

CHAPTER THE FIFTH. RICHARD THE SECOND, SURNAMED OF BORDEAUX.



F little and good were always identical. Richard the Second would have been a very good king, for he was a little boy of eleven years of age when the crane of circumstances hoisted him on to the throne of his grandfather.

Young Richard was the only surviving son of Edward the Black Prince, and out of compliment to the juvenile monarch, his coronation in Westminster Abbey was made as gaudy as possible. No expense was spared in dresses and decorations; but the ceremony not being over till it was high time all children should be in bed and asleep, the boy king was completely exhausted before the spectacle was half over. Stimulants were administered to keep the child up; but when the heavy crown was placed on his brow, the diadem completely overbalanced a head already oscillating from side to side with excessive drowsiness.

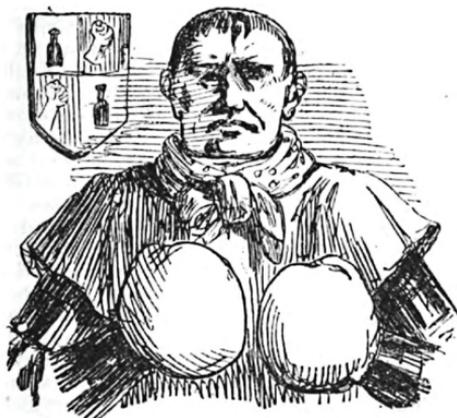
His attendants tumbled him into a litter, and hurried him into a private room, where, by dint of the most scarifying restoratives held to his nose, he so far recovered as to be enabled to

create four earls and nine knights, partake of a tremendous supper, dance at a ball, and listen to a little minstrelsy.

* It was at the coronation of Richard the Second that we first find mention in history of a champion rushing into Westminster Hall, throwing his gauntlet on the ground, and offering to fight any number—one down and another come on—who may dispute the title of the sovereign.

The gallantry of the challenge is not very considerable, for it is a well-understood thing beforehand that the police will keep all suspicious characters out of the Hall, and the only difficulty required is in backing out of the Hall on horseback; as, if a claimant to the throne should actually appear, the champion would no doubt back cleverly out of his challenge.

Even this trifling merit must, however, be assigned to the horse, who is generally a highly-trained palfrey from the neighbouring amphitheatre, and is let out, trappings and all included, to the Champion of England for the performance in which his services are required.* We get these facts from Walsingham, who gives an elaborate account of the coronation. Walsingham says, they waltzed till all was blue, which means, until the coerulean dawn began to make its appearance.



Though Richard was not too young for the position of king, it was not to be supposed that a boy of his age could be of any

use whatever, and twelve permanent councillors were therefore appointed, to do the work of government. It was expected that the Duke of Lancaster, alias John of Gaunt, would have been appointed regent, but not one of the king's uncles was named, and John, looking gaunter than ever, withdrew in stately dudgeon to his Castle of Kenilworth.

John of Gaunt was not so called from his gaunt stature, as some suppose, but from Ghent, or Gand (then called Gaunt) where the gent, was born, The truce with France having expired, without renewal, some attacks were made on the English coast, and advantage was taken of the circumstance to ask the Parliament for a liberal supply. Every appeal to the patriotism of the people was in those days nothing more than an attack upon their pockets; and it is not improbable that, by an understanding among the various kings of Europe, one of them should be threatened with attack if he required a pretext for obtaining a subsidy from his subjects.

Notwithstanding the money taken from the public purse for the national defence, the work was so utterly neglected by the

Government, that John Philpot, a shipowner and merchant of London, equipped a small fleet of his own, with which he captured several of the enemy's vessels.

The authorities feeling the act to be a reflection on their own shameful dereliction of duty, censured Philpot for his interference; but the worthy alderman, by replying—"Why did you leave it to me to do, when you ought to have done it yourselves?" effectually silenced all remonstrance.

Young Richard, or those who acted for him, continued to make ducks and drakes of the money of the English, which was being constantly wasted in wanton warfare. The setting up of a duke here, or the taking down of a king there, though the English felt no interest whatever in either the duke or the king, became a pretext for levying a tax on the people.

In order that none should escape, so much per head was imposed on every one from the highest to the lowest.

The tax varied with the rank of the person; and while a duke or archbishop was assessed at six 'thirteen four (£6 13s. 4d.) a lawyer was mockingly mulcted of six and eightpence. Such was the unpopularity of the poll-tax, that a regular pollish revolution speedily broke out, which was fomented by the exactions of some mercenary speculators to whom the tax had been farmed out by the Government. Commissioners were sent into the disturbed districts to enforce payment, and one Thomas de Bampton, who sat at Brentwood in Essex, with two serjeants-at-arms, was glad to take to his legs, to escape the violence of the populace, who sent him flying all the way to London, where he rushed with his two attendants into the Common Pleas, and asked for justice. Sir Robert Belknap, the chief, was sitting at Nisi Prius, when Bampton begged permission to move the court as far as Essex.

The judge followed by clerks, jurors, and ushers, consenting to the motion, went off to Brentwood, where they had no sooner arrived, than poor Belknap was seized by the nape of the neck and forced to flee, while the clerks and jurors were much more cruelly dealt with.

Leaders were all that the people wanted, when a notorious priest who got the name of Jack Straw from his being a man of that material put himself at the head of the discontents.

The throwing up a straw will often tell which way the wind blows, and the elevation of Jack certainly indicated an approaching hurricane. During the excitement, one of the tax-gatherers called upon one Walter the Tyler, of of Dartford, in Kent, to demand fourpence, due as Miss Walter's Poll-tax. Mrs. Walter, with the vanity of her sex, wishing to make herself out younger than she really was, declared that the girl was not of the age liable by law to the imposition.

The collector made a very rude remark on that very tender point, the age of the elder lady, when she screamed out to her husband, who was tiling a house in the neighbourhood, to

come and “punish the impertinent puppy.” Walter, who had still his trowel in his hand, replied by crying out “Wait till I get at you;” and the tax-gatherer insolently calling out “What’s that what you say, Wat?” so irritated Walter, that he at once emptied a hod of mortar on to the head of the collector.

The functionary was, of course, dreadfully mortar-fied at this incident, but the trowelling he got with the trowel completely finished him. Everybody applauded what Wat had done, and he was soon appointed captain of the rebels.

They released from prison a Methodist parson named John Ball, or Bawl, whom they called their chaplain.

A nucleus having been formed, the mob increased with the rapidity of a snowball, picking up the scum of the earth at every turn, until it arrived at an alarming magnitude.

The Tyler first visited Canterbury, where he played some practical jokes upon the monks, and then came to Blackheath, where, finding the young king’s mother the widow of the Black Prince he gave the old lady a kiss, and in this operation nearly every rebel followed his leader. Such were the liberties taken by the mob in their zeal on behalf of liberty, which they often affect to pursue by means of the vilest tyranny, cruelty, cowardice, and oppression.

The insurgents made for London, when Walworth, the mayor, endeavoured to oppose their entrance; but his efforts were vain, and several parts of the city were burnt and plundered.

The Temple was destroyed by fire, and the lawyers running about in their black gowns amid the flames suggested a very obvious comparison.

Newgate and the Fleet prisons were broken into, when all the scamps from both places at once assumed the character of patriots, and joined the cause of the people.

It is astonishing how easily a scamp who is unfit for any honest occupation can at once become a friend of the masses.

The prisons might at any time contribute a fresh supply, when the stock of lovers of liberty on hand may seem to be

diminishing. Rapine and murder were pursued with impunity for some time, the Government leaving matters to take their chance; until a formal demand having been made by the mob for the heads of the Chancellor and Treasurer, it was thought high time to effect a compromise. A proclamation was issued announcing the king's intention to be at Mile End by a certain hour, and the people were politely requested to meet him there. On his reaching the spot where he intended to talk things over with his subjects, he found sixty thousand of them assembled; and as they all began talking at once, a little confusion arose until the appointment of a regular spokesman.

At length the demands of sixty thousand tongues were reduced to four heads, and to these the king agreed very graciously.

The dispute might have ended mildly at Mile End, but for the violent proceedings of those who kept away from the meeting. These got into the Tower directly Richard's back was turned, and the least of their offences was the rudeness they manifested towards the widow of the Black Prince, who had either dropt in to tea with the Archbishop and Chancellor or was permanently residing there.

This lady had got the name of the Fair Maid of Kent, a title that had many local variations, according to the part of the county in which she was spoken of. Sometimes they called her the Dartford Daisy, sometimes the Canterbury Belle, sometimes the Greenwich Geranium, sometimes the Woolwich Wallflower, and occasionally, even the Heme Bay Hollyoak.

The rioters finding her in the Tower, treated the Fair Maid of Kent with excessive rudeness, comparing her lips to Kentish cherries, and making them the subject of the well-known game which is played by what is termed bobbing at the fruit specified. She was, in fact, nearly smothered in the Tower with the kisses of the malcontents. Her ladies were, of course, dreadfully shocked, and their screams of "Mi!" at the treatment of their mistress were truly terrible. When remonstrated with on the

liberty they were taking, they declared liberty to be the sacred object they were bent on furthering. The Fair Maid of Kent was at length dragged away by her attendants, who concealed her in a house called the royal wardrobe, or perhaps put her into a clothes-cupboard, to keep her out of the way of the rioters.

The Mile End charter had been very nicely written out by order of the king, but Wat Tyler and his followers refused to have anything to do with it. Richard tried another charter with more concessions, but this had no effect; and at length he drew up a third, which went still further than the two first, for the king, or those who advised him, cared not how much was promised to answer a temporary purpose, as there was never any difficulty in breaking a pledge that might be found inconvenient. Whether or no Wat suspected the worthlessness of charters, which might be sworn to one day and treated as waste paper the next, he refused to be satisfied with either of the documents offered to his approval. Finding written communications utterly useless, Richard rode into town, with the intention of seeing what could be done by means of a personal interview.

