

villeins and gentlemen. They call us slaves, and beat us if we are slow to do their bidding, but God has now given us the day to shake off our bondage."

303. The Outbreak General; Violence in London.—Twenty years before there had been similar outbreaks in Flanders and in France. This therefore was not an isolated instance of insurrection, but rather part of a general uprising. The rebellion begun by Tyler and Ball spread through the southern and eastern counties of England, taking different forms in different districts. It was violent in St. Albans, where the serfs rose against the exactions of the abbot, but it reached its greatest height in London.

For three weeks the mob held possession of the capital. They pillaged and then burned John of Gaunt's palace. They seized and beheaded the Lord Chancellor and the chief collector of the odious poll-tax, destroyed all the law papers they could lay hands on, and ended by murdering a number of lawyers; members of that profession being particularly obnoxious because they, as the rioters believed, forged the chains by which the laboring class were held in subjection.

304. Demands of the Rebels; End of the Rebellion.—The insurrectionists demanded of the king that villeinage should be abolished, that the rent of agricultural lands should be fixed by Parliament at a uniform rate in money, that trade should be free, and that a general unconditional pardon should be granted to all who had taken part in the rebellion. Richard promised redress; but while negotiations were going on, Walworth, mayor of London, struck down Tyler with his dagger, and with his death the whole movement collapsed almost as suddenly as it arose. Parliament now began a series of merciless executions, and refused to consider any of the claims which Richard had shown a disposition to listen to. In their punishment of the rebels the House of Commons vied with the Lords in severity, few showing any sympathy with the efforts of the peasants to obtain their freedom from feudal bondage. The uprising, however, was not in vain, for by it the

old restrictions were in some degree loosened, so that in the course of the next century and a half villeinage was gradually abolished, and the English laborer acquired that greatest yet most perilous of all rights, the complete ownership of himself.¹ So long as he was a serf, the peasant could claim assistance from his master in sickness and old age; in attaining independence he had to risk the danger of pauperism, which began with it—this possibility being part of the price which man must everywhere pay for the inestimable privilege of freedom.

305. The New Movement in Literature.—The same spirit which demanded emancipation on the part of the working classes showed itself in literature. We have already seen how, in the previous reign, Langland, in his poem of "*Piers Plowman*," gave bold utterance to the growing discontent of the times in his declaration that the rich and great destroyed the poor. In a different spirit Chaucer, "the morning-star of English song," now began to write his "*Canterbury Tales*," a series of stories in verse, supposed to be told by a merry band of pilgrims on their way from the Tabard-Inn, Southwark,² to the shrine of St. Thomas Becket in Canterbury.

There is little of Langland's complaint in Chaucer, for he was generally a favorite at court, seeing mainly the bright side of life, and sure of his yearly allowance of money and daily pitcher of wine from the royal bounty. Yet, with all his mirth, there is a vein of playful satire in his description of men and things; and his pictures of jolly monks and easy-going churchmen, with his lines addressed to his purse "as his saviour down in this world here," show that he too was thinking, at least at times, of the manifold evils of poverty and of that danger springing from religious indifference which poor Langland had taken so much to heart.

¹ In Scotland villeinage lasted much longer, and so late as 1774, in the reign of George III., men working in coal and salt mines were held in a species of slavery, which was finally abolished the following year.

² Southwark: see note to Paragraph No. 153.

306. Wycliffe; The First English Bible. — But the real reformer of that day was John Wycliffe, rector of Lutterworth and lecturer at Oxford. He boldly attacked both the religious and political corruption of the age. The mendicant friars who at an earlier period had done such good work had now grown too rich and lazy to be of further use. Wycliffe organized a new band of brothers, known as "Poor Priests," to take up and push forward the reforms the friars had dropped. Clothed in red sackcloth cloaks, barefooted, with staff in hand, they went about from town to town¹ preaching "God's law," and demanding that church and state bring themselves into harmony with it.

