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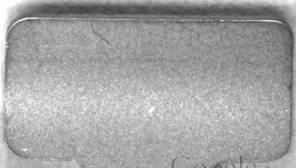
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Narrow. 6 February 1787.

A CONCISE
H I S T O R Y
O F
E N G L A N D.

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A CONCISE
HISTORY
OF
ENGLAND,

FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES,

To the Death of GEORGE II.

By JOHN WESLEY, A.M.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

V O L. I.

L O N D O N,

Printed by ROBERT HAWES, the Corner of
Dorset-Street, Crispin-Street, Spitalfields.

And sold at the Foundry, Moorfields.



P R E F A C E.

1. **T**HE grand objection which every thinking man naturally makes, to most of the Historiës that are extant, and to the Histories of England in particular; is, That they are unimportant; that they are well nigh filled with incidents, the knowledge of which brings the reader neither profit nor pleasure. For instance; it no more concerns us to know nine parts in ten, of what is contained in Rapin's History, than to know, that on such a day, "a bird dropped a feather on one of the Pyrenæan mountains."

2. A contrary objection may nevertheless be made to the generality of our Historians. Altho' they are far too prolix on most occasions, yet on others they are too concise. They do not in any wise copy after Tacitus; (altho' some of them profess

profess to do it) who lightly passes over a thousand circumstances, which less judicious writers would have related at large, while he gives a very minute detail of those striking incidents, which have a tendency either to improve the understanding, or to amend the heart.

3. This certainly arises from want of Judgment, a fault very conspicuous in most of our Historians. Either they had not a good natural understanding: (and then what could be expected from them?) or they had not the opportunity of improving their understanding by a liberal education. Hence even when they transcribe from the most sensible authors, they betray their own littleness of sense. They do not know what to take and what to leave: or how to weave together what they have taken. Much less do they know, how to amend what they think wrong, which they generally alter for the worse.

4. But a greater fault still, is Partiality. And how very few are free from it? Even in relating the uninteresting transactions which occurred many hundred years ago, most authors

vehemently

P R E F A C E.

vehemently espouse the cause, either of one party or the other : as naturally, as in reading Homer, some are earnest for the Trojans ; others equally earnest for the Grecians. How much more vehemently, may we expect men of a warm temper, to espouse the cause of one or the other party, when they speak of those who lived near our own times ? In the past or the present century ? Accordingly, some violently attach themselves to the cause of King Charles the First : others with equal violence defend and extol the Long Parliament, or Oliver Cromwell. Many suppose the whole family of the Stuarts, to have been good men, and excellent Princes : others paint them as the worst of men, and the vilest of tyrants.

5. There is yet another objection which may be made, to all the Histories of England which I have seen : (I mean the General Histories ; for this objection does not lie against several particular Histories ; such as Lord Clarendon's History of the Rebellion, or Mr. Neal's History of the Puritans) that is, they seem calculated only for Atheists ; for there is nothing about GOD in them

them. *Who would gather from these accounts, who would have the least suspicion, that it is GOD who governs the world? That his kingdom ruleth over all, in Heaven above, and in Earth beneath? That he alone changeth the times and the seasons, removeth kings and setteth up kings, and disposes all things by his almighty power, according to the counsels of his own will? Nay, rather from the whole tenor of their discourse one would suppose, that GOD was quite out of the question: that the King of Heaven had no more to do in the revolutions of England, than the Emperor of Japan: and that his power over Great-Britain, was as effectually extinguished, as that of the Danes and Saxons.*

6. *In such an History as I wish to see, unimportant incidents should have no place: at most, they should be very briefly and slightly touched, just to preserve the thread of the narration. Something of the kind is attempted in the following volumes, which contain the substance of the English History, extracted chiefly from Dr. Goldsmith,*

Rapin

Rapin, and Smollet ; *only with various corrections and additions. But ten thousand dull passages are omitted ; which could be inserted for no other purpose, than to enlarge the volume, and consequently the price ; to oblige the Bookseller, rather than the Reader.*

7. *Those incidents which are of greater importance, which tend either to improve the understanding, or to inspire the heart with noble and generous sentiments, are recited at large with all their circumstances. And this it was easy to do from one or other of the Historians above-mentioned. If Dr. Goldsmith happens to be too concise, on any of these occasions, the defect is abundantly supplied, either by Smollet or Rapin. With what judgment this is done in the following papers, must be submitted to the candid reader. For I cannot herein comply with the mode : I cannot prevail upon myself, (altho' I am convinced, how fashionable it is) to make a laboured panegyric upon my own understanding.*

8. *With all the understanding I have, I have endeavoured to avoid, that other rock whereon so many*

many split, Partiality. As I have for fifty years read and considered the eminent writers on both sides, that I might not be biassed by either, so I have laboured, (like Dr. Warner, the most impartial writer of English History I ever saw) to steer between the two extremes, the bigotry on one side and on the other. And I am in hopes this will appear to all who are divested of prejudice, and who are lovers of naked truth.

9. Wholly to divest oneself of prejudice and partiality, is indeed a difficult thing. And I have found it equally difficult, to see GOD in all the affairs of men: among the multiplicity of visible causes, still to see Him that is invisible, the One Great Cause, sitting on the circle of the heavens, and ruling all things in heaven and earth. How few patterns have we in this kind! Who takes GOD into his account, or seems to think, he has any concern in the transactions of the lower world? I wish to habituate the readers of English History, to a nobler way of thinking: as I desire myself to see GOD pervading the

moral

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ix

moral, as well as the natural world, so I would fain have others to see him, in all civil events, as well as in all the Phenomena of nature. I want them to learn that the Lord is King, be the earth never so impatient: that he putteth down one and setteth up another, in spite of all human power and wisdom. Let there be at least one History of England, which uniformly acknowledges this: let there be one Christian History, of what is still called, (tho' by a strong figure) a Christian Country.

LONDON, Aug. 10,
1775.

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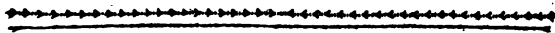


A

CONCISE HISTORY

O F

ENGLAND.



CHAP. I.

*Of the Britons before the Arrival of the Romans,
and during their Government.*



It is probable, that Britain was originally joined to France, till severed from it by the universal deluge. The extent of the rocks is exactly the same on each side of the channel, fronting each other. They have the same appearance, rising perpendicular and abrupt from the shore, unlike the gradual ascent of the hills and mountains on other Coasts. And a ridge of rock runs across the straits at the bottom of the Sea.

Vol. I.

B

This

2 HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

This Island was called Britannia by the Romans long before the time of Cæsar. It is supposed, that this name was originally given it by the merchants who resorted hither from the Continent. These called the inhabitants Briths, from their custom of painting their naked bodies, and small shields, with an azure blue, which in the language of the country was called Brith, and which served to distinguish them from those strangers who came among them.

The British Isles were discovered by the Phœnicians, about four hundred and fifty years before the birth of Christ. But long before this period, they were peopled from the Continent, by the Gauls settled on the opposite shore. This may be inferred, from the evident conformity between them, in laws, religion, language, manners and complexion.

The inland inhabitants lived in cottages thatched with straw, and fed large herds of cattle. Their hair flowed down upon their backs and shoulders; their beards were close shaven, except upon the upper lip.

The commodities exported from Britain were chiefly hides and tin. This metal was then thought peculiar to the island, and was in much request both in nearer and remoter regions. Their language, customs, religion, and government, were generally the same with those of the Gauls. As to their government, it consisted of several small principalities, each under its respective leader; and this seems to be the earliest mode of dominion deduced from the privileges of paternal authority. In great dangers, a commander in chief was chosen in a general assembly; and to him was committed.

committed the conduct of all, with the power of making peace or war. Their forces consisted chiefly of foot; yet they could bring a considerable number of horse into the field. They likewise used chariots in battle, with short scythes fastened to the ends of the axletrees, which spread terror and devastation wheresoever they drove.

The religion of the Britons was one of the most considerable parts of their government; and the Druids, who were the guardians of it, possessed great authority. These offered sacrifices in public and private, and pretended to explain the will of Heaven. They sacrificed human victims, whom they burned in large wicker idols, made so capacious as to contain a multitude of persons at once. The female Druids plunged their knives into the breasts of the prisoners taken in war, and prophesied from the manner in which the blood happened to stream from the wound. Their altars consisted of four broad stones, three set edge-ways, and the fourth at top, many of which remain to this day, particularly in Cornwall. To these rites, tending to impress ignorance with awe, they added great austerity of manners. They lived in woods, caves, and hollow trees; their food was acorns and berries; by these arts, they were almost adored by the people. Hence they were patiently permitted to punish crimes from which they themselves were supposed to be free; and their authority was so great, that not only the property, but also the lives of the people were at their disposal. No laws were instituted by the princes, or common assemblies, without their advice and approbation; no per-

4 HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

son was punished by bonds or death, without their passing sentence; no plunder taken in war was used by the captor until the Druids determined what part they would take for themselves.

It may be easily supposed, that the manners of the people took a tincture from the discipline of their teachers. But to have a just idea of what the Britons then were, we have only to turn to the savage nations which still subsist in primeval rudeness: Temperate rather from necessity than choice; patient of fatigue; bold, improvident, and rapacious; such is the picture of savage life at present, and such it was from the beginning.

Hence it appears, that the antient *Druids* have no title to the praises which have been generally lavished upon them. Their Gods were Devils, and these their worshippers, were little better than themselves. According to the best accounts, they were self-interested hypocrites, as great strangers to mercy as to truth, and having no more knowledge of, or regard to the God of Heaven, than the wildest of the present Hottentots.

Ireland was originally peopled from Spain: and was at first called Scotland. In the fifth century a body of the Irish crossing the sea, settled in the North of Britain, which was thence called Scotland. Before this time, it was peopled by the Picts, or painted-Britons, who had fled thither from the Romans.

* The Britons had long remained in this state, when Cæsar having over-run Gaul prepared to invade them. It seems, the measure of their iniquities being full, God was

now

* Before Christ, 55.

now determined to punish them. His presence was, that they had sent succours to the Gauls while he waged war against them. They endeavoured to appease him by submission. But when he sent Comius to treat with them, they cast him into prison. Cæsar being informed of this, set sail for Britain about midnight, and the next morning arrived on the coast near Dover, where he saw the rocks and cliffs covered with armed men.

Finding it impracticable to gain the shore there, he chose a landing-place of greater security. This was about eight miles farther on, probably at Deal, where there was an inclining shore and a level country. The ill-armed Britons, were an unequal match for the Romans. However, they made a brave opposition; the conflicts between them were fierce, the losses mutual, and the success various. The Britons had chosen Cassibelaunus for their commander in chief, but the petty princes threw off their allegiance. Some of them fled into the internal parts of the kingdom, others submitted to Cæsar, till at length Cassibelaunus himself, weakened by so many desertions, resolved upon making what terms he was able. The conditions were, that he should send to the Continent double the number of hostages at first demanded, and that he should acknowledge subjection to the Romans.

Cæsar then returned into Gaul and left the Britons to enjoy their customs, religion, and laws. But they neglected the performance of their stipulations, and only two of their states sent over hostages. Whereupon Cæsar the ensuing spring, set sail with six hundred

HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

ships; and, arriving at the place of his former descent, landed without opposition. The islanders indeed had assembled an army and marched down to the sea-side to oppose him; but seeing the number of his forces, they were struck with consternation, and retired. The Romans pursued them to their retreats, until at last common danger induced them to forget their former dissensions, and to unite their whole strength. Cassibelaunus was chosen to conduct them; and for some time harrassed the Romans in their march. But undisciplined strength was not able to repress the vigour and intrepidity of Cæsar. He discomfited the Britons in every action; he advanced into the country, passed the Thames in the face of the enemy, took and burned the capital city of Cassibelaunus, established his ally Mandubratius as sovereign of the Trinobantes; and having obliged the inhabitants to make new submissions, he returned with his army into Gaul.

‡ Augustus, formed a design of subduing Britain; but the British ambassadors, promising the accustomed tribute, he desisted from his intentions. In the reign of his Successor Tiberius some Roman soldiers having been wrecked on the British coast, the inhabitants not only assisted them with the greatest humanity, but sent them in safety back to their general. In consequence of this, a constant intercourse of good offices subsisted between the two nations; the principal British nobility resorted to Rome, and many received their education there.

From

‡ Before Christ, 40.

† From that time the Britons began to improve in the arts which contribute to the advancement of human nature. The first art which a savage people is generally taught by their politer neighbours is that of war. Accordingly the Britons, adopted several Roman improvements, as well in their arms as in their arrangement in the field. Their ferocity to strangers, for which they had been always remarkable, was mitigated; and they began to permit commerce even in the internal parts of the country. They still, however, continued to live as herdsmen and hunters, a manifest proof that the country was but thinly inhabited. A nation of hunters can never be populous, as their subsistence is necessarily diffused over a large tract of country.

The Britons afterwards, for almost a century, enjoyed their liberty, till the Romans, in the reign of Claudius, began to think of reducing them under their dominion. The expedition was conducted in the beginning by Plautius and other commanders; ||till Claudius himself finding affairs sufficiently prepared for his reception, made a journey thither, and received the submission of several states. Many of the inland provinces refused to submit: but the southern coast, with all the adjacent country, was seized by the conquerors, who secured the possession by fortifying camps, building fortresses, and planting colonies.

§ Caractacus was the first who seemed willing, by a vigorous effort, to rescue his country.

† Before Christ, 16. || A. D. 43. § A. D. 50.

country. This rude foldier, though with inferior forces, continued for above nine years, to oppofe and harrafs the Romans; till Ostorius Scapula was fent over to command their armies. He advanced the Roman conquests, pierced the country of the Silures, a warlike nation along the banks of the Severn, and at length came up with Caractacus. The British general, when he faw the enemy approaching, drew up his army, and going from rank to rank, exhorted them to ftrike the laft blow, for liberty, fafety, and life. To thefe exhortations his foldiers replied with fhouts of determined valour. But what could undisciplined bravery avail againft the attack of an army skilled in all the arts of war? The Britons after an obftinate refiftance, were totally routed; and a few days after Caractacus himfelf was delivered up to the conquerors by Cartimandua, queen of the Brigantes, with whom he had taken refuge. Claudius commanded that he fhould be brought from Britain, in order to be exhibited as a fpectacle to the Roman people. Accordingly, on the day appointed, the Emperor afcending his throne, ordered the captives, and Caractacus among the number, to be brought into his prefence. The vaffals of the British king, with the fpoils taken in war, were firft brought forward; thefe were followed by his family, who with abject lamentations, implored mercy. Laft of all came Caractacus himfelf, with an undaunted air. He appeared no way dejected, but cafting his eyes on the fplendours that furrounded him,

him, "Alas, cried he, how is it possible that a people possessed of such magnificence at home could envy me an humble cottage in Britain!" When brought into the Emperor's presence, he is said to have addressed him in the following manner: "My present misfortunes redound as much to your honour as to my disgrace; and the obstinacy of my opposition serves to increase the splendours of your victory. Had I surrendered myself in the beginning of the contest, neither my disgrace nor your glory would have attracted the attention of the world, and my fate would have been buried in general oblivion. I am now at your mercy, but if my life be spared I shall remain a monument of your clemency." The Emperor was affected with the British hero's misfortunes, and ordered him to be unchained upon the spot, with the rest of the captives,

Notwithstanding these misfortunes, the Britons were not subdued. They made one effort more to recover their liberty, in the times of Nero*, taking advantage of the absence of Paulinus the Roman general, who was employed in subduing the isle of Anglesey. That small island, separated from Britain by a narrow channel, still continued the chief seat of the Druids, and constantly afforded a retreat to their defeated forces. It was thought necessary therefore to subdue that place, and Paulinus, the greatest general of his age, undertook the task. The Britons endeavoured to obstruct his landing, both by the force of their arms and the terrors of their

* A. D. 59.

their religion. The priests and islanders were drawn up in order of battle upon the shore. The women, dressed like furies, with dishevelled hair and torches in their hands, poured forth the most terrible execrations. Such a fight at first confounded the Romans, so that they received the first assault without opposition. But Paulinus exhorting his troops to despise their menaces, drove the Britons off the field, burned the Druids in the same fires they had prepared for their captive enemies, and destroyed all their consecrated groves and altars.

† In the mean time the Britons, resolved by a general insurrection to free themselves from servitude. They had many motives to aggravate their resentment; the greatness of their taxes, which were levied with unremitting severity; the cruel insolence of their conquerors, who reproached that very poverty which they had caused; but particularly the cruel treatment of Boadicea, queen of the Icenii. Prasatagus, their king, at his death had bequeathed one half of his dominions to the Romans, and the other to his daughters, thus hoping by the sacrifice of a part, to secure the rest in his family. But it had a different effect; for the Roman procurator immediately took possession of the whole; and when Boadicea, the widow of the deceased, attempted to remonstrate, he ordered her to be scourged like a slave, and violated the chastity of her daughters. These outrages produced a revolt thro' the whole island. The Icenii, were the first to take arms; all the other states soon followed

† A. D. 60.

followed the example; and Boadicea, a woman of great beauty and an unconquered spirit, was appointed to head the common forces. These, exasperated by their wrongs, attacked several of the Roman settlements and colonies with success. Paulinus hastened to relieve London, which was already a flourishing colony; but found on his arrival that it would be requisite for the general safety to abandon it. It was soon reduced to ashes; and the Romans, with all other strangers, to the number of seventy thousand, put to the sword. Flushed with these successes, the Britons no longer sought to avoid the enemy, but boldly came to the place where Paulinus waited their arrival, posted in a very advantageous manner with a body of ten thousand men. The battle was obstinate and bloody. Boadicea herself appeared in a chariot with her two daughters, and harangued her army; but the irregular bravery of her troops was unable to resist the cool intrepidity of the Romans. They were routed with great slaughter, eighty thousand perished in the field, and a vast number were made prisoners, while Boadicea herself, fearing to fall into the hands of the victor, put an end to her life by poison. || But the general who finally established the dominion of the Romans in this island was Julius Agricola, who governed it during the reigns of Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian, and distinguished himself as well by his courage as humanity.

Agricola, as the northern part of the country was least tractable, carried his victorious
arms

|| A. D. 75.

arms thither. *He was opposed by Galgacus, at the head of a numerous army, whom he defeated in a decisive action. Yet he did not think proper to pursue the enemy into their retreats, but embarking a body of troops on board his fleet, ordered the commander to surround the whole coast of Britain, which had not been discovered to be an island till the preceding year. This armament, steered to the northward, and making the tour of the whole island, arrived in the port of Sandwich, without the least disaster.

During these military enterprizes Agricola was ever attentive to the arts of peace. He attempted to humanize the fierceness of the Britons, by introducing the Roman laws, habits, manners, and learning. He taught them to raise all the conveniences of life, instructed them in the arts of agriculture, and, in order to protect them in their peaceable possessions, drew a rampart, and fixed a train of garrisons between them and their northern neighbours; thus cutting off the ruder and more barren parts of the island, and securing the Roman province from the invasion of a fierce and necessitous enemy. † From that time the Romans seemed more desirous of securing what they possessed, than of making new conquests.

For several years after the time of Agricola, a profound peace prevailed in Britain: Only they were frequently harraft by their Northern Neighbours; to subdue whom, the Emperor Adrian himself came over: And caused a rampart of earth to be thrown up from the
mouth

• A. D. 78. † A. D. 79.

mouth of the Tyne, to Solway frith. * Twenty years after the Romans raised another rampart, between the Frith of Forth, and the Frith of Clyde. † The Caledonians renewing their incursions, the Emperor Severus, though sixty years old, came over to chastise them. After losing many men, he caused a wall of free-stone, sixty-eight miles in length, to be built in the place of Adrian's rampart. He afterwards died at York. So did the Emperor Constantius. Constantine his successor is supposed to have been born at Colchester, the Britons lived under him in great tranquility : But in succeeding ages, Rome, that had long given laws to nations, began to sink under her own greatness. Mankind, as if by a general consent, rose up to vindicate their natural freedom ; almost every nation asserting that independence which they had been long so unjustly deprived of. It was in these turbulent times, that the emperors found themselves obliged to recruit their legions from the troops that were placed to defend the frontier provinces. And as the Roman forces decreased in Britain, the Picts and Scots more and more infested the northern parts ; and crossing the Friths, which the Romans could not guard, filled the country with slaughter and consternation. When repulsed, as was at first always the case, they retired with the spoil, and watched for the next opportunity of invasion.

At length, in the reign of Valentian the younger, the empire of Rome being fatigued with distant expeditions, informed the wretched Britons, that they were now no longer to
 C expect

* A. D. 120 † A. D. 207.

expect foreign protection. They accordingly, drew away from the island all the Romans, and most of the Britons who were fit for military service. † Thus they took their last leave of the island, never more to return, after having been masters of it near four centuries.

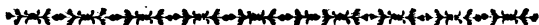
It is far from certain, that St. Paul ever was in Britain; nor does it appear, who first preached the Gospel here. The story of King Lucius embracing Christianity in the Second Century, is likewise exceeding doubtful. And tho' there were Christians in the island, as we learn from Tertullian, before the end of the century, yet it seems they were but few till toward the close of the third Century. In the beginning of the fourth, many of them suffered Martyrdom, in the general persecution raised by Dioclesian, throughout the Roman Empire.

In the beginning of the fourth Century, three British Bishops were present at the Council of Arles: The decrees of which were sent by the subscribing Bishops to the Bishop of Rome. But far from addressing him as Sovereign of the Church, they gave him no Epithet but that of "Dear Brother." They say, Since they had not the comfort of seeing their brother, the Bishop of Rome, at Arles, they have sent an abstract of their Canons, that he might publish them thro' his whole Diocese.

In this Century lived Pelagius, born in Britain, whose real name is said to have been Morgan. His doctrine was the more readily embraced, as he was a person of unblemished
morals

† A. D. 426.

morals. He is said to have denied Original Sin, and to have taught, that man may attain Perfection in this life, and that without the assistance of the Grace of God. But we cannot be sure of this : As all the account of him which we have is from his bitter Enemies, who took care to destroy all his writings. It is not improbable, that he was one of the most judicious, as well as one of the holiest men of the Age.



C H A P. II.

The Britons and Saxons.

THE Britons were now in a miserable condition : But they did not profit by all they suffered : They were still utterly without God in the world ; as ignorant of him as the beasts that perish. * In the mean time, the Picts and Scots uniting together, attacked the northern wall with redoubled forces. Having opened themselves a passage, they ravaged the whole country with impunity, while the Britons sought shelter in their woods and mountains.

C 2

It

* A. D. 430.

It happened, however, that the Picts themselves began to feel the same inconveniencies in a country which they had ravaged; and being in want of necessaries, were obliged to retreat into their own country.

† The enemy having left the country open, the Britons joyfully issued from their mountains and forests, and pursued once more their usual arts of husbandry, which were attended with such abundance the succeeding season, that they soon forgot all their past miseries. But it had been happy for them, if plenty had not removed one evil to plant another. They began, from a state of famine, to indulge themselves in such riot and luxury, that their bodies were enervated, and their minds debauched. God who had delivered them was not in all their thoughts. They fell into a total profligacy of manners; which instead of being restrained, was encouraged and increased by example of their Clergy. Being informed of fresh preparations for an invasion from their merciless neighbours, they pitched upon Vortigern as their general and sovereign. This step was only productive of fresh calamities. Vortigern, instead of exerting what strength remained in the kingdom, only set himself to look for foreign assistance; and the Saxons appeared to him at once the most martial, and the most likely to espouse his interests.

The Saxons were one branch of those Gothic nations, which, swarming from the northern hive, came down to give laws to the rest of Europe. A part of this people, under the

† A. D. 440.

the name of Suevi, had, some time before Cæsar's invasion of Gaul, subdued an extensive empire in Germany. These, for their strength and valour, were formidable to all the German nations. They were afterwards divided into several nations, and each became famous for subduing the country they invaded. France, Germany, and England, were among the number of their conquests.

They dressed with some degree of elegance, which the generality of the Britons, had not yet learned. Their women used linen garments, trimmed and striped with purple. Their hair was bound in wreaths, or fell in curls upon their shoulders; their arms were bare, and their bosoms uncovered; fashions, which, in some measure, seem peculiar to the ladies of England to this day. Their government was generally an elective monarchy, and sometimes a republic. Their commanders were chosen for their merit, and dismissed when their authority was no longer needful. The salaries they were supplied with, seldom exceeded a bare subsistence; and the honours they received, were the only reward of their superior dangers and fatigues.

It was no disagreeable circumstance to these conquerors, to be invited into a country upon which they had, for ages been forming designs. † In consequence, therefore, of Vortigern's invitation, they arrived with fifteen hundred men, under the command of Hengist and Horsa, who were brothers, landed on the isle of Thanet and were put in possession thereof, according to their agreement. They did

C 3

not

† A. D. 449.

not long remain inactive; but, being joined by the British forces, boldly marched against the Picts and Scots, who had advanced as far as Lincolnshire, and gained a complete victory.

Hengist and Horsa being sensible of the fertility of the country to which they came, and the barrenness of that which they had left behind, invited over great numbers of their countrymen to become sharers in their new expedition. It was no difficult matter to persuade the Saxons to embrace an enterprize, which promised, at once, an opportunity of displaying their valour, and of rewarding their rapacity. § Accordingly they sent over a fresh supply of five thousand men.

The Britons now began to entertain apprehensions of their new allies, whose numbers augmented, as their services became less necessary. However they bore every encroachment with patience. But the Saxons being determined to come to a rupture with them, easily found a pretext, complaining, that their subsidies were ill paid, and their provisions withdrawn. They, demanded that these grievances should be immediately redressed, otherwise they would do themselves justice; and, in the mean time, they engaged in a treaty with the Picts, whom they had been called in to repress. The Britons, at length took up arms; and having deposed Vortigern, put themselves under the command of Vortimer, his son. || These nations were perpetually at variance, their hatred to each other enflamed by difference of religion, the Britons being Christians, that is,
in

in name, and the Saxons, still remaining in a state of idolatry. Many battles were fought between them, in one of which, fought at Eglesford, in Kent, Horsa, the Saxon general, was slain.

Hengist, now sole commander, procuring constant supplies from his native country, carried devastation into the most remote corners of Britain. He spared neither sex, age, or condition, but laid all the country desolate before him. It was about this time, that numbers, deserting their native country, fled over to the province of Armorica, since called Brittany, * where they settled in great numbers, among a people of the same manners and language with themselves.

The Britons found a temporary relief in the valour of one or two of their succeeding kings. † After the death of Vortimer, Ambrosius, a Briton, though of Roman descent, was invested with the command, and in some measure proved successful in uniting his countrymen against the Saxons. He penetrated with his army into the very heart of their possessions, and restored the British interest and dominion. Still, however, Hengist kept his ground in the country; and inviting over a new tribe of Saxons, under the command of his brother Octa, he settled them in Northumberland. As for himself, he kept possession of the kingdom of Kent, comprehending also Middlesex and Essex, fixing his royal seat at Canterbury, and leaving his newly-acquired dominions to his posterity.

After the death of Hengist, several other German tribes, allured by the success of their

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country-

* A. D. 457. † A. D. 458.

countrymen, came over in great numbers. A body of their countrymen, under the conduct of Ælla and his three sons, † had some time before laid the foundation of the kingdom of the South Saxons. This new kingdom included Surry, Suffex, and the New Forest; and extended to the frontiers of Kent.

At this period, Merlin, the British Prophet lived. All the Monkish writers call him a wizard. It seems; he was a sensible man, who for his Learning and skill in the Mathematics, was counted as something preternatural, in those days of ignorance.

* Another tribe of Saxons, under the command of Cerdic and his son Kenric, landed in the west, and from thence took the name of West Saxons. These met a vigorous opposition from the natives, but being reinforced from Germany, and assisted by their countrymen on the island, routed the Britons; and although retarded in their progress by the celebrated king Arthur, they had strength enough to keep possession of their conquests. These established the third Saxon kingdom in the island, namely, that of the West Saxons, including the counties of Hants, Dorset, Wilts, Berks, and the Isle of Wight.

† It was in opposing this Saxon invader that the celebrated prince Arthur acquired his fame. Could courage alone repair the miserable state of the Britons, his might have been effectual. According to the most authentic historians, he worsted the Saxons in twelve successive battles. But they were too numerous and powerful to be extirpated; so that

‡ A. D. 477. * A. D. 490. † A. D. 510.

that a peace, was the only fruit of his victories. The enemy still gained ground; and this prince, in the decline of life, had the mortification, from domestic troubles, to be a patient spectator of their encroachments. His first wife had been carried off by Melnas, king of Somersetsshire, who detained her a whole year at Glastonbury, until Arthur, discovering the place of her retreat, advanced with an army against the ravisher, and obliged him to give her back. In his second wife, perhaps, he was more fortunate, as we have no mention made of her; but it was otherwise with his third consort, who was debauched by his own nephew Mordred. This produced a rebellion, in which the king and his traiterous kinsman meeting in battle, slew each other.

Thus fell the last of the British worthies, who had with indefatigable courage so long supported the cause of his sinking country, he was certainly, exclusive of all fiction, an illustrious hero, of unshaken fortitude, unblemished morals, and unlimited generosity. He was likewise zealous for religion, and an eminent patron and protector of learning. At his dying request, he was buried in the old church at Glastonbury, by his second wife Guinever.

In the mean time, while the Saxons were thus gaining ground in the west, their countrymen were not less active in other parts. † Adventurers still continuing to pour over from Germany, one body of them, under the command of Uffa, seized upon the counties of

C 5

Cambridge

* A. D. 547.

Cambridge, Suffolk, and Norfolk, and gave their commander the title of King of the East Angles, which was the fourth Saxon kingdom founded in Britain.

Another body of these adventurers formed a kingdom under the title of East Saxony, or Essex, comprehending Essex, Middlesex, and part of Hertfordshire. This kingdom, which was dismembered from that of Kent, formed the fifth Saxon principality.

The kingdom of Mercia was the sixth, comprehending all the middle counties, from the banks of the Severn to the frontiers of the two last named kingdoms.

The seventh and last kingdom which they obtained was that of Northumberland, one of the most powerful and extensive of them all. This was formed from the union of two smaller Saxon kingdoms, the one called Bernicea, containing the present county of Northumberland and the bishoprick of Durham; the subjects of the other, called the Deiri, extending themselves over Lancashire and Yorkshire. These kingdoms were united in the person of Ethelfríd, king of Northumberland, by the expulsion of Edwin, his brother-in-law, from the kingdom of the Deiri, and the seizure of his dominions.

‡ In this manner the natives being overpowered, seven kingdoms were established in Britain, which have been since well known by the name of the Saxon Heptarchy. The Britons having been exhausted by continual wars, and even worn out by their own victories, were compelled to forsake the more fertile parts

‡ A. D. 584.

parts of the country, and to take refuge in Wales and Cornwall. The few who were not either massacred or expelled their habitations, were reduced to the most abject slavery, and employed in cultivating those grounds for their new masters, which they once claimed as their own.

From this time British and Roman customs ceased: The language, which had been either Latin or Celtic, was discontinued, and the Saxon or English only was spoken. The land, before divided into colonies or governments, was cantoned into shires. The habits of the people in peace, and arms in war, their titles of honour, their laws, and methods of trial by jury, were continued as originally practised by the Germans. But they imitated the Britons in their government, by despotic and hereditary monarchies, while their exemplary chastity, and their abhorrence of slavery, were quite forgotten.

The Saxons having no longer the Britons to contend with, began to quarrel among themselves. A country divided into a number of petty independent principalities, must ever be subject to contention. The wars therefore and revolutions of these little rival states were extremely numerous, and the accounts of them have swelled the historian's page. But these accounts are so confusedly written, that a repetition of them can gratify neither our judgment nor curiosity. Instead therefore of entering into a detail of tumultuous battles, it will be more proper to give some account of the introduction of Christianity among the Saxons, which happened during this dreary period.

Before this, there were many schools of learning in Britain, under the inspection of persons eminent for their abilities. One was taught at Landaff; another at Lantuit in Glamorganshire. Where a great number of the British nobility received their education. Dubritius, Bishop of Landaff, built twelve Monasteries, wherein all the monks earned their bread by their own labour. That of Bangor afforded many persons, eminent both for learning and piety, and generally contained between two and three thousand Monks, who all lived by the labour of their hands. It seems, that while all the other parts of Britain were filled with vice, and war, and bloodshed and confusion, religion and peace were found among the Welsh, and flourished together for some centuries.

The christian religion never suffered more persecution than it underwent in Britain from the barbarity of the Saxon pagans, who burned all the churches, stained the altars with the blood of the clergy, and massacred all those whom they found professing Christianity. This deplorable state of religion in Britain was first taken into consideration by St. Gregory, who was then pope, and he undertook to send missionaries thither. Some favourable circumstances seemed providentially to prepare the way for their arrival. Ethelbert, king of Kent, in his father's life-time had married Bertha, the only daughter of Coribet, king of Paris. But before he was admitted to this alliance, he was obliged to stipulate that this princess should enjoy the free exercise of her religion, which was that of Christianity.

tianity. † She was therefore attended to Canterbury, the place of her residence, by Luidhard, a Gaulish prelate, who officiated in a church dedicated to St. Martin, which had been built by the Britons, near the walls of Canterbury. The exemplary conduct and powerful preaching of this primitive bishop, added to the queen's learning and zeal, made very strong impressions upon the king, as well as the rest of his subjects, in favour of Christianity.

* The next year, Gregory sent over forty Benedictine Monks, with Austin at their head. Upon his first landing in the Isle of Thanet, he sent one of his interpreters to the Kentish king, declaring he was come from Rome with offers of eternal salvation. The king immediately ordered them to be furnished with all necessaries, though without declaring himself in their favour. Augustine, encouraged by this, proceeded with redoubled zeal to preach the gospel. So much assiduity, together with the earnestness of his address, and the example of his followers, at last powerfully operated. The king openly espoused the Christian religion, while his example wrought so successfully on his subjects, that numbers of them came voluntarily to be baptized. The heathen temples were changed to places of Christian worship, and such churches as had been suffered to decay were repaired. Austin was consecrated archbishop of Canterbury, || endowed with authority over all the British churches, and his associates, spread themselves over all the country.

The

† A. D. 596. * A. D. 597. || A. D. 598.

The kingdom of the heptarchy which next embraced the Christian faith was that of Northumberland: Edwin, a wise, brave, and active prince, then king of the country, was married to Ethelburga, the daughter of Ethelbert, who had been so lately converted. This princess, emulating the glory of her mother, who had been the instrument of converting her husband and his subjects, carried Paulinus, a learned bishop, with her into Northumberland. Edwin, whom his queen solicited to embrace Christianity, for a long time hesitated, willing to examine its doctrines, before he declared in their favour. § Accordingly he held several conferences with Paulinus, and, after a serious discussion, declared himself a Christian. The high priest also of the pagan superstition soon after declaring himself a convert, and the whole body of the people followed their example: That is, were baptized, *called* themselves Christians, and used the christian modes of worship! And how little did they gain by this?

It was before this, (A. D. 613) that Adelfrid, then king of Northumberland, invaded Wales, killed twelve hundred and fifty of the monks of Bangor, and demolished their monastery.

The authority of Edwin, soon prevailed upon Earpwold, the king of the East-Angles, to embrace christianity. This monarch, however, after the death of Edwin, relapsed into his former idolatry. But upon his decease, Sigebert, his half-brother, who had been educated in France, restored Christianity among the Angles.

Mercia

§. A. D. 626.

* Mercia, the most powerful kingdom of the heptarchy, owed its conversion, likewise, to a woman. The wife of Peada, who was the daughter of Oswy, king of Northumberland, having been bred in the Christian faith, employed her influence with success in converting her husband and his subjects. But the new religion was attended with small influence on the manners of that fierce people, as we find Otto, one of their new converted kings, treacherously destroying Ethelbert, king of the East Angles, at an entertainment to which he had been invited. However, to make atonement for this transgression, he made a pilgrimage to Rome, and procured absolution. It was upon this occasion, that to ingratiate himself with the pope, he engaged to pay him a yearly donation for the support of an English college at Rome; and, in order to raise the sum, imposed a tax of a penny on each house possessed of thirty-pence a year. This imposition being afterwards generally levied throughout the kingdom, went by the name of Peter-pence. In the kingdom of Essex, Seburt, who was nephew to Ethelbert, king of Kent, was before this, (A. D. 610) prevailed upon by his uncle to embrace the christian religion.

We know but little of the propagation of Christianity in the kingdom of Suffex; but this being the smallest of all the Saxon heptarchy, it is probable it was governed in its opinions by some of its more powerful neighbours. During the reign of Cissa, one of its
kings

* A. D. 644.

kings, the kingdom fell into a total dependence upon that of Wesssex, and to this probably it owed its conversion.

The kingdom of Wesssex, which in the end swallowed up all the rest, was, of all the Saxon establishments the most active and warlike. * After several reigns, Ceodwalla mounted the throne, an enterprizing, warlike, and successful prince. He subdued entirely the kingdom of Suffex, and annexed it to his own. † He made also some attempts upon Kent, but was repulsed with vigour. Ina, his successor, was the most renowned of all the kings who reigned in England during the heptarchy. This monarch inherited the military virtues of Ceodwalla, but improved by policy, justice, and prudence. He made war upon the Britons, who yet remained in Somerset, and having totally subdued that province, he treated the vanquished with a humanity hitherto unknown to the Saxon conquerors. In less than a year after he mounted the throne of Wesssex, he was declared monarch of the Anglo Saxons. He compiled a body of laws, which served as the ground-work of those which were afterwards published by Alfred. He also assembled a general council of the clergy, in which it was determined, that all churches, monasteries, and places of religious worship which had gone to ruin or decay, should be rebuilt. At length, after a distinguished reign of thirty-seven years, in the decline of life, he made a pilgrimage to Rome; and on his return home, shut himself up in a cloister, where

* A. D. 668. † A. D. 688.

where he died. † To him succeeded Oswald, Cudred, Sigebert, Cenulph, and Brithric; all these claiming the crown, not entirely by hereditary right, nor yet totally rejecting their family pretensions.

It was in the reign of the last-named monarch, that Egbert, a grand-nephew of the late king Ina, began to grow popular among the West Saxons, both on account of his family and private merit. Being sensible, however, of the danger of popularity, under such a jealous monarch as Brithric, he withdrew into France, to the court of Charlemagne, at that time the most polished prince of Europe. This was a school, in which young Egbert failed not to make a rapid proficiency; and he soon acquired such accomplishments, both in arts and arms, as made him greatly superior to any of his countrymen at home.

Nor was it long before this prince had an opportunity of displaying his natural and acquired talents to advantage. For Brithric being poisoned by his wife Eadburga, the nobility recalled him to ascend the throne of his ancestors. * About that time also, a providential concurrence of events prepared the way for his becoming sole monarch of the whole country. The royal families had been entirely extinguished in all the kingdoms, except that of Wessex. Thus, Egbert was the only surviving descendant of those conquerors, who boasted their descent from Woden; and consequently, beside his personal merit, he had hereditary pretensions to the throne of the

† A. D. 780. * A. D. 799.

the united kingdoms. It was his desire to unite these petty states into one great kingdom. The king of Mercia was the first who furnished him with a pretext for recovering the part of his dominions, which had formerly been dismembered. Beornult, the monarch of that country, taking advantage of Egbert's absence, then employed in quelling the Britons, invaded his dominions with a numerous army. Egbert was not remiss in marching to oppose him, with a body of troops less numerous but more resolute. Both armies met at Wilton, and a battle ensuing, the Mercians were defeated with terrible slaughter.

While the victor pursued his conquest into the enemies' country, he dispatched his eldest son, Ethelwolf, with an army, into the kingdom of Kent, who soon made himself master of it. The East Saxons also, and part of Surry, readily submitted to Egbert; nor were the East Angles backward in sending ambassadors to crave his protection, against that nation whose yoke they were resolved no longer to bear. ¶ The Mercian king attempting to repress their defection, was defeated, and slain: And two years after, Ludecan, his successor, met with the same fate. Withalf, one of their ealdermen, soon after put himself at their head, but being driven from province to province by the victorious arms of Egbert, he was, at last, obliged to take shelter in the abbey of Croyland, while Egbert made himself master of the whole kingdom of Mercia.

The

¶ A. D. 823.

The kingdom of Northumberland was the last that submitted to his authority. By this submission, all the kingdoms of the Heptarchy were united under his command; but, to give splendour to his authority, a general council of the clergy and laity was summoned at Winchester, where he was solemnly crowned king of England, by which name the united kingdom was thenceforward called.

|| Thus, about four hundred years after the first arrival of the Saxons in Britain, all their petty settlements were united into one great state, and nothing offered, but prospects of peace, security, and increasing refinement. At this period, namely, about the eighth century, the arts and sciences, which had been before only known to the Greeks and Romans, were disseminated over Europe, where they were sufficient to raise the people above mere barbarians; tho' they had lost much of their native splendor in the transplantation.

From the time that Augustine converted Ethelbert to Christianity, the power of the papal See was slowly and gradually increasing in England, altho' frequently opposed. But it had now surmounted all opposition, and was almost universally acknowledged. But Religion was at an exceeding low ebb: So that it may admit of much doubt, whether the English Christians, so called, had either more piety or humanity, than their Heathen Ancestors.

CHAP.

|| A. D. 827.

CHAPTER III.

From the Accession of Egbert, to the Norman Conquest.

EGBERT was hardly settled on his united throne, when both he and his subjects began to be alarmed at the approach of new and unknown enemies. * A swarm of those nations, who had possessed the countries bordering on the Baltic, began, under the names of Danes and Normans, to infest the western coasts of Europe; and to fill all places, where they came, with slaughter and devastation. The Normans fell upon the northern coasts of France; the Danes chiefly upon England, their first appearance being when Brihtic was king of Wessex. † It was then, that a small body of them landed on the coasts of that kingdom, and having committed some depredations, fled back to their ships. About seven years after they made a descent upon the kingdom of Northumberland, but their fleet being shattered by a storm, they were defeated by the inhabitants, and put to the sword. It was not till about five years after the accession of Egbert, that their invasions became truly formidable. From that time they continued, with unceasing ferocity, until the whole kingdom was reduced to the most distressful bondage.

As

* A. D. 829, † A. D. 787.

As the Saxons had utterly neglected their naval power since their first settlement in Britain; the Danes, found no difficulty in landing upon the isle of Sheppey, in Kent, and returned to their ships loaden with spoil. † Their next attempt, the year ensuing, was at the mouth of the Tyne, where they landed a body of fifteen thousand men, that made good their ground against the efforts of Egbert; who, after a battle, was obliged to draw off his forces by night. Within two years after they landed in Cornwall; and being joined by the Britons there, they advanced towards the borders of Devonshire, where they were totally routed by Egbert, in a pitched battle, at Hengidown-hill, near Kellingington. By this victory, he secured the kingdom from invasion for some time; but his death invited them to renew their devastations. He reigned thirty-seven years, twenty as king of Wessex only, seven with the title of monarch, and ten as real sovereign. He was doubtless a great warrior, that is, a great robber and murderer. Hereby he acquired the surname of Great, such is the wisdom of the world!

§ He was succeeded by Ethelwolf, his son, who had neither the vigour nor the abilities of his father. He was scarcely settled on his throne, when a fleet of Danish ravagers, consisting of thirty-three sail, landed at Southampton; but were repulsed, though not without great slaughter on both sides. However, no defeat could repress the obstinacy, no difficulties daunt the courage of these fierce invaders

† A. D. 833. § A. D. 838.

invaders, who still persevered in their descents, and, year after year, made inroads into the country, marking their way with pillage, slaughter, and desolation. Though often repulsed, they always obtained their end, of spoiling the country, and carrying the plunder away.

In this state, affairs continued for some time, the English often repelling, and as often being repulsed by invaders; till, at length, the Danes landing on the isle of Thanet, stationed themselves there. * In this place they kept their ground, notwithstanding a bloody victory gained over them by Ethelwolf. From thence, they soon after removed to the isle of Sheppey, more convenient for their tumultuary depredations.

In the mean time, Ethelwolf, the wretched monarch of the country, instead of exerting his strength to repel these invaders, was more solicitous to obey the dictates of monkish superstition. † In order to manifest his devotion to the pope, he sent his son Alfred to Rome, and, not satisfied with this, undertook a pilgrimage thither in person. He passed a twelvemonth in that city, and gained no small applause for his devotion, which he testified by his great liberality to the church. § In his return home, he married Judith, daughter to the emperor Charles the Bald; but on his landing, he found his second son, Ethelbald, had formed a conspiracy to expel him from the throne. To prevent a civil war, a division of the kingdom was agreed on: Ethelwolf lived only two years after this agreement;

* A. D. 852. † A. D. 853. § A. D. 855.

ment; leaving, by will, the kingdom shared between his two eldest sons, Ethelbald and Ethelbert; || the west being consigned to the former, the east to the latter. The reign of Ethelbald, infamous for all manner of vices, was of no long continuance. † He was succeeded by his brother Ethelred, a brave prince, but whose valour was insufficient to repress the Danish incursions. Landing in the North with large forces, they prevailed more and more, till penetrating into Mercia, they took up their winter quarters at Nottingham; from whence, they were not dislodged without difficulty. * Their next station was at Reading, from whence they infested the country with their excursions. The king, attended by his brother Alfred, marched at the head of the West Saxons against them; there, after various success, he died of a wound which he received in battle, ‡ and left to his brother Alfred, the inheritance of a kingdom that was now reduced to the brink of ruin.

Nothing could be more deplorable than the state of the country when Alfred came to the throne. The Danes had already subdued Northumberland and East Anglia, and had penetrated into the very heart of Wessex. The Mercians were united against him; the dependence on the other provinces was precarious: the lands lay uncultivated, and all the churches and monasteries were burned to the ground. In this terrible situation of affairs, nothing appeared but objects of terror. Yet God made use of the wisdom and virtues of one

|| A. D. 857. † A. D. 866. * A. D. 869.

‡ A. D. 871.

one man to bring back happiness, security, and order; and all the calamities of the times found redress from Alfred.

This prince seemed born not only to defend his bleeding country, but even to adorn humanity. He had given early instances of those virtues which afterwards adorned his reign; and was anointed by pope Leo as future king, when at Rome. On his return, he became every day more the object of his father's fond affections; and that, perhaps, was the reason why his education was at first neglected. He attained the age of twelve, before he was made acquainted with the lowest elements of literature; but hearing some Saxon poems read, which recounted the praise of heroes, his whole mind was roused, not only to obtain a similitude of glory, but also to be able to transmit that glory to posterity. Encouraged by the queen, his mother, and assisted by a penetrating genius, he soon learned to read these compositions, and proceeded from thence to a knowledge of Latin authors.

He was scarce come to the crown, when he was obliged to oppose the Danes, who had seized Wilton, and were exercising their usual ravages. || He marched against them with the few troops he could assemble on a sudden, and a desperate battle was fought, to the disadvantage of the English. But misfortune could not abate the king's diligence. He was in a little time enabled to hazard another engagement; so that the enemy, dreading his courage and activity, proposed terms of peace, which

|| A. D. 872.

which he did not think proper to refuse. They agreed to relinquish the kingdom; but instead of complying with their engagements, they only removed from one place to another, burning and destroying wherever they came.

Alfred, found himself unable to repel the ravagers, who from all quarters invaded him. New swarms of the enemy arrived every year upon the coast, and fresh invasions were still projected. It was in vain that Alfred pursued them, straitened their quarters, and compelled them to treaties; they broke every league; and continuing their attacks with unabated perseverance, at length totally dispirited his army. Some of them left their country, and retired into Wales, or fled to the continent. Others submitted to the conquerors. In this universal defection, Alfred finding his remonstrances ineffectual, was obliged to give way to necessity. Accordingly, dismissing his servants, he dressed himself in the habit of a peasant, and lived for some time in the house of an herdsman, who had been entrusted with the care of his cattle. † In this manner, though abandoned by all, he resolved to continue in his country, to catch the slightest occasions for bringing it relief. In his solitary retreat, which was in the county of Somerset, at the confluence of the rivers Parret and Thone, he amused himself with music, and supported his humble lot with the hopes of better times.

