the fact that the widow of Crowmer, daughter of Lord Saye, later married Alexander Iden who died, well honored, in 1459.[72]

The badly shaken government turned to the task of cleaning up the mess, meting out punishment to those involved and attempting, however vainly, to correct some of the major abuses which had precipitated the upheaval. Commissions of oyer and determiner were sent to Rochester under the Chancellor, Cardinal Kempe, and the Duke of Buckingham,[73] others to Norfolk and other infected areas to hear cases of those accused of participating. King Henry himself led an army into Kent in early September to put down flare-ups of revolt which continued for several months like the aftershocks following a major earthquake.[74]

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[71] Rymer, Foedera, XI, 275.

[72] Jacob, 15th Cent., p. 494; Cal. Pat., 1446-1452, p. 506.

[73] Paston Letters, II, 161-162.

[74] Three 15th Cent. Chron., p. 68-69; Flenley, Six Town Chron., pp. 135 and 157; English Brut, p. 519; Gregory's Chron., p. 196; Nicolas, Proceedings, VI, 101.

> The king rode into Kent and commanded his Justices to sit at Canterbury to inquire as to the causers and accessories to rebellion. The King rode then to Sussex and from there to the West Country.[75]

The chroniclers present a picture of Henry as a king quite determined, at the time, to bring order from chaos resulting from his own inaction. It would have been easy, and quite in character, for him to have stayed at Westminster and to send his officials to oversee the administration of justice. This he did not do. He led an army into the center from which dissatisfaction and rebellion had spread. He evidently presided in person at some trials. No greater indication can be found of the depths of his feeling or his determination to act as he had to than the entry in Gregory's Chronicle (p. 197) which states "ande at Rochester ix men were beheddyd at the same tyme, and hyr heddys were sende unto London by the kyngys commaundment . . . and xii heddys at another tyme . . . as hys was commaundyd by the kyng." Other chroniclers, too, give evidence of Henry's purposeful action at this time of crisis. "And in other places in Kent the kynge did grete justice."[76] Before the year was out "xxiii hedes stode upon London Bridge at onces."[77]

Unfortunately for King Henry and England, new and even more ominous developments soon confronted him. An indication of this is found in the statement, "Many strange and wounderfulle bylle were

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[75] Kingsford, Chron. of London, p. 162.

[76] Three 15th Cent. Chron., p. 68.

[77] English Brut, p. 520.

sete in dyvers placys, sum at the kyngys owne chambyr doore . . ."[78] And then, late in August or early in September, Henry received word that Richard, Duke of York, had defied orders, given the lieutenancy of Ireland to the Earl of Ormond, and landed in Wales with a sizeable force behind him.[79]

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[78] Gregory's Chron., p. 195.

[79] Flenley, Six Town Chron., p. 125.

CHAPTER IV

SOMERSET AND YORK

During the summer of 1450 England continued to heave with lawlessness and disorder. "For the world was so strange that tyme that noo man might wel ride nor goo in noo cooste of this land wt out a strength of ffelaushiip but tht hewer robbed."[1] Defeated soldiers returning unpaid from the debacle in France vented their frustrations on those they felt were responsible. In London they ransacked the Church of the Grey Friars, and took down and reversed the arms of Lord Saye who was buried there. They did much the same to anything that seemed to have any connection with Suffolk. They even stole a quarter of Jack Cade which had been set up at Deptford Strand.[2]

Early in August, perhaps summoned by Henry, Edmund Beaufort, Duke of Somerset, landed in England following the disasterous end of his inglorious administration in Normandy.[3] Since there was

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[1] Flenley, Six Town Chron., p. 135; Cf. "On the Corruptions of the Times" in T. Wright, Political Songs and Poems, II, 235-237; and "On The Times," pp. 238-242:

> Now ys Ynglond alle in fyght
> . . . . . .
> Many lawys and lytyl ryght.
> Many actes of parlament
> And few kept wyth tru entent.

[2] Flenley, Six Town Chron., p. 134.

[3] Ibid.

little more he could do there, it may be that Henry and Margaret felt that his support would be useful in the event of further disturbances.

There is another possible explanation of Somerset's return at this time. Henry and Margaret had been married for almost six years and no child had been born to assure the succession. There were three potential heirs should the royal marriage remain barren: Richard, Duke of York; Lady Margaret Beaufort, daughter of the first Duke of Somerset; and her uncle, the present Duke of Somerset. Since the Lady Margaret was female and only seven years old she was probably given little consideration. The Duke of York's claim was through the female line from Philippa Mortimer, daughter of Lionel of Antwerp, and from Edmund of Langley, youngest son of Edward III. He was also popular and of proved ability. But "there were certain persons enjoying the royal intimacy who were rivals of the said Duke and who made him to stink in the king's nostrils even unto death."[4] The Duke of Somerset, on the other hand, had the full confidence of the king and queen. The Beauforts had been legitimized by the Pope and Parliament, and the fact that Henry IV had disbarred them from the succession was not necessarily an insurmountable barrier. Under these circumstances, Margaret and Henry may well have felt that the possibility of declaring Somerset heir presumptive might be used as a whiphandle against York.

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[4] Croyland Chron., p. 418; Cf. Gregory's Chron., p. 189.

At the beginning of September the king received news of the arrival of York in Wales from Ireland.[5] Henry had already recalled Somerset, an act not calculated to please York who had detested Somerset at least since 1447 when the latter replaced him as lieutenant of France. The king's next act indicates the apprehensions at Court raised by York's sudden appearance in Wales. He sent John Talbot, Lord Lisle, with a body of troops to impede York's progress,[6] and, more importantly, to prevent others from joining the duke to augment his already sizeable forces. William Tresham, Speaker of Parliament in 1447 and a long time adherent of York, was among those attempting to join the duke. Several of those sent out by Henry, under the leadership of Lord Grey of Ruthyn, intercepted and killed him near Northampton.[7] Duke Richard, however, must have been informed of the king's orders to intercept him, for he turned aside, avoided the forces sent against him, and continued his march toward London. Realizing that this new crisis might well result in a resort to arms, King Henry created Somerset Constable of England in mid-September.[8]

Alarm spread as York moved closer to London. Near St. Albans Lord Hoo and a contingent of his men came close to an open clash with York. Had it not been for the efforts of Sir William

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[5] Worcester's Annales in Stevenson, Letters, II, 769.

[6] Ibid., p. 770.

[7] Ibid.; Gregory's Chron., p. 195.

[8] His commission in Rymer, Foedera, XI, 276, is dated 11 September. See also Cal. Pat., 1446-1452, p. 401.

Oldhall, York's Chamberlain and soon to be elected Speaker, the first blood of the "Wars of the Roses" might have been spilled at that time.[9] William Wayte in a letter to John Paston during the first week of October says categorically "That alle the Kynges howshold was and is afered ryght sore."[10]

The duke had already taken the law into his own hands on his march toward London. He had arrested John Sutton, Lord Dudley, and Reginald Bowlers, Abbott of Gloucester, and sent them to his own castle of Ludlow to await his pleasure. A short while later John Gargrave, "Keeper of the King's Bench," was given the same treatment.[11]

York had the backing of several of the greatest magnates in England. Through his wife Cecille, he was related to the powerful Nevilles including her brothers the Earl of Salisbury, Lord Fauconberge, Lord Latimer, Lord Abergavenny, and Robert, Bishop of Salisbury and Durham. In addition, Cecille's sister Catherine brought the support of the influential Dukes of Norfolk through her marriage to Duke John.[12] Most important of all in years to come was the support of the duchess' nephew, Richard, Earl of Warwick, Salisbury's

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[9] Paston Letters, II, 175.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Stowe, Annales, p. 638.

[12] Catherine later earned a dubious place in history when, as a skittish maiden of 80, she became a partner in the "diabolical marriage" with the 20 year old John Woodville. (Worcester's Annales in Stevenson, Letters, II, 783.)

son. With the amassing of such powerful adherents and their open hostility toward King Henry's chief advisors, York was, in effect, making a declaration of civil war. With both York and Somerset now on English soil a violent clash was almost inevitable.

With the horrors of the recent summer still vivid in his mind Henry was desperate for some solution to the crisis confronting him that would restore peace to his kingdom and to himself. The weakness of the government was certainly obvious to all. It had set itself against York at news of his landing from Ireland by sending armed forces to intercept and arrest him. It had failed miserably and allowed him freedom of movement throughout the kingdom with his private army of four thousand well armed men.[13]

London, still seething with the spirit of revolt, witnessed several riots in late September and October. The prisoners at Newgate went on a rampage for four hours until "discomfited by the mair and shirrefs and chastiseid."[14] A month later, on October 28, the mayor and "alle the crafts of the citee" on procession to Westminster were set upon by fifty soldiers "armed for werr." When they refused the mayor's orders to lay down their arms the mayor and his men "set upon hem and toke their wepens from them and sent divers of them to prisen." Two days later the arms of the Duke of York, wherever they appeared, were torn down and the king's arms put

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[13] Worcester's Annales in Stevenson, Letters, II, 769.

[14] Flenley, Six Town Chron., p. 135.

in their place. The next day the king's arms were torn down and York's put back. Such was the situation that the mayor "for keping of the citee and the peas yede dayly wt harneised men defensable for the werr."[15]

Despite the king's foray into Kent and the harsh punishment dealt to Cade's followers the magic of the title "Captain of Kent" continued to draw followers. Among others, one John Smythe adopted the title and his movement caused enough alarm so that the Duke of Somerset, shortly after his return from France, was sent into Kent after him.[16]

Henry was intelligent enough to realize that if a solution was to be found to this critical situation it would have to come from a larger segment of the population than that represented by the Court or by the Yorkists. Almost at the same time that word was received of York's arrival from Ireland, summons were sent out for a Parliament which was to meet two months later.[17]

On 6 November 1450, this Parliament met at Westminster. Among the most important items of business was the "pacification, punichment, and resistance of riotously disposed people who in

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[15]Flenley, Six Town Chron., p. 135.

[16]Nicolas, Proceedings, VI, 101, contains an authorization, dated 3 October 1450, for payment of £40 to Somerset for expenses incurred in putting down "John Smythe, Captain of Kent." His commission is dated 8 September 1450 in Cal. Pat., 1446-1452, p. 431.

[17]Powicke and Fryde, Handbook, p. 532, citing Report on the Dignity of a Peer, IV, 927-931.

diverse parts of the kingdom have made and caused congregations, commotions, insurrections most gravely perturbing the said kingdom."[18]

The Duke of York, backed by his four thousand armed retainers, obviously felt that he held the upper hand and could dictate terms to King Henry. On 23 November he made a show of strength in London on his way to Parliament by leading several thousand of his men through the city, his sword borne regally before him. The following day the effect was heightened when the Duke of Norfolk, "wt a greet peple in Brigandiers and vi clarions a fore him blowyng," marched through London to Westminster. Still further emphasis was made on 25 November as the Earl of Warwick with a sizeable force "arreied for the werr" likewise paraded through the capital toward Parliament.[19]

Prior to this York had spent some time in Kent assuring the return to Parliament of men favorable to his cause. In his endeavors he had been supported by his brother-in-law the Duke of Norfolk.[20] It was such men as these who made so memorable a display as they marched through London.

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[18] Rot. Parl., V, 210.

[19] Flenley, Six Town Chron., p. 137. See also Three 15th Cent. Chron., p. 69, and Gregory's Chron., p. 195. Gregory gives the dates of York's show of force as 2 December. Elected Mayor of London the following year (1451-1452), Gregory, an eye witness to these events, adds at the end of his account of them an interesting personal observation on the display: "whyche was a gay and gloryus syght if hit hadde ben in Fraunce, but not in Ingelonde, for hyt boldyd sum mannys hertys that hyt causyd aftyr many mannys dethe. Where was or ys the defaute I wotte not."

[20] Paston Letters, II, 184-185. Not only did York and Norfolk pack Parliament with their own supporters, but they saw to it that these men came to Westminster with powerful backing. See Norfolk's letter to John Paston dated 22 October.

Henry was not to be intimidated by a show of force, however. Shortly he made his own demonstration:

> The kyng and alle of his lordys and theire mayny com rydyng thurgh london in iii ostis rially harnessed and the citizens standing arrayed on every sides the stret whiles the kyng and his host went through it. Which was oon of the most glorious sights that ever eny man in these dayes sawe . . .[21]

York was not impressed. He had the power to back the demands he was to make--demands which well reflected his ambition. His power at this time is indicated by an interesting observation in a letter to John Paston from John Damme and James Gresham: "As touchyng shirefs, ther arn none chosyn ne named, and as men suppose, non shall by chasyn til my Lord of Yorks comyng."[22] When he finally arrived, his Chamberlain, William Oldhall, had already been forced upon the king as Speaker.[23] The duke had earlier written to Henry setting forth his complaints and peremptory demands. This letter is worth citing in full.

> Please it your Hyghnes tendirly to consider the grett grutchyng and romer that is universaly in this your reame of that justice is nouth dewly ministred to such as trespas and offende a yens your lawes, and in special of them that ben endited of treson, and other beyng openly noysed of the same; wherfore for gret inconveniens that have fallen, and grett is lyke to fallen her after in your seid reame, which God defende, but if by your Hyghnesse provysion convenable by mad for dew reformacion and punyshment in this behalf; Wherfore I, your humble suget and lyge man, Richard, Duke of York, willyng as effectually as I kan, and desiryng suerte and prosperite of your most roiall person, and welfare of this your noble reame, councel and advertyse your excellent, for the conversacion of good tranquillite and pesable rewle among all trew sogetts,

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[21]Flenley, Six Town Chron., p. 157.

[22]Paston Letters, II, 186.

[23]Ibid.; Rot. Parl., V, 210-211.

> for to ordeyn and provyde that dewe justice be had a yenst all such that be so endited or openly so noysed: wher inne I offre, and wol put me in devour for to execute your comaundements in thes premises of such offenders, and redresse of the seid mysrewlers to my myth and power. And for the hasty execucion herof, lyke it your Hyghnes to dresse your letteres of prevy seale and writts to your officers and ministres to do take, and areste all soch persons so noysed or endited, of what astatte, degre, or condicion so ever thei be, and them to comytte to your Tour of London, or to other your prisons, there to abyde with outen bayle or maynprice on to the tyme that they be utterly tryed and declared, after the cours of your lawe.[24]

King Henry's reply to his cousin was couched in dignified and reasonable terms which demonstrate not only his awareness of his own obligation and responsibilities but also that York might have ground for his complaints. His tone was concilliatory but not submissive. He told York that

> for many causes moving us [we have] determined in our soule to stablish a sad, and a substantial Counsell, giving them more amply authoritie and power than ever we did afore this: in the which wee have appointed you to be one.

The king went on to administer a mild rebuke to his arrogant cousin for his presumption in offering his services for the indictment and punishment of persons to be named by him:

> . . . it is not accustomed sure, nor expedient, to take a conclusion and conduct by advise or counsell of one person by himself for the conservation, it is observed that the greatest and the [least], the rich and the poor, in libertie, vertue, and effect of your voices be equall.

He told the duke that he was summoning <u>all</u> the lords of his Council for consultation on the matters brought up by the duke as well as

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[24] <u>Paston Letters</u>, II, 177-178. Cf. Stowe, <u>Annales</u>, p. 643. He misdates the letter 1452 according to Ramsay, <u>Lanc.</u>, II, 135, n.4. Another slightly different version is printed in appendix XI, pp. 366-367 of Kingsford's <u>English Historical Literature</u>.

"other oure great matters." He ended by observing that the conclusions reached by that Council would be by the grace of God.[25] The clear implication being: "by the grace of God and not the Duke of York."

This exchange of letters, however, did little toward calming the tense and dangerous situation. In the first days of December the Duke of Somerset was attacked at Blackfriars "and that day he was robbyde of alle hys goodys, and hys jewyllys were takyn and borne a-waye . . ."[26] Such was the hatred for him that he would probably have been killed then and there had he not managed to escape by the river in a barge belonging to the Earl of Devonshire while the mayor and commons of the city set upon those attacking him.[27] The next day similar attacks were made on the lodgings and possessions of several of the Court circle including Sir Thomas Todenham, the king's wardrober, Sir Thomas Hoo, and Lord Hastings.[28]

Parliament was adjourned for Christmas on 18 December[29] by order of the king, perhaps with the rather forlorn hope that tempers and feelings would be cooled by the time appointed for resumption of their deliberations--20 January 1451. Shortly

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[25] Stowe, Annales, p. 643.

[26] Gregory's Chron., pp. 195-196; Flenley, Six Town Chron., pp. 137 & 157; Stowe, Annales, p. 638.

[27] Worcester's Annales in Stevenson, Letters, II, 769; Flenley, Six Town Chron., p. 137.

[28] Gregory's Chron., p. 196.

[29] Rot. Parl., V, 213.

after Christmas, quite possibly to provide him with a place of refuge if the need arose, Henry appointed the Duke of Somerset Captain of the Castle of Calais.[30]

Acting on York's offer in his letter and probably feeling that getting the duke out of the city would keep him from stirring up trouble, Henry in Mid-December appointed his cousin to accompany him into Kent on a commission of oyer et terminer to try additional followers of Jack Cade.[31] Finding the government at this point too strong to be intimidated, although badly shaken, the Duke of York perforce bowed to the king's will.[32]

The royal commissioners sat at various towns of northeastern Kent between 27 February and 22 March 1451,[33] administering much more severe justice than that meted out a few months earlier. So severe was the sentencing of the court that "men calle hyt in Kent the harvyste of hedys."[34]

The punishment of lesser rebels for past and present insurrections, however, did nothing toward solving the far more dangerous defiance of authority among the magnates. Attacks on the king's

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[30]Worcester's Annales in Stevenson, Letters, II, 770.

[31]Cal. Pat., 1446-1452, p. 435; Paston Letters, II, 205-206.

[32]Nicolas, Proceedings, VI, xxxiii.

[33]Mabel Christie, Henry VI (London; 1922), p. 386. The itinerary provided by Miss Christie, pp. 375-389, is a most useful appendix to her biography. See also Three 15th Cent. Chron., pp. 68-69; Gregory's Chron., p. 197; Flenley, Six Town Chron., p. 157.

[34]Gregory's Chron., p. 197.

chief advisors continued during this period especially as news from France told of continued reverses in Aquataine.

Some time probably just before the final adjournment of Parliament, the Commons presented a petition to the king for the removal of some thirty of his Court circle.[35] Heading the list was, of course, the name of Edmund Beaufort, Duke of Somerset. The list included as well the name of Alice, Duchess of Suffolk;[36] William Booth, Bishop of Chester, and Queen Margaret's Chancellor; and most of the names appearing in the manifesto of Jack Cade. The petition accused them of

> mysbehavyng aboute youre Roiall person, and in other places, by whos undue meanes youre possessions have been gretely amenused, youre lawes not executed, and the peas of this youre Reame no observed nother kept . . .

The king's response, through Chancellor Kempe, reveals not a weakminded, irresolute fool but a man of dignity fully aware of his royal estate and his responsibilities. He told the Commons that it had always been his intent to surround himself with virtuous persons and he was not aware of any cause sufficient to move him to dismiss those named in the petition. Nevertheless, as a sop to the petitioners, Henry agreed to dismiss for one year those who were neither lords nor those "certaine persons which . . . have be accustumed contynuelly to waite uppon [our] person, and knowen howe and in what wise they shall moew beste serve [us] . . ."[37]

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[35] Rot. Parl., V, 216. No date is given in the Parliament Rolls, hence the precise time is open to conjecture.

[36] She had been Alice Chaucer, granddaughter of the poet.

[37] Rot. Parl., V, 216.

During the year's suspension anyone wishing to bring formal charges against any of those suspended would be patiently heard.

Perhaps in reaction to this rebuff, or perhaps as an independant act, new fuel was added to the hostility between the Court party and York when the member of Parliament for Bristol, Thomas Yonge, petitioned for the naming of the Duke of York as heir presumptive to the crown "because the king until now has had no offspring."[38] For his presumption the audacious Yonge was committed to the Tower.[39]

As the spring of 1451 gave way to summer, the disturbed state of England increased. Reverses in France gave impetus to the demands for Somerset's removal. Two years before a list of pointed questions to be asked of the duke had been drawn up and designed to embarrass him and cast doubts on his honesty and loyalty.[40] They all concerned his administration of affairs in Normandy and most of them were of the "have you stopped beating your wife?" variety. Whether these questions were ever formally put to Somerset I have been unable to discover. Whether or not they were, they clearly reveal the general consensus concerning the duke in 1450. By 1450 in the midst of the furor over Cade word arrived in England of the fall of Bordeaux, Gascony, and

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[38] Worcester's Annales in Stevenson, Letters, II, 770.

[39] See Yonge's petition for compensation in Rot. Parl., V, 337.

[40] Stevenson, Letters, II, 718-722. Who drew this list up I have been unable to discover.

Guyenne.[41] The list of towns, cities, castles, and fortresses taken by the French during Somerset's tenure as Lieutenant is printed in Stevenson's Letters and Papers Illustrative of The Wars of The English in France (Volume II), and covers approximately eight pages and well reflects the magnitude of the losses in English eyes.[42]

Somerset had already been blamed, along with Queen Margaret, for the final loss of Normandy,[43] and now they could be blamed for the loss of the rest of England's French possessions. These losses served to strengthen further the bonds of uniting the opposition and further lessen those of law and order.

A long held enmity between the Earl of Devon, Thomas Courtenay, and Lord Bonville erupted into violence in the West in June, 1451, when Devon laid siege to Bonville's castle at Taunton.[44] The Duke of York induced Bonville to accept his mediation, but in the meanwhile other lords had joined in the fight.

During the summer King Henry was constantly on progress through Kent, Sussex, Hampshire, and Wiltshire.[45] Most certainly this was to bring to these areas the awe and majesty of the crown

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[41] Flenley, Six Town Chron., p. 157; Three 15th Cent. Chron., p. 69.

[42] Pages 619 through 634, in French with parallel English translation.

[43] Stowe, Summarie (1565), Fol. 151 b.

[44] Worcester's Annales in Stevenson, Letters, II, 770.

[45] Christie, Henry VI, p. 386.

and, more importantly, his own still popular person. If anything could have stilled the tumultuous passions of his subjects this would have. But the corruption of rebellion had spread too far, sunk too deep. Laws became less and less meaningful. The powerful among the gentry as well as the nobility took whatever they wanted without regard to laws, decrees, or statutes of the realm.[46]

Late in September, 1451, the king summoned a Council to sit at Coventry "pro concordia habenda inter ducem Eboraci et Somersetiae, et posita est eorum controversia in presentia domini regis in arbitrio caeterorum dominorum."[47] Henry probably hoped that the pressure of these "certain lords" added to the prestige and influence of his own presence could bring some sort of harmony between his friend and advisor and the kingdom's greatest magnate. If this was so, the kindly Henry failed. Far from looking for amicable relations with his rival, York was looking for trouble.

