

Titulus Regius (The Royal Title)

King Richard Petitioned to become king by The Three Estates of the Realm and Elected King

Where late heretofore, that is to say, before the consecracion, coronacion and inthronizacion of oure Souveraign Lord the King Richard the Thirde, a rolle of perchement, conteignyng in writeing certeine articles of the tenour undre writen, on the behalve and in the name of the thre Estates of this Reame of Englond, that is to wite, of the lords spirituells and temporalls, and of the Commons, by many and diverse lords spirituells and temporalls, and other nobles and notable persones of the Commons in grete multitude, was presented and actualy delivered unto oure said Souveraine Lord the King, to th'entent and effect expressed at large in the same rolle; to the which rolle, and to the consideracions and instant peticion comprized in the same, our said Souveraine Lord, for the public wele and tranquillite of this land, benignely assented.

Nowe forasmuch as neither the said three Estats, neither the said persones, which in their name presented and delivered, as is abovesaid the said rolle unto oure said Souverain Lord the King, were assembled in fourme of Parliament; by occasion whereof, diverse doubts, questions and ambiguitees, been moved and engendered in the myndes of diverse persones, as it is said: Therefore, to the perpetuall memorie of the truth, and declaration of th'same, bee it ordeigned, provided and stablissed in this present Parliament, that the tenour of the said rolle, with all the contynue of the same, presented, as is abovesaid, and delivered to oure before said Souverain Lord the King, in the name, and on the behalve of the said three Estates out of Parliament, now by the same three Estates assembled in this present Parliament, and by auctorite of the same, bee ratifyed, enrolled, recorded, approved and auctorized, into removying the occasion of doubtes and ambiguitees, and to all other lawfull effect that shall mowe thereof ensue; soo that all things said, affirmed, specifyed, desired and remembred in the said rolle, and in the tenour of the same underwritten, in the name of the said three Estates, to the effect expressed in the same rolle, bee of like effect, vertue and force, as if all the same things had ben soo affirmed, specifyed, desired and remembred in a full Parliament,

and by auctorite of the same accepted and approved. The tenoure of the said rolle of parchment, whereof above is made mencione, foloweth and is such.

To the High and Myghty Prince Richard Duc of Gloucester.

Please it youre Noble Grace to understande the consideracion, **election**, and petition underwritten of us the lords spirital and temporal and commons of this reame of England, and thereunto agreably to geve your assent, to the common and public wele of this lande, to the comferte and gladnesse of all the people of the same.

Furst, we considre how that heretofore in tyme passed this lande many years stode in great prosperite, honoure, and tranquillite, which was caused, forsomuch as the kings then reinyng used and followed the advice and counsaill of certaine lords spirituelx and temporelx, and othre personnes of approved sadnesse, prudence, policie, and experience, dreading God, and havyng tendre zele and affection to indifferent ministration of justice, and to the comon and politique wele of the land; then our Lord God was dred, luffed loved, and honoured; then within the land was peace and tranquillite, and among neighbors concorde and charite; then the malice of outward enemyes was myghtily repressed and resisted, and the land honorably defended with many grete and glorious victories; then the entrecourse of merchandizes was largely used and exercised; by which things above remembred, the land was greatly enriched, soo that as wele the merchants and artificers as other poor people, laborying for their lyvyng in diverse occupations, had competent gayne to the sustentation of povertie. But afterward, when that such as had the rule and governaunce of this land, deliting in adulation and flattery and lede by sensuality and concupiscence, folowed the counsaill of good, vertuous, and prudent personnes such as above be remembred, the prosperite of this lande dailie decreased, soo that felicite was turned into miserie, and prosperite into adversite, and the ordre of polecye, and of the law of God and man, confounded; whereby it is likely this reame to falle into extreme miserie and desolation, - which God defende, - without due provision of convenable remedie bee had in this behalfe in all godly hast.

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 pretended marriage, as all

England hath cause to say, made betwixt the said King Edward and Elizabeth sometye 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 law 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 suffyciently 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, aftre 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 bfore and longe tyme after, the said King Edward was and stooode marryed 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 bfore 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 together 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.

Moreover we consider howe that afteward, by the thre estates of this reame assembled in a parliament holden at Westminster the xvijth yere of the regne of the said King Edward the iiiijth, he then being in possession of coroune and roiall estate, by an acte made in the same parliament, George Duc of Clarence, brother to the same King Edward now decessed, was convicted and attainted of high treason; and in the same acte is conteigned more at large.

Because and by reason whereof all the issue of the said George was and is disabled and barred of all right and clayme that in any wise they might have or challenge by enheritence to the crowne and roiall dignitie of this reame, by the auncien lawe and custome of this same reame.

