The mansions of the nobility at this period exhibited great elegance. Crosby Hall, London, at one time the residence of Richard III., and still standing, is a fine specimen of the "Inns," as they were called, of the great families and wealthy knights.

GENERAL INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE.

377. Agriculture and Trade. — Notwithstanding the civil wars of the Roses, agriculture was prosperous, and foreign trade largely increased. The latter was well represented by Sir Richard Whittington, thrice mayor of London, who, according to tradition, lent Henry V. large sums of money, and then at an entertainment which he gave to the king and queen in his city mansion, generously cancelled the debt by throwing the bonds into the open sandal-wood fire.

Goldsmiths from Lombardy had now settled in London in such numbers as to give the name of Lombard Street to the quarter they occupied. They succeeded the Jews in the business of money-lending and banking, and Lombard Street still remains famous for its bankers and brokers.

MODES OF LIFE, MANNERS, AND CUSTOMS.

378. Dress. — Great sums were spent on dress by both sexes, and the courtiers' doublets, or jackets, were of the most costly silks and velvets, elaborately puffed and slashed. During the latter part of the period the pointed shoes, which had formerly been of prodigious length, suddenly began to grow broad, with such rapidity that Parliament passed a law limiting the width of the toes to six inches. At the same time the court ladies adopted the fashion of wearing horns as huge in proportion as the noblemen's shoes. The government tried legislating them down, and the clergy fulminated a solemn curse against them; but fashion was more powerful than church and Parliament combined, and horns and hoofs came out triumphant.

VIII.

"One half her soil has walked the rest
In heroes, martyrs, poets, sages."
O. W. Holmes.

POLITICAL REACTION. — ABSOLUTISM OF THE CROWN, — THE ENGLISH REFORMATION AND THE NEW LEARNING.

CROWN or POPE?

HOUSE OF TUDOR. — 1485–1603.

Henry VII., 1485–1509.
Henry VIII., 1509–1547.
Edward VI., 1547–1553.
Mary, 1553–1558.
Elizabeth, 1558–1603.

379. Union of the Houses of Lancaster and York. — Before leaving the continent, Henry Tudor had promised the Yorkist party that he would marry Elizabeth, eldest daughter of Edward IV., and sister to the young princes murdered by Richard III. Such a marriage would unite the rival houses of Lancaster and York, and thus put an end to the civil war. A few months after the new king's accession the wedding was duly celebrated, and in the beautiful east window of stained glass in Henry VII.'s Chapel, Westminster Abbey, the Roses are seen joined; so that, as the quaint verse of that day says: —

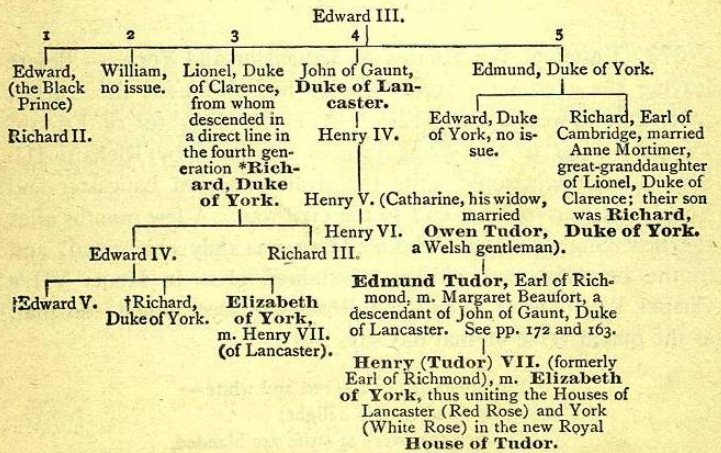
"Both roses flourish — red and white —
In love and sisterly delight;
The two that were at strife are blended,
And all old troubles now are ended."

