

books and of learned men, irresistible among women. A few friends held by him to the last, with more of what seems personal regard than Edward II. or Richard II. conciliated. He has partisans in London at the time of his deepest humiliation, and is welcomed rapturously in Lynne a few days before his death. The Cinque-ports seem to have been steadily faithful to his interests. It is evident that, while his clergy and his nobles hated him, a portion of the towns were with him, either grateful for past favors or liking his enemies less. The loss of Normandy was chiefly due to his quarrel with his English subjects; he held England against the pope with singular success; and his last campaigns prove that he had organized his tyranny till he was an overmatch for half the realm, and could still do something when France had succored the rebellion.

Yet, allowing all this, which has, perhaps, been too often overlooked, it may be doubted if it be not an aggravation of the infamy that clings to John's name. He favored the cities, not in the interest of freedom, but to gain money by the sale of charters, or to set class against class. His power was based on the systematic employment of foreign mercenaries; he tortured to extort wealth, and murdered freely when his avarice was disappointed. His great struggle against Innocent began in the attempt to usurp the rights of a corporate body, and was carried on by confiscations and violence. Lastly, like all voluptuaries, John perpetually broke down at the critical moment of his fortunes. He scoffed at religion, and was cowed by a strolling prophet's utterances. Bearing to be excommunicated for years, giving churches freely to be plundered, he yet attached a superstitious reverence to the relics he carried with him. Perhaps the best summary of his life is the simple record of the great facts of his reign, that he lost Normandy, that he became the pope's vassal, and that he died fighting against Magna Charta. Never, probably, was there an English king who

would more cordially have indorsed the Roman tyrant's wish: "When I am dead let the earth be consumed in fire;" never one of whom the poet might have said, with greater truth, that "he wearied God."

 XVII.

ENGLAND IN THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY.—LONGMAN.

[John left, as his heir and successor, a little boy nine years old—Henry III. His long reign covers more than half of the thirteenth century, one of the most brilliant and eventful periods of the world's history. It was the age of great statesmen, great scholars, and great architects. It was, for England, an age of great constitutional progress; but in this the king himself had little share. He was essentially weak and untrustworthy—a mere figure-head; during his minority under the control of able ministers; then the tool of foreign favorites; while, later, he became involved in a fateful struggle with the baronial party. Some idea of the condition of England at this period may be obtained from the following sketch of domestic life and manners.]

ABOUT twenty years before Edward became king, more than seventy woods and forests belonged to the Crown; and this was one of the great grievances of the people. These woods were full of game of all kinds: wolves were far from uncommon; wild cattle were found so near London as in Osterly Wood, in Middlesex; and the fens and marshes were the abode of cranes, storks, and bitterns.

Besides these woods belonging to the Crown, the whole land was scattered over with forest. Between London and St. Albans the country was so thickly wooded, and the woods were so much frequented by lawless freebooters, who robbed the passing travelers, that the abbots of St. Albans kept armed men to guard the road to London. Throughout the whole country, indeed, the woods were so much the haunts of robbers, that, in 1285, a law was passed, ordering that all