On reaching Smithfield he met Wat Tyler, and drew up opposite the gate of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, which was in those days an abbey. The incident which then happened has been variously described by different pens, but unless we had at our command some of the Smithfield pens that happened to be present at the time, we could not vouch for the accuracy of any particular statement. Some say that Tyler came up in a bullying attitude, and flourished a dagger; others allege that he seized the king's bridle, as if he would take out of the royal hands the reins of power; a few hint that Wat was intoxicated, either with brief authority or something equally short; but all agree that he received his quietus at the hands of one of his majesty's attendants.

The merit or responsibility of the death of Wat Tyler has usually been assigned to Walworth, Lord Mayor of London, who is said to have killed the rebel with his mace; * but it is doubtful

whether the civic potentate would be carrying his mace about with him during a morning's ride.

* Others say that the mace in the hands of Walworth was not the official mace, but a mace belonging to a billiard marker in the mob. It is pretty certain that, wherever the mace may have come from, the insolence of Tyler furnished the cue. The fall of the Tyler had a most depressing influence on his followers, and Richard, riding up to them, offered his services as their leader. "Tyler was a traitor," cried the king: "I will be your captain and your guide," when several of the mob consented to transfer themselves, like so many tools, from the hands of Wat to those of Richard. Some of the rioters sneaked quietly away, while those that remained were paralysed; for it was always the characteristic of an English mob, to go on very valiantly as long as they had it all their own way, but to turn tail and flee on the very first symptom of earnest resistance. Richard, finding himself once more powerful, instead of tempering justice with mercy, threw in a strong seasoning of the most highly -spiced cruelty, and commenced a series of executions, in which there were nearly fifteen hundred victims to royal vindictiveness. As might have been expected from the state of royal honour at the time, he at once revoked all the charters to which he had agreed—an act which proved that Tyler took a very fair view of the worth of the concessions he had rejected. Jack Straw, one of the rioters, after being tauntingly told by the authorities that he, Straw, deserved to be thrashed, was among the sufferers by the law; and an act was passed by which "riots and rumours and other such things" were turned into high treason. Considering that rumour has an incalculable number of tongues, which are not unfrequently all going at once, there must have been plenty to do under the act by which all rumours were converted into high treason.

In the year 1382, Richard was married to Anne of Bohemia, a most accomplished Bohemian girl, and the daughter of

Charles the Fourth, the highly respectable emperor. The king had in the commencement of his reign been surrounded by a low set, placed about him by his mother, the Princess of Wales, for the purpose of excluding his uncles, who could not be expected to mix with ministers and officers whose vulgarity was shocking, and whose meanness was quite detestable. One of these fellows, John Latimer, a Carmelite friar, and an Irishman, gave Richard a parchment containing the particulars of a conspiracy to place the crown on the head of his uncle, the Duke of Lancaster. The duke swore that the whole story was false; his accuser swore the contrary, and the dispute was at length settled by the strangulation of Latimer. Sir John Holland, the king's half-brother, was the alleged perpetrator of the savage act; and indeed this gentleman subsequently disgraced himself by a homicide in the royal camp, for he pounced upon and killed one of the favourites.

"You're no favourite of mine," roared Holland, as he perpetrated the ruffianly act; which proves the holland of that day to have been a very coarse material.

The Duke of Lancaster having gone abroad to urge a stale, and rather hopeless, claim to the throne of Castile, Richard was left in the power of his more turbulent uncle, the Duke of Gloucester. This unpleasant person at once proposed a permanent Council of Regency, to which the king objected, when, with dramatic effect, one of the commons produced from under his cloak the statute by which Edward the Second had been deposed, and holding it to Richard's head, implied that his consent or his life were his only alternatives. Upon this he gave his consent, but about two years afterwards, at a council held in May, 1389, he suddenly took what is commonly called a new start, and rising up, addressed Gloucester with the words, "I say, Uncle, do you know how old I am?"

"Of course I do," replied Gloucester, a little puzzled at the oddness of the question; "you are in your twenty-second year;

and a fine boy you are of your age," continued the crafty duke; "but why so particular about dates at the present moment?" "Because," replied the king, "I've been thinking if I'm not old enough to manage my own affairs now, I never shall be."



An expression of "hoity toity!" came into the countenance of the duke; but Richard continued, with much earnestness, that all the young men of his age were released from the control of their guardians, and he did not see why he should any longer be kept morally in pinafores. With this he thanked the council for their past services, which, however, he declared he should no longer require. Before there was time to prevent him, he had snatched the seals from the archbishop, and seized the bunch of keys from the Bishop of Hereford. Everybody was completely dumbfounded by this exhibition on the part of a lad who had never before been known to do more than stammer out a bashful "Bo!" to some goose he may have met with in his youthful wanderings, Gloucester was driven from the council, and the whole thing was done before anyone present had time or if he had time he certainly omitted the opportunity

to say "Jack Robinson." An affecting reconciliation afterwards took place between Gloucester and the king; but we believe the reconciliation itself to have been more affected than the parties who were concerned in it.

Richard had soon afterwards the misfortune to lose his wife; and in 1394 he went over to Ireland with a considerable army, but, as it would seem, less for the purpose of making war than making holiday.

The English king never struck a blow, and the Irish did not resist, so that the whole affair was a good deal like that portion of the performance of Punch, in which one party is continually bobbing down his head, while the other is furiously implanting blows on vacancy. Richard entertained the Irish with great magnificence, and at one of the banquets said the evening was so pleasant he wished he could make several knights of it. Some of the guests taking up the idea, persuaded him to make several knights by knighting them, which he did with the utmost affability.

Richard did not remain very long a widower, for in October, 1396, he married Isabella, the daughter of Charles the Sixth, an infant prodigy, for she was scarcely more than seven, though a prodigy, according to Froissart, of wit and beauty.

Our private opinion which we do not hesitate to make public is that there must have been some mistake about the infant's age, and that the parents and nurses of that period were not so particular in proving registers and records of birth as they might, could, or should have been. The wit of a child of seven must have been fearfully forced to have been so early developed: and in spite of the tendency there has always been to exaggerate the merits of royalty, we respectfully submit that the facetiae of a child of seven must have been of the very smallest description. The king, who had never been cordially reconciled to Gloucester, was annoyed by the opposition of the latter to the royal marriage, and resolved on striking a blow at his uncle as well as

at one or two of his chief partisans. Richard's plan was to ask people to dinner, and in the middle of one of the courses, give a signal to a sheriff's officer, who was concealed under the tablecloth, from which he sprang out and arrested the visitor.

He served the Earls of Warwick and Arundel one after the other in this way, having invited them each in turn to a chop, which it was designed that they should eventually get through the agency of a hatchet.

This must not be confounded with an old legend, that he asked his friends occasionally to a chop at Hatchett's the well-known hotel in Piccadilly, His uncle Gloucester was not to be caught in this way, and declined several invitations to a tête-à-tête, when Richard, determined to accomplish his object, went to Bleshy Castle in Essex, where his uncle was residing. "As you won't come to see me, I've come to see you," were the king's artful words, when he was naturally invited to partake of that fortune du pot which is the ever-ready tribute of English hospitality.

While Richard was doing the amiable with the Duchess, Gloucester, the Duke, was seized by one of the bailiffs in the suite—disguised, of course, as a gentleman of the household—and hurried to the Essex shore, where he was shoved off in a boat, and conveyed, almost before he could fetch his breath, to Calais.

It was the practice of Richard to do things by fits and starts; so that he accomplished an object very often by getting people to aid him without knowing exactly what they were about, in consequence of the suddenness with which he claimed their services. A few days after poor Gloucester had been "entered outwards" for Calais, the king went to Nottingham Castle, where, taking his uncles Lancaster and York by surprise, he pulled out a document, requesting them to favour him with their autographs, They could not very well refuse a request so strangely made, and it eventually turned out that they had put their names to a bill of indictment against Gloucester, Warwick and Arundel. A Parliament was called to try the traitors, who

were condemned, as a matter of course; for Richard, walking into the house with six hundred men-at-arms and a body-guard of archers, was pretty sure of a large majority.

Arundel was beheaded, and a writ was issued against Gloucester, commanding him to return from Calais, to undergo the same disagreeable process.

Fortunately, or unfortunately for the duke, he was dead before the writ could be served; but the Parliament, though they could not kill him twice over, indulged the satisfaction of declaring him a traitor after his decease, by which all his property became forfeited. This proceeding was a good deal like robbing the dead; but it was by no means contrary to the spirit of the period. Warwick pleaded guilty, and was sentenced to perpetual imprisonment in the Isle of Man—a sort of *lucus a non lucendo*, which was called the Isle of Man from there being scarcely a man to be seen in the place from one week's end to the other.

The peculiar richness of this reign consists in the historical doubts, of which it is so full that the chroniclers are thrown into a state of pleasing bewilderment.

Nobody knows what became of Gloucester while in captivity at Calais; and therefore every writer is at liberty to dispose of the duke in any manner that may tempt an imagination inclining to riot and rampancy. The treatment of his Royal Highness becomes truly dreadful in the hands of the various antiquarians and others who have undertaken to deal with him. By one set of authorities he is strangled, in accordance with the alleged orders of the king; others kill him of apoplexy; a few poison him; ten or a dozen drown him; six or seven smother him; but all agree in the fact that he was, surreptitiously settled.

We are the only faithful recorders of the real fact, when we state upon our honour that nobody knows the manner of the duke's death, which is involved in the dense fogs of dim obscurity.

