**Richard III**

Edward VI took the English throne in 1461. When he unexpectedly died in 1483, his brother Richard was one of the most powerful men in the kingdom. Edward IV left two little sons, Edward, Prince of Wales, age twelve, and Richard, Duke of York, age nine. Their uncle Richard made a conspiracy to seize the Princes. He brought them to London and locked away in the Tower, and started to move toward usurpation. He alleged that the marriage of his dead brother, Edward IV, was invalid because Edward had previously promised to marry another woman. As a result, the little princes were declared bastards, and young Edward V had no right to the throne of England. To assure his own security, Richard is believed to have ordered to murder the little princes in the Tower. He became King Richard III.

Richard had the most obvious reasons for wanting the young princes dead. He lived through a civil war that taught him that powerful men were always ready to rally around a standard revolt. If such a flag could be raised for a prince of the royal blood to restore him to a rightful throne, noblemen with great lands, great debts, and empty wallets might readily take arms, looking for the main chance in the change of kings. Richard never felt secure on his throne; his swift, lawless, and lethal moves against those who threatened him showed that he was capable of murder if by murder he could rid himself of the mortal danger. And as long as the little princes remained alive the danger was always present. In the summer of 1483, the little princes disappeared forever; that much is certain.

Richard III was killed in the battle on 22 August 1485. Henry Tudor, earl of Richmond, now King Henry VII by right of conquest and some other hereditary claims, felt he needed to justify his own actions at the battle of Bosworth. He issued a royal proclamation, dated the day before the battle, declaring himself the rightful king of England and condemning Richard as the rebellious subject. In 1674 two small skeletons were found in a wooden box buried ten feet under a small staircase that workmen were removing from the White Tower. They were thought to be the bones of the little princes. King Charles II had his own reasons for being offended at the murder of kings, so he placed these bones in the chapel of Henry VII in Westminster Abbey.

**Vocabulary**

usurpation - узурпация, незаконный захват

allege - утверждать, заявлять (голословно)

invalid - не имеющий законной силы

bastard - внебрачный ребенок

security - безопасность

rally - сплотиться

standard - знамя, флаг

murder - убийство

disappear - исчезнуть

rightful - законный

condemn - осуждать

**Questions**

1. How old were Edward VI's children in 1483?

2. Where did Richard bring Edward VI's children to?

3. How did Richard start to move to usurpation?

4. What did Richard do to assure his own security?

5. What were Richard's reasons for wanting the young princes dead?

6. Did Richard feel secure on his throne? Why?

7. What was the result of the battle of Bosworth?

8. What did Henry Tudor do to justify his actions?

9. What happened in the seventeenth century?