Peace came from the union, but it was peace interrupted by insurrections.[1]

380. Condition of the Country; Power of the Crown. — Henry, it is said, had his claim to the throne printed by Caxton, and distributed broadcast over the country. It was the first political appeal to the people made through the press, and was a sign of the new period upon which English history had entered. Since Caxton began his work, the kingdom had undergone a most momentous change. The great nobles, like the Earl of Warwick, were, with few exceptions, dead, their estates confiscated, their thousands of followers either buried on the battle-field or dispersed throughout the land. The small number of titled families remaining was no longer to be feared. The nation itself, though it had taken comparatively little part in the war, was weary of bloodshed, and ready for peace on any terms.

The accession of the house of Tudor marks the beginning of a long period of well-nigh absolute royal power. The nobility were

[1] ORIGIN OF THE HOUSE OF TUDOR.



* Inherited the title Duke of York from his uncle Edward. See No. 5.
† The princes murdered by Richard III.

too weak to place any check on the king; the clergy, who had not recovered from their dread of Lollardism and its attacks on their wealth and influence, were anxious for a strong conservative government such as Henry promised; as for the commons, they had no clear united policy, and though the first Parliament put certain restraints on the crown, yet they were never really enforced.[1] The truth is, that the new king was both too prudent and too crafty to give them an opportunity. By avoiding foreign wars he dispensed with the necessity of summoning frequent parliaments, and also with demands for large sums of money. By thus ruling alone for a large part of the time, Henry got the management of affairs into his own hands, and transmitted the power to those who came after him. In this way the Tudors with their successors, the Stuarts, built up that system of "personal sovereignty" which continued for a hundred and fifty years, until the outbreak of a new civil war brought it to an end forever.

381. Growth of a Stronger Feeling of Nationality. — It would be an error, however, to consider this absolutism of the crown as an unmitigated evil. On the contrary, it was in one important direction an advantage. There are times when the great need of a people is not more individual liberty, but greater national unity. Spain and France were two countries consisting of a collection of petty feudal states, whose nobility were always trying to steal each other's possessions and cut each other's throats, until the rise in each of a royal despotism forced the turbulent barons to make peace, to obey a common central law, and by this means both realms ultimately developed into great and powerful kingdoms. When the Tudors came to the throne, England was still full of

[1] At the accession of Henry VII., Parliament imposed the following checks on the power of the king: —

1. No new tax to be levied without consent of Parliament.
2. No new law to be made without the same consent.
3. No committal to prison without a warrant specifying the offence, and the trial to be speedy.
4. Criminal charges and questions of fact in civil cases to be decided by jury.
5. The king's officers to be held responsible to the nation.

the rankling hate engendered by the Wars of the Roses. Held down by the heavy hand of Henry VII., and by the still heavier one of his son, the country learned the same salutary lesson of growth under repression which had benefited Spain and France. Henceforth Englishmen of all classes, instead of boasting that they belonged to the Yorkist or the Lancastrian faction, came to pride themselves on their loyalty to crown and country, and their readiness to draw their swords to defend both.

382. Henry's Methods of raising Money; the Court of Star-Chamber. — Henry's reign was in the interest of the middle classes, — the farmers, tradesmen, and mechanics. His policy was to avoid heavy taxation, to exempt the poor from the burdens of state, and so ingratiate himself with a large body of the people. In order to accomplish this, he revived "benevolences," and by a device suggested by his chief minister, Cardinal Morton, and hence known and dreaded as "Morton's Fork," he extorted large sums from the rich and well-to-do.[1] The cardinal's agents made it their business to learn every man's income, and visit him accordingly. If, for instance, a person lived handsomely, the cardinal would insist on a correspondingly liberal gift; if, however, a citizen lived very plainly, the king's minister insisted none the less, telling the unfortunate man that by his economy he must surely have accumulated enough to bestow the required "benevolence."[2] Thus on one prong or the other of his terrible "fork" the shrewd cardinal impaled his writhing victims, and speedily filled the royal treasury as it had never been filled before.[3]

1 Those whose income from land was less than £2, or whose movable property did not exceed £15 (say $150 and $1125 now), were exempt. The lowest rate of assessment for the "benevolences" was fixed at twenty pence on the pound on land, and half that rate on other property.