Into these we will not venture, lest we lose our own way and mislead the reader who may pay us the compliment of

committing himself to our guidance, Richard having got rid of Gloucester, was anxious for the removal of Norfolk and Hereford, whom he involved in a quarrel with each other, intending that they should realise the legend of the Cats of Kilkenny. When, however, they had entered the lists to decide their dispute by wager of battle, Richard thought it better to run no risk of either of them escaping, and he therefore sentenced both to banishment. Poor Norfolk, a pudding headed fellow, who might have gone by the name of the Norfolk Dumpling, was soft enough to die of grief at Venice, on his road to Jerusalem, whither he contemplated a pilgrimage.

Hereford remained in France, having been promised a pardon, but as it did not arrive he took French leave to return to England, in 1399, after scarcely more than a year's absence. His retinue was so small as to be utterly ridiculous, for it consisted of one exiled archbishop, fifteen knights, and a small lot of servants, who may be put down as sundries in the little catalogue. One fool, however, makes many, and one rebellious earl was soon joined by a number of other seditious nobles.

The plan of Hereford was that of the political quack who pretends to have a specific for every disease by which the constitution is affected.

He published a puffing manifesto declaring that he had no other object but the redress of grievances, and that the crown was the very last thing to which his thoughts were directed. One of his confederates to whom Hereford was reading the rough draft of his proposed address, suggested that the disclaimer of the crown which it contained, might prove inconvenient, when the royal diadem was really obtainable. "Don't you see," replied the crafty Hereford with a smile, "I have not compromised myself in any way. I have only said it is the last thing to which my thoughts are directed, and so indeed it is, for I think of it the last thing at night as well as the first thing in the morning." Thus with the salve of speciousness, did the wily earl soothe for a time the irritations of

his not very tender conscience.

The manifesto had its effect, for it is a remarkable fact that they who promise more than it is possible to perform, find the greatest favour with the populace; for an undertaking to do what cannot be done always affords something to look forward to.

Expectation is generally disappointed by fulfilment, and the most successful impostors are consequently those who promise the most impracticable things without ever doing anything.

The imposition cannot be detected until the impossibility of the thing promised is demonstrated; and this does not often happen, for the difficulty of proving a negative is on all hands admitted.

It was therefore a happy idea of Hereford, as a political adventurer, to promise a redress of every grievance; and if he could have added to his pledge of interference *de omnibus rebus* an assurance of his ultimately applying his panacea to *quodam alia*, there is little doubt that he would have been even more successful than he was in augmenting the number of his followers. By the time he reached London he had got sixty thousand men of all sorts and sizes about him, for the people in those days were fond of changing their leaders, and Hereford was popular as the latest novelty.

The Duke of York the king's uncle moved to the West End, as Henry and his forces entered at the East; but Henry of

Bolingbroke alias Hereford, who was also the nephew of York invited the latter to a conference. After talking the matter over, the worthy couple agreed to a coalition; the conduct of York being very like that of an individual left to guard a house, and joining with the thief who came to rob the premises.



Richard, who was in Ireland, knew nothing of what was passing at home, for in consequence of contrary winds, the non-arrival of "our usual express" was for three weeks a standing announcement with all the organs of intelligence.

When he received the news from his "own reporter," he started for Milford Haven, where he was almost overwhelmed with disagreeable information from gentlemen who evinced the genius of true penny-a-liners in making the very most and the very worst of every calamitous incident.

Richard's soldiers seeing that their king more than ever required their fidelity and aid, immediately, according to the usual practice, ran away from him.

"They deserted," says the chronicler, "almost to a man," and it is to be regretted that we have not the name of the "man" who formed the nearly solitary exception to the general apostacy. Whoever he may have been, he must have exercised a great deal of self-command, for he was, of course, his own officer; he must have reviewed himself, as well as gone through the ceremony of putting himself on duty and taking himself off at the proper periods. We must not, however, take too literally the calculations of the old chroniclers, who reduce the number of

Richard's adherents to an almost solitary soldier, for the truth appears to be that the king mustered almost six thousand men out of the twenty thousand he had brought with him from Ireland, Flight was therefore his only refuge, and selecting from his stock of fancy dresses the disguise of a priest, Richard, accompanied by his two half-brothers, Sir Stephen Scroop, the Chancellor, and the Bishop of Carlisle, with nine other followers, set off for the Castle of Conway.

There he met the Earl of Salisbury and a hundred men, who had eaten every morsel of food to be found in the place, and Richard was occupied in running backwards and forwards from Conway to Beaumaris, then on to Carnarvon, then back to Conway again, in a wretched race for a dinner.

It is pitiable to find a king of England reduced to the condition described in the old nursery ditty, He went to Conway for provisions; but "When he got there, The cupboard was bare;" and the same result followed his visit to Beaumaris and Carnarvon. Notwithstanding the number of bones that his subjects had to pick with him, there was not one in the larders of the three castles he visited. "And so," in the emphatic words of the nursery rhyme, "the poor dog had none.

"So complete was the desertion of Richard, that the Master of the Household, Percy, Earl of Worcester, called all the servants together, and broke his wand of office, accompanying the act by exclaiming, "Now I'm off to Chester, to join the Duke of Lancaster" This ceremony was equivalent to a discharge of all the domestics under him, and the king, had he returned to his abode, would have been compelled to "do for himself" in consequence of the disbanding of all his menials.

The members of the establishment, fancying they had an opportunity of bettering themselves, did not hesitate to follow the example of their chief, and there is no doubt that a long list, headed Want Places, was at once forwarded to the Duke of Lancaster.

Having ransacked every corner of Conway Castle without finding any provisions, Richard had nothing left but an unprovisional surrender. He got as far as Flint Castle, which was only three miles from Chester, but he found the inhabitants had flinty hearts, and he met with no sympathy. Henry of Bolingbroke came to meet him, when Richard, touching his hat, bid welcome to his "fair cousin of Lancaster."

"My lord," replied Henry, somewhat sarcastically, "I'm a little before my time, but, really, your people complain so bitterly of your not having the knack to rule them, that I've come to help you." Richard gave a mental "Umph!" but added, "Well, well, be it as you will," for his hunger had taken away all his appetite for power. After a repast, unto which the king did much more ample justice than he had ever done to his subjects, a hackney was sent for, and Richard rode a prisoner to Chester.



No one pitied him as he passed, though the spectacle was a truly wretched one, The horse was a miserable hack, while Richard himself was hoarse with a hack-ing cough, caught in the various exposures to wind and weather he had undergone in his vicissitudes, The dismal cortège having put up at Litchfield for the king and his horse to have a feed, of which both

were greatly in want, Richard made a desperate attempt, while the waiter was not in the room, to escape out of a window. He had run a little way from his guards, but a cry of "Stop thief!" caused him to be instantly pursued, and, when taken, he was well shaken for the trouble he had occasioned. He was treated with increased severity, and on arriving in London was conveyed, amid the hootings of the mob, to the Tower.

Parliament had been appointed to meet on the 29th of September, 1399, and on that day Richard received in his prison a deputation, to whom he handed over the crown and the other insignia of royalty. Not satisfied with the delivery of the sceptre as a proof of the king's abdication, a wish was expressed to have it in writing, and he signed, as well as resigned, without a murmur, His enemies had, in fact, determined on his downfall, and they seemed anxious to be prepared at all points for dragging the throne from under him. In order to make assurance doubly or trebly sure, an act of accusation against him was brought before Parliament on the following day, when Richard's conduct was complained of in thirty-three, or as some authorities have it, thirty-five separate articles.

The Pictorial History of England, which is generally very accurate, mentions thirty-three articles. Rapin sets out substance of thirty-one of the articles, and adds that there were four others. There is no doubt that Richard had behaved badly enough, but the articles, taking the definite and indefinite together, attributed to him a great deal more than he had really been guilty of.

His punishment having taken place before his trial, it was of course necessary, for the sake of making matters square, that the offence should be made to meet the penalty.

Had he been tried first and judged afterwards, a different course might have been taken, but as he had already been deposed, it was desirable—if only for the look of the thing that he should be charged with something which would have warranted the Parliament in passing upon him a sentence of deposition.

Upwards of thirty articles were therefore drawn up, for the great fact that in laying it on thick some is almost sure to stick, was evidently well known to our ancestors: He was charged with spending the revenues of the crown improperly, and choosing bad ministers, though he might have replied that bad had been the best, and that he and Hobson were, with reference to choice, in about the same predicament. He was accused, also, of making war upon the Duke of Gloucester, as well as on the Earls of Lancaster and Chester, to which he might have responded that they began it, and that it was only in his own defence he had treated them as enemies. It was alleged against him, also, that he had borrowed money and never paid it back again; but surely this has always been a somewhat common offence, and one which the aristocracy should be the last persons in the world to treat with severity. In one article he was charged with not having changed the sheriffs often enough, and, as if to allow him no chance of escape, another article imputed to him that he had changed the sheriffs too frequently. Some of the counts in the indictment were utterly frivolous, and the twenty-third stated that he had taken the crown jewels to Ireland, as if he could not legally have done what he pleased with his own trinket-box. It must be presumed that Richard allowed judgment to go by default, for all the accusations were declared to be proved against him. If he had been assisted by a special pleader, he might have beaten his accusers hollow on demurrer, for many of the counts in the declaration were, in legal phraseology, utterly incapable of holding water, * Notwithstanding the weakness of the articles, they were not attacked by any one in Parliament except the Bishop of Carlisle, who, in a miserable minority of one, formed the entire party of his sovereign. The venerable prelate, in a powerful speech, talked of Richard's tyranny, including his murder of Gloucester, as mere youthful indiscretion; and described his excessive use of the most arbitrary power, as the exuberance of gaiety.