The only Bible then in use was the Latin version. The people could not read a line of it, and many priests were almost as ignorant of its contents. To carry on the revival which he had begun, Wycliffe now translated the Scriptures into English. The work was copied and circulated by the "Poor Priests." But the cost of such a book in manuscript — for the printing-press had not yet come into existence — was so great that only the rich could buy the complete volume. Many, however, who had no money would give a load of farm produce for a few favorite chapters. In this way Wycliffe's translation was spread throughout the country among all classes.² Later, when persecution began, men hid these precious copies and read them with locked doors at night, or met in the forests to hear them expounded by preachers who went about at the peril of their lives, so that the complaint was made by Wycliffe's enemies "that common men and women who could read were better acquainted with the Scriptures than the most learned and intelligent of the clergy."

¹ Compare Chaucer's

"A good man ther was of religioun,
That was a poure persone [parson] of a town."

Prologue to the Canterbury Tales (179).

² The great number of copies sent out is shown by the fact that after the lapse of five hundred years, one hundred and sixty-five, more or less complete, are still preserved in England.

307. The Lollards; Wycliffe's Remains burned. — The followers of Wycliffe eventually became known as Lollards, or Psalm-singers.¹ From having been religious reformers denouncing the wealth and greed of a corrupt church, they would seem, at least in many cases, to have degenerated into socialists or communists, demanding, like John Ball, — who may have been one of their number, — that all property should be equally divided, and that all rank should be abolished. This fact should be borne in mind with reference to the subsequent efforts made by the government to suppress the movement. In the eye of the church, the Lollards were heretics; in the judgment of many moderate men, they were destructionists and anarchists, as unreasonable and as dangerous as the "dynamiters" of to-day.

By a decree of the church council of Constance,² forty-four years after Wycliffe's death the reformer's body was dug up and burned. But his influence had not only permeated England, but had passed to the continent, and was preparing the way for that greater movement which Luther was to inaugurate in the sixteenth century. Tradition says that the ashes of his corpse were thrown into a brook flowing near the parsonage of Lutterworth, the object being to utterly destroy and obliterate the remains of the arch-heretic, but, as Fuller says, "this brook did convey his ashes into the Avon, Avon into Severn, Severn into the narrow sea, and that into the wide ocean. And so the ashes of Wycliffe are the emblem of his doctrine, which is now dispersed all the world over."³

308. Richard's Misgovernment. — Richard's reign was unpopular with all classes. The people hated him for his extravagance;

¹ Or "Babblers."

² Constance, Southern Germany. This Council (1415) sentenced John Huss and Jerome of Prague, both of whom may be considered Wycliffites, to the stake.

³ Fuller's Church History of Britain. Compare also Wordsworth's Sonnet to Wycliffe, and the lines, attributed to an unknown writer of Wycliffe's time: —

"The Avon to the Severn runs,
The Severn to the sea;
And Wycliffe's dust shall spread abroad,
Wide as the waters be."

the clergy, for his failing to put down the Wycliffites, with the doctrines of whose founder he was believed to sympathize; while the nobles disliked his injustice and favoritism. Some political reforms were attempted, which were partially successful; but the king soon regained his power, and took summary vengeance on the leaders, besides imposing heavy fines on the counties which had supported them. Two influential men were left, Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk, and Henry Bolingbroke, Duke of Hereford, whom he had found no opportunity to punish. After a time they openly quarrelled, and accused each other of treason. A challenge passed between them, and they were to fight the matter out in the king's presence; but when the day arrived, and they came ready for the combat, the king banished both from England. Shortly after they had left the country Bolingbroke's father, John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, died. Contrary to all law, Richard now seized and appropriated the estate, which belonged by right to the banished nobleman.

309. Richard deposed and murdered.—When Bolingbroke, who was now by his father's death Duke of Lancaster, heard of the outrage, he raised a small force and returned to England, demanding the restitution of his lands.