Previous to his retirement, Alfred had concerted measures for assembling a few trusty friends, whenever an opportunity should offer

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† A. D. 876.

of annoying the enemy. This chosen band, took shelter in the forests and marshes of Somerset, and from thence made occasional irruptions upon straggling parties of the enemy. Their success, encouraged many to join them, till at length sufficiently augmented, they repaired to their monarch, who had by that time been reduced by famine to the last extremity.

Mean while, Ubba, the chief of the Danish commanders, carried terror over the whole land, and now ravaged the country of Wales without opposition. The only place where he found resistance was, in his return, from the castle of Kenwith, into which the earl of Devonshire had retired with a small body of troops. This gallant soldier finding himself unable to sustain a siege, and knowing the danger of surrendering to a perfidious enemy, was resolved, to force his way through the besiegers, sword in hand. The proposal was embraced by all his followers, while the Danes, secure in their numbers, were not only routed with great slaughter, but Ubba, their general, was slain.

This victory restored courage to the dispirited Saxons; and Alfred, taking advantage of their favourable disposition, apprized them of the place of his retreat, and instructed them to be ready with all their strength at a minute's warning. But still none was found who would undertake to give intelligence of the forces and posture of the enemy. Not knowing a person in whom to confide, he undertook this dangerous task himself. In the

the dress of a shepherd, with an harp in his hand, he entered the Danish camp, and was so much admired, that he was brought into the presence of Guthrum, the Danish prince, with whom he remained some days. There he remarked the supine security of the Danes, and their dissolute wasting of ill-gotten booty. Having made his observations, he returned to his retreat, and detaching proper emissaries among his subjects, appointed them to meet him in arms in the forest of Selwood, a summons which they gladly obeyed.

It was against the most unguarded quarter of the enemy that Alfred made his attack, while the Danes, surprized to behold an army of English, whom they considered as totally subdued, were routed with great slaughter; and, though such as escaped fled for refuge into a fortified camp in the neighbourhood, yet, being unprovided for a siege, in less than a fortnight they were compelled to surrender at discretion. † By the conqueror's permission, those who did not chuse to embrace Christianity embarked for Flanders, under the command of one of their generals called Hastings. Guthrum, their prince, became a convert with thirty of his nobles, and the king himself answered for him at the font. Soon after the Danes settled in Northumberland, Mercia and East Anglia, submitted to Alfred, and swore allegiance to him.

* Of the Danes who had enlisted with Hastings, a part returned, contrary to agreement, once more to ravage the country, and

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landing

‡ A. D. 877. * A. D. 879.

landing on the coasts of Kent, advanced towards Rochester, in hopes of surprizing that city. They were soon, however, deterred from proceeding, by hearing that Alfred was upon his march to oppose them. || That such depredations might be prevented for the future, this monarch equipped a strong fleet, with which he attacked and destroyed sixteen of their vessels in the port of Harwich. There was now but the port of London open to the invaders, and that city he soon reduced to capitulation. Having augmented its fortifications, and embellished it with a number of new edifices, § he delivered it in charge to his son-in-law, Ethelred, and thus secured the whole country from foreign danger.

Alfred had now attained the meridian of glory; he possessed a greater extent of territory than had ever been enjoyed by any of his predecessors; the kings of Wales did him homage for their possessions, the Northumbrians received a king of his appointing, and no enemy appeared to give him the least apprehensions, or excite an alarm. In this state of prosperity Alfred was diligently employed in cultivating the arts of peace, and in repairing the damages which the kingdom had sustained by war. After rebuilding the cities which had been destroyed by the Danes, he established a regular militia through-out the kingdom. He took care that all his subjects should be armed and registered: he assigned them a regular rotation of duty; a part was employed to cultivate the land, while others were

|| A. D. 882. § A. D. 886.

were appointed to repel any sudden invasion. He had a naval force that was more than a match for the invaders, and trained his subjects as well in the practice of sailing as of naval engagements. A fleet of an hundred and twenty ships of war was stationed along the coasts; and being well supplied with all things necessary, both for subsistence and war, impressed the enemy with awe. Yet there succeeded some formidable descents. § Hastings, the Danish chieftain, in particular, appeared off the coast of Kent with a fleet of three hundred and fifty sail; and altho' his forces were vigorously repulsed by Alfred, yet he found means to secure himself in the possession of Bamflete, near the Isle of Canvey, in the county of Essex. But he was not long settled there, when his garrison was overpowered by a body of the citizens of London, with great slaughter, and his wife and two sons made captives. These experienced the king's clemency: he restored them to Hastings on condition that he should depart the kingdom. Meantime the East-Anglian Danes with those of Northumberland broke into rebellion; and, yielding to their favourite habits of depradation, embarked on board two hundred and forty vessels, and appeared before Exeter. But they met such a reception from Alfred, that they put to sea again without attempting any other enterprize. A third body of piratical Danes, in great numbers, after the departure of Hastings, seized and fortified Shobury at the mouth of the Thames; and having left a garrison there,

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marched

§ A. D. 893.

marched along the banks of the river till they came to Bodington, in the county of Gloucester, where being reinforced by a body of Welshmen, they threw up entrenchments, and prepared for defence. But they were soon furrounded by the king's forces, and reduced to the utmost extremity. After having eaten their horses, they made a desperate sally, in which numbers were cut to pieces. Those who escaped, being pursued by Alfred, were finally dispersed, or totally destroyed. Nor did he treat the Northumbrian freebooters with less severity. || Falling upon them while they were exercising their ravages in the west, he took twenty of their ships; and having tried all the prisoners at Winchester, hanged them as pirates and common enemies of mankind.

Having by this vigilance and well-timed severity, given peace to his subjects, his next care was to polish the country by arts, as he had protected it by arms. He is said to have drawn up a body of laws; but those which remain to this day under his name seem to be chiefly the laws already practised in the country by his Saxon ancestors, which he improved, enlarged and established. The trial by juries, mulcts and fines for offences, by some ascribed to him, are of a more ancient date. He divided the whole kingdom into counties, the counties into hundreds, and these into tythings, so called because they consisted of ten freeholders, who were pledges to the king for the good behaviour of each other. All his resolutions concerning public affairs

|| A. D. 897.

affairs, passed thro' three different councils : The first consisted of his particular friends, the second of the nobility. The third was the general assembly of the nation which derived their meeting from his Saxon ancestors. The care of Alfred for the encouragement of learning did not a little tend to improve the morals and restrain the barbarous habits of the people. When he came to the throne, he found the English sunk into the grossest ignorance and barbarism, proceeding from the continued disorders of the government, and from the ravages of the Danes. He himself complains, that, on his accession, he knew not one person south of the Thames who could so much as interpret the Latin service. To remedy this deficiency, he invited over the most celebrated scholars from all parts of Europe ; he founded the university of Oxford, and endowed it with many privileges. He gave, in his own example, the strongest incentives to study. He usually divided his time into three equal portions ; one was given to sleep, and the refecti^on of his body, diet, and exercise ; another to the dispatch of business ; and the third to study and devotion. He made a considerable progress in the different studies of grammar, rhetoric, philosophy, architecture, and geometry. He was an excellent historian, he understood music, and was acknowledged to be the best Saxon poet of the age. He left many works behind him, many of which remain to this day. He translated the pastoral of Gregory I, *Bœtius de Consolatione*, and Bede's Ecclesiastical History, into

the Saxon language. Sensible that his illiterate subjects were not much susceptible of speculative instruction, he endeavoured to convey his morality by parables and stories, and is said to have translated from the Greek the fables of Æsop. Nor did he neglect even the mechanical arts. Before his time, the generality of the people made use of timber in building. Alfred raised his palaces of brick, and the nobility by degrees began to imitate his example. He introduced and encouraged manufactures of all kinds, and no inventor or improver of any ingenious art was suffered to go unrewarded. * It was after a glorious reign of twenty-nine years thus spent, in the advancement of his subjects happiness, that he died in the 52d year of his age and the full enjoyment of his faculties, an example to princes, and an ornament to human nature. To give a character of this prince would only be, to sum up those qualities which constitute perfection. Even virtues seemingly opposite, were happily blended in his disposition; persevering, yet flexible; moderate, yet enterprising; just, yet merciful; stern in command, yet gentle in conversation. Nature also, as if desirous that such admirable qualities of mind should be set off to the greatest advantage, had bestowed on him all bodily accomplishments, vigour, dignity, and an engaging, open countenance. No historian charges him with any vice, but all unanimously agree to represent him as one of the most amiable and truly glorious princes that ever wore the crown.

Alfred

* A. D. 901.

Alfred had, by his wife Ethelwitha, the daughter of a Mercian earl, three sons and three daughters. His eldest son, Edmund, died without issue, during his father's lifetime. His third son, Ethelwald, inherited his father's passion for letters, and lived a private life. His second son, Edward, succeeded him on the throne. Many were the battles he fought, and the victories he won; so that, though unequal to his father in the arts of peace, he did not fall short of him in the military virtues. He built several castles, and fortified different cities. He reduced Turkethill, a Danish invader, and obliged him to retire with his followers. He subdued the East Angles, and acquired full dominion over the Northumbrians. He was assisted in these conquests by his sister, Ethelfleda, the widow of Ethelbert, earl of Mercia, who, after her husband's death, retained the government of that province. * But after he had reduced the whole kingdom to his obedience, and began his endeavours to promote the happiness of his people, he was prevented by death from the completion of his designs. In his reign, namely in the year 915, the University of Cambridge was founded.

† To him succeeded Athelstan. He received some disturbance from the Northumbrian Danes, whom he compelled to surrender; and resenting the conduct of Constantine, the king of Scotland, who had given them assistance, he ravaged that country, till he was appeased by the submissions of the monarch. These submissions, however were insincere.

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Soon

* A. D. 912. † A. D. 925.

Soon after Athelstan had evacuated that kingdom, Constantine entered into a confederacy with a body of Danish pirates, and some Welch princes who were jealous of Athelstan's growing greatness. A bloody battle was fought near Brunzburg, in Northumberland, in which the English monarch was again victorious. After this success, Athelstan enjoyed his crown in tranquility, and he is regarded as one of the ablest and most active of the Saxon kings. During his reign the Bible was translated into the Saxon language; and some alliances also were formed by him, with the princes on the continent. † He died at Gloucester, in the forty-sixth year of his age, after a reign of sixteen years, and was succeeded by his brother, Edmund, then but eighteen years old.

Edmund, also, met with disturbance from the Northumbrians; but his activity soon defeated their attempts. The great end which he aimed at, during his reign, was to curb the licentiousness of this people. Among other schemes for the benefit of the people, he was the first monarch who by law instituted capital punishments in England. Remarking that fines would not restrain robbers, who were in general men who had nothing to lose, he enacted, that, in gangs of robbers, when taken, the oldest of them should be condemned to the gallows. * This was then reckoned a severe law; for, among our early ancestors, all the penal laws were mild and merciful. The resentment this monarch bore to men of this sort was the cause of his death.

His

† A. D. 941. * A. D. 945.

His virtues, abilities, wealth, and temperance, promised him a long and happy reign; when, on a certain day, as he was solemnizing a festival in Gloucestershire, he remarked that Leolf, a notorious robber, whom he had sentenced to banishment, had the boldness to enter the hall where he was dining, and to sit at the table among the royal attendants. Enraged at this, he commanded him to leave the room; and on his refusing to obey, the king, whose temper was choleric, flew against him, and caught him by the hair. The ruffian, drew a dagger, and lifting his arm, stabbed the monarch to the heart, who fell down on the bosom of his murderer. † The death of the assassin, who was instantly cut in pieces, was but a small compensation for the loss of a king, loved by his subjects, and deserving their esteem.

The late king's sons were too young to succeed him in the government; his brother Edred was therefore appointed to succeed. About this time, the monks, from being contented to govern in ecclesiastical matters, began to assume the direction in civil affairs; and, by artfully managing the superstition of the people, erected an authority that was not shaken off for several centuries. Edred had blindly delivered over his conscience to the guidance of Dunstan, abbot of Glastonbury; and this man, under the appearance of sanctity, concealed the most boundless ambition. The monks had hitherto been a kind of secular priests, who, though they lived in communities, were neither separated from the rest

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of

† A. D. 948.

of the world, nor useless to it. They were often married; they were assiduously employed in the education of youth, and subject to the commands of temporal superiors. But now the celibacy, and the independency of the clergy, were warmly recommended by the see of Rome to all ecclesiastics in general, and to the monks in particular. A favourable opportunity offered of carrying this measure in England, arising from the superstitious character of Edred, and the furious zeal of Dunstan. Edred implicitly submitted to his directions; and the kingdom was in a fair way of being turned into a papal province by this zealous ecclesiastic, when he was checked in the midst of his career, by the death of the king, who died of a quinsy, in the tenth year of his reign.

† Edwy, his nephew, who now ascended the throne, at the age of fourteen, was a prince of great personal beauty, and an amiable, yet martial disposition. But he had an enemy to contend with, against whom all military virtues could be of little service. Dunstan, who had governed during the former reign, was resolved to remit nothing of his authority in this; and Edwy, immediately upon his accession, found himself involved in a quarrel with the monks; whose rage, neither his accomplishments nor his virtues could mitigate. Their whole body, and Dunstan at their head, pursued him with implacable animosity while living, and endeavoured to brand his character to posterity.

This

† A. D. 954.

This Dunstan, who makes a greater figure in these times, than even kings themselves, was born of noble parents, in the west; but being a man of licentious manners in his youth, he betook himself to the austerities of a monastic life, to atone for his faults. He secluded himself entirely from the world, in a cell so small, that he could neither stand erect, nor lie along in it. It was in this retreat that his fancy teemed with visions of the most extravagant nature. His supposed illuminations were frequent; his temptations strong, but he always resisted with bravery. The devil, it was said, one day paid him a visit in the shape of a fine young woman; but Dunstan, knowing the deceit, seized him by the nose with a pair of red hot pincers, and held him till the malignant spirit made the whole neighbourhood resound with his bellowings. He was considered as the peculiar favourite of the Almighty, and appeared at court with an authority greater than that of kings. Being possessed of so much power, it may be easily supposed, that Edwy could make but a feeble resistance; and that his first fault was likely to be attended with the most dangerous consequences. The monk found or made one on the very day of his coronation. There was a lady of the royal blood, named Elgiya, whose beauty had made a strong impression on this young monarch's heart. He had ventured to marry her, tho' she was within the degrees of affinity prohibited by the canon law. On the day of his coronation, while his nobility were giving a loose to the more noisy

noisy pleasures of wine and festivity in the great hall, Edwy retired to his wife's apartment; where, in company with her mother, he enjoyed the more pleasing satisfaction of her conversation. Dunstan no sooner perceived his absence, than conjecturing the reason, he rushed furiously into the apartment, and upbraiding him bitterly, dragged him forth in the most outrageous manner. The king was advised to punish this insult, by bringing him to account for the money with which he had been entrusted during the last reign. This account, the haughty monk refused to give in; wherefore, he was banished the kingdom. His exile only served to encrease his reputation among the people; and Odo, archbishop of Canterbury, was so far transported, that he pronounced a divorce between Edwy and Elgiva. The king could no longer resist the indignation of the church, but consented to surrender his wife to its fury. Accordingly, Odo sent into the palace a party of soldiers, who seized the queen; and by his orders, branded her on the face with an hot iron. Not contented with this, they carried her by force into Ireland, and there commanded her to remain in perpetual exile. This injunction, however, was too distressing for that faithful woman to comply with; for, being cured of her wound, and having obliterated the marks which had been made to deface her beauty, she once more ventured to return to the king, whom she still regarded as her husband. But she was taken prisoner by a party whom the archbishop had sent,

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and put to death in the most cruel manner. In the mean time, a secret revolt against Edwy became almost general; and that it might not be doubted at whose instigation it was undertaken, Dunstan returned to England, and put himself at the head of the party. The malecontents soon proceeded to open rebellion; and having placed Edgar, the king's younger brother, a boy of about thirteen years of age, at their head, they put him in possession of all the northern parts of the kingdom. Edwy's power, and the number of his adherents every day declining, he was at last obliged to consent to a partition of the kingdom; but his death, which happened soon after, freed his enemies from all further inquietude, and gave Edgar peaceable possession of the government.

|| Edgar being placed on the throne by the influence of the monks, affected to be entirely guided by their directions. There has ever been some popular cry, some darling prejudice amongst the English; and he, who has taken the advantage of it, has always found it of excellent assistance to his government. He made Dunstan first Bishop of Worcester, and afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury. The sanctity of the monks was the cry at that time; and Edgar, chiming in with the people, at once promoted their happiness, and his own glory. Few English monarchs have reigned with more splendor. He not only quieted all domestic insurrections, but repelled all foreign invasions. And being so well established, the monks, whom he promoted, are

|| A. D. 959.

are loud in his praise; and yet, the example of his continence was no way corresponding. His first transgression of this kind was, the breaking into a convent, carrying off Editha, a nun, by force, and committing violence on her person. For this act of sacrilege and barbarity, no other penance was enjoined, than that he should abstain from wearing his crown for seven years. As for the lady herself, he was permitted to continue his intercourse with her without scandal.

But he had long heard of the beauty of a young lady, whose name was Elfrida, daughter to the earl of Devonshire. Unwilling to credit common fame in this particular, he sent Ethelwald, his favourite friend to see, and inform him, if Elfrida was indeed, that incomparable woman. Ethelwald arriving at the earl's, had no sooner cast his eyes upon her, than he became desperately enamoured of her himself. Such was the violence of his passion, that forgetting his master's intentions, he demanded her for himself in marriage. The earl gave his consent, and their nuptials were performed in private. Upon his return to court, he appeared amazed how the world could talk so much, and so unjustly of her charms. When he had, weaned the king from his purpose, he took an opportunity, after some time, of turning the conversation on Elfrida, representing, that though the fortune of the earl of Devonshire's daughter would be a trifle to a king, yet it would be an immense acquisition to a subject. He, therefore, humbly entreated permission to pay his addresses to her.

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The request was readily complied with; Ethelwald returned to his wife, and their nuptials were solemnized in public. His greatest care, however, was to keep her from court; and he took every precaution, to prevent her appearing before a king so susceptible of love. But it was impossible to keep his treachery long concealed. Edgar was soon informed of the whole transaction; and dissembling his resentment, took occasion to visit that part of the country, accompanied by Ethelwald, who reluctantly attended him. Upon coming near the lady's habitation, he told him, that he had a curiosity to see his wife, and desired to be introduced as his acquaintance. Ethelwald, did all in his power, but in vain, to dissuade him. All he could obtain, was permission to go before, on pretence of preparing for the king's reception. On his arrival, he fell at his wife's feet, confessing what he had done, and conjuring her to conceal, as much as possible, her beauty from the king. Elfrida, promised compliance; but, prompted either by vanity, or revenge, adorned her person with the most exquisite art. The event answered her expectations; the king, no sooner saw, than he resolved to obtain her. The better to effect his intentions, he took leave with a seeming indifference; but his revenge was not the less certain. Ethelwald was some time after sent into Northumberland, and was found murdered in a wood by the way. Some say, he was stabbed by the king's own hand; some, that he only commanded the assassination. Elfrida was invited soon after

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to court by the king, and their nuptials performed with the usual solemnity.

Such were the criminal passions of a monarch, whom the monks represent as the most perfect of mankind. His reign was successful, because it was founded upon a compliance with the prejudices of the people; but it produced very sensible evils upon his successor. He died, after a reign of sixteen years, in the thirty-third year of his age, being succeeded by his son, Edward, whom he had by his first marriage, with the daughter of the earl Ordmer.

* Edward, surnamed the Martyr, was made king by the interest of the monks, at fourteen years of age. In his reign, there is nothing remarkable, if we except his memorable end. Though this young monarch had been, from the beginning, opposed by Elfrida, his step-mother, who seems to have united the greatest deformity of mind, with the highest graces of person; yet he ever shewed her marks of the strongest regard, and expressed, on all occasions, the most tender affection for her son, his brother. Hunting one day near Corfe-castle, where Elfrida resided, he thought it his duty to pay her a visit, although he was not attended by any of his retinue. There desiring some liquor to be brought him, as he was thirsty, while he was holding the cup to his head, one of Elfrida's domestics, instructed for that purpose, stabbed him in the back. The king, finding himself wounded, put spurs to his horse; but fainting with the loss of blood, he fell from the saddle, and his foot sticking in the
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* A. D. 965.

the stirrup, he was dragged along by his horse, till he was killed. Being tracked by the blood, his body was found, and privately interred at Wareham by his servants.

Ethelred the Second, the son of Edgar and Elfrida, succeeded at twelve years of age, incapable of governing the kingdom, or providing for its safety. During his reign, the Danes, after a long interval, renewed their invasions. ¶ And landed on several parts of the coast, spreading their usual terror, and devastation: Till Ethelred, at the persuasion of the Archbishop of Canterbury, gave them ten thousand pounds to return home. Yet not many years after, under the command of Sweyn king of Denmark, and Anlaf king of Norway, they came again and committed on all sides their destructive ravages. § The English opposed them with a formidable army, but were repulsed with great slaughter. The Danes, encouraged by this success, marched boldly into the heart of the kingdom, filling all places with the marks of horrid cruelty. As Ethelred had before bought them off with money, he now resolved to put the same expedient in practice. He sent ambassadors, therefore, and offered them subsistence and tribute, provided they would depart the kingdom. It has often been remarked, that buying off an invasion only serves to invite a repetition of hostilities. So it happened upon this occasion: Sweyn and Anlaf agreed to the terms, and peaceably took up their quarters at Southampton, where the sum of sixteen thousand pounds was paid them. Anlaf returned to his

¶ A. D. 981. § A. D. 499.

his native country, and never infested England more; but Sweyn was less scrupulous, and the composition with him gave but a short interval to the miseries of the English.

During this period, the Danish Invasions produced an extreme corruption of manners, and a profound ignorance all over England. The memoirs of what had passed in Church and State were destroyed, with the monasteries in which they were preserved. The Councils held were mixt assemblies, consisting of the Clergy and Nobility. Meantime the power of the Clergy, and of the Bishop of Rome in particular, continually increased.

The Danes, appeared a short time after, upon the English shore, and demanded twenty-five thousand pounds more. This sum they also received; and this only served to improve their desire for fresh exactions. But they soon had a material cause of resentment given them. They had made several settlements for many years before, in different parts of the kingdom. There, without mixing with the natives, they still maintained a peaceable correspondence and connexion among them. But they still shewed their attachment to their own countrymen, and lorded it over the English. This was motive sufficient, in that barbarous age, for a general massacre; and Ethelred embraced the cruel resolution of putting them all to the sword. † This plot was carried on with such secrecy, that in one day, (Nov. 13.) all the Danes in England were destroyed without mercy. But this massacre, instead

† A. D. 1002.

instead of ending the long miseries of the people only prepared the way for greater calamities.

* While the English were yet congratulating each other upon their late deliverance from an inveterate enemy, Sweyn, king of Denmark, appeared off the western coast with a large fleet, meditating slaughter; and furious with revenge. The English vainly attempted to summon their forces, treachery and cowardice still operated, to dispirit their troops or to dissipate them. To these miseries were added a dreadful famine, partly from the bad seasons, and partly from the decay of agriculture. For a while they supposed that the Danish devastations would be retarded by the payment of thirty thousand pounds, which the invaders agreed to accept; but this, as in all the former cases, afforded but a temporary relief. For a while they placed some hopes in a powerful navy, but this was soon divided and dispersed. Nothing therefore now remained, but their suffering the just indignation of the conqueror, and undergoing all the evils that war, inflamed by revenge, could inflict. During this period, a general consternation, together with a mutual diffidence and dissention, prevailed. Cessations from these calamities were purchased, one after another, by immense sums; but as they afforded a short alleviation of the common distress, at last no other resource remained, than that of submitting to the Danish monarch, of swearing allegiance to him, and giving hostages as pledges of sincerity.

Ethelred

* A. D. 1003.

† Ethelred was obliged to fly into Normandy, and the whole country came under the power of Sweyn.

The death of Sweyn, which happened about six weeks after, seemed to offer a favourable opportunity of once more restoring Ethelred to the throne, and his subjects to their liberties. Accordingly he seized it with avidity; but his indolence, credulity, and cowardice, obstructed all success. At length, after having seen the greatest part of the kingdom seized by the insulting enemy, after refusing to head his troops to oppose them, he retired to London, where he ended an inglorious reign of thirty-seven years by a natural death, leaving behind him two sons, the eldest of whom, Edmund, succeeded to his crown.

* Edmund, received the surname of Ironside, from his hardy opposition to the enemy; which yet could not restore the happiness of his country. He was opposed by one of the most powerful and vigilant monarchs then in Europe; for Canute, afterwards surnamed the Great, succeeded Sweyn as king of Denmark, and also as general of the Danish forces in England. The contest between these two monarchs was therefore managed with great obstinacy; the first battle that was fought appeared undecisive; a second followed, in which the Danes had some advantage: But Edmund still having interest enough to bring a third army into the field, the Danish and English nobility, equally harrassed, obliged their kings (after

† A. D. 1013 * A. D. 1016.

(after Edmund had sent a challenge to Canute, which he refused to accept) to come to a compromise, and to divide the kingdom, between them by treaty. Canute reserved to himself the northern parts of the kingdom, the southern parts were left to Edmund; but this prince being murdered about a month after the treaty by his two chamberlains, at Oxford, Canute was left in peaceable possession of the whole kingdom.

Canute, though he had gratified his ambition in obtaining possession of the English crown, yet was obliged at first to make some mortifying concessions. But as his power grew stronger, he resumed those grants which he had made, and even put many of the English nobles to death, sensible that those who had betrayed their native sovereign would never be true to him. Nor was he less severe in his exactions upon the subordinate ranks of the people, levying at one time seventy-two thousand pounds upon the country, and eleven thousand more upon the city of London only.

§ Having thus strengthened himself, by effectually weakening all who had wealth or authority to withstand him, he next began to shew the merciful side of his character. Nor does it seem without just grounds that he is represented by some historians as one of the first characters in those barbarous ages. His first step to reconcile the English to his yoke, was, by sending back to Denmark as many of his followers as he could safely spare. He made no distinction between the English and Danes

§ A. D. 1017.

Danes in the administration of justice, but restored the Saxon customs in a general assembly of the kingdom. The two nations thus uniting with each other, were glad to breathe for a while from the tumult and slaughter in which they had involved each other; and to confirm their amity, the king himself married Emma, the sister of Richard, duke of Normandy, who had ever warmly espoused the interests of the English.

|| Canute having thus settled his power in England, made a voyage into Denmark, attacked by the king of Sweden. In this expedition, Godwin, an English earl, was particularly distinguished for his valour, and acquired that fame which laid a foundation for the power he acquired during the succeeding reigns. * In another voyage he made to Denmark, he attacked Norway; and, expelling Olaus from his kingdom, annexed it to his own empire. Thus, being at once king of England, Denmark, and Norway, he was considered as the most potent prince in Europe.

Towards the end of his reign, he endeavoured to atone for his former fierceness, by acts of penance and devotion. He built churches, endowed monasteries, and appointed revenues for the celebration of mass. † He even undertook a pilgrimage to Rome, where he remained a considerable time; and, besides obtaining from the pope some privileges for the English school erected there, he engaged all the princes through whose dominions he passed to desist from those heavy impositions; which

|| A. D. 1019. * A. D. 1028. † A. D. 1031.

which they were accustomed to exact from the English pilgrims. These were topics that filled the mouths of his courtiers with flattery. They even affected to think his power uncontrollable, and that all things would be obedient to his command. Canute, is said to have taken the following method to reprove them. He ordered his chair to be set on the sea-shore while the tide was coming in, and commanded the sea to retire. "Thou art under my dominion, cried he; the land upon which I sit is mine; I charge thee therefore, to approach no farther, nor dare to wet the feet of thy sovereign." He feigned to sit some time in expectation of submission, till the waves began to surround him: then, turning to his courtiers, he observed, that the titles of Lord and Master belonged only to him whom both earth and seas obey. From that moment he never would wear his crown, but ordered it to be placed in the church at Winchester. Thus, feared and respected, he lived many years, honoured with the surname of Great for his power, but deserving it still more for his virtues. He died at Shaftesbury, in the nineteenth year of his reign, leaving behind him three sons, Sweyn, Harold, and Hardicnute. Sweyn was crowned king of Norway, Hardicnute of Denmark, and Harold succeeded his father on the English throne.

† HAROLD, surnamed Harefoot, from his swiftness in running, upon his first coming to the crown, met with opposition from his younger brother, Hardicnute. But, by
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† A. D. 1035.

the intervention of the nobles, a compromise was made between them; by which it was agreed, that Harold should have London, and all the provinces north of the Thames, while the possession of the southern parts should be ceded to Hardicnute; and, until that prince should appear in person, Emma, his mother, should govern in his stead. But this agreement was of short duration; for queen Emma having brought over from Normandy Edward and Alfred, Alfred was invited, by Harold, to London, and treacherously set upon, by earl Godwin, on the way. Six hundred of his train were murdered; he himself was taken prisoner, and his eyes being put out, he was conducted to the monastery of Ely, where he died soon after. Edward and Emma, apprised of his fate, fled to the continent, and Harold, without resistance, took possession of the whole kingdom. He lived to enjoy it but four years; and dying, left the succession open to his brother.

‡ Hardicnute's title was readily acknowledged, both by the Danes and the English; and, upon his arrival from the continent, he was received with the most extravagant demonstrations of joy. But his government was violent and unjust. It was but of short duration. He died two years after his accession, in consequence of excess at the marriage of a Danish lord, which was celebrated at Lambeth.

§ Edward, surnamed the Confessor, succeeded. The English who had long groaned under a foreign yoke, now set no bounds to their joy, at finding the line of their ancient monarchs restored; and at first the warmth of
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‡ A. D. 1040. § A. D. 1042.

their raptures was attended with some violence against the Danes; but the new king soon composed these differences, and the distinction between the two nations gradually disappeared. Thus, after a struggle of above two hundred years, all things seemed to remain in the same state in which those conflicts began. These invasions from the Danes produced no change of laws, customs, language, or religion; nor did any other traces of their establishments seem to remain, except the castles they built, and the families that still bear their names. No farther mention therefore is made of two distinct nations; for the Normans coming in soon after, served to unite them into a closer union.

The first acts of this monarch's reign, were to resume all grants that had been made by the crown in former reigns; and to order his mother, Emma, who was ever intriguing against him, to be shut up in a monastery. And though he had married Editha, the daughter of Godwin, yet either from mistaken piety, or fixed aversion, during his whole reign, he abstained from her bed.

Godwin, who was long grown too powerful for a subject, made these things the pretext of his opposition. He began by complaining of the influence of the Normans in the government, and his animosities soon broke out into action. * Eustace, count of Boulogne, who had married Edward's sister, arrived in England upon a visit to the king, and was received with great honour and affection. Upon his return to Dover, having

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* A. D. 1048.

sent a servant before him to bespeak lodgings in that city, a fray happened between this domestic and the townsmen, in which he lost his life. The count and his attendants attempting to take revenge, the inhabitants took arms, and both sides engaging with great fury, the count was obliged to find safety by flight, after having lost about twenty of his men, and slain as many of the people. The count, exasperated at this insult, returned to the court, at Gloucester, and demanded justice of the king, who espoused his quarrel. He instantly gave orders to Godwin, in whose government Dover lay, to go and punish the inhabitants for their crime. This was a conjuncture highly favourable to his schemes: So he absolutely refused to obey the king's command. Sensible, however, that obedience would soon be extorted, unless he could defend his insolence, he prepared for his defence, or, rather, for an attack upon Edward. † Accordingly, under a pretence of repressing some disorders on the Welsh frontier, he secretly assembled a great army, and attempted to surprize the king, who continued, without the smallest suspicion, at Gloucester. Nevertheless, being soon informed of Godwin's treachery, his first step was, privately to summon all the assistance he could, and, in the mean while, to protract the time by a pretended negociation. As soon as he found himself in a capacity to take the field, he changed his tone; and Godwin, finding himself unable to oppose his force, or to keep his army together, permitted it to
disperse

† A. D. 1050.

disperse, and took shelter with Baldwin, earl of Flanders. His estates, which were numerous, together with those of his sons, were confiscated, and the greatness of the family seemed, for a time, totally overthrown.

About this time. William, Duke of Normandy, paid a visit to King Edward; who received him with abundance of civility: and (if William said true) made a Will, wherein he appointed him his Successor.

But this nobleman's power was too strong to be shaken by so slight a blast; for, being assisted with a fleet by the earl of Flanders, † he landed on the Isle of Wight, where he was joined by his son Harold, with a squadron which that nobleman had collected in Ireland. From thence being reinforced by great numbers of his former dependants and followers, he sailed up the Thames, and, appearing before London, threw all things into confusion. In this exigence, the king alone seemed resolute; but his nobility, many of whom were secretly inclined to Godwin, brought on a negociation; in which it was stipulated, that the king should dismiss all his foreign servants, and that Godwin should give hostages for his own future good behaviour. Godwin's death, which followed soon after, prevented him from reaping ~~the~~ fruits of an agreement, by which the king's authority was almost reduced to nothing.

* This nobleman was succeeded in his governments and offices by his son, Harold, who, in his ambition, was equal to his father, but in his virtues and abilities far his superior

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† A. D. 1052 * A. D. 1053.

rior. By a modest and gentle demeanour he acquired the good-will of Edward, or at least softened the hatred which he had long borne the whole family. He insinuated himself into the affections of the people by his liberality and candour, while every day he increased his power. Meantime the king made his brother, Tosti, duke of Northumberland, upon the death of Siward, who had long governed that province with great glory.

Harold's insinuating manners, his power, and virtues, increased his popularity to such a degree, that he began to be talked of as the most proper person to succeed to the crown. But nothing could be more ungrateful to Edward, as he abhorred a successor from the family of Godwin. He therefore sent for his nephew, Edward, from Hungary, who was the direct descendant from the ancient Saxon kings. Prince Edward soon arrived, but was scarce safe landed, when he died, leaving his pretensions to Edgar Atheling, his son, who was young, weak, and inactive.

In the mean time, Harold did not remit in obedience to the king, or his assiduities to the people; still increasing in his power, and preparing the way for his advancement to the throne. § Two incidents which happened about this time, contributed to fix his popularity. The Welsh renewing their hostilities under prince Griffin, were repelled by him, and rendered tributary to England. The other incident was no less honourable: † His brother Tosti, who had been appointed to the government of Northumberland, having grievously oppressed

§ A. D. 1057. † A. D. 1064.

oppressed the people, was expelled in an insurrection, and Harold was ordered by the king to reinstate him, and punish the insurgents. While at the head of an army, preparing to take signal vengeance for the injury done to his brother, he was met by a deputation of the people who had been so cruelly governed. They assured him that they had no intention to rebel, but had taken up arms merely to protect themselves from the cruelty of a rapacious governor. They enumerated the grievances they had sustained from his tyranny, brought the strongest proofs of his guilt, and appealed to Harold's equity for redress. This nobleman, convinced of Tostig's brutality, sacrificed his affection to his duty; and not only procured their pardon from the king, but confirmed the governor whom the Northumbrians had chosen in his room. From that time, Harold became the idol of the people; and, indeed, his virtues deserved their love.

Harold, thus secure of the affections of the English, openly aspired at the succession. The people instead of discountenancing his pretensions, assisted them with their wishes and applause. Edward, broken with age, infirmities, and superstition, took little pains to secure the succession. Meantime he was surprized by sickness, which brought him to his end, † on the fifth of January, in the sixty-fifth year of his age, and twenty-fourth of his reign.

This prince, was of a mild and peaceable temper. He was remarkable neither for virtues nor vices; only he was very charitable; particularly to the monks, which gained him

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† A. D. 1066.

the title of Saint : yea and Confessor, tho' he never suffered any thing for religion. However he was canonized by Pope Alexander III, under the name of Edward the Confessor. He was the first who touched for the King's Evil. ---I knew one who was touched by Queen Anne and perfectly cured.

Harold, whose virtues seemed to give a right to his pretensions, ascended the throne without any opposition. The citizens of London, seconded his claim; the clergy adopted his cause; and the body of the people, sincerely loved him. Nor were the first acts of his reign unworthy of the general prejudice in his favour. He took the most effectual measures for an impartial administration of justice; ordered the laws to be revised, and reformed; and those disturbers of the publick peace to be punished, who had thriven under the lenity of the last reign.

But neither his valour, his justice, nor his popularity, were able to secure him from misfortunes. The first symptoms of his danger, came from his own brother, Tosti, who had taken refuge in Flanders, and went among the princes of the Continent, endeavouring to engage them in a league against Harold. Not content with this, being furnished with some ships by the earl of Flanders, he pillaged the coast, until he was encountered, and routed by Morcar, who had been appointed to the government from which he was expelled.

But Harfagar, king of Norway, brought over by his remonstrances, arrived with a fleet of two hundred sail at the mouth of the
river

river Humber, where he was joined by the shattered remains of Tosti's forces. It was in vain that the earls of Mercia and Northumberland attempted to stop their progress, with a body of undisciplined troops: they were quickly routed, and York fell a prey to the enemy. Mean while, Harold being informed of this misfortune, hastened with an army to the protection of his people, and expressed the utmost ardour to shew himself worthy of their favour. He had given so many proofs of an equitable and prudent administration, that the people flocked from all quarters to his standard; and, as soon as he reached the enemy at Stamford, he found himself in a condition of giving them battle. The action was very bloody, but the victory was decisive on the side of Harold, and ended in the total rout of the Norwegians, Harfagar, their king, and Tosti being slain. Those who escaped, owed their safety to the personal prowess of a brave Norwegian; who, singly, defended a bridge over the Derwent for three hours, against the whole English army; during which time, he slew forty of their best men with his battle-ax, but he was at length slain by an arrow. Harold, pursuing his victory, made himself master of a Norwegian fleet that lay in the river Ouse; and had the generosity to give prince Olave, the son of Harfagar, his liberty, and to allow him to depart with twenty vessels. There had never before been in England an engagement between two such numerous armies, each being composed of no less than three score thousand men. The news

of this victory diffused inexpressible joy over the whole kingdom; they gloried in a monarch who now shewed himself able to avenge them of their invaders; but they had not long time for triumph, when news was brought of a fresh invasion. This was under the conduct of William, duke of Normandy, at the head of a large army.

† William, who was afterwards called the Conqueror, was the natural son of Robert, duke of Normandy. His mother's name was Arlette, a beautiful maid of Falaize, whom Robert fell in love with, as she stood gazing at her door, whilst he passed through the town. William, who was the offspring of this amour, owed his greatness chiefly to his personal merit. His body was vigorous, his mind capacious, and his courage not to be repressed by danger. His father, Robert, growing old, and superstitious also, resolved upon a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, contrary to the advice and opinion of all his nobility. As his heart was fixed upon the expedition, instead of attending to their remonstrances, he shewed them his son William, whom, though illegitimate, he recommended to their care, exacting an oath from them of homage and fealty. He then put him, as he was yet but ten years of age, under the tutelage of the French king; and soon after, going into Asia, from whence he never returned, left young William rather the inheritor of his wishes, than his crown. In fact, William, from the beginning, found himself exposed to much opposition, from his youth and inexperience, from the reproach of his birth,
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† A. D. 1066. Sept. 28.

from a suspected guardian, a disputed title, and a distracted state. The regency, appointed by Robert, found great difficulties in supporting the government against this complication of dangers; and the young prince, when he came of age, found himself reduced to a very low condition. But the great qualities which he soon displayed, gave encouragement to his friends, and struck a terror into his enemies. He on all sides opposed his rebellious subjects, and repressed foreign invaders. The tranquility which he had thus established in his dominions, induced him to extend his views; and some overtures, said to be made him by Edward the Confessor, enflamed his ambition with a desire of succeeding to the English throne. Whether Edward really appointed him to succeed, is uncertain; but it is beyond a doubt, that Harold happening to pay a visit to the Norman coast, was induced by this prince, to acknowledge his claims. But when William objected the breach of this, he alledged, it was extorted from him, at a time when he had no power to refuse. William was not remiss, after the death of Edward, to lay in his claims; and finding that arms alone were to decide the dispute, prepared to assert them with vigour. His subjects, as they had long been distinguished for valour, had, at this time, attained to the highest pitch of military glory. His court was the center of politeness; and all who wished for fame in arms, flocked to put themselves under his conduct. The fame of his intended invasion of England, was diffused over the whole Conti-

nent; multitudes came to offer him their services, so that he was embarrassed only in the choice of whom he should take. The pope himself was not behind the rest, and in hopes of extending the authority of the church, immediately pronounced Harold an usurper. He denounced excommunication against him, and all his adherents; and sent the duke a consecrated banner. William soon found himself at the head of a chosen army of sixty thousand men, all equipped in the most warlike manner. The discipline of the men, the vigour of the horses, the lustre of the arms and accoutrements were objects that had been scarcely seen in Europe for some ages. It was in the beginning of summer that he embarked this powerful body on board a fleet of three hundred sail; and, after some small opposition from the weather, landed at Pevensey, on the coast of Suffex. William, as he came on shore, happened to stumble and fall; but, instead of being discomposed, he had the presence of mind to cry out, that he thus took possession of the country. He made no show of invading a foreign country, but rather encamping in his own. Here he continued in a peaceable manner for about a fortnight, either willing to refresh his troops, or desirous of knowing the reception his pretensions to the crown would meet with. After having refreshed his men, and sent back his fleet to Normandy, to leave no retreat for cowardice, he advanced along the sea-side to Hastings, where he published a manifesto, declaring the motives that induced him to undertake this enterprize.

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He was soon roused by the approach of Harold, who seemed resolved to retain that sovereignty which he had received from the people. He was now returning, from the defeat of the Norwegians, with all the forces he had employed in that expedition, and all he could invite or collect in the country through which he passed. His army was composed of active and valiant troops, strongly attached to their king, and eager to engage. On the other hand, the army of William consisted of the flower of all the Continent, and had been long enured to danger. England never before, nor ever since, saw two such. The day before the battle, William sent an offer to Harold to decide the quarrel between them by single combat; but Harold refused, and said, he would leave it to the God of armies to determine. Both armies, therefore, that night, pitched in sight of each other, expecting the dawn of the day with impatience.

The next morning, (Oct. 14. Harold's Birth-day) as soon as day appeared, both armies were drawn up against each other. The Normans amounted to sixty thousand, of whom many were horse, armed cap-a-pee. The English were not so numerous, and were mostly foot, armed with target, spear, battle-ax, and scymitar. Harold appeared in the center of his forces, leading on his army on foot, that his men might be more encouraged by seeing their king exposed to an equality of danger. William fought on horse-back, leading on his army, that moved at once singing the song of Rollo, one of the famous chiefs of
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their country. The Normans began the fight with their cross-bows, which, at first galled the English. But they soon came to close fight, and the English, with their battle-axes, hewed down their adversaries with great slaughter. Confusion was spreading among the ranks when William, who found himself on the brink of destruction, hastened, with a select band to the relief of his forces. His presence restored the battle; he was seen in every place, endeavouring to pierce the ranks of the enemy, and had three horses slain under him. The battle lasted from seven in the morning till the afternoon, with equal valour on both sides. At length, William, perceiving that the English line continued impenetrable, pretended to give ground, which drew the enemy from their ranks, and he was instantly ready to take the advantage. Upon a signal given, the Normans returned to the charge, broke the English troops, and pursued them to a rising ground. It was in this extremity, that Harold was seen flying from rank to rank, rallying and inspiring his troops with vigour; and, though he had toiled all day, till near night-fall, in the front of his Kentish men, yet he still seemed unabated in force or courage, keeping his men to the post of honour. Once more, therefore, the victory seemed to turn against the Normans, and they fell in great numbers. Providence, at length, determined a victory, that valour was unable to decide. Harold, making a furious onset at the head of his troops, against the Norman heavy armed infantry, was shot into the brain by an arrow; and his two valiant brothers, fighting by his side, shared the
same.

same fate. He fell with his sword in his hand, amidst heaps of slain, and after the battle, the royal corpse could hardly be distinguished among the dead. From the moment of his death, the English gave ground on every side, and were pursued with great slaughter. There fell near fifteen thousand of the Normans, while the loss on the side of the vanquished was yet more considerable, besides that of the king, and his two brothers. The next day, the dead body of Harold was brought to William, and sent, without ransom to his mother. This battle was fought near Heathfield in Sussex, where the town of Battle now stands.

Thus died Harold, in defence of English liberty, against the usurpation of foreign power. If we except the injury he did to Edgar Atheling (which, it seems, was now visited upon him) he was well qualified to wield the sceptre with reputation to himself, and happiness to his subjects. For he was humane, affable, intelligent, and his generosity was equal to his extraordinary courage.

* This was the end of the Saxon monarchy in England, which had continued for more than six hundred years. Before the times of Alfred, the kings of this race seemed totally immersed in ignorance; and after him, taken up with combating the superstition of the monks, or blindly obeying its dictates. The crown, during this period, was neither wholly elective, nor yet totally hereditary. As for the laws and customs of this race, they brought in many, long in practice among their German ancestors; but they adopted also many more which

* A. D. 1066. Oct. 14.

which they found among the Britons, or which the Romans left behind them. They assumed, in imitation of those nations, the name of Kings. Their noblemen assumed names of Roman authority, being termed Dukes or Duces; while the lower classes of people, were bought and sold with the farms they cultivated; an horrid custom, first introduced by the Greeks and Romans, and afterwards adopted by the countries they conquered. Their canon laws also, which often controuled the civil authority, had primarily their origin in Rome; and the priests and monks who drew them up, had generally their education there. We must not, therefore, ascribe the laws and customs which then prevailed over England, entirely to Saxon original, as many of them were from the Britons and Romans. But now the Saxon monarchy was no more, all customs and laws, of whatever original, were cast into one common mass, and cemented by those of Norman institution. The whole face of obligation was altered, and the new masters instituted new modes of obedience. The laws were improved; but the taste of the people for polite learning, arts, and philosophy, for more than four hundred years after, were still to continue the same.

CHAP.



C H A P. V.

WILLIAM the CONQUEROR.

NOTHING could exceed the consternation of the English upon the loss of the battle of Hastings; their kings slain, the flower of their nobility cut off, and their whole army dispersed or destroyed. Very little remained, but submission to the victor; and William, sensible of their terrors, was careful not to lose the fruits of victory by delay. Accordingly, after a short refreshment of his army, he set forward on the completion of his design; and sitting down before Dover, took it after a slight resistance, and fortified it with fresh redoubts. He then advanced with quick marches towards London, where his approach spread new confusion. The inhabitants for a time hesitated between their terrors and their loyalty; but, casting their eyes on every side, they saw no person of valour or authority sufficient to support them. Edgar Atheling, was a weak prince, without courage or ambition; their other leaders were either destroyed, or too remote to assist them. The clergy, declared openly
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for a prince, whose arms are blessed by the holy see. Nothing then remained, but to acknowledge those claims which it was not in their power to oppose. As soon, therefore, as William passed the Thames, at Wallingford, Stigand, the primate, made submissions to him in the name of the clergy; and, before he came within sight of the city, all the chief nobility, and Edgar Atheling himself, came into his camp, and declared an intention of yielding to his authority. William was glad of being thus peaceably put in possession of a throne, which several of his predecessors had not gained without repeated victories. He therefore accepted the crown upon the terms that were offered him, which were, that he should govern according to the established customs of the country. Though he had it in his power to dictate his own conditions, he chose to have his election considered rather as a gift from his subjects, than a measure extorted by him. He knew himself to be a conqueror, but was willing to be thought a legal king.

In order to give his invasion all the sanction possible, he was crowned at Westminster by the archbishop of York, and took the oath usual in the times of the Saxon and Danish kings, which was, to defend the church, to observe the laws of the realm, and to govern the people with impartiality. Having thus given all possible satisfaction to the English, his next care was, to reward the many brave adventurers who had followed his fortunes. He first divided the lands of the English
barons

barons who opposed him among the Norman barons; and such as he could neither supply with money nor lands, he appointed to the vacant offices of the state. But, as there were still numbers unprovided for, he quartered them on the rich abbeys, until better means offered. This, was but little resented by the people, who were willing to see their own burthens lightened, by having a part of them laid upon shoulders that were at that time much better able to bear them.