Over this we consider howe that ye be the undoubted sonne and heire of Richard late Duke of Yorke verray enheritour to the said crowne and dignitie roiall and as in ryght Kyng of Englund by way of enheritaunce and that at this time the premisses duely considered that is noon other person lyvyng but ye only, that by right may clayme the said coroune and dignitie roiall, by way of enheritaunce, and how that ye be born within this lande, by reason whereof, as we deme in our myndes, ye be more naturally enclyned to the prosperite and comen wele of the same: and all the three estates of the land have, and may have more certain knowledge of your birth and filiation above said. Wee considre also, the greate wytte, prudence, justice, princely courage, and the memorable and laudable acts in diverse battalls which we of this same reame, and also the greate noblesse an excellence of your byrth and blode as of hym

that is descended of the thre most royal houses in Christendom, that is to say, England, Fraunce, and Hispaine.

Wherefore these premises by us diligently considered, we desyring affectuously the peas, tranquillitie and wele publique of this lande, and the reducion of the same to the auncien honourable estate and prosperite, and havng in your greate prudence, justice, princely courage and excellent virtue, singular confidence, have chosen in all that in us is and by this our wrytyng choise you, high and myghty Prynce into our Kyng and souveraine lorde & c., to whom we knowe for certayn it appartaneth of enheritaunce so to be choosen. And hereupon we humbly desire, pray, and require your said noble grace, that accordinge to this **election** of us the three estates of this lande, as by your true enheritaunce ye will accept and take upon you the said crowne and royall dignitie with all things thereunto annexed and apperteynyng as to you of right belongyng as well by enheritaunce as by lawfull **election**, and in caas ye do so we promitte to serve and to assiste your highnesse, as true and faithfull subjietz and liegemen and to lyve and dye withyou in this matter and every other just quarrel. For certainly we bee determined rather to aventure and comitte us to the perill of our lyfs and jopardye of deth, than to lyve in suche thraldome and bondage as we have lyved long tyme heretofore, oppressed and injured by new extorcions and impositions, agenst the lawes of God and man, and the liberte, old police and lawes of this reame wherein every Englishman is inherited. Oure Lorde God Kyng of all Kyngs by whose infynte goodnesse and eternall providence all thyngs been pryncypally gouverned in this worlde lighten your soule, and graunt you grace to do, as well in this matter as in all other, all that may be accordyng to his will and pleasure, and to the comen and publique wele of this land, so that after great cloudes, troubles, stormes, and tempests, the son of justice and of grace may shyne uppon us, to the comforte and gladnesse of all true Englishmen.

Albeit that the right, title, and estate, whiche oure souverain lorde the Kyng Richard III. Hath to and in the crown and roiall dignite of this reame of England, with all thyngs thereunto annexed and appertynyng, been juste and lawefull, as grounded upon the lawes of God and of nature, and also upon the auncien lawes and laudable customes of this said reame, and so

taken and reputed by all suche personnes as ben lerned in the abovesaide lawes and custumes. Yet, neverthelesse, forasmoche as it is considred that the moste parte of the people of this lande is not suffisiantly lerned in the abovesaid lawes and custumes whereby the trueth and right in this behalf of liklyhode may be hyd, and not clerely knowen to all the people and thereupon put in doubt and question: And over this howe that the courte of Parliament is of suche autorite, and the people of this lande of suche nature and desposicion, as experience teacheth that manifestation and declaration of any trueth or right made by the thre estats of this reame assembled in parliament, and by auctorite of the same maketh before all other thyng. Moost faith and certaintie; and quietyng men's myndes, remoweth the occasion of all doubts ans seditious language:

Therefore at the request, and by the assent of the three estates of this reame, that is to say, the lords spirituelx and temporalx and coments of this lande, assembled in this present parliament by auctorite of the same, bee it pronounced, decreed and declared, that oure saide souveraign lorde the kinge was and is veray and undoubted kyng of this reame of England; with all thyngs thereunto within this same reame, and without it annexed unite and apperteynyng, as well by right of consanguinite and enheritance as by lawful election, consecration and coronacion. And over this, that at the request, and by the assent and autorite abovesaide bee it ordeigned, enacted and established that the said crowne and roiall dignitie of this reame, and the inheritaunce of the same, and other thyngs thereunto within the same reame or without it annexed, unite, and now apperteigning, rest and abyde in the personne of oure said souveraign lord the kyng duryng his lyfe, and after his decesse in his heires of his body begotten, And in especiall, at the request and by the assent and auctorite abovesaid, bee it ordeigned, enacted, established, pronounced, decreed and declared that the high and excellent Prince Edward, sone of oure said souveraign lorde the kyng, be hiire apparent of our saide souveraign lorde the kyng, to succeed to hym in the abovesayde crown and roiall dignitie, with all thyngs as is aforesaid thereunto unite annexed and apperteignyng, to have them after the decesse of our saide souveraign lorde the kyng to hym and to his heires of his body lawfully begotten.