Finding that the powerful family of the Percies were willing to aid him, and that many of the common people desired a change of government, the duke now boldly claimed the crown, on the ground that Richard had forfeited it by his tyranny, and that he stood next in succession (through his descent from Henry III.). The king now fell into Henry's hands, and events moved rapidly to a crisis. Richard had rebuilt Westminster Hall. The first Parliament which assembled there met to depose him, and to give his throne to the victorious Duke of Lancaster. Shakespeare represents the fallen monarch saying in his humiliation,—

“With mine own tears I wash away my balm,¹
With mine own hand I give away my crown.”

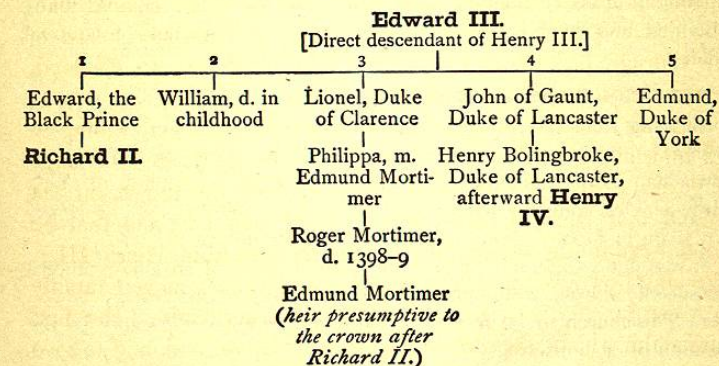
¹ Richard II., Act IV. Sc. 1. The balm was the sacred oil used in anointing the king at his coronation.

After his deposition Richard was confined in Pontefract Castle, Yorkshire, where he found, like his unfortunate ancestor Edward I., “that in the case of princes there is but a step from the prison to the grave.” His death did not take place, however, until after Henry's accession.¹

310. Summary.—Richard II.'s reign comprised,—

1. The peasant revolt under Wat Tyler, which led eventually to the emancipation of the villeins, or serfs.
2. Wycliffe's reformation movement; his translation of the Latin Bible, with the rise of the Lollards.
3. The publication of Chaucer's “Canterbury Tales,” the first great English poem.
4. The deposition of the king, and the transfer of the crown by Parliament to Henry, Duke of Lancaster.

¹ Henry of Lancaster was the son of John of Gaunt, who was the fourth son of Edward III.; but there were descendants of that king's *third* son (Lionel, Duke of Clarence) living, who, of course, had a prior claim, as the following table shows.



This disregard of the strict order of succession furnished a pretext for the Civil Wars of the Roses, which broke out sixty years later.

GENERAL VIEW OF THE ANGEVIN, OR PLANTAGENET, PERIOD. — 1154-1399.

I. GOVERNMENT. — II. RELIGION. — III. MILITARY AFFAIRS. — IV. LITERATURE, LEARNING, AND ART. — V. GENERAL INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE. — VI. MODE OF LIFE, MANNERS, AND CUSTOMS.

GOVERNMENT.

311. Judicial Reforms. — In 1164, Henry II. undertook, by a series of statutes called the Constitutions of Clarendon, to bring the church under the common law of the land, but was only temporarily successful. By subsequent statutes he reorganized the administration of justice, and laid the foundation of trial by jury.

312. Town Charters. — Under Richard I. many towns secured charters giving them the control of their own affairs in great measure. In this way municipal self-government arose, and a prosperous and intelligent class of merchants and artisans grew up who eventually obtained important political influence in the management of national affairs.

313. The Great, or National, Charter. — This pledge extorted from King John in 1215 put a check to the arbitrary power of the sovereign, and guaranteed the rights of all classes from the serf and the townsman to the bishop and baron. It consisted originally of sixty-three articles, founded mainly on the first royal charter (that of Henry I.), given in 1100. (See Paragraph No. 185, and note.)

It was not a statement of principles, but a series of specific remedies for specific abuses, which may be summarized as follows: —

1. The church to be free from royal interference, especially in the election of bishops.

2. No taxes except the regular feudal dues (see Paragraph No. 200), to be levied except by the consent of the National Council.