But what gave them umbrage, was, to see him place all power in the hands of his own countrymen. He disarmed the city of London, and other places which were warlike and populous, and quartered Norman soldiers in all those places where he dreaded an insurrection. Having thus secured the government, and, brought the English to an entire submission, he resolved to return to the continent, there to enjoy the congratulation of his ancient subjects. § Having, therefore, no reason to apprehend any disturbance in his absence, he left the regency with his brother Odo, bishop of Bayeux, and William Fitzosborne. To secure himself yet farther, he resolved to carry with him all the English noblemen, from whose power or inclination he could apprehend a revolt; and, pretending to take great pleasure in their conversation, he set sail with his honourable captives for Normandy, where he was received by his paternal subjects with a mixture of admiration and joy. He was soon visited by an ambassador from the king of France, sent to congratulate his success.

William

§ A. D. 1067.

William, naturally fond of splendour, received this embassy with great state and magnificence, while his English courtiers, willing to ingratiate themselves with their new sovereign, endeavoured to outshine each other, and made a display of riches which struck foreigners with astonishment.

† In the mean time, the absence of the Conqueror from England produced fatal effects. His officers being no longer controlled by his justice, thought this a fit opportunity for extortion; while the English, no longer awed by his presence, thought it the happiest occasion for vindicating their freedom. The two governors he had left, took all opportunities of oppressing the people; either desiring to provoke them into rebellion, in order to profit by confiscations, or, in case they submitted tamely to their impositions, to grow rich without slaughter. The inhabitants of Kent, who were more immediately exposed to these outrages, having repeated their remonstrances to no purpose, at length had recourse to Eustace, count of Boulogne, who assisted them in an attack upon the garrison of Dover. But the Normans having repulsed the assailants, took the nephew of count Eustace prisoner. This miscarriage did not deter Edric the Forester, who possessed a considerable part of Salop and Herefordshire, from repelling the depredations of the Normans, and, in his turn, wasting their possessions. But though these open hostilities were not very considerable, the disaffection among
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† A. D. 1067.

plaints, and even insurrections, in different parts of the kingdom; but William, conscious of his power, marched against such as were most formidable, and soon compelled them to implore mercy. In this manner the inhabitants of Exeter and Cornwall excited his resentment and experienced his lenity.

* Yet these insurrections were slight, compared to that in the North, which seemed to threaten the most important consequences. This was excited by the intrigues of Edwin and Morcar, the two most powerful noblemen of the English race, who, joined by Blethim, prince of North-Wales, Malcolm, king of Scotland, and Sweyn, king of Denmark, resolved to make one terrible effort for the recovery of their ancient liberties. But the vigour of William destroyed their projects before they were ripe for execution; for advancing towards them at the head of a powerful army, by forced marches, the two earls were so intimidated, that, instead of opposing, they had recourse to the Conqueror's clemency, by submission. He pardoned them without farther hesitation. A peace which he made with Malcolm, king of Scotland, shortly after, deprived them of all hopes of assistance from without.

Both the English ~~and the~~ were at that time in a most deplorable situation. All the miseries that insolence on one hand, and hatred on the other; that tyranny and treason, suspicion and assassination, could bring upon a people, were united. The Normans committed continual insults upon the English, and these

* A. D. 1068.

these vainly sought redress from their partial masters. Thus, legal punishment being denied, they sought for private vengeance; and a day seldom passed, but the bodies of assassinated Normans were found in the woods and highways. At length, the conquerors themselves began to wish for the tranquility and security of their native country; and several of them, though entrusted with great commands, desired to be dismissed the service. In order to prevent these desertions, which William highly resented, he was obliged to allure others to stay, by the largeness of his bounties. These brought on fresh exactions, and new insurrections were the natural consequence.

|| The inhabitants of Northumberland, impatient of their yoke, attacked the Norman garrison in Durham, and taking advantage of the governor's negligence, put him, with seven hundred of his men, to the sword. The Norman governor of York shared the same fate; and the insurgents, being reinforced by the Danes, and some leaders from Scotland, attacked the castle, which was defended by a garrison of three thousand men. Mallet, its governor, that he might the better provide for its defence, set fire to some houses which lay contiguous; but the fire spreading, the whole city was quickly in flames. This proved the cause of his destruction; for the enraged inhabitants joining in the assault, entered the citadel sword in hand, and cut off the whole garrison without mercy. This gleam of success seemed to spread a general spirit

|| A. D. 1060.

spirit of insurrection. The counties of Somerset, Dorset, Cornwall, and Devon, united in the common cause, and determined to make one great effort for freedom.

William assembled his forces, and led them towards Northumberland, swearing he would not leave a soul alive there. Wherever he appeared, the insurgents either submitted or retired. The Danes were hired to return into Denmark. Waltheoff, who long defended York castle, submitted to the victor's clemency, and was taken into favour. Edric, another nobleman, who commanded the Northumbrians, made his submission, and obtained pardon, while the rest dispersed themselves, and left the Normans undisputed masters of the kingdom. Edgar Atheling, who had been drawn among the rest into this insurrection, sought a retreat in Scotland. There he continued, till by proper solicitation, he was again taken into favour by the king. From that time he remained in England in a private station, content with opulence and security; perhaps as happy, though not so splendid, as if he had succeeded in the career of his ambition.

William now resolved to throw off all appearance of lenity. His first step was, to order the county of Northumberland to be laid waste, the houses to be burned, the instruments of husbandry to be destroyed, and the inhabitants to seek new habitations. By this order, it is said, that above one hundred thousand persons perished, either by the sword or famine, and the country is supposed, even at this day, to bear the marks of its ancient depo-

depopulation. * He next proceeded to confiscate all the estates of the English gentry, and to grant them to his Norman followers. Thus, all the antient and honourable families were reduced to beggary, and the English were entirely excluded from every road either to honour or preferment. They had the cruel mortification to find, that all his power only tended to their depression, and that the scheme of their subjection was attended with every circumstance of insult and indignity. And now all persons whatever throughout the land, were obliged on pain of death, to put out their fires and candles at eight in the evening, on the ringing of the curfew [*couvre feu*] bell.

He was not yet, however, sufficiently arbitrary to change all the laws, for those of his own country. He only made several innovations, and ordered the law-pleas in the several courts to be made in the Norman language. Yet, with all his endeavours to make the French the popular language, the English still gained ground; and what deserves remark, it had adopted much more of the French idiom for two or three reigns before, than during the whole line of the Norman kings succeeding.

The feudal law had been before introduced into England by the Saxons, but this monarch reformed it, according to that of his native dominions. He divided all the lands of England, except the royal demesne, into baronies, and conferred those upon certain military conditions, on the most considerable of his

* A. D. 1070.

followers. These had a power of sharing their grants to inferior tenants, who were denominated knights, or vassals, and who paid their lord the same duty that he paid the sovereign. To the first class of these baronies the English were not admitted; and the few who were permitted still to retain their landed property, were content to be received in the second. The Barons exercised all kinds of jurisdiction within their own manors, and held courts in which they administered justice to their own vassals. This law extended not only to the laity, but also to the bishops and clergy. They had usurped a power, during the Saxon succession, of being governed within themselves; but William restrained them to the exercise of their ecclesiastical power only, and submitted them to the same duties with their fellow-subjects. This they regarded as a grievous imposition; but the king's authority was established by a power that neither the clergy nor the pope could resist. But, to keep the clergy as much as possible in his interests, he appointed none but his own countrymen to church-dignities, and even displaced Stigand, archbishop of Canterbury, upon some frivolous pretences.

While he thus was employed in humbling the clergy, he was no less solicitous to repress many superstitious practices. He abolished trials by *ordeal* and *camp-fight*: the ordeal trial, which had been originally of pagan institution, and was still held in veneration by the Saxon christians, was either by fire or water. It was used in criminal cases, where the suspicions were strong, but the proofs not evident.

evident. In that of fire, the person accused was brought into an open plain, and several plough-shares, heated red-hot, were placed at unequal intervals before him; over these he was to walk blindfold, and if he escaped unhurt, he was acquitted of the charge. In the trial by water, the person accused was thrown, bound hand and foot, into the water: if he sunk, he was declared innocent; if he swam, he was executed as being miraculously convicted. The trial by camp-fight was performed by single combat, in lists appointed for that purpose, between the accuser and the accused. He that, in such a case, came off victorious, was deemed innocent; and he that was conquered, if he survived his antagonist's resentment in the field was sure to suffer as a malefactor. Both these trials William abolished, as unchristian and unjust; and he reduced all causes to the judgment of twelve men, of a rank nearly equal to that of the prisoner. This method of trial, by jury, was common to the Saxons, as well as the Normans, long before; but it was now confirmed by him, with all the sanction of undisputed authority.

* While William was thus employed, in rewarding his associates, punishing the refractory, and giving laws for the benefit of all, he was threatened with an insurrection in his dominions on the continent, which his presence was necessary to suppress. Unwilling, however, to draw off his Norman forces from England, he carried over an army, composed almost entirely of English; and, by those

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brave

* A. D. 1071.

brave troops, he soon reduced the revolters to submission. Thus we see a whimsical vicissitude of fortune; the inhabitants of Normandy brought over for the conquest of the English, and the English sent back to conquer the Normans. However, William had not much time to enjoy his success; for accounts were quickly brought him from England, that a new conspiracy was formed, supported by the joint efforts of the Normans as well as the English. The adventurers who had followed the fortunes of William into England, had been bred in authority and independence at home, and were ill able to endure the absolute authority which this monarch had for some time assumed. † The discontents were become general among these haughty nobles, and some wanted only his absence to break out into open rebellion. Among the number was Roger, earl of Hereford, son and heir to Fitzosborne, who had been the king's principal favourite. This nobleman had solicited William's consent to permit the marriage of his sister with Ralph de Guader, earl of Norfolk; but he was flatly refused. Nevertheless, he proceeded to solemnize the nuptials with great magnificence, assembling all his friends, and those of Guader upon the occasion. As the parents of the new married couple were well acquainted with the character of William, whose resentment they had every reason to dread, they took the opportunity, while the company was heated with wine, to introduce that as a subject of conversation. They inveighed
against

† A. D. 1073.

against the severity of his government; they affected to commiserate the English, whom he had reduced to beggary; and aggravated the defects in his disposition, which they represented as haughty and unforgiving. The guests were ready at any time to concur in their complaints; but now, warmed by the jollity of the entertainment, they put no bounds to their zeal. They unanimously entered into a conspiracy to shake off his yoke; and earl Waltheoff himself, whom we have already seen pardoned upon a former insurrection, was among the foremost on this occasion. But it was not without the greatest anxiety, that he reflected in his cooler intervals upon an engagement made in the ardour of intoxication. He confessed the whole conspiracy to Lanfranc, who exhorted him, by all means to reveal it to the king; which he did. William coolly thanked him, but secretly resolved to punish him.

During this interval, the conspirators being informed that Waltheoff was gone to Normandy, concluded that their designs were betrayed, and flew to arms before their schemes were ripe for execution. The earl of Hereford was checked by Walter de Lacy, a great Baron in the king's interest. The earl of Norfolk was defeated by Odo, the king's brother; and the prisoners who were taken had each the right foot cut off. || The earl himself retired to Denmark; so that William, upon his arrival in England, found that nothing remained for him to do, but to punish the criminals, which was performed

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with

|| A. D. 1074.

with unusual severity. Many of the rebels were hanged, some had their eyes put out, and others their hands cut off. The unfortunate Waltheoff, notwithstanding his early confession, found no mercy. He was rich, and he was an Englishman, two faults that aggravated his guilt; he was accordingly † tried, condemned, and executed. Having thus re-established the peace of his government, and extinguished the last embers of rebellion with blood, William returned once more to the continent, in order to pursue Guader, who, escaping from England, had taken refuge with the count of Bretagne. Finding him however too powerfully protected by that prince, instead of prosecuting his vengeance, he wisely came to a treaty with the count, in which Guader was included.

† William, having thus secured the peace of his dominions, now expected rest from his labours; and finding none either willing or able to oppose him, he hoped that the end of his reign would be marked with prosperity and peace. But such is the blindness of human hope, that he found enemies where he least expected them, and such too as served to embitter all the latter part of his life. His last troubles were excited by his own children, from the opposing of whom he could expect neither glory nor gain. He had four sons, Robert, Richard, William, and Henry, besides several daughters. Robert, his eldest son, was a prince who inherited all the bravery of his family, but was rather bold than prudent. Earnest after fame, and impatient that his father should stand in the way,

† A. D. 1075. † A. D. 1076.

way, he aspired at independence. He had formerly been promised by his father the government of Maine, a province of France, which had submitted to William, and was also declared successor to the dukedom of Normandy. However, when he came to demand the execution of these engagements, he received an absolute denial; the king shrewdly observing, that it was not his custom to throw off his cloaths till he went to bed. Robert openly declared his resentment, and was often heard to express his jealousy of his two surviving brothers, William and Henry, for Richard was killed, in hunting, by a stag. These, by greater assiduity, had wrought upon the affections of the king, and consequently were the more obnoxious to Robert. A mind, so well prepared for resentment, soon found, or made a cause for an open rupture. The princes were one day in sport together, and, in the idle petulance of play, took it in their head to throw water upon their elder brother as he passed through the court. Robert, quickly turned this idle frolic into a studied indignity; and having these jealousies farther enflamed by one of his favourites, drew his sword, and ran up stairs to take revenge. The whole castle was quickly filled with tumult, and it was not without some difficulty, that the king himself was able to appease it. But he could not allay the animosity, which from that moment, prevailed in his family. Robert, attended by several of his confederates, withdrew to Rouen that very night, hoping to surprize the castle; but his design was defeated by the governor.

† The flame being thus kindled, the popular character of the prince, and a sympathy of manners, engaged all the young nobility of Normandy and Maine, as well as of Anjou and Brittany, to espouse his quarrel; even his mother, supported him by secret remittances, and aided him in this obstinate resistance. This unnatural contest continued for several years to enflame the Norman state; and William was at last obliged to have recourse to England for supporting his authority against his son. Accordingly, drawing an army of Englishmen together, he led them over into Normandy, where he soon compelled Robert and his adherents to quit the field, and he was quickly reinstated in all his dominions. As for Robert, being no longer able to resist his father, he was obliged to take shelter in the castle of Gerberoy, which the king of France had provided for him, where he was shortly after besieged by his father. As the garrison was strong, and conscious of guilt, they made a gallant defence; and many were the skirmishes that were fought under its walls. In one of these, the king and his son being both concealed by their helmets, attacked each other with mutual fury. A fierce and dreadful combat ensued, till at last the young prince wounded his father in the arm, and threw him from his horse. The next blow would, in all probability, have put an end to the king's life, had not he cried out. Robert immediately recollected his father's voice, and stung with a consciousness of his crime, he leaped from his horse, and raised the fallen monarch

† A. D. 1076.

monarch from the ground. He then prostrated himself in his presence, and craved pardon for his offences, promising, for the future, a strict adherence to his duty. The resentment harboured by the king was not so easily appeased. Instead of pardoning his son, he gave him his malediction, and departed for his own camp on Robert's horse, which the prince had assisted him to mount. However, the conduct of the son served, after some recollection to appease the Father. § As soon as William was returned to Rouen, he became reconciled to Robert, and carried him with him into England, where he was successfully employed in retaliating an invasion of Malcolm king of Scotland.

† William being thus freed from foreign and domestic enemies, now had leisure for the duties of peace. For this purpose the Doom-day Book was compiled by his order, which contains a general survey of all the lands in the kingdom; their extent in each district; their proprietors, tenures, value, the quantity of meadow, pasture, wood, and arable land, which they contained; and in some counties, the number of tenants, cottagers, and people of all denominations, who lived upon them. This detail enabled him to regulate the taxations in such a manner, that all the inhabitants bore their duties in proportion to their abilities.

He was no less careful of the methods of saving money, than of accumulation. He reserved a very ample revenue for the crown; and, in the general distribution of land among

F 5.

his

§ A. D. 1080. † A. D. 1081..

his followers, he kept possession of no less than fourteen hundred manors in different parts of the country. Such was his income, that it is justly said to have exceeded that of any English prince either before or since his time. No king of England was ever so opulent; none so able to support the magnificence of a court; none had so many places of trust and profit to bestow; and none, consequently, had his commands attended with such implicit obedience.

There was one pleasure to which William, as well as all the Normans and ancient Saxons, was addicted, which was hunting. To indulge this in its utmost extent, he depopulated the county of Hampshire for thirty miles, destroying with thirty-six churches, all the villages, and making the wretched out-casts no compensation for such an injury. In the time of the Saxon kings, all noblemen without distinction had a right to hunt in the royal forests; but William appropriated all these, and published severe laws to prohibit his subjects from encroaching on this part of his prerogative. The killing of a deer, a boar, or even an hare, was punished with the loss of the delinquent's eyes; at a time, when the killing of a man might be atoned for by paying a moderate fine.

As the king's wealth and power were so great, it may be easily supposed, that the riches of his ministers were in proportion. Those of his brother Odo, bishop of Bayeux, were so great, that he resolved to purchase the Papacy. For this purpose, taking the opportunity

tunity of William's absence he equipped a vessel, on board of which he sent immense treasures, and prepared for his embarkation, but was detained by contrary winds. In the mean time, William having had intimation of his design, resolved to prevent the exportation of so much wealth from his dominions. Accordingly returning from Normandy, where he was then employed, he came into England at the instant his brother was stepping on board, and immediately ordered him to be made a prisoner. His attendants, however, respecting the immunities of the church, scrupled to execute his commands; so that the king himself was obliged with his own hand to seize him. Odo, appealed to the Pope; who, he alledged, was the only person upon earth to try a bishop. To this the king replied, that he did not seize him as bishop of Bayeux, but as earl of Kent; and in that capacity he expected, and would have an account of his administration. He was, therefore sent prisoner into Normandy; and notwithstanding all the threats of Gregory, was detained in custody during the remainder of William's reign.

* William had scarcely put an end to this transaction, when he felt a severe blow in the death of Matilda, his queen; and, as misfortunes generally come together, he received information of a general insurrection in Maine, the nobility of which had been always averse to the Norman government. Upon his arrival on the continent, he found, that the insurgents had been excited by the king of

F 6.

France,

§ A. D. 1082.

France, whose policy consisted in thus lessening the Norman power. William's displeasure was not a little encreased, by the account he received of some railleries which that monarch had thrown out against him. It seems, that William, who was become corpulent, had been detained in bed some time by sickness; and Philip was heard to say, that he only lay in of a big belly. This so provoked the English monarch, that he sent him word; he would soon be up, and would at his churching present such a number of tapers, as would set the kingdom of France in a flame.

In order to perform this promise, he levied a strong army, and entering the isle of France; destroyed and burned all the houses without opposition. He took the town of Mante, which he reduced to ashes. Before the flames were extinguished he entered the town. But his horse chancing to place his fore-feet on some hot ashes, (remarkable Providence!) plunged so violently, that the rider was thrown forward, and bruised upon the pummel of the saddle to such a degree, that he was obliged to return to Rouen. Finding his illness encrease, and being sensible of the approach of death, he began to turn his eyes to a future state. He was now struck with remorse for all his cruelties; he endeavoured to atone for his former offences, by large presents to churches and monasteries, and by giving liberty to many prisoners whom he unjustly detained. He was even prevailed on, though not without reluctance, to consent, with his dying breath, to the deliverance of his brother Odo. He then bequeathed Normandy
and.

and Le Maine to his eldest son Robert, to Henry, he left five thousand pounds, and his mother's jointure, without the smallest territory; and though he would not pretend to establish the succession of the crown of England, to which he now began to perceive he had no title, he expressed his wish that it might devolve to his favourite son William, whom he immediately dispatched with letters to the archbishop of Canterbury. Having thus regulated his temporal affairs, he was conveyed in a litter to a little village near Rouen, where he might settle the concerns of his soul without interruption. It was there that he died, in the sixty-first year of his age, after having reigned fifty-two in Normandy, and twenty-one in England. His principal officers abandoned him, before he expired, and his servants plundered whatever came in their way. His body was interred in the church at Caen, which he himself had founded; but his interment was attended with a remarkable circumstance. As the body was carrying to the grave, the prelates and priests attending with the most awful silence, a man, who stood upon an eminence, was heard to cry out with a loud voice, and to forbid the interment of the body, in a spot that had been unjustly seized by the conqueror. That very place, cried the man, is the area of my father's house; and I now summon the departed soul before the divine tribunal to do me justice, and to atone for that oppression. The bishops and attendants were struck; they enquired into the truth of his charge, and finding it just, agreed to satisfy him for the damages he had sustained.

William

William was a prince of great courage and capacity : but ambitious, vain, politic, cruel, vindictive, covetous, and rapacious. Though sudden and impetuous in his enterprizes, he was cool, deliberate, and indefatigable in times of danger. He is said, by the Norman writers, to be above eight feet high, his body strong built, and well proportioned, and his strength such, that none of his courtiers could draw his bow. He talked little; he was seldom affable to any, except to Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury; with him he was ever meek and gentle; with all others, stern and austere. Though he rendered himself formidable to all, and odious to many, yet he had policy sufficient to transmit his power to his posterity, and the throne is still occupied by his descendants.



CHAP.

C H A P. VI.

WILLIAM RUFUS. †

WILLIAM, surnamed RUFUS, from the colour of his hair, had no sooner received the late king's letter to Lanfranc, in his favour, than he hastened to take measures for securing himself on the throne. Arriving, therefore, before the news of William's death had reached England, his first care was, to take possession of the treasure left by the king at Winchester, which amounted to the sum of sixty thousand pounds. He then addressed the primate, who had always considered him with an eye of peculiar affection; and who instantly proceeded to his coronation. At the same time Robert, who had been appointed successor to Normandy, took peaceable possession of that government; where his person was loved, and his accession long desired.

In the beginning of William the Second's reign, the English began to think they had hitherto mistaken this prince's character, who had appeared to them rude and brutal. He seemed

† A. D. 1087.

seemed to pay the utmost regard to the councils of Lanfranc, the primate, which were mild and gentle, and constantly calculated for the benefit of the nation. Nevertheless, the Norman barons, imagined that he kept his disposition under an unnatural restraint, and that he only waited an opportunity for throwing off the mask when his power should be established. They eagerly desired Robert to reign over them. Robert was open, generous, and humane; he carried his facility to an excess, as he could scarcely give any of his adherents the mortification of a refusal. But this was a quality no way disagreeable to those who expected to build on the easy pliancy of his temper. A powerful conspiracy was therefore carried on against William; and Odo, the late king's brother, undertook to conduct it to maturity.

William, sensible of the danger, endeavoured to gain the affections of the native English, whom he prevailed upon, by promises of good treatment, and preference in the distribution of his favours, to espouse his interests. He was soon therefore in the field; and, at the head of a numerous army, shewed himself in readiness to oppose all who should dispute his pretensions. In the mean time, Odo had written to Robert an account of the conspiracy in his favour, urging him to use dispatch, and exciting him, by the greatness of the danger, and the splendor of the reward. Robert gave him assurance of speedy assistance; but his indolence was not to be excited by distant expectations. Instead of employing his money in

in levies, to support his friends in England, he squandered it away in idle expences, till the opportunity was lost; while William exerted himself with incredible activity, to dissipate the confederacy before he could arrive. Nor was this difficult to effect: the conspirators had, in consequence of Robert's assurances, taken possession of some fortresses; but the appearance of the king soon reduced them to implore for mercy. He granted them their lives, but confiscated all their estates, and banished them the kingdom.

* William, thus fixed in the peaceable possession of the kingdom, shewed the first instance of his perverse inclinations, in his ingratitude to the English, who had secured him on the throne. The death of Lanfranc, which followed shortly after, took off all restraint, and his mind now appeared in its natural deformity. He ordered a new survey to be taken of all the lands of the kingdom; and wherever he found them undervalued in the Doom's-day book, he raised the proportion of taxes accordingly. Even the privileges of the church, he little regarded: he seized the vacant bishopricks, and openly put to sale several abbies. † Soon after, he appeared in Normandy, at the head of a numerous army; but the nobility, on both sides, strongly connected by interest and alliances, brought on an accommodation. Among other articles of this treaty, it was agreed, that, in case either of the brothers should die without issue, the survivor should inherit all his dominions. It was in vain that Henry, the other brother, remon-

* A. D. 1089 † A. D. 1090.

remonstrated against this act of injustice; it was in vain that he took arms, and defended a little fortress, on the coast of Normandy, for some time, against their united assaults. He was at last obliged to surrender; and, being despoiled of even the small patrimony that was left him, he wandered about for some years, with a few attendants, and was often reduced to great poverty.

It was in besieging this fortress, that a circumstance or two have been related, which serve to mark the character of the two brothers. As William was taking the air one day on horseback, at some distance from the camp, he perceived two horsemen riding out from the castle, who soon came up and attacked him. In the very first encounter, the king's horse being killed, lay upon him, in such a manner, that he could not disengage himself. His antagonist, while he remained in this situation, lifted up his arm to dispatch him; when William exclaimed, in a menacing tone, "Hold, villain, I am the king of England." The two soldiers were immediately seized with veneration; and, helping him up, accommodated him with one of their horses. William was not ungrateful for this service; he mounted the horse, and ordering the soldier to follow, took him into his service. Soon after, Robert had an occasion to show still greater generosity; for, hearing that the garrison was in great distress for want of water, he not only ordered that Henry should be permitted to supply himself, but also sent him some pipes of wine for his own table. Rufus did not approve of this ill-timed generosity; but Robert ans-

answered his remonstrances by saying, "Shall we suffer our brother to die with thirst! Where shall we find another when he is gone?"

* The next year Malcolm invaded Northumberland, and besieged Alnwick, till it was reduced to great extremity. Morel, the Governor, then desired a capitulation: And on pretence of presenting the keys to Malcolm on the point of a spear, ran it into his eye, and killed him on the spot; on which his whole army fled.

|| A new breach was made some time after between the brothers, in which Rufus found means to encroach still further upon Robert's possessions. An incursion from the Welsh filled the country of England with alarm; but they were quickly repelled. † A conspiracy of the Norman barons in England followed; but their schemes were frustrated. Robert Mowbray, earl of Northumberland, who was at the head of this plot, was thrown into prison, where he died, after thirty years confinement. The count Eu, another conspirator, denying the charge, fought with his acquser, in presence of the court, at Windsor, and being worsted in the combat, was condemned to be castrated, and to have his eyes put out. Every conspiracy, thus detected, served to enrich the king, who took care to apply to his own use those treasures that had been amassed for the purpose of dethroning him.

But the memory of these transient broils, was now totally eclipsed by one of the most noted enterprizes that ever excited the attention of mankind. I mean the Crusades, which were

* A. D. 1092. || A. D. 1093. † A. D. 1094.

were now first projected. Peter the Hermit, a native of Amiens, in Picardy, was a man of great zeal, courage, and piety. He had made a pilgrimage to the holy sepulchre at Jerusalem, and beheld the manner in which the Christians were there treated by the Infidels. Upon his return, he entertained the design of restoring to the Christians the land where their religion was first propagated. He first proposed his views to Martin II. at that time pope, who permitted, rather than assisted, this bold enthusiast. § Peter, therefore, warmed with a zeal that knew no bounds, began to excite the princes of Christendom to the recovery of the Holy-land. Bare-headed, and bare-footed, he travelled from court to court, preaching as he went, and inflaming the zeal of every rank of people. The fame of this design being thus diffused, prelates, nobles, and princes, concurred in seconding it; and, at a council held at Clermont, where the pope himself exhorted to the undertaking, the whole assembly cried out with one voice, *It is the will of God.* From that time, nothing was seen but an universal migration of the western nations into the east; men of all ranks flew to arms; and bore the sign of the cross upon their right shoulder, as a mark of their devotion to the cause. In the midst of this universal ardour, men were not entirely forgetful of their temporal interests; for some, hoping a more magnificent settlement in the soft regions of Asia, sold their European property for whatever they could obtain, contented with receiving any thing for what they were predetermined.

§ A. D. 1095.

terminated to relinquish. Among the princes who felt this general spirit of enterprize, was Robert, duke of Normandy. The Crusade was entirely adapted to his inclinations, and his circumstances; he was brave, zealous, covetous of glory, harrassed by insurrections, and, what was more than all, fond of change. In order to supply money to defray the charges of so expensive an undertaking, he offered to mortgage his dukedom of Normandy to his brother Rufus, for a stipulated sum of money. This sum, which was no greater than ten thousand marks, was readily promised by Rufus. He was no way solicitous about raising the money, as he knew the riches of his clergy. From them, therefore, he forced the whole; and thus equipping his brother for his romantic expedition, he, more wisely, and safely, took peaceable possession of his dukedom at home.

† In this manner was Normandy once more united to England; and from this union, afterwards, arose those numerous wars with France, which, for whole centuries continued to depopulate both nations, without encreasing the power of either. However, Rufus was not a little pleased with this acquisition; he made a voyage to his new dominion, and took possession of it, according to agreement. But, though Maine and Normandy greatly encreased the king's territories, they added but little to his real power, as his new subjects were composed of men of independent spirits, more ready to dispute than obey his commands. Many were the revolts and insurrections which

† A. D. 1096.

which he was obliged to quell in person; and no sooner was one conspiracy suppressed, than another arose.

In the midst of these foreign troubles, he found himself involved in a disagreeable quarrel with Anselm, archbishop of Canterbury, a prelate of an haughty disposition, and extremely tenacious of the rights of the church. There was at that time a schism in the church, between Urban and Clement, who both pretended to the papacy; and Anselm, who had already acknowledged Urban, was determined without the king's consent, to introduce his authority into England. William, who, imitating his father's example, had prohibited his subjects from recognizing any pope whom he had not previously approved, was enraged at Anselm's pretensions. A synod was summoned at Rockingham, for deposing the prelate; but, instead of obeying the king, the members of it declared, that none but the pope could inflict a censure on their primate. To this was soon added a fresh offence. Anselm being required to furnish his quota of soldiers, for an expedition against the Welsh, reluctantly complied; but he sent them so ill equipped, that Rufus threatened him with a prosecution. As the resentments on both sides were encreased, their mutual demands were raised in proportion, till at length their anger proceeded to recrimination; and Anselm, finding it dangerous to remain in the kingdom, desired permission to retire to Rome. This request the king very readily complied with; but he ordered all his temporalities to be confiscated, and actually kept possession of them the remaining part of his life.

This

This open infringement of what were then considered as rights of the church, served to unite the pope, as well as all the ecclesiastics of his own dominions, against him. Urban even menaced him with excommunication; but he was too earnestly engaged in the crusade, to attend to any other business. Rufus, therefore, little regarded those censures, which he found were ineffectual. About this time he repaired London-bridge, and built Westminster-hall, 270 feet long and 74 broad. The next year (1099) a great inundation on the coast of Kent, covered the lands formerly belonging to Earl Godwin, and made the Godwin-sands. In the same year, Jerusalem was taken by the Crusaders, and forty thousand Saracens put to the sword.

† He proceeded, only intent upon extending his dominions, either by purchase or conquest. The earl of Poitiers and Guienne, enflamed with a desire of going upon the crusade, had gathered an immense multitude for that expedition, but wanted money to forward his preparations. He had recourse, therefore to Rufus; and offered to mortgage all his dominions. The king accepted this offer with his usual avidity; and had prepared a fleet, and an army, in order to take possession of the rich provinces consigned to his trust. But a providential event put an end to all his ambitious projects. His favourite amusement was hunting. The New Forest was generally the scene of his sport; and there he usually spent those hours which were not employed in business of a more serious nature. One day, as he

† A. D. 1100.

he was mounting his horse, in order to take his customary amusement, he was stopped by a monk, who warned him, from some dream he had the night before, to abstain from that day's diversion. Rufus, smiling at his superstition, ordered him to be paid for his zeal, but desired him to have more favourable dreams for the future. Thus, setting forward he began the chase, attended by Sir Walter Tyrrel, a French knight, famous for archery. Towards sun-set, they found themselves separated from the rest of their retinue; and the king dismounted, either through fatigue, or in expectation of a fresh horse. Just at that instant, a stag bounded out before him; and Rufus, drawing his bow, wounded the animal, yet not so mortally but that it fled; while he followed, in hopes of seeing it fall. As the setting sun beamed in his face, he held up his hand before his eyes, and stood in that posture; when Tyrrel, who had been engaged in the same pursuit, let fly an arrow, which glancing from a tree, struck the king to the heart. He dropt dead instantly; while the innocent author of his death, put spurs to his horse, hastened to the sea shore, embarked for France, and joined the crusade that was then setting out for Jerusalem. William's body, being found by some countrymen passing through the forest, was laid across an horse, and carried to Winchester, where it was, next day, interred in the cathedral, without ceremony, or any marks of respect. Few lamented his fate, and none of the courtiers attended his funeral. His tragical death, in the very place
 where

where his brother and nephew perished, gave occasion for many reflections. It was publicly said, that God thus took vengeance on the Conqueror's family, for his laying waste the country in so prodigious a manner, to make the New Forest.

It requires no great art to draw the character of a prince, whose vices were compensated by scarce one virtue. Rufus was a perfidious, encroaching, dangerous neighbour, an unkind and ungenerous relation, a rapacious, and yet a prodigal prince. However, there remain to this day, some monuments of his public spirit; the Tower, Westminster-Hall, and London-bridge, are evidences that the treasures of government were not all expended in vain. William Rufus was slain in the thirteenth year of his reign, and the forty-fourth of his age. As he never was married, the succession devolved upon Robert, his elder brother, but he was too distant to assert his pretensions.

VOL. I.

G

CHAP.





C H A P. VI.

HENRY I. surnamed BEAUCLEERC.

TH E R E were now two competitors for the crown; Robert, who had engaged in the holy war, and Henry, the youngest brother, who continued at home. Had Robert been in Normandy when William died, there is no doubt but he would have been elected. After the taking of Jerusalem, he began to think of returning home. But, instead of taking the direct road to England, he passed through Italy, where he became acquainted with Sibylla, daughter of count Conversana, a lady of celebrated beauty; and, marrying her, he lavished away, in her company, those hours which should have been employed in the recovery of his kingdom.

In the mean time, Henry, hastening to Winchester, resolved to secure the royal treasure, which he knew to be the best assistant in seconding his aims. William de Breteuil, who had the care of the treasury, informed of the king's death, opposed himself boldly to Henry's pretensions. The dispute was on the point of producing blood-shed, when several
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of Henry's partizans arriving, compelled Breteuil to surrender the treasure, with a part of which, they hoped to be rewarded for their service. Being possessed of this, without losing time, he hastened to London, where he procured himself to be proclaimed king. The barons, as well as the people, acquiesced in a claim which they were unprovided to resist.

Henry easily foresaw, that to secure his title, his subjects were to be indulged. His first care, therefore, was to make several concessions in their favour. He granted them a charter, establishing the churches in possession of all their immunities, abolishing those excessive fines which used to be exacted from heirs; granting his barons, and military tenants, the power of bequeathing their money by will, remitting all debts due to the crown; offering a pardon for all former offences, and promising to confirm and observe all the laws of Edward the Confessor.

Still farther to ingratiate himself with the people, Henry expelled from court all the ministers of his brother's arbitrary power. He stripped Ralph Flambard, his brother's principal favourite, of his dignity, and had him confined to the Tower. But what gave him the greatest share of popularity, was his recalling Anselm, archbishop of Canterbury, who had been banished during the last reign, to his former dignity. One thing only remained to confirm his claims without danger of a rival. The English still remembered their Saxon monarchs with gratitude, and beheld them excluded the throne with regret.

There remained some of the descendants of that favourite line; and, among others, Matilda, the niece of Edgar Atheling; who, having declined all pretensions to royalty, was bred up in a convent, and had actually taken the veil. Upon her Henry first fixed his eyes as a proper consort, by whose means, the long breach between the Saxon and Norman interests would be united. It only remained to get over the scruple of her being a nun; but this a council, devoted to his interests, readily admitted; and Matilda being pronounced free to marry, the nuptials were celebrated with great solemnity.

‡ It was at this juncture, that Robert returned from abroad, and after taking possession of his native dominions, laid claim to the crown of England. But he was now, as in all his former attempts, too late. However, as he was a man of undaunted resolution, he seemed resolved to dispute his pretensions to the last; and the great fame he had acquired in the East, did not a little forward his endeavours. He was also excited to these resolutions by Flambar, who had escaped from the Tower; together with several others, as well of the Norman as the English nobility. Even the seamen were affected with the popularity of his name, and revolted to him with the greatest part of a fleet that had been equipped to oppose his passage. Henry, who outwardly pretended to slight all these preparations, yet knew his subjects fluctuated between him and his brother. In this emergency, he had recourse to the bigotry of the people. He paid

‡ A. D. 1101.

paid diligent court to Anselm; and this prelate, in return, employed all his credit in securing him on the throne. He rode through the ranks of the army, recommending to the soldiery the defence of their king, and promising to see their valour rewarded. Thus the people were retained in their allegiance, and the army marched cheerfully forward to meet Robert and his forces, which were landed at Portsmouth. When the two armies came in sight, they both seemed equally unwilling to hazard a battle; and their leaders, who saw that much more would be lost than gained by such a conflict, made proposals for an accommodation. This, after the removal of a few obstacles, was agreed to; and it was stipulated, that Robert, upon the payment of a certain sum, should resign his pretensions to England; and that if either of the princes died without issue, the other should succeed to his dominions. This treaty being ratified, the armies on each side were disbanded; and Robert having lived two months in the utmost harmony with his brother, returned in peace to his own dominions.

|| But it was not in the power of formal treaties to bind up Henry's resentment. He soon shewed his resolution to punish the heads of the party which had lately opposed him; and this he did, under different pretexts. The earl of Shrewsbury, Arnulf de Montgomery, and Roger, earl of Lancaster, were banished the kingdom, with the confiscation of their estates. Robert de Pontefract, Robert de Mallet, William de Warene, and the earl of

G 3

Cornwall

|| A. D. 1102.

Cornwall, were treated with equal severity; * so that Robert, finding his friends oppressed, came over to England to intercede in their behalf. Henry received him very coolly, and assembled a council to deliberate in what manner he should be treated; so that Robert finding his own liberty to be in danger, was glad to ask permission to return; which, however, was not granted him, till he consented to give up his pension.

But Robert's affairs every day began to wear a worse appearance. His servants pillaged him without compunction; and he is described as lying whole days a-bed for want of cloaths, of which they had robbed him. His subjects were treated still more deplorably, for being under the command of petty tyrants, who plundered them without mercy, the whole country was become a scene of violence and depredation. It was in this miserable exigence, that the Normans at length had recourse to Henry, from whose wise administration of his own dominions, they expected a similitude of prosperity, should he take the reins of theirs. Henry very readily promised to redress their grievances. † The year ensuing therefore, he landed in Normandy with a strong army, took some of the principal towns; and shewed, by the rapidity of his progress, that he meditated the entire conquest of the country.

Robert, who had already mortgaged, or given away the greatest part of his demesne, spent his time in the most indolent amusements, and looked upon the progress of Henry with

* A. D. 1103. † A. D. 1105.

with an eye of perfect indifference. But being at last roused from his lethargy, he took the strange resolution of appealing, in person, to Henry's natural affections, which this brave, imprudent man, estimated by the emotions of his own heart. Henry received him, not only with coolness, but contempt; and soon taught him, that no virtues will gain that man esteem who has forfeited his pretensions to prudence. Robert, thus treated with indignity, quitted his brother in a transport of rage; expressing an ardent purpose of revenge.

Robert was resolved to shew himself formidable; even in the distressed state of his circumstances. Possessed with high ideas of chivalry, he was willing to retrieve his affairs by valour, which he had lost by indolence. He raised an army, and approached his brother's camp, with a view of finishing, by a decisive battle, the quarrel between them. While the two armies were yet in sight of each other, some of the clergy employed their mediation; but as Henry insisted upon Robert's renouncing the government of his dominions and one half of the revenue, all accommodation was rejected with disdain, and both sides prepared for battle. Robert was now entered on that scene of action in which he chiefly gloried. He animated his little army by his example, and led them to the encounter with that spirit which had made the infidels tremble. There was no withstanding his first shock; that quarter of the English army where he made the impression gave way, and he was nearly on the point of gaining a complete

plete victory. But it was different on that quarter where his general commanded; he was put to flight by one of the king's generals, who also advancing himself with a fresh body of horse, his whole army rallied; while Robert's forces, exhausted and broken, gave ground on every side, in spite of all his efforts and personal valour. But though he saw his army defeated, he refused to turn his back upon an enemy that he still disdained. He was taken prisoner, with near ten thousand of his men, and all the considerable barons who had adhered to him. * This victory was followed by the final reduction of Normandy, while Henry returned in triumph to England, leading with him his captive brother, who, after a life of bravery and generosity, now found himself not only deprived of his patrimony and his friends, but also of his freedom. Henry detained him a prisoner during the remainder of his life, which was no less than twenty-eight years; and he died in the castle of Cardiff, in Glamorgan-shire.

The first step Henry took, after his return to England, was to reform some abuses which had crept in among his courtiers; for, as they were allowed by the feudal law to live upon the king's tenants whenever he travelled, they, under colour of this, committed all manner of ravages with impunity. † To remedy this disorder, he published an edict, punishing with the loss of sight all such as should commit any depredations in the places through which they passed. Some disputes also concerning

* A. D. 1106. † A. D. 1108

cerning ecclesiastical affairs, were compromised and adjusted. Henry was contented to resign his right of granting ecclesiastical investitures, but was allowed to receive homage from his bishops for all their temporal properties and privileges. The marriage of priests also was prohibited, and laymen were not allowed to marry within the seventh degree of affinity.

These regulations served to give employment to Henry in his peaceful intervals; but the apprehensions which he had from the dissatisfaction of his Norman subjects, and his fears for the succession, gave him too much business to permit any long relaxation. His principal concern was, to prevent his nephew, William, the son of Robert, from succeeding to the crown, in prejudice of William, his own son. His nephew was but six years of age, when he committed him to the care of Helie de St. Saen; and this nobleman discharged his trust in his education with a degree of fidelity uncommon at that barbarous period. Finding that Henry was desirous of recovering possession of his pupil's person, he withdrew, and carried him to the court of Fulk, count of Anjou, who gave him protection. This noble youth, wandering from court to court, evaded all the arts of his powerful uncle, who was not remiss in trying every method of seizing him, either by treaty or intimidation. † In this struggle, Lewis the king of France, took the young adventurer's part, and endeavoured to interest the pope in his quarrel. Failing in this, he

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† A.D. 1109.

endeavoured to gain, by force of arms, what his negotiations could not obtain. A war ensued between him and Henry, in which many battles were fought, but attended with no decisive consequences. In one of these, which was fought at Noyon, a city that Lewis had an intention to surprize, the valour both of the nephew and the uncle, were not a little conspicuous. This young man, who inherited all his father's bravery, charged the van of the English army with such impetuosity, that it fell back upon the main body, commanded by the king in person, whose utmost efforts were unequal to the attack. Still, however, exerting all his endeavours to stem the torrent of the enemy that was pouring down upon him, a Norman knight, whose name was William Crispin, discharged at his head two such furious strokes of a sabre, that his helmet was cut through, and his head severely wounded. At the sight of his own blood, which rushed down his visage, he was animated to a double exertion of his strength, and retorted the blow with such force, that his antagonist was brought to the ground, and taken prisoner. This decided the victory in favour of the English, who pursued the French with great slaughter; and it also served to bring on an accommodation soon after, in which the interests of his nephew were entirely neglected. § From this period, till the time of that brave youth's death, which happened about eight years after, he appears to have been employed in ineffectual struggles to gain those dominions to which he had the most just claim.

All

§ A. D. 1119.

All things now seemed to smile upon Henry, and promise a long succession of felicity. He was in peaceable possession of two powerful states, and had a son who was acknowledged undisputed heir, arrived at his eighteenth year, whom he loved most tenderly. His daughter, Matilda, was also married to the emperor Henry V. of Germany, having been sent to that court while but eight years old, for her education. All his prospects, however, were at once clouded by misfortunes which tinged his remaining years with misery. || The king, from the facility with which he usurped the crown, dreading that his family might be subverted with the same ease, took care to have his son recognized as his successor by the states of England, and carried him over to Normandy to receive the homage of the barons of that duchy.

* After performing this, Henry returning triumphantly to England, brought with him a numerous retinue of the chief nobility. In one of the vessels of the fleet, his son, and several young noblemen, the companions of his pleasures, went together. The king set sail from Barfleur, and was soon carried by a fair wind out of sight of land. The prince was detained by some accident; and his sailors, as well as their captain Fitz Stephen, having spent the interval in drinking, became so disordered, that they ran the ship upon a rock, and immediately it was dashed to pieces. The prince was put into the boat, and might have escaped, had he not been called back by the cries of Maude, his natural

G. 6.

sister.

† A. D. 1115. * A. D. 1120.

sister. He was at first conveyed out of danger himself, but could not leave her to perish. He, therefore, prevailed upon the sailors to row back and take her in. The approach of the boat, giving several others who had been left upon the wreck, the hopes of saving their lives, numbers leaped in, and the whole went to the bottom. Above an hundred and forty young noblemen of England and Normandy, were lost on this occasion. A butcher of Rouen was the only person who escaped; he clung to the mast, and was taken up the next morning by some fishermen. Fitz Stephen, the captain, while the butcher was thus buffeting the waves for his life, swam up to him, and enquired if the prince was yet living. When, being told, that he had perished; then, I will not out-live him, said the captain, and immediately sunk to the bottom. The shrieks of these unfortunate people were heard from the shore, and the noise even reached the king's ship. Henry entertained hopes for three days, that his son had put into some distant port of England; but when certain intelligence of the calamity was brought him, he fainted away, and was never seen to smile from that moment to the day of his death.

The rest of this prince's life seems a mere blank, his restless desires having now nothing left worth toiling for. † His daughter, Matilda, however, becoming a widow by the death of the emperor, he married her a second time to Geoffry Plantagenet, eldest son of the count of Anjou.

† A. D. 1126.

Anjou, and endeavoured to ensure her accession, by obliging his barons to recognize her as the heir of all his dominions. Some time after, that princess was delivered of a son, who received the name of Henry ; and the king, farther to ensure her succession, caused all the nobility of England and Normandy to renew their former oaths of allegiance. The barons of these times were ready enough to swear whatever the monarch commanded ; but, it seems, they observed it no longer than while they were compelled to obey. Henry did not long survive. He was seized with a sudden illness at St. Denis, a little town in Normandy. He † died in the sixty-seventh year of his age, and the thirty-fifth of his reign, leaving, by will, his daughter Matilda heiress of all his dominions. He built a palace at Woodstock, to which he added a park, said to be the first park in England.

If we consider Henry's character impartially, we shall find more to admire than to love in it. It cannot be doubted, but that he was a wise and valiant prince ; and yet our hearts revolt against his success, and follow the unfortunate Robert even to his captivity. Henry's person was manly, his countenance engaging, his eye clear, serene, and penetrating. By his great progress in literature, he had acquired the name of Beau Clerc, or the scholar ; and such was the force of his eloquence, that, after a conference with him, the pope is said to have given him the preference to all the other princes of Europe. He was much addicted to women, and left behind
him

† Dec. 1. 1135.

him a numerous spurious offspring. His justice seemed to approach cruelty; stealing was first made capital in his reign; and coining was punished with death and mutilation. He first granted the city of London a charter and privileges; and, from this first concession, we may date the origin of English liberty, such as we find it at this day.



CHAP. VII.

STEPHEN.

AS every expedient was used during the life of the late king, to fix the succession in his family, he, among others, thought that the aggrandizing his nearest relations would not be an impolitic step. He only dreaded the designs of Robert and his adherents, no way mistrusting any attempts from another quarter. With these views, he was very liberal in heaping favours upon the children of his sister Adela, who had been married to the count of Blois. He thought they

they would be the strongest safe-guard to protect him from the attempts of his brother, or his posterity: in pursuance of this plan, he had, some years before his death, invited Stephen and Henry, the two youngest of his sister's sons, into England, and received them with great honour and esteem. Thinking that he could never do too much to secure their affections, he married Stephen to the daughter and heiress of Eustace, count of Boulogne, who brought him an immense fortune. He conferred on him the great estate forfeited by Robert Mallet in England, and by the earl of Montaigne in Normandy. Nor was Stephen's brother, Henry, without his share in the king's liberalities. He was created abbot of Glastonbury, and bishop of Winchester; so that the two brothers were far the most powerful subjects in the kingdom.

