

5. EDWARD V. 1483

107. **The short reign of Edward V.**—Richard, Duke of Gloucester, the late king's brother, was a prudent and far-seeing man, but he thought little of sacrificing those who stood in the way of his ambition. He was slightly deformed, but was good-natured and well liked by the people. He was also an able soldier, and had fought bravely for his brother; but there is no doubt that he kept steadily before himself the design of securing the crown. When Edward IV died, his eldest son, Edward, a boy of twelve, was proclaimed king. Richard was made Protector and ruled with the assistance of a Council.

In order to carry out his designs, Richard secured possession of the persons of Edward and his younger brother, the Duke of York, and confined them in the Tower. After the princes were in his hands, he did not conceal from those nobles who were willing to stand by him, his intention of becoming king. He prevailed upon Parliament to declare that the marriage of Edward IV had not been legal, and that, therefore, his children could not inherit the throne. Several people who might have stood in his way were executed, and at last Parliament offered him the crown. He did not, however, feel safe so long as the two princes in the Tower were alive. The story was spread that they had mysteriously disappeared, but every one believed that Richard had killed them. No one dared to ask questions; but many years afterwards some workmen found two little skeletons buried at the foot of a staircase in the Tower, and it has been thought that they were those of the murdered princes.

SUMMARY

After the death of Edward IV his brother Richard, Duke of Gloucester, was made Protector. Richard was determined to secure the crown, and did so, and the two young princes met their death in the Tower.