3. The Court of Common Pleas (see Paragraph No. 197, note) not to follow the king, but remain stationary at Westminster. Justice to be neither sold, denied, nor delayed. No man to be imprisoned, outlawed, punished, or otherwise molested, save by the judgment of his equals or

the law of the land. The necessary implements of all freemen, and the farming-tools of villeins or serfs, to be exempt from seizure.

4. Weights and measures to be kept uniform throughout the realm. All merchants to have the right to enter and leave the kingdom without paying exorbitant tolls for the privilege.

5. Forest laws to be justly enforced.

6. The charter to be carried out by twenty-four barons together with the mayor of London.

This document marks the beginning of a written constitution, and it proved of the highest value henceforth in securing good government. It was confirmed thirty-seven times by subsequent kings and parliaments, the confirmation of this and previous charters by Edward I. in 1297 being of especial importance.

314. Rise of the House of Commons. — In 1265, under Henry III., through the influence of Simon de Montfort, two representatives from each city and borough, or town, together with two knights of the shire, or country gentlemen, were summoned to meet with the lords and clergy in the National Council, or Parliament. From this time the body of the people began to have a voice in making the laws. Later in the period the knights of the shire joined the representatives from the towns in forming a distinct body in Parliament sitting by themselves under the name of the House of Commons. They obtained the power of levying all taxes, and also of impeaching before the House of Lords any government officer guilty of misuse of power.

315. New Class of Barons. — Under Henry III. other influential men of the realm, aside from the great landholders and barons by tenure, began to be summoned to the king's council. These were called "barons by writ." Later (under Richard II.), barons were created by open letters bearing the royal seal, and were called "barons by patent."¹

316. Land Laws. — During this period important laws [De Donis, or Entail, and Quia Emptores] respecting land were passed, which had the effect of keeping estates in families, and also of preventing their possessors from evading their feudal duties to the king. At the same

¹ This is the modern method of raising a subject (e.g., Lord Tennyson) to the peerage. It marks the fact that from the thirteenth century the ownership of land was no longer considered a necessary condition of nobility; and that the peerage had now developed into the five degrees, which it still maintains, of dukes, marquises, earls, viscounts, and barons.

time a restriction on the acquisition of land by the church (Statute of Mortmain), which was exempt from paying certain feudal dues, was also imposed to prevent the king's revenue from being diminished.

RELIGION.

317. Restriction of the Papal Power.—During the Angevin period the popes endeavored to introduce the canon law (a body of ordinances consisting mainly of the decisions of church councils and popes) into England, with the view of making it supreme; but Parliament, at Merton, refused to accept it, saying, "We will not change the laws of England." The Statute of Mortmain was also passed (see Paragraph No. 278) and other measures (Statute of Provisors and Statute of Præmunire), which forbade the Pope from taking the appointment of bishops and other ecclesiastics out of the hands of the clergy; and which prohibited any appeal from the king's court to the papal court. Furthermore, many hundreds of parishes, formerly filled by foreigners who could not speak English, were now given to native priests, and the sending of money out of the country to support foreign ecclesiastics was in great measure stopped.

During the crusades two religious military orders had been established, called the Knights Hospitallers and the Knights Templars. The object of the former was, originally, to provide entertainment for pilgrims going to Jerusalem; that of the latter, to protect them. Both had extensive possessions in England. In 1312 the order of Templars was broken up on a charge of heresy and evil life, and their property in England given to the Knights Hospitallers, who were also called Knights of St. John.

318. Reform.—The Mendicant Friars began a reformatory movement in the church and accomplished much good. This was followed by Wycliffe's attack on religious abuses, by his translation of the Bible, with the revival carried on by the "Poor Priests," and by the rise of the Lollards, who were eventually punished by the passage of severe laws, partly on the ground of their heretical opinions, and partly because they became in a measure identified with socialistic and communistic efforts to destroy rank and equalize property.

MILITARY AFFAIRS.

