

Richard III's proclamation against Henry 'Tudor' – June 1485

RICHARD by the grace of God, King of England, France, and Lord of Ireland greets you: FOR AS MUCH as the King our sovereign Lord hath certain knowledge that Piers, Bishop of Exeter, Jasper Tydder, son of Owen Tydder, calling himself Earl of Pembroke, John, late Earl of Oxon, and Sir Edward Woodville, with divers other rebels and traitors, disabled and attainted by the authority of the High Court of Parliament, of whom many be known as open murders, adulterers, and extortioners, contrary to the pleasure of God and against all truth, honour, and nature, have forsaken their native country, taking them first to be under the obeisance of the Duke of Brittany and to him promised certain things, which, by him and his counsel were thought things too greatly unnatural and abominable for them to grant, observe, keep, and perform, and therefore the same utterly refused. The said traitors, seeing the said Duke and his counsel would not aid nor succour them, nor follow their ways, secretly departed out of his country in to France, and there placed themselves under the obeisance of the King's ancient enemy, Charles, calling himself King of France.

The said rebels and traitors have chosen to be their captain one Henry Tydder, (otherwise Tudor) son of Edmond Tudor, son of Owen Tudor who of his ambitiousness and insatiable covetousness encroaches and usurps upon himself the name and title of the estate of royalty in this Realm of England, unto which he has no manner of interest, right, title, or colour, as every man well knows; for he is descended from bastard blood both on his father's side and on his mother side; for Owen, his grandfather, was born a bastard, and his mother was daughter of John, Duke of Somerset, who was son of John, Earl of Somerset, son of Dame Katherine Swynford, and begotten in their double adultery, and so it is quite evident that no title can, nor may be, attributed to him, in him who fully intends to enter this Realm, with the purpose of a conquest. And if he should achieve his false intent and purpose, every man his life, livelihood, and goods would be taken into his hands, and there would ensue disinheriting and destruction of all the noble and worshipful blood of this Realm for ever, and to resist and withstand this, every true and native born Englishman must put his hand to the matter of his own safety and well-being.

And to the extent that the said Henry Tudor might achieve his false intent and purpose, he has enlisted the aid, support, and assistance of the king's ancient enemy of France. He hath covenanted and bargained with him and all the counsel of France to give up and release in perpetuity all the right, title, and claim that the kings of England have, had, and ought to have, to the crown and realm of France, together with the duchies of Normandy, Anjou, and Maine, Gascony and Guisne, and the castles and towns of Calais, Guisne, Hammes, with the marches belonging to the same.

And for more proof and exposure of his said purpose of conquest Henry Tudor has given as well to divers of the said king's enemies as well as to his said rebels and traitors, archbishoprics, bishoprics, and other high clerical positions, and also the duchies, earldoms, baronetcies, and other possessions and inheritances of knights, squires, gentlemen, and others of the king's true subjects within the Realm, and intends also to change and subvert the laws of the same.

And over all this, the said Henry Tudor and others of the king's rebels and traitors already mentioned, have the intention at their coming, if they do take power, to carry out the most cruel murders, slaughtering, robberies, and disinheriting that was ever seen in any Christian realm. So for

this and other inestimable dangers to be avoided, and so that the king's rebels, traitors, and enemies may be utterly put off their malicious and false purpose if they enforce to land, the king our sovereign lord wills, charges, and commands each and every native and true subject of this his realm, like good and true Englishmen, to endeavour with all their powers to see to their own defence and that of their wives, children, goods, and inheritance against the said malicious purposes and conspiracies, which the ancient enemies have made with the king's rebels and traitors for the final destruction of this land. And our said sovereign lord, as a good-willed, diligent, and courageous prince, will put his most royal person to all the labour and pains necessary on this account for the resistance and subduing of his said enemies, rebels, and traitors for the greatest comfort, well-being, and safety of all his true and faithful liege men and subjects.

And over and above this, our sovereign lord wills and commands all his subjects to be ready in their highest order of defence and prepared to do the highest war service, when there is an open proclamation, or otherwise shall be commanded so to do, for resisting the king's said rebels, traitors, and enemies.

Given at Westminster, 23rd day of June, in the second year of our reign.