By the end of October Henry had returned to Westminster where he remained for the rest of the year.[48] York in the same period must have developed more definitely his plans for the

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[46]See, for example, the Petition to Commons from the town of Swaffham citing "trespasez, offencez, wronges, extorcyons, mayntenauncez, imbraceryes, oppressions, and perjuryes" of Sir Thomas Tudenham. This petition, in rough draft, is printed in Paston Letters, II, 231-233. Other examples of this type of thing are found on pp. 213-217, 247, 248, 252.

[47]Worcester's Annales in Stevenson, Letters, II, 770-771. Worcester's dates are often erroneous but this entry can only apply to 1451 although he places it in the 28th year of Henry VI, or possibly 1452 or 1453. It is difficult to tell.

[48]Chrisite, Henry VI, p. 387.

future. Consulting with his closest friends, Norfolk, Salisbury, Devon, Lord Cobham, they agreed to raise an army with the avowed purpose of removing by force those around the king they considered to be guilty of "manifest injuries done to the Commonwealth of which the principle was the Duke of Somerset [who was] greatly hated by the commons for the loss of Normandy." York was also well aware that Somerset would be vehemently opposed to the duke "in his challenge to be made to the crown when time should serve."[49] These plans were to be kept secret but it seems some word must have leaked out. This is indicated by York's actions in early 1452. From the castle at Ludlow he issued a formal manifesto on 9 January:

> Forasmuch as I, Richard Duke of Yorke, am informed that the king my soveraugne lord, is my heavy lord, greatly displeased with me, and hath me in mistrust by sinister information of mine enemies, adversaries, and evill willers, where God knoweth . . . I am, have been, and ever will be his true liege man, and have I said before this divers times, as well by mouth as by writing, notified and declared to my saide soveraigne lord.[50]

Having expressed his hurt feelings, Duke Richard went on to say that the king's displeasure so grieved him that he had begged the Bishop of Hereford and the Earl of Shrewsbury to hear his profession of innocence and then to go to the king and tell him that he was ready to swear his loyalty on the sacrament before any witnesses the king might be pleased to send.

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[49] Stowe, Annales, p. 639.

[50] Ibid.

A little less than one month later, in early February, evidently having received no word from Henry, the Duke of York sent a manifesto to the citizens of Shrewsbury requesting their assistance in the removal of Somerset.[51] In the manner of a modern politician deploring the decline of national prestige abroad, he recalled the great praise "worship, honour, and manhood [which] was ascribed of all Nations unto the people of this Realm . . ." while the king still possessed Normandy and the other French dominions. He then told them of what

> derogation, loss of merchandize, lesion of honour, and villany is said and reported generally unto the English nation for loss of the same; namely unto the Duke of Somerset when he had the Commandance and Charge thereof.

He went on to say that this loss had encouraged the enemy to attack and conquer Gascony and Guyenne, and to lay siege to Calais. He complained that all his advice concerning the situation had been laid aside and ignored through the malice and envy of Somerset who was constantly laboring "for my undoing, and to corrupt my blood and disherit me and my heirs." York, understanding the still great popularity of Henry and the sacred awe that still was attached to the crown, made clear distinction between the king and Somerset. It was the latter who "prevaileth and ruleth about the king's person, that by this means the land is likely to be destroyed." Only after making this distinction did York boldly assert that he was "fully concluded to proceed

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[51] Henry Ellis, Original Letters Illustrative of English History, (3 Vols; 2nd Ed.; 1st Series; 1825), I, 51.

in all haste against him" to restore peace and tranquillity and always keeping within the bonds of his "liegeance"--at least as he saw it. He then asked for as many men as Shrewsbury might be able to muster, piously adding that they should behave correctly and "do no offence nor robbery, nor oppression upon the people, in lesion of justice."[52]

On 13 February, Thomas Kent, clerk of the King's Council[53] who had been sent by Henry to confer with York, returned to Westminster with such disturbing news--probably concerning York's letter to the men of Shrewsbury--that Henry acted with unaccustomed speed and vigor. He gathered an army and with Somerset, the Duke of Buckingham, and other lords headed through Coventry toward Wales where he had been informed that York had gathered a "strong power of people," with the assistance of the Earl of Devon, Lord Cobham, and others.[54] Lord Cobham, among others, had received summons to the King's Council, which they ignored. On 17 February Henry again wrote expressing his displeasure at this failure and ordering him in peremptory terms to appear forthwith or suffer the consequences.[55]

York, however, heard of the king's plan to intercept and arrest him and turned his army, either to avoid a direct clash

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[52]Although Ellis asserts in an introductory note that this letter, from which I have quoted several sections verbatim, is original, the orthography demonstrates that it can only be a modernized version.

[53]Kingsford, English Hist. Lit., pp. 364-365.

[54]Flenley, Six Town Chron., p. 139; Stowe, Annales, p. 640; Davies' Chron., pp. 69-70; Kingsford, English Hist. Lit., p. 163.

[55]Nicolas, Proceedings, VI, 116.

with the crown or, possibly, because his forces were not yet strong enough. He knew that tremendous strength waited him in London. He therefore sent his herald ahead of him to request the privilege of passing through the city with his army. King Henry had anticipated this very tactic and, on 24 February, had addressed letters to the mayor, aldermen, and commons ordering the city not to permit York's entry.[56] Thus temporarily balked, the duke and his army crossed the Thames at Kingsbridge and marched into Kent where he hoped to rally the remnants of Jack Cade's followers to his cause.[57]

Hard on his heels the king with his royal army arrived in London--the vanguard on the twenty-seventh, the king and the main army the following day.[58]

The Duke of York found that the men of Kent had evidently had their fill of rebellion which, before, had gained them little but hard punishment. They "came nat to hym as they had promysed, and [he] was not stronge ynoughe for the kynges parte."[59] While Henry remained at Southwark, the Duke of York established a strongly fortified camp at Dertford.[60]

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[56]Kingsford, English Hist. Lit., p. 297; Davies' Chron., p. 70; Stowe, Annales, p. 640.

[57]Davies' Chron., p. 70; Kingsford, English Hist. Lit., pp. 297-298.

[58]Davies' Chron., p. 70; Kingsford, "Extracts" in English Hist. Lit., pp. 297-298.

[59]Davies' Chron., p. 70.

[60]Ibid. Also Kingsford, "Extracts" in English Hist. Lit., p. 298; Stowe, Annales, p. 640.

The king and his advisors were determined at this point to put an end to his cousin's rebellious activities. He and the royal army "came toward the seyde duke of Yorke for to dystresse hym and his people."[61] Before committing himself to the bloodshed of a battle the unwarlike Henry made one last effort at mediation. He sent an embassy to York consisting of the Bishops of Winchester and Ely, the Earl of Salisbury and his son, Warwick, Lord Beauchamp, and Lord Sudely.[62] York, however, remained adamant. He told the king's emissaries that "he wold have the Duke of Somerset, or elles he wold dye therefore."[63]

At this open refusal by York even to try to reconcile their differences, King Henry, on 1 March, moved his army to Blackheath and prepared for battle. York must have realized at this point that he was not going to be able to bluff his way to victory over Somerset. After refusing Henry's overtures two days earlier he now, at the behest of several lords, whether of his party or the king's is unclear, agreed to meet with Henry on Friday, 3 March.

To make sure that York realized he was not acting out of weakness Henry regrouped his forces in full strength on Blackheath on the morning of the meeting. York set his conditions for accepting the king's grace: "that his peticiouns for the wele of

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[61] Davies' Chron., p. 70.

[62] Kingsford, "Extracts" in English Hist. Lit., p. 368.

[63] Ibid., p. 298. The full text of the formal charges placed by York against Somerset is printed in Paston Letters, I, 103-108.

the kynge and the realme myght be hadde and his enemyes to the Toure to bide the lawe."[64] He had already sent a formal statement to King Henry citing his complaints concerning the activities of his enemies while he was in Ireland. He seems to have been most outraged at

> certaine commissions which were made . . . to have me indited of treason, to the intent for to have undone me and mine issue, and corrupted my blood, as it is openly published: beseaching your Maiestie roiall, of your righteousness, to examine these matters and thereupon to do such justice . . . as the cause requireth: for mine intent is fully to persue to your highness for the conclusion of these matters.[65]

The king had replied to this letter in moderate and sensible terms. In effect, he asked York to consider things from his viewpoint. York had descended on England without advance notice; men using his name had made plainly treasonous statements about Henry and the government; rebels using his name freely had murdered several government officials; "Wherefore we sent to divers of our courts and places, to hearken and to take hade if anie such maner comming were, and if these had been such for to resist it." Henry said he had no doubt of York's loyalty but the evidence certainly did not support this faith. As for the indictment that seemed to disturb York so greatly,

> We thinke verily and hold for certaine, that there was none such. And if ye may truely proove that any person was thereabouts, the matter shall be demeaned as the case shall require, so that he shall know it is oure great displeasure.

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[64] Three 15th Cent. Chron., p. 69; Kingsford, "Extracts" in English Hist. Lit., p. 298; Davies' Chron., p. 70.

[65] Stowe, Annales, p. 642.

The king ended this reasoned and intelligent reply with the assurance "for the easing of your hart in all such matters, we declare, repute and admit you as our true and faithful subject, and as our welbeloved Cousin."[66]

It may have been this reasonable letter that convinced the royal rebel that Henry was sincere and that a solution was possible. He was persuaded to disband his forces, which he did on the promise that Somerset would be sent to the Tower to answer "such Articles as the Duke of York sholde put on him."[67]

The duke arrived at King Henry's tent accompanied by the Earl of Devon, Lord Cobham and forty horse.[68] Advance word of this may have reached Henry and been regarded by him and his advisors as a breach of York's promise to disband his forces. This would certainly explain the surprise which greeted York upon entering the king's tent. For there, awaiting him alongside the king in his accustomed place, was Edmund Beaufort, Duke of Somerset.[69] If Henry had felt that York's forty horsemen indicated lack of good faith on the duke's part, he could quite reasonably feel justified in keeping the Duke of Somerset at his side. This

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[66]This letter of King Henry is printed in full in Stowe's Annales, p. 642.

[67]English Brut, p. 520.

[68]Kingsford, "Extracts" in English Hist. Lit., p. 298.

[69]English Brut, p. 520; Three 15th. Cent. Chron., p. 69.

would certainly exonerate Henry of the charge of duplicity and even treachery so often laid to him, or at least to his advisors, by modern historians.[70]

Whatever the reason, Somerset was there with Henry. York's forty horse could do little in the face of the king's army. The knowledge that the men of Kent had not come flocking to him must have made York realize the futility of continuing his rebellion at this time. He had no alternative but to submit. He was, to all intents, placed under arrest and then made to ride guarded before the king "as A prisoner thrugh London."[71]

There may have been some talk of sending him to the Tower but "a noyse Aroose that therl of Marche, his son was commyng with xml men to London-ward, wher-of the kyng & his councel fered. And than they concluded that the Duke of York sholde departe at his will."[72]

On 10 March 1452 the Duke of York in formal ceremonies at St. Paul's made his public submission and swore, as he had promised

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[70]It may be that the single source referring to York's 40 mounted men, in Kingsford's London Chronicles, has escaped the notice of these writers. There is no mention of them in the English Brut, Bale's Chronicle, Gough's Chronicle, Stowe's works, Davies' Chronicle, Gregory's Chronicle, or any of the other lesser and fragmentary chronicles.

[71]English Brut, p. 520; Three 15th Cent. Chron., p. 69.

[72]English Brut, p. 520; Kingsford, London Chron., p. 163; Stowe's Annales, p. 644, based in part on Brut has the interesting and revealing statement that the rumor of March's approach "feared so the Queene (my italics) and Councell that the duke was set at full libertie. Edward of March was not quite ten years old.

the month before, a solemn oath on the sacrament never in any way to act against the king.[73]

This matter seemingly settled, King Henry granted a general pardon on Good Friday for all offenses.[74] For the remainder of the year, from July through early November, Henry and Margaret were on a progress throughout their kingdom hoping to heal the wounds of rebellion which had rent the realm for two years.[75] All seemed well

> but sum what the hertys of the pepyl hyng and sorowyd for that the Duke of Gloucester wos dede, and sum sayde that the Duke of Yorke hadde grete wronge, but what wronge there was noo man that darste say, but sum grounyd and sum lowyrd and hadde dysdayne of othyr.[76]

Fresh disasters in France and the king's mental collapse six months later were to precipitate a new crisis from which England would not emerge for twenty-two years.

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[73] Stowe, Annales, p. 520; Three 15th Cent. Chron., p. 69. Stowe gives the full oath as sworn by York. It is also found in full in the Act of Attainder of York in Rot. Parl., V, 346-347.

[74] Paston Letters, II, 272.

[75] Ramsay, Lanc., II, 151.

[76] Gregory's Chron., p. 198.

CHAPTER V

ILLNESS AND PROTECTORATE

During the summer of 1453, after some earlier temporary successes due to the efforts of the honorable old John Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, Lord Moleyns, and the Earl's bastard son, Lord Lisle,[1] the English suffered through the final agonies of the Hundred Years' War. In July Shrewsbury rushed succor from Bordeaux to the beseiged fortress of Castillon. He and his troops ran head on into the earthworks and artillery of the French. In the ensuing melee the gallant old earl was unhorsed by a cannon ball and trampled to death under the feet of his panic-stricken soldiers. With him fell Lord Lisle and another son, Lord Berkeley. Lord Moleyns, with many others, was among those taken prisoner.[2]

With the death of the valiant Talbot, the last dim hopes for the English in France flickered and went out. By the end of September only Bordeaux, which had been recaptured just a year before,[3] remained in English hands. On 7 August Henry and the Council had given authorization to the mayor of London for the import of alum from Jena, from the sale of which, at fixed rates,

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[1] See Ramsay, Lanc., II, 152-155; Jacob, Fifteenth Cent., pp. 505-506.

[2] Ramsay, Lanc., II, 155-156; Jacob, Fifteenth Cent., p. 506; Davies' Chron., p. 70.

[3] Ramsay, Lanc., II, 153; Jacob, Fifteenth Cent., p. 505.

the proceeds were to be used for the defense of Guienne.[4] This proved to be too little and too late. On 19 October Bordeaux was surrendered to the officers of King Charles VII.

The war which had begun in glory and triumph for England had come to its wretched end. The dreams and ambitions of Edward III lay in wreckage at the feet of his great-great-grandson. The news of old Shrewsbury's death and the disaster to the English forces most certainly had a shattering effect on Henry. Had it been the only blow he might have withstood it. But just a few weeks prior to this the pious king had received the news of the fall of Constantinople to the Turks. There is no evidence extant which reveals how Henry took this news but, knowing his deeply religious nature, it can only have been a terrible shock to him. These shocks coming on top of many others were to take a terrible toll.

A Parliament had been called at Reading, away from Yorkist centers of influence, for 6 March 1453.[5] The primary purpose for this Parliament was to try to correct the abysmal condition of the Exchecquer. No subsidy had been voted since 1449. The only funds made available since then were a meagre poll tax on foreigners and the income tax, both voted in 1450. Little had come of either of these. The war in France made mandatory new and sizeable subsidies.

Parliament began well for Henry and the Lancastrians. A staunch supporter of the House of Lancaster, Thomas Thorpe, was

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[4]Nicolas, Proceedings, VI, 152-154. This authorization refers to an Act of Parliament of 1451 in Rot. Parl., V, 214-216.

[5]Rot. Parl., V, 227.

chosen Speaker.[6] York's set-back at Blackheath would seem to have given new strength to the supporters of the government, for all went quite smoothly. Petitions on behalf of several persons disabled by Cade's courts were presented and granted. Other private petitions, all agreeable to the king, were also presented.[7]

Since no subsidies had been granted for three years and Parliament seemed to be in a giving mood, they made grants of a tenth and a fifteenth, tonnage and poundage, and the duties on wool were increased. Poll taxes on alien householders and servants were granted for life.[8] If collectable, which seems doubtful in some cases,[9] the immediate fiscal problems of the realm would be relieved, if not ended.

In addition to these more or less normal grants, Commons also made an unusual, if not unprecedented, grant of twenty-thousand archers to be raised and maintained by the shires for six months. These archers were not for foreign service as is made clear in the grant.[10] It can only be assumed that civil war was considered a very real possibility despite the apparent calm.

In order to work out the details of this novel grant Commons requested time in which to do so. King Henry willingly agreed to

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[6] Rot. Parl., V, 227.

[7] Ibid., pp. 265-266.

[8] Ibid., Flenley, Six Town Chron., p. 140.

[9] The rates on wool duties were to be 50s. on each sack for natives and 100s. for aliens which seem almost impossibly high.

[10] Rot. Parl., V, 230-233.

this and in a little speech from the throne he thanked the Commons for their efforts. Cardinal Kempe then adjourned Parliament to 25 April when they would reassemble at Westminster.[11]

The second session of Parliament was taken up mostly with the details of implementing the grant of archers. Just before adjournment, evidently acting on information from government informers, William Oldham, Speaker of the previous Parliament, was attainted of treason for involvement in Cade's rebellion.[12] Parliament was then adjourned once more until 12 November when they were to assemble at Reading.[13] Henry again expressed his own thanks to them and assured them he would be a gracious and benevolent lord to them.[14] Chancellor Kempe then made his closing speech which indicated that the twenty-thousand archers might soon be needed. He referred to standing disorders, riots, malefactions, extortions and oppressions which the king was determined to suppress.[15]

In June and July the longtime rivalry and enmity between the two great families of Percy and Neville broke into violence. Intertwined with both the Percies and Nevilles, related also to the Duke of York, among others, were the Bourchiers.[16] The fighting among

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[11] Rot. Parl., V, 231.

[12] Ibid., pp. 265-266.

[13] Ibid., p. 236.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid.

[16] For the intricacies of these relationships see Ramsay, Lancaster and York, II, 163-165, and the very useful tables in V. H. H. Green, The Later Plantagenets (London; 1955), pp. 401-414, especially tables F, J, K.

these powerful families had come to the attention of the king and his Council. On 7 June Henry had written to Lord Egremont, third son of the Earl of Northumberland, with a peremptory command to appear before the Council in all possible haste to explain his brawling activities.[17] The order was ignored, and on 26 June a second letter was sent by Henry with a strong rebuke for failure to obey various mandates. Again Egremont was ordered to present himself to the Council and in the meanwhile he was ordered to keep the peace.[18] On the same date letters were addressed to Neville concerning the fights with Egremont which, he was told, were causing great trouble to the king's subjects. Neville, too, was then ordered to explain himself before the Council and to keep the peace in the meantime.[19]

At about the same time Bishop Beckyngton, one-time Keeper of the Privy Seal and Henry's private secretary, received a letter from Thomas Chaundler commenting on the lamentable evils of the times. "Forsooth, what appears in our times if not murder and furtive seditions which put aside the most noble from power by intestine war, insidious plunderings and depredations . . ."[20] Here is further evidence, if any be needed, of the uneasy atmosphere in the summer of 1453.

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[17] Nicolas, Proceedings, VI, 140.

[18] Ibid., p. 141.

[19] Ibid., pp. 141-142.

[20] Correspondence of Bishop Beckyngton, II, 311.

It would seem that, at least at this point, York was not party to these riots and was living up to the oath he had taken at St. Paul's.[21] In August the enmity mentioned above erupted into open battle at Stamford Bridge, when a party of Nevilles, returning from the wedding festivities of Thomas Neville and Lady Maud Stanhope, collided with Lord Egremont, his brother Richard, and a group of their supporters. The pitched battle which followed is regarded by some as initiating the Wars of the Roses.[22]

The Court, however, had to face a far more serious problem. For three years King Henry had been pounded by an almost uninterrupted series of personal blows and national disasters.

In 1450 Suffolk was exiled and the brutally murdered; the realm was torn asunder by Cade's rebellion; the bishop who had performed Henry's marriage rites was torn to pieces by a mob, and another bishop suffered a similar fate; the treasurer was murdered; the Duke of York attempted a rebellion; attacks were made on the king's chief advisor, friend, and cousin, Somerset; demands were made for the banishment of Court favorites; a member of Parliament (Thomas Yonge) raised at least some doubts concerning Henry's right to the crown.

In 1451, came the English reverses and defeats in France, the fall of Bordeaux, and rising unrest in England.

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[21] See Henry's letter to York, appointing him to stop the brawling and squabblings of Egremont, the Duke of Exeter, and others, in Nicolas' Proceedings, VI, 130, 131.

[22] Worcester's Annales in Stevenson, Letters, II, 770.

In 1452, York marched on London with a sizeable army; renewed charges were leveled against Somerset.

In 1453, the fall of Constantinople and the siege of Castillon occurred; there were increasing factionalism and strife among the magnates; the open battle at Stamford Bridge took place.

To offset this whole dreary list of woes and horrors there were only two really bright events--the recovery of Bordeaux in late 1452 and the announcement of Margaret's pregnancy in February 1453.[23] Even the pending birth of a long awaited child could hardly counteract the weight of the three years of grief, horror, and failure. To make matters worse, Henry, as a sensitive and intelligent man, most certainly knew that most, if not all, was due to his own failures and shortcomings as a king--failures and shortcomings that had caused not only humiliation for England but the loss of countless lives.

And then, some time in the first ten days of August, came the shattering news of the defeat at Castillon and the death of England's most capable commander, the Earl of Shrewsbury. This news, I believe, was the final blow under which King Henry's mind crumbled and gave way while he was at Clarendon.[24] The precise date is uncertain. Both contemporary and modern writers fix the date anywhere from late June or early July to early September. However, I believe that the

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[23] Review of Francis Leary's The Golden Longing, in Reunion, VI, No. 54 (June, 1960), p. 157. (Reunion is published regularly by the British organization, The Confraternity of Unity.)

[24] Worcester's Annales in Stevenson, Letters, II, 771.

time can be fixed, with some degree of certainty, within the first ten days of August.[25]

Probably no single event in the troubled reign of Henry VI has been more distorted, misunderstood, and misinterpreted than this illness, which lasted for a year and a half. With few exeptions, Henry is described in this period as unbalanced. Among those who so described him were K. H. Vickers, in England in The Later Middle Ages--"mad"; E. F. Jacob, in The Fifteenth Century--"insane"; and Paul Murray Kendall, in Warwick The Kingmaker--"mad . . . in an animal-like stupor." Such words as "imbecility" and "drivelling idiocy" have been bandied about glibly. Most writers complacently trace Henry's illness to, and compare it with, that of his maternal grandfather, Charles VI, when in fact it bore no resemblance to the violent, terrified ravings of that wretched monarch.

Scant study has been made of this illness and little of it published; yet some things seem clear, even to a layman. The several descriptions found in contemporary writings, which will be cited later, indicate that the above descriptions fall far off the mark.

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[25] Sir James Gairdner, in Paston Letters, I, 130, n.3, refers to an almanac of the period which places the date "In nocte S. Laurentii..." The probability that the king's illness was triggered by the news of Castillon and Talbot's death fits well with this date. The news had not been received on 7 August (above p. 78, n.4). Just three days earlier Shrewsbury was thought to be still alive since troops in Guienne were identified as being under his command on that date. Stevenson, Letters, II, 487-488. It seems certain that between the fourth and tenth of August some shattering blow was dealt Henry which began his illness, and the news from France was certainly of the kind to do just this. See Appendix N.1.

