THE ROYAL FAMILY

I.M. TERESHCHENKO

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The House of Tudor was a prominent European royal house that ruled the Kingdom of England and its realms, including the Lordship and Kingdom of Ireland, from 1485 until 1603. The century of board of the Tudor dynasty (1485-1603) is frequently considered the best period of the English history. The very fact that Henry Tudor became King of England at all is somewhat of a miracle. His claim to the English throne was tenuous at best. His father was Edmund Tudor, a Welshman of Welsh royal lineage, but that was not too important as far as his claim to the English throne went. What was important though was his heritage through his mother, Margaret Beaufort, a descendant of Edward III. This descent from King Edward was through his third son, John of Gaunt. John's third wife, Katherine Swynford had borne him several children as his mistress before he married her. The children born before the marriage were later legitimized, but barred from the succession. Margaret Beaufort was descended from one of the children born before the marriage of John and Katherine. By 1485 the Wars of the Roses had been raging in England for many years between the Houses of York and Lancaster. Henry Tudor raised a Lancastrian army against Richard III and at the Battle of Bosworth Field in 1485, Richard was killed and the Yorkists defeated. It is said that Henry found Richard's crown on the battlefield and placed it on his head. Henry VII was crowned king and married Edward IV's daughter, Elizabeth of York a move that was to end the Wars of the Roses.
Henry VII
BORN: 28 JANUARY 1457
SUCCEEDED: 22 AUGUST 1485
DIED: 21 APRIL 1509

• Henry VII is less known than Henry VIII or Elizabeth I. But he played a much more important role in creation of the new type of a monarchy than any of them. He shared views of the growing class of dealers and land owners and established the royal authority on business quickly.

Henry VII firmly believed that wars harmed to trade and manufacture, and trade and manufacture were extremely profitable for the state, therefore he avoided military conflicts both with Scotland and France.

During the wars of the Roses the trading position of England was seriously shaken. Germany grasped trade with the Baltic and northern Europe, connections with Italy and France though remained, but were very weak in comparison with the pre-war period. The way to Europe remained only through Netherlands and Belgium.
Arthur Tudor, Prince of Wales was born on September 19 or 20, 1486, just 13 months after Henry VII had won the throne. Arthur’s parents, Henry VII and Elizabeth of York, were married in January of 1486, uniting the houses of Lancaster and York, the rivals of the Wars of the Roses. When their first child was born, he became the physical manifestation of the union of the two houses.

His name, Arthur, was purposely chosen to evoke memories of the great British king of the same name. With his birth, the new Tudor dynasty was off to a good start.

In 1488-9, Henry VII negotiated the preliminary treaty of Medina del Campo with Spain which included the proposal that Arthur would be married to Catherine of Aragon.

In 1496, further negotiations were conducted and it was agreed that Catherine would come to England in 1500, when Arthur was 14. Catherine did eventually arrive in October 1501.

After 16 years of negotiation and earlier proxy betrothals and marriages, the Spanish marriage for Arthur finally took place 14th November 1501 in old St. Paul’s Cathedral in London. Although Henry VII had a reputation for penny-pinching, this wedding was an occasion that he spared no expense.
Henry had seven children by Elizabeth of York, four of whom survived infancy: Arthur, who died shortly after his marriage to Catherine of Aragon, Henry, Margaret and Mary.

The force of the law was considerably weakened because of disobedience of the nobility and the army. Nevertheless, Henry judged severely and encouraged penalties as their punishment brought money to the treasury. Henry's purpose was an independent monarchy in all spheres including the financial one. The English monarchy had never been one of the wealthiest of Europe and even more so after the War of the Roses. So in this way he could get the lands of the executed noblemen, and taxes which he raised for the needs of the state. It should be mentioned he never wasted money. The only thing on which he spent it with pleasure was the construction of a merchant marine fleet. After his death there were 2 million pounds sterling in the Treasury, approximately 15 years of the revenue.

It could be debated whether or not Henry VII was a great king, but he was clearly a successful king. He had several goals that he had achieved by the end of his reign. He established a new dynasty after 30 years of struggle, he strengthened the judicial system as well as the treasury and successfully got rid of all the other claimants to his throne. The monarchy that he left to his son was a fairly secure one and most definitely a wealthy one.
Margaret, Queen of Scotland
Born: 29 November 1489
Died: 18 October 1541

Margaret, the first daughter of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York, was born at the Palace of Westminster on the 29th of November 1489.