Such great riches, so much power, and the consciousness of abilities, were the first incentives to Stephen's ambition. Placed at no great distance from the throne by birth, and perceiving the success of his uncle's usurpation, he resolved to run the same career. For this purpose, during the king's life-time, he used all his arts to procure popularity. By his bravery, activity, and vigour, he acquired the esteem of the barons; by his generosity and familiar address, the love of the people. No sooner, therefore, was the king known to be dead, than Stephen hastened from Normandy, where he then was, and setting sail for England, landed at Dover. But
the

the citizens, apprized of his intent, shut their gates against him. From thence he went on to Canterbury, where he was treated with like disrespect; but, passing on, he arrived at London, where he was immediately saluted king, by all the lower ranks of the people. Being thus secured of the people, his next step was to gain the clergy; and, for that purpose, his brother, the bishop of Winchester, exerted all his influence among them. The archbishop of Canterbury, as he had taken the oaths of allegiance to Matilda, seemed for a while to stand out; but Hugh Bigod, steward of the household, averring upon oath that the late king had expressed his intentions to make Stephen his heir, the archbishop anointed him without farther scruple. The people acquiesced in his claims from his popularity; the clergy allowed them, being influenced by the intrigues of his brother; and the nobility permitted a king, from the weakness of whose title they might derive power to themselves.

Stephen, in order to secure his throne, passed a charter, granting several privileges to the different orders of the state: to the nobility, a permission to hunt in their own forests; to the clergy, a speedy filling of all vacant benefices; and to the people, a restoration of the laws of Edward the Confessor. To fix himself still more securely, he took possession of the royal treasures at Winchester, and had his title ratified by the pope with a part of the money.

A

A crown thus gained, was to be kept only by repeated concessions. The nobility and the clergy, in proportion as they were indulged in one demand, prepared to find out others. The barons, in return for their submission, required the right of fortifying their castles, nor could the king refuse his consent, as their opposition might be fatal. The clergy imitated the same example; and, in a short time, all England was filled with these independent fortresses, which the noblemen garrisoned with their own vassals, or with mercenary bravos hired from the continent. Nothing could exceed the misery which the kingdom was reduced to, at this terrible period of aristocracy. Unbounded rapine was exercised upon the people for the maintenance of these troops; the private animosities of the nobility were productive of wars in every quarter; the erection of one castle proved the immediate cause of building many more; and the whole country presented a scene of petty tyranny and hostile preparation. It was in vain that a victory, * gained by the king over the Scots at Northallerton, promised to allay the murmurs of the people: their miseries were risen to too great a height. And the prince was obliged to tolerate in others that injustice by which he had himself risen to the throne.

Yet not only real, but imaginary grievances were added, to raise the discontents of the people. The clergy, whose power had been firmly established on the ruins of the
regal

* A. D. 1138.

regal authority, began, in imitation of the lay barons, to build castles, and entertain garrisons, sensible that their sacred pretensions would be more implicitly obeyed, when their temporal power was sufficient to enforce them. Stephen, who now too late perceived the mischiefs attending these multiplied citadels, resolved to begin with destroying those of the clergy, whose profession seemed to be averse to the duties of war. Taking, therefore, the pretence of a fray which had arisen between the retinue of the bishop of Salisbury and that of the earl of Brittany, he seized that prelate, and obliged both him and the bishop of Lincoln to deliver up their castles, which they had lately erected. This the whole body of the clergy considered as a breach of that charter which he had granted; they loudly murmured against his infraction; and even the bishop of Winchester, his brother, resolved to vindicate the privileges of the church. A synod was assembled, in which the disgraced prelates openly inveighed against the king. But he instead of answering their charge in person, sent one of his barons to intimidate his accusers.

It was in this critical situation of Stephen's affairs, that accounts were brought him of Matilda's landing in England, with a resolution to dispossess him, and regain the crown. Matilda, upon the death of the late king, being then in Normandy, found herself totally unable to oppose the rapid progress of her rival. She was not less unfortunate in her continental connections than in those at home.

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The Norman barons, almost unanimously declared for Stephen, and put him in possession of their government; while Geoffry himself, Matilda's husband, was content to resign his pretensions, and to receive a pension from the English king. He had not, however, long acquiesced in this, when he was incited to a renewal of his wife's claims by Robert earl of Gloucester, natural son of the late king, a nobleman who had, from the beginning, opposed the accession of Stephen. This haughty baron, having at length settled with his friends the project of an opposition, retired to the continent, to the court of Matilda, and from thence sent the king a defiance, solemnly renouncing his allegiance. It was not long before he was in a capacity to second his declarations; he landed, together with Matilda, upon the coast of Sussex. The whole of Matilda's retinue, amounted to no more than an hundred and forty knights, who immediately took possession of Arundel castle; but the nature of her claims soon increased the number of her forces. † Mean time Stephen, flew to besiege Arundel, where she had taken refuge. This fortress was too feeble to promise a long defence; and it would have been soon taken, had it not been represented to the king, that, as it was a castle belonging to the queen dowager, it would be an infringement on the respect which was her due. There was a spirit of generosity mixed with the rudeness of the times, that unaccountably prevailed in many transactions; Stephen permitted Matilda to come forth in safety

† A. D. 1139.

safety, and had her conveyed with security to Bristol. It would be tedious to relate the various skirmishes on either side, in pursuance of their respective pretensions; it will suffice to say, that Matilda's forces increased every day, while her antagonist seemed every hour to become more unpopular. The troops Stephen led were, in general, foreign mercenaries, more accustomed to pillage than to conquer. But, in this fluctuation of success, the kingdom was exposed to ruin, which ever side pretended to victory. The castles of the nobility were become receptacles for licensed robbers. The land was left untilled, the instruments of husbandry were destroyed or abandoned, and a terrible famine, the result of general disorder, oppressed at once the spoiled and the spoilers.

† After the misery of numberless undecided conflicts, added to the rest of the country's calamities, a complete victory, gained by the forces of Matilda, promised to terminate their disputes. Stephen had marched his forces to relieve the city of Lincoln; the earl of Gloucester led a body of troops to second the efforts of the besiegers. The two armies engaged within sight of the city, and a dreadful conflict ensued. After a violent shock, the two wings of Stephen's army, which were composed of horse, were put to flight; and the infantry soon followed the example. All the race of the Norman conqueror were brave. Stephen was for some time left without attendants, and fought on foot in the midst of his enemies, assaulted by multitudes,

†. A. D. 1140.

tudes, and resisting all their efforts, with astonishing intrepidity. Being hemmed in on every side, he made way for some time with his battle-ax; but that breaking, he drew out his sword and dealt his blows round the circle in which he was enclosed. At length, after performing more than could be naturally expected from a single arm, his sword flying in pieces, he was obliged to surrender himself a prisoner. He was conducted to Gloucester; and though at first treated with respect, he was soon after, thrown into prison and laid in irons.

Stephen and his party now seemed totally disabled. Matilda was considered as incontestable sovereign, and the barons came in daily from all quarters to do her homage. The bishop of Winchester himself, led her in procession into his cathedral, and blessed her with the greatest solemnity; the archbishop of Canterbury also swore allegiance; and shortly after an ecclesiastical council, at which none of the laity assisted, except deputies from the city of London, confirmed her pretensions; and she was crowned at Winchester with all imaginable solemnity.

† A crown thus every way secured, seemed liable to be shaken by no accidents; yet such is the vanity of human security, that Matilda remained but a short time in possession of the throne. This princess was resolved upon repressing the growing power of the nobles, who had left only the shadow of authority to their sovereign. But having neither temper, nor policy, she disgusted those by her pride,

to

† A. D. 1141.

to whom she was obliged for her power. The first petition she refused, was the releasement of Stephen; she rejected the remonstrance of the Londoners, who intreated her to mitigate the severe laws of the Norman princes, and revive those of Edward the Confessor. She treated the nobility with a disdain, to which they had long been unaccustomed; while the fickle nation once more began to pity their deposed king, and to repent the steps they had taken in her favour. The bishop of Winchester, having been himself disobliged, was not remiss in fomenting these discontents; and when he found the people ripe for a tumult, detached a party of his friends and vassals to block up the city of London, where the queen resided. At the same time, measures were taken to instigate the Londoners to a revolt, and to seize her person. Matilda having timely notice of this conspiracy, fled to Winchester, whither the bishop followed her. His party was soon sufficiently strong to besiege her in the very place, where she first received his benediction. There she continued for some time, but the town being pressed by famine she was obliged to escape, while her brother the earl of Gloucester endeavouring to follow, was taken prisoner, and exchanged for Stephen. Thus a sudden revolution once more took place; Matilda was obliged to seek for safety in Oxford. Stephen was recognized as king, and taken from his dungeon to be placed on the throne! So God putteth down one, and setteth up another!

Yet

Yet still the affairs of Stephen continued to fluctuate. Though he had the good fortune to see his rival fly to the continent, and leave him entire possession of the kingdom; though his brother was possessed of the highest authority among the clergy, yet he was insecure. Finding that the castles built by the noblemen of his own party encouraged a spirit of independence, and were little less dangerous than those which remained in the hands of the enemy, he endeavoured to gain these; and this attempt united many of his own adherents against him. This discontent was increased by the opposition of the clergy, who, began to declare loudly in favour of his opponents. The pope laid his whole party under an interdict, for his having refused to send deputies to the general council at Rheims. By this sentence, which was now first practised in England, divine service was prohibited, and all the offices of religion ceased, except baptism and extreme unction. This state of Stephen's affairs looked so unpromising, that a revolution was once more expected, when his submission to the see of Rome for a while suspended the blow.

Stephen had hitherto been opposed only by men who seconded the pretensions of another; and who consequently wanted that popularity, which those have who fight their own cause. But he was now to enter the lists with a new opposer, who was every day growing more formidable. * This was Henry, he son of Matilda, who had now reached his sixteenth year; and gave the greatest hopes of
being

* A. D. 1149.

being one day a valiant leader and a consummate politician. It was usual in those days for young noblemen to receive the honour of knighthood before they were permitted to carry arms; and Henry proposed to receive his admission from his great uncle, David, king of Scotland. With this view, and in hopes of once more inspiring his mother's party, he landed in England with a great retinue of knights and soldiers, accompanied by many noblemen, as well English as foreigners. The ceremony was performed by the Scotch king at Carlisle, amidst a multitude of people, who all, pleased with the vigour, the address, and with the youth of the prince, secretly began to wish for a revolution in his favour. Soon after his return to Normandy, he was by his mother's consent, invested with that duchy which had some time before revolted to her. He was also, upon the death of his father Geoffry Plantagenet, secured in the possession of his dominions; and to add still more to his power, he married Eleanor the daughter and heiress of the duke of Guienne and Poitou; and took possession of these extensive territories.

With this great accession of power, young Henry was now resolved to reclaim his hereditary kingdom. For this purpose, being assured of the dispositions of the majority of the people, he made an invasion on England, § where he was immediately joined by almost all the barons of the kingdom. Though it was now the middle of winter, he advanced to besiege Malmesbury; and took the town, after

§ A. D. 1153.

having worsted a body of the enemy that attempted to oppose his march. Soon after Reading, and above thirty other fortresses, submitted without resistance.

In the mean time Stephen, tried every method to anticipate the purpose of his invasion. He had convoked a council in London, where he proposed his own son Eustace, as his associate in government, as well as his successor. He had expressed a desire of immediately proceeding to the coronation; but the archbishop of Canterbury refused to perform the ceremony. It was then no time to prosecute his resentment, when his rival was making hasty strides to the throne; wherefore he marched with all possible diligence to oppose him, where he was besieging Wallingford; and coming in sight, he rested his army to prepare for battle. In this situation the two armies remained for some time, within a quarter of a mile of each other, a decisive action being every day expected. While they continued thus, a treaty was set on foot by the interposition of William, earl of Arundel, for terminating the dispute without blood. The death of Stephen's son, which happened during the course of the treaty, facilitated its conclusion. It was therefore agreed by all parties, that Stephen should reign during life; and that justice should be administered in his name. That Henry should, on Stephen's death, succeed to the kingdom; and William, Stephen's son, should inherit Bologne and his patrimonial estate. After all the barons had sworn to this treaty,

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which filled the whole kingdom with joy, Henry evacuated England; * and Stephen returned to the peaceable enjoyment of his throne. His reign, however, was soon after terminated by his death, which happened about a year after the treaty, at Canterbury, where he was interred.

The fortune of many princes gives them, with posterity, the reputation of wisdom and virtue: Stephen wanted success in all his schemes but that of ascending the throne; and consequently his virtues and abilities now remain more doubtful. If we estimate them by the happiness of his subjects, they will appear very small; for England was never more miserable than during his reign: but if we consider them as they appear in his private conduct, few monarchs can boast more. Active, generous, and brave, his sole aim was to destroy a vile aristocracy, that oppressed the people; but the abilities of no man, however politic or intrepid, were then sufficient to resist that evil. The faults therefore of this monarch's reign are entirely to be imputed to the ungovernable spirit of the people, but his virtues were his own.



C H A P.

* Oct. 25, 1154.

C H A P. VIII.

H E N R Y II.

WE have hitherto seen the barons and clergy becoming powerful, in proportion to the weakness of the monarch's title, and enriching themselves with the spoils of enfeebled majesty. Henry Plantagenet had now every right, both from hereditary succession, from universal assent, from power, and personal merit, to make sure of the throne, and to keep its prerogatives unimpaired. He was employed in besieging a castle of one of his mutinous barons upon the continent, when news was brought him of Stephen's death; but, sensible of the security of his claims in England, he would not relinquish his enterprize till he had reduced the place. * He then set out, and was received in England with the acclamations of all the people; who, harassed with supporting opposite pretensions, were now rejoiced to see all parties united.

The first act of Henry's government gave the people an happy omen of his future wise administration. Conscious of his strength, he began to resume those privileges, which

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had

* A. D. 1154.

had been extorted from the weakness of his predecessors. † He immediately dismissed all those mercenary soldiers, who committed infinite disorders. He ordered all the castles, which were erected since the death of Henry the first, and were become receptacles of rapine, to be demolished, except a few, which he retained in his own hands for the protection of the kingdom. The adulterated coin was cried down, and new money struck of the right value. He resumed many of those benefactions which had been made to churches and monasteries in the former reigns. He gave charters to several towns, by which the citizens claimed their privileges, independent of any superior but himself. These charters were the groundwork of English liberty. The struggles which had before this time been, whether the king or the barons, or the clergy, should be despotic over the people, now began to assume a new aspect; and a fourth order, namely, that of the more opulent of the people, began to claim a share in administration. Thus was the feudal government at first impaired; and liberty more equally diffused throughout the nation.

From this happy commencement, England once more began to respire; agriculture returned; and every individual seemed to enjoy the happy effects of the young king's wise administration. Indeed some slight commotions proceeded from many of the depressed barons; but they were quickly brought to a sense of their duty. The Welsh, also made some incursions; but were obliged to make submission

‡ A. D. 1155.

submission, and to return to their natural fortresses. Yea to such a state of tranquility was the whole kingdom brought in a very short time, that Henry thought his presence no longer necessary to preserve order at home; || and therefore made an expedition to the continent, where his affairs were in some disorder.

As the transactions of the continent do not properly fall within our limits, it will be sufficient to say, that Henry's valour and prudence soon extended his power in that part of his dominions; and he found himself, either by marriage, or hereditary claims, master of a third part of the French monarchy. He became master, in right of his father, of Anjou, Touraine, and Maine; in that of his mother, of Normandy; in that of his wife, of Guienne, Poictou, Xaintonge, Auvergne, Perigord, Angumois, and the Limousin; to which he shortly after added Brittany, by marrying his son, who was yet a child, to the heiress of that dukedom, who was yet a child also; and thus securing that province, under pretence of being his son's guardian. * It was in vain that Lewis, the king of France, opposed his growing power; and several ineffectual engagements served to prove, that little was to be acquired by force. A cessation of arms, therefore, was at first concluded between them; and soon after a peace.

† Henry being thus become the most powerful prince of his age, and having humbled the barons that would circumscribe his power,

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he

|| A. D. 1156. * A. D. 1159. † A. D. 1161.

he might naturally be expected to reign with very little opposition for the future. But it happened otherwise. He found the severest mortification from a quarter, where he least expected it. Though he had diminished the power of the barons, he was sensible the influence of the clergy was still gaining ground; and was grown to such a pitch, as would shortly annihilate the authority of the sovereign himself.

They now seemed resolved not only to be exempted from the ordinary taxes of the state, but to be secured from its punishments also. They had extorted an immunity from all but ecclesiastical penalties, during the last distracted reign; and they continued to maintain that grant in the present. It may easily be supposed, that a law which thus screened their guilt, contributed to encrease it; and we accordingly find upon record, not less than an hundred murders committed by men in holy orders, in the short period since the king's accession, not one of which was punished, not so much as with degradation; while the bishops themselves seemed to glory in this horrid indulgence.

The mild character, and advanced age, of Theobald, archbishop of Canterbury, prevented Henry, during his life-time, from any attempts to repress the vices of his clergy; but after his death, he resolved to exert himself. † For this purpose, and that he might be secure against any opposition, he advanced to that dignity Thomas à Becket, on whose compliance he supposed he could entirely depend.

The

The famous Thomas à Becket, the first man of English extraction, who had, since the Norman conquest, risen to any share of power, was the son of a citizen of London. Having received his early education in the schools of that metropolis, he resided some time at Paris; and on his return became clerk in the sheriff's office. In that station he was recommended to the archbishop of Canterbury, and behaved so well, that he obtained some dignities in the church. Thomas, resolved to fit himself for an higher station, by travelling into Italy, where he studied the civil law at Bologna. On his return, he appeared to have made so great a proficiency, that he was promoted by his patron to the archdeaconry of Canterbury. On the accession of Henry to the throne, he was recommended to that monarch; and the king finding, that his spirit and abilities entitled him to the highest trusts, soon promoted him to the dignity of lord chancellor. Preferments were now heaped upon him without number. He was made provost of Beverly, dean of Hastings, and constable of the Tower: and, to complete his grandeur, he was entrusted with the education of prince Henry, son and heir to the king. His revenues were immense; his expences were incredible. He kept open table for persons of all ranks. The most costly luxuries were provided for his entertainments. The pomp of his retinue, the sumptuousness of his furniture, and the munificence of his presents corresponded with the greatness of his preferments. His apartments exhibited an

odd mixture of rudeness and splendor; they glittered with gold and silver-plate, and yet were covered with hay or clean straw in winter, and with green rushes in summer, for his guests to recline on. A great number of knights were retained in his service, and the greatest barons were fond of being received at his table; the king himself frequently condescended to partake of his entertainments. He employed two and fifty clerks in keeping accounts of the vacant prelacies, and his own ecclesiastical preferments. When he crossed the sea, he was always attended with five ships; and in an embassy to Paris, he appeared with a thousand persons in his retinue, displaying such wealth as amazed the spectators. As he was but in deacon's orders, he declined few of the amusements then in fashion. He diverted himself in hawking, hunting, chess-playing, and tilting; at which he was so expert, that even the most approved knights dreaded his encounter. Thus great was Becket while but chancellor; but when, contrary to the advice of Matilda, he was promoted to the archbishopric, his whole conduct took a new turn. He endeavoured to gain the character of sanctity. Without consulting his master's pleasure, he sent him the seals of his office as lord chancellor, pretending that he was henceforth to be employed in matters of a more sacred nature. Though he still retained the pomp and splendor of his retinue, he was in his own person the most mortified man that could be seen. He wore sack-cloth next his skin. He changed it so seldom,

seldom, that it was filled with dirt and vermin. His usual diet was bread, his drink, water. His back was mangled with the frequent discipline. He every day washed on his knees the feet of thirteen beggars. Every one that made profession of sanctity was admitted to his conversation; and his aspect wore the appearance of mortification and sorrow.

Henry now saw, when it was too late, the superiority which Becket aimed at. His resignation of the chancellor's office shewed, how much he was mistaken in the pliancy of Becket's disposition; especially when he began to revive some antient claims to several churchlands, that had lain dormant ever since the Conquest.

Notwithstanding this, Henry was resolved to try every expedient to rectify the errors that had crept in among the clergy, who, under a pretence of independence upon secular power, were grown abominably licentious. During the preceding reign, a great number of idle and illiterate persons, in order to enjoy the indulgence of their vices, had entered into holy orders; for the bishops seldom rejected any that presented. These having no benefices, and subject to no jurisdiction, committed the most flagrant enormities with impunity. Among other inventions of the clergy to obtain money, that of selling pardons was introduced. These, and such like grievances, bore hard upon the people; who were at the same time taught, that their only remedy was implicit submission. A prince of Henry's

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penetration

penetration easily pierced through the midst of ignorance in which the age was involved ; and resolved, by a bold struggle, to free the laity from these clerical usurpations. * An opportunity soon offered, for beginning his intended reformation. A man in holy orders had debauched the daughter of a gentleman in Worcester-shire ; and then murdered the father. The atrociousness of the crime produced indignation among the people ; and the king insisted that the assassin should be tried by the civil magistrate. This Becket opposed, and ordered the criminal to be confined in the bishops prison, lest he should be seized by the officers of the king. It was to no purpose that the king desired he might be tried first by an ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and then delivered up to the secular tribunal. Becket asserted that it was unjust to try a man twice for the same offence ; and appealed to the court of Rome. This was the time for Henry to make his attack upon the immunities of the church ; when, to defend itself it must espouse the cause of the most atrocious criminal. He therefore summoned an assembly of all the prelates in England, and desired that the murderer should be delivered over to the hands of justice. Becket retired with the prelates to deliberate ; but as he guided in the assembly, they entrenched themselves behind the papal decrees, and refused to give up their prisoner. Henry, willing to bring them to an open absurdity, demanded, whether they were willing to submit to the ancient laws of the kingdom ? They replied, that they were willing

* A. D. 1163.

willing; except where their own order was concerned. The king, provoked by this evasive answer, instantly quitted the assembly; and sent Becket orders to surrender the honours and castles which he continued to hold, in consequence of having been chancellor. These being surrendered, the prelate quitted London, without taking the least notice of the assembly.

Becket was soon after induced to give way, and to promise his majesty, a steady observance of the ancient laws of the kingdom. This was the disposition which the king wished to retain him in; and he therefore summoned a general council of the nobility and prelates at Clarendon, to whom he submitted this important affair, and desired their concurrence. These councils seem, at that time, convened rather to give authenticity to the king's decrees, than to enact laws that were to bind their posterity. A number of regulations were there drawn up, which were afterwards well known under the title of the Constitutions of Clarendon. By these regulations it was enacted, that clergy-men accused of any crime should be tried in the civil courts; that laymen should not be tried in the spiritual courts, except by legal and reputable witnesses; that the king should ultimately judge in ecclesiastical and spiritual appeals; that the archbishops and bishops should be regarded as barons, and obliged to furnish the public supplies as usual with persons of their rank; that the goods forfeited to the king should not be protected in churches,

or church-yards, by the clergy; and that the sons of villains should not take orders without the consent of their lord. These, with some others of less consequence, to the number of sixteen, were readily subscribed by all the bishops present; and Becket himself, who at first shewed some reluctance, added his name to the number. It only remained that the pope should ratify them; but there Henry was mistaken. † Alexander, who was then pope, condemned them in the strongest terms, abrogated, annulled, and rejected them; out of sixteen he admitted only six, which he thought not important enough to deserve censure.

How Henry could suppose the pope would consent to these articles, which must destroy his whole authority in the kingdom, is not easy to conceive; but we may well suppose, that a man of Becket's character must be extremely mortified, at finding that he had signed what the pope had refused to confirm. Accordingly, on this occasion, he expressed the deepest sorrow for his former concessions. He redoubled his austerities, in order to punish himself for his criminal compliance; and refused to perform at the altar, till he had obtained absolution from his holiness. All these mortifications appeared to Henry as little more than specious insults upon himself; and the breach between him and the archbishop every day grew wider. At last, willing to supersede the prelate's authority at any rate, he desired the pope would send a legate into his dominions; who, from the nature of his

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† A. D. 1164.

commission might have a superior controul. This the pope readily granted; and a legate was appointed, but with a clause annexed to his commission, that he was to execute nothing in prejudice of the archbishop. An authority thus clogged in that very part where it was desired to be unlimited, was no way agreeable to the king; and he sent back the commission with great indignation. He now went another way to wreak his resentment upon Becket. He had him sued for some lands, which were part of a manor belonging to his primacy; and the primate being detained by sickness from coming into court, his non-attendance was construed into disrespect. A great council was summoned at Northampton, where Becket defended his cause in person; but he was condemned as guilty of a contempt of the king's court, and as wanting in that fealty which he had sworn to his sovereign. All his goods and chattles were confiscated; and the bishop of Winchester was obliged to pronounce the sentence against him. Besides this conviction, the king exhibited another charge against him for three hundred pounds which he had levied. Becket, rather than aggravate the king's resentment, agreed to give sureties for the payment. The next day, another suit was commenced against him for a thousand marks, which the king had lent him on some former occasion. Immediately on the back of these, a third claim was made, still greater than the former. This was to give an account of the money he had received, and expended, during the time
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of his chancellorship. The estimate was laid at no less than forty thousand marks; and Becket was wholly unprovided either of the means of balancing his accounts, or of securities for answering so great a demand. In this exigence, his friends were divided. Some prelates advised him to resign his see; some to throw himself entirely upon the king's mercy; and some to offer ten thousand marks as a general satisfaction for all demands. Becket followed none of these opinions; but arraying himself in his episcopal vestments, and with the cross in his hand, he went forward to the king's palace, and entering the royal apartments, sat down, holding up the cross as his banner of protection. The king, who sat in an inner room, ordered by proclamation the prelates and the nobility to attend him; to whom he complained loudly of Becket's insolence and inflammatory proceedings. The whole council joined in condemning this instance of his unaccountable pride; and determined to expostulate with him upon his inconsistency, in formerly subscribing the Constitutions of Clarendon, and now being the first to infringe them. But all their messages, threats, and arguments were to no purpose; Becket had taken his resolution, and it was now too late to attempt to shake it. He put himself, under the protection of the pope; and appealed to him against any penalty which his judges might inflict. Then, departing the palace, he asked the king's permission to leave Northampton; and upon receiving a refusal, withdrew in disguise, and found means to cross over to the continent.

The

The intrepidity of Becket, joined to his apparent sanctity, gained him a favourable reception upon the continent, both from the people and their governors. The king of France who hated Henry, affected to pity his condition ; and the pope, honoured him with the greatest marks of distinction. Becket, sensible of his power, was willing to shew all possible humility ; and resigned his see into the pope's hands, in order to receive it back from him with greater solemnity. Such favours bestowed upon a perjured traitor, (for such had been his sentence of condemnation in England,) excited the indignation of Henry beyond measure. He saw his ambassadors slighted, all his endeavours to procure a conference with the pope frustrated, and his subjects daily excited to discontent. * He resolved to free himself, and his people, from a burthen that had long oppressed them. He accordingly issued orders to his justiciaries, inhibiting, under severe penalties, all appeals to the pope or the archbishop ; and forbidding any of them to receive mandates from them. He declared it treason to bring over from either of them any interdict upon the kingdom. This he made punishable in secular clergymen by the loss of their revenues and by castration, in regulars by the amputation of their feet, and in laymen by death.

The pope and the archbishop were not remiss on their side to retort these fulminations. Becket compared himself to Christ, who had been condemned by a lay tribunal ; and who was crucified a-new in the present oppressions of

* A. D. 1165.

of the church. But he did not rest in complaints only. He issued out a censure, excommunicating the king's chief ministers by name, all that were concerned in sequestering the revenues of his see, and all who obeyed or favoured the Constitutions of Clarendon. He even threatened to excommunicate the king himself, if he did not immediately repent; and to give his censures the greater energy, he got them ratified by the pope.

Whatever Henry's contempt of these fulminations might be, he, now secretly wished for an accommodation. Yet there seemed no other way but by the king's appealing to the pope, as umpire between him and the archbishop. † The pope, on the other hand, was every day threatened himself by the machinations of an antipope. He was apprehensive that the king of England might join against him; he knew his great abilities, and was sensible that as yet no insurrection had been made in consequence of the threats and exhortations of Becket. Thus the disposition of both parties produced frequent attempts towards an accommodation; but their mutual jealousies protracted this desirable treaty,

These disturbances continued for some time longer; Becket never losing an opportunity of impeaching the king's ministers, and obstructing all his measures. ‡ At length, by the mediation of the pope's legate, all difficulties were adjusted; and while the king allowed Becket to return, that prelate consented to wave the kiss of peace. The ceremonial of the interview being regulated, when the archbishop

† A. D. 1167.

‡ A. D. 1170.

bishop approached, the king advanced to meet him in the most gracious manner; and conversed with him for some time, with great ease, familiarity, and kindness. All material points being adjusted, Becket attended Henry on horseback; and as they rode together, the prelate begged some satisfaction for the invasions of his right by the archbishop of York, who had some time before crowned the young prince. To this Henry replied, that what was past could not be undone; but that he would take care that none but he should crown the young queen, which ceremony was soon to be performed. Becket, transported at this instance of the king's condescension, alighted instantly, and threw himself at the feet of his sovereign, who, leaping from his horse at the same time, lifted him from the ground, and helped him to remount. The terms of their agreement were very advantageous to the prelate; and this might have inspired him with gratitude. It was agreed, that he should not resign any of those pretensions, which had been the ground of the quarrel; that Becket and his adherents should be restored to their livings; and that all the possessors of such benefices belonging to the see of Canterbury, as had been installed since the primate's absence, should be expelled, and Becket supply the vacancies. In return for these concessions, the king only reaped the advantage of seeing his ministers absolved from the sentence of excommunication, and of preventing an interdict, which was preparing to be laid upon all his dominions.

Becket

Becket having thus triumphed over the king, resolved to remit nothing of the power which he had acquired. He soon began to shew, that not even a temporary tranquility was to be the result of his reconciliation. Nothing could exceed the insolence with which he conducted himself upon his first landing in England. Instead of retiring quietly to his diocese, with that modesty which became a man just pardoned, he made a progress through Kent, in all the splendor and magnificence of a sovereign pontiff. As he approached Southwark, the clergy, the laity, men of all ranks and ages, came forth to meet him, and celebrated his triumphal entry with hymns of joy. Thus, confident of the voice and the hearts of the people, he began to launch fourth his thunders against those who had been his opposers. The archbishop of York, who had crowned Henry's eldest son in his absence, was the first against whom he denounced sentence of suspension. The bishops of London and Salisbury he excommunicated. Robert de Broc, and Nigel de Sackville, were exposed to the same censures; with many of the most considerable prelates and ministers, who had assisted at the late coronation. One man he excommunicated for having spoken against him; and another, for having cut off the tail of one of his horses.

Henry was then in Normandy, while the primate was thus triumphantly parading thro' the kingdom; and it was not without the utmost indignation that he received information of his turbulent insolence. When the excommunicated

communicated prelates arrived with their complaints, he burst out into an exclamation, that he had no friends, or he would not so long have been exposed to the insults of that ungrateful hypocrite. These words excited the attention of the whole court; and four of his most resolute attendants, knights and gentlemen of his household, Reginal Fitz-Urse, William de Tracy, Hugh de Moreville, and Richard Brito, immediately communicated their thoughts to each other. They instantly bound themselves by an oath to revenge their king's quarrel; and secretly retiring, took shipping at different ports, and met the next day at the castle of Saltwode, within six miles of Canterbury. Some expressions which they had dropt, and their sudden departure, gave the king reason to suspect their design. He therefore sent messengers to overtake and forbid them, in his name, to commit any violence; but these orders arrived too late. The conspirators proceeded to Canterbury with all haste. Advancing directly to Becket's house, and entering his apartment, they reproached him very fiercely for the rashness and the insolence of his conduct. Becket vindicated all his actions. During this altercation, the time approached for Becket to assist at vespers, whither he went, the conspirators following; As soon as he had reached the altar, they all fell upon him; and having cloven his head, he dropt down dead before the altar of St. Benediſt.

The circumstances of the murder, and the place where it was perpetrated, made a surprising impression on the people. No sooner
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was his death known, than they rushed into the church; and dipping their hands in his blood, crossed themselves with it, as with that of a saint. The clergy, whose interest it was to have Becket considered as a saint, did all in their power to magnify his sanctity, to extol the merits of his martyrdom, and to hold him out as the fittest object of the veneration of the people. Their endeavours prevailed. Innumerable were the miracles said to be wrought at his tomb. It was not sufficient that his shrine had the power of restoring dead men to life; it restored also cows, dogs, and horses. It was reported, and believed, that he rose from his coffin before he was buried, to light the tapers designed for his funeral: nor was he remiss, when the funeral ceremony was over, in stretching forth his hands to give his benediction to the people. Thus Becket became a saint; and the king was strongly suspected of procuring his assassination.

Nothing could exceed the king's consternation upon receiving the first news of this prelate's catastrophe. He was instantly sensible that the murder would be imputed to him. He was apprized that his death would effect what his opposition could not do; and would procure those advantages to the church, which it had been the study of his whole reign to refuse. These considerations gave him the most unfeigned concern. He shut himself up in darkness, refusing the attendance of his domestics. He even refused, during three days, all nourishment. The courtiers, dreading the effects of his regret, were at last obliged

obliged to break into his solitude; and induced him to be reconciled to a measure that he could not redress. The pope soon after being made sensible of the king's innocence, granted him his pardon; but upon condition that he would perform every injunction that the holy See should require. All things being thus adjusted, the assassins retired to the enjoyment of their former dignities and honours; and the king, in order to divert the minds of the people to a different object, undertook an expedition against Ireland.

Ireland was at that time in much the same situation that England had been, after the first invasion of the Saxons. They had been early converted to Christianity; and, for three or four centuries after, possessed a large proportion of the learning of the times. Being undisturbed by foreign invasions, and perhaps too poor to invite the rapacity of conquerors, they enjoyed a peaceful life, which they gave up to piety, and such learning as was then thought necessary. Of their learning, their arts, their piety, and even their polished manners, many monuments remain to this day. But in time they fell from these; and their posterity at the time we speak of, were wrapt in the darkest barbarity. This may be imputed to the frequent invasions which they suffered from the Danes, who over-ran the whole country, and every where spread their ravages, and confirmed their authority. The natives, kept in the strictest bondage, grew every day more ignorant and brutal. And when at last they rose upon their conquerors, and totally expelled them the island

island, they wanted instructors to restore them to their former attainments. From thence they continued in the most deplorable state of barbarism. The towns that had been formerly built were suffered to fall into ruin; the inhabitants exercised pasture in the open country, and sought protection from danger by retiring into their forests and bogs. Almost all sense of religion was extinguished; the petty princes exercised continual outrages upon each other's territories; and nothing but strength alone was able to procure redress.

|| At the time when Henry first planned the invasion of the island, it was divided into five principalities, Leinster, Meath, Munster, Ulster and Connaught; each governed by its respective monarch. As it had been usual for one or other of these to take the lead in their wars, he was denominated sole monarch of the kingdom, and possessed of a power resembling that of the early Saxon monarchs in England. Roderic O' Connor, king of Connaught, was then advanced to this dignity, and Dermot M' Morrogh was king of Leinster. This licentious tyrant, had carried off and ravished the daughter of the king of Meath, who being strengthened by the alliance of the king of Connaught, invaded the ravisher's dominions and expelled him from his kingdom. He had recourse to Henry, who was at that time at Guienne; and offered to hold his kingdom of the English crown, in case he recovered it by the king's assistance. Henry readily accepted the offer; but being at that time embarrassed by more near interests, he only gave Dermot letters patent, by which

|| A. D. 1171.

which he empowered all his subjects to aid the Irish prince in the recovery of his dominions. Dermot returned to Bristol, where he formed a treaty with Richard, sur-named Strongbow, earl of Pembroke, who agreed to re-instate him in his dominions, upon condition of his being married to his daughter Eva, and declared his heir. Dermot at the same time contracted for succours with Robert Fitzstephen, and Maurice Fitzgerald, whom he promised to gratify with the city of Wexford, and the two adjoining districts. Being thus assured of assistance, he returned privately to Ireland, and concealed himself during the winter in the monastery of Ferns. * Robert Fitzstephen the ensuing spring, landed with an hundred and thirty knights, sixty esquires, and three hundred archers. They were soon after joined by Maurice Pendergast, who, about the same time, brought over ten knights and sixty archers; and with this small body of forces they resolved on besieging Wexford, which was to be theirs by treaty. This town was quickly reduced; and the adventurers being reinforced by another body of men to the amount of an hundred and fifty, under the command of Maurice Fitzgerald, composed an army that struck the barbarous natives with awe. Roderic the chief monarch of the island, ventured to oppose them, but he was defeated; soon after the prince of Offory was obliged to submit, and give hostages for his future conduct.

Dermot being re-instated in his hereditary dominions, soon began to conceive hopes of making himself master of Ireland. With these

* A. D. 1172.

these views, he endeavoured to expedite Strongbow; who was not yet come over. Dermot tried to enflame his ambition by the glory of the conquest, and his avarice by the advantages it would procure. Strongbow first sent over Raymond, one of his retinue, with ten knights and seventy archers; and shortly after himself landed with two hundred horse and an hundred archers. All these English forces, now joining together became irresistible; and though the whole number did not amount to a thousand, yet the natives were every where put to the rout. The city of Waterford quickly surrendered; Dublin was taken by assault; and Strongbow, soon after marrying Eva according to treaty, became master of the kingdom of Leinster upon Dermot's decease.

The island being thus in a manner subdued, for nothing was capable of opposing the progress of the English arms, Henry was willing to share in person those honours, which the adventurers had already secured. He therefore shortly after, landed in Ireland at the head of five hundred knights and some soldiers; not so much to conquer a disputed territory, as to take possession of a subject kingdom. In his progress through the country, he received the homage of the petty chieftains as he went along, and left most of them in possession of their ancient territories. In a place so uncultivated, and so ill peopled, there was still land enough to satisfy the adventurers who had followed him. Strongbow was made seneschal of Ireland, Hugh de Lacy was made
governor.

governor of Dublin, and John de Courcy received a patent for conquering the province of Ulster, which as yet remained unsubdued. The Irish bishops very gladly admitted the English, as they expected from their superior civilization, a greater degree of reverence and respect. Pope Adrian, who had, in the beginning, encouraged Henry to subdue the Irish, by his Bull, granting him the kingdom, now confirmed him in his conquest, and the kings of England were acknowledged as lords of Ireland for ever. Thus, after a trifling effort, in which very little money was expended, and little blood shed, that beautiful island became an appendage to the English crown, and as such it has ever since continued, with unshaken fidelity.

The joy which this conquest diffused was very great; and Henry seemed now to have attained his wishes. He was undisputed monarch of very large domains; father of a numerous progeny, victorious over all his enemies, and cheerfully obeyed by all his subjects. Henry, his eldest son, had been anointed king, and was acknowledged as undoubted successor; Richard, his second son, was invested with the dutchy of Guienne and Poitou; Geoffry, his third son, inherited, in right of his wife, the dutchy of Brittany; and John, his youngest, was designed as king in Ireland. Such was the flattering prospect of grandeur before him; but such is the instability of human happiness, that this very exaltation of his family, proved the means of embittering his future life.

Queen Eleanor, who had been divorced from her former consort for incontinence, was long become disagreeable to Henry; and he sought in others, those satisfactions he could not find with her. Among the number of his mistresses we have the name of Fair Rosamond, who makes so conspicuous a figure in the ballads of the time. Rosamond Clifford is said to have been the most beautiful woman in England. Henry loved her with a faithful attachment; and in order to secure her from the resentment of his queen, who, having been incontinent herself, became jealous of his incontinence, he concealed her in a labyrinth in Woodstock Park, where he passed his vacant hours. This came to the queen's knowledge, who, as the accounts add, being guided by a clew of silk to her fair rival's retreat, obliged her, by holding a drawn dagger to her breast, to swallow poison. Whatever truth may be in this story, certain it is, that this haughty woman, by her jealousy first sowed the seeds of dissension between the king and his children.

§ Young Henry was taught to believe himself injured, in not being admitted to a share of the administration. This prince had, from the beginning, shewn a large degree of pride: when the ceremony of his coronation was performing, the king, willing to give it all the splendor possible, waited upon him at table; and while he offered him the cup, observed, that no prince ever before had been so magnificently attended. There is nothing extraordinary, replied the young prince, in
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§ A. D. 1173.

seeing the son of a count serving the son of a king. The discontent of young Henry was soon followed by that of Geoffry and Richard, whom the queen persuaded to assert their title to the territories assigned them; and upon the king's refusing their demands, they all fled to the court of France, where Lewis gave them countenance and protection. Queen Eleanor herself was meditating an escape to the same court, and had put on man's apparel for that purpose, when she was seized by the king's order and put into confinement. Thus Henry saw all his long prospect of future happiness totally clouded; his sons, scarce yet arrived at manhood, eager to share the spoils of their father's possessions; his queen warmly encouraging those undutiful princes in their rebellion, and many potentates of Europe not ashamed to lend them assistance. Nor was his prospect much more pleasing when he looked among his subjects: his licentious barons, disgusted with a vigilant government, desired to be governed by princes whom they could flatter or intimidate: the clergy had not yet forgot Becket's death; and the people considered him as a saint and a martyr. In this universal disaffection, Henry supported that intrepidity which he had shown through life, and prepared for a contest from which he could expect to reap neither profit nor glory. Twenty thousand mercenary soldiers, joined to some troops which he brought over from Ireland, and a few barons of approved fidelity, formed the sole force with which he proposed to resist his opponents.

It was not long before the young princes had sufficient influence to raise a powerful confederacy in their favour. Beside the king of France, Philip count of Flanders, Matthew count of Bologne, Theobald count of Blois, and Henry count of Eu, all declared themselves in their interests. William, king of Scotland, also made one of this association, and a plan was concerted for a general invasion of Henry's dominions. This was shortly after put into execution. The king's continental dominions were invaded on one side, by the count of Flanders and Boulogne; on the other by the king of France, with a large army, which the young English princes animated by their presence. But Henry found means to oppose them on every quarter; the count of Boulogne, being mortally wounded in the assault of the town of Drincourt, † his death stopped the progress of the Flemish arms on that side. The French army being obliged to retire from the siege of Verneuil, Henry attacked their rear, put them to the rout, and took several prisoners. The Barons of Brittany also, who had risen in favour of the young princes, shared no better fate; their army was defeated in the field, and, taking shelter in the town of Dol, were there made prisoners of war. These successes repressed the pride of the confederated forces, and a conference was demanded by the French king, to which Henry readily agreed. In this interview, he had the mortification to see his three sons, ranged on the side of his inveterate enemy; but he was still more

† A. D. 1174.

walked barefoot towards the town, prostrated himself before the shrine of the saint, remained in fasting and prayer a whole day, watched all night the holy relics, made a grant of fifty pounds a year to the convent, for a constant supply of tapers to illuminate the shrine; and, not satisfied with these submissions, he assembled a chapter of monks, disrobed before them, put a scourge of discipline into each of their hands, and presented his bare shoulders to their infliction. Next day he received absolution; and departing for London, received the agreeable news of a victory over the Scots, obtained on the very day of his absolution.

Having thus brought over the minds of the people, he fought upon surer grounds; every victory he obtained was imputed to the favour of the saint, and every success increased the confidence of his party. The victory which was gained over the Scots was signal and decisive. William, their king, after having committed the most horrible depredations, had thought proper to retreat upon the advance of an English army, commanded by Ralph de Glanville, the famous English lawyer. As he had fixed his station at Alnwick, he thought himself perfectly secure, from the remoteness of the enemy, against any attack. In this however he was deceived; for Glanville, informed of his situation, made an hasty march, and approached very near during the obscurity of a mist. The Scotch, who continued in perfect security, were surprized in the morning to find themselves attacked; and their king venturing with a small
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body of horse to oppose the assailants, was surrounded and taken prisoner. His troops hearing of this, fled on all sides with the utmost precipitation to their own country.

From that time Henry's affairs began to wear a better aspect; the barons, who had revolted, instantly delivered up their castles to the victor, and England in a few weeks was restored to perfect tranquility. Young Henry, who was ready to embark with a large army, to second the efforts of the English insurgents, finding all disturbances quieted at home, abandoned all thoughts of the expedition. Lewis attempted in vain to besiege Rouën, which Henry hastened over to succour. A cessation of arms and a conference was once more agreed upon by the two monarchs. Henry granted his sons much less advantageous terms than they formerly refused to accept: the most material, were some pensions for their support, some castles for their residence, and an indemnity to all their adherents. Thus England once more emerged from the numerous calamities that threatened to overwhelm it, and the king was left at liberty to make various provisions for the glory, the happiness, and the security of his people.

* His first care was to make his prisoner, the king of Scots, undergo a proper punishment for his ungenerous attack. That prince was content to sign a treaty, by which he was compelled to do homage to Henry for his dominions in Scotland. It was agreed, that his barons and bishops should do the

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same;

* A. D. 1175.

same; and that the fortresses of Edinburgh, Stirling, Berwick, Roxborough, and Jedborough, should be delivered into the hands of the conqueror till the articles were performed. This treaty was punctually and rigorously executed; the king, barons, and prelates of Scotland did homage to Henry in the cathedral of York; so that he might now be considered as the monarch of the whole island, the mountainous parts of Wales excepted.

His domestic regulations were as wise as his political conduct was splendid. He enacted severe penalties against robbery, murder, coining, and burning of houses; ordaining that these crimes should be punished by the amputation of the right-hand and right-foot. He partitioned out the kingdom into six divisions; † and appointed itinerant justices to go their respective circuits to try causes, to restrain the cruelties of the barons, and to protect the lower ranks of the people. He renewed the trial by juries, which, by the barbarous method of camp-fight, was almost grown obsolete. He demolished all the castles that had been built in the times of general confusion; and, to secure the kingdom more effectually against any threatened invasion, he established a well-armed militia, who, with proper accoutrements, specified in the act, were to defend the realm upon any emergency.

But it was not in the power of wisdom to conciliate the turbulent spirits of his sons, who, not contented with rebelling against their father, now warmly prosecuted their enmities

† A. D. 1176.

enmities against each other. * Richard, whom Henry had made master of Guienne, and who had already displayed great valour in humbling his mutinous barons, refused to obey his father's orders in doing homage to his elder brother for that dutchy. Young Henry and Geoffry, uniting their arms, carried war into their brother's dominions; and while the king was endeavouring to compose their differences, he found himself secretly conspired against by all. What the result of this conspiracy might be, is uncertain; for it was defeated by the death of young Henry, who died in the twenty-ninth year of his age, of a fever, at Martel, not without the deepest remorse for his undutiful conduct towards his father.

† As this prince left no posterity, Richard was become heir in his room; and he soon discovered the same ambition as his elder brother. He refused to obey his father's commands in giving up Guienne, which he had been put in possession of; and even made preparations to attack his brother Geoffry, who was possessed of Brittany. No sooner was this breach made up, at the intercession of the queen, than Geoffry broke out into violence, and demanded Anjou to be annexed to his dominions of Brittany. This being refused him, he followed the old method of procuring redress, fled to the court of France, and prepared to levy an army against his father. † Henry was freed from the danger that threatened him on that quarter, by Geoffry's death, who was killed in a tournament at Paris. The loss of this prince gave

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few,

* A. D. 1180. † A. D. 1183. ‡ A. D. 1186.

few, except the king himself, any uneasiness, as he was universally hated, and went among the people under the name of *The Child of Perdition*.