It is the unanimous opinion of two well-qualified psychiatrists and an equally well-qualified general practitioner of medicine, whom this writer consulted at length,[26] that Henry was the victim of an acute melancholy of severe degree.[27]

The writers who mention the king's illness in any detail at all are in quite surprising agreement.[28] William Worcester says that Henry, being at Clarendon, "suddenly fell into a grave infirmity of the head, in such manner that he seemed extracted from his mind."[29] Robert Bale's account gives a hint that it was some unexpected event which sent the king suddenly into "a ffranzy and his wit and reson wt drawen . . ."[30] John Whethamstede says he was temporarily deprived of his senses, that his memory was gone, and that he could move from one place to another only with difficulty.[31] The nearest thing to an official description of his symptoms is found in the Rolls of Parliament as part of a report by a delegation of bishops and earls sent by Parliament in March, 1454, to inform the king of the death

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[26]Dr. Philip S. Herbert, Psychiatrist, Cornell University-New York Hospital in New York City; Dr. Byron L. Casey, Psychiatrist, East Lansing, Michigan; Dr. Norman Henderson, East Lansing, Michigan.

[27]See Appendix for the long-range diagnoses of Drs. Herbert and Casey, and for the information supplied them upon which they based their statements.

[28]There were at least ten contemporary or nearly contemporary writers who referred to Henry's illness. See J. R. Lander, "Henry VI and the Duke of York's Second Protectorate, 1455 to 1456," Bulletin of the John Ryland's Library, XLIII (1960-61), p. 46, n.3. Hereafter cited as Lander, "Henry VI."

[29]Annales in Stevenson, Letters, II, 771.

[30]Flenley, Six Town Chron., p. 140.

[31]Whethamstede, Registrum, I, 163.

of Archbishop Kempe. Six items were drawn up to be presented to the king "if they fynde the Kynges disposition suche." That some idea of the king's condition had reached Parliament is indicated by a proviso to the commission of these lords which said that these six articles were to be read to the king "if he will attende to the heryng and understondyng therof, and ellys they shall opene but oonly the furst and second Articles." The first of these articles expressed the Lords' fervent hope for the "relief of his grete sykeness that it hath liked God to visit his Highnisse with." The second article merely assured Henry that the Lords were doing all in their power to advance the common weal and that they hoped their work would result in improving the king's welfare and royal estate. The other four articles concerned the death of Kempe and the need for appointing a new archbishop, the precautions for the safety of the Great Seals, the matter of the membership of the Council, and the need for secrecy in the affairs mentioned.

When the delegation returned from Windsor it made a formal report to Parliament on 25 March,[32] informing the members that they had disclosed their mission to the king in the way directed in their commission, giving him the contents of the first two articles.

> And then for asmoche as it liked not the Kynges Highnesse to yeve eny answere to the Articles, the seid Bishop of Chester, by th'advis of all the othir Lordes, declared . . . the othir matiers conteigned in the seid instruction; to the whiche

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[32]The delegation consisted of the Bishops of Winchester, Ely, and Chester; the Earls of Warwick, Oxford, and Shrewsbury; Viscounts Beaumont and Bourchier; the Prior of St. Johns; and Lords Fauconberge, Dudley, and Stourton. Rot. Parl., V, 240.

> maters ne to eny of theim they cowede gete noo answere ne signe, for no prayer ne desire, lamentable chere ne exhortation, ne eny thyng that they or eny of theim cowede do or sey, to theire grete sorowe and discomfort.

Since they had not eaten, they then had their dinner in the hope, possibly, that something had penetrated the melancholy of the king and that he would give some sort of response when they returned. If such was their hope, it was in vain. After dinner

> they come . . . to the same place where they were before; and there they moeved and sturred hym, by all the waies and meanes that they cowede thynke, to have answere of the matiers aforsaid, but they cowede have noon; and from that place they willed the Kynges Highnesse to goo into an othir Chambre, and so he was ledde between ii men into the Chamber where he lieth; and there the Lordes moeved and sturred the Kynges Highnesse the thirde tyme, by all the means and weyes that they coude thynk, to have aunswere of the seid matiers . . . but they cowede have no aunswere, worde, ne signe; and therfor with sorowfull hartes come theire way.[33]

The extent of Henry's withdrawal is demonstrated in a news letter written by John Stodeley from London on 19 January 1454, in which he describes the efforts made to get the king to give some sign of recognition or even awareness of his long awaited son, who had been born on 13 October 1453.

> . . . please it, you to wite that at the Princes [Edward] comyng to Wyndesore, the Duc of Buk' toke hym in his armes and presented hym to the Kyng in godely wise, besechyng the Kyng to blisse hym; and the Kyng yave no maner answere. Natheless the Duk abode stille with the Prince by the Kyng; and whan he coude no maner answere have, the Queene come in, and toke the Prince in hir armes and presented hym in like forme as the Duke had done, desiryng that he shuld blisse it; but Alle their labour was in veyne, for they departed thens without any answere or countenaunce savying only that ones he loked on the Prince and caste doune his eyene ayen, without any more.[34]

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[33] Rot. Parl., V, 241.

[34] Paston Letters, II, 295-296.

These accounts give a picture of a man totally withdrawn from the world around him--apathetic, lethargic, in a "deep reactive depression." In effect, he seems to have lapsed into an almost infantile passivity.

Dr. Philip S. Herbert in his letter to this writer says that these symptoms, coupled with the type of person King Henry was, suggest "that the responsibility of ruling . . . had become overwhelming, but escape into suicide, abdication, or exile was unacceptable. There was only one place to maneuver, and that was acute illness."[35]

The preceding three years had proved too much for him. The news of Shrewsbury's defeat and death had been the last straw. He had continued to work as long as he could. As late as 7 August he had written the Mayor of London concerning the sale of alum for funds to relieve Guienne.[36] For the months immediately preceding his illness letters are found bearing the royal autograph which well attest to Henry's interest in and attention to affairs of state right up to the time his distress suddenly became too much to bear.[37] The above descriptions of the king's condition do not provide any basis for the generally accepted view that he was violently insane in the manner of his French grandfather, nor a driveling imbecile, nor a feebleminded idiot. The fact that he once "loked on the Prince

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[35]Letter from Dr. Philip S. Herbert, Psychiatrist, New York City, 5 February 1964. See Appendix.

[36]Above pp. 77-78. This letter is headed "By the King," a style used by no other person. See Nicolas Proceedings, VI, ccxiv.

[37]Nicolas, Proceedings, VI, 132-139.

and caste doune his eyene ayen" certainly indicates he was not catatonic nor in an "animal-like stupor." He just didn't care any more.

The Court seems at first to have tried to keep the king's illness concealed. He remained at Clarendon, where there was less likelihood of his being seen, until October. When Parliament reassembled at Reading on 12 November the Chancellor immediately adjourned it again until February, after explaining that Henry was absent because of the number of deaths--from plague, it is assumed--which had occurred recently in Reading.[38]

It became obvious quite soon that the king would require much additional care and attention. Day and night attendants were hired to be with him, clothe him and feed him, and see generally to his welfare.[39]

There is evidence that by December he required even more attention, for the minutes of the Council for 6 December (Henry's 32nd birthday) state that it was necessary hastily to provide certain sums of money for the expenses of the king's household. Warrants were issued for a special export of wool, in the king's name, in the fastest way possible--whatever ships, men, ports, etc., would get the job done most quickly for ready money. No customs, subsidies, or other fees were to be paid regardless of laws to the

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[38] Rot. Parl., V, 238; Cal. Pat., 1452-1461, p. 139.

[39] Lander, "Henry VI, " p. 47, in which he cites the Exchequer Issue Rolls.

contrary.[40] The hope may have been that additional care, paid for by these special funds, would bring about sufficient recovery for Henry to open Parliament on the appointed date in February. If this was their hope, it was in vain. By 11 February 1454, it was obvious that the king would be unable to preside at the opening of Parliament. Still attempting to conceal the true nature of Henry's illness, his associates sent the Earl of Worcester, Treasurer of England, to Reading. He was commissioned to tell the members that the king "for certain reasons" was unable to be there personally. He then adjourned them for an additional three days, after which they were to assemble at Westminster.[41] On the thirteenth a commission was drawn up, granting the Duke of York limited authority to open and to hold Parliament as Henry's lieutenant.[42]

In the meanwhile, new efforts were undertaken to cure the king. The minutes of the Council for 15 March reveal that a commission was given to John Arundel, John Faceby, and William Hatcliff, physicians; and to Robert Wareyn and John Marchall, surgeons, to go to Windsor, where the King had been taken in October. There they

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[40] Nicolas, Proceedings, VI, 164-165. The order is signed by Cardinal Kempe; William Booth, Archbishop of York; Thomas Kempe, Bishop of London; William Waynflete, Bishop of Winchester; Thomas Bourchier, Bishop of Ely; Richard, Duke of York; Jasper Tudor, Earl of Pembroke; Richard, Earl of Warwick; John Tiptoft, Earl of Worcester; and Lord Bouchier. These august names attest to the unusual and urgent nature of the business since such things were normally signed by only two or three Council members.

[41] Rot. Parl., V, 238; Cal. Pat., 1452-1461, p. 140.

[42] Rymer, Foedera, XI, 344.

were to treat him in such manner as they could best devise and according to the most learned physicians who had written on the subject. They were to administer to their wretched patient elixirs, potions, waters, syrups, confections, laxatives, medicines, clysters, suppositories, gargles, baths, ointments, unctions, and a myriad of other hair-raising prescriptions.[43] (They may have felt that the treatment would shock him into recovery, or that he would recover in self-defense!) In the almost total absence of knowledge concerning mental illness these remedies were well meant but futile.

Since Henry remained locked within himself, something had to be done so that the realm could be administered. Hence on 27 March 1454

> The lords spiritual and temporal gathered in the present Parliament, moved by certain reasons, elect and name Richard, Duke of York, to be Protector and Defender of the English Kingdom so long as it shall please the King.[44]

The Duke's Patent contained a further clause which indicated the Council's gloomy doubts concerning Henry's recovery by stating that York would bear the burdens of Protector and Defender during the King's pleasure until such time as "Edward the said Lord King's first born son, reaches years of discretion and if he wishes to assume the . . . Protectorship."

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[43] Nicolas, Proceedings, VI, 166-167.

[44] Rot. Parl., V, 242. His formal Patent was sealed on 3 April. In it the reason given was openly declared as the "infirmity which the Most High Savior has pleased to visit upon our Person . . ." It added that attendance to affairs of state would be tedious and prejudicial to the King's swift recovery. Rymer, Foedera, XI, 346; Cal. Pat., 1452-1461, p. 159.

After modestly protesting that he had neither "wisdom, connyng, nor habilite to take upon me that wurthy name of Protectour and Defensour" York made several provisos and requests before he would agree to take upon himself the task they proposed. He stipulated that he would serve only until "suche tyme as it shall please ouir blessed Creatour to restore his most noble persone to helthfull disposition"; that the spiritual and temporal lords should assist him in every way possible; that they state just how much in the way of salary he would be paid. The last point it was agreed would be discussed with the duke before a final statement was made. The other two points were readily agreed to. Their answer to a fourth point, however, seems to indicate that the lords did not fully trust the duke. He had requested that they clearly define

> suche auctorite and power, as it shall lyke you that y shall have for th'execution of the seid charge, and also fredome and libertee that shall therunto belong . . . and howe ferre the said power and auctorite, and also the fredame and libertee shall extende.

If the duke expected plenipotentiary authority, the lord's response must have come like a dash of cold water. They told him he would be chief of the King's Council with an appropriate title but not

> the name of Tutour, Lieutenant, Governour, nor of Regent, nor noo name that shall emporte auctorite of governaunce of the lande; but the seid name of Protectour and Defensor, the whiche emporteth a personnell duete of entendaunce to the actuell defence of this land.[45]

Additional evidence that the lords had dark suspicions of what York might attempt, with proper backing, is found in a protest he lodged

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[45] Rot. Parl., V, 242.

with the Council on 6 December 1453. He began by stating that he was and had been the king's true liegeman and would do all he could to aid and support the crown and government. He then came to his revealing complaint that

> diverse persones suche as of long tyme have been of his the King's Counsail have be commaunded afore this tyme by what meanes he watte never not to entende uppon him the king but to withdrawe thaim of any counsaille to be yeven unto him.[46]

Once these issues were settled, the government resumed its major business of directing the affairs of a sorely beset land. The actions of the King's Council during the eighteen months of Henry's illness provide good proof of the strength of the form of government the English had hammered out in the preceding four hundred years. Far from paralyzed by the unprecedented nature of the crisis confronting them, the government continued almost uninterrupted the transaction of the king's business.[47]

The Duke of York, even before his official entry into the Protectorship, set about removing the most irritating thorn in his side--the Duke of Somerset and Somerset's strongest supporters. On 15 February 1454 York had charges brought in Parliament against Speaker Thorpe for Thorpe's seizure of goods and chattels, possibly arms, belonging to York. Since Thorpe was a member of the Council, it seems quite likely that he was acting under orders but this was

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[46] Cal. Pat., 1452-1461, pp. 143-144; also printed in Paston Letters, I, 336-337.

[47] There is no change in either tone or content of the Council's minutes, ordinances, etc., as found in Nicolas, Proceedings, VI, 142-220, covering the period of King Henry's illness.

of no moment to York; Thorpe was a staunch adherent of Somerset and must be removed. Thorpe was tried in the Court of Exchequer, fined £1000, and £10 in costs, and imprisoned until he had satisfied all claims against him. This was agreed to by the Lords thus leaving vacant the Speakership, which York could be expected to fill with one of his own supporters.[48] This was promptly done, the vacancy being filled by Thomas Charlton.

That Somerset well understood the potential danger to himself is indicated by this revealing passage in John Stodelly's newsletter of 19 January 1454:

> The Duke of Somerset hathe espies goyng in every Lordes hous of this land; some gone as freres, som as shipmen taken on the sea, and som on Other wise; which reporte unto hym all that thei kun see or here touchyng the seid Duke. And therfore make gode wacche, and beware of suche espies.[49]

This highly informative letter gives a vivid picture of the uneasiness of the times. Stodelly tells that the Chancellor, Archbishop Kempe, "hathe charged and commaunded alle his servauntes to be redy with bowe and arwes, swerd and bokeler, crossbowes, and alle other habillements of werre . . . for the saufgarde of his persone."[50] He writes that the Earl of Wiltshire, Lord Bonville, the Duke of Exeter, the Lords Egremont, Beaumont, Poynings, and Clifford "maken all the puissance they kan and may come hider [to London] with theym." He tells of the Duke of Buckingham's having made two

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[48] Rot. Parl., V, 239-240.

[49] Paston Letters, II, 299.

[50] Ibid., p. 296.

thousand badges "to what entent men may construe as their wittes wale yeve theym."[51] Even more ominous is an indication that there were very real fears for the safety of the King--"Item, Tresham, Josep, Danyelle, and Trevillian have made a bille to the Lordes, desiryng to have a garisone kept at Wyndsore for the saufguard of the Kyng and of the Prince . . ."[52] This letter also reveals that at least one attempt was made to prevent York from obtaining the Protectorship. Stodelly says that Queen Margaret "hathe made a bille . . . desiryng those articles to be graunted; wherof the first is that she desireth to have the hole reule of this land" She also requested power to appoint the Chancellor, Treasurer, Keeper of the Privy Seal "and alle other officers that the kyng shuld make" to create all bishops and to fill all benefices in the king's gift.[53]

That Margaret's "bille" was rejected showed Somerset, if he needed to be shown, the direction in which things were moving. He knew York detested him and would stop at nothing to remove him, permanently if possible, from the circle of the king's advisors. The chroniclers, whether Yorkist or Lancastrian, knew this.

> The Duke of York above all things first sought meanes howebe to provoke the malice of the people against the Duke of Somerset, imagining that he being made away his purpose should shortly come to conclusion. He also practiced to bring the King into the hatered of the people.[54]

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[52] Paston Letters, II, 297.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Stowe, Annales, p. 647.

On the other side of the coin, but saying basically the same thing, were those with Yorkist leanings.

> Duryng the kynges sykenesse the duk of York was made protector of Englond, whereof the duk of Somerset had grete indignacion and alway malygned ayenst hym and stered the kyng ageyne hym; natheles meny of the lordes of the Counceyl fauored more the duk of York thanne hym.[55]

York's followers had been strong enough in October, 1453, to force the Council to send summons to him when he claimed he had been deliberately insulted by Somerset who, he stated, had seen to it that no such summons had been sent. Somerset and Chancellor Kempe, significantly, did not sign this special letter of summons.[56] That even his supporters were not absolutely sure of York's intentions is indicated by the instructions given Sir Walter Tyrell, who was to deliver the letter to Duke Richard. Tyrell was to tell the Duke that he was to attend the Council "peasiblie and mesurablie" accompanied. After York had taken his seat at the Council on 21 November, Speaker Thorpe was removed as the first order of business. Somerset had absented himself from the Council; so York had a clear field for his next step--the removal of the Duke of Somerset.

To give the ouster of Somerset an aura of concerted action rather than that of a personal vendetta, the Yorkist Duke of Norfolk, John Mowbray, presented a petition to the Council denouncing Somerset and calling for a full investigation of the charges. Norfolk told the Council that he had made these charges before and the Duke of Somerset

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[55] Davies' Chron., p. 78.

[56] Nicolas, Proceedings, VI, 163.

had answered with "falsnesse and lesyngs." Somerset was guilty of giving and taking bribes in his administration of justice, and he was responsible (even as Suffolk) for the loss of "ii so noble duchees as Normandie and Guyen, that ben wel worth a greet royaume." Norfolk insisted that the Duke be tried in separate French and English tribunals for the crimes committed the two countries.[57]

Somerset was sent to the Tower to await trial. Several months later, in reply to a letter from his nephew, King James II of Scotland, inquiring about the reasons for his imprisonment and asking whether he wanted help from Scotland, Somerset indicated that his friends may well have concurred in his imprisonment for his own safety. He told the King of Scots that "it was done by thadvyse of the lords of the Kyngs Counseyle, which, as I understand, was mooste for the swertye of my person." He refused to discuss the nature of King Henry's ailment without the king's consent or the advice of the Council. He assured James that he did not

> desire nor assent to aske ne to have any helpe by might of them into this realme; for I have moche more trust in my trewthe and the rightwynes of my sovereigne lord and the lords of the land than I could have of any might inward [or] outwarde.[58]

When the news of this reply got back to the lords they were infuriated. They announced that they had not given their assent to any answer from the duke; they said that by his statement that they had sent him to the Tower for his own safety he had slandered and blasphemed

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[57]The Duke of Norfolk's petition is printed in Paston Letters, II, 290-292.

[58]Nicolas, Proceedings, VI, lxiii-lxv.

them, since he had been detained there on suspicion of treason. Just to make sure there were no doubts about this, they ordered the Act of Commitment to be read publicly.

It is quite likely that it was due these dire circumstances that Queen Margaret, to demonstrate that Henry was not totally lacking in capacity for action, made the effort, mentioned above, to draw from her unhappy husband some small sign of intelligence by presenting to him their infant son.

The business of Parliament proceded with the two factions snarling and clawing at each other at every opportunity. Yorkist accused Lancastrian;[59] Lancastrian impeached Yorkist;[60] Commons, in a sullen mood, waspishly refused to vote additional supply, asserting that they had already voted sufficient funds at Reading. They then, pointedly, reminded the king's lieutenant that the Chancellor had promised a "sadde and wyse Councaill . . . wherof they have noo knoweleche as yit" and declared that they wished the Lords to give them knowledge and notice of same.[61]

During all this time the good old Chancellor, Cardinal Kempe,[62] concentrated on keeping the domestic peace and trying to provide for the defense of England's last continental foothold at

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[59]Ralph, Lord Cromwell, asked for "sueerte of the peas" against Henry, Duke of Exeter. Rot. Parl., V, 264.

[60]The Duke of Buckingham brought charges of treason against Thomas, Earl of Devon. Rot. Parl., V, 249.

[61]Rot. Parl. V, 240.

[62]He was nearly seventy-five years old.

Calais.[63] In reply to Commons' demand for information concerning the "sad and wise" Council, Archbishop Kempe assured them "that they shuld have good and comfortable aunswere, without eny grete delay or tariyng."[64] Three days later the man who had served the crown for nearly thirty-five years was dead. His great experience, faithfulness, and moderate approach had brought him the respect of Lancastrians and Yorkists alike.[65] It was Kempe's death and the need to name a new archbishop which necessitated the appointment of a Protector.

As soon as the powers of the Protector had been voted to him by both the Lords and the Commons,[66] York filled the vacancies left by Kempe's death with men sympathetic to his cause. As Chancellor he named his brother-in-law, the Earl of Salisbury. Shortly thereafter he had the satisfaction of seeing Thomas Bourchier, his brother-in-law and Bishop of Ely, elevated to the primacy of England.[67] The new archbishop had a foot in the Lancastrian camp, since he was the Duke of Buckingham's half-brother.

No effort, it seems, was made to bring the Duke of Somerset to trial. This may well have been to prevent his using the trial

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[63] Rot. Parl., V, 249.

[64] Ibid., p. 240.

[65] Stubbs, Constitutional History of England, III, 166.

[66] Rot. Parl., V, 242-243. York had insisted on the support of a formal vote by the Lords who passed the bill--and the buck--by sending it to Commons for their vote. See Ramsay, Lanc., II, 173.

[67] Rymer, Foedera, XI, 344; Nicolas, Proceedings, VI, 168.

as a public forum to stir up trouble. Although no trial was held, York did proceed to strip his rival of most of his important posts. York appropriated the Captaincy of Calais to himself, and then compelled Parliament to agree to a long list of items designed to make the job of defending Calais as businesslike and efficient as possible.[68]

Indicating a desire to bring peace among the hostile factions, the duke provided for keeping the sea by assigning for three years the proceeds of tonnage and poundage to three Lancastrians and two Yorkists.[69]

The effects of the Duke of York's strong and determined government were soon felt, as is reflected in a letter written by William Worcester to John Paston on 5 July: "And justice ys don dayly uppon thevys and malefactours, and people be glad that justice may procede . . . The soudeours be more temperat than they were."[70]

On 18 July the Council raised the question of what to do with Somerset. Some felt that he could be released on bail. Unwilling to see his rival set at liberty quite so easily, the Duke of York

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[68] Rot. Parl., V, 254-256. York's formal commission is dated 17 July. Rymer, Foedera, XI, 351; Nicolas, Proceedings, VI,199-206.

[69] Rot. Parl., V, 244-245; Stevenson, Letters, II, 493-494. The Earls of Shrewsbury and Wiltshire, and Lord Stourton were Lancastrians; the Earls of Salisbury and Worcester were Yorkists. They set about their task "yn all haste," Paston Letters, II, 324.

[70] Paston Letters, II, 325.

told the Council that the opinion of the judges should be obtained, without which he would never consent.[71]

Even the determined and efficient Duke of York could not work miracles. Several refractory lords continued their internecine fights and squabblings. In particular, the Percies and Nevilles, Lord Bonville and the Earl of Devon continued their quarrels openly.

