



England's Boy King: The Diary of Edward VI, 1547-1553

Edward Tudor, W. E. S. North

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In January 1547 a nine-year-old boy was proclaimed king of England. The young, king, Edward VI, was the son of Henry VIII and all the power which that ruler had eagerly amassed found itself in the youthful hands of a frail and sickly child. That child, England's boy king, would last just six years on the throne before dying of tuberculosis and taking the hopes of many with him to the grave.

Throughout Edward's short reign the young ruler kept a journal, a detailed diary recounting events in his kingdom. It is a fascinating record of Tudor England through the eyes of its monarch. The diary narrates all the momentous events in the young king's life but also observes the wider world, noting down news from England and keeping a watchful eye on Ireland, Scotland and mainland Europe.

The diary makes for a wonderful chronicle of Tudor life. Edward reveals an increasing awareness as his reign progresses, showing an interest in religious reform, commerce and political machinations. He gleefully recounts the fate of traitors and rebels and ponders on the ups and downs of Scottish politics. But he also notes down items which have a personal interest for him - an earthquake in Croydon in May 1551, presents from France, jousting on boats on the Thames.

Sometimes naive, sometimes astute and calculating, the diary is a faithful record of six years in English history. An age in which political and religious parties rushed to secure their influence over the boy king whilst still darker forces wait in the wings, with religious revolution and rebellion never being far away.



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