

very passion hateful to God and man; of one, who, to the last, exhibited all the insolence of pride, all the audacity of unbridled power, and all the impiety of an unchastised spirit. What change! At one moment an absolute and despotic King, at the next, a lump of lifeless clay, forsaken and shunned, like that of his father, by all, even by his brother! He, on whose nod had hung the safety and property of millions, was now thrown into the dirty cart of a charcoal burner, and received the last obsequies of religion unaccompanied by a tear from one of those millions.

In charity it may be hoped that the current belief of the manner of his death is correct; that it was the casual glance of an arrow—the arrow given by the Red King himself—which struck the wretched monarch. But there is reason enough for the suspicion that his evil deeds had brought on their punishment.—Spurred to madness by the desolation which his predecessor and himself had caused in making this New Forest, an avenging hand was probably found, to rid the world of a tyrant.

And now perhaps we have arrived at the end of his mortal history, and may fancy that his remains could suffer no farther dishonor. Not so. Heaven itself seems willing to give one awful sign of its displeasure, and to mark the spot where the disturber of his people found his grave. The tower of Winchester cathedral, in which the Red King was interred, was soon afterwards destroyed by lightning, and his tomb was covered by the ruins.

Again we say “he that runs may read.”—The vices and impiety of private individuals may exist in as large a degree as those of Princes, although they may neither have so extensive a scope, nor be so publicly perceptible; and no offender is so mean that he may not be cut off “with all his imperfections on his head.”

Yet once again must one of the family of the Norman conqueror be brought to figure on our canvass. So eventful was their career, so prominent were their lives, and so striking was the end of each, that they even seem to offer themselves to our notice, as lessons which neither can, nor ought to be overlooked. Diversified in their several characters, equally diversified in their “last days,” and the end of each was in perfect keeping with his life; but whilst the heart softens over the remorse of the conqueror, and whilst we are startled and shocked at the sudden exit of Rufus, the mind

is saddened, and shrinks back upon itself as it views the living death, the state of hopeless despondency, the countenance from which smiles have long been for ever banished, the mortified and broken down ambition of him who, for his learning and worldly wisdom, was pre-eminently distinguished as the *Beau Clerc*. Springing from the same root, there are many, in the successive generations of the English annals, whose lives and whose “last days” afford powerful lessons to those who attentively consider them; but the Conqueror and his sons offer so many peculiarities, that they seem to be linked in a consecutive series, for the express purpose of giving the moral of their history a greater momentum, and of compelling us to pause on them as they are severally brought in review.

But as Henry, on whom we have here to dwell, will be the last of the family on whom we shall enlarge in this part of our series, certain reflections naturally arise relative to those who come more immediately after him in the page of history; which reflections cannot be stifled without violating the principles upon which the exhibition of “the last days of Princes” was formed. The awful threat in the second article of the decalogue, in which we learn that God will “visit the sins of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation” of those who hate him, is too frequently looked upon as generally an abstract proposition; and, as it is productive of painful sensations to trace out its application, we commonly avoid it as much as possible; but the fact is not the less true, though it be in a great measure unmarked; and here, in the earliest English monarchs of the Norman race, it is most forcibly and lamentably held up to example. Ambition, duplicity, tyranny, and cruelty, attended the steps of the first Norman monarch; the next generation presents a Robert, the victim of his brethren, and his son brought to a premature death; a Richard, the only virtuous one of his family, early and violently snatched out of life; a William, the plague of all, and deserted by all, cut off in mid career, even when his arrogance and tyranny were at their highest pitch; and a Henry, whose very essence was falsehood and equivocation, justly deprived, for years, of mental peace, plagued by a fury of a daughter, for whose aggrandizement he devoted the latter portion of his wretched life, with sad misgivings that he was labouring in vain. Pass we then to that daughter—the third generation—engaged in continual war for the crown which