On 23 July, the Council gave the king's lieutenant authority to grant the king's livery to eighty men of his own choosing.[72] It seems obvious that this was done so that the duke might enforce compliance with letters sent out the following day to twelve lords who had flagrantly ignored summons to a Great Council scheduled to sit at Westminster on 25 July. Their disobedience, they were told, set a "full strange example to others." They were then peremptorily commanded to appear at the Council called for 21 October.[73] Shortly thereafter York's son-in-law, the Duke of Exeter, was arrested on York's orders and sent to Pomfret Castle.[74] William Paston refers to this arrest in a letter to his brother late in July--"My Lord of Yorke hathe take my Lord of Exsater in to hys awarde." He also mentions

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[71]Minutes of the Council for 18 July 1454 in Nicolas, Proceedings, VI, 206-207.

[72]Ibid., pp. 209-214.

[73]Nicolas, Proceedings, VI, 214-216. The defiant lords were the Earl of Shrewsbury, the Bishop of St. David's, Lords Barkley, Poyning, Botreaux, Audley, Zouche of Harrington, Lovell, Clifford, Roos, Hoo of Hastings, Greystoke, and Willoughby.

[74]Ibid., p. 217.

the plight of Somerset, which seems to have changed for the worse. "The Duke of Somerset is styll in prison, in warse case than he was."[75]

In early September there is evidence that Henry may have improved in health or--less likely--temporarily recovered. No chronicler makes mention of this event, nor do the official documents. Nevertheless, on 6 September 1454, William Paston wrote again to his brother from London:

> My Lord of Canterbury hathe received hys crosse, and I was with hym in the kynggs chamber qwan he mad hys homage. I told Harry Wylton the demeanyg betwixt the kyng and hym.

A little later he mentioned that "Harry Wylton sey the Kyng. My Lord of Ely hathe do hys fewthe [fealty]."[76] There is an additional hint of hope for Henry's recovery, gossamer thin though the hint may be, in the ordinances of the Council two months later. In arranging changes in the royal household, the Council referred to the "king our souvrain lord beying in his welfare and good helth of body to the which wt Goddes grace he shall rightwell resort in short tyme."[77]

Alone this would mean little, but placed with William Paston's letter it is at least worthy of notice. It is this writer's belief that these statements do, indeed, point to an improvement of King

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[75] Paston Letters, II, 329.

[76] Ibid., III, 2-3. Prof. Gairdner asserts (p. 1) there can be no doubt as to the date. Despite this, almost without exception, modern writers claim that King Henry gave no sign of improvement until his sudden and total recovery three and a half months later. It may be that the King was merely paraded and manipulated like a marionette for this important ceremony, but it seems to me most unlikely.

[77] Nicolas, Proceedings, VI, 221, dated 13 November 1454.

Henry's condition. Given the type of illness of which I believe he was a victim, it is highly possible that in his withdrawal Henry continued to listen. Affairs of the Church had always been of prime importance to Henry. It is not without significance that this possible improvement is associated with the religious ceremonies of bestowing the crozier upon an archbishop and receiving the homage of a bishop. Further supporting this theory is the fact that Henry did recover "suddenly" and completely at Christmas time, just five weeks after the Council's statement and three months after the ceremony referred to in Paston's letter.

CHAPTER VI

FIRST BATTLE OF ST. ALBANS

Whether or not King Henry's recovery was foreshadowed as suggested above, there is no uncertainty about his final and complete recovery in late December, 1454. On 9 January 1455, John Paston received a letter from Edmund Clere at Greenwich telling the news:

> Blessed by God, the Kyng is wel amended, and hath ben syn Cristemeday, and on Seint Jones day [December 27] comaunded his awmener to ride to Caunterbury wyth his offryng . . .
>
> And on the Moneday after noon the Queen came to him and brought my Lord Prynce with her. And then he askid what the Princes name was, and the Queen told him Edward; and than he hild up his hands and thankid God therof. And he seid he never knew til that tyme, not wist not what was seid to him, not wist not where he had be whils he hath be seke . . .
>
> And she told him that the Cardinal was dede, and he seid he knew never therof til that tyme . . .
>
> And my Lord of Wynchester and my Lord of Seint Jones were with him on the morow After Tweltheday, and he speke to hem as well as ever he did; and when thei came out thei wept for joye.[1]

Toward the end of his letter Clere supplies a rather poignant statement made by King Henry at this time: "And he seith he is in charitee with all the world, and so he wold all the Lords were." Surely, this would seem to indicate that, even so soon after his recovery, he had heard rumblings from the dissident magnates at

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[1] Paston Letters, III, 13. The apparent amnesia concerning his illness lends support to the diagnosis by Dr. Herbert who says "In any of these conditions [depression, catatonic schizophrenia, hysterical stupor] the memory of the attack may be repressed." See Appendix. The date of Henry's recovery is also found in Flenley, Six Town Chron., pp. 108, 158.

Court. I think there can be no doubt that the queen lost no time in informing him that Somerset was in the Tower and who had put him there.

The king's long illness seems to have had the same effect on him as a long restful and refreshing sleep. He immediately set about the business of government with a vigor all but unprecedented during the thirty-two years he had been king. That he was not wholly disenchanted with York at this time is indicated by a letter under the sign manual for 3 February. In it Henry commanded the fractious Henry Holland, Duke of Exeter, earlier placed in ward by York, to go to Wallingford Castle and to stay there until further notice. The determined tone of the letter, which refers to "riotts" committed by Exeter, casts strong doubts on the generally held opinion of Henry. Two days later orders were given "De Duce Somerseta Extra Turrim Elargendo," on the recognizance of the Duke of Buckingham, the Earl of Wiltshire, Lords Roos and Fitzwarin, given to the king in person.[2]

On the 7th Somerset was released on bail and on 4 March "In the high presences of oure Soveraign Lord the Kyng," he made his formal statement of innocence. He stated that in the time of the "disease of oure seid Soveraign Lord" he had been committed to the Tower of London and kept there "one whole yere, ten weekes and more." Nothing that he tried or that was tried in his name could gain his release. He claimed there was no lawful cause or charge laid against

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[2]Rymer, Foedera, XI, 361.

him. He requested full discharge as a loyal subject and asserted he stood ready to refute any charges that might be brought against him. Thereupon "it pleased the kyng . . . to say that he knew the seid Duke hath be and is his True and feithful Liegeman and cousin . . . and therefore, in the presence of all the lordes, openly declared" Somerset to be so and discharged him from bail to full freedom.[3] Both he and the Duke of York were placed under bond of 20,000 marks to keep the peace until 20 June when the issues between them would be put to arbitration by the Archbishop of Canterbury.[4]

Somerset cannot be blamed too much for his subsequent activities. His imprisonment for well over a year on trumped up charges and the refusal of York as Protector to bring him to trial where he might have hoped to exonerate himself do not speak well of his rival's dedication to justice. A much bigger man than Somerset might well have soured in such circumstances. Those who detested him took what satisfaction they could in being able to say, "I told you so."

> Whenne he was delyuered oute of the toure, he took more uppon hym thenne he dyd before, stiryng the kyng dayly and maliciously ageyns the forseyde duc of York and erles, coniectyng and ymaginyng howe he myght dystroy theym.[5]

> And unwisely the Duke of Somerset, who formerly was arrested, was withdrawn from prison in the Tower. And then was made mortal enmity for the Duke of York, hostilely inciting the king against the Duke of York, the Earl of Salisbury, and the Earl of Warwick, returning to them evil for good.[6]

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[3] Rymer, Foedera, XI, 361-362.

[4] Ibid., pp. 362-363.

[5] Davies' Chron., p. 78.

[6] Flenley, Six Town Chron., p. 108.

On the same day Somerset was exonerated by the king, York was relieved of the Captaincy of Calais, and two days later Henry bestowed the office on Somerset.[7] Within a few days Salisbury was relieved of the Great Seal which was handed to Archbishop Bourchier;[8] on 15 March, James Butler, Earl of Wiltshire, became Treasurer, that office having been taken from the Earl of Worcester. On 19 March the Duke of Exeter was set at liberty.[9] This latter act most certainly was taken as a direct slap at the Nevilles.[10]

York, Salisbury, and Warwick, fully aware that the political winds had shifted, departed from Court without permission and without proper courtesy to the king.[11] The simmering feud of the Nevilles and Percies, aggravated by Exeter's release, now combined with the bitter resentment of York, Salisbury, and Warwick against the Duke of Somerset to precipitate the final crisis which was eventually to prove fatal to all but one of the major protagonists of 1455.[12]

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[7]Rymer, Foedera, XI, 365.

[8]Nicolas, Proceedings, VI, 358-359.

[9]Rymer, Foedera, XI, 365.

[10]See C. A. J. Armstrong, "Politics and The Battle of St. Albans, 1455," Bulletin of The Institute of Historical Research, XXXIII-XXXIV (1960-1961), p. 9. Hereafter cited as Armstrong, "Politics."

[11]Armstrong, "Politics," p. 11. Armstrong bases his statement on Giles' Chronicle which also states that these three at once entered into a conspiracy to disobey both king and Council until their rivals were removed. See also Whethamstede, Registrum, I, 164-166.

[12]Considering the major protagonists to be King Henry, York, Somerset, Exeter, Salisbury, Warwick, Northumberland, and Egremont. All but Exeter were either murdered, killed in battle, or executed.

To cope with this development Henry, always ready to try the peaceful way before a resort to arms, summoned a Great Council to meet at Leicester to provide for the safety of the king. The only contemporary reference to this particular reason for the Leicester Council is found in a letter written on the eve of the 1st Battle of St. Albans by York, Salisbury, and Warwick to the Chancellor-Archbishop: ". . . We understand the callying and stablishyng of the Kynges Counsail at his Towne of Leycester . . . for suertee of his [the King's] most noble persone . . ."[13]

There is some indication that the business contemplated for this Council was rather unusual. The membership of the Council was unusual. The method of summons was also unusual since Henry went to the considerable trouble of affixing the signet to each letter which also bore the normal Privy Seal.[14] Indeed, this Council bore more than a little resemblance to a Parliament without burgesses.[15] It may well be that King Henry hoped the Council would bring about a settlement between York and Somerset as well as providing for his own safety. This would, most certainly, be in accordance with his character.

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[13] Rot. Parl., V, 280.

[14] See Armstrong, "Politics," pp. 11-12, on the unusual features of the Leicester Council.

[15] Ibid., p. 13. A continuation of Polychronicon, printed in Kingsford, Engl. Hist. Lit., pp. 342-345, says, p. 345 ". . . dominus rex, itinerans de Londoniis versus Leycestriam ad parliamentum ibidem tenedum." (Italics mine.)

York and his allies had busied themselves in collecting a sizeable force to give strength to the demands which they purposed to present to the king at Leicester.[16] That they had received summons to this Council is indicated by the fact that their letter to the Chancellor, which dredges up every other conceivable complaint, makes no mention whatever of not receiving a summons. The rebels marched south to bar the road to Leicester while Henry, Margaret, and Somerset took measures for their defense.

They took stock of the royal armory in mid May;[17] then hastily raised a force of some 3500 men ("firent hastivement . . . jusques a la some de iii^{m}v^{c} persones"[18]). On 18 May Henry, realizing the need for additional support, sent a letter under the signet to the mayor of Coventry requesting that all available men be sent in haste to St. Albans to aid the king.[19] At about the same time the king's bowyer bought five hundred bows and ten boxes for transporting them.[20] Unfortunately the letter to Coventry was unduly slow. The city council ordered one hundred men assembled and sent to St. Albans to serve the king. Before they could be sent on their way word was received of the battle and its outcome which changed the situation drastically.

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[16]Whethamstede, Registrum, I, 164.

[17]Cal. Pat., 1452-1461, pp. 247-248.

[18]"Dijon Relation," appendix I of Armstrong, "Politics," p. 63.

[19]Coventry Leet Book, ed. M. D. Harris (E.E.T.S., Nos. 134, 135, 138, 146, 1907-1913), pp. 282-283.

[20]Armstrong, "Politics," pp. 16-17, citing Warrants for Issue 34 Henry VI (P.R.O., E 404/70/3, No. 22).

The letter to Chancellor Bourchier from York, Salisbury, and Warwick was written on 20 May from Royston. In it they proclaim their loyalty and inform the Chancellor that since the Council at Leicester is purportedly for the purpose of looking to the king's safety this

> implieth a mistrust to somme persones: we therfore his true and humble Liegemen, have accompaigned us the better, to th' entent to emploie us in such devoir as accordeth with oure duetee, to that that may be the suertee of his said most noble persone, wherein we woll neither spare our bodies ner good so, and also to knowe whoo be had in jelosy of Such mistrust . . .

Once this was known, they continued, they would proceed to subdue them. They informed the Chancellor that they were well aware of the "subtile meanes" by which their enemies were coloring the king's opinion of them. The defamation and blasphemy hurled at them by their enemies must be ended and, furthermore, they were determined that the king should hear the truth about them.[21]

The righteous indignation of this letter is most impressive. If the rebels were as innocent as they claimed, and if their intent was to provide for the safeguard of the king, it seems odd that their army was drawn up just a few miles outside London. York had been in the North, possibly in Yorkshire,[22] gathering an army. If the duke and the others were as innocent as they claimed, what possible reason was there for them to travel twice the distance from Yorkshire to Leicester and then to place their army as a barrier between

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[21] Rot. Parl., V, 280-281.

[22] Armstrong, "Politics," pp. 14-15.

Henry and Leicester? Further suspicion is cast on this action by a passage in a contemporary chronicle:

> The seyde duke Richard and the erle [Salisbury], seying that they myghte nat preuayle ne withstond the malice of the forseyde duk Edmond; the whiche dayly entended and prouoked the kyng to theyre fynal destruccioun; and gadered priuyly a power of peple and kept thaym couertly in villages aboute the touns of Seynt Albons. (My italics)[23]

It would seem also that the last paragraph of the letter itself raises some doubts as to the good intentions of the writers. They requested the Chancellor to show the letter to the king and to tell him their intentions, including their determination "for the removyng and overthrawyng of the cedicious and fraudelent blaspheme and defamie Untruly . . . leyed upon us." Perhaps even more sinster than this was their claim that they spoke on behalf of "the Lordes, Knyghtes, Squires, and all other people beying with us." They concluded with the pious injunction to the Chancellor to do his best to convince the king so that "any inconvenient that for lacke ther of mowe falle . . . be [not] leyed upon you."[24]

This evidence seems, to this writer, sufficient at least to question the generally held belief that York was honest and open in his claims, and that the Council at Leicester was called "in reality to cover movements to crush the Duke of York."[25]

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[23] Davies' Chron., p. 71.

[24] Rot. Parl., V, 281.

[25] Ramsay, Lanc., II, 180; C. A. J. Armstrong in "Politics," is one of the very few modern writers who does not concur in this opinion.

At 2 A.M. 22 May a second letter from the rebel leaders was delivered to the Lancastrian camp by York's confessor, William Willeflete.[26] The contents of this letter were merely a rehash of their grievances and a plea that the writers be given audience with King Henry so that they might lay their case before him. As a gratuitous slap at their enemies they enclosed a copy of their letter to the Chancellor claiming they did so because "we be not acertaigned whether oure said [letters] be by his Faderhood shewed unto youre seid good grace or not."[27] The reason for this bit of nastiness is revealed, I believe, by the so-called "Parliamentary Pardon" enacted two months later.[28] After presenting all the "facts," including the two letters in question, it was stated that these letters were deliberately kept from King Henry by the malice of Somerset, Thomas Thorpe, and William Joseph who intercepted the letter to the Chancellor-Archbishop when the latter took it to the king. An official statement like this would seem, at first glance, fairly trustworthy. Considered in light of the outcome of the First Battle of St. Albans and the subsequent sitting of a Parliament called by the victors, the veracity of that Parliament's version is at least open to question.[29]

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[26] Rot. Parl., V, 282.

[27] Rot. Parl., V, 281. This letter is also printed in Paston Letters, III, 23-24.

[28] Rot. Parl., V, 280-283.

[29] Armstrong, "Politics," pp. 22 & 23.

By mid-morning of 22 May both armies were encamped in and around the town of St. Albans about twenty miles north of London. With King Henry was a rather august company of noblemen including two dukes, Somerset and Buckingham; the Marquess of Dorset, Somerset's nineteen year old son; the Earl of Stafford, Buckingham's son and Somerset's son-in-law; the Earl of Pembroke, Henry's half-brother; the Earl of Northumberland; the Earl of Devon; the Earl of Wiltshire; Lords Clifford, Dudley, Berners, and Roos. With York's camp was a less distinguished but more numerous company headed by the Earls of Salisbury and Warwick; York's thirteen year old son Edward, Earl of March; Viscount Bourchier, brother of the Chancellor-Archbishop and of Lord Berners. The best estimates place York's strength at about three thousand, that of the king about two thousand.[30]

Rather than taking refuge in the nearby Abbey as might have been expected, King Henry "in harnys hys owne propyr person,"[31] set his standard in the center of the town.[32] York sent envoys to the king requesting audience. Henry had designated Buckingham his spokesman earlier in the day at the same time he evidently replaced Somerset as Constable with Buckingham.[33] Buckingham agreed to confer with Henry and present to rebels' letters to him personally. In return for this concession he requested one from them. He pointed

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[30]Armstrong, "Politics," p. 28.

[31]Gregory's Chron., p. 198.

[32]Whethamstede, Registrum, I, 173.

[33]Armstrong, "Politics," pp. 23, 30, in which he cites Giles' Chronicle as the sole source for this change in Constable.

out the seriousness of any attack on the king's banner and asked that they "retrayent jusques a Barnet ou a Hattefeld pour une nuyt."[34]

York's envoy returned to Buckingham with a renewal of the demand for an answer to his articles which were a restatement of the demands made at Dartford three years before. They would be satisfied only if

> your hyghe Majeste [would] delyver such as we wole accuse, and they to have lyke as they have deserved and done . . . We wyll not now cesse for noon such promysse, surete, ne other, tyl we have hem whych hav deserved deth, or elles we to dye therefore.[35]

York's herald was sent back with Buckingham's offer to relay the message to the king. When, for the third time, York sent the herald for a direct reply to his demands Buckingham must have realized that further talk was bootless. The herald was sent back with a clear rejection of York's demands:

> I, Kyng Herry, charge and comaund that no maner persone, of what degree, or state, or condicyon that evere he be abyde not, but voyde the felde, and not be so hardy to make ony resystens ageyne me in myn owne realme; for I shall knowe what traytor dar be so bold to reyse apepull in myn owne lond, where thorugh I am in grete des ese and hevynesse and by the feyth that I owe to Seynt Edward and to the corone of Inglond, I shall destrye them every moder sone, and they be hanged and drawen, and quartered, that may be taken afterward, . . . And, for a conclusyon, rather then they shall have ony Lorde here with me at this tyme, I shall this day, for her sake, and in this quarrell my sylff lyve or dye.[36]

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[34]"Fastolf Relation," appendix II of Armstrong's "Politics," p. 66.

[35]Paston Letters, III, 26.

[36]Ibid., pp. 26-27. On the authenticity of this letter and the version of the affair as given in the Parliamentary Pardon see Armstrong, "Politics," pp. 33-37; see also Whethamstede, Registrum, I, 167.

On receipt of the king's reply York is reported to have said, "Then it is meet for us to do that which we have the power to do."[37]

Although the reply by King Henry may not be authentic in detail there is some reason to believe that an answer in the same general terms was sent. One of the most doubtful phrases is that threatening to hang, draw, and quarter anyone taken captive. This blood-thirstiness is most uncharacteristic of the gentle king, but even he was human and must have been close to the end of his patience.

Henry was certainly intelligent enough to realize that the bitter personal enmity between York and Somerset had come to the point of posing a very real danger to the dynasty. The feud had obscured or concealed this fact for too long. It is quite likely, therefore, that this was in Henry's mind when the reply, regardless of the particular wording, was given to York's arrogant demands.

It is unfortunate that, although all the chroniclers devote considerable space to the Battle of St. Albans, there is no agreement among them concerning the details. We must, therefore, pick our way carefully through them, selecting the evidence which seems most logical and which fits what we know of the character of those involved.

This lack of agreement among the contemporary accounts of the battle leaves obscure the responsibility for the actual start of the

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[37]"Doncques il nous convient faire ce que faire nous pouvons." "Fastolf Relation," in Armstrong, "Politics," p. 65.

fighting. One claims that while the negotiations were still in progress Warwick broke into the far side of town;[38] others say that, upon being called traitors, York, Warwick, and Salisbury launched the attack.[39] Again, the details are uncertain and are not of particular importance to this study. The important, indeed crucial, factor is the presence of the king. This raised what otherwise might have been a minor clash to one of major proportions. A deliberate armed attack on the king turned a private fight into a public catastrophe. For the Duke of York, the die was cast on Thursday, 22 May 1455. King Henry having taken his place beneath his royal standard represented the realm. An attack upon him, therefore, was an attack on the kingdom.

The actual fighting was brief, and the details are not germane to this thesis. Within a short time the issue was settled.[40] It would seem that, once the Yorkists had broken into the town the Lancastrians panicked. The Earl of Wiltshire is singled out in two accounts for his cowardice: "Thys sayde [earl] sette the kynges baner agayne an howse ende and fought manly with the helys

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[38] English Brut, p. 522.

[39] Flenley, Six Town Chron., pp. 108, 142.

[40] "And it was done with inne di houre . . .", Paston Letters, III, 30. "Le bataille dura jusques a deux heures et demie," "Dijon Relation," appendix I of Armstrong "Politics," p. 64. Sources consulted for accounts of the battle: Davies' Chron., p. 72; Flenley, Six Town Chron., pp. 108, 142, 158; Three 15th Cent. Chron., pp. 70, 152, 168; Gregory's Chron., p. 198; English Brut, pp. 522, 601; Whethamstede, Registrum, I, 167-169; Paston Letters, III, 25-30.

for he was a feryd of lesyng of beaute."[41] Standing practically alone with his deserted banner, Henry received a slight wound in the neck from an arrow.[42] He could certainly see that his forces had been, or were being, defeated on every side and that he could do nothing to save the situation. He allowed himself to be led to shelter in a nearby house where he waited for the next step.

That the fight itself was a personal one between York and Somerset is given additional proof by the fact that the fighting stopped almost at once when it was known that Somerset had been slain,[43] probably on orders from York.

His detested rival dead all York had to do was to take control of the king's person. This could best be done by a ceremonial submission after which Henry had no alternative but to extend his grace to the duke. Henry had already agreed "de bonne voulant" to turn over the Duke of Buckingham and the Earl of Wiltshire when York had sent a herald to demand that he do so.[44] The King, in all

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[41] Gregory's Chron., p. 198; see also Paston Letters, III, 28, where he is associated with Thorpe in cowardly flight. In a letter to William Worcester (p. 33), William Barker says that "Sir Phillyp Wentworth . . . bare the Kynges standard, and kest hit down and fled." This may be so since little distinction was made between the standard and the king's banner. See Armstrong, "Politics," p. 43, n.3.