- From an early age, Margaret was part of Henry VII’s negotiations for important marriages for his children and her betrothal to James IV of Scotland was made official by a treaty in 1502 even though discussions had been underway since 1496. Part of the delay was the wait for a papal dispensation because James’ great-grandmother was Joan Beaufort, sister of John Beaufort, who was the great-grandfather of Margaret Tudor. That made James IV and Margaret Tudor fourth cousins, which was within the prohibited degree. Patrick Hepburn, the Earl of Bothwell, acted as a proxy for James IV of Scotland for his betrothal to Margaret Tudor at Richmond in January 1502 before the couple was married in person. The wedding finally took place for real on 8 August, 1503 at Holyrood House in Edinburgh—Margaret was 13 and James was 30.

- In the first few years of Henry VIII’s reign, the relations with Scotland became strained, and would eventually erupt into war. In 1513, Henry VIII went to France to conduct military campaigns and made Queen Catherine of Aragon regent the the Earl of Surrey (who had led Margaret to Scotland for her wedding) was in charge of the forces that had remained in England.

- In 1509, Margaret’s father died and her brother was now Henry VIII, the new king of England.
Princess Mary Tudor was born to Henry VII and Elizabeth of York on March 18, 1496.

- She was the youngest child of the King and Queen to live past childhood. As she grew, Mary became a beautiful lady and was considered to be one of the most attractive women in Europe at the time.
- She got married to Louis XII, King of France, who was 34 years older than Mary. The King was a widower with no heir, and Henry VIII was more than ready to supply his sister as a way of making truce with a continental power. Mary first took part in a proxy marriage, with the Duc de Longueville standing in for Louis. A month later, Mary traveled to Paris for her real marriage to the 52 year old King of France. Mary remained the complacent princess, biding her time. The two were married in the fall of 1514, followed by weeks of celebrations, which obviously put a strain on her aging new husband. Louis XII died New Year's Day 1515, after just three months of marriage.
- Mary had fallen in love with her brother's friend, Charles Brandon even before her marriage. She married Charles Brandon, 1st Duke of Suffolk in secret in France on 3 March 1515.
- When Henry VIII found out about the marriage, he was furious. However, Mary was his favorite sister and Charles was an old friend, and the couple was soon forgiven. Mary was good friends with her sister-in-law Catherine of Aragon, and was a supporter of hers in the 'great matter' of the divorce and rejected Anne Boleyn. Mary's health began to fail in 1533, and she died on June 24 of that year.
- Later her granddaughter Lady Jane Grey became the Queen of England after Edward VI for about nine days.
Henry VIII
BORN: 28 JUNE 1491
SUCCEEDED: 21 APRIL 1509
DIED: 28 JANUARY 1547

Henry VIII was King of England from 21 April 1509 until his death. He was also Lord of Ireland (later King of Ireland) and claimant to the Kingdom of France. Henry was the second monarch of the House of Tudor, succeeding his father, Henry VII. Henry VIII was a significant figure in the history of the English monarchy. Henry VIII, was unlike the father. He was severe, vicious and prodigal, he wanted to become one of the most influential kings in Europe, but did not succeed in it as during the years of wars in England much had changed: France and Spain now were much stronger states, and Spain had been allied with the Roman empire which at that time owned most of Europe. Henry VIII wanted England to be more powerful than these two countries. He tried to conclude the union with Spain, but failed; then he made an attempt to conclude a treaty with France but failed again. There was no limit to Henry's disappointment. He had spent a huge sum of money for the creation and maintenance of the royal court and unnecessary wars. Gold and silver from recently discovered America had added heat to the fire. Henry lowered the share of silver in coins and money depreciated so quickly, that a quarter of a century later the pound fell in price seven times.
Wales

Unlike Henry VII, half Welsh, Henry VIII, did not share his father’s love to this country. He wanted to control Wales completely and to impose English customs upon its inhabitants. He even reformed names of the Welsh who, unlike Englishmen, did not use surnames. In 1536-43 Wales became part of England. The English law now operated on the whole territory of Wales, and he introduced the same system of English counties. Representatives of Wales entered the English parliament, and English became the official language. The Welsh language survived only due to the Welsh Bible and a small amount of the population which still used it in their daily speech.

Scotland

The Scottish kings tried to create the same centralized monarchy what existed in England, but it was not so easy because Scotland was poorer, and the Scottish-English border and mountains practically were not supervised by the government. The Scots, knowing about the infirmity, avoided conflicts with England, but Henry VIII was relentless in the desire to win Scotland. In 1513 the English armies crushed the Scots, but king James V, as well as many Scots, still wanted to be a Catholic.

Henry VIII sent a new army to Scotland to force James V to accept authority of the English king. Scotland had great losses, and its king soon died. Henry wanted to marry his son Edward to Mary, queen of Scotland, but the Scottish parliament did not approve this marriage and Mary became the French queen.

Ireland

In Ireland the affairs were much worse. Henry VIII made an attempt to introduce English authority in Ireland as he had done it in Wales, and convinced the Irish parliament to recognize him as their king.