But the death of the prince did not wholly remove the cause of his revolt; for Philip, the king of France, disputed his title to the wardship of Arthur, the son of Geoffry, who was now become duke of Brittany, upon the death of his father. † In consequence of this, another conference of the two kings was held between Gisors and Trie, the usual place of meeting, under a vast elm, that is said to have shaded more than an acre. It was in the midst of this conference, that a new object was offered to their consideration; and that quickly bore down all secular considerations. The archbishop of Tyre appeared before the assembly in the most miserable habit, and with looks calculated to inspire compassion. He had come from the Holy Land, and had seen the oppression of the Christians, who were appointed to defend the Holy Sepulchre, and was a witness of the triumph of the infidels. The Christians, about a century before, had attacked and taken Jerusalem; but the Saracens being every day reinforced by fresh supplies, at last conquered a land of warriors, who, in common, preferring celibacy to marriage, had not multiplied in the ordinary methods of population. The holy city itself was re-taken by the victorious arms of Saladin; and all Palestine, except a few maritime towns, subdued. Nothing now remained of those boasted conquests, that had
enflamed

† A. D. 1188.

enflamed the zeal of the western world; and nothing was to be seen, of what near a century before had employed the efforts of all the noblest spirits of Europe. The western Christians were astonished at this intelligence; the whole audience burst into tears; the two kings laid aside their animosity, and agreed to convert their whole attention to the rescuing Jerusalem from the hands of the infidels. They instantly therefore took the cross; many of their most considerable vassals imitated their example; and as the emperor Frederic I. entered into the same confederacy, it was expected, nothing could resist their united endeavours. But it was the fate of Henry to be crossed in his most darling pursuits by his undutiful and ungrateful children.

Richard, to hinder his Father from going, entered into a confederacy with the king of France. § And, Henry found himself obliged to give up all hopes of taking the cross, and compelled to enter upon a war with France and his eldest son. He saw the confederacy daily gaining ground. Ferte Bernard fell first into the hands of the enemy; Mans was next taken by assault; Amboise, Chaumont, and Chatteau de Loire, opened their gates upon the enemies appearance; Tours was invested; and the king, who had retired to Saumur, and had daily instances of the cowardice and infidelity of his governors, expected the most dismal issue of all his enterprizes. At last a treaty was concluded, in which he submitted to many mortifying concessions. It was agreed

I 6

that

§ A. D. 1189.

that Richard should marry the princess Adelaïd, and be crowned king of England during the life-time of his father. It was stipulated, that Henry should pay twenty thousand marks to the king of France, as a compensation for the charges of the war; that his own barons should engage to make him observe this treaty; and in case of violating it, to join Philip and Richard against him; and that all his vassals who espoused the cause of Richard, should receive an indemnity for the offence. These were terms sufficiently humiliating to a prince accustomed to give, not receive, commands; but what was his resentment, when, upon demanding a list of the barons that were to be thus pardoned, he found his son John, his favourite child, among the number. He had long borne an infirm state of body with calm resignation; he had seen his children rebel without much emotion; he saw his own son his conqueror, himself bereft of his power, reduced to the condition of a fugitive, and almost suppliant, in his old age; and all this he endured with tranquillity of temper: but when he saw that child, whose interests always lay next his heart, among the number of those who were in rebellion against him, he could no longer contain his indignation. He broke out into expressions of the utmost despair; cursed the day in which he had received his miserable being; and bestowed on his ungrateful children a malediction, which he never after could be prevailed upon to retract. The more his heart was disposed to friendship and affection, the more he resented this barbarous

barous return; and now, not having one corner in his heart where he could look for comfort, or fly for refuge from his conflicting passions, he lost all his former vivacity. A lingering fever, caused by a broken heart, soon after terminated his life and his miseries. He died at the castle of Chinon, near Saumur.

His corpse was conveyed by his natural son Geoffry, who of all his children behaved with duty, to the nunnery of Font-Everaud; and next day, while it lay in the abbey-church, Richard chancing to enter, was struck with horror at the sight. At his approach, the blood was seen to gush out at the mouth and nostrils of the corpse. Richard could not endure the sight. He exclaimed, that he was his father's murderer; and expressed a strong, though late, sense of that undutiful conduct, which brought his parent to an untimely grave.

Thus died Henry, in the fifty eighth year of his age, and the thirty-fifth of his reign; in the course of which he displayed all the abilities of a politician, all the sagacity of a legislator, and all the magnanimity of an hero. He was of a middle stature, strong and well proportioned, his countenance was lively and engaging; his conversation affable and entertaining; his elocution easy, persuasive, and at command. When he could enjoy leisure, he recreated himself, either in learned conversation or reading, and he cultivated his natural talents by study above any prince of his time. He lived revered above all the princes of his time: and his death was deeply
lamented

lamented by his subjects, whose happiness appears to have been the great aim of all his endeavours. He was temperate, even to a degree of abstinence, and seldom sat down, except at supper. He was compassionate to all in distress, and so charitable, that he constantly allotted a tenth of his household provisions to the poor. And in a time of dearth he maintained ten thousand indigent persons, from the beginning of Spring to the end of Autumn.

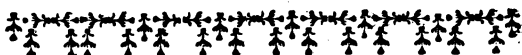
During his reign, all foreign improvements in literature and politeness, in laws and arts, seem to have been, in a good measure, transplanted into England. The little learning of the Saxon priests, which was confined to church history and legendary tales, was now exchanged for school-philosophy. The homely manners of the great were softened by the pomps of chivalry. The people, however, were as yet far from being civilized; and even in the cities, where the social arts were best cultivated, there were amazing instances of barbarity. It was common, for instance, in London, for great numbers to the amount of an hundred, or more, of the sons and relations of eminent citizens, to form themselves into a confederacy to plunder and rob their more wealthy neighbours. By these crimes it was become so dangerous to walk the streets at night that the citizens, after dark, were obliged to continue within doors. A band of these ruffians had one day attacked the house of a rich citizen, with an intention to plunder it. They had already broke thro' a stone wall with hammers and wedges; and were

were actually entering the house sword in hand, when the citizen, in complete armour, supported by his servants, appeared in the passage to oppose them. He cut off the right hand of the first robber that entered; and made such a noble resistance, that his neighbours had time to assemble, and come to his relief. The man who lost his hand was caught; and was tempted by the promise of a pardon to reveal his confederates, among whom was one John Senex, esteemed among the richest and the best born citizens of London. He was convicted; and though he offered five hundred marks for his life, the king ordered him to be hanged.

Henry left only two legitimate sons, Richard, who succeeded him; and John, who inherited no territory, and therefore received the surname of Lackland. He left three legitimate daughters, Maud, who was married to the duke of Saxony, Eleanor married to Alphonso, king of Castile, and Joan, to William, king of Sicily. He left two natural sons by Rosamond; Richard Longsword, who was afterwards married to the daughter and heiress of the earl of Salisbury; and Geoffry, who was afterwards archbishop of York.

C H A P.





C H A P. IX.

RICHARD I. surnamed COEUR DE LION.

RICHARD, who succeeded to the throne without opposition, seemed resolved to discourage future disobedience, by dismissing from his service all those who had assisted him in his former undutiful conduct. Those who had seconded his rebellion, instead of meeting with that honour they expected, were treated with scorn and neglect. He retained in his service all the loyal adherents of the late king; saying those who were faithful to one sovereign would probably continue so to another. He instantly released his mother from confinement; and was profuse in heaping favours upon his brother.

Richard had issued a proclamation, forbidding all Jews to enter into the Church, during the coronation service. Yet a few of them endeavoured to steal in; but they were detested and roughly repelled. A fray ensued, in which several Jews were killed. A report arose, that the king had ordered all the Jews to be extirpated: on which the populace murdered all they could find, and then plundered.

‡ A. D. 1189

dered and set fire to their houses, in which great numbers of them perished. Richard punished the ringleaders of this riot severely, and took the Jews under his protection. Five hundred Jews had retired into York castle for safety; but finding themselves unable to defend the place, they resolved to perish by killing one another, rather than trust the fury of their persecutors. Having taken this gloomy resolution, they first murdered their wives and children; next threw the dead bodies over the wall; and then setting fire to the houses, perished in the flames.

Richard's father had left him above an hundred thousand marks; and this he endeavoured to augment by all expedients: in order to his expedition to the Holy Land. He set up to sale the revenues and manors of the crown, and several offices of the greatest trust and power. Liberties, charters, castles, and employments, were given to the best bidders. When some of his friends suggested the danger attending this venality, he told them he would sell the city of London itself, if he could find a purchaser. In these times we find but one man who was honest enough to retire from employment, when places were become thus ignominious. This was the great lawyer Glanville, who resigned his post of justiciary. Richard was not much displeased at his resignation, as he was able shortly after to sell his employment to Hugh, bishop of Durham, for a thousand marks. Thus the king, elated with the hopes of fame, was blind to every other consideration. Numerous exactions were practised upon people
of

of all ranks and stations. A zealous preacher of those times was so bold as to remonstrate against the king's conduct; and advised him to part with his three daughters, which were pride, avarice, and sensuality. To this Richard readily replied, "You counsel right, my friend; and I have already provided husbands for them all. I will dispose of my pride to the templars; my avarice to the monks; and as for my sensuality, the clergy shall share that among them." At length having got together a sufficient supply for his undertaking; he set out for the Holy Land, whither he was impelled by repeated messages from the king of France, who was ready to embark in the same enterprise.

* The first place of rendezvous for the two armies of England and France, was the plain of Vezelay, on the borders of Burgundy, where, when Richard and Philip arrived, they found their armies amounting to an hundred thousand fighting men. These were all ardent in the cause; the flower of both dominions, and provided with all the implements and accoutrements of war. Here the French prince, and the English, entered into the most solemn engagements of mutual support; and having determined to conduct their armies to the Holy Land by sea, they parted, one for Genoa, the other for Marseilles, with a view of meeting the fleets that were to attend them at their respective stations. It was not long after that both fleets put to sea; and nearly about the same time were obliged, by stress
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* A. D. 1190.

of weather, to take shelter in Messina, the capital of Sicily, where they were detained during the whole winter. Richard took up his quarters in the suburbs; Philip in the town, and lived upon good terms with the Sicilian king.

It is now unknown what gave rise to a quarrel, which happened soon after, between the Sicilians and the English; it is doubtful whether the intrigues of the French king, or the violent proceedings of Richard. Certain it is, that the Messinese soon took occasion to treat the English with great insolence; shut their gates, manned their walls, and set Richard at defiance. Richard, who had hitherto acted as a friend, endeavoured to use the mediation of Philip; but while the two monarchs were in deliberation, a body of Sicilians issued from the town, and attacked the English with great impetuosity. This insult was sufficient to excite the fury of Richard, who conscious of his own superior force, assaulted the city with such fury, that it was soon taken, and the standard of England displayed on the ramparts. Philip, who considered the place as his quarters, exclaimed against the insult, and ordered some of his troops to pull down that mark of his disgrace. To this, Richard returned for answer, that he was willing to take down the standard, since it displeased his associate; but that no power on earth should compel him to do so. This was sufficient to produce a mutual jealousy between these two princes, which never after subsided.

‡ Many were the mistrusts, and the mutual reconciliations between these two monarchs, which

‡ A. D. 1191.

which were probably inflamed by the Sicilian king. At length, however, having settled all controversies, they set sail for the Holy Land, where the French arrived long before the English. Their little knowledge of the art of sailing, made that passage by sea long and dangerous, which is now considered as trifling. Richard's fleet was once more encountered by a tempest, and two of the ships driven upon the coast of the island of Cyprus. Isaac, who was then prince of that country, either impelled by avarice, or willing to discourage the rest of Richard's fleet from landing, pillaged the ships that were stranded, and threw the seamen and soldiers into prison. But Richard who soon after arrived, took ample vengeance for that injury. He disembarked his troops, defeated the tyrant, entered the capital by storm, obliged Isaac to surrender at discretion, and took the island into his own possession. It was there that Richard married Berengaria, daughter to the king of Navarre, who had attended him in his expedition; and whom he had preferred to Adalais, the king of France's sister, whose fidelity he suspected.

Upon the arrival of the English army in Palestine, the French and English princes seemed to forget their secret jealousies. In besieging the city of Acon, while the one made the attack the other guarded the trenches; and this duty they performed each day alternately. By this conduct that garrison, after a long and obstinate resistance, was obliged to capitulate; and, upon condition of having their lives spared, they promised to restore all the

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the prisoners that had been made by the Saracens, and to deliver up the wood of the true cross. Such were the amazing advantages that attended an enterprize that had laid Asia in blood; and had, in a great measure, depopulated Europe of its bravest forces!

Immediately after the conquest of this place, Philip declared his resolution of retiring to France. He pleaded the bad state of his health; and, left Richard ten thousand of his troops under the command of the duke of Burgundy. Richard, being now left sole conductor of the war, went on from victory to victory. The christian adventurers, under his command, determined to besiege Ascalon, in order to prepare the way for attacking Jerusalem. Saladin, the most renowned of all the Saracen monarchs, placed himself upon the road with an army of three hundred thousand men. This was a day equal to Richard's wishes, this an enemy worthy his highest ambition. The English were victorious. Richard, when the wings of his army were defeated, led on the main body in person, and restored the battle. The Saracens fled in the utmost confusion; and no less than forty thousand perished on the field of battle. Ascalon soon surrendered; other cities followed the example, and Richard was at last able to advance within sight of Jerusalem. † But just at this glorious juncture, his ambition was to suffer a total overthrow. Upon reviewing his forces, he found his army so wasted with famine, fatigue, and even with victory, that they were neither able nor willing to second the

† A. D. 1192.

the views of their commander. It appeared, therefore, absolutely necessary to come to an accommodation with Saladin; and a truce for three years was accordingly concluded, in which it was agreed, that the sea-port towns of Palestine should remain in the hands of the christians; and that all of that religion should be permitted to make their pilgrimage to Jerusalem in perfect security.

Richard, having thus concluded his expedition with more glory than advantage, began to think of returning home. But he was at a loss how to proceed. If he should take shipping, and return by the way he came, he must necessarily put himself into the power of the king of France. No way, therefore, was left but by going more to the north; wherefore taking shipping for Italy, he was wrecked near Aquileia. From thence directing his travels towards Ragusa, and putting on the disguise of a pilgrim, he resolved to make his way, in that private manner, through Germany. But his quality was suspected; and the governor of Istria pursued him, in order to make him a prisoner. Being thus forced from the direct road, and now become a fugitive, he was obliged to pass by Vienna, where his expences and liberalities betraying his dignity, tho' disguised in the habit of a pilgrim, he was arrested by Leopold duke of Austria, who commanded him to be imprisoned and loaded with shackles, to the disgrace of honour and humanity. This prince had served under Richard at the siege of Acon; and being disgusted on some affront, offered

offered him by his commander, he took this base method of retaliating the injury. His avarice, also, might have had a share in this procedure, as he expected a large share of that ransom which he knew would be given by the English. Henry the sixth, who was then emperor of Germany, was equally an enemy to Richard, on account of the alliance contracted between him, and Tancred king of Sicily, by his marriage with Berengaria. When therefore, shortly after, he received the news of Richard's being in custody, he required the prisoner to be delivered up to him, and stipulated a large sum of money to the duke as a reward for this service. Thus the king of England, who had long filled the world with his fame, was basely thrown into a dungeon, and loaded with irons, by those who expected to reap a sordid advantage from his misfortunes. It was a long time before his subjects in England knew what was become of their beloved monarch. So little intercourse was there between different nations at that time, that this discovery is said to have been made by a poor French minstrel, who playing upon his harp near the fortress in which Richard was confined, a tune which he knew that unhappy monarch was fond of, he was answered by the king from within, who with his harp played the same tune; and thus discovered the place of his confinement.

In the mean time, his affairs in England were in a very unprosperous situation. The kingdom was under the government of two prelates, one of whom had bought his place,
and

and the other had risen to it by the meanest arts of adulation. The bishop of Durham was ignorant and avaricious. Longchamp his colleague, bishop of Ely, was elated by the consciousness of his master's favour. Tempers so opposite soon began their enmity; and Longchamp went so far, as to arrest the person of his colleague; who was obliged to resign his power to obtain his liberty. It was to no purpose, that the king by his letters commanded Longchamp to re-place his co-adjutor; this haughty prelate refused to obey. He proceeded, still to govern the kingdom alone; and as he knew his situation was precarious, he encreased the number of his guards, without which he never ventured from his palace. In the universal disgust, which so much power and magnificence naturally produced against him, there were none hardy enough to controul his will, except John the king's brother, who, having been personally disoblged by this prelate, was willing to catch the present favourable occasion, of universal discontent, to oppose him. He accordingly summoned at Reading, a general council of the nobility and prelates; and cited Longchamp to appear before them. Longchamp, unwilling to trust himself in their power, shut himself up in the Tower of London. From thence he fled, in the disguise of a female habit, beyond sea; upon which the archbishop of Rouen was made justiciary in his room. These dissensions were soon known by the king of France, who was by this time returned from the Holy Land

Land. He made all possible use of Longchamp's resentment to divide the English; and had almost prevailed upon John, to throw off his allegiance, by an offer of putting him in possession of all Richard's continental dominions.

‡ It was in this precarious situation of affairs, that the English were first informed of the king's captivity. The Queen Dowager was enraged at the treatment of her favourite son. The people testified their regard for him with all the marks of violence and despair. The clergy considered him as a sufferer in the cause of the church; and all mouths were filled with the nobleness of his actions, and the greatness of his fall. But while these testified the sincerity of their sorrow, some did all they could to prolong his captivity. Of this number was the king of France, his ancient enemy, and his own brother John, who, forgetting every tie of kindred, duty, or gratitude, on the first invitation from Philip, suddenly went abroad, and held a conference with him, in which the perpetual captivity of Richard was agreed upon. He stipulated to deliver into Philip's hands a great part of Normandy; and in return, he received the French king's assurances of being secured on the English throne. In consequence of this treaty, Philip invaded Normandy, the fortresses of which were delivered up to him after a colour of opposition; and all but Rouen were subjected to his authority. John, on his side, was equally assiduous to secure England; and, upon his arrival in London,

Vol. I. K claimed

‡ A. D. 1193.

claimed the throne, as being heir to his brother, of whose death he pretended to have received certain intelligence. But his claim was rejected by all the barons, who took such measures to provide for the security of the kingdom, that John was obliged to return to the continent, and openly to acknowledge his alliance with the king of France.

In the mean time, the unhappy Richard suffered all the mortifications that malicious tyranny could inflict. The emperor, in order to make him submit to the payment of a larger ransom, treated him with the greatest severity, and reduced him to a condition worse than that of the meanest malefactor. Richard, however, was too noble-spirited to be depressed by those indignities. As he did not know what extremities he might be reduced to, or what condescensions he might be obliged to make, he wrote to the justiciary of England to obey no orders that should come from him, if they seemed in the least contrary to his honour, or the good of the nation. His precautions were well founded; for the emperor, willing to intimidate him, had him accused at the diet of Worms of many crimes and misdemeanors, partly to justify his own cruelty, and partly to swell the ransom. There he was charged with making an alliance with Tancred, the usurper of Sicily; of turning the arms of the crusade against a christian prince; of affronting the duke of Austria before Acon; of obstructing the progress of the christian arms, by his contests with the king of France; of concluding a
truce

truce with Saladin, and leaving Jerusalem in the hands of the infidels. These frivolous charges were heard by Richard with becoming indignation. He even waved his dignity to answer them; and so fully vindicated himself before the princes who composed the diet, that they exclaimed loudly against the conduct of the emperor, while the pope threatened him with excommunication. This barbarous monarch now saw that he could no longer detain his prisoner. He therefore was willing to listen to terms of accommodation. A ransom was agreed upon, which amounted to an hundred and fifty thousand marks. Of this, Richard was to pay one hundred thousand, before he received his liberty; and sixty-seven hostages were to be delivered for the remainder. The agreement being thus made, Richard sent Hubert, one of his faithful followers in the Holy Land, to England, with the terms upon which he was to receive his liberty, and with a commission to raise money for that purpose. * But the ardour of the people out-went the cool offerings of their duty; great sums were raised by voluntary contribution, to purchase the freedom of their king. The churches and monasteries melted down their plate; the bishops, abbots, and nobles, paid a fourth of their annual income; the inferior clergy contributed a tenth of their tythes, and the requisite sum being amassed; queen Eleanor and the justiciary immediately set out for Germany.

K 2

His

* A. D. 1194.

His releasement from captivity was performed with great ceremony at Mentz, in presence of the German nobility; the money was paid by queen Eleanor, and the hostages were delivered as a security for the remainder. In the mean time the emperor beheld his releasement with an agitation of all the malignant passions. He could not bear to see one he had made his enemy in a state of felicity; he could not bear to lose the superior advantages that were offered for his detention. All his terrors, from his own subjects, gave way to the superior dictates of avarice; he therefore once more resolved to send him back to his former prison, and gave orders to have him pursued and arrested. But the messengers were too late. Richard, well acquainted with his perfidy, had ordered some shipping to attend him at the mouth of the Scheld. Upon his arrival at the place, he went instantly on board, and was out of sight of land when his pursuers reached Antwerp.

Nothing could exceed the joy of the English, upon seeing their monarch return, after all his achievements and sufferings. He made his entry into London in triumph; and such was the profusion of wealth shewn by the citizens, that the German lords who attended him were heard to say, that if the emperor had known of their affluence, he would not so easily have parted with their king. He, soon after, ordered himself to be crowned anew at Winchester. He convoked a general council at Nottingham, at which he confiscated all his traitorous brother's possessions; and then having made preparations for

for avenging himself on the king of France, set sail with a strong body of forces for Normandy.

Richard was but one day landed, when his faithless brother John came to throw himself at his monarch's feet. At the intercession of queen Eleanor, he was received into favour. "I forgive him," said the king; "and I wish I could as easily forget his offences as he will forget my pardon." This condescension was not lost upon a man, whose heart was not dead to every sentiment of humanity. From that time he served him faithfully; and did him signal services in his battles with the king of France, which followed soon after. These wars, * which produced no remarkable event, nor were succeeded by any permanent consequences, only served to keep the animosity of the two nations alive, without fixing their claims or pretensions. The most remarkable circumstance, in the tedious journals of those transactions, is the taking the bishop of Beauvais captive at the head of his vassals, and his being put in prison by Richard. When the pope demanded his liberty, and claimed him as a child of the church, the king sent his holiness the bloody coat of mail, which that prelate had worn in battle; asking whether that was the coat of his son. The cruelty of both parties was in this manner enflamed by insult and revenge. Both kings frequently put out the eyes of their prisoners, and treaties were concluded and broke with very little repugnance. At length, the pope's legate induced them to commence a

K 3

treaty,

* A. D. 1195.

treaty, which promised to be attended with a firmer reconciliation; but the death of Richard put an end to the contest.

‡ Aymar, viscount of Limoges, a vassal of the crown, had taken possession of a treasure, which was found by one of his peasants in digging a field; and to secure the remainder he sent a part of it to the king. Richard, as superior lord, sensible that he had a right to the whole, insisted on its being sent him; and, upon refusal, attacked the castle of Chalus, where he understood this treasure had been deposited. On the fourth day of the siege, as he was riding round the place to observe where the assault might be given, he was aimed at by one Bertram de Jourdon, from the castle, and pierced in the shoulder with an arrow. The wound was not in itself dangerous; but an unskilful surgeon endeavouring to disengage the arrow from the flesh, so rankled the wound, that it mortified, and brought on fatal symptoms. Richard, when he found his end approaching, made a will, in which he bequeathed the kingdom, with all his treasure, to his brother John, except a fourth part which he distributed among his servants. He ordered also, that the archer who had shot him, should be brought into his presence, and demanded what injury he had done him that he should take away his life? The prisoner answered with deliberate intrepidity: "You killed, with your own hands, my father, and my two brothers; and you intended to have hanged me. I am now in your power, and my torments may give you re-
venge;

venge; but I will endure them with pleasure, since it is my consolation, that I have rid the world of a tyrant." Richard, struck with this answer, ordered the soldier to be presented with one hundred shillings, and set at liberty; but Marcade the general who commanded under him, like a true ruffian, ordered him to be flead alive. Richard died in the tenth year of his reign, and the forty-second of his age, leaving only one natural son, called Philip behind him.

Richard had all the qualities that could gain the admiration and love of a barbarous age. He was open, magnanimous, generous, and brave, to a degree of romantic excess. But he was also proud, passionate, and revengeful; as bold and as fierce as a lion. He was tall and well-made. His eyes were blue and sparkling, and his hair of a bright yellow. He was not in England above eight months, during the whole course of his reign. And his severe afflictions seem to have been a just return for those he brought upon a tender Father.



C H A P. X.

J O H N.

THE king of France, who was the only monarch that could assist the pretensions of a rival, had long declared for John's title; and during the life of his brother, had given him the most convincing proofs of sincerity in his assistance. But it was otherwise, now. * Philip began to shew, that his former alliances were calculated not to serve John, but to distress England. There was an old claimant of the crown; Arthur, the son of Geoffry, a youth, twelve years of age. Philip, who only desired an occasion to embarrass John, soon resolved to second his pretensions; and several of the continental barons immediately declared in favour of Arthur's succession.

John, who was readily put in possession of the English throne, lost no time to second his interest on the continent; and his first care was to recover the revolted provinces from young Arthur, his nephew. The war, therefore, between the English and French king was renewed with all its former animosity, and all its usual detail of petty victories, and undecisive

* A. D. 1199.

undecisive engagements. At length, a treaty put an end to those contests, and it was hastened by a circumstance peculiarly favourable. John's nephew, Arthur, together with Constantia, his mother, distrusting the designs of the king of France, came to throw themselves on his mercy, and restored the provinces which still continued in their interest. Thus this monarch saw himself undisputed monarch of all the dominions which were annexed to the English throne. But he was ill able to preserve that power by his prudence, which was obtained by the mutual jealousies of his enemies. His first transgression was his marriage with Isabella, the daughter of count Angoulême, while the queen was yet alive; nay, and while Isabella belonged to another husband, the count de la Marche, who ardently loved her. † Does it not undeniably follow, that Isabella never was his lawful wife? Consequently, that his children by her, were bastards? What right then could they or any of their posterity, The Stuarts in particular, have to the crown of England? Certainly none by birth: even supposing John to have had a right to the throne. But he had none. Matilda had a prior right, from whom King George is lineally descended.

But to return, Arthur, who, with his mother, had so imprudently resigned themselves to his protection, soon perceived their error. Observing somewhat suspicious in his manner of conducting himself to them, they fled from Mans, where he detained them, and retired in the night to Angers, from whence they

K 5,

wente

† A. D. 1209.

went once more to take refuge with their old protector. As it was Philip's interest to treat them with all possible indulgence, they were received with great marks of distinction; and young Arthur's interests were soon after very vigorously supported. One town after another submitted to his authority; and all his attempts seemed attended with success. But his unfortunate ardour soon put an end to his hopes. Being of an enterprising disposition, he had laid siege to a fortress in which the dowager-queen was. John falling upon his little army, before they were aware, the young prince was taken prisoner, together with the most considerable of the revolted barons. The greater part of the prisoners were sent over to England; but the prince himself was shut up in the castle of Falaise. What afterwards became of him is not well known: certain it is, he was never heard of more.

John was now surrounded by difficulties on every side. The loss of all his French provinces immediately followed. Not but that he attempted a defence; and even laid siege to Alençon, one of the towns that had revolted from him. But Philip, his active rival, quickly obliged him to raise the siege.

* Normandy soon followed the fate of the French provinces. Chateau Gaillard, one of its strongest fortresses, being taken after an obstinate siege, the whole duchy soon submitted to his authority; and thus, after being for above three centuries dismembered from the French monarchy, was again reunited.

John

A. D. 1205

John, on his arrival in England, laid the blame of his ill success upon his barons, who had deserted his standard in Normandy. To punish them for this, he levied large sums upon their estates, under colour of preparations for a Norman expedition; which, however, he deferred till the next year. † He then embarked with a large army, landed at Rochelle, marched to Angers, subdued a considerable part of Poitou; and having concluded a truce for two years, re-embarked for England.

Hubert the archbishop of Canterbury now died; and the Augustine monks privately made choice of Reginald, their sub-prior. The bishops exclaimed at this election, as a manifest invasion of their privileges; and a furious contest was likely to ensue. A politic prince would have seized such a conjuncture; and have managed the quarrel so as to enfeeble the exorbitant power of the clergy, by enflaming their mutual animosity. But John sided with the suffragan bishops; and John de Gray, bishop of Norwich, was unanimously chosen. To decide the claims of both parties, it was expedient to appeal to Rome; an agent was sent by the bishops to maintain their cause, while the monks dispatched twelve of their order to support their pretensions. Innocent III. who then filled the chair, possessed an unbounded share of power, and his talents were equal to it. He seized that conjuncture which John failed to use; and vacating the claims of both parties, enjoined the monks to chuse Cardinal Stephen Langton, an Englishman, then at Rome, to fill the vacant dignity.

K 6.

This

This was an encroachment the see of Rome had long been aiming at, and that it was now resolved to maintain. The being able to nominate to the greatest dignity in the kingdom, next that of the king, was an acquisition that would effectually give the court of Rome an authority, which it had hitherto vainly pretended to assume. † To reconcile John to this, the people sent him a most affectionate letter, with a present of four gold rings. John received the rings, but was resolved not to admit Stephen Langton as archbishop of Canterbury.

§ The pope proceeded to threats, and at last sent three English prelates to the king to inform him, that if he persevered in his disobedience, he would put the kingdom under an interdict. All the other prelates threw themselves on their knees before the king; and entreated him in the most earnest manner not to bring upon them the resentment of the holy tribunal; and exhorted him to receive the newly elected primate. But these entreaties served only to enflame his resentment. He swore by God's teeth, his usual oath, that if the kingdom was put under an interdict, he would banish the whole body of the clergy, and confiscate their possessions. This idle threat only served to hasten the resentment of the pontiff, who at last issued the sentence of the interdict. This[‡] was calculated to strike the senses in the highest degree, and to operate upon the superstitious minds of the people. By it a stop was immediately put to divine service, and to the administration of all the sacraments

† A. D. 1207.

§ A. D. 1208.

Sacraments but baptism. The church doors were shut, the statutes of the saints were laid on the ground. The dead were refused christian burial, and were thrown into ditches and on the highways, without any funeral solemnity. Marriage was celebrated in the church-yards, and the people prohibited the use of flesh, as in times of public penance. They were prohibited shaving their beards, saluting each other, or giving any attention to their apparel. Every circumstance seemed calculated to inspire religious terror; and testified the apprehensions of divine vengeance. Against such a calamity, increased by the deplorable lamentations of the clergy, it was in vain that John exerted all his authority, threatened and punished, and opposed the terrors of his temporal power to their ecclesiastical censures. It was in vain that he banished some, and confined others; it was in vain that he treated the adherents of Langton with rigour, and ordered all the concubines of the clergy to be imprisoned. John saw himself every day growing more obnoxious. The barons, were almost to a man his enemies. The clergy represented him in the most odious light to the people; and nothing remained to him but the feeble relics of that power, which had been so strongly fixed by his grandfather, that it was not yet totally overthrown.

|| In the mean time, the pope seeing all the consequences he expected attending the interdict; and that the king, was thus rendered perfectly disagreeable to his subjects, resolved to second his blow; and while the people were

|| A. D. 1209.

were yet impressed with terror, to take advantage of their consternation. The church of Rome had artificially contrived a gradation of sentences; by which, while she inflicted one punishment, she taught the sufferers to expect more formidable consequences from that which was to ensue. On the back of the interdict therefore, came the sentence of excommunication, by which John was at once rendered impious, and unfit for human society. No sooner was this terrible sentence denounced against him, than his subjects, began to think of opposing his authority. * And yet it is remarkable, that quickly after the archbishops and great men gave the king an aid, for the defence of the kingdom, and the recovery of his dominions in France. Could this have been, if he had then been so odious and contemptible, as he is generally said to have been?

In June, some commotions happening in Ireland, the king went over with a large army. Thirty petty princes came and swore fealty to him at Dublin, and the king of Connaught author of the troubles was brought to obedience. And can any one believe, that king John was at this time universally hated and despised?

† The next gradation of papal indignation, was to absolve John's subjects from their oaths of fidelity and allegiance; and to declare every one excommunicated who had any commerce with him in public or private; at his table, in his council, or even in private conversation. Notwithstanding this, we find
John

* A. D. 1210. † A. D. 1211.

John, this very year, marching into the furthest parts of Wales with a large army, forcing the princes and nobles to a submission, and returning with eight and twenty hostages.

The next year the Welsh having made fresh ravages, he put all their hostages to death, and prepared to carry the war into Wales; but being informed of a conspiracy against him, he suddenly returned to London. Meantime being apprehensive of the fidelity of his barons, he required their sons and daughters, as hostages for their obedience. He banished several great men who were in the conspiracy, but treated the rest of his subjects with mildness. † In the mean while the pope, who had resolved on giving the kingdom to another, was employed in fixing upon a person, who was willing to accept the donation, and had power to vindicate his claim. Philip, the king of France, seemed of all others the fittest, he was politic and powerful, he had already despoiled John of his continental dominions, and was the most likely person to deprive him of the remainder. To him, therefore, the pope made a tender of the kingdom of England; and Philip ardently embraced the offer. To strengthen the hands of Philip still more, the pope published a crusade against the deposed monarch all over Europe; exhorting the nobility, the knights, and men of every condition, to take up arms against that persecutor of the church. Philip was not less active on his part; he levied a great army, and collected a fleet of seventeen hundred vessels in the sea-ports of Normandy and Picardy.

† A. D. 1212.

Picardy, already in imagination devouring the kingdom.

|| John, put himself at the head of sixty thousand men, and with these advanced to Dover. Europe now regarded the important preparations on both sides with impatience; and the decisive blow was soon expected, in which the church was to triumph, or to be overthrown. But neither Philip nor John had ability equal to the pontiff by whom they were actuated; he appeared on this occasion too refined a politician for either. He only intended by Philip to intimidate his refractory son, not to destroy him. He expected more advantages from his agreement with a prince, of so abject a fortune, than from his alliance with a great and victorious monarch; who, having nothing else left to conquer, might convert his power against his benefactor. He therefore, secretly commissioned Pandolf his legate, to admit of John's submission, in case it should be offered, and he dictated the terms which would be proper for him to impose. In consequence of this, the legate passed through France, to Dover, and had a conference with John. He there represented the numbers of the enemy, and the secret confederacy there was in England against him. He intimated, that there was but one way to secure himself from impending danger; which was, to put himself under the pope's protection, who was a merciful father, and still willing to receive a repenting sinner to his bosom. John assented to the truth of the legate's remonstrances, and took an oath to perform whatever the

Pope

popé should impose. He required him to take the most extraordinary oath in all the records of history, kneeling upon his knees, and with his hands held up between those of the legate.

“ I John, by the grace of God, king of
 “ England, and lord of Ireland, in order to
 “ expiate my sins, from my own free will,
 “ and the advice of my barons, give to the
 “ church of Rome, to pope Innocent, and
 “ his successors, the kingdom of England, and
 “ all other prerogatives of my crown. I will
 “ hereafter hold them as the pope’s vassal. I
 “ will be faithful to God, to the church of
 “ Rome, to the pope my master, and his suc-
 “ cessors legitimately elected. I promise to
 “ pay him a tribute of a thousand marks
 “ yearly ; to wit, seven hundred for the king-
 “ dom of England, and three hundred for
 “ the kingdom of Ireland.” Having thus
 done homage to the legate, and agreed to re-
 instate Langton in the primacy, he received
 the crown, which he had been supposed to
 forfeit.

Thus, after all his armaments, Philip saw himself disappointed of his prey. Nevertheless, as he had undertaken it at the pope’s request, he was resolved to prosecute the war, in opposition to him and all his censures. But in the mean time, the English admiral attacked the French fleet in their harbours, where he took three hundred ships, and destroyed an hundred more. Philip finding it impossible to prevent the rest from falling into the hands of the enemy, set fire to them himself, and was thus obliged to give up all designs upon England.

King

King John now resolved to carry the war into France, but as he was ready to embark, the barons sent him word, they could not attend him, unless he was first absolved from his excommunication. This was accordingly done, but still they refused, and quarrelled with him afresh. After they were reconciled, he went over to France, subdued Poitou and most of Anjou, a peace was then concluded between the two crowns.

* The barons had been long forming a confederacy against him ; and were now encouraged by Langton the primate. At a synod of his clergy, convened in St. Paul's, on pretence of examining into the losses sustained by the exiled bishops, he conferred privately with a number of barons, shewed them a copy of Henry the first's charter, and exhorted them to insist on the renewal and observance of it. The barons swore they would lose their lives sooner than forego those claims, and the confederacy every day began to spread wider.

A new and a more numerous meeting was summoned by Langton, at St. Edmundsbury, under colour of devotion. He again produced the charter of Henry ; and they agreed, that after Christmas they would prefer their common petition in a body ; and in the mean time separated, with resolutions to enlist men, and fortify their castles. † Pursuant to their promise, they repaired in the beginning of January to London, accoutered in military garb and equipage, and presented their demands to the king ; alledging, that he had promised to grant them, at the time he con-

fented

* A. D. 1214. † A. D. 1215

sent to a confirmation of the laws of Edward the Confessor. John desired time to consider of an answer to their demands. He promised, that at the festival of Easter, he would give a positive reply to their petition; and offered them the archbishop of Canterbury, the bishop of Ely, and the earl mareschal, as sureties for fulfilling his engagements. The barons accepted the terms, and peaceably returned to their habitations.

After waiting till Easter, when the king promised to return them an answer, upon the approach of that festival they met, by agreement, at Stamford. There they assembled a force of above two thousand knights, and a body of foot, to a prodigious number. † From thence, they marched to Brackley, about fifteen miles from Oxford, the place where the court then resided. John, hearing of their approach, sent the archbishop of Canterbury, the earl of Pembroke, and others of his council, to know the particulars of their request. The barons delivered a schedule, containing the chief articles of their demands, and of which the charters of Henry and Edward formed the groundwork. On his refusal to comply, they chose Robert Fitzwalter for their general, and proceeded without ceremony to make war upon the king. They besieged Northampton, they took Bedford, they were joyfully received into London. They wrote circular letters to all the nobility and gentlemen who had not yet declared in their favour, and menaced their estates with devastation, in case of refusal or delay.

In

† A. D. 1215. Apr. 27.

In the mean time the king was left at a place called Odiham in Surry, with a mean retinue of only seven knights, where he endeavoured to avert the storm, by the mediation of his bishops and ministers. At length he desired a conference with the Barons, which accordingly was appointed.

The ground where the king's commissioners met the barons was between Staines and Windsor, at a place called Runimede, still held in reverence by posterity, as the spot where the standard of freedom was first erected in England. There the barons appeared, with a vast number of knights and warriors, on the fifteenth day of June, while those on the king's part, came a day or two after. Both sides encamped apart. The debate between power and precedent are generally but of short continuance. The barons, determined on carrying their aims, would admit of few abatements; and the king's agents being for the most part in their interests, few debates ensued. After some days, the king signed and sealed the charter required of him; a charter which continues in force to this day, and is the famous bulwark of English liberty, and goes by the name of **MAGNA CHARTA**. This famous deed, either granted or secured very important privileges to those orders of the kingdom that were already possessed of freedom, namely, to the clergy, the barons, and the gentlemen; as for the inferior, and the greatest part of the people, they were as yet held as slaves.

The

The clergy, by this charter, had their former grants confirmed. All check upon appeals to Rome was removed, by allowance to every man to depart the kingdom at pleasure; and the fines upon the clergy, for any offence, were to be proportionable to their temporal, not their ecclesiastical possessions. With respect to the barons, they were secured in the custody of the vacant abbies and convents, which were under their patronage. The duties to be paid for earldoms, baronies, and knights fees were fixed, which before were arbitrary. This charter decreed, that barons should recover the lands of their vassals, forfeited for felony, after being a year and a day in possession of the crown; that they should enjoy the wardships of their military tenants, who held other lands of the crown by a different tenure; that a person knighted by the king, though a minor, should enjoy the privileges of a full grown man, provided he was a ward of the crown. It enacted that heirs should be married without disparagement, and before the marriage was contracted, the nearest relations were to be informed of it. No tax, was to be imposed upon the people by the great council of the nation, except in three particular cases, the king's captivity, the knighting his eldest son, and the marrying his eldest daughter. When the great council was to be assembled, the prelates, earls, and great barons were to be called to it by a particular writ, the lesser barons by a summons of the sheriff. It went on to ordain, that the king shall not seize any baron's land for a debt

debt to the crown, if the baron possesses personal property sufficient to discharge the debt. No vassal shall be allowed to sell so much of his land, as to incapacitate him from performing the necessary service to his lord. With respect to the people, the following were the principal clauses calculated for their benefit. It was ordained, that all the privileges, and immunities, granted by the king to his barons, should be also granted by the barons to their vassals. One weight, and one measure, shall be observed throughout the whole kingdom; merchants shall be allowed to transact all business, without being exposed to any arbitrary tolls and impositions; they, and all freemen, shall be allowed to go out of the kingdom, and return to it at pleasure; London, and all cities and boroughs shall preserve their ancient liberties, immunities, and free customs; aids or taxes, shall not be required of them, except by the consent of the great council; no towns, or individuals, shall be obliged to make, or support bridges but by ancient customs; the goods of every freeman shall be disposed of according to his will; if he die intestate, his heirs shall succeed to them; no officer of the crown shall take any horses, carts, or wood, without the consent of the owner; the king's court of justice shall be stationary, and shall no longer follow his person; they shall be open to every one, and justice shall no longer be refused, or delayed by them; the sheriffs shall be incapacitated to hold pleas of the crown, and shall not put any person upon
his

his trial, from rumour or suspicion alone, but upon the evidence of lawful witnesses; no freeman shall be taken, or imprisoned, or dispossessed of his tenement and liberties, or outlawed, or banished, or anywise hurt, unless by the legal judgment of his peers, or by the law of the land; and all who suffered otherwise in this, and the two former reigns, shall be restored to their rights and possessions; every freeman shall be fined in proportion to his fault, and no fine shall be levied on him to his utter ruin. Such were the stipulations in favour of that part of the people, who, being either merchants, or the descendants of the nobles, or of the clergy, were independent of any immediate lord. But that part of the people who tilled the ground, who constituted, the majority of the nation, had but one single clause in their favour, which stipulated, that no villain should by any fine be bereaved of his carts, ploughs, and instruments of husbandry. As for the rest, they were considered as a part of the property belonging to an estate, and passed away, with the horses, cows, and other moveables, at the will of the owner.

This great charter being agreed to by all, and mutually signed by both parties, the barons, in order to secure the observance of it, prevailed on the king, to appoint twenty-five of their order conservators of the public liberty. These were to admonish the king, if he should act contrary to his obligations; in case of resistance, they might levy war against him, and attack his castles. John, submitted to all these regulations, however injurious to majesty;

majesty; and even sent writs to the sheriffs, ordering them to constrain every one to swear obedience to the twenty-five barons. His subjects therefore flattered themselves with brighter prospects; and it was thought the king's misfortunes had humanized his disposition.

But John burned with desire to shake off the conditions they had imposed upon him. The submissions he had paid to the pope, and the insults he had sustained from the king of France, slightly affected him, as they were his equals; but the sense of his subjection to his own vassals, sunk deep on his mind. He grew sullen, silent, and reserved. He shunned the society of his former companions; and retired into the Isle of Wight, to hide his disgrace in solitude. But he sent to the continent to enlist a large body of mercenary troops; he made complaints to the pope of the insurrections of his subjects against him; and the pontiff very warmly espoused his cause. A bull was sent over, annulling the whole charter; and at the same time the foreign forces arrived.

The barons, after obtaining the charter, seemed to have been lulled into security; and took no measures for assembling their forces. The king, therefore was for some time undisputed master of the field, at the head of an army of Germans, Brabantines, and Flemings, all eager for battle, and inspired with the hopes of dividing the kingdom among them. The castle of Rochester was first invested; and, after an obstinate resistance, obliged to surrender

surrender at discretion. After the reduction of this important fortress, the royal interests began to prevail; and two armies were formed, with one of which the king marched northward, subduing all fortresses. The other army, commanded by the earl of Salisbury, was equally vigorous and successful; several submitted at its approach, and London itself was in the utmost danger.

* The barons, reduced to this deplorable situation, lost all power of self-defence. In this desperate exigence, they applied to Philip, king of France; and offered to acknowledge Lewis, the eldest son of that monarch, as their sovereign, on condition of his affording them protection. No proffer could have been more agreeable to this ambitious monarch, who long wanted to annex England to his dominions. He therefore instantly embraced the proposal of the barons; of whom, however, he demanded five and twenty hostages. These being sent over, he began to make the most diligent preparations for this expedition, regardless of the menaces of the pope, who threatened Philip with excommunication, and actually excommunicated Lewis some time after. The first detachment consisted of a body of seven thousand men, which he reinforced soon after by a powerful army, commanded by Lewis himself, who landed at Sandwich without opposition.

John, who just now saw himself in the career of victory, upon the landing of the French army was stopped all of a sudden. The first effect of their appearance was, that

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* A. D. 1215.

most of the foreign troops deserted, refusing to serve against the heir of their monarchy. Many noblemen also deserted his party; and his castles daily fell into the hands of his enemies. Thus England saw nothing but a prospect of being every way undone. But what neither human prudence could foresee, nor policy suggest, was brought about by an happy and unexpected concurrence of events.

Lewis having vainly endeavoured to pacify the pope's legate, resolved to set the pope at defiance, and marched his army against the castle of Rochester, which he quickly reduced. Thence he advanced to London, where the barons and burghers did him homage, and took the oath of fealty, after he had sworn to confirm the liberties and privileges of the people. Though never crowned king of England, yet he exercised sovereign authority, granting charters, and appointing officers of state. But how flattering soever the prospect before him appeared, yet there was a secret jealousy that was undermining all his pretensions. He on every occasion shewed a visible preference to his French subjects, to the detriment of those he came to govern. The suspicions of the English against him were still farther increased, by the death-bed confession of the count de Melun, one of his courtiers, who declared to those about him, that it was the intention of Lewis to exterminate the English barons as traitors, and to bestow their dignities and estates upon his own French subjects. This greatly operated upon the minds of the people; so that the earl of Salisbury, and other noble-

noblemen, who had forsaken John's party, once more deserted to him, and gave no small lustre to his cause.

In the mean time, John was assembling a considerable army, with a view to make one great effort; and at the head of a large body of troops, resolved to penetrate into the heart of the kingdom. With these resolutions he departed from Lynn, which, for its fidelity, he had distinguished with many marks of favour, and directed his route towards Lincolnshire. His road lay along the shore, which was overflowed at high-water; but being ignorant of the tides, he lost all his carriages, treasure, and baggage, by their influx. He himself escaped with the greatest difficulty, and arrived at the abbey of Swinestead, where his grief for the loss he had sustained, and the distracted state of his affairs, threw him into a fever. Next day, being unable to ride on horse-back, he was carried in a litter to the castle of Seaford, and from thence removed to Newark, where, after having made his will, he died in the fifty-first year of his age, and the eighteenth of his reign.

The monks have painted king John in the blackest colours, in order to excuse the Pope's proceedings against him. And some faults undoubtedly he had: but he could not possibly be such a monster as they make him, considering the general tenor of his actions, as they themselves relate them. From these very relations it appears, that he was a bold, intrepid man: brave in an high degree, and much esteemed by the generality of his subjects; otherwise he could never have raised

such armies, when at first the pope and all the clergy; then almost all the barons were against him. And he must have had conduct as well as courage; for he scarce ever lost a battle. He really seems to have set out with the same views, and the same spirit as Henry I; determined to oppose the usurped power of the clergy, as well as of the nobles. Therefore both the one and the other blackened him without mercy, and painted him as a monster; whereas, it is probable, he was tho' not the best, yet far from being the worst of the English Princes.

He left two legitimate sons behind him; Henry, who succeeded him on the throne, and was now nine years of age; and Richard, who was about seven. He left also three daughters; Jane, married to Alexander, King of Scots; Eleanor, married to the earl of Pembroke; and Isabella, married to the emperor Frederic II,



C H A P.



C H A P. IX.

H E N R Y III.

* **K**ING John being dead, the partiality of Lewis was the more disgusting, as it was the less concealed. The diffidence which he constantly discovered of the fidelity of the barons, increased their jealousy of him; and an accident happened, which rendered him still more disagreeable to his new subjects. The government of the castle of Hertford becoming vacant, it was claimed as of right by Robert Fitzwalter, a nobleman who had been extremely active in his service: but his claim was rejected. It was now, therefore, apparent, that foreigners were to engross all the favour of their new sovereign. Nor was the excommunication denounced against Lewis by the pope entirely without its effect. In fact the people were easily persuaded to consider a cause as impious, for which they had an insurmountable aversion.