[42] Paston Letters, III, 28, 30; Davies' Chron., p. 72; Gregory's Chron., p. 198.

[43] Cal. Mil. Papers, pp. 16-17. Letter to the Archbishop of Ravenna dated 31 May 1455 which states that the battle ceased at once with the death of Somerset. Davies' Chron., p. 72, says essentially the same thing.

[44] "Dijon Relation," appendix I in Armstrong, "Politics," p. 64.

likelihood, agreed willingly to this arrogant demand in order to prevent further bloodshed and because he had no real alternative. Buckingham, seriously wounded, was taken prisoner but Wiltshire had long since fled the field. His major purpose accomplished, York went to the Abbey where Henry had been taken. He knelt and requested mercy for having imperiled the person of the king. He offered as excuse his loyal determination to rid the king of the traitors who had misled him. Henry, at the mercy of the victorious rebels, gave his pardon to the duke and all others.[45]

The following day the Duke of York, having had his way, conducted King Henry "in gret Astate to London, and he was looged in the Bisshop paleys of London."[46]

The correspondant of the Archbishop of Ravenna expressed a generally held belief when he wrote: "He [York] will take up the government again and some think that the affairs of that kingdom will now take a turn for the better."[47]

Had normal political life been resumed at this point there is good reason to believe that the remainder of Henry's reign would have been relatively peaceful and the succession of his son assured. The failure to do so, rather than the direct results of the battle, made a final Lancastrian disaster all but inevitable.[48]

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[45]"Dijon Relation," Appendix I in Armstrong, "Politics," pp. 64-65.

[46]English Brut, p. 522.

[47]Cal. Mil. Papers, p. 17.

[48]Armstrong, "Politics," p. 63.

CHAPTER VII

SECOND ILLNESS AND SECOND PROTECTORATE

The battle losses on both sides at St. Albans were negligible. Among the dead, in addition to the Duke of Somerset, were the Earl of Northumberland and Lord Clifford. The Duke of Buckingham; his son, Lord Stafford; Somerset's son, the Earl of Dorset; and the Earl of Devon were seriously but not mortally wounded. Figures on the total casualties are difficult to determine, but probably no more than 150 to 200 were killed.[1] Casualty figures, however, are often far from commensurate with the results of a battle.

York was in command of the king's person, Somerset was dead, and a Parliament had been called which could be expected to put the stamp of approval on all the duke had done.

While waiting for Parliament to assemble on 9 July, the Duke of York began clearing Somerset's men from offices of state. He took for himself the post of Constable of England, and gave the post of Treasurer to his brother-in-law, Viscount Bourchier. Archbishop Bourchier retained the Great Seal. The Earl of Warwick was given the vacant Captaincy of Calais.[2] By early June the Duke of

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[1] Davies (Chron., p. 72) says "at this bataylle were slayne lx persones of gentilmen and of other." Paston Letters, III, 38, says "48 of the slayn were buried in the Abbey," and (Ibid., p. 30) that 400 were killed, and, in a third letter (p. 31), "ther was at most slayn vi score."

[2] Paston Letters, III, 31-33; English Brut, p. 522.

Buckingham had been persuaded to make his peace with the victors, he and his kinsmen giving considerable bond to keep the peace. Lord Dudley was sent to the Tower to an uncertain fate, and Somerset's son was in Warwick's custody. All in all, on the surface things seemed to be going as York wished.

Beneath the surface, however, there was uneasiness, as is revealed by this brief paragraph in a letter sent to William Worcester in early June:

> Hit was seyd, for soothe, that Harpere and ii other of the Kynges Chamber were confedered to have steked the Deuk York in the Kynges chamber; but hit was not so for they have clered theym there. But London upon the same tole areysen, and every man to harneys on Corpus Christi even, and moche adoo there was.[3]

On 5 June the neck wound that Henry had received, and the distress he must have felt at the death of Somerset and the others, necessitated sending a letter under Privy Seal to Gilbert Kemer, Dean of Salisbury and a noted physician. This letter has been interpreted to indicate that "by June 5th Henry was once more in the doctors' hands with a return of his old malady."[4] There is no basis whatever for this assumption. The letter states that "we be occupied and laboured, as ye knowe wel, with Sicknesse and Infirmitees" and the attention is required of "expert, notable, and proved men in the crafte of Medicines, as ye be, in whom, among alle other, our affection and desire right especially is sette." Kemer is

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[3] Paston Letters, III, 33.

[4] Kenneth H. Vickers, England in the Later Middle Ages (London; 1913), p. 46; Nicolas, Proceedings, VI, lxxii, note 4, essentially indicates the same.

required to go to Windsor on 12 June to "entende upon oure Persone for the cause abovesaid."[5] Rather than a recurrence of the acute depression, as has been too generally assumed, this illness seems much more likely to have been the result of an infection from the slight wound in the neck and the considerable discomfort it must have caused. There is no evidence which would indicate a return of mental incapacity. Indeed, there is good evidence that Henry continued to give attention to affairs of state throughout the summer.[6]

There is no agreement among modern historians as to the date of this supposed relapse into imbecility, yet all agree that it did happen, some time between early June and early October. It is this writer's contention that at no time did Henry suffer a recurrence of the illness of 1453-1454. There is no doubt that he was ill for about three and a half or four months. This illness necessitated the appointment of the Duke of York as Protector for a second time late in 1455. The nature of this second illness is the point with which I disagree. In the course of this chapter I shall offer an alternative which fits the known facts and which is medically sound.

While under the care of Kemer, the king at least nominally continued to conduct affiars of state first from Westminster and later from Hertford.[7]

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[5] Rymer, Foedera, XI, 366.

[6] Nicolas, Proceedings, VI, 247-249.

[7] In Paston Letters, III, 32, the statement runs, "the Kyng, the Quene, and the Prynce remeven to Hertford to morwen . . ." Dr. Gairdner dates this letter in June, 1455.

The Court, as indicated by letters from the Council, was still apprehensive of renewed violence. On 23 June letters were sent to all the magnates ordering them to come to the Parliament, summoned on 26 May, "with only the companie accorded your astate."[8] Reflecting the uneasiness that was felt throughout the country is a brief observation John Jenry made in a letter to John Paston on 24 June. "Sum men holde it right straunge to be in this Parlement, and me thenketh they be wyse men that soo doo."[9] It is quite possible that the Duke of York had stirred up a good deal of resentment, especially among those who were not particularly happy with his victory. In an age when loyalty to the crown was still a basic part of the Englishman's make-up, the precipitate and arrogant attack on the Royal Standard and the King's Person would leave a bad taste in many mouths and negate much of the popular favor that York might otherwise have gained.

Both sides used every means possible to assure a favorable majority in the coming Parliament. On 8 June the Duchess of Norfolk wrote John Paston,

> . . . for as muche it is thought right necessarie for divers causes that my Lord have at this tyme in the Parlement suche persones as longe unto him . . . we hertily desire and pray you

to do everything possible to "the good explyte and conclusion of the

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[8] Nicolas, Proceedings, VI, 244. Letters were addressed to the Dukes of York, Norfolk, Buckingham; Earls of Warwick, Salisbury, Arundel, Devon, Oxford, Shrewsbury, Worcester, Wiltshire, Northumberland; Lords Beaumont, Bourchier, Cromwell, Grey of Ruthyn, Grey of Rougemont, Bonville, Roos, Abergavenney, Greystoke, Scrop of Groby.

[9] Paston Letters, III, 39.

same." Ten days later Paston received a similar letter from William Pryce, representing the other side. Each correspondent gave the names of those they wished elected.[10]

On 9 July, when Parliament assembled at Westminster, Henry was well enough to take his seat in the regal chair of state in the Painted Chamber.[11] After the election of John Wenlock (a Yorkist wounded at St. Albans)[12] as Speaker,[13] the proceedings of Parliament were taken up with savage charges and countercharges as to who had been responsible for the battle of St. Albans. In Henry's presence, on 17 July, the Earl of Warwick and Lord Cromwell nearly came to blows "in somuch as the Lord Cromwell wold have excused hym self of all the steryng or moevyng the male journey of Seynt Albones." Hearing about this, Warwick rushed to the king and "sware by his othe" that Cromwell lied and was "begynner of all that journey." Warwick was evidently so enraged that the Earl of Shrewsbury "hathe loged hym at the hospitall of Seynt James, . . . be the Lord Cromwell's desire, for his sauf gard."[14] A later paragraph in the same letter tells that, despite the admonition in the letters of 23 June,[15] Warwick's, Salisbury's, and York's retainers

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[10] Paston Letters, III, 34, 36. See also Nicolas, Proceedings, III, 246-247.

[11] "Ipso Domino Rege in Camera depicta regali Solio redidente." Rot. Parl., V, 278. If he had fallen victim of "his old malady" this would not have been possible.

[12] Paston Letters, III, 28.

[13] Rot. Parl., V, 280.

[14] Paston Letters, III, 44.

[15] Above, p. 122.

were going about London and Westminster in full arms, and that their barges plying the river between London and Westminster were "stuffed . . . full of wepon dayly." The writer, Henry Windsor, adds that on the day he was writing, a proclamation was made "on the Kyngs behalf that noman shuld nether bere wepon ner were harnes defensible." This would certainly seem to indicate that Henry's will had not been totally sujugated to that of the Duke of York.

The major business of Parliament, after committees were appointed to deal with the more mundane affairs,[16] was the so-called Parliamentary Pardon for York, Salisbury, Warwick and their supporters. The incident was recited in detail from the Yorkist's point of view, which may well have played rather fast and loose with the truth.[17] The king was required to say that York's letters had been withheld from him and that he was satisfied that all these men were "true and feitheful Liegemen." Full responsibility for everything that happened on 22 May was thrown upon Somerset, Thorpe, and William Joseph.[18] Furthermore, it was decreed that "nothing doon there never after this tyme to be spoken of; to the which bill many a man groged full sore nowe it is passed." An even more telling observation on the apprehensions felt by many is Henry Windsor's closing admonition to the recipients

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[16]Expenses of the royal household, defense of Calais, defense of Berwick under attack by the Scots, the keeping of the sea, drain of bullion, and the government of Wales. Rot. Parl., V, 279.

[17]Above, pp. 109-115.

[18]Rot. Parl., V, 282, 332.

of his letter: "After this is rede and understonden, I pray you bren or breke it, for I am loth to write any thing of any Lord."[19]

Once pardon was extended to the major rebels, they agreed to renew their oaths of fealty to King Henry in person on 23 July.[20] As a final bit of business, and as a gesture to York's one-time patron, a bill was passed rehabilitating the memory of Duke Humphrey of Gloucester.[21] Parliament was then prorogued to 12 November.

During the summer Henry continued to attend to the business of ruling his badly shaken realm. The many letters, petitions and other documents bearing his sign manual well attest to his continued interest in such things during the time he is thought to have been once again insane. On 2 August he initialed a petition from John Shipward for export and import of goods, and gave his answer; on 8 August he signed a formal letter to King Alfonso V of Portugal; on 9 August his autograph appears on a petition from Thomas Lomley, and on the answering grant, of the Constableship of the Castle at Scarborough, £20 annual income from its revenues and 25 marks from the farm of the town of Scarborough, and one robe a year from the Great Wardrobe on condition the recipient spend 40 marks annually on the repair of the Castle;[22] on 27 September he

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[19] Paston Letters, III, 44.

[20] Rot. Parl., V, 282-283. Sixty magnates, including two archbishops, two dukes, eleven bishops, six earls, two viscounts, eighteen abbotts, two priors, and seventeen barons, took the oath. A Proviso was added that "all other Lordes beyng not present, shuld at theire commyne make the seid othe."

[21] Rot. Parl., V, 335; Flenley, Six Town Chron., pp. 109, 142-143.

[22] Nicolas, Proceedings, VI, 254-255, 257, 259.

wrote "under oure signet of the Egle" to the mayor, aldermen, and sheriffs of London concerning the right of sanctuary at St. Martin's.[23] On 5 December he wrote to the Earls of Arundel and Wiltshire, and Lords Fitzwarin and St. Amond, informing them that the Duke of York, had been sent to Devon to put a stop to riots occurring there and ordering them to assist him or suffer the consequences.[24]

These letters which take us far past the latest date given for King Henry's supposed relapse into insanity, seem to raise doubt that this was the cause for York's second protectorate. Contemporary accounts give no definite evidence to support the idea, which is odd in view of their many references, even though brief, to his illness the year before.

The basis upon which modern writers make the claim of a second period of insanity seems to be a doubtful passage in a letter, dated 28 October, written by James Gresham to John Paston. The fact is that the original manuscript is badly decayed at just the point where the passage in question occurs.[25] This passage is as follows:

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[23] Calendars of Letter-books of The City of London, ed. R. R. Sharpe, Letter Book K temp. Henry VI (London; 1911), pp. 370-371.

[24] Nicolas, Proceedings, VI, 267-270. This letter bears the warranty Per Regem, a form used only by the king and hence equivalent to the sign manual when no qualifying phrase is added, such as et consilium, auctoritate parliamenti, or per avisamentum consilii. See Lander, "Henry VI," pp. 53-54, n.3. Lander refers to another letter under the sign manual, dated 12 December, which I have been unable to find.

[25] Paston Letters, III, 48, n. 1.

> so muche rumor is here; what it menyth I wot not, God turne it . . . at Hertford, and summe men ar a ferd that he is seek ageyn. I pray God . . . my Lords of York, Warwyk, Salesbury and other arn in purpos to conveye hym . . . & c.[26]

This is certainly far from conclusive evidence of a return to imbecility.[27]

But if King Henry had not relapsed into "insanity," what is there to account for his absence from the opening of Parliament on 12 November "for certain just and reasonable causes"? Since it is this writer's contention that Henry was not insane, except in a most general way, the year before, he thinks that the king could not very well "relapse into insanity" at this point. However, that is a minor quibble. The available information which, it must be admitted, is slight seems to permit of a very logical explanation which fits the known facts.

On 22 May Henry had been slightly wounded in the neck by an arrow at the Battle of St. Albans.[28] A few days later he was described as having "no grete harme."[29] Two weeks later the physician,

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[26] Paston Letters, III, 49-50.

[27] J. R. Lander traces the rise of this idea from 1833, when Sharon Turner wrote: "In June the King again became diseased," through Lingard's History of England of 1848, and Gairdner's 1874 edition of the Paston Letters, to Bishop Stubbs, who wrote in 1878 that before 12 November "the king was again insane." Once Stubbs had spoken, the idea became fixed. Lander, "Henry VI," pp. 50-51.

[28] I am deeply indebted to Dr. Donald W. Thaden, pediatrician of East Lansing, for his advice on this section of my paper. The generally grimy condition of most children has made him familiar with infections from minor injuries. The unsanitary conditions of the 15th century, would, therefore, be quite familiar to him.

[29] Paston Letters, III, 31.

Gilbert Kemer, was sent to tend the king at Windsor. On 9 July Henry opened Parliament in person and ten days later was said to stand "in hele" of his body.[30] There is no further word of his health, good or bad, until 28 October and the letter quoted above. Two weeks later, 12 November, he was unable to be present at the opening of Parliament, and the Duke of York acted for him by letter of the Council.[31] During this period and after, the king continued to affix the sign manual to official documents. Further evidence that Henry continued to be interested in the world around him in this period is a command in the decree of 22 November which committed the government to the Privy Council. After claiming that "the grete diligence and actuell laboure [of governing] is to his moost noble persone full tedious and grete to suffre and bere," he turned the government over to the Council with the proviso "that in all such matiers as touchen the honour, wurship and suertee of his moost noble persone, they shall late his Highnes have knowlech what direction they take in theym."[32] (The italics are mine.) On 25 February 1456, King Henry personally relieved the Duke of York, who had been appointed on 19 Novermber,[33] from his duties as Protector.[34]

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[30] Paston Letters, III, 43.

[31] Nicolas, Proceedings, VI, 261-262.

[32] Rot. Parl., V, 289-290.

[33] Rymer, Foedera, XI, 369-370.

[34] Rot. Parl., V, 321-322.

The above chronology, in the opinion of Dr. Thaden, supports the following diagnosis: the wound suffered on 22 May became infected, requiring the attention of Dr. Kemer two weeks later. Either the ministrations of Kemer or nature cleared the infection enough for Henry personally to preside at the opening of Parliament on 9 July without apparent illness, as is indicated by the reference to his "hele" of body. Even if he were suffering some discomfort it would not have been noticed since he was noted for his lack of complaints, regardless of his circumstances. Any possible inflamation of his wound would be concealed by the high-necked gowns he habitually wore.

During the summer the infection could very well have died down and the wound, to all appearances, healed. In addition, during the warmer summer months Henry very likely exchanged the heavy woolen gowns of the winter and early spring for lighter weight clothing. In the fall, then, a secondary infection of severe degree must have set in, which incapacitated him for three months with high fever, quite likely high enough to cause delirium which would account for the rumor that he was "seek ageyn." This infection could well have lain dormant and then flared up in a virulent form (such cases are far from unheard of). It is also possible that the original infection had left deposits of pus on the neck of his cool weather clothes, which he began to wear again as the weather cooled in early October. These dirty gowns could very well have reinfected Henry through a possible cut or scratch. This type of infection could incapacitate a person, especially one

who had never been particularly strong. Rest and care, even without modern antibiotics, could bring about recovery within one to three months. During most of this time Henry would have been fully capable of signing documents, listening to reports, etc.; but the general day-to-day tasks would, indeed, be "full tedious and grete to suffre and bere."

This diagnosis, admittedly, is conjecture. But it is conjecture which fits the known facts and is far more reasonable than the generally accepted belief that King Henry was "insane" during the fall and winter of 1455.

The king's illness at the time appointed for the reassembling of Parliament, made mandatory the naming of a surrogate for the king at the opening ceremonies. Therefore, on 10 November the Council authorized a commission to be issued to the Duke of York, giving him power to hold Parliament, to act in the king's name, and to dissolve Parliament upon the completion of its business.[35]

The disturbances in Devon mentioned above (p. 126) were the result of a renewal of the feud between the Earl of Devon and Lord Bonville. On 23 October the earl's son had descended on Bonville's lawyer, Nicholas Radford, dragged him from his house and savagely killed him in the pulic highway.[36] Not many days later the earl and Bonville's men fought a pitched battle near

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[35]Nicolas, Proceedings, VI, 261; Minutes of the Council. See also notes 32 and 33 above. York's Patent is printed in Rot. Parl., V, 453-454.

[36]Paston Letters, III, 48-49. See also Lander "Henry VI," pp. 59-64 for details of fighting between these two magnates in the fall of 1455.

Exeter and forced Bonville to flee for his life. The earl then capped his crimes by plundering Exeter Cathedral and holding the canons for ransom. It was this flagrant flaunting of the law that made the Commons renew their request to the Lords for the appointment of a Protector. It was probably also a strong factor in the decision to call upon York.[37]

The duke assumed the duties of Protector with modest reluctance even as he had the preceding year.[38] He exercised his powers for only a short period, however. The business of this session of Parliament was completed in a month. Very little was actually accomplished in view of the innumerable things that could and should have been done to restore the kingdom to political and economic stability. An Act of Resumption was passed that would have gone far toward restoring the fiscal health of the government, had it not been emasculated by at least 145 distinct exemptions.[39] These exemptions themselves are additional evidence that King Henry was in full control of his mind in mid-December when the full and royal response were enacted. Only Henry himself or the Protector could have stipulated the exemptions, and it is stretching credulity too far to think that it was the Duke of York.

On 15 December the duke prorogued Parliament to 14 January. His commission to do so was agreed upon by the Council on the

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[37] Rot. Parl., V, 285-286.

[38] Ibid., pp. 286-287.

[39] Ibid., 300-303, 303-320.

eleventh.[40] It should be noted that York prorogued Parliament, not as Protector as he was entitled to under his commission as Protector, but under a special commission from the Council. This may indicate that Henry was again exerting some influence with the Council or, possibly, that the Council was not particularly enamored of York and took this way of expressing disenchantment.

Far from fulfilling the happy anticipations following St. Albans, York had not succeeded in appreciably altering the unruly nature of the magnates, nor had he been able to do much in reforming the government. As noted above[41] only sixty, out of one hundred and one spiritual and temporal lords had attended the July session of Parliament. In November even fewer put in an appearance.[42] On 15 December, in an effort to improve attendance at the January session, letters went out, under Privy Seal, to sixty-five lords commanding their presence and threatening heavy fines for failure to obey.[43]

The threat, it would seem, proved ineffective.

> This day [9 February 1456] my Lordes Yorke and Warwick comen to the Parlement in a good aray, to the noumbre of iii^{c} men, all jakkid and in brigantiens, and noo lord elles, wherof many men mervailed.[44]

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[40] Nicolas, Proceedings, VI, 274; Rot. Parl., V, 321.

[41] Above, p. 125, n.20.

[42] Lander, "Henry VI," p. 56, n.4. Sir James Ramsay, in Lanc., II, 189, gives 37 as the total number but gives no source for this figure.

[43] Nicolas, Proceedings, VI, 279-282.

[44] Paston Letters, III, 75. Letter from John Bocking to Sir John Fastolf.

This same letter reports a rumor that Henry was about to discharge the Duke of York as Protector and that, if the latter had not come so strongly supported, he would have been attacked. But "there is no man able to take ony suche enterprise." A bit further on, Bocking gives additional evidence that King Henry still had a mind of his own. He says that "a grete man" had told him that the king wanted York as chief councillor and lieutenant with a title reflecting this role. York would serve at the king's pleasure and his patent would be revised according to Henry's wishes so that it would be "not soo large as it is by Parlement." The consensus, according to Bocking was, however, that this could not be accomplished in view of the "comyng this day in suche array to Westminster." He believed that York's Protectorship would continue as it had been, although "the Quene is a grete and strong labourid woman, for she spareth noo peyne to sue hire thinges to an intent and conclusion to hir power."[45]

In the light of events two weeks later, it would seem that Queen Margaret was successful in sueing "hire thinges," for on 25 February Henry went to Parliament and personally dismissed York as Protector and Defender.[46] Parliament then returned to business, dealing with petitions of various types, repeals of Acts of Resumption of earlier years, and requests for new Acts of Resumption.[47]

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[45] Paston Letters, III, 75.

[46] Rot. Parl., V, 321-322; Rymer, Foedera, XI, 373-374.

[47] Rot. Parl., V, 328-344.

On 12 March 1455 Parliament was dissolved,[48] and the conflict between Lancaster and York entered a new phase.

[48] Powicke and Fryde, Handbook, p. 532. The Rolls of Parliament contain no entry for the dissolution of this Parliament.