2 Richard Reed, a London alderman, refused to contribute a "benevolence." He was sent to serve as a soldier in the Scotch wars at his own expense, and the general received government orders to "use him in all things according to sharp military discipline." The effect was such that few after that ventured to deny the king what he asked.

3 Henry is said to have accumulated a fortune of nearly two millions sterling; an amount which would perhaps represent upwards of $150,000,000 now.

But Henry had other methods for raising money. He sold offices in church and state, and took bribes for pardoning rebels. When he summoned a parliament he obtained grants for putting down some real or pretended insurrection, or to defray the expenses of a threatened attack from abroad, and then quietly pocketed the appropriation, — a device not altogether unknown to modern government officials. A third and last method for getting funds was invented in Henry's behalf by two lawyers, Empson and Dudley, who were so rapacious and cut so close that they were commonly known as "the king's skin-shearers." They went about the country enforcing old and forgotten laws, by which they reaped a rich harvest. Their chief instrument for gain, however, was a revival of the Statute of Liveries, which imposed enormous fines on those noblemen who dared to equip their followers in military garb, or designate them by a badge equivalent to it, as had been their custom during the civil wars.[1]

In order to thoroughly enforce the Statute of Liveries, Henry reorganized the Court of Star-Chamber, so called from the starred ceiling where the tribunal met. This court had originally for its object the punishment of such crimes committed by the great families, or their adherents, as the ordinary law courts could not, or through intimidation dared not, deal with. It had no power to inflict death, but might impose long terms of imprisonment and ruinous fines. It, too, first made use of torture in England to extort confessions of guilt.

Henry seems to have enforced the law of Livery against friend and foe alike. Said the king to the Earl of Oxford, as he left his castle, where a large number of retainers in uniform were drawn up to do him honor, "My Lord, I thank you for your entertainment, but my attorney must speak to you." The attorney, who was the notorious Empson, brought suit in the Star-Chamber against the earl, who was fined 15,000 marks, or something like $750,000, for the incautious display he had made.

1 See Paragraph No. 348.

383. The Introduction of Artillery strengthens the Power of the King. — It was easier for Henry to pursue this arbitrary course because the introduction of artillery had changed the art of war. Throughout the Middle Ages the call of a great baron had, as Macaulay says, been sufficient to raise a formidable revolt. Countrymen and followers took down their tough yew long-bows from the chimney-corner, knights buckled on their steel armor, mounted their horses, and in a few days an army threatened the throne, which had no troops save those furnished by loyal subjects.

But now that men had digged "villanous saltpetre out of the bowels of the harmless earth" to manufacture powder, and that others had invented cannon, "those devilish iron engines," as the poet Spenser called them, "ordained to kill," all was different. Without artillery, the old feudal army, with its bows, swords, and battle-axes, could do little against a king like Henry who had it. For this reason, the whole kingdom lay at his mercy; and though the nobles and the rich might groan, they saw that it was useless to fight.

384. The Pretenders Symnel and Warbeck. — During Henry's reign, two pretenders laid claim to the crown: Lambert Symnel, who represented himself to be Edward Plantagenet, nephew of the late king; and Perkin Warbeck, who asserted that he was Richard, Duke of York, generally and rightly supposed to have been murdered in the Tower by his uncle, Richard III. Symnel's attempt was easily suppressed, and he commuted his claim to the crown for the position of scullion in the king's kitchen. Warbeck kept the kingdom in a turmoil for more than five years, during which time one hundred and fifty of his adherents were executed, and their bodies exposed on gibbets along the South shore to deter their master's French supporters from landing. At length Warbeck was captured, imprisoned, and finally hanged at Tyburn.