319. Scutage.—By a tax called scutage, or shield-money, levied on all knights who refused to serve the king in foreign wars, Henry II.

obtained the means to hire soldiers. By a law reviving the national militia, composed of freemen below the rank of knights, the king made himself in great measure independent of the barons, with respect to raising troops.

320. Armor; Heraldry.—The linked or mail armor now began to be superseded by that made of pieces of steel joined together so as to fit the body. This, when it was finally perfected, was called plate armor, and was both heavier and stronger than mail.

With the introduction of plate armor and the closed helmet it became the custom for each knight to wear a device, called a crest, on his helmet, and also to have one called a coat of arms (because originally worn on a loose coat over the armor). This served to distinguish him from others, and was of practical use not only to the followers of a great lord, who thus knew him at a glance, but it served in time of battle to prevent the confusion of friend and foe. Eventually, coats of arms became hereditary, and the descent, and to some extent the history, of a family can be traced by them. In this way heraldry serves as a help to the knowledge of men and events.

321. Chivalry; Tournaments.—The profession of arms was regulated by certain rules, by which each knight solemnly bound himself to serve the cause of religion and the king, and to be true, brave, and courteous to those of his own rank, to protect the ladies and succor all persons in distress. Under Edward III. chivalry reached its culmination and began to decline. One of the grotesque features of the attack on France was an expedition of English knights with one eye bandaged; this half-blind company having vowed to partially renounce their sight until they did some glorious deed. The chief amusement of the nobles and knights was the Tournament, a mock combat fought on horseback, in full armor, which sometimes ended in a real battle. At these entertainments a lady was chosen queen, who gave prizes to the victors.

322. The Use of the Long-Bow; Introduction of Cannon; Wars.

—The common weapon of the yeomen, or foot-soldiers, was the long-bow. It was made of yew-tree wood, and was of the height of the user. Armed with this weapon, the English soldiers proved themselves irresistible in the French wars, the French having no native archers of any account.

Roger Bacon is supposed to have known the properties of gunpowder

as early as 1250, but no practical use was made of the discovery until the battle of Crécy, 1346, when a few very small cannon are said to have been employed by the English against the enemy's cavalry. Later, they were used to throw heavy stones in besieging castles. Still later, rude hand-guns came slowly into use. From this period kings gradually began to realize the full meaning of the harmless-looking black grains, with whose flash and noise the Oxford monk had amused himself.

The chief wars of the time were the contests between the kings and the barons, Richard I.'s crusade, John's war with France, resulting in the loss of Normandy, Edward I.'s conquest of Wales and temporary subjugation of Scotland, and the beginning of the Hundred Years' War with France under Edward III.

The navy of this period was made up of small, one-masted vessels, seldom carrying more than a hundred and fifty fighting men. As the mariner's compass had now come into general use, these vessels could, if occasion required, make voyages of considerable length.

LEARNING, LITERATURE, AND ART.

323. Education.—In 1264 Walter de Merton founded the first college at Oxford, an institution which has ever since borne his name, and which really originated the English college system. During the reign of Edward III., William of Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester, gave a decided impulse to higher education by the establishment, at his own expense, of Winchester College, the first great public school founded in England. Later, he built and endowed New College at Oxford to supplement it. In Merton's and Wykeham's institutions young men of small means were instructed, and in great measure supported, without charge. They were brought together under one roof, required to conform to proper discipline, and taught by the best teachers of the day. In this way a general feeling of emulation was roused, and at the same time a fraternal spirit cultivated which had a strong influence in favor of a broader and deeper intellectual culture than the monastic schools at Oxford and elsewhere had encouraged.

324. Literature.—The most prominent historical work was that by Matthew Paris, a monk of St. Albans, written in Latin, based largely on earlier chronicles, and covering a period from the Norman Conquest, 1066, to his death, in 1259. It is a work of much value, and was continued by writers of the same abbey.

The first English prose work was a volume of travels by Sir John Mandeville, dedicated to Edward III. It was followed by Wycliffe's translation of the Bible into English from the Latin version, and by Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales," the first great English poem.