The bishop's freedom of speech was fatal to his freedom of person; for he was instantly ordered into custody by the Duke of Lancaster. No one followed on the same side as the prelate, whose removal to prison had the effect of checking any tendency to debate, and the articles were, of course, agreed to without a division. Sentence of deposition was accordingly passed on the king, who had been already deposed, and the people of England revoked all the oaths and homage they had sworn to their sovereign. Such, indeed, was the determination of his subjects to overturn their king, that his deposition was not unlike the practical joke of drawing the throne literally from under him. They knew he had not a leg to stand upon, and they seemed determined that he should not have a seat to sit down upon; for even established forms were overturned in order to precipitate his downfall.

Mackintosh, who keeps the facts always very dry, seems inclined to our opinion that the indictment would not have held water.

What became of Richard after his having been deposed is a point upon which historians have differed; but the favourite belief is that he was cut off with an axe by one of his gaolers at Pomfret Castle, where he was kept in custody.

Some are of opinion that he was starved, and died rather from want of a chop than by one having been administered. Mr. Tytler believes that the unfortunate exmonarch escaped to Scotland, where he resided for twenty years; but the story is doubtful, for even in Scotland it is impossible to live upon nothing, which would have been the income of Richard after his exclusion from the royal dignity.

When we come to weigh this sovereign in the scale, we can scarcely allow him to pass without noticing his deficiency.

He seems to have had originally a due amount of sterling metal, but the warmth of adulation melted away much of the precious ore, as a sovereign is frequently diminished in value by sweating. To this deteriorating influence may be added that

of the clipping process, to which he was subjected by his enemies, who were bent on curtailing his power. He had by nature a noble and generous disposition, which might have made him an excellent monarch. But our business is with what he really was, and not with what he might have been. He was alternately cowardly and tyrannical, in conformity with the general rule—applicable even to boys at school—that it is the most contemptible sneak towards the stronger who is towards the weaker the fiercest bully. Wholesome resistance tames him down into the sneak again, and in pursuance of this ordinary routine, Richard, from an overbearing tyrant, became a crouching poltroon, when his enemies got the upper hand of him. It was during this reign that the authority of the pope was vigorously disputed in England, chiefly at the instigation of John Wickliffe, who denied many



of the doctrines of the Church of Rome, and protested against its supremacy. Its influence was, moreover, weakened by its being in some sort “a house divided.” Avignon had been for some time the papal residence, but the Italian cardinals having persuaded the pontiff to return to Rome, the French cardinals set up a sort of opposition pope, who continued to live at Avignon. Urban did the honours with great urbanity in the Eternal

City, while Clement carried on the papal business at the old establishment in France, and Europe became divided between the Clementines and Urbanists, These two sects of Christians continued to denounce each other to eternal perdition for some years, and their trial of strength seemed to consist chiefly in a competition as to which could execrate the other with the greatest bitterness, This dissension was no doubt favourable to the views of Wickliffe, who, like other great reformers, renounced in his old age the liberal doctrines by which he had obtained his early popularity.

We have alluded in the course of this chapter to a combat which was about to take place between the Earls of Hereford and Norfolk, in pursuance of the practice of Wager of Battle, which was in those days prevalent. It may seem unjust and ridiculous to the present generation, that the strongest arm or stoutest spear should have settled a legal difference, but even in our own times it is frequently the longest purse which determines the issue of a law-suit, The only difference is that litigants formerly knocked about each other's persons, instead of making their assaults upon each other's pockets, and the legal phrase, that "so-and-so is not worth powder and shot," preserves the allegory of a combat, to which an action-at-law may be compared with the utmost propriety. There has always been something chivalric in entering upon the perilous enterprise of litigation, and we are not surprised that the forensic champions of England should have been originally an order of Knights Templars.

The only military title which is still left to the legal corps is that of Sergeant, and the black patch in the centre of their heads is perhaps worn in memory of some wound received by an early member of their order in the days of Wager of Battle.

The sword of justice may also be regarded as emblematical of the hard fight that is frequently required on the part of those who seek to have justice done to them by the laws of their country. Contemporaneously with the Wager of Battle, there was intro-

duced during the reign of Henry the Second a sort of option, by which suitors who were averse to single combat might support their rights by the oaths of twelve men of the vicinage.

Thus it was possible for those who were afraid of hard hitting to have recourse to hard swearing, if they could get twelve neighbours to take the oath that might have been required. These persons were called the Grand Assize, and formed the jurors—a word, as everybody knows, derived from the Latin *juro*, to swear—but the duty has since been transferred from the jury to the witnesses, who not unfrequently swear quite as hard as the most unscrupulous of our ancestors. We have seen that there were very few improvements in the reign of Richard the Second; but we think we may justly say of the sovereign, that though he did no good to his country, yet, in the well-known words of a contemporary writer, “He would if he could, but he couldn’t

CHAPTER THE SIXTH. ON THE MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE.



BEFORE entering on the fourth book of our history, we may perhaps be allowed to pause, for the purpose of taking a retrospective glance at the condition, customs, candlesticks, sports,

pastimes, pitchers, mugs, jugs and manners of the people. It is curious to trace the progress of art, from the coarse pipkin of the early Briton to the highly respectable tankard * found in the ruins of Glastonbury Abbey, which proves the teeth of the monks to have been decidedly liquorish. We must not, however, plunge prematurely into the pot of a more polished era: but we must go regularly back to the earthenware of our earliest ancestors, The furniture of the Britons was substantial rather than elegant. A round block of wood formed their easiest chair, which, we need hardly say, was easier to make than to sit upon. The earth served the purpose of a bed, not only for the parsley but for the people; and in winter they made fires on the floor, till the Romans, who brought slavery in one hand, gave the brasier with the other, Thus did even subjugation tend to civilisation, and the very chains of the conqueror contained links for the enlightenment of the conquered.

The diet of the Britons was as poor as their apartments, and consisted chiefly of wild berries, wild boars, and bisons. We have no record of their cookery, and it is doubtful whether they cooked at all, though some antiquarians have endeavoured to find evidence of a stew, a roast or a curry, and have ended after all in making a mere hash of it. In clothes the Britons were by no means straight-laced, though their intercourse with the Gauls was of inexpressible advantage to them, for it introduced the use of Braccæ, or trousers made of fine wool woven in stripes or chequers. The tankard has no name distinctly bitten into it, It is probable that we get out our own word braces from ,the Braccæ of our forefathers.

Of the domestic habits of the early tenants of our isle very little is known, and we regret to say there can be little doubt they might most of them have been indicted for polygamy had they lived under our present system of laws, for a plurality of wives was in those days nothing singular, Their mode of bringing up children is wrapt in obscurity, but the treatment, if we are to

believe a story told by Salinus, * was rather less tender than vigorous; for the first morsel of food was put into the infant's mouth on the point of his father's sword, with the hope that the child would turn out as sharp a blade as his parent.

The Saxons brought very material improvements to the mode of living in our island, though we cannot compliment them on the comfort of all their upholstery.

Their chairs were a good deal like our camp-stools, without the material which forms the seat; for the Anglo-Saxons were satisfied to sit in the angle formed by the junction of the legs of the article alluded to. Pictorial History of England, The drinking-cups in use at this period began to be very elaborate, and were made of gold or silver, while glass was a luxury unknown, though the Venerable Bede, who had a good deal of glass in his family, mentions lamps and vessels of that material.

The Anglo-Saxons had beds and bolsters; but from illustrations we have seen in the Cotton MS., we think that if, as they made their beds, so they were obliged to lie, our ancestors could not have slept very pleasantly. Some of the Saxon bedsteads were sexagonal boxes, into which it was impossible to get, without folding one's self up into the form of an S; and another specimen is in the shape of an inverted cocked hat, somewhat smaller than the person by whom it is occupied. Nothing but a sort of human half-moon could have found accommodation in this semilunar cradle, in which to have been "cribbed, cabined, and confined," could not have been very agreeable.

Costume could scarcely be considered to have commenced before the Anglo-Saxon period, for the Britons persevered in a style of un-dress which was barely respectable.

It is therefore most refreshing to find our countrymen at last with stockings to their feet and shirts to their backs, in which improved case they are to be met with in the Anglo-Saxon period. The shoe also stands boldly forward at about the same time, and shows an indication of that polish which was eventually to

take a permanent footing. Amid the many irons that civilisation had in the fire at this date, are the curling-irons for ladies' hair, which began to take a favourable turn during the Anglo-Saxon period, The armour worn by the military part of the population was very substantial, consisting chiefly of scales, which gave weight to the soldiery, and often turned the balance in their favour This species of defence was, however, too expensive for the common men, who generally wore a linen thorax or "dickey," with which they offered a bold front to the enemy It would be exceedingly difficult to give an accurate account of Anglo-Saxon life, for there are no materials in existence out of which a statement could be framed; and though some historians do not object to have "their own materials made up," we should be ashamed to have recourse to this species of literary tailoring. We think it better to cut our coat according to our cloth; and we had rather figure in the sparest Spencer of fact, than assume the broadest and amplest cloak, if it were made of a yarn spun from the dark web of ambiguity, What we say, we know, and what we are ignorant of, we know much better than to talk about.



The Anglo-Saxon husbandman was little better than a serf who was paid for his labour by the landowner; but the former fur-

nished the base, without which there would have been no locus standi for the latter's capital. It was customary in those days to encourage the peasantry by prizes, which did not consist of a coat for a faithful servitude of nearly a life, but a grant of a piece of the land to which the labourer had given increased value by his industry, The proprietors of the soil had not yet learned the wisdom of trying how much a brute could be made to eat, and how little a human being could exist upon, With reference to the domestic habits of the period, it has been clearly ascertained that people of substance took four meals a day, and as they took meat at every one, their substance can be no matter of astonishment, The Britons had not been in the habit of dressing their food, which is not surprising, for they scarcely dressed themselves; but the Anglo-Saxons were not so fond of the raw material. With them the pleasures of the table were carried to excess, and drinking went to such an extent, that every monk was prohibited from taking any more when his eyes were disturbed, and his tongue began to stammer.