385. Henry's Politic Marriages. — Henry accomplished more by the marriages of his children and by diplomacy than other monarchs had by their wars. He gave his daughter Margaret to King James IV. of Scotland, and thus prepared the way for the union of the two kingdoms. He married his eldest son, Prince Arthur, to Catharine of Aragon, daughter of the king of Spain, by which he secured a very large marriage portion for the prince, and what was of equal importance, the alliance of Spain against France. Arthur died soon afterwards, and the king got a dispensation from the Pope, granting him permission to marry his younger son Henry to Arthur's widow. It was this prince who eventually became king of England, with the title of Henry VIII., and we shall hereafter see that this marriage was destined by its results to change the whole course of the country's history.

386. The World as known at Henry's Accession. — The king also took some small part in certain other events, which seemed to him, at the time, of less consequence than these matrimonial alliances, but which history has regarded in a different light from that in which the cunning and cautious monarch considered them. A glance at the map[1] will show how different our world is from that with which the English of Henry's time were acquainted. Then, the earth was not supposed to be a globe, but simply a flat body surrounded by the ocean. The only countries of which anything was certainly known, with the exception of Europe, were parts of Western Asia, together with a small strip of the northern and eastern coast of Africa. The knowledge which had once existed of India, China, and Japan appears to have died out in great measure with the travellers and merchants of earlier times who had brought it. The land farthest west of which anything was then known was Iceland.

387. First Voyages of Exploration; the Cabots. — About the time of Henry's accession a new spirit of exploration sprang up. The Portuguese had coasted along Africa as far as the Gulf of Guinea, and there established trading-posts. Stimulated by what they had done, Columbus, who believed the earth to be round,

[1] See Map No. 11, page 186.

determined to sail westward in the hope of reaching the Indies. In 1492 he made his first voyage, and discovered one of the West India Islands.

Five years later, John Cabot, a Venetian residing in Bristol, England, with his son Sebastian, who was probably born there, persuaded the king to aid them in a similar undertaking. On a map drawn by the father after his return we read the following lines: "In the year of our Lord 1497, John Cabot and his son Sebastian discovered that country which no one before his time had ventured to approach, on the 24th June, about 5 o'clock in the morning." That entry records the discovery of Newfoundland, which led a few days later to that of the mainland of North America, which was thus first seen by the Cabots.

As an offset to that record we have the following, taken from the king's private account-book: "10. Aug. 1497, To him that found the new isle £10."

Such was the humble beginning of a series of explorations which gave England possession of the largest part of the North American continent.

388. Henry VII.'s Reign the Beginning of a New Epoch. — A few years after Cabot's return Henry laid the corner-stone of that "solemn and sumptuous chapel" which bears his own name, and which joins Westminster Abbey on the east. There he gave orders that his tomb should be erected, and that prayers should be said over it "as long as the world lasted." Emerson remarks[1] that when the visitor to the Abbey mounts the flight of twelve black marble steps which lead from it to the edifice where Henry lies buried, he passes from the mediæval to the beginning of the modern age — a change which the architecture itself distinctly marks. The true significance of Henry's reign is, that it, in like manner, stands for a new epoch, new in modes of government, in law, in geographical discovery, in letters, art, and religion.

The century just closing was indeed one of the most remarkable

[1] English Traits.

No. 11.

THE WORLD SHORTLY AFTER THE ACCESSION OF HENRY VII.

Light arrows show voyages south made up to 1492; (light track, Da Gama's voyage, 1497).

Dark arrows, voyages of Columbus and Cabot.

White crosses, countries of which something was known before 1492.

White area, including western coast of Africa, the world as known shortly after Henry VII.'s accession.

To face page 186.

in history, not only in what it had actually accomplished, but still more in the seed it was sowing for the future. The artist Kaulbach, in his fresco entitled "The Age of the Reformation," [1] has summed up all that it was, and all that it was destined to become in its full development. Therein we see it as the period which witnessed the introduction of firearms, and the consequent overthrow of feudal warfare and feudal institutions; the growth of the power of royalty and of nationality through royalty; the sailing of Columbus and of Cabot; the revival of classical learning; the publication of the first printed book; and finally, the birth of that monk, Martin Luther, who was to emancipate the human mind from its long bondage to unmeaning tradition and arbitrary authority.

