

Titulus Regius (The Royal Title)

26 June 1483: Petition to Richard, Duke of Gloucester, as quoted in the Act of Parliament of January 1484

Over this, amonges other thinges, more specially we consider howe that the tyme of the raigne of Kyng Edward IV, late decessed, after the ungracious, pretensed marriage (as all England hath cause so say) made betwixt the said King Edward and Elizabeth (sometyme wife to Sir John Grey, Knight), late nameing herself (and many years heretofore) 'Queene of England', - the ordre of all politeque rule was perverted, the laws of God and of Gode's church, and also the lawes of nature and of Englund, and also the laudable customes and liberties of the same (wherein every Englishman is inheritor), broken, subverted, and contempned, against all reason and justice, so that this land was ruled by self-will and pleasure, feare and drede (all manner of equitie and lawes layd apart and despised), whereof ensued many inconvenients and mischiefs (as murdres, estortions, and oppressions, namely, of poor and impotent people), soo that no man was sure of his lif, land, ne lyvelode, ne of his wif, doughter, ne servaunt, every good maiden and woman standing in drede to be ravished and defouled. And besides this, what discords, inward battailes, effusion of Christian men's blode (and namely, by the destruction of the noble blode of this londe), was had and comitted within the same, it is evident and notarie through all this reame (unto the grete sorrowe and heavynesse of all true Englishmen).

And here also we considre howe that the said pretensed marriage, bitwixt the above named King Edward and Elizabeth Grey, was made of grete presumption, without the knowying or assent of the lords of this lond, and alsoe by sorcerie and wichecrafte, committed by the said Elizabeth and her moder, Jaquett Duchess of Bedford (as the common opinion of the people and the publique voice and fame is through all this land; and hereafter - if, and as, the case shall require - shall bee proved sufficiently, in tyme and place convenient).

And here also we considre how that the said pretenced marriage was made privatly and secretly, without edition of banns, in a private chamber, a profane place, and not openly in the face of church, afre the lawe of Godds church, but contrarie thereunto, and the laudable custome of the Church of England. And howe also, that at the tyme of contract of the same pretensed marriage (and bifore and longe tyme after), the said King Edward was, and stode married and trouth-plyght, to oone Dame Elianor Butteler (doughter of the old Earl of Shrewesbury), with whom the saide King Edward had made a precontracte of matrimonie, longe tyme bifore he made the said pretensed mariage with the said Elizabeth Grey in manner and fourme aforesaide.

Which premises being true (as in veray trouth they been true), it appeareth and followeth evidently, that the said King Edward (duryng his lyfe) and the said Elizabeth lived toghether sinfully and dampnably in adultery, against the lawe of God and his church. And therefore noe marvaile that (the souverain lord and head of this londe, being of such ungodly disposicion, and provokying the ire and indignation of oure Lorde God), such haynous mischiefs and inconvenients as is above remembered, were used and committed in the reame amongst the subjects.

Also it appeareth evidently, and followeth, that all th' issue and children of the said king beene bastards, and unable to inherite or to clayme anything by inheritance, by the lawe and custome of England.

Extract Ends