Henry's mistake was that he tried to impose Reforms on the Irish. However, unlike in England, monasteries and churches in Ireland were still important social and economic centres, and besides, the Irish noblemen were unwilling to change their religion. During the Tudor’s reign England was at war with Ireland four times, and eventually won and brought Ireland under the control of the English parliament.

REFORMS
In 1510 Henry VIII married Catherine of Aragon, the widow of his elder brother Arthur, but by 1526 he did not have neither a successor nor chances of his birth. Henry tried to persuade the Pope to divorce them, however, he refused, being under Charles's V influence, king of Spain, and a relative of Catherine. Then Henry convinced English bishops in 1531 to recognize him as the Head of the English Church. It was fixed by law in 1534. Now Henry’s fight with Rome was more political than religious. Henry did not approve of the Reforms suggested by Martin Luther in Germany and John Calvin in Geneva.

As well as his father Henry ruled the country with the help of the advisers, however he destroyed all the links with Rome with the approval of the parliament. A series of the laws accepted in 1532-36 made England a Protestant country though the majority of the population still were Catholics.

But Reformation of Henry VIII was not finished. Henry made one more step: together with the new main minister Thomas Cromwell he started census of the church property. In 1536-39 560 monasteries were closed. Henry gave or sold their property including the land to a new class of land owners and dealers.

He died in 1547, having left three children: Mary by Catherine of Aragon, Elizabeth, the daughter of his second wife, and a nine-year old Edward, the son by Jane Seymour, the only wife whom Henry VIII really loved.
Edward VI
BORN: 12 OCTOBER 1537
SUCCEEDED: 28 JANUARY 1547
DIED: 6 JULY 1553

Henry VIII died in 1547, secure in the knowledge that he had left behind the male heir to the throne that he had longed for. Unfortunately, the boy was young, not even 10 years old, when he became king. Therefore he had to rule the country with the help of the council. It should be noted that all members of the council belonged to new Protestant religion, created by the Tudors. Edward's uncle, Edward Seymour became Lord Protector, and through Edward, sought to control England. Lord Protector was later overthrown by John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, who then took control as Edward's chief advisor. The majority of Englishmen, in the meantime, adhered to Catholic church. Less than half of the population of England were Protestants. Meanwhile, Edward VI, despite the fact that he was only a child, had his mind set on religious reform. In 1549, Edward ordered the publication of the Book of Common Prayer, containing the forms of worship for daily and Sunday church services. In 1552 the new prayer book was issued and sent to all churches. Protestants in England were happy to have the young king on the throne, but feared that the boy who had a poor health, might die. It was common knowledge that Mary, Henry's eldest daughter and heir after Edward (according to Henry VIII's will), would return the country to Roman Catholicism. To prevent this from happening, several of the nobles plotted to bring another woman to the throne in her place. Some rallied the other heir of Henry VIII: Elizabeth. Others looked to the descendants of Henry VIII's sister Mary. The oldest of these descendants was the Lady Jane Grey.

When Edward VI fell ill in 1553, his advisers looked to the possible imminent accession of the Catholic Lady Mary, and feared that she would overturn all the reforms made during Edward's reign. Perhaps surprisingly, it was the dying Edward himself who feared a return to Catholicism, and wrote a new will repudiating the 1544 will of Henry VIII. This gave the succession to his cousin Lady Jane Grey, the granddaughter of Henry VIII's sister Mary Tudor. Most of Edward's council signed the Devise for the Succession, and when Edward VI died on 6 July 1553, Lady Jane was proclaimed queen. However, the popular support for the proper Tudor dynasty—even a Catholic member—overruled Northumberland's plans, and Jane, who had never wanted to accept the crown, was deposed after just nine days. Mary's supporters joined her in a triumphal procession to London, accompanied by her younger sister Elizabeth. Jane and her husband were later executed.
Mary I
BORN: 18 FEBRUARY 1516
PROCLAIMED QUEEN: JULY 1553
DIED: 17 NOVEMBER 1558

Mary was not acute or flexible enough in the religion and politics. She is remembered for restoring England to Roman Catholicism. Mary’s husband was king of Spain, Philip. It was not the best choice: a Catholic and a foreigner. Mary's main goal was to restore Catholicism in England. In the process, she had almost 300 religious dissenters burned at the stake, earning her the sobriquet of "Bloody Mary".

However, Mary’s Persecutions were unpopular with the Protestant’s majority of England. Mary's dream of restoring the Catholic Tudor dynasty was put to an end, and her popularity further declined. She lost the last English area on French soil, Calais, to Francis, Duke of Guise on 7 January 1558 besides. During Mary's reign, however, a new coining system was introduced that would be used until the 18th century, and her marriage to Philip II created new trade routes for England. Mary also welcomed the first Russian ambassador to England, creating relations between England and Russia for the first time. Mary died on 17 November 1558. Elizabeth Tudor, age 25, was now Elizabeth I of England.
The Elizabethan era.