389. Summary. — Looking back, we find that with Henry the absolutism of the crown or "personal monarchy" began in England. Yet through its repressive power the country gained a prolonged peace, and, despite "benevolences" and other exactions, it grew into stronger national unity.

Simultaneously with this increase of royal authority came the discovery of a new world, in which England was to have the chief part. A century will elapse before those discoveries bear fruit. After that, our attention will no longer be confined to the British Islands, but will be fixed as well on that western continent where English enterprise and English love of liberty are destined to find a new and broader field of activity.

HENRY VIII. — 1509–1547.

390. Henry's Advantages. — Henry was not quite eighteen when he came to the throne. The country was at peace, was fairly prosperous, and the young king had everything in his favor. He was handsome, well-educated, and fond of athletic sports. His frank disposition won friends everywhere, and he had inherited

[1] Kaulbach's (Ḱowl'bäk) Age of the Reformation: one of a historical series of colossal wall paintings in the Berlin Museum.

from his father the largest private fortune that had ever descended to an English sovereign. Intellectually, he was in hearty sympathy with the revival of learning, then in progress both on the continent and in England.

391. The New Learning; Colet, Erasmus, More. — During the greater part of the Middle Ages the chief object of education was to make men monks, and originally the schools established at Oxford and Cambridge were exclusively for that purpose. In their day they did excellent work; but a time came when men ceased to found monasteries, and began to erect colleges and hospitals instead.[1] In the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries William of Wykeham and King Henry VI. built and endowed colleges which were specially designed to fit their pupils to live in the world and serve the state, instead of withdrawing from it to seek their own salvation. These new institutions encouraged a broader range of studies, and in Henry VI.'s time particular attention was given to the Latin classics, hitherto but little known. The geographical discoveries of Henry VII.'s reign, made by Columbus, Cabot, and others, began to stimulate scientific thought, and it was evident that the day was not far distant when questions about the earth and the stars would no longer be settled by a text from Scripture which forbade further inquiry.

With the accession of Henry VIII. education received a still further impulse. A few zealous English scholars had just returned from Italy to Oxford, full of ardor for a new study, — that of Greek. Among them was a young clergyman named John Colet. He saw that by means of that language, of which the alphabet was as yet hardly known in England, men might put themselves in direct communication with the greatest thinkers and writers of the past. Better still, they might acquire the power of reading the Gospels and the writings of St. Paul in the original, and thus reach their

[1] In the twelfth century 418 monasteries were founded in England; in the next century only about a third as many; in the fourteenth only 23; after that date their establishment may be said to cease.

true meaning and feel their full influence. Colet's intimate friend and fellow-worker, the Dutch scholar Erasmus, had the same enthusiasm. When in sore need of everything, he wrote in one of his letters, "As soon as I get some money I shall buy Greek books, and then I may buy some clothes." The third young man, who, with Erasmus and Colet devoted himself to the study of Greek and to the advancement of learning, was Thomas More, who later became lord chancellor. The three looked to King Henry for encouragement in the work they had undertaken; nor did they look in vain. Colet, who had become a doctor of divinity and a dean of St. Paul's Cathedral, London, encountered a furious storm of opposition on account of his devotion to the "New Learning," as it was sneeringly called. His attempts at educational reform met the same resistance. But Henry stood by him, liking the man's spirit, and saying, "Let others have what doctors they will; this is the doctor for me." The king also took a lively interest in Erasmus, who was appointed professor of Greek at Cambridge, where he began his great work of preparing an edition of the Greek Testament with a Latin translation in parallel columns. Up to this time the Greek Testament had existed in scattered manuscripts only. The publication of the work in printed form gave an additional impetus to the study of the Scriptures, helped forward the Reformation, and in a measure laid the foundation for a revised English translation of the Bible far superior to Wycliffe's. In the same spirit of genuine love of learning, Henry founded Trinity College, Cambridge, and at a later date confirmed and extended Cardinal Wolsey's endowment of Christ Church College, Oxford.

