



FROM THE HOLBEIN PAINTING

KING EDWARD THE SIXTH—ASCENDED THRONE 1547

sins to make away with the young king and his brother.

So hideous a tale even for those dark days has been doubted and efforts made to defend Richard III from the charge of murdering his nephews. The "murder of the princes in the Tower" has been attacked as a popular fable. It is interesting to glance at the evidence as it has come down to us. The Shakespearian view of Richard III, as a monster of cruelty, is fairly well borne out. The chief credible witness is Sir Thomas More, who was but eight years old then, but who is believed to have learned the facts from Archbishop Morton who played a leading part in the events. The manuscript of More's history was found among his papers after his death and printed in 1557 by his son-in-law, Rastell. There is also the evidence of

contemporary foreigners, some of it in correspondence from London, who asserted that Richard ordered the murders. This was the common belief of his own subjects who turned against him in consequence. Further corroboration is the confession, 18 years later, of Sir Wm. Tyrrel, Richard III's master of horse. By order of the king he had been given the keys of the Tower for one night, and, acting under his instructions, the murderers—Forrest, who had charge of the princes' sleeping apartment, and Dighton, a groom—entered the chamber and smothered the two lads with pillows as they lay asleep. Tyrrel said the bodies were hastily buried that night in the Tower. Two centuries later this part of the story was confirmed by the finding of two bodies under the staircase as you ascend to the Norman