325. Architecture.—Edward I. and his successors began to build structures combining the palace with the stronghold.¹ Conway and Caernarvon Castles in Wales, Warwick Castle, Warwickshire, and a great part of Windsor Castle on the Thames, twenty-three miles west of London, are magnificent examples, the last still being occupied as a royal residence.

In churches, the massive architecture of the Normans, with its heavy columns and round arches, was followed by Early English, or the first period of the Gothic, with pointed arches, slender, clustered, columns and tapering spires like that of Salisbury Cathedral. Later the Decorated style was adopted. It was characterized by broader windows, highly ornamented to correspond with the elaborate decoration within, which gave this style its name, which is seen to best advantage in Exeter Cathedral, York Minster and Merton College Chapel.

GENERAL INDUSTRY.

326. Fairs; Guilds.—The domestic trade of the country was largely carried on during this period by great fairs held at stated times by royal license. Bunyan, in "Pilgrim's Progress," gives a vivid picture of one of these centres of trade and dissipation, under the name of "Vanity Fair." Though it represents the great fair of Sturbridge, near Cambridge, as he saw it in the 17th century, yet it undoubtedly describes similar gatherings in the time of the Plantagenets. In all large towns the merchants had formed associations for mutual protection and the advancement of trade called merchant-guilds. Artisans now instituted similar societies, under the name of craft-guilds. For a long time the merchant-guilds endeavored to shut out the craft-guilds, the men, as they said, "with dirty hands and blue nails," from having any part in the government of the towns; but eventually the latter got their full share, and in some cases, as in London, became the more

¹ The characteristic features of the Edwardian castles are double surrounding walls, with numerous protecting towers, and the omission of the square Norman keep.

influential party of the two. In London they still survive under the name of the "City Companies."

327. The Wool Trade.—Under Edward III. a flourishing trade in wool grew up between England and Flanders. The manufacture of fine woollen goods was also greatly extended in England. All commerce at this period was limited to certain market towns called "staples." To these places material and goods for export had to be carried in order that they might pay duty to the government before leaving the country. Imports also paid duties. If an Englishman carried goods abroad and sold them in the open market without first paying a tax to the crown, he was liable to the punishment of death.

328. The Great Strike.—The scarcity of laborers caused by the ravages of the Black Death caused a general strike for higher wages on the part of free workingmen, and also induced thousands of villeins to run away from their masters, in order to get work on their own account. The general uprising which a heavy poll-tax caused among the laboring class, though suppressed at the time, led to the ultimate emancipation of the villeins, by a gradual process extending through many generations.

MODE OF LIFE, MANNERS, AND CUSTOMS.

329. Dress; Furniture.—During most of this period great luxury in dress prevailed among the rich and noble. Silks, velvets, scarlet cloth and cloth of gold were worn by both men and women. At one time the lords and gallants at court wore shoes with points curled up like rams' horns and fastened to the knee with silver chains. Attempts were made by the government to abolish this and other ridiculous fashions, and also to regulate the cost of dress according to the rank and means of the wearer; but the effort met with small success. Even the rich at this time had but little furniture in their houses, and chairs were almost unknown. The floors of houses were strewn with rushes, which, as they were rarely changed, became horribly filthy, and were a prolific cause of sickness.

330. The Streets; Amusements; Profanity.—The streets of London and other cities were rarely more than twelve or fifteen feet wide. They were neither paved nor lighted. Pools of stagnant water and heaps of refuse abounded. There was no sewerage. The only scavengers were the crows. The houses were of timber and plaster,

with projecting stories, and destructive fires were common. The chief amusements were hunting and hawking, contests at archery, and tournaments. Plays were acted by amateur companies on stages on wheels which could be moved from street to street. The subjects continued to be drawn in large measure from the Bible and from legends of the saints. They served to instruct men in Scripture history, in an age when few could read. The instruction was not, however, always taken to heart, as profane swearing was so common that an Englishman was called on the continent by his favorite oath, which the French regarded as a sort of national name before that of "John Bull" had come into use.