CHAPTER VIII

YORK AND MARGARET

With the dissolution of Parliament in the early part of March, the king, queen, prince, and the great magnates scattered from London in an overt expression of mutual distrust. Margaret and Prince Edward were established at Tutbury. Henry remained at Westminster until mid-May when he moved to Sheen. The Duke of York went to his stronghold at Sandal Castle and Warwick retired to his castle at Warwick. The Duke of Buckingham "noo thing wel plesid, and sumwhat on easid of herte to his purpose" also departed for his estates.[1]

Unlike the situation following the murder of Suffolk when the Duke of Somerset immediately filled the gap thus created, Margaret did not now have a powerful supporter to take the place of the fallen Somerset. She had succeded in persuading Henry to dismiss York as Protector but she now had to work directly through her gentle husband. For all his kindness and good intentions, even his strongest supporters could not say that he was reliable.

Margaret, however, seems to have become even more determined than ever to preserve the crown to the Lancastrians. Her fierce maternal intincts had been roused by the birth of the long awaited Prince Edward and she was willing to go to any extreme to make certain that he would inherit the crown intact.

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[1] Paston Letters, III, 86, John Bocking to John Paston on 8 May.

Unfortuantely, the surviving records for late 1456, 1457, and early 1458 are extremely scant. Especially is this true of records of the Privy Council, a point remarked on by Professor Gairdner.[2] It is, therefore, possible only to trace in outline, with a few high points, the events of this period of eighteen months or so.

To the people of the era it seemed that even the heavens were conspiring against the tranquility of England for, toward the end of June, Halley's Comet appeared "betwene the northe and the est, extendying her bemes towardes the sowthe. The whiche sterre was seynne also in the Court of Rome as they reported that came fro thens."[3]

In more mundane affairs the Duke of York, rather arrogantly, it would seem, continued to arrange things to his liking despite what must have been vehement protests from the queen. In March Warwick's younger brother, George Neville, was provided with the temporalities of the See of Exeter although he was evidently still too young for consecration as bishop.[4] In late April a riot erupted in London "be twene the mercers and the Lombardes,"[5] which necessitated sending the Duke of Buckingham to the City with a commission of oyer et determiner.[6]

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[2] Paston Letters, I, 168, 170.

[3] Davies' Chron., p. 72, "Brief Notes" in Three 15th Cent. Chron., p. 152. I am indebted to Dr. Samuel Thorndike, Professor of Mathematics and Astronomy at Alma College, for his definite identification of the chroniclers' "stella comata" as Halley's comet.

[4] Above, p. 6; also Powicke and Fryde, Handbook, p. 226.

[5] Three 15th Cent Chron., p. 70. See also Gregory's Chron., p. 199; Flenley, Six Town Chron., p. 110; English Brut, pp. 522-523.

[6] Flenley, Six Town Chron., p. 143.

The preceding year the Scots had taken advantage of the situation in England to launch an attack, led by James II, against the border fortress at Berwick.[7] No formal reply or protest was made until 26 July when York took it upon himself to send, in Henry's name, a contemptuous rebuff to James for an act "unworthy of a king or couragious knyght."[8] Such issues as these kept the Duke of York occupied so that Queen Margaret was able to set her plans for a renewed attack on him in the fall.

Henry and the Court had moved to areas where the strongest Lancastrian support might be expected, in and around Leicester, Coventry, and Kenilworth.[9] A Great Council was called to sit at Coventry to which York and his friends were invited. Young Henry Beaufort, now Duke of Somerset, was summoned also, probably to give Margaret the support of his name since, at the age of twenty, he could not command much of a personal following.

Writing to John Paston on 8 October, John Bocking observed, "As to tidings, the Kyng and the Quene ar at Coventre. The Counsail be ganne there yesterday, and my Lord Shrewysbury, Tresorier of England."[10] The removal of Lord Bourchier as Treasurer was followed on the 11th by the replacement of Archbishop Bourchier as Chancellor. The Great Seal was turned over to a stronger Lancastrian in the person

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[7] Three 15th Cent. Chron., p. 70.

[8] Rymer, Foedera, XI, 383.

[9] Christie, Henry VI, pp. 387-388.

[10] Paston Letters, III, 103.

of William Waynflete, Bishop of Winchester, and the queen's Chancellor, Laurence Booth, became Keeper of the Privy Seal.[11] These ministerial changes once more returned control of the administration to the Lancastrians and Margaret. An entry in the Rolls of Parliament concerning the crimes of the Duke of York preliminary to his attainder in 1459 indicates that Margaret and her supporters had next made a strong bid for the impeachment of York. The pertinent passage reads:

> . . . at youre Citee of Coventre, in youre grete Counseill holden there, after dyvers reherces by youre Chaunceller of Englond in youre moost high presence made to the seid Duc of York; the Duc of Bukyngham, on the bihalf of the Lordes Temporell, reherced full notably to moke the seid Duc of York to understonde of what demeanyng he had been, and lete hym witte that he had no thyng to lene to, sauf oonly youre Grace, as more playnly is conteyned in an Acte therof made. [The Duke of Buckingham and other lords] on ther knees bisought You, seyng the grete Jupartie for youre moost noble persone . . . inquietyng so often the grete parte of youre Realme, that it shuld not lyke You to shew the seid Duc of York . . . hereafter grace, if he attempted . . . to doo the contrary to youre Roill estate or inquietyng of youre Realme . . . to be punished after ther deserte . . .[12]

Henry had replied that he would do so. It seems that the Duke of Buckingham had more common sense than many of the magnates and he used his moderating influence to bring about one more compromise in which King Henry was more than pleased to concur.[13]

On the 11th the young Duke of Somerset's retainers were involved in a street fight with the Coventry night watch in which two or three of the latter were killed. A general alarm had been sounded as the townsmen assembled to avenge the deaths. Buckingham again stepped in

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[11] Paston Letters, III, 108.

[12] Rot. Parl., V, 347.

[13] Ramsay, Lanc., II, 199.

and took "direccion therin."[14] Somerset also seems to have been determined to avenge his father's death by seeking a fight with York, Salisbury, and Warwick. Here, too, "was made a pesse . . . thys tretys was made at Covyntre, in the holy tyme of Lentyn by the mene of Kyng Harry the VI."[15]

Despite all his peacemaking efforts on behalf of Henry, the Duke of Buckingham had little love for Queen Margaret. It was obvious that he held her responsible for the dismissal of his two half-brothers from their offices.

> It is seid the Duke of Buks taketh right straungely that bothe his brethren arn so sodennly discharged from ther offices of Chauncellerie and Tresoryship; and that among other causeth hym that his opynyon is contrary to the Whenes [Queen's] entent.[16]

As the Coventry Council ended King Henry and the Duke of York appear to have reached an understanding. That Henry had always inclined toward trusting York seems clear from various sources, and it is also clear that York was quite ready to take advantage of this fact. Queen Margaret, however, was not so easily blinded to York's ambitions. Prior to leaving Coventry Henry and the duke had conferred at length despite the queen's hostility which may have led her to attempt to prevent York's departure.

> My Lord of York hath be with the Kyng, and is departed ageyn in right good conceyt with the Kyng, but not in gret conceyt with the Whene; and sum men say, ne hadde my Lord of Buks not have letted it, my Lord of York had be distressed in his departyng.[17]

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[14] Paston Letters, III, 108.

[15] Gregory's Chron., p. 203; Gregory dates this in 1458 but no such event occurred at that time and his other details seem to fit with the events of 1456.

[16] Paston Letters, III, 108.

[17] Ibid.

For the remainder of 1456 Henry and Margaret appear to have remained in or near the Midlands,[18] where, it can be assumed, the queen set about rebuilding the Lancastrian party from the wreckage of St. Albans. York retired to his seat at Wigmore, and Salisbury to his at Middleham, while the Earl of Warwick took up his duties as Captain of Calais where he could plot and plan with the Duke of Burgundy and the Dauphin.[19]

1457 is nearly a blank as far as official records and documents are concerned. No Parliament was held, thus depriving us of the valuable Parliament Rolls, and other government agencies are similarly lacking in documentary evidence of activity. There is evidence that a Council was summoned to Coventry in February,[20] but little if anything is known of what business was transacted. In another attempt to get rid of the Duke of York, he was again commissioned Lieutenant of Ireland for ten years.[21]

In April Henry and Margaret were at Hereford to settle a violent dispute which seems to have broken out between Sir William Herbert and others unidentified. William Botoner writing on May first to John Paston indicates that Henry and Margaret had endeared themselves with the burgesses and gentlemen in and about Hereford. He says "the burgeys

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[18] Christie, Henry VI, pp. 387-388.

[19] Ramsay, Lanc., II, 200.

[20] Nicolas, Proceedings, VI, 333.

[21] Ramsay, Lanc., II, 201, citing John Thomas Gilbert, History of The Viceroys of Ireland.

and gentlemen aboute Herford wille goo wyth the Kyng Wyffe and Chylde, but a pease be made or the Kyng part thens . . ."[22]

Late in August a new humiliation was visited upon the English. On 28 August

> the Sencyall of Normandy, Sir Peers the Brasyle and Flokket came with iiiM[1] men and landyd be syde Sandwyche, and toke the towne and spoyled hit, and toke a way myche goode, and slewe dyverse persones, and toke many prisoners.[23]

A contemporary French chronicler, D'Escouchy, probably writing under the impression that York was still in charge of the government, states that the French attack had been arranged by Queen Margaret to embarrass York.[24] Had this been true it does not seem possible to have kept such information a secret. Certainly one of the several hundred Frenchmen involved would have let slip some clue at least. Had this been known it is highly probable that the English would have torn Margaret to pieces at the first opportunity. That this did not happen proves nothing, of course. It does cast doubts on the queen's guilt.

In late October or early November, 1457, a Council was summoned at Westminster. The exact date and the nature of the business discussed is unknown. It seems to have been a stormy session centering on the scandal of the heretical Bishop of Chichester, Reginald Pecock.[25]

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[22] Paston Letters, III, 118.

[23] Three 15th Cent. Chron., pp. 70-71. See also Davies' Chron., p. 74; Flenley, Six Town Chron., pp. 111, 144-145, 159.

[24] See Ramsay, Lanc., II, 202, n.2. Three modern writers, Gairdner, Vickers, and Jacob, use this one rather doubtful source to lay the blame squarely on the queen which seems to be a questionable practice.

[25] Nicolas, Proceedings, VI, 290-291; Paston Letters, I, 175; Three 15th Cent. Chron., p. 71; Davies' Chron., p. 75; English Brut, p. 525; Flenley, Six Town Chron., pp. 145, 159.

It may be assumed that, given his deep interest in the Church, King Henry would be closely concerned in the details of Pecock's hearing, recantation, and the subsequent burning of many of his books, although no official records survive concerning the king's involvement. The only clue I have found of his concern is a letter under the sign manual dated 29 November 1457 which was sent to all the lords spiritual and temporal telling them that because of the importance of matters to be discussed the Council would resume deliberations on 27 January.[26]

1457 thus ended pretty much as it had begun, in gloom and forboding. No one really believed that the "feigned agreement" between the queen and York would last.[27] Relations had been strained too far and too long.

Henry's summons to the Council in January specifically stated that no excuses would be tolerated for non-attendance. The implication is that responsibility for the Council's decisions would be shared by all the magnates. He hoped to work out a more definitive, more lasting adjustment of private quarrels and controversies, and bring about a real reconciliation among all his official family. To do this he needed all the support he could get. He was doomed to disappointment.

On 1 February 1458 William Botoner revealed this in a letter to Sir John Fastolf as he told of the armed retinues the magnates brought with them to Westminster.

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[26]Nicolas, Proceedings, VI, 290.

[27]Stowe, Summarie, (1570); Fol. 281.

> The Kyng came last weke to Westminster, and the Duk of Yorke came to London . . . with [his household] to the nombre of cxl hors . . .; the Erle of Salysburye with iiii^{c} hors in hys companye, iiii^{xx} [four score] knyghts and sqwyers.
>
> The Duke of Somerset came . . . with ii^{c} hors . . . and the Duc of Excestr shalle be here thys weke with a grete felyshyp and strong, as it ys seyd.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> And the Duke of Excester takyth a grete displesir that my Lord Warewyke occupyeth hys office and taketh the charge of the kepyng of the see uppon him.[28]

Six weeks later John Bocking wrote of the displeasure of Exeter who was evidently given a sop to keep him quiet: "My Lord of Excester is displesid that the Erle of Warwyk shall keep the see, and hath ther fore received this weke M^{l}li. of the Hanupere."[29]

Even the warning in the summons to the Council failed to move some of the barons. For on 14 February the king wrote a stinging letter to the Earl of Arundel ordering him to get himself to the Council immediately and explain his absence.[30] During this period Henry continued his attention to lesser affairs of state as indicated by his sign manual on a minor petition of 5 February.[31]

The factional split continued in spite of all Henry's efforts. The younger lords whose fathers had fallen at St. Albans, Somerset, Northumberland, Egremont, and Clifford, arrived with retinues to match those of the Yorkists, but "the cyte wolde not receyue theym, because they came ageyns the pease." They therefore were obliged to

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[28] Paston Letters, III, 125.

[29] Ibid., p. 127.

[30] Nicolas, Proceedings, VI, 293.

[31] Ibid., p. 297.

take up quarters outside the walls of the city in the vicinity of Temple Bar and Westminster. The city was convinced that the young lords meant to destroy York, Salisbury, and Warwick who "was every day armed forto withstonde the malice of tho yong lordes."[32]

Henry opened the Council with a sincere plea to both factions to end their quarrels and make peace.[33] Despite the "grutche and wroth" of the young lords against those responsible for their fathers' deaths

> the byshoppys and other lordes tretyd betwyxt theym of the pease and accorde, and after long trete bothe partyes submytted theym to the laude and arbytrement of the kyng and his counselle.[34]

The arbiters decided that the Duke of York, Salisbury, and Warwick should provide on annuity of £45 to be paid to the Abbey of St. Albans, where the slain were buried, to provide prayers "for theyre soules and for the soules of alle tho that were slayne there." Furthermore, York and the two earls were to pay young Somerset and his mother, Northumberland and Egremont, and Lord Clifford "a notable summe of money, for recompens of theyre fadres, and for wronges done unto theym."[35]

Henry sent orders to the Mayor of London, Geoffrey Boleyn, to make formal proclamation throughout the city "that the lordis were

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[32]Davies' Chron., p. 77. The writer, strongly pro-Yorkist, says further that York and Salisbury came peaceably "onely with theyre household" and took up quarters within the city. See also English Brut, p. 525.

[33]Whethamstede, Registrum, I, 417-418.

[34]Davies' Chron., p. 77.

[35]Ibid., p. 78.

accorded."[36] As a demonstration of the newly signed treaty and a symbol of the amity now supposed to exist among all the magnates a solemn procession to St. Paul's was held on 25 March 1458. Henry wore his crown and full royal regalia. The king was followed by the queen led by the Duke of York, then followed Somerset and Salisbury, Exeter and Warwick, the other lords hand-in-hand.[37]

To the populace this seemed to presage a new day adawning and it "was a greet gladnes and comfort to the peple."[38] But the final words on the subject by another chronicler sourly state "but hit endured nat long."[39] For a time, however, it seemed that all would be well.[40]

The shouting had no sooner ceased than the major antagonists were busy on new plans designed to advance their respective causes. The Duke of York betrayed his ambitions by opening negotiations with several foreign powers. In May a commission was given to Warwick and the Bishop of Salisbury, Richard Beauchamp, to confer with the Duke of Burgundy on breaches of the truce.[41] From this they could obviously branch out in their talks to cover many matters not covered or even contemplated in their commissions.

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[36] Flenley, Six Town Chron., p. 160.

[37] Ibid; also English Brut, p. 525.

[38] Flenley, Six Town Chron., p. 145.

[39] Davies' Chron., p. 78.

[40] See Wright, Pol. Poems, II, 254-256, for a poem celebrating this accord and amity among the lords and the high hopes for the future.

[41] Rymer, Foedera, XI, 410-411.

In November Sir John Wenlock went to Mons to sound out the possibilities of a marriage between one of York's sons and the infant granddaughter of Duke Phillip. Phillip was evasive and Wenlock went to Rouen to investigate the chances of a marriage between the Houses of York and Valois. Here, too, he was rebuffed.[42]

A new Council met in October, 1458, at which the queen hoped to reverse the political tide which seemed to be turning against her. The letters of summons under the sign manual had gone out to the lords on 26 August ordering their appearance at Westminster on 10 October.[43] The Earl of Shrewsbury was replaced by a stronger Lancastrian, the Earl of Wiltshire, in the office of Treasurer.[44] A renewed effort was made to oust Warwick from his Captaincy of Calais but he refused to resign, insisting that his appointment had been made by Parliament and not the king.[45]

In mid-November the bitter hatreds at Court once more broke into open violence. While on his way to a Council meeting in Westminster Warwick and his men were attacked by members of the royal household. Warwick was saved by the intervention of his friends who made it possible for him to escape by barge but not before even the "coques come renyng out with spyttes & pestelles Ayenst him."[46]

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[42]Ramsay, Lanc., II, 210-211, in which he cites Jacques Du Clercq's Memoires.

[43]Nicolas, Proceedings, VI, 297.

[44]Powicke and Fryde, Handbook, p. 103.

[45]Davies Chron., p. 78; Stevenson, Letters, I, 368.

[46]English, Brut, p. 526; Flenley, Six Town Chron., pp. 113, 146; Davies' Chron., p. 78.

The peace, amity, and accord so ceremoniously announced had lasted less than eight months.

During this period it seems that King Henry had been kept as much as possible in the dark concerning the true state of affairs in his kingdom.

> There myght noo mane man that shulde preche by-fore the kynge, but that he shulde shew hys sarmon in wrytyng, were he docter or other, in so moche the lordys woldys ABC wolde assygne what he shulde say, as for any thynge that longyd unto the comyn wele, and yf he passyd hyr commaundement he shulde lese hys costys, and goo as he come, withowte mete and drynge.[47]

This would seem to indicate that all unpleasant or distressing news was kept from the king.

Probably the bluntest criticism of the regime in contemporary records is found in one of the chronicles. It is worth quoting at length.

> In this same tyme, the reame of Englonde was oute of all good gouernaunce, as it had be many dayes before, for the kyng was simple and lad by couetous counseylle, and owed more than he was worthe. His dettes encreased dayly, but payment was there none; alle the possessyons and lordeshyppes that perteyned to the croune the kyng had yeue awey, . . . And suche ymposiciones as were put to the peple, as taxes, tallages, and quynzymes . . . was spended on vayne, for he helde no householde . . . For these mysgouernaunces, and for many other, the hertes of the peple were turned away from thaym that had the londe in gouernance and theyre blyssyng was turned into cursyng.
>
> The quene with such as were of her affynyte rewled the reame as her lyked, gaderyng ryches innumerable. . . . The quene was defamed and desclaundered, that he that was Called Prince, was nat his sone, but a bastard goten in avoutry, wherefore she dreding that he shulde nat succede hys fadre in the Crowne of Englonde, allyd un to her alle the knyghtes and squyers of Chestershyre . . . yeue lyuery of Swannys to alle the gentilmenne of the Countre . . . trustyng through thayre streynghte to make her sone kyng; makyng pryue menys to some of the lordes of Englonde for to

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[47] Gregory's Chron., p. 203.

> styre the kyng that he shuld resygn the Croune to hyr sone, but she coude not bryng her purpos aboute.[48]

So far as I have been able to discover this is the most complete, detailed, and bitter condemnation of the government and the queen from a contemporary source. Because of this I feel it proper to quote as much of it as I have.

Politically the kingdom seemed to be disintegrating almost day-by-day. No Parliament had been called for three years, since it was obvious to all that the Lancastrians could not hope to hold a majority if one were to be called. The king, the queen, and the Council were concentrating on saving the dynasty while actual government of the realm was left in abeyance.

The Duke of York at last put aside the camouflage and began openly to advance his claims to the crown.[49] Already letters of summons signed by King Henry had gone out to all magnates favorably inclined toward the king to assemble for a Council to be held on 2 April.[50] A little later new Privy Seal letters were sent

> asynyd wythinne wyth the kynggys howyn hand . . . The intent of the wrytyng that they sshuwlde by wyth the Kyng at Leycester the x day of May, wyth as many personys defensebylly arrayid as they myte acording to her degre, and that they schwld bryng wyth hem for her expensys for ii monythis.[51]

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[48] Davies' Chron., pp. 79-80.

[49] Whethamstede, Registrum, I, 337.

[50] Summons were sent out on 20 February. Nicolas, Proceedings, VI, 298.

[51] Paston Letters, III, 139. Margaret Paston to her husband 29 April. (Mistress Paston's spelling is by far the worst in the collection and furthermore, she opened her husband's mail as attested to in this letter.)

Henry and Margaret were not only assembling an army of loyalists, they were also laying in military stores. On 7 May Henry placed the sign manual on an order for the purchase of bow-staves and arrows and "othre stuffe" for defense of the kingdom.[52]

The Yorkists, too, were arming for the now inevitable resort to violence. The seriousness of the situation is demonstrated by a series of letters Henry wrote in late June concerning the Prior of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem. The Grandmaster had written asking permission for the Prior to attend a chapter meeting at Rhodes. The king needed every bit of support he could muster and wrote the Grandmaster denying his permission for the Prior to leave the kingdom. He wrote to the Chancellor of Rhodes requesting him to order the Grandmaster not to summon the Prior and he wrote to others asking them to inform the Grandmaster of his refusal.[53] Only the most serious crisis could have moved Henry to interfere in any sort of ecclesiastical business.

In the early fall of 1459 Henry took the field to intercept Salisbury on his way to Kenilworth where he hoped to join York and Warwick to confront the king with their demands as they had done at Dartford and St. Albans.[54] Salisbury was forced to retreat in the face of the royal advance. The evidence of the chroniclers indicates that Margaret had taken the command of the royal army. They all refer to the "Quenys galentys," the queen's men, the "Quenes meyney," "the

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[52]Stevenson, Letters, II, 511.

[53]Nicolas, Proceedings, II, 299-300.

[54]Rot. Parl., V, 348.

quene and hyre company." This royal army caught Salisbury at Bloore Heath on 23 September. The fight was prolonged and confused and before the end of the day Salisbury was forced to withdraw without a clear cut victory on either side.[55]

Salisbury, York, and, a little later, Warwick finally managed to join forces although their numbers were, evidently, still less than those of the queen. Henry again offered amnesty to all who would abide by the oath of allegiance, but the Yorkists, rightfully distrusting the queen, rejected the hand offered them. Warwick particularly was still seething over the attack on him at Westminster.[56]

In the face of this rebuff Henry had no alternative but to continue his march toward Ludlow. On 10 October York, Salisbury, and Warwick sent a vague manifesto to the king in which they presented their excuses for what they had done, and offered an explanation of their intentions. It was the same tired material they had presented at Dartford and St. Albans. In effect it is an apologia and an effort to shift the blame for their rebellion to other shoulders.[57] Again the forgiving king offered pardon to all who would join the royal forces within six days. Two of York's professional soldiers, Sir Andrew Trollope and Sir John Blount, during the night "consayvyd that the Erle of Warwyke was goyng unto the Duke of York and not unto the kynge" and crossed over to the royalist army. With the desertion

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[55]Gregory's Chron., p. 204; Three 15th Cent. Chron., p. 72; English Brut, p. 526; Davies Chron., p. 80.

[56]Whethamstede, Registrum, I, 339-341.