The misfortune, however, was, that as all who were present at a banquet, generally began to experience simultaneously a disturbance of the eye and a stammering of the tongue, no one noticed it in his neighbour, and the orgies were often continued until the stammering ended in silence, and the optical derangement finished by the closing of the organs of vision.

The chase was a popular amusement with the Anglo-Saxons, but it does not seem to have been pursued with much spirit, if we are to believe an illustration from the Cotton MS. * of the practice of boar-hunting Two men and one dog are seen hunting four boars, who are walking leisurely two and two, while the hound and the hunters are hanging back, as if afraid to follow their prey too closely, In another picture, from the Harleian MS., seven men are seen huddled together on horseback, as if they had all fainted at the sight of a hawk, who flaps his wings insolently in their faces. Nothing indeed can

be more pusillanimous than the sports of the Anglo-Saxons as shown in the illustrations of the period. The only wonder is, that the animals hunted did not turn suddenly round and make sport of the sportsmen. Julius, A. 7. The condition of the great body of the people was that of agricultural labourers, who, it is said, were nearly as valuable to their employers or owners as the cattle, and were taken care of accordingly, In this respect they had an advantage over the cultivators of the soil in our own time, who remain half unfed, while pigs, sheep, and oxen, are made too much of by constant cramming, The Normans added little to the stock of English furniture, for we have looked through our statistical tables and find nothing that would furnish an extra leaf to our history It is, however, about this time that we find the first instance of a cradle made to rock, an arrangement founded on the deepest philosophy; for by the rocking movement the infant is prepared for the ups and downs of life he will soon have to bear up against.

The reign of John introduces us to the first saltcellar on record, though, by the way, the first vinegar cruet is of even earlier date, for it is contemporary with the sour-tempered Eleanor, who is reported to have played a fearful game at bowls with the unfortunate Rosamond, When Fashion first came to prevail in dress, Taste had not yet arrived, and the effect was truly ridiculous. It does not follow, however, that if Fashion and Taste had existed together, they would have managed to agree; for although there is often a happy union between the two, they very frequently remain at variance for considerable periods. Fashion being the stronger, usually obtains the ascendancy in the first instance; but Taste ultimately prevails over her wayward rival. In nothing so much as in shoes, have the freaks of Fashion been exemplified. She has often taken the feet in hand, and in a double sense subjugated the understanding of her votaries. In the days of Henry the First shoes were worn in a long peak, or curling like a ram's horn, and stuffed with tow, as

if the natural too was not sufficient for all reasonable purposes. The rage for long hair was so excessive that councils * were held on the subject, and the state of the crops was considered with much anxiety, The clergy produced scissors at the end of the service to cut the hair of the congregation; and it is said of Serlo d'Abon, the Bishop of Seez, that he, on Easter Day, 1105, cut every one of the locks off Henry the First's knowledge-box. At Limoges, in 1031, by Pope Gregory the Seventh in 1073, and at Rouen in 1095, We have hinted at the out-of-door amusements of the people, but those pursued within doors may deserve some passing notice. The juggler, the buffoon, and the tumbler were greatly in request, and we see in these persons the germ of the wizards, the Ramo Samees, the clowns, with their "Here we ares," and the various families of India-rubber incredibles, Mackintosh marvels, or Kensington untrustables, that have since become in turns the idols of an enlightened British public. That there is nothing new under the sun, nor in the stars at least those belonging to the drama is obvious enough to anyone who will examine the records of the past, which contain all that are declared to be the novelties of the present.

Learned monkeys, highly-trained horses, and to go a little further back—terrific combats, or sword dances, in which deadly foes go through mortal conflicts in a pas de deux, are all as old as the hills, the dales, the vales, the mountains, and the fountains. Even the reading-easel—for those who wish to read easily which was advertised but yesterday, and patented the other day, was a luxury in use as early as the fourteenth century Even Polka jackets, imported from Cracow in Poland, were "very much worn," and, for what we know, the Polka itself may have been danced in all its pristine purity. In head-dresses we have seen nothing very elegant, for, during Richard the Second's reign, a yard or two of cloth, cut into no regular pattern, formed a bonnet or hood for a lady, while an arrangement in fur very like a muff, constituted the hat of a

gentleman, Out-of-door sports were much in favour during the fourteenth century, and the priesthood were so much addicted to the pleasures of the chase, that a clergyman was prohibited from keeping a dog for hunting unless he had a benefice of at least ten pounds per annum.



The foxhunting parson is therefore a character as old as the days of Richard the Second, in whose reign the Bishop of Ely was remarkable for activity in the field, where the right reverend prelate could take a difficult fence with the youngest and best of them. He was particularly active in hunting the wolf, and he often said jestingly, that the interests of his flock prompted him to pursue its most formidable enemy.

We have seen what our ancestors were in their habits, pleasures, and pursuits, none of which differed very materially from those that the people of the present generation are or have been in the habit of following. As the child is father of the man, the infancy of a country is the parent of its maturity.

Reproduction is, after all, the nearest approach we can make to novelty, and though in the drama of life "each man in his time plays many parts," there is scarcely one of which he can be called the original representative.

**BOOK IV. THE PERIOD FROM
THE ACCESSION OF HENRY THE FOURTH
TO THE END OF THE REIGN OF RICHARD
THE THIRD, A.D. 1399—1485.**

**CHAPTER THE FIRST.
HENRY THE FOURTH, SURNAMED
BOLINGBROKE.**



HE wily Henry had now got the whip hand of his enemies, and had grasped the reins of government. He ascended the throne on the 30th of September, 1399, and began to avail himself at once of the patronage at his disposal by filling up, as fast as he could, all vacant offices. His pretext for this speed was to prevent justice from being delayed, to the grievance of his people; and by pretending there was no time to elect a new Parliament, he continued the old one, which was in a state of utter subservience to his own purposes.

At the meeting of the Legislative Assembly, which took place

on the 6th of October, Thomas Arundel, the Archbishop of Canterbury, made "the speech of the day," which was a powerful panegyric on the new sovereign. There is no doubt that the whole oration was a paid-for puff, of which the primacy was the price, for the prelate had been restored by Henry to the archiepiscopacy, out of which Richard had hurried him.

The new candidate for the crown gave three reasons for claiming it; but when a person gives three reasons for anything, it is probable they are all bad, for if one were good the other two would be, of course, superfluous. He declared his triple right to be founded, first on conquest, which was the right of the ruffian who, having knocked a man on the head, steals his purse and runs off with it; secondly, from being the heir, which he was not; and thirdly, from the crown having been resigned to him, which it certainly had been, when the resigning party was under duress, and when his acts were not legally binding. Upon these claims he asked the opinion of Parliament, which, having been cleverly packed by Arundel and his whippers-in, of course pronounced unanimously in Henry's favour. Upon this he vaulted nimbly on to the steps of the throne, and, pausing before he took his seat, he cried out in a loud voice, "Do you mean what you say?" when the claqueurs raised such a round of applause, that, whispering to one of his supporters "It's all right," he flung himself on to the regal ottoman.

Another round of applause from the privileged orders secured the success of the farce, and the usual puffing announcements appeared in due course, intimating the unanimous approbation of a house crowded to suffocation. This had been certainly the case, for the packing was so complete as to stifle every breath of free discussion. A week's adjournment took place, to prepare for the coronation, which came off on the 13th of October in a style of splendour which Froissart has painted gorgeously with his six-pound brush, and which we will attempt to pick out with our own slender camel's-hair. On the Saturday before the

coronation, forty-six squires, who were to be made knights, took each a bath, and had, in fact, a regular good Saturday night's wash, so that they might be nice and clean to receive the honour designed for them. On Sunday morning, after church, they were knighted by the king, who gave them all new coats, a proof that their wardrobes could not have been in a very flourishing condition. After dinner, his majesty returned to Westminster, bareheaded, with nothing on, according to Froissart, but a pair of gaiters and a German jacket.

The streets of London were decorated with tapestry as he passed, and there were nine fountains in Cheapside running with white and red wine, though we think our informant has been drawing rather copiously upon his own imagination for the generous liquor. The cavalcade comprised, according to the same authority, six thousand horse; but again we are of opinion that Froissart must have found some mare's nest from which to supply a stud of such wondrous magnitude.

The king took a bath on the same night, in order, perhaps, to wash out the port wine stains that might have fallen upon him while passing the fountains. "Call me early, if you're waking," were the king's last words to his valet, and in the morning the coronation procession started for the Abbey of Westminster. Henry walked under a blue silk canopy supported on silver staves, with golden bells at each corner, and carried by four burgesses of Dover, who claimed it as their right, for the loyalty of the Dover people was in those days inspired only by the hope of a perquisite. The king might have got wet through to the skin before they would have held a canopy over him, had it not been for the value of the silver staves and golden bells, which became their property for the trouble of portage.

On each side were the sword of Mercy and the sword of Justice, though these articles must have been more for ornament than for use in those days of regal cruelty and oppression. Coronation of Henry the Fourth (from the best Authorities)

At nine o'clock the king entered the Abbey, in the middle of which a platform, covered with scarlet cloth, had been erected; so that the proceedings might be visible from all corners of the Abbey. He seated himself on the throne, and was looking remarkably well, being in full regal costume, with the exception of the crown, which the Archbishop of Canterbury proposed to invest him with. The people, on being asked whether the ceremony should be performed, of course shouted "Aye," for they had come to see a coronation and were not likely to deprive themselves of the spectacle by becoming, at the last moment, hypercritical of the new king's merits. We cannot say we positively know there was no "No," but the "Ayes" unquestionably had it; and Henry was at once taken off the throne to be stripped to his shirt, which, in the middle of the month of October, could not have been very agreeable treatment. After saturating him in oil, they put upon his head a bonnet, and then proceeded to dress him up as a priest, adding a pair of spurs and the sword of justice. While his majesty was in this motley costume, the Archbishop of Canterbury, clutching off the bonnet from the royal head, placed upon it the crown of Saint Edward.