Elizabeth I
BORN: 7 SEPTEMBER 1533
SUCCEEDED: 17 NOVEMBER 1558
DIED: 24 MARCH 1603

During the Tudors’ reign, from 1485 to 1603 the foreign policy of England varied some times, but by the end of the sixteenth century some main principles had been produced. As well as Henry VII, Elizabeth I considered to be trade to be the most important business of foreign policy. For them any country which was the contender in international trade, became the malicious enemy of England. This idea remained a basis of the foreign policy of England till the nineteenth century. Elizabeth continued her grandfather’s Henry VII policy. He considered Spain to be England’s main enemy.

The English ships attacked Spanish when those came back from the Spanish colonies in America, loaded with gold and silver because Spain has given up to England in the right to trade with their colonies. Though these ships also were piracy, the part of their extraction got in treasury. Elizabeth apologized to the Spanish king, but left the treasure in the country. Philip, certainly knew, that Elizabeth encouraged actions of the "old salts", most well-known of which were Frensis Drake, Don Howkins and Martin Forbisher.

By far the most dangerous threat to the Tudor dynasty during Elizabeth’s reign was the Spanish Armada of 1588. Launched by Elizabeth’s old suitor Philip II of Spain, and commanded by Alonso de Guzmán El Bueno, the seventh Duke of Medina Sidonia, the Spanish had 22 galleons and 108 armed merchant ships; however, the English and the Dutch Republic outnumbered them. The Spanish lost as a result of bad weather on the English Channel and poor planning and supplies, and the skills of Sir Francis Drake and Charles Howard, the second Baron Howard of Effingham (later first Earl of Nottingham). Anyway, it was not the end of war between England and Spain which has ended only with Elizabeth’s death.
In the meantime trade went very well. By the end of the sixteenth century England traded with the Scandinavian countries, with Ottoman empire, Africa, India and, certainly, America. Elizabeth encouraged resettlement of Englishmen on the new grounds and formation of colonies. As for the parliament, only two circumstances forced the Tudors to bear parliament: for them money and support of land owners and dealers were necessary. In 1566 queen Elizabeth told the French ambassador, that three parliaments which she had already called, were enough and she would not call it any more. At the beginning of the sixteenth century the parliament gathered only under the order of the monarch. Sometimes he gathered it twice a year, and sometimes from session to session six years passed. For first forty four years of the Tudors’ reign the parliament gathered only twenty two times. Elizabeth, as well as her grandfather Henry VII, tried not to involve the parliament in state affairs and with from 1559 to 1603 called it only thirteen times. Within a century of the Tudors’ reign the authority inside parliament moved from the House of Lords to the House of Commons. The reason of it was simple: members of the House of Commons represented richer and influential classes of the society, than members of the House of Lords. The House of Commons became much more numerous, partly because of appearing of a lot of cities in England, partly because of representatives of Wales. In both the chambers the speaker directed discussion in the necessary way, and also achieved the decision necessary for the monarchy. Elizabeth's reign is also known as the Elizabethan era, famous above all for the flourishing of English drama, led by playwrights such as William Shakespeare and Christopher Marlowe.
The end of Tudors

While Elizabeth declined physically with age, her running of the country continued to benefit her people. In response to famine across England due to bad harvests in the 1590s, Elizabeth introduced the poor law, allowing peasants that were too ill to work a certain amount of money from the state. All the money Elizabeth had borrowed from Parliament in 12 of the 13 parliamentary sessions was paid back; by the time of her death, Elizabeth not only had no debts, but was in credit. Elizabeth died childless at Richmond Palace on 24 March 1603. She never named a successor. However, her chief minister Sir Robert Cecil had corresponded with the Protestant King James VI of Scotland, son of Mary, Queen of Scots, and James's succession to the English throne was unopposed. The Tudor dynasty survived only in the female line, with the House of Stuart occupying the English throne for most of the following century. So, it can be said that the last achievement of Elizabeth I was the union of England and Scotland.
The achievements of Tudors

Although, the dynasty of Tudors consisted only of six kings, it completely changed the history of Great Britain. During its reign:

1. The Wars of the Roses were finished;
2. The separation of the Church of England from the Roman Catholic Church happened;
3. The establishment of an English Protestant church took place;
4. The Spanish armada was defeated in 1588;
5. England became a sea power;
6. The colonies in America, such as Virginia, were founded;
7. England and Scotland were finally united.

So, by the end of their reign the Tudors left a powerful country, which played an important role in the world’s politics.