[57]The manifesto is given in full in Davies' Chron., pp. 81-83.

of two such highly prized soldiers the Yorkists broke camp and fled.[58]

Margaret and Henry realized they now could hope for a majority in Parliament and therefore summons went out on 20 November to all those who might be expected to side with the House of Lancaster.[59] After the formal opening by Henry and the address of the Chancellor the members elected as Speaker Thomas Tresham.[60] He was as staunch a Lancastrian as his father, the ill-fated William, had been a staunch Yorkist.

The main item of business was the attainder of Richard, Duke of York, Richard, Earl of Salisbury, and Richard, Earl of Warwick, along with all their major supporters, including the duke's two eldest sons, the Earls of March and Rutland. One woman was among those attainted, Alice, Countess of Salisbury.[61] The Bill of Attainder rehearsed all the crimes, real or imagined, that the accused had been guilty of from the time of Cade's rebellion.[62]

In giving his assent to the bill Henry, always eager to forgive and forget, made the proviso

> so that be vertue therof he be not put fro his prerogatyf, to shewe such mercy and grace as shall please his Highnes, . . . to

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[58]Gregory's Chron., p. 205; Davies' Chron., p. 83.

[59]Davies' Chron., p. 83; Rot. Parl., V, 345.

[60]Rot. Parl., V, 345.

[61]A list of all those attainted is found in Paston Letters, III, 199. See also Davies' Chron., p. 84.

[62]Rot. Parl., V, 346-350.

> any persone or persones whos names be expressed in this Acte or to eny other that mygt be hurt be the same.[63]

It is obvious that Henry was still loathe to believe his enemies meant him any real harm.

The Bill of Attainder seemed a final victory for Henry and Margaret. York and his supporters were driven from the realm, but in fact Margaret had merely succeeded in forcing her enemies beyond her reach and releasing them of any sense of duty or allegience to the crown. Warwick and Salisbury had fled to Calais to raise what forces they could;[64] the Duke of York returned to Ireland where he received a warm welcome from the Earls of Kildare and Desmond who brought to him the support of several Irish Counties.[65]

In England Margaret had made her influence felt in no uncertain terms.

> Every lord in Englond at this tyme durst not disobey the Quene, for she rewled pesibly al that was done About the Kyng, which was a gode, simple, & Innocent man.[66]

After several raids on the south coast of England, Warwick, Salisbury, and the eighteen year old Edward, Earl of March, landed at Dover from Calais. They brought with them the august person of Bishop Francesco dei Coppini, the Papal Legate,[67] thus giving the appearance of Papal sanction to their invasion.

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[63] Rot. Parl., V, 350.

[64] Davies' Chron., p. 84; Three 15th Cent. Chron., p. 72.

[65] Ramsay, Lanc., II, 222, citing Gilbert, Viceroys of Ireland.

[66] English Brut, p. 527.

[67] Ramsay, Lanc., II, 233, citing Ellis, Letters, (3rd Series), I, 91.

The rebel lords again wrote a manifesto in which they claimed to be ready to serve the king anywhere he might be pleased to send them. Their only condition was that Henry first withdraw the attainders passed against them. They then gave the lie to their fine sounding assurances of loyalty by giving strong implication that if this were not done and done with utmost speed they would reverse the attainders by force of arms.[68] The Yorkists also sent communications of a similar nature to the Archbishop of Canterbury and to the Commons.[69] They dragged out items of complaint going as far back as the death of the Duke of Gloucester. Each and every disaster, crime, misfeasance, malfeasance, extortion, theft, and intimidation was laid to the responsiblity of their enemies. Nowhere is there any indication that some of the unrest and disorder was the direct result of their own arrogant behavior.

When they had landed the rebels were met by the Archbishop of Canterbury with his cross. As they marched toward London they were joined by a great majority of the men of Kent who brought with them their own manifesto couched in the most extreme partizan terms. Again, Henry was exonerated and all blame placed on "false-brought-of-nought persones" who had "daily and nightly about his Highness . . . informed [him] that good is evil and evil is good." They accused these people of convincing the king that he was above the law "and that the law

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[68]Ramsay, Lanc., II, 233, citing Ellis, Letters, (3rd Series), I, 85.

[69]These letters are printed in full in Davies' Chron., pp. 86-90.

was made but to his pleasure."[70] A few days later a long ballad was nailed to the gates of Canterbury which further revealed the depth of mistrust and unrest that was eating the vitals of the kingdom. The most revealing lines in this poem are concerned with Prince Edward:

> This preuethe fals wedlock and periury expresse
> Fals heryres fostred, as knowethe experyence,
> Unryghtewys dysherytyng with false oppresse.
> . . . . . .
> Send hoom thy trew blode vn to his propre veyne
> Richard duk of York . . .[71]

This would seem to indicate that York or his partizan propagandists had been active in smearing the Queen's reputation and casting doubts on the right of Edward to succeed to the throne.

On 2 July the rebels entered London with the Papal Legate whose task it was to make peace, in the Pope's name, between the hostile factions. "But . . . he usurped and toke oponne hym more power thanne he had, as it was knowenne afterword."[72]

In London the rebels found the clergy in convocation at St. Paul's. The Earl of Warwick made a public declaration to them that he and the others intended nothing contrary to the rights of King Henry.[73]

The Papal Legate, the following day, sent Henry a shameless letter, despite his supposedly neutral position, in which he adjured the king to concede all the Yorkist demands at the peril of his soul.[74]

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[70] The Kentish Manifesto is printed in full in Chronicles of The White Rose, James Bohn, publisher, (London; 1845), pp. lxxiv-lxxvi.

[71] Davies' Chron., pp. 92-93. The full poem is found pp. 91-94.

[72] Ibid., p. 94.

[73] Worcester's Annales in Stevenson, Letters, II, 773.

[74] Ramsay, Lanc., II, 226, citing Ellis, Letters, (3rd Series) I, 89.

While Warwick made plans for future operations and then left London heading for the Court at Coventry, Salisbury and Lord Cobham laid siege to the Tower which was being held by Lord Scales, Lord Hungerford, and John Delamere, the sheriff of Kent.[75]

At word of Warwick's approach, Henry

> departyng fro Covyntre towarde the fylde of Northehampton, he kyste hyr [the Queen] and blessyd the prynce and commaunded hyr that she shulde not com unto hym tylle that [he] sende a specyalle tokyn unto hyr that no man knewe but the kynge and she.[76]

It was evidently well known that the rebels hoped to get Margaret into their clutches "for they knewe welle that alle the workyngs that were done growe by hyr, for she was more wythyer then the kynge."[77]

On 10 July the rebels found Henry and his army just outside Northampton.[78] On behalf of the king the Duke of Buckingham scornfully rejected the Yorkists' offer of mediation by Coppini and the Archbishop of Canterbury.[79] Both had made their bias painfully clear and it must have been obvious that their "mediation" would leave Henry nothing but a puppet, if that.

In the midst of the battle that followed Lord Grey of Ruthyn committed a blatant act of treachery by pressing through the loyalist ranks, where he held command of the vanguard, and offered his services to the rebels. In short order the victory went to the rebels. Dead on the field lay the Duke of Buckingham, the Earl of Shrewsbury, Lords

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[75] White Rose Chron., p. lxxvi; Worcester Annales in Stevenson, Letters, I, 772.

[76] Gregory's Chron., p. 209.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Davies' Chron., p. 92.

[79] Ibid., p. 96; Whethamstede, Registrum, I, 372-373.

Beaumont and Egremont; many others drowned in crossing the flooded river in an attempt to escape.[80] King Henry was taken prisoner by the victorious rebels and conducted to London where he was lodged in the Bishop's Palace.

When she received word of the disaster at Northampton, Margaret fled with the Prince of Wales toward Harlech. During this flight she was nearly captured, robbed of all her jewels and belongings by those sent to protect her, and finally threw herself on the mercy of a fierce looking brigand who in the end was moved by her plea, "Save the son of Your king." The thief conducted them in safety to Harlech Castle in Wales.[81]

The Yorkists in the meanwhile purged London and the government of all those opposed to them. Speaker Thorpe, caught trying to escape disguised as a friar, was sent to the Tower and there vanishes from history.[82] The offices of state, which had been cravenly resigned in mass at word of Warwick's approach to Northampton,[83] were now filled by York's adherents.[84]

With the fighting seemingly over and the government safely in the hands of his friends, the Duke of York now felt it safe to return

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[80]Whethamstede, Registrum, I, 373-374; Davies' Chron., pp. 96-97; Gregory's Chron., p. 207; Worcester's Annales in Stevenson, Letters, I, 773.

[81]These adventures, which would satisfy the fans of the most lurid historical fiction, are attested to by William of Worcester's Annales in Stevenson, Letters, I, 775; Davies' Chron., pp. 98-99; Gregory's Chron., pp. 208-209; and Margaret's own account in Chastelain's Chronique cited by Ramsay in Lanc., II, 236, n.1.

[82]Three 15th Cent. Chron., p. 75.

[83]Rymer, Foedera, XI, 456.

[84]Ibid., p. 458.

to England and claim his reward. Parliament had been summoned to meet on 7 October and the duke arrived in London three days later,[85] fully expecting to be acclaimed king.

Arriving at Westminster he "brak up the dores of the kynges chambre. And the kyng heryng the grete noyse and rumore of the peple, yaafe hym place and took another chambre."[86] The duke arrogantly claimed this as his right and when the dismayed lords suggested he should go to the king he said that he held only of God and that there was no one in the kingdom who ought not wait on him rather than he on them.[87] Such insolent behavior toward a man who had shown him every kindness personally caused immediate disgust.[88]

Seeing he could not advance himself this way, York resorted to a sham legal approach. On 16 October he laid his formal claim to the crown before Parliament.[89] The following day the subservient Chancellor requested the lords to give a "bref and undelaied" reply. Unwilling to take the responsibility for such a critical matter, the lords decided to confront Henry himself with their problem. His reply was:

> My father was king; his father was also king;
> I have worn the crown forty years from my cradle;

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[85] Rot. Parl., V, 373; Worcester's Annales in Stevenson, Letters, II, 774.

[86] Davies' Chron., p. 99.

[87] Kingsford, Chronicle of London., p. 171.

[88] "Contra eum mururanter agere . . .," Whethamstede, Registrum, I, 378, 380.

[89] Rot. Parl., V, 375-376.

> you all have sworn fealty to me as your sovereign,
> and your fathers have done the like to my fathers.
> How then can my right be disputed?[90]

Nevertheless he asked them to seek a judgment from the King's Justices. The justices, too, had no desire to become involved. Further requests brought forth a list of objections to York's title which York answered item by item.[91] Finally, the lords offered as solution that Henry retain the crown during his lifetime and that upon his death the crown and title would pass to York and his heirs. The wretched Henry, surrounded by enemies, his beloved wife and son in hiding, deprived of the advice he so badly needed, had no alternative but to give in and disinherit his son in favor of the arrogant Duke of York.[92]

Margaret had, meanwhile, made her way to Denbigh where she was joined by the Duke of Exeter. The Duke of Somerset was still in France where he was under the safe conduct of the King of France. It was reported that he planned to join Margaret in Wales as soon as possible.[93]

In November and December the queen's allies began a thorough ravaging of Yorkist estates in the north of England. When word of this reached London York dissolved Parliament and, with the Earl of Rutland, and Salisbury headed north while Warwick and the Duke of

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[90] Blacman, Henry, VI, p. 44.

[91] Rot. Parl., V, 376-377.

[92] Ibid., pp. 378-380.

[93] Paston Letters, III, 234.

Norfolk guarded London, and the Earl of March was sent to raise troops in Wales.[94]

On the 30th of December, while his army was reduced in size due to foraging parties he had sent out, York's was caught by Margaret's army near Wakefield. The duke rejected his advisers' caution to wait till the army was full strength, led what forces he had toward the queen's army, blundered into a trap that his enemies had had plenty of time to lay for him. He fell at the head of his troops. The seventeen year old Rutland was caught as he attempted to flee, and was cut down by the vengeful Lord Clifford. The old Earl of Salisbury was captured during the night and beheaded the following day. When the body of York was found, it, too, was decapitated and, adorned with a mocking paper crown, the head set ablove the gates of York.[95]

Almost literally, overnight the situation seemed reversed. But Warwick and the new Duke of York, Edward, were still forces to be reckoned with, a factor Queen Margaret was well aware of.

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[94]Davies' Chron., p. 106; Gregory's Chron., pp. 209-210; Worcester's Annales in Stevenson, Letters, II, 774-775.

[95]Worcester's Annales in Stevenson, Letters, II, 775; Gregory's Chron., p. 210; Davies' Chron., pp. 106-107; Three 15th Cent. Chron., p. 76.

CHAPTER IX

FINAL SUCCESS OF THE YORKISTS

Queen Margaret realized that, despite the victory at Wakefield, she would need additional forces if she were to regain control of the kingdom for her husband. While the victory was being won by her friends, she was in Scotland raising an army and seeking the aid of Mary of Guelders, the queen-mother of the nine year old James III.[1] In return for this assistance Margaret was prepared to agree to a marriage between Prince Edward and a sister of young James III. The Scots, realizing Margaret's position, were interested but demanded, in addition to the marriage, the cession of the vital fortress of Berwick. In no position to bargain, Margaret accepted these humiliating terms.[2]

Margaret cannot be condemned for failing to consider English feelings and sentiments with regard to Berwick. She was, after all, a mother and wife desperately fighting for the only two people she really loved, her gentle husband and her son. She had already demonstrated that she was prepared to fight like a she-wolf to preserve their rights. National pride and bruised sensitivities, even defense against the Scots, meant nothing to her under the circumstances.

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[1] James II had been killed six months before by the explosion of a canon during the siege of Roxborough Castle. Davies' Chron., p. 99.

[2] Ramsay, Lanc., II, 243, citing Auchenleck's Chronicle.

With Scottish auxiliaries accompanying her Margaret returned to York.

In the meanwhile Duke Edward had dealt a blow to her hopes by catching the Earls of Pembroke and Wiltshire at Mortimer's Cross in Wales on 2 February. In the ensuing fight Pembroke and Wiltshire managed to escape while Edward won the day. After the victory, a ghost from the past appeared one last time. Owen Tudor, aging stepfather of the king, father of the Earls of Pembroke and Richmond, was captured and, on Edward's orders, led, disbelieving to the last, to the block.[3]

Soon after this Queen Margaret led her army south from York. The captive Henry had already been compelled to send out letters to various magnates ordering them to come, or send men, in all haste for the defense of the realm against "misruled, malicious, and outrageous people" in the north.[4] Margaret's army of Englishmen and booty-seeking Scots and Frenchmen, ravaged and pillaged its way toward London, and in the process lost whatever sympathy and support that still remained to the Lancastrians. Because of the looting, rumors spread that Margaret had agreed that all England south of the Trent was to be given over to her army for looting and pillaging.[5]

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[3]Gregory's Chron., p. 211; Worcester's Annales in Stevenson, Letters, II, 775-776; Flenley, Six Town Chron., p. 167.

[4]Nicolas, Proceedings, VI, 307-310; Davies' Chron., p. 107. The letters are significantly countersigned by Salisbury and Warwick among other Yorkists.

[5]Three 15th Cent. Chron., p. 155; Davies' Chron., p. 107-108; Gregory's Chron., p. 212; Whethamstede, Registrum, I, 389, 394. Whethanstede's version indicates that the Northern army did, indeed, have

In mid-February Warwick took King Henry with him to St. Albans as he prepared to intercept the Northern Army on its way toward London. Marching south Margaret defeated a Yorkist outpost at Dunstable.[6] The following day her army reached St. Albans. The details of the second Battle of St. Albans are of no importance here. It is sufficient to say that Warwick was evidently caught with no information concerning his enemy's size, deployment, or personel.[7] Under the pressure applied by the queen's army, Warwick's forces broke and fled, leaving the unhappy Henry alone in his tent with just one attendant, Thomas Hoo. This faithful squire convinced him to go to the queen and Northern lords. Margaret and Edward were hardly more happy than Henry when they were reunited. Henry knighted his eight year old son on the spot and issued a proclamation against plundering and looting.[8] Even in the first blush of victory the unfortunate king proved unable to enforce his will. The town of St. Albans was sacked.[9]

The vengeful queen was not to be denied her desire to punish those responsible for her humiliations and shame. The young prince

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official permission to loot: " . . . prout asseruerant, per Reginam et proceres Boreales, ad rapiendum et capiendum quicquid alicubi locorum citra Trentam invenire poterunt per viam remunerationis et recompensationis pro laboribus suis."

[6] Gregory's Chron., p. 212; Worcester's Annales in Stevenson, Letters, I, 776.

[7] Ramsay, Lanc., II, 245, n.3. Gregory's Chron., pp. 212-213, contains quite a full and interesting account.

[8] Whethamstede, Registrum, I 393-394.

[9] Above, n.5.

was placed in judgment over two captives, Lord Bonville and Sir Thomas Kyrielle. Despite the king's earlier promises to them, Prince Edward dutifully pronounced the sentence he had been taught and condemned them both to death.[10]

Had Margaret immediately led her army to London while the capital was still reeling under the shock of the defeat at St. Albans, the course of English history might well have been far different, "They would have had everything at their will." Because she did not "this wrought the destruction of King Henry and his queen."[11] It may well be that Margaret, after the looting at St. Albans, felt she could not trust her troops in London, and wished to spare both the city and her husband the horrors of looting.

Warwick took full advantage of this vacuum in London and got in touch with the Duke of York at Gloucester, then went to Oxford to join forces with the new leader of the party.[12] During late February and early March discussions were held among the leading Yorkists concerning Edward's claim to the crown. By 3 March the leading magnates had become determined to make the eighteen year old Duke of York king. On the fourth, a solemn procession to St. Paul's and thence to Westminster ended with Edward taking his seat on the throne and stating formally his claim and his right to do so. From there he went to the Abbey and was crowned Edward IV.[13]

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[10]English Brut, p. 602; Davies' Chron., p. 108.

[11]"Hoc fuit destructio regis Henrici et reginae suae," Worcester's Annales in Stevenson, Letters, I, 776.

[12]Gregory's Chron., p. 215; Worcester's Annales in Stevenson, Letters, I, 777.

[13]Whethamstede, Registrum, I, 404-408, Three 15th Cent. Chron., p. 173.

In less than two weeks Edward was on the march again in pursuit of Henry and his army. By Sunday, 29 March, he caught up with them at Towton in Yorkshire, half-way between Wakefield and York. It was Palm Sunday and the pious Henry would have avoided battle had he been able. The Battle of Towton was fought in a blinding snow storm blowing directly into the faces of the Lancastrians. When the Duke of Norfolk arrived with fresh troops to throw against Henry and Margaret, their defeat became a certainty. The battle was one of the bloodiest of the war. Even though contemporary accounts of the numbers are totally unreliable, there can be no doubt that the number of slain was extremely high and, added to these, were several score killed in cold blood following their capture. Among the dead were the Earl of Northumberland, Lords Clifford, Neville, and Wells. The Earls of Devon and Wiltshire were captured in flight and beheaded.[14]

Henry, Margaret, and Prince Edward fled for their lives toward Scotland with the Duke of Somerset. Henry seems to have remained on English soil as long as he could. On 18 April Thomas Playters, writing to John Paston, says, "I herd of Sir John Borceter and Christofer Hanson, that Herry the sext is in a place in Yorke schire is calle Corumber; suche a name it hathe, or muche lyke." According to Playters some of Northumberland's men had laid siege to this unidentifiable place in an effort to capture the fugitive king. But "Herry the

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[14] White Rose Chron., p. 9; Gregory's Chron., p. 217; Flenley, Six Town Chron., p. 167; Three 15th Cent. Chron., p. 77; English Brut, p. 533. Those chronicles giving casualty figures say that upwards of 30,000 on both sides were killed.

sext . . . stole a way at a lytyll posterne on the bak syde." He adds, "Sum say the Qwen, Somerset and the Prince schuld be there."[15] By May 1st, probably to purchase refuge from them, Henry had turned Berwick over to the Scots.[16]

Although ten more years of fighting and heartbreak remained to the Lancastrians, the carnage at Towton put an end to any real chance of success. The effect of King Henry's character and personality from this time ceased to be a factor in the struggle. The fight was carried on in his name by his wife and the few friends who remained loyal. Henry became little more than a tool or puppet in the hands of those who had control of his body. Queen Margaret became, if she had not been all along, the leader of the Lancastrians. She sent an embassy to France in the summer of 1461 to raise funds and support, but nothing came of it despite the encouragement her agents sent.[17]

Forays into England were made on several occasions in the next few years but to no avail. In August, 1463, Margaret decided the only hope remaining to her was to go to France herself and beg, if need be, Louis IX to give her the help she needed. She parted from Henry, never to see him again, at Bamborough and sailed for Flanders and thence to the French Court.[18]

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[15] Paston Letters, III, 269.

[16] Ibid., p. 271; Three 15th Cent. Chron., pp. 77-78, 174.

[17] See the letter from Lord Hungerford and Robert Whityngham to her, dated 30 August 1461 in Paston Letters, III, 306-307. At the end of this letter is a list of those with Margaret and Henry in Scotland.

[18] Worcester's Annales in Stevenson, Letters, II, 781.

For the next two years Henry was dragged from place to place, often hungry, cold, and always miserable, but never uttering a word of complaint or reproach.[19] Some time during July, 1465, he was betrayed by those he thought he could trust and was captured in Lancashire. During the long journey to London, on orders, it would seem, from the brave Earl of Warwick, King Henry was compelled to submit to the degrading humiliation of being tied to his horse, his feet shackled to the stirrups. In London he was displayed in a procession through Chepe and Cornhill to the Tower.[20] He spent five years in the Tower, during which an attempt may have been made to murder him.[21]

In the fall of 1470, Margaret and Warwick, now allied under circumstances not relevant here, liberated the unhappy king and set him once more on the throne of England where he ruled, a shadow king, for six months. After two more battles, during one of which his beloved son was killed, he was again deposed and returned to the Tower. During the night of 21 May 1471 an assasin's hand ended a life of horror and heartbreak and sent him to a life that he was sure would be better--it could hardly be worse.[22]

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[19] Blacman, Henry VI, pp. 39, 41, 43.

[20] White Rose Chron., pp. 14 & 108; Worcester's Annales in Stevenson, Letters, II, 785; Gregory's Chron., pp. 232-233; Three 15th Cent. Chron., p. 80.

[21] Blacman, Henry VI, p. 40. Blacman tells of "two who were compassing his death," which could only have been during this period.

[22] The account of his death in the "Arrival of Edward" in White Rose Chron., p. 93, attributing his death to "pure displeasure and melancholy," can be discounted. See the various versions of his death

For nearly fifty years Henry VI had been a major part of English history. He was not, as is often claimed, a cipher or an imbecile. His character and personality were important factors in the struggle between Lancaster and York. He was capable of decisive action, as I have demonstrated in this thesis. He lacked the stamina and the will to crush without mercy those who opposed him. His namesakes, Henry VII and Henry VIII, had what he lacked and succeeded where he failed. They, however, are often condemned for their ruthlessness even as their gentle predecessor is condemned for his mildness. They were "good kings"; Henry VI was a good man.