Henry was not sorry when these harassing ceremonies were at an end, and having left the Abbey to dress, returned to the Hall to dinner. Wine continued to play, like ginger-beer, from the fountain; but the jets were of the same paltry description as that which throws up about a pint a day in the Temple.

We confess that we are extremely sceptical in reference to all allegations of wine having been laid on in the public streets, particularly in those days, when there were neither turncocks to turn it on, nor pipes through which to carry it.

Even with our present admirable system of waterworks, we should be astonished at an arrangement that would allow us to draw our wine from the wood in the pavement of Cheapside, or take it fresh from the pipe as it rolled with all its might through the main of the New River. Whether the liquid could be really laid on may be doubtful, but that it would not be worth drinking cannot admit of a question.

Under the most favourable circumstances, our metropolitan fountains could only be made to run with that negative stuff to which the name of negus has been most appropriately given. Let us, however, resume our account of the ceremonial, from which, with our heads full of the wine sprinkled gratuitously over the people, we have been led to deviate.



Dinner was served for the coronation party in excellent style, but before it was half over it was varied by an entrée of the most extraordinary and novel character. It was after the second course that a courser came prancing in, with a knight of the name of Dymock mounted on the top of the animal.

The expression of Henry's astonished countenance gave an extra plat, in the shape of calf's head surprised, at the top of the royal table. The wonder of Henry was somewhat abated when the knight put into the royal hand a written offer to fight any knight or gentleman who would maintain that the new king was not a lawful sovereign, The challenge was read six times over, but nobody came forward to accept it; and indeed it was nearly impossible, for care had been taken to exclude all persons likely to prove troublesome, as it was very desirable on the occasion of a coronation to keep the thing respectable. The champion was then presented with "something to drink," in a golden goblet, and pocketed the poculum as a perquisite. Thus passed off the coronation of Henry the Fourth, which is still further remarkable for a story told about the oil used in anointing the head of the new monarch.

This precious precursor of all the multitudinous mixtures to which ingenuity and gullibility have since given their heads, was contained in a flask said to have been presented by a good hermit to Henry Duke of Lancaster, the grandson of Henry the Third, who gave it to somebody else, until it came, unspilt, into the possession of Henry of Bolingbroke. We confess we reject the oil, with which our critical acidity refuses to coalesce, and we would almost as soon believe the assertion that it was a flask of salad oil sent from the Holy Land by the famous Saladin.

The day after the ceremony, or as soon after as the disarrangement caused by the preparations for the coronation could be set to rights, the Parliament resumed its sittings.

The terrible turncoaterly of the last few years gave rise to fearful recriminations in the House of Lords, and the terms "liar"

and "traitor" flew from every corner of the building. At one time, forty gauntlets were thrown on the floor at the same moment, as pledges of battle, but there was as little of the fortiter in re as of the suaviter in modo, and the gloves not being picked up became, of course, the perquisites of the Parliamentary charwoman. Some wholesome acts were passed during the session, but the chief object of the new king was to plant himself firmly on the throne of England. A slip from the parent trunk was grafted on to the Dukedom of Cornwall, and the Principality of Wales, to both of which Henry's eldest son was nominated. No act of settlement of the crown was introduced, for his majesty wisely thought, that it would only have proclaimed the weakness of his title had he made any attempt to bolster it. Had the question of legitimacy been tried, the young Earl of March would have turned out to be many steps nearer the throne than Henry, who, however, laughed at his claims, and the old saying of "as mad as a March hare," was quoted by a parasite, to prove the insanity of regarding March as a fit heir to the throne of England. Besides, the little fellow was a mere child, and was, of course, a minor consideration in a country which had a natural dread of a long regal minority.

"A boy of eight or nine," said one of the philosophers of the day, "cannot sit upon the throne, without bringing the kingdom into a state of sixes and sevens." It was, however, to strengthen the presumed legitimacy of his family that Henry got his son created Prince of Wales, and though the circumstance is said to have weighed but as a feather in the scales, the Prince of Wales's feathers must always go for something in the balance.

Richard, who was still in custody, was kept continually moving about from castle to castle, like a spring van in town or country, until a few of the lords devised the plan of murdering Henry and restoring the late king, just by way of novelty.

A tournament was got up, to which the king was politely asked, and the words, "Tilting at two, An answer will oblige,"

might be found in the corner of the invitation card. Henry “had much pleasure in accepting” the proposal to join the jousting party, but having received an intimation from the Earl of Rutland, his cousin and one of the conspirators, his majesty did not attend the soir e.

The intention was to have hustled him and killed him on the spot, but he did not come, and the jousting was, of necessity, carried on for some time by the traitors at the expense of each other. At length, as the day wore on, they began to think it exceedingly odd that Henry had not arrived, when suspecting they had been betrayed, they determined to make for Windsor, where they knew the king had been passing his Christmas holidays. He had, however, received timely warning, and had left for London, so that the conspirators were utterly baffled.

On their arrival at Windsor, they hastened to surprise the Castle; but the greatest surprise was for themselves, when they heard of the escape of their intended victim.

Henry had rushed up to town to issue writs against every one of the traitors, who ran away in all directions before he had time to return to Windsor. Some of them attempted to proclaim King Richard in every town they passed through; but they might as well have proclaimed Old King Cole, or any other merry old soul, for they only got laughed at and slaughtered by the inhabitants.

Poor Richard was also a sufferer by his injudicious friends, for it was agreed that he would become an intolerable nuisance if he should serve as a point for the rebels to rally round. It was therefore thought advisable to have him abated, and according to the chroniclers of the day, who confess they know nothing about it, he was either starved or murdered. The condition of Richard’s young wife, Isabella, a girl of eleven, the daughter of King Charles of France, was exceedingly deplorable.

She had brought a large fortune to her husband, and upon his death, her father wished her to be restored to the bosom, and her money to the pockets, of her family.

The young lady was promised by an early boat; but Charles insisted that she should be allowed to bring her dowry back with her. Henry, who had spent at least half of it, declined this proposal, and her papa, who had an eye to the cash, would not receive her without, so that she really seemed on the point of becoming a shuttlecock tossed between two immense battledores in the shape of Dover and Calais. Every kind of paltry excuse was set up to avoid payment of the demand, and the English pretended to find upon their books an old claim for the ransom of the French King, John, who had been taken by Edward the Third, and had never been duly settled for.

This plea of set-off was overruled on demurrer by the French, who kept reiterating their applications for Richard's widow and her dowry, with a threat of ulterior proceedings if the demand was not speedily complied with. At length Henry agreed to restore her like a toad, "with all her precious jewels in her head, Her old father received her with the exclamation of "Oh, you duck of diamonds," in allusion, no doubt, to the valuable brilliants she carried about her; and there is every reason to believe that had her teeth been literally pearls, the king would have made copious extracts from the choice collection.

Henry now began to consider the best means for making himself popular, and after thinking it well over he came to the conclusion that a war would be a nice little excitement, of which he might reap the benefit. Upon looking about him for an eligible object of attack, Scotland seemed to be the most inviting; for Robert, the actual king, was old and helpless, while his eldest son David, Earl of Bothsay, was a drunken, dissipated, reckless, but rather clever personage. He had quarrelled with his uncle the Duke of Albey, who had acted as regent during the illness of the king, and who was himself a remorseless ruffian; so that the Scotch royal family consisted of a dotard, a drunkard, and a bully. Henry, though he wanted a war, wished to get it without paying for it, to prevent the odium he might incur by taxing

the people. He therefore tried the old plan of feudal service, by calling upon all persons enjoying fees or pensions to join him in arms at York, under pain of forfeiture.

The lay lords were ordered to come at their own charge with their retainers, but the result afforded a strong proof of the fact that a thing is never worth having if it is not worth paying for. Those who came in arms were fearfully out at elbows; and amid the owners of fees with their retainers, was perhaps some unhappy Templar, with his one fee and one retainer, urged by an ordinary motion of course, to appear in the great cause of the king versus Bruce, Rothsay and others.

Henry began boldly with a writ of summons directed to Robert, greeting, and ordering him to come to Edinburgh to make submission. The Earl of Rothsay entered an appearance for his father; a declaration of war ensued on Henry's part, when Rothsay, without putting in a plea, took issue at once, and threw himself upon the country. Henry, not expecting the action to come off so speedily, was but ill prepared, and after making a vain attempt at a fight—in the course of which he tried all his earls and failed on every count—he retired from the contest. He endeavoured, nevertheless, to make the best of it, and observed pleasantly to his followers, "Well, gentlemen, I told you we were sure to beat, and so we will yet. Come, let us beat a retreat; that is better than not beating anything.

Thus ended, in a pitiable and most humiliating pun, a campaign commenced in pride, confidence, and insolence.

While Henry was fooling away his time and resources in the North, a little matter in the West was growing into a very formidable insurrection. Owen Glendower, esquire, a Welsh gentleman "learned in the law," who had held a place in the household of Richard the Second, perhaps as standing counsel, became involved in a dispute about some property with Lord Grey de Ruthyn. Mr. Glendower petitioned the Lords, who rejected his suit, which so irritated him that he instantly exchanged

the pen for the sword, the forensic gown for the coat of mail, and dashing his wig violently on the floor, ordered a helmet to fit the head and the box hitherto devoted to peaceful horse-hair. In the course of his legal studies he had learned something of the art of making out a title, and he immediately set to work to prove himself the lineal descendant of the native Welsh princes. By drawing upon fact for some portions, and his imagination for the remainder, he contrived to get up an excellent draft abstract, which he endorsed with the words "Principality of Wales. Grey Ruthyn at's self;" and adding the usual formula of "Mr. O. Glendower, to settle and advise, 2 Guas.; Clerk, he placed it among his papers, The Welsh peasants set him down as a magician at the least, and the barrister had no difficulty in placing himself in a little brief authority over them.