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IX

* A. D. 1216.

In this disposition of the people, the claims of any native, would have had a probable chance of succeeding. A claim was accordingly made in favour of young Henry, the son of the late king, now but nine years of age. The earl of Pembroke, a nobleman of great worth and valour, who had faithfully adhered to John in all the fluctuations of his fortune, was, at this time marshal of England, and consequently at the head of the army. This nobleman determined to support the interests of the young prince, and had him solemnly crowned by the bishops of Winchester and Bath, at Gloucester. In order also to confirm his own authority, a general council of the barons was summoned at Bristol, where the earl was chosen guardian to the king, and protector of the kingdom. His first act was highly pleasing to the people, and reconciled them to the interests of the young prince. He made young Henry grant a new charter of liberties, which contained but very few exceptions from that granted by his predecessor. To this was added a charter, ascertaining the jurisdiction, and the boundaries of the royal forests, which from thence was called the Charta Foresta. By this it was enacted, that all the forests which had been enclosed since the reign of Henry the second, should be restored to the people. Offences on the forests were no longer capital, and all the proprietors of land were granted a power of cutting and using their own wood at pleasure. To these measures, which gave universal satisfaction, Pembroke took care to add his active endeavours against the enemy. He wrote letters,

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in the king's name, to all the malecontent barons, assuring them of his resolutions to govern them by their own charters; and represented the dangers which they incurred by their adherence to a French monarch, who only wanted to oppress them. These assurances were attended with the desired effect. The party of Lewis lost ground every day, by the desertion of its most powerful leaders. The earls of Arundel, and Warene, together with William Marshall, eldest son of the protector, came over to the young king; and all the rest of the barons appeared desirous of an opportunity of following their example.

* The protector was so much strengthened by these accessions, that he took the field; but the French army appearing, he was obliged to retire. The count de Perche, who commanded for Lewis, was so elated with his superiority, that he marched to Lincoln; and being admitted into the town, attacked the castle, which he soon reduced to extremity. The protector, finding that a decisive blow was to be struck, summoned all his forces from every quarter, and in turn, appeared so much superior to the French, that they shut themselves up within the city. But the garrison of the castle having received a strong reinforcement, made a vigorous sally upon the besiegers, while the English army assaulted them from without; and scaling the walls, entered the city sword in hand. Lincoln was delivered over to be pillaged; the French army was totally routed, the commander in chief was killed, and several of the rest made

L 4

prisoners

* A. D. 1217.

prisoners of war. This misfortune of the French was but the fore-runner of another. Their fleet, which was bringing over reinforcements, both of men and money, was attacked by the English, under the command of Philip d' Albiney, and was repulsed with considerable loss. These repeated losses served, at length, to give peace to the kingdom. Lewis finding his cause desperate, began to be anxious for the safety of his person; and was glad to submit to any conditions favourable to his retreat. He concluded a peace with the protector; in which he agreed to leave the kingdom; only requiring an indemnity for all his adherents. Thus ended a civil war, which had for some time drenched the kingdom in blood; and in which not only its constitution, but all its happiness seemed irretrievable. But the earl of Pembroke, the protector, did not long survive his success.

The young king was gentle, easy and good-natured to his dependents; but no way formidable to his enemies. Without activity or vigour, he was unfit to conduct in war; without distrust or suspicion, he was imposed upon in times of peace. A king of such qualifications, was very little fitted to hold the reins of a kingdom, such as England was at that time, where every order was aspiring to independence, and endeavouring to plume themselves with the spoils of the prerogative. || The protector was succeeded in his office by Peter, bishop of Winchester, and Hubert de Burgh, high justiciary; but no authority in the governors could.

|| A. D. 1219.

could control a people, who had been long used to civil discord, and caught every slight occasion to magnify small offences into public grievances. The nobles were now, in effect, the tyrants of the people; -for having almost totally destroyed the power of the crown; and being encouraged by the weakness of a minority, they retained by force the royal castles, which they had usurped during the former convulsions; they oppressed their vassals; they infested their weaker neighbours; and invited all disorderly people to take protection under their authority. It is not then to be wondered, that there were many complaints against those who were placed over them; Hubert de Burgh, who seemed to take the lead in government, at this time experienced many conspiracies, not only against his authority, but his person; and so little did the confederates regard secrecy, that they openly avowed their intentions of removing him from his office. † The barons being required by him to give up their castles, they not only refused, but several of them entered into a confederacy to surprize London; and, with the Earls of Chester and Albemarle at their head, advanced as far as Waltham with that intention. At that time, however, their aims were frustrated by the diligence of the government: and meeting some time after at Leicester, in order to seize the king, they found themselves disappointed in this, as in their former attempt. In this threatening commotion, the power of the church was obliged to interpose; and the archbishops and

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prelates

† A. D. 1225.

prelates threatened the barons with the sentence of excommunication, should they persist either in their attempts upon the king, or in detaining his castles. This menace at last prevailed. Most of the fortresses were surrendered; and the number at that time is said to have amounted to above a thousand. But though Henry gained this advantage by the prudence and perseverance of his minister, yet his power was not yet established. A contest with his brother Richard, who had amassed such sums of money, as to be reckoned the richest prince in Europe, soon shewed the weakness both of his power and his disposition. * Richard had unjustly expelled an inferior baron from his manor; and the king insisted upon his restoring him. The other persisting in his refusal, a powerful confederacy was formed, and an army assembled; which the king had neither power nor courage to resist. Richard's injustice was declared legal; and his resentment was obliged to be mollified by grants of much greater importance than the manor which had been the first ground of the quarrel. Thus was the king obliged to submit to all the demands of his haughty vassals; and he had scarce any person who seemed solicitous for his interests, † but Hubert de Burgh, whom nevertheless, he discarded in a sudden caprice; and thus exposed his faithful servant to the violent persecution of his enemies. Among the many frivolous crimes objected to him, he was accused of gaining the king's affections by enchantment, and of sending the prince of Wales a jewel,

* A. D. 1227.

† A. D. 1232.

jewel, which he had stolen from the treasury, that rendered the wearer invulnerable. Hubert, when he found his ruin resolved on, was compelled to take sanctuary in a church; but the king was prevailed upon to give orders for his being dragged from thence. The clergy interposed, and obliged the king to permit him to return to his sanctuary; but he was once more constrained to surrender himself a prisoner, and was confined to the castle of Devizes. From thence Hubert made his escape; and, though he afterwards obtained the king's pardon, he never had any desire to encounter future dangers in his service.

But as weak princes are never to be without governing favourites, the place of Hubert was soon supplied by Peter de Roches, bishop of Winchester, a Poictevin by birth, one equally remarkable for his arbitrary conduct, and for his courage and abilities. Henry, in pursuance of this prelate's advice, invited over a great number of Poictevins, and other foreigners, who having neither principles nor fortunes at home, * were willing to adopt whatever schemes their employer should propose. Every office and command was bestowed on those unprincipled strangers, whose avarice and rapacity were exceeded only by their pride and insolence. So unjust a partiality to strangers naturally excited the jealousy of the barons; and they even ventured to assure the king, that if he did not dismiss all foreigners from court, they would drive both him and them out of the kingdom. But the bishop of Winchester had taken his measures

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* A. D. 1233.

so well that he brought over the most powerful of the confederates, and the estates of the more obnoxious barons were confiscated, for the benefit of his needy countrymen. In these violent measures the king was a calm spectator; he was contented with present advantages; and while these confiscations procured immediate wealth, he little regarded the consequence. † But yet soon after, at the instance of the Bishops, he was induced to dismiss his minister, and to send him and his needy countrymen out of the kingdom.

It was now expected that the people were to be no longer aggrieved by seeing foreigners advanced above them. But their hopes were quickly disappointed; for the king having married Eleanor, daughter of the count of Provence, he transferred his affections to the strangers of that country. § Places, dignities, and vast treasures, were lavished upon them; many young noblemen, who were wards to the crown, were married to wives of that country; and when the sources of the king's liberality were dried up, he resumed the grants he had formerly made, in order to continue his favours. The resentment of every rank of people was excited by this mischievous attachment; but their anger was scarce kept within bounds when they saw a new swarm of these intruders come over from Gascony, with Isabella, the king's mother, who had been some time before married to the count de la Marche.

To these discontents, those arising from the rapacity of the see of Rome were added shortly after.

† A. D. 1234. § A. D. 1236.

after. The clergy of England, while they were contending for the power of the pope, were not aware that they were effectually opposing their own interests; for the pontiff having, by various arts, obtained the investiture of all livings and prelacies in the kingdom, failed not to fill up every vacancy with his own creatures. His power being established, he now began to turn it to his profit, and to enrich the church by every art of extortion and avarice. † At this time, all the chief benefices of the kingdom were conferred on Italians. Great numbers of that nation were sent over at one time to be provided for; the king's chaplain alone is said to have held at once seven hundred ecclesiastical livings. Foreign Ecclesiastics now possessed seventy thousand marks yearly income in England, while the king's revenue scarce amounted to a third part of that sum. These abuses became too glaring even for the blind superstition of the people to submit to; they rose in tumults against the Italian clergy, pillaged their barns, wasted their fields, and insulted their persons. But these were transient obstacles to the papal encroachments. The pontiff exacted the revenues of all vacant benefices, the twentieth of all ecclesiastical livings without exception, the third of such as exceeded an hundred marks a year, and a half of such as were held by non-residents: he claimed the goods of all intestate clergymen: he pretended a right of inheriting all money got by usury, and he levied voluntary contributions on the people. Meantime, the king being in
great

† A. D. 1237.

great want of money his barons granted him a very liberal supply, for which he renewed their charter with more than usual solemnity. § All the prelates and abbots were assembled, with burning tapers in their hands; the Magna Charta was read in their presence; and they denounced sentence of excommunication against all who should infringe its decisions; they then put out their tapers on the ground, and exclaimed, "May every soul that proves false to this agreement, so stink and corrupt in hell." The king had his part in the ceremony, and subjoined, "So help me God, I will inviolably keep all these things, as I am a man, as I am a christian, as I am a knight, and as I am a king crowned and anointed."

But though the king, in the last convention, had engaged to follow the advice of English counsellors, yet he was directed in all his measures by foreigners, and William de Valence, in particular. This imprudent preference, joined to other illegal steps, impelled Simon Montfort, earl of Leicester, to attempt wresting the scepter from the feeble hand that held it. This nobleman was the son of the famous general who commanded against the Albigenses, whose great fault was their ferocious, unaffected piety, and opposition to some of the errors of Popery. He was married to the king's sister; and, by his power and address, was possessed of a strong interest in the nation. The king was the only person whose favour he disdained to cultivate. He so much disregarded Henry's friendship.

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or enmity, that when the monarch, upon a certain occasion, called him traitor, Leicester gave him the lie; and told him, that if he were not his sovereign, he would soon make him repent of his insult. Being possessed of power too great for a subject, he had long, though secretly, aspired at the throne, and filled all places with complaints of the king's injustice, partiality, and inability to govern.. Having at last found his design ripe for execution, he called a meeting of the most considerable barons; and concealing his private ambition under the mask of public concern, he represented to them the necessity of reforming the state.. He exaggerated the oppressions of the lower orders of the people, the violations of the barons' privileges, the continued plunder of the clergy, and the perfidy of the king.. His popularity and his power added weight to his eloquence; and the barons entered into a resolution of redressing public grievances, by taking the administration of the government into their own hands..

* The first place where this formidable confederacy discovered itself, was in the parliament-house, where the barons appeared in complete armour.. The king, upon his entry, asked them what was their intention; to which they replied, to make him their sovereign, by confirming his power, and to have their grievances redressed.. Henry, assured them of his intentions to give all possible satisfaction; and for that purpose, summoned another parliament at Oxford, to digest a new plan of government, and to elect proper persons who were to be entrusted with the chief authority..

authority. This parliament, afterwards called the *mad parliament*, went expeditiously to work upon the business of reformation. Twenty-four barons were appointed, with supreme authority, to reform the abuses of the state, and Leicester was placed at their head. Their first step contained the rude out-line of the house of commons, which makes a part of the constitution at this day. They ordered, that four knights should be chosen by each county, who should examine into the grievances of their respective constituents, and attend at the ensuing parliament, to give information of their complaints. They ordained, that three sessions of parliament should be regularly held every year; that a new high sheriff should be annually elected; that no wards or castles should be entrusted to foreigners; no new forests made; nor the revenues of any counties let to farm. These constitutions were so just, that some of them have been continued to the present time; but it was not the security of the people, but the establishment of their own power, that this confederacy aimed at. Instead of resigning their power, when they had fulfilled the purposes of their appointment, they still maintained themselves in authority; pretending that they had not as yet digested all necessary regulations for the benefit of the state. The whole state accordingly underwent a complete alteration; all its former officers were displaced, and creatures of the twenty-four barons were put in their room; they even imposed an oath upon every individual of the nation, declaring an implicit obedience to all the regulations executed.

ated, and to be yet executed, by the barons, who were thus appointed as rulers. They not only abridged the authority of the king, but of parliament, giving up to twelve persons all parliamentary power between each session. Thus these insolent nobles, after having trampled upon the crown, threw prostrate all the rights of the people, and a vile oligarchy was on the point of being established for ever.

The first opposition that was made to these usurpations, was from that very power, which so lately began to take place in the constitution. The knights of the shire, who for some time, had regularly assembled in a separate house, now first perceived those grievances. These bold and patriotic men strongly remonstrated against the slowness of the proceedings of their twenty-four rulers. They represented that though the king had performed all the conditions required of him, the barons had done nothing for the people; that their own interests seemed their only aim; and they called upon the king's eldest son, prince Edward, to interpose and save the sinking nation.

Prince Edward was at this time about twenty-two years of age, and his abilities and integrity rendered him an important personage. Upon this occasion his conduct impressed the people with the highest idea of his piety and justice. He alledged, that he had sworn to the late Constitutions of Oxford, which, though contrary to his own private sentiments, he resolved not to infringe. At the same time, however, he sent a message to
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the barons, requiring them to bring their undertaking to an end. To this the barons were obliged to reply, by publishing a new code of laws, which, though it contained scarce any thing material, yet they supposed would, for a while, dazzle the eyes of the people, until they could take measures to confirm their authority. In this manner, under various pretences, they continued themselves in power for three years; while the whole nation perceived their aims, and loudly condemned their treachery.

The people now only wanted a leader to subvert this new tyranny; but they knew not where, nor whom they could apply to for succour. The king himself, weak, and irresolute, was in a manner leagued with those who depressed his interests; the clergy, who formerly gave the people redress, were little concerned in the commotions of the state. In this distressful situation, they had recourse to young prince Edward, who, had given the strongest proofs of courage, wisdom, and constancy. † At first, indeed, he refused to take advantage of the pope's absolution, and the people's earnest application; but being at last persuaded to concur, a parliament was called, in which the king resumed his former authority; and the barons, after making a fruitless effort to take him by surprize at Winchester, were obliged to acquiesce in what they could not openly oppose.

In the mean time the earl of Leicester, now way discouraged by the bad success of his past enterprizes, resolved upon entirely overturning that power, which he had already humbled.

For

For this purpose he formed a most powerful confederacy with the prince of Wales, who invaded England with a body of thirty thousand men. To these barbarous ravagers Leicester joined his own forces, and the whole kingdom was exposed to all the devastations of a licentious army. The citizens of London also were not averse to his cause. Under the command of their mayor, Thomas Fitz-Richard, a furious man, they fell upon the Jews, and many of the more wealthy inhabitants, pillaging and destroying where-ever they came. The fury of the faction was not confined to London only, but broke out in most of the populous cities of the kingdom; while the king, deploring the turbulence of the times, and in vain applied to the pope for his protection.

In this distressful state of the nation, nothing remained, but an accommodation with the insurgent barons; and after some time a treaty of peace was concluded, but upon the most disadvantageous terms to the king. † The provisions of Oxford were restored, and the barons re-established in the sovereignty of the kingdom. They took possession of all the royal castles and fortresses; they even named the officers of the king's household; and summoned a parliament to meet at Westminster, in order more fully to settle the plan of their government. By this assembly it was enacted, that the authority of the twenty-four barons should continue; and that not only during the reign of the king, but also during that of prince Edward.

But

† A. D. 1263.

But these were conditions which, though the king could submit to, yet the young prince would by no means acquiesce in. He appealed to the king of France, and when that just monarch declared in his favour, resolved to have recourse to arms. Accordingly, summoning the king's military vassals from all quarters, and being reinforced by many of the more equitable barons, he resolved to take the field. His first attempts were successful; Northampton, Leicester, and Nottingham, submitted to his power; and he proceeded into the county of Derby, in order to ravage the estates of such as had espoused the opposite cause. On the other side, the earl of Leicester was besieging Rochester, when he was informed of the king's successes; upon which he raised the siege, and retreated to London, where he was joined by a body of fifteen thousand men. Both armies being thus pretty near equal, they resolved to come to an engagement, and Leicester halted within about two miles from Lewes in Sussex; offering, at the same time, terms of accommodation, which he well knew the king would reject. Upon the refusal of these, both sides prepared for a battle with the utmost animosity. The earl advanced with his troops near Lewes, where the king had drawn up his forces. The royal army was formed in three divisions; prince Edward commanded on the right; Richard, the king's brother, who had been some time before made king of the Romans, was posted on the left wing, and Henry himself remained in the center. The earl's army
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was divided into four bodies: the first was conducted by Henry de Montfort, son of the general; the second was commanded by the earl of Gloucester; the third was under the command of the earl himself; the fourth, consisting of Londoners, was under the direction of Nicholas Seagrave. To encourage these, the bishop of Chichester gave a general absolution to their party; accompanied with assurances, that if any of them fell in the action, they would infallibly be received into heaven. The battle was begun by prince Edward, who rushed upon the Londoners, with so much fury, that they were unable to sustain the charge, but fled with great precipitation. The prince, transported with a desire of revenging the insults they had offered to his mother, pursued them four miles off the field of battle, causing a terrible slaughter. While he was making this imprudent use of his victory, the earl of Leicester, who was a skilful commander, pushed with all his forces against the enemies left wing, put them to the route, and took both the king and his brother prisoners. It was a dreadful prospect, to the young prince, returning victorious from the pursuit, to behold the field covered with the bodies of his friends; and still more when he heard that his father and his uncle were defeated and taken. In this deplorable state, he at first endeavoured to inspire his remaining troops with ardour; but being artfully amused by Leicester with a pretended negotiation, he quickly found his little body of troops surrounded, and he himself obliged to submit to such

Such terms as the conqueror thought fit to impose. These were short, and very conformable to his wretched situation. He, together with another general named Henry d'Almain, were to surrender themselves prisoners, as pledges in the place of the king and his brother, who were to be released. The Provisions of Oxford were to continue in full force; but to be revised by six Frenchmen, appointed by the king of France; three prelates, and three noblemen, who, with three more of their own choosing, were to be invested with full powers to settle all disturbances. Such was the convention called the *Mise of Lewes*.

These great advantages were no sooner obtained, than Leicester resolved to possess himself of that power, for which he had so long been struggling. * Instead of referring the subject in dispute to the king of France, as was agreed on, he kept Richard still a prisoner; and though he had already confined prince Edward in the castle of Dover, yet he took care to keep the king also. To add to his injustice, he made use of his name for purposes the most prejudicial to the royal interests; and while he every where disarmed the king's adherents, kept his own partizans in a posture of defence. The king was carried about from place to place, and obliged to give his governors directions to deliver their castles into the hands of his enemy. To this usurpation of the king's authority, Leicester added the most barefaced and rapacious avarice. He seized the estates of no less than
eighteen

* A. D. 1264.

eighteen barons, as his share of the spoil gained in the battle of Lewes. He engrossed to himself the ransom of all the prisoners; he monopolized the sale of wool to foreign markets; and to fix himself compleatly in authority, he ordained that all power should be exercised by a council of nine persons, who were to be chosen by three persons, or the majority of them; and these were the earl himself, the earl of Gloucester, and the bishop of Chichester.

In this stretch of power, Leicester was not so entirely secure, but that he still feared the combinations of the foreign states against him. The king of France, at the intercession of the queen of England, who had taken refuge at his court, actually prepared to reinstate Henry in his dominions; the pope was not sparing in his ecclesiastical censures; and there were many other princes that pitied the royal sufferings, and secretly wished the usurper's fall. The miserable situation of the kingdom in the end produced the happiness of posterity. Leicester, to secure his power, was obliged to have recourse to an aid till now entirely unknown in England, namely, that of the body of the people. He called a parliament, where, besides the barons of his own party, and several ecclesiastics, who were not immediate tenants of the crown, he ordered returns to be made of two knights from every shire; and also deputies from the boroughs, which had been hitherto considered as too inconsiderable to have a voice in legislation. *This is the first confirmed outline of an English house of commons. The people had been gaining

* Jan. 20, 1265.

gaining some consideration since the gradual diminution of the force of the feudal system. The establishment of corporation charters, by which many of the rustic slaves were in a capacity of rescuing themselves from the power of their masters, encreased not only the power of the people, but their ardour to be free. As arts encreased, the number of these little independent republics, if they may be so called, increased in proportion; and we find them, at the present period, of consequence enough to be adopted into a share of the legislature. Such was the beginning of an institution, that has since been the guardian of British liberty. In this manner it owed its original to the aspiring aims of an haughty baron, who flattered the people with the name of freedom, with a design the more completely to tyrannize.

A parliament assembled in this manner, to second the views of the earl, was found not so complying as he expected. Many of the barons, who had hitherto adhered to his party, appeared disgusted at his immoderate ambition; and many of the people, who found that a change of masters was not a change from misery to happiness, began to wish for the re-establishment of the royal family. In this exigence, Leicester finding himself unable to oppose the concurring wishes of the nation, was resolved to make a merit of what he could not prevent; and accordingly released prince Edward, and had him introduced at Westminster hall, where his freedom was confirmed by the unanimous voice of the barons. But though Leicester, had
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all the popularity of restoring the prince, yet he was politic enough to keep him still guarded by his emissaries, who watched all his motions, and frustrated all his aims.

On the other hand, prince Edward, who had too much penetration not to perceive that he was made the tool of Leicester's ambition, ardently watched an opportunity to regain that freedom, of which he enjoyed but the appearance. An opportunity soon offered. The duke of Gloucester, one of the heads of Leicester's party, being discontented at that nobleman's great power, retired from court in disgust, and went, for safety, to his estates on the borders of Wales. Leicester was not slow in pursuing him thither; and to give greater authority to his arms, carried the king and the prince of Wales along with him. This was the happy opportunity that young Edward long wanted, in order to effect his escape. Being furnished by the earl of Gloucester with an horse of extraordinary swiftness, under pretence of taking the air with some of Leicester's retinue, who were in reality appointed to guard him, he proposed that they should run their horses one against the other. When he perceived that he had thus sufficiently tired their horses, immediately mounting Gloucester's horse that was still fresh, he bid his attendants very politely farewell. They followed him indeed for some time; but the appearance of a body of troops belonging to Gloucester put an end to the pursuit. This happy event seemed the signal for the whole body of royalists to rise.

The well known valour of the young prince, the long train of grievances which the people endured ; and the countenance of the earl of Gloucester, a man of great power, all combined to encrease their numbers. An army was soon assembled which Leicester had no power to withstand ; and he saw his hard-earned power ravished from him, without being able to strike a single blow in its defence. His son, attempting to bring him a reinforcement of troops from London, was, by a vigorous march of young Edward, surprized, and his army cut to pieces.

It was not long after, that the earl himself, ignorant of his son's fate, passed the Severne, in expectation of the London army ; but instead of the troops he expected, he soon perceived that the indefatigable prince was coming up to give him battle. Nor was it without a stratagem that his little army was assaulted. While the prince led a part of his troops by a circuit to attack him behind, he ordered another body of them to advance with the banners of the London army that was just defeated, which, for a long time, the earl mistook for an actual reinforcement. At last, however, he perceived his mistake ; and saw that the enemy was advancing against him on all sides, with the most determined bravery. He now, therefore, found that all was lost ; and was so struck with dismay, that he could not help exclaiming, " The Lord have mercy upon our souls, for our bodies are doomed to destruction." He did not, however abandon all hopes ; but drew up his men in a compact circle, and exhorted them

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to fight like men who had all to gain or all to suffer. At the same time, he obliged the old king to put on armour, and to fight against his own cause, in the front of the army. The battle soon began ; but the earl's army having been exhausted by famine on the mountains of Wales, were but ill able to sustain young Edward's attack. During this terrible day, Leicester behaved with astonishing intrepidity ; and kept up the spirit of the action from two o'clock in the afternoon, till nine at night. At last, his horse being killed under him, he was compelled to fight on foot ; and tho' he demanded quarter, the adverse party refused it. The old king who was placed in the front of the battle, was soon wounded in the shoulder ; and not being known by his friends, he was on the point of being killed by a soldier ; but crying out, I am Henry of Winchester the king, he was saved by a knight of the royal army. Prince Edward hearing the voice of his father, instantly ran to the spot where he lay, and had him conducted to a place of safety.

This victory proved decisive ; and those who were formerly persecuted, now became oppressors in their turn. The king, was now resolved to take a signal vengeance on the citizens of London, who had ever forwarded the interests of his opponents. In this exigence, submission was their only resource ; and Henry was hardly kept from totally destroying the city. He was at last contented to deprive it of its military ensigns and fortifications, and to levy upon the inhabitants a

very heavy contribution. * Fitz-Richard, the seditious mayor, was imprisoned, and purchased his pardon with the loss of his substance. The rebels every where submitted, or were pursued with rigour. Their castles were taken and demolished; and scarce any were found that disputed the king's authority. Among the few who still continued refractory, was one Adam Gordon, formerly governor of Dunster castle, and very much celebrated for his prodigious strength, and great bravery. This courageous baron maintained himself for some time in the forests of Hampshire, and ravaged the counties of Berks and Surry. Prince Edward was, at length, obliged to lead a body of troops into that part of the country to force him from thence; and attacked his camp with great bravery. Being transported with the natural impetuosity of youth, and the ardour of the action, he leapt over the trench, by which it was defended, attended by a few followers; and thus found himself unexpectedly cut off from the rest of his army. Gordon soon distinguished him from the rest of his attendants; and a single combat began between these two valiant men, which, for a long time, continued doubtful. But the prince's fortune at last prevailed: Adam's foot happening to slip, he received a wound, which disabled him from continuing the action, and he remained at the mercy of the conqueror. Edward was as merciful as he was brave; he not only granted him his life, but introduced him that very night to his consort at Guilford; procured him

* A. D. 1265. Aug. 5.

him his pardon and estate, and received him into favour. Gordon was not ungrateful ; he ever after followed the prince ; and was often found combating by his side in the most dangerous shock of battle. In this manner, the generosity of the prince tempered the insolence of victory ; and strength was gradually restored to the different members of the constitution, that had been so long weakened by civil discord.

Edward having thus restored peace to the kingdom, found his affairs now so firmly established, that it was not in the power of any slight disgust, taken by the licentious barons, to shake them. The earl of Gloucester, indeed, who had been so instrumental in restoring the king to the crown, thought that no recompence could equal his merits. He therefore engaged once more in open rebellion ; but was soon brought to submission by the prince, who obliged him to enter into a bond of twenty thousand marks, never to enter into similar schemes for the future. The kingdom being thus tolerably composed, that ardour for military glory, which shone forth in all this prince's actions, now impelled him to undertake the expedition against the infidels in the Holy Land. The crusade was at that time the great object of ambition ; all other wars were considered as trifling, and all other successes as mean, in comparison of those gained over the enemies of Christ. To that renowned field of blood flocked all the brave, the pious, the ambitious, and the powerful.

In pursuance of this resolution, † Edward failed from England with a large army, and arrived at the camp of Lewis, the king of France, which lay before Tunis; and where he had the misfortune to hear of that good monarch's death before his arrival. The prince, however, no way discouraged by this event, continued his voyage, and arrived at the Holy Land in safety.

He was scarce departed when the health of the old king began to decline; and he found not only his own constitution, but also that of the state, in such a dangerous situation, that he wrote letters to his son, pressing him to return with all dispatch. The former calamities began to threaten the kingdom again; and the barons, oppressed the people with impunity. Bands of robbers infested various parts of the nation; and the populace of London once more resumed their accustomed licentiousness. To add to the king's uneasiness, his brother Richard died, who had long assisted him with advice in all emergencies. He therefore, ardently wished for the return of his gallant son, who had placed the scepter in hands that were too feeble to hold it. At last overcome by the cares of government, and the infirmities of age, he ordered himself to be removed, by easy journies, from St. Edmund's to Westminster, where, sending for the earl of Gloucester, he obliged him to swear that he would preserve the peace of the kingdom; and, to the utmost of his power, maintain the interests of his son. That same night he expired, and the next morning the great
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† A. D. 1270.

seal was delivered to the archbishop of York, and the lords of the privy-council.

‡ Thus died Henry, in the sixty-sixth year of his age, and the fifty-sixth of his reign, the longest to be met with in the English annals. He was a prince more adapted for private than for public life; his ease, simplicity, and good nature, would have secured him that happiness in a lower station, of which they deprived him upon a throne. However, from his calamities, the people afterwards derived the most permanent blessings; that liberty which they extorted from his weakness they continued to preserve under bolder princes. The flame of freedom had now diffused itself from the incorporated towns through the whole mass of people. In this contest, though they often laid down their lives, and suffered all the calamities of civil war, yet those calamities were considered as nothing, when weighed against the advantages of freedom and security.

‡ A. D. 1272.



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C H A P. XII.

E D W A R D I.

* **E**DWARD, was now employed in the holy wars, where he revived the glory of the English name. He had arrived at the city of Acon in Palestine, just as the Saracens were sitting down to besiege it. He soon relieved the place, followed the enemy, and obtained many victories, which though splendid, were not decisive. Such, however, were the enemies' terrors at the progress of his arms, that they resolved to destroy by treachery that valiant commander, whom they could not oppose in the field. A tribe of Mahometans had long taken possession of an inaccessible mountain in Syria, one of whom undertook to murder the prince of England. In order to gain admittance to Edward's presence, he pretended to have letters to deliver from the governor of Joppa, and was permitted to see the prince, who conversed with him freely in the French language, which the assassin understood. In this manner he continued to amuse him for some time, having free ingress and egress to and from the royal apartments.

* A. D. 1272.

apartments. It was on the Friday in Whitsun-week, that he found Edward sitting alone, in a loose garment, the weather being extremely hot. This was the opportunity the infidel had desired; he drew a dagger from his breast, and attempted to plunge it into the prince's bosom. Edward, with great presence of mind, received the blow upon his arm. Perceiving the assassin about to repeat his blow, he struck him at once to the ground with his foot; and wresting the weapon from his hand, buried it in his bosom. The domestics hearing a noise, quickly came into the room. The wound the prince had received was the more dangerous, as having been inflicted with a poisoned dagger; and it soon began to exhibit some symptoms that appeared fatal. He therefore expected his fate with great intrepidity. But Eleanora his wife, sucked the poison from the wound to save his life, at the hazard of her own. It is probable, the personal danger he incurred might induce him more readily to listen to terms of accommodation, which were proposed soon after by the foldan of Babylon. He received that monarch's ambassadors in a very honourable manner, and concluded a truce with him for ten years, ten weeks, and ten days. Having thus settled the affairs of Palestine, he set sail for Sicily, * where he arrived in safety, and there first heard the news of the king his father's death, as well as that of his own son John, a boy of six years of age. He bore the last with resignation, but appeared extremely afflicted at the death of his father; at which,

M 5

when

* A. D. 1273-

When the king of Sicily expressed his surprize, he observed that the death of a son was a loss which he might hope to repair, but that of a father was irreparable.

Though the death of the king happened while the successor was so far from home, yet measures had been so well taken, that the crown was transferred with the greatest tranquility. The high character acquired by the prince, during the late commotions, had procured him the esteem of all ranks of men; and, instead of attempting to oppose, their whole wish was to see him returning in triumph. But he did not seem in much haste, he spent near a year in France, before he made his appearance in England. The honours he received upon the continent; and the acclamations, with which he was every where attended, were too alluring to a young mind to be suddenly relinquished: he was even tempted to exhibit proofs of his bravery in a tournament, to which he was invited by the count de Chalons. Impressed with high ideas of the chivalry of the times, he proposed, with his knights, to hold the field against all that would enter the lists. His usual good fortune attended him. From Chalons, Edward proceeded to Paris, where he was magnificently entertained by Philip, king of France, to whom he did homage for the territories the kings of England possessed in that kingdom. & At length, after various dangers, and fatigues, he arrived in his native dominions, amidst the loud acclamations of his people, and was solemnly crowned at Westminster.

§ A. D. 1274.

minster. The joy of all ranks upon this occasion was inexpressible; the feasting continued a whole fortnight, at the king's expence; five hundred horses were turned loose as the property of those who could catch them. The king of Scotland, with several other princes, graced the solemnity; and did homage for those territories they held under the English crown. Nothing remained to complete the felicity of the people but the continuance of such prosperity; and this they had reason to expect from the king's justice, his œconomy, and his prudence.

As Edward was now come to an undisputed throne, the opposite interests were proportionably feeble. The barons were exhausted by long mutual dissensions: the clergy were divided in their interests, and agreed only in one point, to hate the pope, who had for some time drained them, with impunity: the people, by some insurrections against the convents, appeared to hate the clergy with equal animosity. These disagreeing orders only concurred in one point, that of esteeming and reverencing the king. In such a conjuncture, few measures could be taken by the crown that would be deemed oppressive; and we accordingly find the present monarch often, from his own authority, raising those taxes that would have been peremptorily refused to his predecessor. However, Edward was naturally prudent; and, though capable of becoming absolute, satisfied himself with moderate power.

His first care was to correct those disorders which had crept in, under the last part of his
M 6 father's

father's feeble administration. He proposed, by an exact distribution of justice, to give equal protection to all the orders of the state. He took every opportunity to inspect the conduct of all his magistrates and judges, and to displace such as were negligent, or corrupt. In short; a system of strict justice, marked with an air of severity, was pursued throughout his reign; formidable to the people, indeed, but adapted to the ungovernable licentiousness of the times. The Jews were the only part of his subjects who were refused that justice which the king made boast of distributing. As Edward had been bred up in prejudices against them, he seemed to have no compassion upon their sufferings. Many were the arbitrary taxes levied upon them; two hundred and eighty of them were hanged at once, upon a charge of adulterating the coin of the kingdom; the goods of the rest were confiscated, and all of them banished the kingdom.

* Edward next resolved to march against Llewellyn, prince of North Wales, who refused to do homage for his dominions. The Welsh had for many ages enjoyed their own laws, language, customs and opinions. They were the remains of the ancient Britons, who had escaped the Roman and Saxon invasions, and still preserved their freedom and their country. But as they were, from their number, incapable of withstanding their more powerful neighbours on the plain, their chief defence lay in their inaccessible mountains. Whenever England was distressed by factions at home,

or

* A. D. 1276.

or its forces called off to wars abroad, the Welsh made it a constant practice to pour in and lay the open country waste. Edward had long wished to reduce them. He levied an army against Lewellyn, and marched into his country. The Welsh prince took refuge among the inaccessible mountains of Snowdon, without trusting to the chance of a battle. These had for many ages defended his ancestors against all the attempts of the Norman and Saxon conquerors. But Edward, equally vigorous and cautious, having explored every part of his way, pierced into the very center of Lewellyn's territories, and approached the Welsh army in its last retreats. Lewellyn at first little regarded him: but his contempt was turned into consternation, when he saw Edward place his forces at the foot of the mountains, and hem up his army, in order to force it by famine. Destitute of magazines, and cooped up in a narrow corner of the country, without provisions for his troops, or pasturage for his cattle, without being able to strike a blow, he was at last obliged to submit at discretion. § He consented to pay fifty thousand pounds, as a satisfaction for damages; to do homage to the crown of England; to permit all other barons, except four near Snowdon, to swear fealty in the same manner; to relinquish the country between Cheshire and the river Conway; and to deliver hostages for the security of his submission.

† But this treaty was only of short duration: the lords of the Marches committed all kinds of injustice on their Welsh neighbours;

who

§ A. D. 1277.

† A. D. 1278.

who once more flew to arms. A body of their forces took the field, under the command of David, the brother of their prince, ravaged the plain country, took the castle of Harwardin, made Sir Roger Clifford, justice of the Marches, who was very dangerously wounded, their prisoner, and soon after laid siege to the castle of Rhudhlan. When the account of these hostilities was brought to Edward, he assembled a numerous army, and set out with a fierce resolution to exterminate Lewellyn and his whole family; and to reduce that people to such an abject state, that they should never after be able to distress their neighbours.

|| At first, however, the king's endeavours were not attended with their usual success; having caused a bridge of boats to be laid over the river Menay, a body of forces, commanded by lord Latimer, and de Thonis, passed over before it was completely finished, to signalize their courage against the enemy. The Welsh patiently remained in their fortresses till they saw the tide flowing in beyond the end of the bridge, and thus cutting off the retreat of the assailants. It was then that they poured down from their mountains with hideous outcries; and, with the most ungovernable fury, put the whole body that had got over to the sword. This defeat revived the sinking spirits of the Welsh; and persuaded Lewellyn to hazard a decisive battle. With this view, he marched into Radnorshire; but his troops were surprized and defeated by Edward Mortimer, while he himself was absent from his army, upon a conference with some of the barons of that country. Upon his

his return, seeing the dreadful situation of his affairs, he ran desperately into the midst of the enemy, and quickly found that death he so ardently sought for. One of the English captains recognizing his countenance, severed his head from his body, and it was sent to London.

* David, his brother, soon after shared the same fate; being totally abandoned, was obliged to hide himself in one of the obscure caverns of the country; but his retreat being discovered, he was taken, tried, and condemned as a traitor. He was hanged, drawn and quartered, only for having bravely defended the expiring liberties of his native country. With him expired the government, and the distinction of his nation. It was soon after united to the kingdom of England, made a principality, and given to the eldest son of the crown. Foreign conquests might add to the glory, but this added to the felicity of the kingdom. The Welsh were now blended with the conquerors; and in a few ages, all national animosity was forgotten.

† Edward left his queen to be delivered in the castle of Carnarvon; and afterwards presented the child, whose name was Edward, to the Welsh lords, as a native of their country, and as their appointed prince.

This conquest being achieved, paved the way for one of still more importance, though not attended with such permanent consequences. Alexander III. king of Scotland, had been killed by a fall from his horse, having only Margaret, his grand-daughter, heir to the crown, who died some time after. † The

death.

* A. D. 1283. † A. D. 1284. ‡ A. D. 1292.

death of this princess produced a most ardent dispute about the succession to the Scottish throne, being claimed by no less than twelve competitors. The nobility of the country were divided in their opinions; and, after long debates, agreed to refer the contest to the king of England. The claims of all the other candidates were reduced to three; who were the descendants of the earl of Huntington by three daughters; John Hastings, who claimed in right of his mother, as one of the co-heiresses of the crown; John Baliol, who alledged his right, as being descended from the eldest daughter, who was his grandmother; and Robert Bruce, who was the actual son of the second daughter. Edward, pretended the utmost degree of deliberation; and although he had long formed his resolution, yet he ordered all enquiries to be made on the subject. In this research, he discovered that some passages in old chronicles favoured his own secret inclinations; and without further delay, instead of admitting the claims of the competitors, boldly urged his own; and, to second his pretensions, advanced with a formidable army to the frontiers of the kingdom.

The Scottish barons were thunder-struck at these unexpected pretensions; and though they felt extreme indignation at his procedure, yet they resolved to obey his summons to meet at the castle of Norham; a place situated on the southern bank of the Tweed, where he convened the parliament of that country. He there produced the proofs of his superiority, which he alledged were unquestionable; at the same time advising, them to use deliberation.

tion, and to examine all his allegations with impartial justice. To a proposal that appeared in itself so unreasonable, no immediate answer could be given; the barons, therefore, continued silent; and Edward interpreting this for a consent, addressed himself to the several competitors to the crown; and, previous to his appointing one of them as his vassal, he required their acknowledgement of his superiority. He concluded, none of them would disoblige the man who was unanimously appointed to be the arbitrator of his pretensions. Nor was he deceived; he found them all equally obsequious. Robert Bruce was the first who made the acknowledgment, and the rest quickly followed his example. Edward being thus become the superior of the kingdom, undertook next to consider which of the candidates was the fittest to be appointed under him. In order to give this deliberation the appearance of impartiality, an hundred commissioners were appointed, forty of them chosen by the candidates who were in the interests of John Baliol; forty by those in the interests of Robert Bruce; and twenty, by Edward himself. Having thus fitted matters to his satisfaction, he left the commissioners to sit at Berwick; and went southward. The subject of the dispute ultimately rested in this question, Whether Baliol, who was descended from the elder sister, but farther removed by one degree, was to be preferred before Bruce, who was actually the younger sister's son? The rights of inheritance, as at present generally practised over Europe, were even at that time pretty well ascertained; and
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not only the commissioners, but many of the best lawyers of the age affirmed Baliol's superior claim. Edward, pronounced sentence in his favour; and that candidate, upon renewing his oath of fealty to England, was put in possession of the Scottish kingdom, and all its fortresses, which had been previously put into the hands of the king of England.

§ Baliol being thus placed upon the Scottish throne, less as a king than as a vassal, Edward's first step was sufficient to convince that people of his intentions. A merchant of Gascony had presented a petition to him, importing, that Alexander, the late king of Scotland, was indebted to him a large sum, which was still unpaid, notwithstanding all his solicitations to Baliol, the present king, for payment; Edward eagerly embraced this opportunity of exercising his new right, and summoned the king of Scotland to appear at Westminster, to answer in person the merchant's complaint. Upon subjects equally trivial, he sent six different summonses, at different times in one year; so that the poor Scottish king soon perceived that he was possessed of the name only, but not the authority of a sovereign. Willing, therefore, to shake off the yoke of so troublesome a master, Baliol revolted, and procured the pope's absolution from his former oaths of homage. To strengthen his hands, he entered into a secret treaty with Philip, king of France; which was the commencement of an union between these two nations, that for so many succeeding ages was fatal to the interests of England. To confirm this

§ A. D. 1293.

this alliance, the king of Scotland stipulated a marriage between his eldest son, and the daughter of Philip de Valois.

* Edward, to whom these transactions were no secret, endeavoured to ward the threatened blow, by being the first aggressor; and accordingly summoned John to perform the duty of a vassal, and to send him a supply of forces against an invasion from France. He also summoned him to surrender some of his principal forts, and to appear at a parliament which was held at Newcastle. None of these commands, as he well foresaw, being complied with, he resolved to enforce obedience by marching a body of thirty thousand foot, and four thousand horse, into the heart of the kingdom of Scotland. As the Scottish nation had little reliance on their king, they had assigned him a council of twelve noblemen, They raised an army of forty thousand men, and marched them to the frontiers, which Edward was preparing to attack. But some of the most considerable of the Scottish nobility, among whom were Robert Bruce and his son, endeavoured to ingratiate themselves with Edward by submission, which intimidated those who still adhered to their king. The progress, therefore, of the English arms was extremely rapid; Berwick was taken by assault; Sir William Douglas, the governor, made prisoner, and a garrison of seven thousand men put to the sword. Elated by these advantages, Edward dispatched the earl Warrene, with ten thousand men, to lay siege to Dunbar; and the Scotch, sensible of the importance of that place, advanced with their whole army, under

* A. D. 1296.

under the command of the earls Mar, Buchan, and Lenox, to relieve it. Although the superiority of numbers was greatly on their side, yet discipline was entirely on that of the English. The conflict was of short continuance; the Scots were soon thrown into confusion, and twenty thousand of their men slain. The castle of Dunbar, with all its garrison, surrendered the day following; and Edward, who was now come up with the main body of his army, led them onward into the country. The castles of the greatest strength and importance opened their gates to him almost without resistance; and the whole southern part of the country acknowledged the conqueror. The northern parts were not so easily reducible, being defended by inaccessible mountains, and intricate forests. To make himself master of this part of the kingdom, Edward reinforced his army with numbers of men levied in Ireland and Wales, who, being used to this kind of desultory war, were best qualified to seek, or pursue the latent enemy. But Baliol made these preparations unnecessary. He hastened to make his peace with the victor, and expressed the deepest repentance for his former disloyalty. To satisfy him still further, he made a solemn resignation of the crown into his hands; and the whole kingdom soon followed his example. Edward, thus master of the kingdom, took every precaution to secure his title, and to abolish its former independence. He carefully destroyed all records and monuments of antiquity, that inspired the people with a spirit of national pride. He carried away a stone, which the vulgar pretended to have

have been Jacob's pillow, on which all their kings were seated, when they were anointed. This, the ancient tradition had assured them, was the mark of their government; and wherever it was placed, their command was always to follow. The great seal of Baliol was broke; and that unhappy monarch himself was carried prisoner to London, and committed to the Tower: Two years afterwards he was restored to his liberty, and banished to France, where he died in a private station, without making any further attempts on the throne; happier perhaps in privacy, than if gratified in the pursuits of ambition.

The cessation which was given to Edward by those successes, induced him to turn his ambition to the continent, where he expected to recover a part of those territories that had been usurped from his crown, during the imbecillity of his predecessors. There had been a rupture with France some time before, upon a very trifling occasion. A Norman and English ship met off the coast, near Bayonne; and having both occasion to draw water from the same spring, there happened a quarrel for the preference. This scuffle, in which a Norman was slain, produced a complaint to the king of France, who desired the complainant to take his own revenge, and not bring such matters before him. This the Normans did shortly after; for seizing the crew of a ship in the channel, they hanged a part of them, together with some dogs, in the presence of all their companions. This produced a retaliation from the English cinque-ports; and the animosity of the merchants on both sides being wrought up to fury, the sea became a scene of piracy

piracy and murder. No quarter was given on either side; the mariners were destroyed by thousands; and at last the affair became too serious for the sovereigns of either side to continue any longer unconcerned spectators. Some ineffectual overtures were made for an accommodation; but Edward seeing that it was likely to come to an open rupture, gave orders for having his territory of Guienne, upon the continent, put into a posture of defence. Nor was he remiss in making treaties with several neighbouring princes. He even sent an army, collected in England from the jails, which had been filled with robbers in the former reign. These, tho' at first successful, were soon repulsed by the French army, under the command of Charles, brother to the king of France. Yet it was not easy to discourage Edward from any favourite pursuit. In about three years after, he renewed his attempts upon Guienne, and sent thither an army under the command of his brother, the earl of Lancaster. That prince gained, at first some advantages; but was soon seized with a distemper, of which he died.

‡ The king finding his attempts upon that quarter unsuccessful, resolved to attack France upon another, where he hoped that kingdom would be more vulnerable. He formed an alliance with John, earl of Holland, by giving him his daughter Elizabeth in marriage; and also with Guy, earl of Flanders, whose assistance he procured for the stipulated sum of seventy-five thousand pounds. But after a time the king of France, and he were glad
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‡ A. D. 1297.

to come to an accommodation, by which they agreed to submit their differences to the pope. By his mediation it was agreed between them, that their union should be cemented with a double marriage; that of Edward with Margaret, Philip's sister; and that of the prince of Wales with Isabella, the French monarch's daughter. Philip was prevailed on to restore Guienne to the English. He agreed also, to abandon the king of Scotland, upon condition that Edward should in like manner neglect the earl of Flanders. Thus, after a very expensive war, the two monarchs sat down just where they began.

But though this expedition was thus fruitlessly terminated, yet the expences which were requisite for fitting it out, were not only burthenome to the king, but, in the event, threatened to shake him on his throne. He raised considerable supplies by means of his parliament; then first modelled into the form in which it continues to this day. He issued writs to the sheriffs, enjoining them to send to parliament along with two knights of the shire, (as in the former reign) two deputies from each borough within their county; and these provided with sufficient powers from their constituents, to grant such demands as they should think reasonable. The charges of these deputies were to be borne by the borough which sent them; and far from considering their deputation as an honour, nothing could be more displeasing to any borough than to be thus obliged to send a deputy, or to any individual than to be thus chosen. Such

Such was the constitution of that parliament, to which Edward applied for assistance against France. He obtained from the barons and knights, a grant of the twelfth of their moveables, from the boroughs an eighth; and from the clergy he resolved to exact a fifth: but he there found an unexpected resistance. The pope had some time before issued a bull, prohibiting the clergy from paying taxes to any temporal prince, without permission from the see of Rome; and those of England now pleaded conscience, in refusing to comply with the king's demand. Edward employed their own arguments against them. He refused them his temporal protection, ordered his judges to receive no cause brought before them by the clergy, but to hear and decide all causes, in which they were defendants; to do every man justice against them; and to deny them justice even under the greatest injury.