Kingdoms are but cares,
  State is devoid of stay;
Riches are ready snares,
  And hasten to decay.

Pleasure's a privy prick
  Which vice doth still provoke;
Pomp, unprompt; and fame a flame;
Power a smouldering smoke.

Who meaneth to remove the rock
  Out of the slimy mud,
Shall mire himself, and hardly
    'scape
  The swelling of the flood.

Henrie[23]

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as given in White Rose Chron., pp. 93-94, n.20. His bones were exhumed and examined in 1910 by S. H. St. John Hope. A piece of the shattered skull with hair matted with blood was among the things discovered. See Archeologia, LXII, pp. 533-542.

[23] This poem is attributed by Sir John Harrington to King Henry VI during his imprisonment (1465-1470). It speaks for itself concerning the type of man who wrote it and his mental capacities at the end of his life. See White Rose Chron., pp. 14-15, n. 16.

APPENDIX

The problem of Henry VI's illness of 1453-1454 is a difficult one to solve, especially after a lapse of more than five hundred years. The details of his symptoms are sketchy at best and relatively brief. In the body of this thesis I have supplied essentially all there is to be found in the records. I offer here a copy of the "case history" supplied to Dr. Philip S. Herbert, psychiatrist, of the New York Hospital-Cornell Medical School in New York City; to Dr. Byron L. Casey, psychiatrist, and to Dr. Norman Henderson, general practitioner, both of East Lansing, Michigan. I have also included Dr. Herbert's reply to my letter of inquiry. Dr. Herbert's letter has been edited only to remove extraneous material or personal references. In addition to Dr. Herbert's letter I have included Dr. Casey's brief statement in full, and a note on Dr. Henderson's diagnosis.

I. "Case History" Henry Plantagenet

Born: December 2, 1421.

Father: Henry V; died August 31, 1422, at age 35 (dysentery).

Mother: Catherine of Valois; died 1437 at age 35 (cause unknown).

Grandfather (paternal): Henry IV; died 1413 at age 47. Described as "neurotic" by modern writers. An epileptic. When about 35 had a "nervous breakdown" with, apparently, physical effects

similar to leprosy (so called by his contemporaries). Hypochondriac. Mild stroke at age 38. Gradually deteriorating health until death.

Grandfather (maternal): Charles VI of France. Periodic spells of violent insanity from age 24 until death at 54; thought his court was plotting his death; everyone guilty of treachery, etc. One story has it that, in later life, he thought he was made of glass and would shatter if touched or moved.

Grandmother (paternal): Mary de Bohun; born 1370; died in late 20's after bearing 6 children (cause of death unknown).

Grandmother (maternal): Isabella of Bavaria; died 1435 at age 65. Bore 7 children (evidently took full advantage of her husband's few lucid spells or maybe it didn't matter to her!). A "moral degenerate." In later years was enormously fat from excessive eating and disease (dropsey?), even then is said never to have lacked lovers.

Henry was well educated by an uncle and a cousin. His mother remarried (her chief steward) when he was six. At age 9 it is quite likely that Henry was an eye witness of the death at the stake of a heretic and witch (Jeanne d'Arc)--psychological effects?

Henry developed into a gentle, pious, bookish person at a fairly early age. [He was considered by the Council competent to govern in fact as well as in name at a relatively early age (15)]. He was rather prudish in matters of dress and behavior. Had great interest in education and religion. (Founded the famous schools of Eton and King's

College, Cambridge.) Henry was extremely generous. Described by a contemporary chronicler as unable to distinguish between good and evil.

At 24 Henry married a beautiful, dynamic, strong-willed French princess of 15 or 16. He was evidently completely overwhelmed by her. There is every indication that he loved her deeply and that the love was returned by her.

At 32, after a series of great personal shocks over a period of three years (Jack Cade's rebellion in which several friends and close advisors were savagely murdered; loss of important territory in a war with France; death in battle of a favorite commander; increasingly acrimonious squabblings among his closest advisors, and the probable realization that all of this and much more was due to his own shortcomings as a king), Henry suffered a mental breakdown in early August, 1453. His condition as described by an official delegation of Parliament was one of utter lethargy. He could not or would not speak or give any sign of recognition despite rather rough shakings and slappings on three separate occasions spread over several hours. He could barely feed himself, could not or would not clothe himself; walked only with two or three men supporting him. (This was ten months after the onset.) Three months after the onset his wife, after eight years, bore a son on October 13, 1453. Henry gave no sign of awareness when shown his son by a cousin and later by his wife, except, after great pleading and tears, he "once looked on the prince and cast down his eyes again, without anymore."

More or less suddenly at Christmas, 1454, 18 months after it began, the breakdown ended. Henry said that he "never knew til that

time nor wist not what was said to [me] nor wist not where [I] had been whiles [I] had been sick."

Despite a horrible life for the next 17 years (civil war, slight wound in the neck in battle and 2-3 month illness probably from infection of this wound in the fall of 1455; carted hither and yon by whatever party had control of him; flight into exile; poverty, poor food; treachery and betrayal; 5 years imprisonment; deposition from the throne; restoration as a puppet for six months; death in battle of his son) he never again suffered a similar breakdown although he could not be considered to have been in anything like good health--mental or otherwise. During all this time he was never heard to utter a word of complaint or reproof to those around him. He was murdered in the Tower at age 50 (May, 1471).

Examination of his bones 450 years after death reveal him to have been about 5'9", "well formed but slender with a rather small head for a man of his stature."

It will be noted that Dr. Herbert offers three possible illnesses which may have been the basis of Henry's trouble. I have selected one of these three as the <u>probable</u> solution because of the rather remarkable agreement with the opinions of the other two authorities, and because it seems to fit best with everything that I have discovered about Henry during my research for this thesis. Dr. Herbert had assured me this is acceptable to him.

II. Reply of Dr. Philip S. Herbert

I was much intrigued by your request for a consultation on Henry VI, and the more I thought about it, the more fun I had with the idea.

I've asked around, and reviewed what I know already, about attempting diagnoses in other cultures. It is difficult with an historical figure, who was described in a very different frame of reference from ours, and who can't be examined and cross-questioned.

However, for all these limitations, the historians, I think, could do better than the vague, global appellations like "neurotic" and "nervous breakdown" and with meaningless pejorative weapons like "utter imbecility," perhaps "madness" (this term had some respectibility in English psychiatry today), and definitely "feeblemindedness."

A second difficulty I have is that I think that a man brought up to be a king lives in a very special kind of world. Royalty, one might say, is a sub-culture.

I consulted Professor Alexander Leighton (Social Psychiatry at Cornell) and some of his associates, on a curbstone basis, and with two third-year residents I am supervising, and here's what we all came up with:

1. There just isn't enough information about the attack to make a definite diagnosis.

2. The biographical details are highly suggestive of certain conflicts, but, again, we run out of information.

First of all, the nature and course of the illness seems to be typical of a functional illness, rather than an organic one. In the case of the latter, Henry's physicians would probably have noted--and recognized--the signs of delirium or evidence of an illness that might cause delirium. As I gather it, the illness had a very sudden onset,

a static course, and a comparatively sudden clearing. This could certainly suggest a functional illness.

Now about concrete possibilities: one very likely one is a profound depression, either of the manic depressive type or a so-called psychotic depressive reaction. About the former, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual [of] Mental Disorders (American Psychiatric Association, Washington, 1952) places in this catagory (p. 25) "those cases with outstanding depression of mood and with mental and motor retardation and inhibition . . . Perplexity, stupor or agitation may be prominant symptoms . . ." About the latter:

> The patients are severly depressed and manifest evidence of gross misinterpretation of reality, including at times, delusions and hallucination. This reaction differs from the manic depressive reaction, depressed type, principally in (1) absence of history of repeated depressions or of marked cyclothymic mood swings, (2) frequent presence of environmental precipitating factors.[1]

Another possibility is schizophrenic reaction, catatonic type.

> These reactions are characterized by conspicuous motor behavior, exhibiting marked generalized inhibition (stupor, mutism, negativism and waxy flexibility). The individual may regress to a state of vegetation.

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[1] In checking the Statistical Manual quoted by Dr. Herbert, I found the following statement concerning the ailment he ascribes to Henry VI. This statement certainly adds force to my argument that Henry's illness was triggered by the death of Shrewsbury and the disaster at Castillon.

> Psychotic depressive reaction synonymous with reactive depression: The Reaction is precipitated by a current situation, frequently by some loss sustained by the patient, and is often associated with a feeling of guilt for past failures or deeds. The degree of reaction . . . is dependant upon the intensity of the patient's ambivalent feeling toward his loss (or love). (Pp. 24-25.)

Of the schizophrenic disorders in general, it delineates

> A group of psychotic reactions which . . . are marked by a strong tendency to retreat from reality, by emotional disharmony, unpredictable disturbances in stream of thought, regressive behavior, and in some, by a tendency to 'deterioration'.

My best guess, from the evidence, is a "pyschoneurotic disorder" called the Dissociative Reaction.[2] This reaction represents a type of gross personality disorganization, the basis of which is a neurotic disturbance, although the diffuse dissociation seen in some cases may occasionally appear psychotic. The personality disorganization may result in aimless running or "freezing."

> The repressed impulse giving rise to the anxiety may be discharged by, or deflected into, various symptomatic expressions, such as depersonalization ("I don't feel real"), dissociated personality (like "The Three Faces of Eve"), stupor, fugue (typically a man "loses" his memory, flees or wanders away, functions in a new identity elsewhere or keeps on fleeing), amnesia, dream state, sonnambulism, etc.

If Henry recovered <u>suddenly</u>, I would be quite sure of this diagnosis. In any of these conditions the memory of the attack may be repressed.

So much for formal diagnosis. It is a little easier to guess what he was reacting to, why, and how. The sudden lapse into an infantile passivity in a king suggests that the responsibility of ruling (especially without the necessary character traits and abilities) had become overwhelming, but escape into suicide, abdication, or exile were unacceptable. There was only one place to maneuver, and that was acute illness.

How did he develop his vulnerability to illness? Was there something in his character which, fatefully, helped engineer the

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[2] <u>Diagnostic and Statistical Manual</u>, p. 32.

intolerable situation we assume precipitated the illness? I have some ideas on both scores. Typically, a boy who is fatherless in his early years, even with good surrogates, replaces his lack with a kind of ideal, powerful fantasy of a perfect father. Unfortunately, the boy had no chance to test this fantasy against the reality of a human father with human strengths and human limitations. Instead, it remains a tormenting unapproachable ideal. The "unco'guid" quality of his personality suggests either a saintly quality to this ideal (unlikely, I think) or a quantity of unconscious guilt. There are a number of possibilities which don't have to make rational sense. For example, a child may feel extremely guilty about having been born, though, of course, it wasn't his decision at all. One can feel guilty for someone else's actions, and I think royalty in which there's a peculiar identification of the individual with his family and with his country, might be particularly vulnerable. Your hunch about his feeling guilty about Jeanne d'Arc's burning is a good one, though it's no more likely than an Oedipal guilt about his father's death. One would have to treat him for a long time to find out.

Anyhow, his "defenses" against his own hostile, agressive, ambitious, or competitive feelings were "reaction formation", (he turning them into the opposite) and "denial" of evidence of them in himself and in others. This particular character crippled him, I would think, for being a king at any time and particularly in those tough times.

It is quite possible that his shortcomings, as you described them, were due to his rigid and inappropriate [to a king] saintliness, but considerable work with unhappy people 500 years later have sensitized me to the possibility of a self-defeating or self-destructive drive in this man.

This notion is given some support by the fact that his illness began shortly before the arrival of a long awaited son. Though this could be simply another source of anxiety in a dreadful situation, it could also be, in rational terms, a bright spot in an otherwise rotten situation. But human beings, particularly neurotic ones (I don't have much doubt that he was neurotic, in a broad sense, before and after his breakdown) sometimes react adversely and paradoxically to good fortune. Notice that he stood up fairly well, for 17 years, of the most varied hardships. My guess is that he thrived, psychologically, on martyrdom. (Like Shakespeare's Richard II.)

This is a lot of psychiatry from the arm chair. I would feel much surer of my ground if I had more information.

III. Comment by Dr. Byron L. Casey

He appears to have had a mental depression of very severe degree. This is not uncommon in people of high ideals, strong conscience, and good intellect. Secretary Forrestal and a few others recently were also victims. It is unusual that it occurred only once. Most people with this severe a depression will have several episodes in a lifetime.

IV. Comment by Dr. Norman Henderson, M.D.

Dr. Henderson, although he did not give a full report, concurs with Drs. Herbert and Casey, stating that Henry was "probably a submissive type" and his illness was "acute depression--melancholy."

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following bibliographic essay concerns only those works actually used during the preparation of this thesis. No useful purpose would be served in presenting a full listing of all works that might conceivably relate to one or another aspect of the present study. By and large these may be found among the works cited in the bibliographies referred to in the first section below.

I. Bibliographies and Reference Works:

For a thesis of this type one of the most useful references is C. L. Kingsford's English Historical Literature In The Fifteenth Century (1913). Not only does it provide an essential guide to contemporary writings of all kinds, chronicles, letters, poetry, biographies, but it also has an extensive appendix consisting of bits and fragments of additional material of this nature as well as chronicles "hitherto for the most part unprinted." The bibliography in E. F. Jacob's The Fifteenth Century (1961) is most extensive, highly useful, and one of the most complete among modern works concerned with this period. C. L. Gross' Sources and Literature of English History from Earliest Times to About 1485 (2nd. Ed., 1915) is a standard reference of much value. Of a different nature but extremely useful for names, dates of patents, state officials, and similar details is F. M. Powicke and E. B. Fryde, (Eds.) Handbook of British Chronology (2nd. Ed., 1961).

II. Chronicles:

Little good would come of attempting to assess the many chronicles in order of their importance or usefulness in writing this thesis. Where one might be superior in, say, presenting contemporary factional opinion on certain conditions or people, another would be equally good for the details of a particular event. Each chronicle, in its own way, is of value for the light it casts on one or more aspect of the period.

Outstanding for the strong expression of Yorkist opinion on events and people, especially Margaret of Anjou, Suffolk, and Somerset, is An English Chronicle of The Reigns of Richard II, Henry IV, Henry V, and Henry VI, ed. John Silvester Davies (Camden Society, 1856). Of equal use in other areas is The Historical Collections of a London Citizen, ed. James Gairdner (Camden Society, 1876) which contains the important "Chronicle" of William Gregory. As Lord Mayor of London in 1451-52 Gregory was an eye-witness to many of the events he describes. Three Fifteenth Century Chronicles, ed. James Gairdner (Camden Society, 1880), containing "Stowe's Memoranda" and "Brief Notes of Occurrences under Henry VI and Edward IV," is useful for details of some of the battles of the era and for the fairly detailed account of Cade's Rebellion. By far the most detailed descriptions of this rebellion are found in "Bale's Chronicle" and Gough, "London 10", both printed, along with four other lesser Latin Chronicles in Six Town Chronicles, ed. Ralph Flenley (Oxford, 1911). Some minor details, not found in other chronicles, are included in The Brut or Chronicles of England, Part II. ed. Friedrich W. D. Brie (E.E.T.S., 1906-1908).

For the last years of Henry VI and the early years of Edward IV the best source is Chronicles of The White Rose (1845) including the famous "Arrival of Edward" and "Warkworth's Chronicle."

Among the chronicles dating from the Tudor era by far the most valuable for the letters, manifestos, etc., which it preserves is the Summarie of The Chronicles of England by John Stowe, (editions of 1565 and 1570) and Stowe's Annales (1592).

The remainder of the Tudor Chronicles, as Professor Kingsford points out in his Historical Literature are of less value and should be used with caution. They are, nevertheless, useful for supplementary material and the reflections of the efficacy of Tudor propagandists. They include:

Fabyan, Robert. Chronicle. ed. Henry Ellis, London, 1811.
Hall, Edward. Chronicle. ed. Henry Ellis, London, 1809.
Hardyng, John. Chronicle with Continuation of R. Grafton. ed. Henry Ellis, London, 1809.
Ingulph. Chronicle of The Abbey of Croyland. (Bohn's Library, edition in English.) London, 1854.
Kingsford, C. L. ed. London Chronicle. London, 1905.

III. Public Documents:

Of most use in this work were those collections containing evidence of King Henry's personal involvement in affairs of state. This includes items bearing the royal sign manual, or one of the several signets, and references to the king's bodily presence at a given event. By far the most valuable from this, or, indeed, any viewpoint is Sir Nicholas Harris Nicolas' Proceedings and Ordinances of The Privy Council of England. 7 Vols., London, 1834-1837. (Volumes I through IV relate to the period of this thesis.) Foedera, Conventiones, Litterae et

Cuisque Generis acta Publica inter Regis Angliae et Alio. ed. Thomas Rymer, 20 Vols., London, 1704-1735. (Volume XI relates to the period covered in this thesis.) is only slightly less valuable than the preceeding work. The Rotuli Parliamentorum, 6 Vols., London, 1776-1777. (Vol. V this paper) is in a class by itself for indications of the presence of King Henry at any given session of Parliament as well as for various Acts, bills, petitions, and discussions of action to be taken by Parliament. Other public documents consulted in one or more instances:

Calendar of Charter Rolls. 1427-1516.
Calendar of Patent Rolls. Henry VI. 6 Vols.
Calendar of State Papers, Venice, Vol. I.
Calendar of State Papers. Milan, 1417-1509.
Calendar of Letter Books of The City of London. Letter Book K, ed. R. R. Sharpe, 1912.
Coventry Leet Book or Mayor's Register Containing Records of The City Court Leet. ed. M. D. Harris (E.E.T.S. nos. 134, 135, 138, 146; 1907-1913.)
Statutes At Large of England. ed. Thomas Edlyne Tomlins. 20 Vols. (Vol. I) London, 1811.

IV. Private Letters and Papers Including Ecclesiastical:

Indispensable in a study such as this, indeed, in practically any study concerned with this period of English History, are the justly famous Paston Letters, ed. James Gairdner, Library Edition, 6 Vols., 1904. These contain news letters, gossipy accounts of royal visits, comments on the great events of the times, and similar material found nowhere else. Sometimes what the writers do not say is as important as what they do say. In addition to the private letters of the Paston Family, the collection includes some very useful letters and papers having little if anything to do with the family. Among

several others in this catagory are a detailed account of the 1st Battle of St. Albans, the Duke of York's letter to King Henry just prior to this battle, and the Duke of Suffolk's touching letter of farewell to his son.

Letters and Papers Illustrative of the Wars of The English In France During the Reign of Henry VI, ed. Joseph Stevenson, (Rolls Series), 2 Vols., 1861-1864. a collection of partly private, mostly public documents concerned largely with military-diplomatic affairs in Normandy, Guienne, and France. A very useful supplement at the end of Volume II is the Annales of William of Worcester which contains much of value although Worcester's dates are often one to three years off.

Consulted less often but of equal value in their own way are:

Ellis, Henry. ed. Original Letters Illustrative of English History. 3 Vols., 1st Series, 2nd Edition, 1825.

Monroe, C. ed. The Letters of Margaret of Anjou and Bishop Beckington and Others. Camden Society, 1863.

Whethamstede, Johannes. Registrum. ed. H. T. Riley. 2 Vols., Rolls Series, London, 1872.

Sheppard, J. B. ed. Litterae Cantuariensis. 3 Vols., Rolls Series, 1889.

Williams, C. ed. The Official Correspondance of Thomas Beckyngton. 2 Vols., Rolls Series, 1872.

Wright, T. ed. Political Songs and Poems Relating To English History. 2 Vols., Rolls Series, 1859.

In a catagory more or less by itself is John Blacman's Collectaruim Mansuetudinum et Bonorum Morum Regis Henrici VI, edition with English translation by M. R. James, 1919. This little book is valueless as a biography, being little more than a pious collection of eulogistic praises of Henry's piety, morality, good works, etc. However, it does provide interesting sidelights on the kings's

personality and interests as well as a few anecdotes that are used to illustrate various facets of Henry's character.

V. Medical Authorities on the Two Illnesses of Henry VI:

American Psychiatric Association. Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. Washington, D.C., 1952.

Casey, Dr. Byron L. East Lansing, Michigan. Written reply to inquiry on the illness of Henry VI, 28 April 1964. (date of permission to quote.)

Herbert, Dr. Philip S. New York Hospital-Cornell Medical College. Letter in reply to inquiry 5 February 1964. Letter with supplementary information 15 May 1964.

Henderson, Dr. Norman. East Lansing, Michigan. Reply to inquiry on illness of Henry VI, 28 April 1964 (date of permission to quote.)

Thaden, Dr. Donald W. East Lansing, Michigan. Personal interview concerning 2nd illness of Henry VI. 15 March 1964.

VI. Modern Authorities:

The standard modern work, although in need of revision using later research in the area, is Sir James H. Ramsay's Lancaster and York, a Century of English History, 2 Vols., Oxford, 1892. There have been no other works of comparable excellence in detail and scope since this one. The closest approach to it recently is E. F. Jacob's The Fifteenth Century, Oxford, 1961, but it must be used with caution since the author is none too reliable in placing events in the proper years and there are far too many typographical errors. Another classic authority in need of revision is Bishop William Stubbs' Constitutional History of England, 3 Vols., Oxford, 1874-1878.

The only biography of King Henry is Mabel Christie's Henry VI. London, 1922, which contains a useful but not one hundred per cent accurate itinerary for Henry. A definitive biography is much needed.

The biography of Margaret of Anjou in Agnes Strickland's Lives of the Queens of England, 12 Vols., London, 1850, is dated but still of some use, and quite well documented.

The unpopularity of the fifteenth century among modern scholars is demonstrated by the relative scarcity of articles in learned journals. This is not to say there is nothing of value to be found in them. Two articles in particular were of great value in the writing of this thesis: J. R. Lander's "Henry VI and The Duke of York's Second Protectorate, 1455 to 1456," Bulletin of The John Ryland's Library, XLIII (1960-61, 46-69) was of great help in its refreshing approach to one of the major problems in this work. Of particular interest is Mr. Lander's tracing the origin of the belief in King Henry's "relapse into insanity" in 1455. It is to be hoped that more articles like this one wil appear in the near future. Of only slightly less value is C. A. J. Armstrong's "Politics and The Battle of St. Albans," Bulletin of Historical Research, XXXIII, #87, 1-72. which contains two contemporary accounts, in French, hitherto unpublished, of the 1st Battle of St. Albans, both containing information not found elsewhere.

Other modern authorities consulted include:

Green, V. H. H. The Later Plantagenets. London, 1955.

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Review of The Golden Longing by Francis Leary, Reunion, VI, No. 54 (June, 1960) published by Confraternity of Unity.

"Discovery of The Remains of King Henry VI" by W. H. St. John Hope in Archaeologia, 2nd Series, LXII, (1910) pp. 533-542.

"The Saintly Plantagenet: Henry VI" by Albert Makinson, History Today, XII, #2, (February, 1962), pp. 97-104.