Assisted by his clerk the trusty Thomson, Mr. Owen Glendower armed himself for the contest upon which he had determined to enter; and the learned gentleman, who had never used any weapon more formidable than a file, upon which he had occasionally impaled a declaration, now girded on the sword, and prepared to listen to the war-trumpet as the only summons to which he would henceforth pay attention Taking the somewhat professional motto of "deeds not words," he sallied forth, as he boldly declared, for the purpose of subjecting all his opponents to special damage.



He collected a small band, and made an attack on the property of Grey de Buthyn, for which the king had Mr. Glendower's name published in the next batch of outlaws. Irritated by this indignity, the learned gentleman declared himself sovereign of Wales, observing with much quaintness, "One may as well be hanged for a sheep as for a lamb, and why not for a Welsh rabbit?" Henry at once marched in pursuit, but the barrister was cautious enough to avoid an action, and led his antagonist all over the Welsh circuit, by which he continually put off the day of trial. Henry, who had a variety of other little matters to attend to, was compelled to allow the cause of himself versus Glendower to stand over to an indefinite period.

Among the businesses getting into arrear at home, was an absurd declaration of war by Walleran of Luxemburgh, the Count of Ligny and St. Pol, who had married a sister of the deposed Richard, and was suddenly seized with a fit of fraterno-legal or brotherly-in-lawly affection, and began to talk of avenging his unfortunate relative. In spite of the recommendations of his best friends, who all urged him "not to make a fool of himself," he insisted on going to sea, where a fate a good deal like that of the three wise men of Gotham appeared to threaten him. Conspiracies now sprung up on every side, and a rumour was spread, that Richard was alive in Scotland, and was coming presently to England at the head of a large army, to play old Harry with Henry's adherents.

Never was a cry of "Bogey" more utterly futile than this assertion, for Richard was really dead, though it suited a certain party of malcontents to resuscitate him for their own purposes. Henry was exceedingly angry at the rumour, and every now and then cut off some half-dozen heads, as a punishment for running about with a false tale, but there was no checking the evil.

At length an army came from Scotland, but Richard was not with it, and the Scotch no longer kept up the delusion, but, like the detected impostor who confessed "It is a swindle, and now

do your worst," they acknowledged the hoax they had been previously practising, The Scotch proved mischievous, but impotent; and Henry was not far from the truth when in one of his remonstrances he remarked, "You are doing yourselves no good, nor me either." They were defeated at Nisbet Moor by the English, under the command of a disaffected Scot, the old Earl of March, who was piqued at his daughter Elizabeth having been jilted by the Earl of Bothsay, to whom she had been affianced The Earl of Bothsay had made another, and let us hope, a better match, so that the action fought at Nisbet Moor was, as far as the Earl of March was concerned, in reality an action for a breach of promise of marriage. Young Bothsay had united himself to Miss Mariell Douglas, the daughter of old Douglas who had his child the husband—that was for his child the husband—that was to have been—of Earl March's daughter that was, but had also obtained for himself a grant of the estates of the father of Rothsay's ex-intended. Douglas, with ten thousand men at his heels, hurried to take possession, and they soon carried sword and fire—but we believe it was fire without coals—to Newcastle. Having completely sacked this important city—but mark I there were in those days no coals to sack—he returned laden with plunder, towards the Tweed, for which way he went, was—like Tweedle-dum and Tweedle-dee—a matter of pure indifference, The Duke of Northumberland, aided by his son, the persevering Percy, surnamed Hotspur, with the indignant March, had got an army in the rear, when Douglas, seeing a good position between the two forces, called Homildon Hill, was the first to take possession of it. Harry Percy was about to charge up the hill, when the Earl of March, seizing his bridle, backed him cleverly into the ranks, and advised him to begin the battle with his archers. The advice was taken; they shot up the hill, and success was the upshot. Every arrow told with terrific effect upon the Scotch, who presented a phalanx of targets, and the stalwart troopers became at

length so perforated with darts, that they looked like so many fillets of veal, skewered through and through by the enemy. Douglas was wounded in so many places, that he resembled a porcupine rather than a Scottish chief, and he was taken into custody, regularly trussed like a chicken prepared for roasting. Among his fellow-prisoners were the Earls of Moray and Angus, who had tried daughter that was, but had also in vain to escape; but neither did Moray nor Angus reach their own quarters in time to escape the grasp of the enemy.

The battle of Homildon Hill, which we have thus faintly described, was fought on the 14th of September, 1402, while Henry himself was much less profitably occupied in hunting up his learned friend, or rather his knowing opponent, Owen Glendower. The lawyer-like cunning of this gentleman carried him triumphantly through all his engagements; and though good cause might have been shown against it, yet, by his cleverness and tact in Wales, he was nearly successful in getting his rule made absolute. Henry's next annoyance was an impertinent letter from a former friend and "sworn brother," the Duke of Orleans, uncle of Isabella, the widow of the late king, and the acknowledged "female in distress," whom it was fashionable for the "recognised heroes" of that day to talk about avenging. The letter of the Duke of Orleans was a mixture of ferocity and facetiousness; it deplored the inactivity prevailing in the military market, and offered to do a little business with Henry, either in "lances, battle-axes, swords, or daggers.

"He sneeringly repudiated "bodkins, hooks, points, bearded darts, razors, and needles," as if Henry had been in the habit of arming himself with the fittings of a work-box or a dressing-case. An answer was returned in the same sarcastic strain, and an angry correspondence ensued, in which the parties gave each other the lie, offered to meet in single combat, and indeed entered into a short but sharp wordy war, which was followed by no more serious consequences.

Northumberland, who had struck for the defence of his country, now struck for his wages, which were unsatisfactory, and several other patriotic noblemen insisted on more liberal terms for their allegiance, Henry having resisted the extortion, gave, of course, great offence to his faithful adherents, who veered, at once, clean round to the scale of the king's enemies.

In those days the principles of great men seemed to go upon a pivot, and Northumberland's swivel was evidently in fine working order on the occasion to which we have alluded. Scroop, the Archbishop of York, who might well have been called the Unscrupulous, advised that Henry should be treated as a wrongful heir, and that the young Earl of March should be rallied round, as the rightful heir, by the dissatisfied nobles. They sent a retaining fee to Owen Glendower, and marked upon his brief "With you the Earl of Northumberland and Henry Percy," and appointed a consultation at an early period. Earl Douglas was released from custody without payment of costs, on condition of his leaving the rebels, and O.

Glendower, Esquire, married the daughter of his prisoner, Mortimer, the young Earl of March's uncle.

The conspirators having consulted, determined to proceed, and though Northumberland himself was kept at home by indisposition, Hotspur marched to meet Glendower.

That learned gentleman, who had probably not received his "refresher," did not come, but young Percy, nevertheless, sent to Henry a written notice of trial.

The king proposed referring it to arbitration, but the offer was treated with contempt; and he then rejoined that he had no time to waste in writing, but he would, "by dint of sword and fierce battle." prove their quarrel was false and feigned, "whereupon," as the lawyers have it, "issue was joined." Each army consisted of about fourteen thousand men, and on the morning of the 21st of July, 1403, both being full of confidence, began sounding their horns or blowing their own trumpets. Hotspur

and Douglas led the first charge with irresistible vigour, and one or two gentlemen who had carried their loyalty so far as to wear the royal arms as a dodge, while the king fought in plain clothes, paid with their lives the penalty of their fidelity. Henry of Monmouth, the young Prince of Wales, got several slaps in the face, and once or twice exclaimed, in the Norman-French of the period, "Oh, Mon mouth!" but he nevertheless continued to the last, showing his teeth to the enemy.

Douglas and Hotspur were not ably supported, and the latter was struck by an arrow shot at random, while Douglas, losing command over his head, took to his heels, and becoming positively flighty in his flight, fell over a precipice.

This was his downfall, but not his death, for he was picked up and made prisoner Old Percy, who had been absent from ill-health, but had now got much better from his illness, was marching to join the insurgents with a considerable force, and had paused on the road to take his medicine, when he was met by a messenger, who, glancing at the physic, exclaimed, "Ah! my lord, I've got a blacker dose than that for you!" With this, he administered two pills in the shape of two separate announcements of the deaths of Hotspur and Worcester, the son and brother of the earl, who, bidding "Good morning" to his retainers, all of whom he dismissed, shut himself up in the castle of Warkworth, The king soon routed him out, when Northumberland, like an old sycophant as he was, pretended that Hotspur had acted against his advice, for the venerable humbug, though eager enough to share in his son's success, was meanly anxious to repudiate him in his misfortunes.

By this paltry proceeding, Northumberland was allowed to get off cheap, and even to win commiseration as the victim of the imprudence of his heir, though the fact was that the latter had been completely sacrificed to his parent's selfishness.

In the year 1404, the old cry of "Dick's alive" was renewed, and some people even went so far as to say that they had re-

cently walked and talked with the deposed King Richard. The rumour ran that he was living in Scotland, and one Serle, an old servant, went over to recognise his majesty, but found in his place the court jester, who bore some resemblance to the unfortunate sovereign. Serle, however, determined on playing his cards to the best advantage, and thought it a good speculation to play the fool off in place of the king, a trick which was for a time successful. The buffoon humoured the joke, which was a sorry one for its author, who was executed as a traitor, and it might be as well if the same justice were dealt out to similar delinquents in the present day, for indifferent jokes are the madness of few for the gain of nobody.