In this outlawed situation, they suffered numberless hardships from every ruffian, while the king's officers remained unconcerned spectators. These at length, prevailed; and they agreed to lay the sums they were taxed in some church appointed them, which were to be taken away by the king's officers. Thus at once they obeyed the king, without incurring the censures of the pope. But though these sums were very great, yet they were by no means adequate to his wants. New taxes were, therefore, arbitrarily imposed. Edward laid a duty of forty shillings a sack upon wool; he required the sheriffs of each county

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to supply him with two thousand quarters of wheat, and as many of oats, without considering the manner they were to be obtained. These he levied by way of loans, promising to pay an equivalent, whenever the exigencies of the state were less pressing. Such various modes of oppression were not suffered without murmuring. The clergy were already disgusted to a man; the people complained at those extortions they could not resist; while many of the barons, jealous of their privileges as well as of national liberty, gave countenance to the general discontent.

The first symptoms of this spirit of resistance appeared, upon the king's ordering Humphry Bohun, the constable; and Roger Bigod the marshal of England, to take the command of an army that he proposed to send over into Gascony, while he himself intended to make a diversion on the side of Flanders. But these two powerful noblemen refused to obey his orders, alledging, that they were obliged by their offices to attend him only in the wars, and not to conduct his armies. A violent altercation ensued. The king, addressing himself to the constable, cried out, "Sir earl, by God, you shall either go or be hanged." To which the haughty baron replied, "Sir king, by God, I will neither go, nor be hanged." This opposition quite defeated his scheme for the conquest of Guienne. He found he had driven prerogative a little too far; and desired to be reconciled to his barons, to the church, and to his people. He promised,

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mised, upon his return from Flanders, to redress all grievances, and to make his subjects compensation for the losses which they had sustained. These professions served pretty well to allay the kindling discontents of the nation, during his absence abroad. But at the ensuing parliament, the two noblemen, attended by a great body of cavalry and infantry, took possession of the city gates, and obliged the king's council to sign the Magna Charta, and to add a clause, to secure the nation for ever against all impositions and taxes, without the consent of parliament. This the council readily agreed to sign; and the king himself, when it was sent over to him in Flanders, after some hesitation, thought proper to do the same. These concessions he again confirmed upon his return. Thus, after the contest of an age, Magna Charta was finally established; nor was it the least circumstance in its favour, that its confirmation was procured from one of the greatest and boldest princes that ever swayed the English scepter.

But though the confirmation of this charter was obtained without much violence, yet the disturbance given by Scotland about the same time, hastened it. That fierce nation, which had been conquered some time before with so much ease, still discovered a spirit of independence. The earl Warrene had been left justiciary in that kingdom; and his prudence and moderation were equal to his valour. But being obliged, by the bad state of his health, to leave that kingdom, he left the administration in the hands of two very improper

proper ministers; the one, whose name was Ormesby, was rigorous and cruel; the other called Cressingham, was avaricious and mean. Their injustice soon drove this distressed people into open rebellion. A few of those who had fled into the most inaccessible mountains from the arms of Edward, took this opportunity to pour down, and strike for freedom. They were headed by William Wallace, the younger son of a gentleman, who lived in the western part of the kingdom. He was a man of a gigantic stature, incredible strength, and amazing intrepidity; eagerly desirous of independence, and possessed with the most disinterested spirit of patriotism. To this man had resorted all those who were obnoxious to the English government; the proud, the bold, the criminal and the ambitious. These, bred among dangers and hardships themselves, could not forbear admiring in their leader a degree of patience, under fatigue and famine, which they supposed beyond the power of human nature; he soon, therefore, became the principal object of their affection and esteem. His first exploits were petty ravages, and occasional attacks upon the English. As his forces increased, his efforts became more formidable; every day brought accounts of his great actions, his party was joined first by the desperate, and then by the enterprising; at last, all who loved their country came to take shelter under his protection. Thus reinforced, he formed a plan of surprizing Ormesby, the unworthy English minister, who resided at Scone; but though this tyrant escaped

ped yet his effects served to recompense the insurgents. From this time, the Scots began to grow too powerful for the English that were appointed to govern them; many of their principal barons joined the insurgents; Sir William Douglas was among the foremost openly to avow his attachment; while Robert Bruce secretly favoured the cause. To oppose this unexpected insurrection, the earl Warrenne collected an army of forty thousand men in the north of England, and prepared to attack the Scots, who had by this time crossed the borders, and had begun to ravage the country. He suddenly entered Annandale, and came up with the enemy at Irvine, where he surprized their forces, who, being inferior in number, capitulated, and promised to give hostages for their future fidelity. Most of the nobility renewed their oaths, waiting a favourable occasion for vindicating their freedom. Wallace alone disdained submission; but, with his faithful followers, marched northwards, with a full intention to protract the hour of slavery as long as he could. In the mean time, the earl of Warrenne advanced in the pursuit, and overtook him, where he was advantageously posted, in the neighbourhood of Stirling, on the other side of the river Forth. The earl perceiving the favourable ground he had chosen, was for declining the engagement; but being pressed by Cressingham, a proud man, whose revenge blinded his judgment, the earl was at last obliged to comply, and passed over a part of his army to begin the attack. Wallace allowing such numbers of the English to
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get over as he thought fit, boldly advanced upon them before they were completely formed, and put them entirely to the rout. Part of them were pursued into the river that lay in the rear, and the rest were cut to pieces. Among the slain was Cressingham himself, whose memory was so odious to the Scotch, that they flead his dead body, and made saddles of his skin. Warrenne retired with the remains of his army to Berwick, while his pursuers took such castles, as were but ill provided for a siege. Wallace returned into Scotland, after having thus for a time saved his country, laden with an immense plunder, with which he for a while dispelled the prospect of famine, that seemed to threaten the nation.

Edward, who had been in Flanders, while these misfortunes happened, hastened back to restore his authority, and secure his conquests. || As the discontents of the people were not entirely appeased, he took every measure that he thought would give them satisfaction. He restored to the citizens of London a power of electing their own magistrates, of which they had been deprived in the latter part of his father's reign. He ordered strict enquiries to be made concerning the quantity of corn, which he had seized for his armies, as if he intended to pay the value to the owners. Thus having appeased, all complaints, he levied the whole force of his dominions; and at the head of an hundred thousand men, directed his march to the North, fully resolved to take vengeance upon the Scots for their late defection.

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|| A. D. 1297.

* It may easily be supposed, that the Scots, even if united, were but ill able to resist such an army, commanded by such a king; but their own dissensions served to render them still more unequal to the contest. The Scotch were headed by three commanders, who each claimed equal authority; these were the steward of Scotland, Cummin of Badenoch, and William Wallace, who offered to give up his command, but whose party refused to follow any other leader. The Scotch army was posted at Falkirk, and there proposed to abide the assault of the English. They were drawn up in three separate divisions, each forming a complete body of pikemen, and the intervals filled up with archers. Their horse were placed in the rear, and their front was secured with palisadoes.

Edward, tho' he saw that the advantage of situation was against him, little regarded such a superiority, confident of his skill and his numbers; wherefore, dividing his forces also into three bodies, he led them to the attack. Just as he advanced at the head of his troops, the Scotch set up such a shout, that the horse, upon which the king rode, took fright, threw and afterwards kicked him on the ribs, as he lay on the ground; but the intrepid monarch, though sorely bruised, quickly mounted again, and ordered the Welsh troops to begin the attack. These made but a feeble resistance against the Scotch, who fought with determined valour. Edward seeing them begin to decline, advanced in person at the head of another batallion; and having pulled up the palisadoes,

palifadoes, charged the enemy with such an impetuosity, that they were no longer able to resist. Wallace did all that lay in the power of man; but the division commanded by Cummin quitting the field, the division of the lord steward, as well as that of Wallace, lay exposed to the English archers, who then began to excel those of all other nations. Wallace, for a while, maintained an unequal contest; but finding himself in danger of being surrounded, he was at last obliged to give way, and slowly to draw off the poor remnant of his troops behind the river Carron. Such was the famous battle of Falkirk, in which Edward gained a complete victory, leaving twelve thousand of the Scotch, upon the field of battle, while the English, it is said, had not an hundred slain.

A blow so dreadful, had not entirely crushed the spirit of the Scotch nation; and after a short interval, they began to breathe.

Wallace, who had gained all their regards by his valour, merited them more by his declining the rewards of ambition. Perceiving how much he was envied by the nobility, and knowing how prejudicial that envy would prove to the interests of his country, he resigned the regency of the kingdom, and humbled himself to a private station. He proposed Cummin as the properest person to supply his room; and that nobleman endeavoured to shew himself worthy of this pre-eminence. || He soon began to annoy the enemy; and not content with a defensive war, he made incursions into the Southern counties of the kingdom, which Edward had imagined wholly

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subdued.

† A. D. 1299. || A. D. 1302.

subdued. They attacked an army of the English lying at Roslin, near Edinburgh, and gained a complete victory. The renown of the Scottish arms soon began to spread dismay among the English garrisons left in that kingdom; and they evacuated all the fortresses, of which they had for some time been in possession. Thus once more the task of conquest was to be performed over again; and in proportion to their losses, the Scotch seemed to gather fresh obstinacy.

But it was not easy for any circumstances to repress the spirit of the king. † He assembled a great fleet and army; and, entering the frontiers of Scotland, appeared with a force which the enemy could not think of resisting in the open field. The fleet furnished the land army with all necessary provisions; while these marched securely along, thro' the kingdom ravaging the open country, taking all the castles, and receiving the submissions of all the nobles. This employed Edward two years; and by his severity he made the natives pay dear for the trouble to which they had put him. § He abrogated all the Scottish laws, substituted those of England in their place; entirely destroyed all their monuments of antiquity; and endeavoured to blot out even the memory of their freedom. There seemed to remain only one obstacle to the final destruction of the Scottish monarchy, and that was William Wallace, who continued refractory; and wandering with a few forces from mountain to mountain, still preserved his native independence. || But even this feeble

† A. D. 1303. § A. D. 1304. || A. D. 1305.

feeble hope was soon disappointed ; he was betrayed into the king's hands by Sir John Monteith, his friend, whom he had made acquainted with the place of his concealment, being surprized by him as he lay asleep in the neighbourhood of Glasgow. The king, ordered him to be conducted in chains to London, whither he was carried amidst infinite crowds of spectators, who flocked to see a man that had often filled the whole country with consternation. On the day after his arrival, he was brought to his trial as a traitor, at Westminster-Hall, where he was placed upon a high chair, and crowned with laurel in derision. Being accused of various crimes, he pleaded not guilty, but refused to own the jurisdiction of the court, affirming, that it was unjust and absurd to charge him with treason against a prince whose title he had never acknowledged ; and as he was born under the laws of another country, it was cruel to try him by those to which he was a stranger. The judges nevertheless found him guilty of high-treason, and condemned him to be hanged, drawn, and quartered. Such was the end of a brave man, who had through a course of many years, with signal perseverance and conduct, defended his native country against an unjust invader.

* Robert Bruce was among those on whom the cruel fate of Wallace had made the deepest impression. This nobleman, whom we have already seen a competitor for the crown, was now actually in the English army. He never was sincerely attached to the English monarch,

N. 5.

whom

* A. D. 1306.

whom he was compelled to follow ; and an interview with Wallace, sometime before, confirmed him in his resolution to set his country free. But as he was now grown old and infirm, he was obliged to give up the work, and to leave it in charge to his son, whose name was Robert Bruce also, and who conceived the project with ardour. This young nobleman was brave, active, and prudent ; and a favourable conjuncture of circumstances seemed to conspire with his aims. John Baliol, whom Edward had dethroned, and banished into France, had lately died in that country ; his eldest son continued a captive in the same place ; there was none to dispute his pretensions, except Cummin, who was regent of the kingdom ; and he also seemed soon after to be brought over to his interests. He, therefore, resolved upon freeing his country from the English yoke ; and although he attended the court of Edward, yet he began to make secret preparations for his intended revolt. Edward who had been informed not only of his intentions, but of his actual engagements, contented himself with setting spies round him to watch his conduct, and ordered all his motions to be strictly guarded. Bruce was still busily employed in his endeavours, unconscious of being suspected, but he was taught to understand his danger, by a present sent him, by a young nobleman of his acquaintance of a pair of gilt spurs, and a purse of gold. This he considered as a warning to make his escape, which he did, by ordering

ordering his horses to be shod with their shoes turned backwards, to prevent his being tracked in the snow, which had then fallen.

His dispatch was considered then as very great; having travelled from London to Lochmaban, which is near four hundred miles, in seven days. Cummin, who had in the beginning concurred in his schemes, was privately known to have communicated the whole to Edward; and Bruce was resolved, in the first place, to take vengeance upon him for his perfidy. Hearing that he was then at Dumfries, he went thither, and meeting him in the cloisters of a monastery belonging to the Grey Friars, reproached him, in severe terms, with his treachery; and drawing his sword, instantly plunged it in his breast.

Bruce had by this action not only rendered himself the object of Edward's resentment, but involved all his party in the same guilt. They had now no resource left, but desperate valour, and they soon expelled such of the English forces, as had fixed themselves in the kingdom. Bruce was solemnly crowned king, by the bishop of St. Andrew's, in the abbey of Scone; and numbers flocked to his standard, resolved to confirm his pretensions. Thus, after twice conquering the kingdom, and spreading his victories in every quarter of the country, the old king saw, that his whole work was to begin afresh. But no difficulties could repress the arduous spirit of this monarch, who, resolved to make the Scotch once more tremble at his appearance. He vowed revenge against the whole nation. He

N 6

summoned

summoned his prelates, nobility, and all who held by knights service, to meet him at Carlisle, and, in the mean time, detached a body of forces before him into Scotland, under the command of Aymer de Valence, who began the threatened infliction by a terrible victory over Bruce, near Methuen, in Perthshire. That warlike commander fought with great obstinacy; he was thrice dismounted from his horse in the action, and as often recovered: but at last he was obliged to fly, and take shelter, with a few followers, in the Western Isles. The earl of Athole, Sir Simon Frazer, and Sir Christopher Seton, who had been taken prisoners, were executed on the spot. Immediately after this dreadful blow, the resentful king himself appeared in person, entering Scotland with his army divided into two parts, and expecting to find, in the opposition of the people, a pretext for punishing them. But the natives, made no resistance. His anger was disappointed; and he was ashamed to extirpate those, who only opposed patience to his indignation. It was chiefly upon the nobles of the country that the weight of his resentment fell. The sister of Bruce, and the countess of Buchan, were shut up in wooden cages, and hung over the battlements of a fortress, and his two brothers fell by the hands of the executioner. The obstinacy of this commander served to inflame the king's resentment. He still continued to excite fresh commotions in the Highlands; and, though often overcome, persisted in a seemingly fruitless opposition. Edward there-
fore,

fore, at last, resolved to give no quarter; and at the head of a great army entered Scotland, from whence he had lately retreated, resolving to exterminate the whole body of the insurgents. Nothing lay before the Scotch, but prospects of the most speedy and terrible vengeance; while neither their valour, nor their mountains, were found to grant them any permanent protection. But Edward's death put an end to their apprehensions, and effectually rescued their country. He sickened at Carlisle, of a dysentery; enjoining his son, with his last breath, to prosecute the enterprise, and never to desist, till he had finally subdued the kingdom. * He expired, in the sixty-ninth year of his age, and the thirty-fifth of his reign, at Burgh in the sands: after having added more to the solid interests of the kingdom, than any of those who went before. He was a promoter of the happiness of the people; and seldom attempted exerting any arbitrary stretch of power, but with a prospect of encreasing the welfare of his subjects. He was of a very majestic appearance, tall in stature, of regular features, with keen piercing black eyes, and an aspect that commanded reverence and esteem. His constitution was robust; his strength and dexterity unequalled, and his shape agreeable, except from the extreme length and smallness of his legs, from whence he had the appellation of Longshanks. He seemed to have united all those advantages which, in that age, might be considered as true glory. He gained renown by his piety in the Holy Land; he

fixed

* A. D. 1307. July. 7.

fixed the limits of justice at home; he confirmed the rights of the people; he was the most expert at martial exercises of any man in the kingdom. The great blemish in his character was, his injustice and cruelty toward Scotland. This can never be defended by impartial men, and admits of no excuse. Edward, by his first wife, Eleanor of Castile, had four sons, and eleven daughters; of the last, most died young; of the former, Edward the second alone, his heir and successor, survived him.

If we turn to the state of the people during his administration, we shall find, that England acquired not only great power, but great happiness, under his protection. The barons, who might, during this period, be considered as a junto of petty tyrants, ready to cry out for liberty, which they alone were to share, were kept under; and their combinations were but feeble and ill-supported. The monarch was in some measure absolute, though he was prudent enough not to exert his power. He was severe, indeed; but let it be remembered, that he was the first who began to distribute indiscriminate justice. Before his time, the people who rose in insurrections were punished in the most cruel manner, by the sword or the gibbet; while, at the same time, the nobility, who were really guilty, were treated with a degree of lenity, which encouraged them to fresh insurrections. But what gave Edward's reign a true value with posterity, was the degree of power, which the people began to assume during this period. The

The king considered the clergy and barons in some measure as rivals; and to weaken their force, he never attempted to control the flow, but certain advances made by the people, which, in time, entirely destroyed the power of the one, and divided the authority of the other.

C H A P. XIII.

EDWARD II. Surnamed of CAERNARVON.

* **M**UCH was expected from the young prince, and all orders hastened to take the oath of allegiance to him. He was now in the twenty-third year of his age, of an agreeable figure, and of a mild, harmless disposition. But he soon gave symptoms of his unsuitness to succeed so great a monarch. Instead of prosecuting the war against Scotland, he took no steps to check the progress of Bruce; his march into that country being rather a procession of pageantry, than a warlike expedition. Bruce boldly issued from his retreats, and obtained a considerable advantage over the English forces. Young Edward looked tamely on; and, instead of repressing the enemy, endeavoured to come to an

* A. D. 1307.

an accomodation. The English barons, who had been kept under, now saw that they might re-assert their former independence with impunity.

|| To confirm the inauspicious conjectures that were formed of this reign, Edward recalled one of his favourites, who was banished during his father's reign, being accused of corrupting the prince's morals. His name was Piers Gavestone, the son of a Gascon knight, who had been employed in the service of the late king. This young man soon insinuated himself into the affections of the prince : and, in fact, was adorned with every accomplishment of person and mind, that were capable of creating affection ; but he was utterly destitute of those qualities of heart that serve to procure esteem. He was beautiful, witty, brave and active ; but then he was vicious and debauched. These were qualities adapted to the taste of the young monarch, who therefore took Gavestone into his particular intimacy. Even before his arrival from exile, he endowed him with the earldom of Cornwall, which had lately fallen to the crown. He married him soon after to his own niece, and granted him a sum of two and thirty thousand pounds, which the late king had reserved for the maintenance of one hundred and forty knights, who had undertaken to carry his heart to Jerusalem.

These accumulated favours excited the indignation of the barons ; and Gavestone was no way solicitous to soften their resentment. Intoxicated with his power, he became haughty and overbearing. Whenever there was

to

to be a display of pomp or magnificence, Gavestone was sure to eclipse all others; and he not only mortified his rivals by his superior splendour, but by his superior insolence.

The barons were soon after still more provoked to see this presumptuous favourite appointed guardian of the realm, during a journey the king was obliged to make to Paris, to espouse the princess Isabella, to whom he had been long since betrothed. They were not remiss, therefore, upon the arrival of this princess, who was imperious and intriguing; to make her of their party, and to direct her animosity against Gavestone, which he took little care to avoid. A conspiracy was soon formed against him, at the head of which were queen Isabella, and the earl of Lancaster, a nobleman of great power. They bound themselves by oath to expel Gavestone; and began to throw off all reverence for the royal authority. At length, the king found himself obliged to submit to their united clamour; and he sent Gavestone out of the kingdom, by appointing him lord-lieutenant of Ireland. But this compliance was of short duration; the weak monarch, could not live without him; and having obtained a dispensation from the pope for his breach of faith, he once more recalled Gavestone. A parliament was soon after assembled, where the king had influence sufficient to have his late conduct approved; and this served only to increase his affection, and to render Gavestone still more odious.

It was easy to perceive, that a combination of the nobles, while the queen secretly assisted
their

their designs, would prevail against the efforts of a weak king, and a vain favourite. They soon assembled, in a tumultuary parliament, attended with a numerous retinue of armed followers; and began their first usurpations, by giving laws to the king. * They compelled him to sign a commission, by which the whole authority of government was delegated to twelve persons, chosen by themselves. These were to enact ordinances for the good of the state, and the honour of the king, for six months. Many of their ordinances were accordingly put in force, and some of them appeared for the advantage of the nation; such as the requiring that the sheriffs should be men of property; the prohibiting the adulteration of the coin; the excluding foreigners from farming the revenues; and the revoking all the late exorbitant grants of the crown. All these, the king could patiently submit to; but when he learned that Gavestone, was to be banished for ever, he no longer was master of his temper; but removing to York, instantly invited Gavestone back from Flanders, whither the barons had banished him; and declaring his sentence to be illegal, reinstated him in all his former splendours. † This was sufficient to spread an alarm over the whole kingdom; all the great barons flew to arms; the earl of Lancaster put himself at the head of this irresistible confederacy; Guy, earl of Warwick, entered into it with fury; the earl of Hereford, the earl of Pembroke, and the earl Warenne, all embraced the same cause; whilst the archbishop of Canterbury,

* A. D. 1308. March 16. † A. D. 1310.

Canterbury brought over the majority of the ecclesiastics, and consequently of the people. The unhappy Edward, instead of attempting to make resistance, sought only for safety: ever happy in the company of his favourite, he embarked at Tinmouth, and sailed with him to the castle of Scarborough, where he left Gavestone, as in a place of safety; and then went back to York himself, either to raise an army to oppose his enemies; or, by his presence, to allay their animosity. In the mean time, Gavestone was besieged in Scarborough by the earl of Pembroke; and being sensible of the bad condition of the garrison, took the earliest opportunity to offer terms of capitulation. He stipulated, that he should remain in Pembroke's hands as a prisoner for two months; and that endeavours should be used, in the mean time, for a general accommodation. But Pembroke had no intention that he should escape so easily; he ordered him to be conducted to the castle of Deddington, near Banbury, where, on pretence of other business, he left him with a feeble guard, which the earl of Warwick having notice of, he attacked the castle in which the unfortunate Gavestone was confined, and quickly made himself master of his person. The earls of Lancaster, Hereford, and Arundel, were soon apprized of Warwick's success, and informed that their common enemy was now in custody at Warwick castle. Thither, therefore, they hastened with the utmost expedition, to hold a consultation upon him. † This was of no long continuance; they unanimously

† A. D. 1312.

mously resolved to put him to death, as an enemy to the kingdom, and instantly conveyed him to a place called Blacklowhill, where the executioner severed the head from the body.

The king, at first, seemed to feel all the resentment which so sensible an injury could produce ; but equally weak in his attachment and his revenge, he was soon appeased, and granted the perpetrators a free pardon. An apparent tranquility was once more established among the contending parties ; and that resentment which they had exercised upon each other, was now converted against the Scotch. A war had been declared some time before with this nation, in order to recover that authority over them, which had been established in the former reign. * The whole military force of England was now called out by the king, together with very large reinforcements, as well from the continent, as other parts of the English dominions. Edward's army amounted to an hundred thousand men ; while Bruce, king of Scotland, could bring but a body of thirty thousand to oppose him. Both armies met at a place called Banockburn, within two miles of Stirling ; the one confident in numbers, the other relying wholly on their advantageous position. Bruce had a hill on his right flank, and a bog on his left : with a rivulet in front, on the banks of which he had caused several deep pits to be dug, with sharp stakes driven into them, the whole carefully concealed from the enemy. The onset was made by the English ; and a very furious engagement ensued between the cavalry on both sides. The intrepidity of Bruce gave the first turn to the day. He engaged in single combat with
Henry

* A. D. 1313.

Henry de Bohun, a gentleman of the family of Hereford; and at one stroke clove his skull with his battle-axe to the chine. So favourable a beginning was only interrupted by the night; but the battle renewing at the dawn of day, the English cavalry once more attempted to attack the Scotch army; but unexpectedly found themselves entangled among those pits which Bruce had made to receive them. The earl of Gloucester, the king's nephew, was overthrown and slain: this served to intimidate the whole English army; and they were soon still more alarmed by the appearance of a fresh army, as they supposed it to be, that was preparing from a neighbouring height, to fall upon them in the rear. This was only composed of waggons and attendants upon the Scottish camp; who had been supplied by the king, with standards, and ordered to make as formidable an appearance as they could. The stratagem took effect; the English began to fly on all sides; and throwing away their arms, were pursued with great slaughter, as far as Berwick.

Edward himself narrowly escaped by flight to Dunbar, where he was received by the earl of Marche, and conveyed by sea to Berwick. This battle was decisive in favour of the Scotch. It secured the independence of that kingdom; and such was the influence of so great a defeat upon the minds of the English, that for some years after, no superiority of numbers could induce them to keep the field against their formidable adversaries.

* Want of success is ever attended with want of authority. The king having suffered not only

* A. D. 1314.

only a defeat from the Scotch, but also having been weakened by several insurrections among the Welsh and Irish, found his greatest afflictions still remaining in the turbulence of his subjects at home. The nobility took the advantage of his feeble situation to depress his power, and re-establish their own. The earl of Lancaster, and those of his party, no sooner saw the unfortunate monarch return with disgrace, than they renewed their demands, and were reinstated in their former power of governing the kingdom. It was declared, that all offices should be filled from time to time by the votes of parliament, which, as they were influenced by the great barons, these effectually took all government into their own hands. Thus, from every new calamity, the state suffered; the barons acquired new power; and their aims were not so much to repress the enemies of their country, as to foment new animosities.

† The king finding himself thus counteracted in all his aims, had no other resource but in another favourite, on whom he reposed all confidence, and from whose connexions he hoped for assistance. The name of this new favourite was Hugh Despenser, a young man of a noble English family, of some merit, and very engaging accomplishments. His father was a person of a much more estimable character than the son; he was venerable from his years, and respected through life for his wisdom, his valour, and his integrity. But these excellent qualities were set at nought, from the moment he and his son began to share the

† A. D. 1319.

the king's favour. The turbulent barons, and Lancaster at their head, regarded him as a rival, and taught the people to despise those accomplishments that only served to eclipse their own. The king, instead of profiting by the wisdom of his favourites, endeavoured to strengthen himself by their power. For this purpose he married the younger Spenser to his niece; he settled upon him large possessions in the marches of Wales; and even dispossessed some lords of their estates, in order to accumulate them upon his favourite. * This was a pretext the king's enemies had been long seeking for; the earls of Lancaster and Hereford flew to arms; and the lords Audley and Ammory who had been dispossessed, joined them with all their forces. Their first measure was to require the king to dismiss or confine his favourite, the young Spenser, menacing him, in case of a refusal, with a determination to obtain it by force. This request was scarce made, when they began to pillage and destroy the lands of young Spenser, and burn his houses. The estates of the father shared the same fate. They then marched up to London, and so intimidated the parliament that was then sitting, that a sentence was procured of perpetual exile against the two Spensers, and a forfeiture of their fortune and estates. But an act of this kind, was not likely to bind the king any longer than necessity compelled him. Some time after, having assembled a small army to punish one of the barons, who had offered an indignity to the queen, he thought it a convenient oppor-

* A. D. 1321.

opportunity to take revenge on all his enemies at once, and to recal the two Spensers. In this manner the civil war was kindled afresh, and the country involved in slaughter and devastation.

The king hastened by forced marches towards the borders of Wales, where the enemy's chief power lay. Lancaster, was not slow in making head against him; having summoned together all his vassals, and being joined by the earl of Hereford. He likewise formed an alliance with the king of Scotland, with whom he had long been privately connected. * But the king pressed him so closely, that he had not time to collect his forces; and, flying from one place to another, he was at last stopt in his way towards Scotland by Sir Andrew Harcla, who repulsed his forces in a skirmish at Boroughbridge, in which the earl of Hereford was slain, and Lancaster himself taken prisoner. As he had shewn little mercy, there was little extended to him. He was condemned by a court-martial; and led, to an eminence near Pomfret, where he was beheaded. The people, with whom he had once been a favourite, seemed to have quite forsaken him in his disgrace; they reviled him, as he was led to execution, with every kind of reproach; and even his own vassals seemed eager to remove suspicion by their being foremost to insult his distress. About eighteen more of the principal insurgents were afterwards condemned and executed.

A rebellion, thus crushed, served only to encrease the pride and rapacity of young Spenser;

* A. D. 1322. † A. D. 1324.

Spenser; most of the forfeitures were seized for his use; and he was guilty of many acts of injustice. He himself laid the train for his own future misfortunes, and an occasion soon offered. † The king of France, taking the advantage of Edward's weakness, resolved to confiscate all his foreign dominions. After a fruitless embassy from Edward, the queen herself desired permission to go over to France, and endeavour to avert the storm. The French king, tho' he gave her the kindest reception, was resolved to listen to no accommodation, unless Edward in person should appear, and do him homage for the dominions he held under him. This the king of England could not think of complying with. In this exigence, the queen started a new expedient. It was, that Edward should resign Guienne to his son, now thirteen years of age; and that the young prince should go to Paris, to pay that homage which had been required of the father. With this proposal all parties agreed; young Edward was sent to Paris; and the queen, an haughty and ambitious woman, having thus got her son in her power, was resolved to detain him till her own aims were complied with. Among the number of these, was the expulsion of the Spensers, against whom she had conceived a violent hatred.

|| In consequence of this resolution, she protracted the negociation, and being at last required by the king to return, she replied, that she would never again appear in England, till Spenser was banished the kingdom.

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† A. D. 1324. || A. D. 1325.

By this reply, she gained two very considerable advantages; she became popular in England, and she had the pleasure of enjoying the company of a young nobleman, whose name was Mortimer, upon whom she had lately placed her affections. This youth had been condemned for high treason, but had the sentence commuted into perpetual imprisonment in the Tower. From thence, however, he had the good fortune to escape into France, and was soon distinguished for his violent animosity to Spenser. The graces of his person and address, rendered him very acceptable to the queen; so that, from being a partizan, he became a lover, and was indulged with all familiarities. The queen's court now, became a sanctuary for all male-contents. A correspondence was secretly carried on with the discontented at home; and nothing now was aimed at, but to destroy the favourites, and dethrone the king.

‡ To second the queen's efforts, many of the principal nobles prepared their vassals, and loudly declared against the favourite. The king's brother, the earl of Kent, was led in to engage among the rest; together with the earl of Norfolk. The brother and heir to the earl of Lancaster, was attached to the cause; the archbishop of Canterbury expressed his approbation of it; and the minds of the people were enflamed by all those arts, which the designing practise upon the weak and ignorant. In this universal disposition to rebel, the queen prepared for her expedition; and, accompanied by three thousand men at arms,

‡ A. D. 1326.

She, set out from Dort harbour, and landed safely, without opposition, on the coast of Suffolk. She no sooner appeared, than there seemed a general revolt in her favour; three prelates, the bishop of Ely, Lincoln, and Hereford, brought her all their vassals; and Robert de Watteville, who had been sent to oppose her progress, deserted to her with all his forces.

In this exigence, the unfortunate Edward vainly attempted to collect his friends; he was obliged to leave the capital to the resentment of the prevailing party; and the populace, immediately flew out into those excesses which flow from brutality unrestrained by fear. They seized the bishop of Exeter, as he was passing through the city, beheaded him without any form of trial, and threw his body into the Thames. They also seized upon the Tower, and agreed to shew no mercy to any who should oppose their attempts. In the mean time, the king found the spirit of disloyalty was diffused over the whole kingdom. He had placed some dependence upon the garrison in the castle of Bristol, under the command of the elder Spenser; but they mutinied against their governor, and he was delivered up, and condemned by the tumultuous barons to the most ignominious death. He was hanged on a gibbet in his armour, his body was cut in pieces and thrown to the dogs, and his head was sent to Winchester, where it was set on a pole, and exposed to the insults of the populace. Thus died the elder Spenser, in his ninetieth year,

whose character even the malevolence of party could not tarnish. He had passed a youth of tranquility and reputation; but his compliance with his son involved his age in ruin, though not disgrace.

Young Spenser, did not long survive the father; he was taken with some others who had followed the fortunes of the wretched king, in an obscure convent in Wales, and the merciless victors resolved to glut their revenge in adding insult to cruelty. The queen had not patience to wait the formality of a trial: but ordered him immediately to be led forth before the insulting populace, and seemed to take a savage pleasure in feasting her eyes with his distresses. The gibbet erected for his execution was fifty feet high; his head was sent to London, where the citizens received it in brutal triumph, and fixed it on the bridge. Several other lords shared his fate; all deserving pity indeed, had they not themselves formerly justified the present inhumanity, by setting a cruel example.

In the mean time the king, who hoped to find refuge in Wales, was discovered and pursued by his triumphant enemies. Finding no hopes of succour in that part of the country, he took shipping for Ireland; but he was driven back by contrary winds, and delivered up to his adversaries, who expressed their satisfaction in the grossness of their treatment. He was conducted to the capital, amidst the insults and reproaches of the people, and confined in the Tower. A charge was soon after exhibited against him; in which no other crimes but his

his incapacity to govern, his love of pleasure, and his being swayed by evil counsellors, were objected against him. His deposition was quickly voted by parliament; he was assigned a pension for his support; his son Edward, a youth of fourteen was fixed upon to succeed him, and the queen was appointed regent during the minority.

The deposed monarch survived his misfortunes but a short time; he was sent from prison to prison, a wretched outcast, and the sport of his inhuman keepers. § He had been at first consigned to the custody of the earl of Lancaster; but this nobleman, shewing some marks of respect and pity, he was taken out of his hands, and delivered over to lord Berkeley, Montravers, and Gournay, who were entrusted with the charge of guarding him month about. Whatever his treatment from lord Berkeley might have been, the other two seemed resolved he should enjoy none of the comforts of life. They practised every kind of indignity upon him, as if their design had been to accelerate his death. Among other acts of brutal oppression, it is said, that they shaved him for sport in the open fields, using water from a neighbouring ditch. But as they saw that his death might not arrive, even under every cruelty, till a revolution had been made in his favour, they resolved to rid themselves of their fears. Accordingly, his two keepers, Gournay and Montravers, came to Berkley castle, where Edward was then confined; and having concerted a method of putting him to death without any

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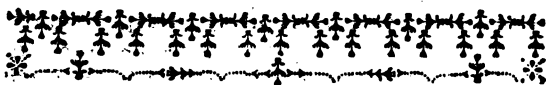
§ A. D. 1327.

external signs of violence, they threw him on a bed, holding him down by a table, which they placed over him. They then ran an horn pipe up his body, through which they conveyed a red hot iron; and thus burnt his bowels, without disfiguring his body. By this cruel artifice, they expected to have their crime concealed; but his horrid shrieks, which were heard at a distance from the castle, soon gave a suspicion of the murder; and the whole was soon after divulged, by the confession of one of the accomplices. He left behind him four children; two sons and two daughters: Edward was his eldest son and successor; John, died young; Jane was afterwards married to David Bruce king of Scotland; and Eleanor was married to Reginald, count of Gueldres.

This prince appears to have been weak, but not wicked. And even his weakness has doubtless been much aggravated, in the accounts which have passed to us thro' the hands of his insolent, cruel, rebellious subjects.

CHAP.





C H A P. XIV.

E D W A R D III.

THE parliament, by which young Edward was raised to the throne, during the life of his father, appointed twelve persons as his privy-council, to direct the operations of government. Mortimer, artfully excluded himself under a shew of moderation; but at the same time he secretly influenced all measures. He caused the greatest part of the royal revenues to be settled on the queen-dowager, and seldom took the trouble to consult the ministers of government in any public undertaking. The king himself was so besieged by the favourite's creatures, that no access could be procured to him, and the whole sovereign authority was shared between Mortimer and the queen, who took no care to conceal her criminal attachment.

† A government so constituted, could not be of long continuance. An irruption of the Scotch gave the first blow to Mortimer's credit; and young Edward's own abilities contributed to its ruin. The Scotch, resolved to take advantage of the feeble state of the

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nation;

‡ A. D. 1328.

nation; and without regarding the truce that subsisted between the two kingdoms, attempted to surprize the castle of Norham. This they seconded by a formidable invasion on the northern counties, with an army of twenty thousand men. Edward, even at this early age discovered his martial disposition. He resolved to intercept them in their retreat; and began his march in the middle of July, at the head of an army of threescore thousand men; but after undergoing incredible fatigues, in pursuing them thro' woods and morasses, he was unable to perceive any signs of an enemy, except from the ravages they had made and the smoaking ruins of villages, which they had set on fire. In this disappointment, he had no other resource, but to offer a reward to any who should discover the place where the Scots were posted. This the enemy understanding, sent him word that they were ready to meet him, and give him battle. However, they had taken so advantageous a situation, on the opposite banks of the river Ware, that the king found it impracticable to attack them; and no threats could bring them to a battle upon equal terms.

It was in this situation, that the first breach was discovered between the king and Mortimer, the queen's favourite. The young monarch, resolved not to allow the ravagers to escape with impunity; but Mortimer opposed his influence to the valour of the king, and prevented an engagement, which might be attended with destructive consequences to his authority, whether he won, or lost the day.

Shortly

Shortly after, the Scotch, under the command of Douglas, made an irruption into the English camp by night, and arrived at the very tent in which the king was sleeping. But the young monarch happening to wake in the critical moment, made a valiant defence against the enemy; his chamberlain and chaplain died fighting by his side; and he thus had time given him to escape in the dark. The Scotch being frustrated in their design, decamped for their own country. The escape of the Scotch was a disagreeable circumstance to the English army. The failure on one part was entirely ascribed to the queen's favourite; and the success on the other, to the king's own intrepidity.

Mortimer now saw himself in a precarious situation; and was resolved, on any terms, to procure a peace with Scotland, in order to fix his power more firmly at home. A treaty was accordingly concluded between the two nations, in which the English renounced all title to sovereignty over the sister kingdom; and the Scotch, in return, agreed to pay thirty thousand marks as a compensation. || The next step that Mortimer thought necessary for his security, was to seize the earl of Kent, brother to the late king, an harmless and well-meaning person, who, under a persuasion that his brother was still alive, entered into a design of reinstating him in his former power. Him therefore, Mortimer resolved to destroy; and summoning him before parliament, had him accused, condemned, and executed, before the young king had time to

interpose. In proportion as Mortimer got rid of his enemies, he enriched himself with their spoils. The estate of the earl was seized upon for the use of his youngest son; the immense fortunes of the Spensers were in like manner converted to his use.

* It was now that Edward resolved to shake off an authority that was odious to the nation. But such was the power of the favourite, that it required much precaution. The queen and Mortimer had for some time chosen the castle of Nottingham for their residence; it was strictly guarded, the gates locked every evening, and the keys carried to the queen. It was agreed, between the king, and some of his barons, to seize upon them in this fortress; and for that purpose, Sir William Eland, the governor, was induced to admit them by a secret subterraneous passage, which had been formerly contrived for an outlet, but was now hidden with rubbish, and known only to one or two. It was by this, the noblemen in the king's interests entered the castle in the night; and Mortimer, without having it in his power to make any resistance, was seized in an apartment adjoining that of the queen's. It was in vain that she endeavoured to protect him; in vain she entreated them to spare her "gentle Mortimer;" the barons, deaf to her entreaties, denied her that pity, which she had so often refused to others. He was condemned by the parliament, which was then sitting, without examining a witness against him. He was hanged on a gibbet at a place called Elmes;
now

* A. D. 1330.

now Tyburn, where his body was left hanging for two days after. A similar sentence passed against some of his adherents, particularly Gournay, and Montravers, the murderers of the late king; but these had time to elude punishment, by escaping to the continent. † The queen, who was the most culpable, was only discarded from all power, and confined for life, to the castle of Risings, with a pension of three thousand pounds a year. From this confinement, she was never after set free; and though the king annually paid her a visit of decent ceremony, yet she found herself abandoned to universal contempt and detestation; and continued for above twenty five years after, a miserable monument of blasted ambition.

Edward now resolved to become popular, by an expedient which seldom failed to gain the affections of the English. He knew that a conquering monarch was the fittest to please a warlike people. The weakness of the Scottish government, which was at that time under a minority, gave him a favourable opportunity of renewing hostilities; and the turbulent spirit of the nobles of that country still more contributed to promote his aims. † A new pretender to that throne appeared, Edward Baliol, and Edward resolved to assist him in his pretensions. He therefore gave him permission to levy what forces he was able in England; and with not above three thousand adventurers, Baliol gained a considerable victory over his countrymen, in which twelve thousand of their men were slain.

O 6

This

‡ A. D. 1331. † A. D. 1332.

This victory which was followed by some others, so intimidated the Scotch, that their armies dispersed, and the kingdom seemed subdued by an handful of men. Baliol, was crowned king at Soone; and every nobleman, who was most exposed to danger, submitted to his authority. But he did not long enjoy his superiority; by another turn equally sudden, he was attacked and defeated by Sir Archibald Douglas, and obliged to take refuge in England once more.

An attempt thus unsuccessfully made by Baliol, only served to enflame the ardour of Edward, who very joyfully accepted of that offer of homage and superiority, which it was Baliol's present interest to make. He therefore prepared, with all his force, to reinstate the king of Scotland, in a government which would be subordinate to his own. He accordingly prevailed upon his parliament to give him a supply; and, with a well-disciplined army, laid siege to Berwick, which capitulated after a vigorous defence. It was in attempting to relieve this city, that a general engagement ensued between the Scotch and the English. It was fought at Hallidown-hill, a little north of Berwick, with great obstinacy on both sides; but Edward prevailed. Douglas, the Scottish general, was slain, and soon after the whole army put to the route. All the Scottish nobles of distinction were either slain, or taken prisoners; near thirty thousand of their men fell in the action. † This important victory decided the fate of Scotland; Baliol, with little trouble

† A. D. 1333. July 9.

trouble, made himself master of the country; and Edward returned in triumph to England, having previously secured many of the principal towns of Scotland, which were declared to be annexed to the English monarchy. These victories, however, were rather splendid than serviceable; the Scotch seemed about this time, to conceive an insurmountable aversion to the English government; * and no sooner were Edward's forces withdrawn, than they revolted against Baliol, and well nigh expelled him from the kingdom. Edward's appearance a second time served to bring them to subjection; but they renewed their animosities upon his retiring. It was in vain, therefore, that he employed all the arts of persuasion, and all the terrors of war, to induce them to submission; they persevered in their reluctance to obey; and they were daily kept in hopes, by promises of succour from France.

This kingdom, which had for a long time discontinued its animosities against England, began to be an object of Edward's jealousy and ambition. A new scene was opened in France, which operated for more than a century, subjecting that country to all the miseries of war. France, at that period, was neither the extensive, nor the powerful kingdom we see it at this day. Many great provinces have been added to it since that period, particularly Dauphiny, Provence, and Franche Comté; and the government was still more feeble, by those neighbouring princes, who were pretended subjects to the king, but, in reality, formidable rivals. At the time we
are

* A. D. 1334.

are speaking of, that kingdom was particularly unfortunate; and the king shared in the general calamity. The three sons of Philip the Fair, in full parliament, accused their wives of adultery; and, in consequence of this accusation, they were condemned and imprisoned for life. Lewis Hutin, the successor to the crown of France, caused his wife to be strangled, and her lovers to be dead alive. After his death, as he left only a daughter, his next brother, Philip the Tall, assumed the crown, in prejudice of the daughter; and vindicated his title by the Salic law, which laid it down, that no female should succeed to the crown. This law, however, was not universally acknowledged, nor sufficiently confirmed by precedents, to procure an easy submission. They had hitherto enquired but slightly in France, whether a female could succeed to the kingdom; and as laws are only made to regulate what may happen by what has happened already, there were no facts upon which to ground the opinions on either side of the question. There were, in reality, precedents to countenance both claims. We thus see that right changed with power; and justice was unknown, or disregarded. In the present instance, the younger brother of the late king, Charles the Fair, jealous of his elder brother's fortune, opposed his pretensions, and asserted, that the late king's daughter was rightful heir to his crown. The cause, thus warmly contested between the two brothers, was at last carried before the parliament; and they decided, upon the

the Salic law, in favour of Philip the Elder. This monarch enjoyed the crown but a short time; and dying, left only daughters to succeed him. Charles, therefore, without a male-opponent, seized the crown; and enjoyed it for some time; but he also dying, left his wife pregnant. As there was now no apparent heir, the regency was contested by two persons, who laid their claims upon this occasion. Edward the third urged his pretensions, as being by his mother Mabella, who was daughter to Philip the Fair, and sister to the three last kings of France, rightful heir to the crown. Philip Valois, on the other hand, put himself in actual possession of the government, as being next heir by the male succession. He was, therefore, constituted regent of France; and the queen-dowager being some time after, brought to bed of a daughter, he was unanimously elected king. He was crowned amidst the universal congratulations of his subjects; received the appellation of Philip the Fortunate; and to this he added the qualities of justice and virtue.

Edward however resolved to undertake the conquest of France. * He first consulted his parliament on the propriety of the undertaking, obtained their approbation, received a proper supply of wool, which he intended to barter with the Flemings; and being attended with a body of English forces, and several of his nobility, he sailed over into Flanders.

§ Philip, on the other hand, made vigorous preparations to oppose him; and challenged

* A. D. 1337. § A. D. 1339.

lenged the invader to single combat, upon equal terms, in some appointed plain. Edward accepted the challenge; for in every action he affected the hero; but some obstacles intervening, the war was prosecuted in the usual manner.

† The first great advantage gained by the English was in a naval engagement on the coast of Flanders, in which the French lost two hundred and thirty ships, and had thirty thousand of their seamen, and two of their admirals slain. None of Philip's courtiers dared to inform him of the event, till his jester gave him a hint, by which he discovered the loss he had sustained. This brought on a truce, which neither side seemed willing to break, till the ambition of Edward was once more excited by the invitation of the count de Mountfort, who had possessed himself of the province of Brittany, and applied to Edward to second his claims. Edward immediately saw the advantages arising from such a proposal. He was happy in the promised assistance of Mountfort, an active and valiant prince, opening to him an entrance into the heart of France. These flattering prospects, however, were for a while damped by the imprisonment of Mountfort, whose aims being discovered, he found himself besieged in the city of Nantz, and taken. But Jane of Flanders, his wife, soon made up for the loss of her husband. || This lady, who was one of the most extraordinary women of her age, courageously undertook to support the falling fortunes of her family. She assembled the inhabi-

† A. D. 1340. || A. D. 1341.

inhabitants of Rennes, where she then resided; and carrying her infant son in her arms, deplored her misfortunes, and inspired the citizens with an affection for her cause. They instantly espoused her interests, and all the other fortresses of Brittany embraced the same resolution; the king of England was entreated to send her succours with all expedition to the town of Hennebone, in which place she resolved to sustain the attacks of the enemy. Charles de Blois, Philip's general, anxious to make himself master of so important a fortress, and still more to take the countess a prisoner, sat down before the place with a large army, and conducted the siege with indefatigable industry. The defence was no less vigorous; several sallies were made by the garrison, in which the countess herself was still the most active. Observing one day that their whole army had quitted the camp to join in a general storm, she sallied out by a postern at the head of three hundred horse, set fire to the enemies tents and baggage, put their followers and servants to the sword, and occasioned such an alarm, that the French desisted from the assault, in order to cut off her communication with the town. Thus intercepted, she retired to Auray, where she continued five or six days; then returning at the head of five hundred horse, she fought her way through one quarter of the French camp, and returned to her faithful citizens in triumph. But mere unsupported valour could not repel an active and superior enemy. The besiegers had at length made several breaches in the walls;

walls ; and it was apprehended that a general assault, which was hourly expected, would be fatal. A capitulation was therefore proposed, and a conference was already begun, when the countess, who had mounted on a high tower, and was looking towards the sea with impatience, descried some ships at a great distance. She immediately exclaimed that succours were arrived, and forbid any further capitulation. She was not disappointed ; the fleet she discerned carried a body of English gentlemen, with six thousand archers, whom Edward had prepared for the relief of Hennebone, but who had been long detained by contrary winds. They entered the harbour under the conduct of Sir Walter Manny, one of the most valiant commanders of his time. This relief served to keep up the declining spirits of the Britons, until the time appointed by the late truce with Edward was expired.

