

The Tudor dynasty ruled England from 1485 to 1603. Elizabeth presided over England's rise to glory abroad and to prosperity and literary achievement at home , justifiably giving her name to England's golden age . Thomas Cromwell , Henry's second administrative genius , oversaw the revolutionary changes of the 1530s : the break with Rome and dissolution of the monasteries , the new growth of Parliament , especially the House of Commons , and the creation out of the old King's Council of a new bureaucratic structure including the Privy Council and the prerogative courts , which were controlled by the Crown . He gained recognition abroad , from Spain in 1489 by the Treaty of Medina del Campo , and then from France , the Netherlands , and Scotland . He exhausted his inherited wealth , but won fame and discovered the talents of Cardinal Thomas Wolsey , who as chancellor and archbishop of York dominated the years 1514–29 . She assisted the Protestant rebels in the Spanish Netherlands and encouraged English sailors to raid Spanish ships on the high seas . Under Edward VI , a minor dominated successively by Edward Seymour , duke of Somerset , and John Dudley , duke of Northumberland , the English Church became Protestant . Almost as a gesture of how his reign would proceed , one of Henry's first decisions was to order the arrest and the execution of Sir Richard Empson and Edward Dudley – the two men who had been responsible for implementing Henry VII's financial measures . Ruthless , ambitious and bold , Henry VIII was a vivid contrast to his careful , father . When Edward died at the age of 16 , Northumberland tried to save Protestantism and himself by placing Edward's Protestant cousin , Lady Jane Grey , on the throne instead of his Catholic Princess Mary . Most Tudor monarchs came to the throne – and remained on the throne – unchallenged . Henry VII possessed only his ability and the ancient name and audacity of his Welsh ancestors . His grandfather had married the widow of Henry V , and his father had married Margaret Beaufort , who was descended illegitimately from Edward III . When the all – capable Wolsey could not obtain it , Henry dismissed him and summoned the Reformation Parliament . She neutralized the Scottish threat by helping the Protestant and pro – English faction to win dominance there . Her navy defeated the Spanish Armada in 1588 and prevented the invasion of England . (Collection of taxes) In 1513 Henry won the Battle of the Spurs in France and beat the Scots at Flodden . Wanting a son , and smitten by the dark eyes of Anne Boleyn , . Henry appealed to the pope for a divorce