Henry was now frightfully embarrassed by the quantity of bills pouring in upon him for carrying on the war in Wales, and every day brought him a fresh account which he had never expected. Even the musicians made a claim, and the king, running his eye down a long list of items, including a drum, a ditto, a ditto, a flute half a day, a pandean pipe, et caetera, et caetera, exclaimed mournfully to his treasurer, "Alas! I fear I cannot manage to pay the piper." In fact, the claims on account of the war left him no peace, and he proposed taking a quantity of the property of the church to settle with his creditors.

This proposition raised a perfect flame amongst the whole body of the clergy.

The Archbishop of Canterbury instantly took fire, while the inferior members of the church were fearfully put out, and cold water being thrown on the attempt, it was soon extinguished. Fighting was still the business that Henry had on hand, for as fast as one of his foes was down, another was ready to come on with fresh vigour. Old Northumberland could not keep quiet, but Owen Glendower was perhaps the most troublesome of all the king's enemies.

The rapidity of the learned gentleman's motions kept the other side constantly employed, for he never hesitated to change

the venue, or resort to a set-off, when he wished to baffle his antagonists. At length, lack of funds, and its customary concomitant, the loss of friends, compelled him not only to stay proceedings, but to keep out of the way to avoid his heavy responsibilities. He is supposed to have been engaged for years in a protracted game at hide and seek, living at the homes of his daughters and friends, but disguised always in a shepherd's plaid, to prevent the servants from knowing him. What became of him was never known, and, unfortunately for the historian, there were in those days no registrars of either births, deaths, or marriages. Some say that Owen Glendower ended his days at Mornington, but they might as well say Mornington Crescent; and the place of his interment is no less doubtful, for where he was buried is now buried in obscurity.

There is a tradition that his tomb is in the Cathedral of Bangor, but this story is of little value to anyone except to the Bangor beadle, who makes an occasional sixpence by calling the attention of visitors to a spot which he, and Common Rumour, between them, have dignified with the title of the tomb of Owen Glendower. We all know the character which Common Rumour bears for an habitual violation of truth; and we are afraid that if she is no better than she should be, the Bangor beadle is not so good as he ought to be.

Henry was fortunate in overcoming his enemies, but his treatment of them was frequently cruel in the extreme.

Poor old Robert, the nominal king of Scotland, was driven about from abbey to abbey, but had no sooner got comfortably settled in one, than a cry of "Here he is! we've got him!" drove him to take refuge in another.

At last he hid himself in the Isle of Bute, where he is supposed to have remained to the close of his existence, and it is certain that he never addressed to the Isle of Bute the celebrated apostrophe, "Isle of Beauty, Fare thee well!" His eldest son Rothsay was imprisoned in the castle of Falkland (March, 1402), into

which it is supposed he was pitched with a pitcher, containing about a pint of water, and furnished by a crusty gaoler, with a piece of crust. Even this miserable diet is said to have been very irregularly administered, and was of course insufficient for an able-bodied young man like Rothsay.

He was treated like a pauper under the new Poor-law, and is believed to have died of inanition; for though the chronicles of that day attributed his death to starvation, the chronicle of our day prefers a genteeler term.

The king of Scotland's second son, James, had been shipped by his father for France, to be out of the way, when the vessel was seized by the crews of some English cruisers.

Robert died of grief at the loss of young James, whom he called his precious jewel of a gem, and the little fellow, though a prisoner, was lodged and boarded in comfort, allowed masters, and instructed in all the usual branches of a sound education. Constitutional liberty had in previous reigns taken very irregular hops, skips, and jumps; but, during the reign of Henry, it began taking rapid strides. During the latter part of his life the tranquillity of his own country gave him the power to lend out his soldiers to fight the battles of others; but it never paid him, for though there was a good deal owing to him, he was unable to get the money. His second son, the Duke of Clarence, had landed in Normandy with a large army, but finding that he could not get a penny to pay his troops, he began to insist on a settlement. He was insultingly told that he was not wanted and might take his army back again, but he soon brought the people to their senses by a little prompt pillage, The matter was arranged, and the Duke of Orleans brought all the ready money he could raise as the first instalment to the headquarters of the English.

It is doubtful whether the payments were regularly kept up, but every possible precaution was taken that bail or bills could afford. Henry's reign was now drawing to a close, and he became exceedingly sentimental in the latter years of his existence.

He had discovered the hollowness of the human heart, together with its propensity for wearing a mask, and the keen perception of this perpetual fancy-dress ball of the finest feelings, rendered him gloomy, solitary, and suspicious.

He was also in a wretched state of health, for nothing agreed with him, and he agreed with nobody.

He became jealous of the popularity of his son, whom he declared to be everything that was bad, though the after life of the young man gave the perfect lie to the paternal libel.

Many anecdotes are related of the low freaks of Henry and his companions, who seem to have been the terror of the police and the people. If we are to believe all that is said concerning them, we should look upon the Prince of Wales and his associates as the foes to that great engine of civilisation the street-door knocker, and the determined enemies to enlightenment by the agency of public lamps.

Anecdotes are told of their being brought before the Chief Justice Gascoigne, the Denman, Pollock, or Wilde of his day, who took cognizance of a case, which would induce either of these learned and upright individuals to exclaim to a complainant: "You must not come here, sir; we don't sit here to decide upon the merits of street rows," Gascoigne, who was a chief justice and a police magistrate all in one—like an article of furniture intended for both a bedstead and a chest of drawers, but offering the accommodation of neither—Gascoigne committed to prison some of the prince's associates.

The learned judge, setting a precedent that might be followed with advantage in the present day, inflicted imprisonment, instead of a fine, on those to whom the latter would have been no punishment, The Prince of Wales, on hearing of the incarceration of his companions, rushed into court, demanding a habeas corpus, and drew his sword upon the judge when asked for a case in point, Judge Gascoigne ordered the usher to take the prince into custody, and the officer of the court having

hesitated, young Henry, politely exclaiming, "I'm your prisoner, sir," surrendered without a murmur. When the king heard the anecdote, he became mawkishly sentimental, exclaiming, "Happy the monarch to have such a good judge for a justice, and happy the father to have a son so ready to yield to legal authority." If the latter is really a subject for congratulation, what happiness the police reports of each day ought to afford to those parents who have had sons confined in the station-house for intoxication, by whom the penalty of five shillings has been paid with alacrity. We can fancy the respectable sire of some youth who has formed the subject of a case at Bow Street, and who has submitted to the decision of the Bench; we can imagine the parent exclaiming, with enthusiasm, "Happy the Englishman to have such a magistrate to enforce the law, and such a son to yield obedience to its orders." Another anecdote is told of the amiable feeling existing between the sovereign and his heir, which we insert without vouching for its truth, though it is not by any means improbable.

The king was ill in bed, and the Prince of Wales was sitting up with him in the temporary capacity of nurse.

The son, however, seemed to be rather waiting for his father's death, than hoping for the prolongation of his life, and the king, having gone off into a fit, the prince, instead of calling for assistance, or giving any aid himself, heartlessly took the opportunity to see how he should look in the crown, which always hung on a peg in the royal bed-chamber.

Young Henry was figuring away before a cheval glass, with the regal bauble on his head, and was exclaiming "Just the thing, upon my honour," when the elder Henry, happening to recover, sat up in his bed, and saw the conduct of his offspring. "Hallo," cried the king, "who gave you leave to put that on? I think you might have left it alone till I've done with it!"



The prince muttered some excuse, which was not long needed, for on the 23rd of March, 1413, Henry the Fourth died, in the forty-seventh year of his age, and the fourteenth of his reign. The character of Henry the Fourth may be told in a few words, and the fewer the better for his reputation, inasmuch as it is impossible to furnish him with that passport to posterity with which it would give us pleasure to present the whole of our English sovereigns. Other historians have puffed him, but the only puffing we can promise him is a regular blowing up. He was cautious how he gave offence to his subjects, but this was less out of regard to their interests than care for his own. He knew that the hostility existing towards him among the nobles, on account of his usurpation, could only be counteracted by obtaining the support of the people.

He therefore refrained from irritating the latter by taxing them heavily for his wars, but he never scrupled to help himself to the goods of the former whenever his exigencies required. The only difference between him and some of his predecessors in the practice of extortion and robbery, is in the fact that while others plundered principally the people, Henry the Fourth thought it better worth his while to plunder the nobles. Some of our predecessors have praised his prudence, which

was unquestionably great; for never was a king more cunning in his attempts to preserve the crown he had unjustly acquired.

He was not wantonly barbarous in the treatment of his enemies when he got them into his power, and, in this respect, his conduct presents an honourable contrast to that of the sanguinary monsters who committed the greatest crimes to surmount the smallest obstacles. He did not seek to stop the merest breath of disaffection by the most monstrous murders, nor to rid himself of the annoyance of suspicion by incurring the guilt of slaughtering the suspected. His treatment of his predecessor, Richard, and one or two others, who are yet unaccounted for, and returned "missing" in the balance-sheet of history, must always leave a blot, or, rather, a shower of blots, throwing a piebald aspect upon the character of Henry. Among the distinguished individuals who shed lustre on a reign which derived no brilliance from the sovereign himself, are the poets Chaucer and Gower, as well as William Wickham, and Richard Whittington, the Lord Mayor of London. We have been at some pains to trace the story of the latter, in the hope of being able to find accommodation for his cat in the pages of history. We regret to say that our task has ended in the melancholy conviction that the cat of Whittington must make one in that imaginary family which comprises the puss in boots of the Marquis of Carabas, the rats and lizards of Cinderella, and the chickens of Mother Carey among the distinctions to which this reign is entitled, we must not omit to mention that it was the first in which the practice prevailed of burning what were called heretics.

Had this circumstance occurred to us before we commenced the character of Henry, we think we might have spared ourselves the trouble of writing it.

The burning of heretics ought, of itself, to brand his name with infamy.