* He accordingly soon after landed at Morbrian, near Vannes, with an army of twelve thousand men ; and endeavoured to give lustre to his arms, by besieging some of the most capital of the enemies fortifications. The vigour of his operations led on to another truce, and this was soon after followed by a fresh infraction. The truth is, neither side observed a truce longer than it coincided with their interests ; and both had always sufficient art to throw the blame of perfidy from themselves. The earl of Derby was sent by Edward to defend the province of Guienne, with instructions
also

* A. D. 1342.

also to take every possible advantage. At first his successes were rapid and brilliant; but as soon as the French king had time to prepare, he met with a very unexpected resistance; so that the English general was compelled to stand upon the defensive. One fortress after another was surrendered to the French; and nothing appeared but a total extinction of the power of England upon the continent. In this situation, Edward resolved to bring relief in person to his distressed subjects and allies; and accordingly embarked at Southampton, on board a fleet of near a thousand sail, of all dimensions. He carried with him, besides all the chief nobility of England, his eldest son, the prince of Wales (afterwards surnamed the black prince) a youth of about fifteen years old, and already remarkable both for understanding and valour. His army consisted of four thousand men at arms; ten thousand archers, ten thousand Welsh infantry, and six thousand Irish, all which he landed safely at La Hogue, a port in Normandy, which country he determined to make the seat of the war. The intelligence of Edward's landing, and the devastation caused by his troops, spread universal consternation through the French court. The rich city of Caen was taken and plundered by the English, the villages and towns, even up to Paris, shared the same fate; and the French had no other resource but by breaking down their bridges, to put a stop to the invader's career. In the mean time, Philip was not idle in making preparations to repress the enemy. He had stationed one of his

|| A. D. 1346.

his generals, Godemar de Faye, with an army on the opposite side of the river Somme, over which Edward was to pass; while he himself at the head of an hundred thousand men, advanced to give the English battle. Edward thus, in the midst of his victories, unexpectedly exposed to the danger of being enclosed and starving in an enemy's country, published a reward to any that should bring him intelligence of a passage over the river Somme. This was discovered by a peasant; and Edward had just time to get his army over the river, when Philip appeared in his rear.

As both armies had for some time been in sight of each other, nothing was so eagerly expected on each side as a battle; and although the forces were extremely disproportioned, the English amounting only to thirty thousand, the French to an hundred and twenty thousand; yet Edward resolved to put all to the hazard. He chose his ground, with advantage, near the village of Crecy; and there determined to await the shock of the enemy. He drew up his men on a gentle ascent, and divided them into three lines. The first was commanded by the young prince of Wales; the second by the earls of Northampton and Arundel; and the third, which was kept as a body of reserve, was headed by the king in person. As his small army was in danger of being surrounded, he threw up trenches on his flank; and placed all his baggage in a wood behind him, which he also secured by an entrenchment. Having thus made the proper dispositions, he and the prince of Wales received the

the sacrament with great devotion; and all his behaviour denoted the calm intrepidity of a man resolved on conquest, or death. He rode from rank to rank with a serene countenance; bade his soldiers remember the honour of their country; and by his eloquence animated the whole army to a degree of enthusiastic expectation. It is said that he first made use of artillery upon this occasion.

On the other side, Philip, confident of his numbers was solicitous to bring the enemy to an engagement. He was advised by some of his generals to defer it till the ensuing day, when his army would have recovered from their fatigue. But the impatience of his troops was too great to be restrained; they pressed one upon the other, and no orders could curb their impetuosity. They were led on in three bodies to oppose those of the English. The first line, consisting of fifteen thousand Genoese cross-bow-men, were commanded by Anthony Doria. The second body was led by the count Alençon, brother to the king, and the king himself was at the head of the third.

About three in the afternoon the famous battle of Crecy began, the French king ordering the Genoese archers to charge; but they were so fatigued with their march, that they cried out for a little rest before they should engage. The count Alençon, being informed of this, rode up and reviled them as cowards, commanding them to begin the onset. Their reluctance was increased by an heavy shower, which fell that instant and relaxed their bow-strings; so that the discharge they

they made produced but very little effect. On the other hand, the English archers, who had kept their bows in cases, and were favoured by a sudden gleam of sun-shine, that rather dazzled the enemy, let fly their arrows so thick, and with such good aim, that nothing was to be seen among the Genoese. But terror and dismay. The young prince of Wales had presence of mind to take advantage of their confusion, and to lead on his line to the charge. The French, cavalry however, commanded by count Alençon, wheeling round sustained the combat, and began to hem the English round. The earls of Arundel and Northampton now came in to assist the Prince, who appeared foremost in the shock; and wherever he appeared, turning the fortune of the day. The thickest of the battle was now gathered round him, and the valour of a boy filled even veterans with astonishment; but their surprize at his courage could not give way to their fears for his safety. Being apprehensive that some mischance might happen to him in the end, an officer was dispatched to the king, desiring that succours might be sent to the prince's relief. Edward, who had all this time with great tranquility, viewed the engagement from a windmill, demanded with seeming deliberation, if his son were dead; but being answered that he still lived, and was giving astonishing instances of valour; "then
 " tell my generals, cried the king, that he
 " shall have no assistance from me; the ho-
 " nour of this day shall be his: let him shew
 " himself worthy the profession of arms, and
 " let

“ let him be indebted to his own merit alone
 “ for victory.” This speech, being reported
 to the prince and his attendants, it inspired
 them with new courage; they made a fresh
 attack upon the French cavalry, and count
 Alençon, their bravest commander, was slain.
 This was the beginning of their total over-
 throw: the French being now without a com-
 petent leader, were thrown into confusion;
 the Welsh Infantry rushed into the midst of
 the conflict, and dispatched those with their
 long knives who had survived the fury of the
 former onset. It was in vain that the king of
 France himself, almost singly maintained the
 combat; he endeavoured to animate his fol-
 lowers, both by his voice and example, but
 the victory was decisive; while he was yet
 endeavouring to face the enemy, John de
 Hainault seized the reins of his horse, and,
 turning him round, carried him off the field
 of battle. In this engagement, thirty thou-
 sand of the French were killed upon the field;
 and among this number, were John king of
 Bohemia, James king of Majorca, Ralph duke
 of Lorraine, nine counts, eighty bannerets,
 twelve hundred knights, fifteen hundred gen-
 tlemen, and four thousand men at arms.

The whole French army took to flight, and
 were put to the sword by the pursuers without
 mercy, till night. The king, on his return
 to the camp, flew into the arms of the prince
 of Wales and exclaimed, “ My valiant son,
 “ continue as you have begun; you have
 “ acquitted yourself nobly, and are worthy of
 “ the kingdom that will be your inheritance.”

Never

Never was a victory more seasonable, or less bloody to the English than this. Notwithstanding the great slaughter of the enemy, the conquerors lost but one esquire, three knights, and a few of inferior rank. The crest of the king of Bohemia was three ostrich feathers, with this motto, Ich Dien; which signifies, in the German language, I serve. This was thought to be a proper prize to perpetuate the victory; and it was accordingly added to the arms of the prince of Wales, and has been adopted by all his successors.

But this victory was attended with still more substantial advantages; for Edward, as moderate in conquest, as prudent in his measures to obtain it, resolved to secure an easy entrance into France for the future. With this view he laid siege to Calais, that was defended by John de Vienne, an experienced commander, and supplied with every thing necessary for defence. The king, knowing the difficulty of taking the town by force, resolved to reduce it by famine. He chose a secure station for his camp; drew entrenchments round the city, and made proper provisions for his soldiers to endure a winter campaign. These operations, though slow, were at length successful. It was in vain that the governor made a noble defence, that he excluded all the useless mouths from the city, which Edward generously permitted to pass through his camp. It was at length taken, after a twelvemonth's siege, the defendants having been reduced to the last extremity. The obstinate resistance, made by the townsmen, was not a little displeasing to
Edward;

* A. D. 1347.

Edward; and he had often declared, that he would take signal revenge for the numbers of men he had lost during the siege. It was with great difficulty, therefore, that he was persuaded to accept of their submission; and to spare their lives, upon condition, that six of the most considerable citizens should be sent him, to be disposed of as he should think proper; but on these he was resolved to wreak his resentment; and he gave orders that they should be led into his camp, bare-headed, and bare-footed, with ropes about their necks, in the manner of criminals just preparing for execution. When the news of this was brought into the city, it spread new consternation among the inhabitants. Who should be the men, that were thus to be offered up as victims to procure the safety of all the rest; and by their deaths appease the victor's resentment, was a fresh subject of dreadful enquiry. In this terrible suspense, one of the principal inhabitants, whose name was Eustace de St. Pierre, walked forward, and offered to undergo any tortures that could procure his fellow-citizens safety. Five more soon followed his noble example; and these marching out like criminals, laid the keys of their city at Edward's feet; but no submissions were sufficient to appease his resentment; and they would in all probability have suffered death, had not the generosity of their conduct affected the queen, who interceded in their behalf, and with some difficulty obtained their pardon.

Edward having thus opened himself a passage into France, by which he might at any

time pour in his forces, and withdraw them with security, resolved on every method that could add stability to his new acquisition. He ordered all the French inhabitants to leave the town, and peopled it with his own subjects from England. He also made it the principal market for wool, leather, tin, and lead; the principal English commodities, for which there was a considerable demand upon the continent. All the English were obliged to bring their goods thither; and foreign merchants came to the same place to purchase them. By these means, the city became populous, rich, and flourishing; and continued for above two centuries after in the possession of the English, and braved all the military power of France.

In this manner, the war between the English and French, was carried on with mutual animosity, a war which at once thinned the inhabitants of the invaded country, while it drained that of the invaders. But a destruction still more terrible at this time, desolated the wretched provinces of Europe. A pestilence, more dreadful than any mentioned in the annals of history, which had already almost dispeopled Asia and Africa, came to settle upon the Western world with increased malignity. It is said to have taken its origin in the great kingdom of Cathay, where it rose from the earth with the most horrid and sulphureous stench, destroying all the inhabitants, and even marking plants and minerals with its malignity. The fourth part of the people were cut off; and it raged with such violence
in

in London, that in one year's space, there were buried in the Charter House church-yard, above fifty thousand persons.

Nor was England free from internal wars during this dreary period. While Edward was reaping victories upon the continent, the Scotch, ever willing to embrace a favourable opportunity, invaded the frontiers with a numerous army, headed by David Bruce, their king. This unexpected invasion, at such a juncture, alarmed the English, but was not capable of intimidating them. Lionel, Edward's son, who was left guardian of England, was too young to take upon him the command of an army; but the victories on the continent, seemed to inspire even women with valour: Philippa, Edward's queen, took upon her the conduct of the field, and prepared to repulse the enemy in person. *Accordingly, having made lord Percy general under her, she met the Scots at a place called Nevill's Cross near Durham, and offered them battle. The Scotch king was no less impatient to engage; he imagined that he might obtain an easy victory against undisciplined troops, headed by a woman. But he was miserably deceived. His army was routed and driven from the field. Fifteen thousand of his men were cut to pieces; and he himself, with many of his nobles and knights, were taken prisoners, and carried in triumph to London.

This victory diffused joy thro' the nation; and they soon had new reasons for exultation. Philip, who was surnamed the Fortunate, upon coming to the crown of France, ended

P 2

his

* A. D. 1346.

his life under the accumulation of every misfortune. John his son succeeded him on the throne. This weak, yet virtuous prince, upon coming to the crown, found himself at the head of an exhausted nation, and a divided and factious nobility. France at that time, pretty much resembled England under the reign of king John. They had barons despotic over their own hereditary possessions; and they obliged their king to sign a charter much resembling the Magna Charta, which had formerly been signed by his name-sake of England. The warlike resources, therefore, of France and England, were at this time very unequal. John was at the head of a nobility, that acknowledged no subordination among each other; they led their dependent slaves to battle, and obeyed their superiors only, as it suited their inclination. Their king might more justly be said to command a number of small armies under distinct leaders, than one vast machine, operating with uniformity. The French barons paid their own soldiers, punished their transgressions, and rewarded their fidelity. But the forces of England were under a very different establishment; the main body of the English army was composed of soldiers indiscriminately levied throughout the nation, paid by the king, and regarding him alone as the source of preferment or disgrace. Instead of personal attendance, the nobility contributed supplies in money; and there was only such a number of nobles in the army as might keep the spirit of honour alive without injuring military subordination.

It

It was in this state of things, that a short truce which had been concluded between Edward and Philip was dissolved by the death of the latter; and Edward well pleased with the factions in France, resolved to seize the opportunity. Accordingly the Black Prince was sent into France with his army; and landing in Gascony, carried his devastations into the heart of the country. On the other hand, Edward himself made an irruption on the side of Calais, at the head of a numerous army. In the mean time John, who was unprepared to oppose them, continued a quiet spectator; nor was it till the ensuing summer's campaign, that he resolved to attack the Black Prince, whose army was by this time reduced to about twelve thousand men. With such trifling forces had this young warrior ventured to penetrate into the heart of France, with a design of joining his forces to those of the duke of Lancaster. But he soon found that his scheme was impracticable; the country before him was too well guarded to prevent his advancing; and all the bridges behind were broken down, which effectually barred a retreat. In this embarrassing situation, his perplexity was increased, by being informed, that the king of France was actually marching at the head of sixty thousand men to intercept him. He at first thought of retreating; but soon finding it impossible, he determined calmly to await the approach of the enemy; and notwithstanding the disparity of forces, to commit all to the hazard of a battle.

It was near Poitiers, that both armies came in sight of each other. The French king might very easily have starved the English: but such was the impatient valour of the French nobility, and such their certainty of success, that he could not repress their ardour to engage. In the mean time, while both armies were drawn out, and expecting the signal to begin, they were stopped by the appearance of the cardinal of Perigord, who attempted to be a mediator between them. But John, sure of victory, would listen to no other terms than the restitution of Calais; with which the Black Prince refusing to comply, the onset was deferred till the next morning.

It was during this interval, that the young prince shewed himself worthy of conquest; he strengthened his post by new intrenchments; he placed three hundred men in ambush with as many archers, who were commanded to attack the enemy in flank, during the heat of the engagement. The morning beginning to appear, he ranged his army in three divisions; the van commanded by the earl of Warwick; the rear by the earls of Salisbury and Suffolk; and the main body by himself. In like manner, the king of France arranged his forces in three divisions; the first commanded by the Duke of Orleans; the second by the Dauphin, attended by his younger brothers; while he himself led up the main body, seconded by his youngest and favourite son, then about fourteen years of age. As the English were to be attacked
only

only by marching up a long, narrow lane, the French suffered greatly from their archers, who were posted on each side, behind the hedges. Nor were they in a better situation upon emerging from this danger, being met by the Black Prince himself, at the head of a chosen body of troops, who made a furious onset upon their forces, already in disorder. A dreadful overthrow ensued; those who were as yet in the lane recoiled upon their own forces; while the English troops, who had been placed in ambush, took that opportunity to encrease the confusion, and confirm the victory. The dauphin, and the duke of Orleans, were among the first that fled. The king of France himself made the utmost efforts to retrieve by his valour; what his rashness had forfeited; but his single courage was unable to stop that consternation, which had now become general through his army; and his cavalry soon flying, he found himself totally exposed to the enemy's fury. He saw his nobles falling round him, valiantly fighting in his defence, and his youngest son wounded by his side. At length, spent with fatigue, and despairing of success, he cried out, he was ready to deliver himself to his cousin, the prince of Wales. The honour of taking him, however, was reserved for a much more ignoble hand; Dennis de Morbec, a knight of Arras.

This success was, in a great measure, owing to the valour and conduct of the black prince; but his moderation in victory was a nobler triumph than had ever graced any former conqueror. He came forth to meet the captive.

captive monarch with an air of pitying modesty ; he remonstrated with him in the most humble manner, when he began to complain of his misfortunes, that he still had the comfort left of reflecting, that, though unsuccessful, he had done all that deserved to ensure conquest. He promised, that a deference to his dignity should never be wanting to soften his captivity ; and at table he actually refused to sit down, but stood among the number of his prisoner's attendants, declaring, that it did not become him, as a subject, to sit down in the presence of a king.

* In April following, the prince conducted his royal prisoner through London, attended by an infinite concourse of people. His modesty upon this occasion was not less than before ; the king of France was clad in royal apparel, and mounted on a white steed, distinguished by its size and beauty ; while the prince himself rode by his side upon a mean little horse, and in very plain attire.

Two kings prisoners in the same court, and at the same time, were considered as glorious achievements ; but all that England gained by them was glory. Whatever was won in France, with all the dangers of war, and the expence of preparation, was successively, and in a manner silently, lost. It may be easily supposed, that the treaties which were made with the captive kings, were highly advantageous to the conquerors ; but these treaties were no longer observed, than while the English had it in their power to enforce obedience. It is true, that John held to his engagements

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* A. D. 1357.

as far as he was able ; but by being a prisoner he lost his authority. The dauphin, and the states of France, rejected the treaties he had been induced to sign ; and prepared, in good earnest, to repel the meditated invasions of the conqueror. † All the considerable towns were put into a posture of defence ; and every thing valuable in the kingdom was secured in fortified places. It was in vain therefore, that Edward tried to allure the dauphin to hazard a battle, by sending him a defiance ; it was impossible to make that cautious prince change the plan of his operations ; it was in vain that Edward alledged the obligation of the treaties which had been signed at London. He, at length, therefore, thought fit to listen to equitable terms of peace, which was at last concluded, upon condition that king John should be restored to liberty, paying a ransom of about a million and a half of our money. It was stipulated, that Edward should forever renounce all claim to the kingdom of France ; and should only remain possessed of the territories of Poictou, Xaintonge, l'Aginois, Perigord, the Limousin, Quercy, Rouvergne, l'Angoumois, and other districts in that quarter, together with Calais, Guisnes, Montreuil, and the county of Ponthieu, on the other side of France. Some other stipulations were made in favour of the allies of England, and forty hostages were sent to England, as a security for the execution of these conditions.

‡ Upon John's return to his dominions, he found himself very ill able to ratify those terms

† A. D. 1358. ‡ A. D. 1360.

terms of peace that had been just concluded. He was without finances, at the head of an exhausted state; his soldiers without discipline, and his peasants without subordination. These had risen in great numbers; and one of the chiefs of their banditti assumed the title of the Friend of God, and the terror of Man. A citizen of Sens, named John Gouge, also got himself, by means of his robberies, to be acknowledged king; and he soon caused as many calamities by his devastations, as the real king had brought on by his misfortunes. Such was the state of that wretched kingdom, upon the return of its captive monarch; and yet such was his absurdity, that he immediately prepared for a crusade into the Holy Land. Had his exhausted subjects been able to equip him for his chimerical project, it is probable he would have gone through with it; but their miseries were such, that they were even too poor to pay his ransom. This was a breach of treaty that John would not submit to; and he was heard to express himself in a very noble manner upon the occasion. "Though, says he, good faith should be banished from the rest of the earth, yet she ought still to retain her habitation in the breast of kings." In consequence of this declaration, he actually returned to England once more, and yielded himself a prisoner, since he could not be honourably free. He was lodged in the Savoy, the palace where he had resided during his captivity; and soon after he closed an unfortunate reign, by his death, which happened* in the fifty-sixth year of his age.

Charles

* A. D. 1364.

Charles, surnamed the Wise, succeeded his father on the throne of France; and this monarch by the force of policy, even though suffering some defeats, restored his country to tranquility and power. He quelled and dissipated a set of banditti, who had long been a terror to the peaceable inhabitants. He led his forces into the kingdom of Castile against Peter, surnamed the Cruel, whom his subjects had dethroned; and who, by means of an alliance with the English, endeavoured to get himself reinstated upon the throne. In consequence of these alliances, the English and French again came to an engagement; their armies on the one side commanded by the black prince; on the other, by Henry of Transtamarre, and Bertrand du Gueselin, one of the most consummate Generals, and accomplished characters of the age. * However, the prince prevailed; the French lost above twenty thousand men, while very few fell on the side of the English.

Nevertheless, these victories were attended with very few good effects. The English, by their frequent supplies had been quite exhausted, and were unable to continue an army in the field. Charles on the other hand, cautiously forbore coming to any decisive engagement; but was contented to let his enemies waste their strength in attempts to plunder a fortified country. When they were retired, he then was sure to sally forth, and possess himself of such places as they were not strong enough to defend. || He first fell upon Ponthieu; the citizens of Abbeville opened their gates

* A. D. 1367. Apr. 3. || A. D. 1369.

gates to him; those of St. Valois, Rue, and Crotoy, imitated the example; and the whole country was in a little time reduced to submission. The southern provinces were invaded by his generals with equal success; while the black prince, destitute of supplies from England, and wasted by a consumptive disorder, was obliged to return to his native country, leaving the affairs of the south of France in a desperate condition.

In this exigence, the resentment of the king of England was excited to the utmost pitch; and he seemed resolved to take signal vengeance on his enemies of the continent. But all his designs were marked with ill success. The earl of Pembroke and his whole army, were intercepted at sea, and taken prisoners by Henry, king of Castile. * Sir Robert Knolles, one of his generals on the continent, at the head of thirty thousand men, was defeated by Bertrand du Guesclin; while the duke of Lancaster, at the head of twenty-five thousand men, had the mortification of seeing his troops diminished one half by flying parties, without ever coming to a battle. Such was the picture that presented itself to this victorious monarch in the decline of life; and this might well serve as a lesson to the princes of the age, that more permanent advantages are obtained by wisdom than by valour. Added to his other uneasinesses, he had the mortification to see his authority despised at home. || It was in vain that he sought refuge, in his age, from the complaints of his subjects, in the arms of a favourite mistress, whose

* A. D. 1371. || A. D. 1374.

whose name was Alice Pierce ; this only served to exasperate his people the more against him. But what of all other things served to gloom the latter part of this splendid reign, was the approaching death of the black prince, whose constitution shewed but too manifestly the symptoms of a speedy dissolution. * This valiant and accomplished prince died in the forty-sixth year of his age, leaving behind him a character without a single blemish ; and a degree of sorrow among the people, that time could scarcely alleviate. His affability, clemency, and liberal disposition, have been celebrated by different historians. Though born in an age, in which military virtues alone were held in esteem, he cultivated the arts of peace ; and seemed ever more happy in deserving praise, than in obtaining it.

The king was most sensibly affected with the loss of his son ; and tried every art to remove his uneasiness ; he had banished his concubine some time before from his presence, but took her again, in hopes of finding some consolation in her company. He removed himself entirely from the duties of the state, and left his kingdom to be plundered by a set of rapacious ministers. He did not survive him long, but died about a year after the prince, at Shene, now Richmond, deserted by all his courtiers, even by those who had grown rich by his bounty. He expired in the sixty-fifth year of his age, and the fifty-first of his reign ; a prince

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more

* A. D. 1376.

more admired than loved by his subjects, and more an object of their applause, than their sorrow.

Edward was very tall, well shaped, and of so majestic an aspect, that his very looks commanded veneration. He was affable and obliging to the good; but inexorable to the bad. He was a friend to the poor, the fatherless, the widow; indeed to all that were afflicted. His greatest fault was ambition, which occasioned the chief blemish of his reign, his conduct toward the king of Scotland.

* The reign of Edward was rather brilliant, than serviceable to his subjects. If England, during these shining triumphs on the continent, gained any real advantage, it was only that of having a spirit of elegance diffused among the higher ranks of the people. In conquests, something is frequently gained in civil life from the people subdued; and as France was at that time more civilized than England, the imitative islanders, adopted the arts of the people they overcame. This was the time when chivalry was at its highest pitch; and many of the successes of England were owing to that romantic spirit, which the king endeavoured to diffuse.

§ It was in this reign that the order of the garter was instituted; the number received into which was to consist of twenty-four persons, beside the king. A story prevails, that the countess of Salisbury, at a ball, happening to drop her garter, the king took it up, and

* A. D. 1377. § A. D. 1349.

and presented it to her with these words, "Honi soit qui mal y pense; Evil to him, that evil thinks." This accident it is said gave rise to the order and the motto, it being the spirit of the times, to mix love and war together, and for knights to plume themselves upon the slightest tokens that their mistresses were pleased to bestow.

Edward left many children by his queen Philippa of Hainault; his eldest son, the black prince, died before him, but left a son named Richard, who succeeded to the throne; Edward's second son was Lionel, duke of Clarence; the third was called John of Ghent, from the place of his birth, and was afterwards created duke of Lancaster. The fourth son was Edmund, earl of Cambridge, and afterwards duke of York; the fifth son was Thomas, duke of Gloucester, the most enterprising of all his family.

About this time, John Wicliff, warden of Canterbury College in Oxford, began to propagate his doctrines. He denied the doctrine of the real presence, the supremacy of the church of Rome, and the merit of monastic vows. He maintained that the scriptures were the sole rule of faith; that the church was dependant on the state; and that the numerous ceremonies of the church were hurtful to true piety. The clergy did not fail to oppose him with fury; but as his doctrines were pleasing to the higher orders of the laity, he found protection from their indignation.

Q.

John

John of Ghent was his particular friend and favourer; and when summoned to appear before the bishop of London, that nobleman attended him into the court; and defended him both from the resentment of the clergy, and the rage of the populace. However, in process of time, he had the satisfaction to see the people, who were at first strongly prejudiced against him, entirely declaring in his favour; and although he was often cited to appear before the prelates, yet from the estimation he was held in among the laity, he was always dismissed without injury. He died in a good old age, of a palsy, in the year 1385, at his rectory of Lutterworth, in the county of Leicester.

CHAP. XV.

RICHARD II.

RICHARD II. came to the throne of his grandfather, when not eleven years of age, and found the people discontented and poor, the nobles proud and rebellious. A spirit of profusion had entered into the kingdom with the spirit of gallantry; which,

* A. D. 1377.

which, while it produced indolence and rapacity among the higher orders, produced want and disobedience among the poor.

As the king was a minor, the government was vested in the hands of his three uncles, the dukes of Lancaster, York, and Gloucester; the difference of whose dispositions, served to check the defects of each other. Lancaster, though experienced during the late reign in government, was neither popular nor enterprising; York was indolent and weak; Gloucester, popular, and ambitious. Under the influence of those, the system of government was kept together for some years; the authority established during the former reign, still continuing to operate in this.

But as the late king had left the kingdom involved in expensive wars; and as these demanded large and constant supplies, the murmurs of the people increased. Nor were they lessened by the manner of carrying on these expeditions; which, in general were languid, and unsuccessful. The duke of Lancaster laid claim to the crown of Castile, and made a fruitless expedition; the war with France produced no enterprize of lustre, neither that with Scotland. The expences, however, entirely exhausted the treasury; and a new tax of three groats, on every person above fifteen, was granted by parliament as a supply. The indignation of the people was high before: and a tax so unequitable, in which the rich paid no more than the poor, kindled the resentment of the latter into a flame.

Notwithstanding the numbers who by war, by a residence in towns, and by other means

had become free, yet there were still multitudes in the country, who were only slaves to the lords from whom they held. These had seen the advantages of liberty, from its effects upon those of equal rank who had gone to live in towns; and they panted for a participation of those advantages. Several of these had become opulent enough to purchase their freedom; but by an unjust act of parliament in this reign, these purchases were declared of no validity. This act the peasants considered as an infraction of the laws of humanity, and such it certainly was. But it had long been the manner of reasoning, to have no regard for the rights of those who were supposed too low for justice. The seeds of discontent were still more cultivated by several popular preachers, who inculcated the natural equality of mankind; and consequently, the right that all had to an equal participation of the goods of nature.

† The minds of the peasants, being thus prepared for insurrection, the manner of collecting this unjust poll-tax, soon furnished them with a pretext. It began in Essex, where a report was industriously spread, that the peasants were to be destroyed, their houses burned, and their farms plundered. The men of Essex were soon joined by Walter Helier, a Tyler of Deptford, better known by the name of Wat Tyler. The tax-gatherers coming to this man's house, while he was at work, demanded payment for his daughter, which he refused, alledging that she was under fifteen. One of the brutal collectors insisted

on

† A. D. 1381.

on her being a full grown woman; and attempted giving a very indecent proof of his assertion. This provoked the father to such a degree, that he struck him dead with a blow of his hammer. The standers by applauded his spirit; and, one and all, resolved to defend him. He was considered as a champion in the cause, and appointed the leader and spokesman of the people. The whole neighbourhood rose in arms; they burnt and plundered wherever they came, and revenged upon their former masters, all those insults which they had long sustained. As the discontent was general, the insurgents increased as they approached the capital. The flame soon propagated itself into Kent, Surry, Suffex, Hertfordshire, Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridge and Lincoln. They were found to amount to above an hundred thousand men, by the time they were arrived at Blackheath; from whence they sent a message to the king, desiring a conference with him. Richard not immediately answering, they entered the city, burning and plundering the houses of such as were obnoxious to them. They broke into the Savoy palace, belonging to the duke of Lancaster, and put several of his attendants to death. Their animosity was particularly levelled against the Lawyers, and they went on without control, till the king went out to a body of them on Mile-End Green, and desired to know their demands. To this they made a very humble remonstrance, requiring a general pardon, the abolition of slavery, freedom of commerce in market-towns, and

a fixed rent instead of those services required by the tenure of villenage. As these requests were reasonable, the king soon complied; and charters were made out, ratifying the grant. In the mean time, another body of these insurgents had broke into the Tower, and murdered the chancellor, the primate, and the treasurer, with some other officers of distinction. At the head of a third body was Wat Tyler, who led his men into Smithfield, where he was met by the king, who invited him to a conference. Tyler ordering his companions to retire, till he should give them a signal, boldly ventured to meet the king in the midst of his retinue. He required that all slaves should be set free; that all commonages should be open to the poor as well as the rich, and that a general pardon should be passed for the late outrages. Whilst he made these demands, he now and then lifted up his sword in a menacing manner; which so raised the indignation of William Walworth, then mayor of London, attending on the king, that, without considering the danger to which he exposed his majesty, he stunned Tyler with a blow of his mace; and one of the king's knights riding up, dispatched him with his sword. The people, seeing their leader fall, prepared to take revenge; and their bows were now bent for execution, when Richard, though not yet quite sixteen years of age, rode up, and with admirable presence of mind, cried out, "What, my people, will you kill your king? Be not concerned for the loss of your leader; I myself will

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“now be your general ; follow me into the field, and you shall have whatever you desire.” The awed multitude immediately desisted ; they followed the king, as if mechanically, into Islington fields, and there he granted them the same charter that he had before given to their companions.

These grants, gained the king great popularity ; and it was his desire to have them continued. But the nobles had long tasted the sweets of power, and were unwilling to admit any other to a participation. The parliament soon revoked these charters ; the people were reduced to the same slavish condition as before, and several of the ring-leaders were punished with capital severity. It is observable, the insurrections of the barons against their kings, are slightly blamed by our Historians ; but the tumults of the people against the barons, are marked with all the virulence of reproach.

The cruelty which was exercised upon this occasion, created no small enmity against the king. He had first granted them a charter, which implied the justice of their demands ; and now he was prevailed upon to revoke it. He soon likewise discovered too great an attachment to his favourites. Robert Vere, earl of Oxford, a young man, whose person was faultless, but who was no otherwise remarkable, had acquired an entire ascendant over him. This nobleman was first created marquis of Dublin, and then duke of Ireland, with the entire sovereignty, during

Q 5.

life,

life, of that island. He gave him his own cousin in marriage; and afterward permitted him to repudiate her for another lady. He soon possessed all the power, while the king had only the shadow of royalty.

Those noblemen, who thought they had themselves better pretensions to favour, instantly took the alarm, and combined against him. † At the head of this association were Moubray earl of Nottingham, Fitz Alan earl of Arundel, Percy earl of Northumberland, Montacute earl of Salisbury, and Beauchamp earl of Warwick. These uniting resolved on the destruction of the favourite; and they began by marking out Michael de la Pole, who was then chancellor, and Oxford's chief friend, as the first object of their vengeance. He was accordingly impeached in parliament; and although nothing material was proved against him, such was the interest of the conspiring barons that he was condemned, and deprived of his office.

They soon after ventured to attack the king in person. Under a pretence that he was as yet unable to govern, although he was at that time twenty-one, they appointed a commission of fourteen persons, to whom the sovereign power was to be transferred for a year. This was, in fact, depriving the king of all power, and oppressing the kingdom with a confirmed aristocracy. It was not without a struggle that the king saw himself thus totally divested of authority; he endeavoured first to gain over the parliament to his interests.

This

† A. D. 1386.

This measure failing, he applied to the judges; who declared that the commission which had deprived him of his authority, was unlawful; and that those who procured or advised it, were punishable with death. This sentence was quickly opposed by declarations from the lords; the duke of Gloucester saw his danger if the king should prevail; and assembling his party, appeared in arms at Haringay Park, near Highgate. || These insurgents, sensible of their own power, were now resolved to make use of the occasion; and began by demanding of the king the names of those who had advised him to his late rash measures. A few days after, they appeared armed in his presence, and accused, by name, the archbishop of York, the duke of Ireland, the earl of Suffolk, and Sir Robert Tresilian, one of the judges who had declared in his favour, together with Sir Nicholas Bember, as enemies to the state. It was now too late for the opposite party to attempt any vindication of their conduct but by arms. The duke of Ireland fled into Cheshire, where he attempted to raise a body of forces; but was quickly obliged to fly into Flanders. & Soon after, the king was obliged to summon a parliament; an accusation was drawn up against five of his counsellors; of these only Sir Nicholas Bember was present; and he was quickly found guilty, condemned, and executed, together with Sir Robert Tresilian, who had been discovered and taken during the interval. Lord Beauchamp of Holt, was shortly after condemned and executed; and

Q 6

Sir

1387

|| A. D. 1387. A. D. 1388.

Sir Simon Burley, who had been appointed the king's governor, shared the same fate. This parliament usually bore the name of the merciless parliament.

It might be supposed, that after such a total subversion of the royal power, there would be no more struggles, during this reign, between the prince and his nominal subjects. * But in an extraordinary council of the nobility, assembled after Easter, the next year, Richard, to the astonishment of all present, desired to know his age; and being told that he was turned of two and twenty, he alledged, that it was time then for him to govern without help; and that there was no reason that he should be deprived of those rights, which the meanest of his subjects enjoyed. The lords answering, in some confusion, that he had certainly an indisputable right to take upon himself the government of the kingdom: "Yes, replied he, I have long been under the government of tutors; but I will now manage my own affairs." He then ordered Thomas Arundel, whom the commissioners had lately appointed chancellor, to give up the seal, which he next day delivered to William of Wickham, bishop of Winchester. He next removed the duke of Gloucester, the earl of Warwick, and other lords of the opposition, from the council. The bishop of Hereford lost his office of treasurer; the earl of Arundel was deprived of the post of high-admiral; all the great officers of the household, as well as the judges, were changed; and all the offices felt the influence of this extraordinary revolution.

The

* A. D. 1389.

† The king being thus left at liberty to conduct the business of government at discretion, began by shewing many marks of moderation towards those who had endeavoured to depress his power; he seemed to be entirely reconciled to his uncles; and he remitted some subsidies which had been granted him. Early in the year he summoned a parliament who unanimously declared, that the prerogative of the king and his crown, should be maintained, and whatever had been done against them redressed, so that he should be as free as any of his progenitors. And before it broke up, the lords and commons presented their humble thanks to the king for his good government, and the great affection and zeal he had continually manifested for the happiness of his people.

Richard's new ministers were men of eminent capacity and unblemished morals. His own manner of living was splendid to extravagance; all at court was music, feasting, and rejoicing. In November 1391, another parliament was called, which confirmed the act for the king's full enjoyment of his royalty. And they were thoroughly satisfied with Richard's conduct during the whole session.

In 1393 the famous statute of *Præmunire* was passed, against all that purchased or solicited in the court of Rome any translation of bishops, bulls, sentences of excommunication, or any thing else, to the prejudice of the king, his crown and dignity.

§ The next year, the queen died at the palace of Sheen, greatly lamented by all.

Her

† A. D. 1390. § A. D. 1394.

Her death made so deep an impression on Richard, that he was for some time quite disconsolate; and could never after bear the sight of that palace. This melancholy event confirmed him in his resolution of going over to Ireland, where the English interest was well nigh lost, and all things were in the utmost confusion. He landed with thirty thousand men. The native Irish hastened to make their submission. He treated them with great clemency, and not only pardoned, but allotted pensions to their chiefs. He removed the officers by whom they had been oppressed: and behaved toward all with such lenity and prudence, as acquired not only the esteem, but affection of the whole nation.

* At his return, the council earnestly advised him to a second marriage, and cast their eyes on Isabel, eldest daughter of the king of France. This was easily agreed to by her father; and Richard going over, married her at Calais.

All the time this duke of Gloucester was secretly fomenting jealousies against the king. He used every art to raise and increase the aversion of the nation against him. * He represented the peace which had been just concluded with France, as the result of the king's pusillanimity; and appeared to lament that Richard should have degenerated so far from the heroic virtues of his father. He spoke with contempt of the king's person and government, and asserted the lawfulness of throwing of all allegiance to him. These were insults that deserved to be chastised in

any

† A. D. 1395

* A. D. 1396.

any subject ; but that called aloud for punishment in him, whose popularity was dangerous, and who more than once had testified a disposition to rebel. As all his conduct was secretly observed by the king's emissaries, Richard at length formed a resolution of ridding himself of him and his faction. He accordingly ordered Gloucester to be arrested, and sent over to Calais, at which place there was no danger of a rescue from his numerous adherents. The earls of Arundel and Warwick were seized at the same time ; and a parliament was summoned at Westminster. This parliament repealed all those acts which had condemned his former ministers ; and revoked the general pardon which the king had granted, upon his assuming the reins of government into his own hands. In consequence of this, several of the party of Gloucester were impeached. Fitz-Alan, archbishop of Canterbury, was banished the kingdom, and his temporalities sequestered. The earl of Arundel vainly pleaded the king's general pardon to stop his execution ; the earl of Warwick shewing signs of contrition, had his life spared, but was banished to the Isle of Man. The greatest criminal yet remained ; and a warrant was accordingly issued to the earl marshal, governor of Calais, to bring over the duke of Gloucester to take his trial. It is probable this nobleman would have shared the same fate with the rest of his party ; but he was privately dispatched in prison : it was supposed by the king's order. The

The death of so popular a nobleman increased these animosities, which had already taken root in the kingdom. The aggrandizement of some new favourites, contributed still more to make the king odious; but it was a seemingly little incident, that gave the occasion for his overthrow. * The duke of Hereford (late lord Derby) appeared in parliament, and accused the duke of Norfolk of having spoken seditious words against his majesty. Norfolk denied the charge; and offered to prove his innocence by single combat. The lords acquiesced in that mode of determination; the time and place were appointed. The day arrived, this duel was to be fought; and Hereford, the challenger, first appeared on a white horse, gaily caparioned, armed at all points, and holding his drawn sword. When he approached the lists, the marshal demanded his name and business; to which he replied, "I am Henry of Lancaster, duke of Hereford, come hither according to my duty, against Thomas Mowbray, duke of Norfolk, a false traitor to God and the king, the realm and me." Then taking the oath that his quarrel was just and true, he desired to enter the lists, which being granted, he sheathed his sword, pulled down his beaver, crossed himself on the forehead, seized his lance, passed the barrier, alighted, and sat down in a chair of green velvet, placed at one end of the lists. He had scarce taken his seat when the king came into the field with great pomp, attended by the lords, and ten thousand men at arms. His majesty being seated

in

* A. D. 1398.

in his chair of state, the king at arms proclaimed, that none but such as were appointed to marshal the field, should presume to touch the lists upon pain of death. Then another herald proclaimed, "Behold here Henry of Lancaster, duke of Hereford, who has entered the lists to perform his devoir against Thomas Mowbray, duke of Norfolk, on pain of being counted false and recreant." Just then the duke of Norfolk appeared in arms, mounted with a coat of arms of crimson velvet embroidered with lions of silver, and mulberry trees; and having taken his oath before the constable and mareschal, entered the field, exclaiming aloud, "God defend the right!" Then alighting from his horse, he placed himself in a chair of crimson velvet opposite to his antagonist, at the other end of the lists. After which, the mareschal having measured their lances, delivered one to the challenger, and sent a knight with the other to the duke of Norfolk; and proclamation was made that they should prepare for combat. Accordingly, mounting their horses, and closing their beavers, they fixed their lances, and the trumpets sounded the charge. The duke of Hereford began his career with great violence; but, before he could join his antagonist, the king threw down his warder, and the heralds interposed. By the advice and authority of his parliamentary commissioners, he stopped the combat, and ordered both the combatants to leave the kingdom. The duke of Norfolk he banished for life, but the duke of Hereford only for ten years. Thus the

one

Book I A

one was condemned to exile without being charged with any offence, and the other without being convicted of any crime. The duke of Norfolk was overwhelmed with grief; he retired to Venice, where, in a little time, he died of a broken heart. Hereford's behaviour on this occasion was submissive, which so pleased the king, that he shortened the date of his banishment four years; and he also granted him letters patent, ensuring him the enjoyment of any inheritance which should fall to him during his absence. The earl of Hereford retiring into Flanders, and from thence to Paris, found a favourable reception from the French king. He even opened a treaty of marriage with the daughter of the duke of Berry, uncle to the king of France; but was prevented from completing the alliance by Richard, who, dreading his increasing power, sent over the earl of Salisbury to Paris, with instructions to break the match. Such an unexpected injury could not fail to aggravate the resentment of Hereford; but he had still more cogent reasons for anger, upon the death of his father, the duke of Lancaster, which happened shortly after. † Richard, as we before observed, had given him letters patent, empowering him to possess any accidental successions that should fall to him while abroad; but being now afraid of strengthening his hands, he retained the possession of the Lancaster estate to himself.

This enflamed the resentment of Hereford. He now set no bounds to his indignation; but formed a design of dethroning him. Indeed,

† A. D. 1399.

need, no man could be better qualified for an enterprize of this nature: he was cool, cautious, discerning, and resolute. He had served with distinction against the infidels of Lithuania; was the idol of the soldiery, and the people; he was immensely rich, and by blood, or alliance, connected with all the great families of the nation. On the other hand, the king gave himself up to a soft effeminate life. His ministers following the example of their sovereign, gave little attention to business; but saw, without any concern, the nation sinking into contempt. In this situation, people naturally turned their eyes upon the banished earl. They only waited for the absence of the king: and this opportunity quickly offered.

The earl of Marche, the king's lieutenant in Ireland, was slain in a skirmish with the natives; which so incensed Richard, that, he resolved, with a numerous army, to revenge his death in person. The duke of Lancaster (for that was the title which Hereford assumed, upon the death of his father) being informed of Richard's departure for Ireland, instantly embarked at Nantz, with a retinue of sixty persons, in three small vessels, and landed at Ravenspur in Yorkshire. The earl of Northumberland together with Henry Percy, his son, who, from his ardent valour, was surnamed Hotspur, immediately joined him with their forces. After this the concourse of people coming to lift under his banner was so great, that in a few days his army amounted to three score thousand men.

The

The duke of York had been left guardian of the realm during Richard's absence; but the most powerful persons who espoused the king's interests were then with him in Ireland. The duke, however assembled a body of forty thousand men at St. Alban's. Hereford from the beginning gave out that he only aimed at the recovery of his patrimony. He entreated the duke of York not to oppose a loyal and humble suppliant in the recovery of his just rights; but to concur in a measure that was more likely to promote the king's honour, than injure his interests. York was deceived by these specious professions; he declared, that he would not only approve, but assist him in his pretensions; and both armies meeting, embraced with acclamations of joy.

Whilst these things were transacting in England, Richard continued in Ireland in perfect security. Contrary winds, which continued for three weeks together, prevented his receiving any news of the rebellion. Upon the first information, he resolved to go immediately over to fight the enemy in person. But he was constrained to stay, till he could prepare ships to transport all his forces. This delay completed his ruin; so that when he landed at Milford-haven with a body of twenty thousand men, he had the mortification to find, that his force was every way inferior to that of the enemy. He now, therefore, saw himself in a dreadful situation, without any friend on whom to rely. His little army gradually deserted him, till he found he had not above six thousand men left.

He

He then saw no other hopes but to throw himself upon the generosity of his enemy. He sent Hereford word, that he desired a conference. For this purpose, the earl appointed him to meet at a castle within about ten miles of Chester, † where he came the next day with his whole army. Richard, who came the day before, descrying his rival's approach from the walls, went down to receive him; while Hereford, after some ceremony, entered the castle in complete armour, only his head was bare, in compliment to the fallen king. Richard received him with that open air for which he had been remarkable. "My lord the king, returned the earl, with a cool, respectful bow, I am come sooner than you appointed; because your people say, that for one and twenty years you have governed with indiscretion. They are very ill satisfied with your conduct; but, if it please God, I will help you to govern them better for the time to come." To this declaration the king made no other answer, but "Fair cousin, since it pleases you, it pleases us likewise."

But this was not the only mortification the unfortunate Richard was to endure. Hereford ordered the king's horses to be brought out of the stable; and two wretched animals being produced. Richard was placed upon one, and his favourite, the earl of Salisbury upon the other. In this mean equipage they rode to Chester; and were conveyed to the castle, with a great noise of trumpets, and through a vast concourse of people. Thus he was led triumphantly along, from town to town,

† A. D. 1399.

town, amidst multitudes who scoffed at him, and extolled his rival. "Long live the good duke of Lancaster, our deliverer!" was the general cry; but as for the king, to use the pathetic words of the poet, "None cried, God bless him." Thus, after repeated indignities, he was confined a close prisoner in the Tower; there, if possible, to undergo a still greater variety of studied insolence. He was soon required to sign a deed, by which he renounced his crown. Upon this Hereford founded his principal claim; but willing to fortify his pretensions, he called a parliament, which was readily brought to approve and confirm his claims. A frivolous charge of thirty-three articles was drawn up, and found valid against the king; upon which he was solemnly deposed, and the earl of Hereford elected in his stead, by the title of Henry IV. Thus began the contest between the houses of York and Lancaster; which, for several years after, deluged the kingdom with blood.

When Richard was deposed, the earl of Northumberland made a motion in the house of peers, with regard to his future treatment. They replied, he should be imprisoned in some secure place, where his partizans should not be able to find him. This was accordingly put in practice; but while he continued alive, the usurper could not rest. He wished for Richard's death; in consequence of which, one of those assassins that are found in every court, ready to commit the most horrid crimes, went down to the place of this unfortunate monarch's confinement, in the castle

castle of Pomfret ; and, with eight of his followers, rushed into his apartment. The king concluding their design was to take away his life, resolved not to fall unrevenged, wherefore, wresting a pole-ax from one of the murderers, he soon laid four of them dead at his feet. But he was at length overpowered, and struck dead by the blow of a pole-ax. Thus died the unfortunate Richard, in the thirty-fourth year of his age, and the twenty-third of his reign. Though his conduct was not always unblameable, yet the punishment he suffered was greater than his offences ; and in the end, his sufferings made more converts to his cause, than his most meritorious actions could have done. He left no posterity.

It is exceeding hard to discover, what the real faults of king Richard were : only, that he loved his favourites too well ; that he punished some rebellious nobles, and that he unjustly banished the duke of Hereford. It is strange, his successor and murderer, did not invent some crimes for him, in order to justify himself. He does not appear to have wanted either courage, conduct, or understanding : he had good-nature, courtesy and affability, perhaps to an excess : but he seems to have been too open, frank and unsuspecting. Upon the whole, he was, if not of a faultless, yet of an amiable character. How then came he to be so unfortunate ?---God putteth down one, and setteth up another !

End of the First Volume.



b.