392. Henry versus Luther. — The king continued, however, to be a stanch Catholic, and certainly had no thought at this period of doing anything which should tend to undermine that ancient form of worship. In Germany, Martin Luther was making ready to begin his tremendous battle against the power and teachings of the Papacy. In 1517 he nailed to the door of the

church of Wittenberg that famous series of denunciations which started the movement that ultimately protested against the authority of Rome, and gave the name of Protestant to all who joined it. A few years later Henry published a reply to one of Luther's books, and sent a copy bound in cloth of gold to the Pope. The Pope was so delighted with what he termed Henry's "angelic spirit," that he forthwith conferred on him that title of "Defender of the Faith," which the English sovereigns have persisted in retaining to the present time, though for what reason, and with what right, even a royal intellect might be somewhat puzzled to explain. With the new and flattering title the Pope also sent the king a costly two-handed sword, intended to represent Henry's zeal in smiting the enemies of Rome, but destined by fate to be the symbol of the king's final separation from the power that bestowed it.

393. Victory of Flodden; Field of the Cloth of Gold. — Politically, Henry was equally fortunate. The Scotch had ventured to attack the kingdom during the king's absence on the continent. They were defeated at Flodden by the Earl of Surrey, with great slaughter. This victory placed Scotland at Henry's feet.[1]

The king of France and the emperor Charles V. of Germany now vied with each other in seeking Henry's alliance. The emperor visited England in order to meet the English sovereign, while the king of France arranged an interview in his own dominions, known, from the magnificence of its appointments, as the "Field of the Cloth of Gold." Henry held the balance of power by which he could make France or Germany predominate as he saw fit. It was owing to his able diplomatic policy that England reaped advantages from both sides, and advanced from a comparatively low position to one that was fully abreast of the foremost nations of Europe.

394. Henry's Marriage with his Brother's Widow. — Such was the king at the outset. In less than twenty years he had become another man. At the age of twelve he had married,[2] at his

[1] See Scott's Marmion. [2] See Hallam; other authorities call it a solemn betrothal.

father's command, and solely for political and mercenary reasons, Catharine of Aragon, his brother Arthur's widow, who was six years his senior. Such a marriage was forbidden, except in certain cases, both by the Old Testament and by the ordinances of the Roman Catholic Church. The Pope, however, had granted his permission, and when Henry ascended the throne, the ceremony was performed a second time. Several children were the fruit of this union, all of whom died in infancy, except one daughter, Mary, unhappily fated to figure as the "Bloody Mary" of later history.

395. The King's Anxiety for a Successor; Anne Boleyn. — No woman had yet ruled in her own right, either in England or in any prominent kingdom of Europe; and Henry was so anxious to have a son to succeed him, that he could not bear the thought of being disappointed; in fact he sent the Duke of Buckingham to the block for casually saying, that if the king died without issue, he should consider himself entitled to receive the crown.

It was while meditating this question of the succession, that Henry became attached to Anne Boleyn, one of the queen's maids of honor, a sprightly brunette of nineteen, with long black hair and strikingly beautiful eyes.

The light that shone in those eyes, though hardly that "Gospel-light" which the poet calls it,[1] was yet bright enough to effectually clear up all difficulties in the royal mind. The king now felt conscientiously moved to obtain a divorce from the old wife, and to marry a new one. In that determination lay most momentous consequences, since it finally separated England from the jurisdiction of the church of Rome.

396. Wolsey favors the Divorce from Catharine. — Cardinal Wolsey, Henry's chief counsellor, lent his powerful aid to bring about the divorce, but with the expectation that the king would marry a princess of France, and thus form an alliance with that

[1] "When love could teach a monarch to be wise,
And Gospel-light first dawned from Bullen's [Boleyn's] eyes." — GRAY.