The Comic History Of England part (4)

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CHAPTER THE SECOND.
EDWARD THE FIRST, SURNAMED LONGSHANKS.

EDWARD was the first king who came to the throne like a gentle-man, without any of that indecent clutching of the crown and sacking of the treasury which had been practised by almost every one of his predecessors. Perhaps his absence from England was the chief cause of this forbearance; but it is at all events refreshing to meet with a sovereign whose accession was not marked by a burglary upon the premises where the public treasure happened to be deposited.

On the 20th of November, 1272, four days after his father's death, Edward was proclaimed king by the barons at the New Temple. It was probably under the shade of the old fig-tree in Fig-Tree Court, that they read his titles of King of England, Lord of Ireland, and Duke of Aquitaine. Edward had been engaged in the crusades, as one of those fighting missionaries who conveyed "sermons in stones" through the medium of slings, and knocked unbelief literally upon the head with the

Christian battle-axe. One day he nearly lost his life, by the hands of an assassin, disguised as a postman from the Emir of Jaffa, who, feigning a wish to be converted, had opened a correspondence with Edward.

The English prince was lying in his robe-de-chambre on a couch, when the usual salaam—the emir's postman's knock—was made at the door of his apartment. The messenger had brought a letter, of which Edward had scarcely broken the wax, when his doom was nearly sealed by a blow from a dagger, hidden in the postman's sleeve. The prince parried the attack with his arms, which were his only weapons, until, wresting the dirk from his assailant's hands, he used it to put a period to the existence of the would-be murderer, by a process of punctuation which no grammarian has attempted to describe,Edward's wound was not deep, but his enemies had been deep enough to introduce some venom into it. When he heard the fact he gave himself up to despair, for he considered that his existence was irretrievably poisoned. A romantic story is told of Queen Eleanor having sucked the poison from her husband's arm, but it is quite certain that such succour was never afforded him, and the anecdote is therefore not worth the straw that the operation would have required.

The prince owed his recovery to the prompt attendance of an English surgeon, who happened to be settled at Acre, and to some drugs supplied by the Grand Master of the Templars, who opened his heart and his chest—of medicine—for the relief of the suffering Edward. There is no doubt that Eleanor had sufficient affection for her husband, to have prompted her to draw the poison into her mouth had it ever entered her head; but the fact appears to be that the remedy was never thought of until a century after the infliction of the wound, which was a little too late to be of service to the patient, though nothing is ever too late to be made use of by the chroniclers. The notion was too good to be rejected by these very credulous gentlemen, who are easily induced to convert might have been, into has been, when the latter course is better adapted for exciting an agreeable interest. Feeling tolerably secure of the throne, he was in no hurry to take possession, but enjoyed an agreeable tour before returning to England. He paid a visit to the new pope, his old friend Theobald, though there was some difficulty in getting into Theobald's road, for his holiness had left Rome for Civita Vecchia. Edward spent some time in Italy, for among the many irons he had in the fire were two or three Italian irons, which he desired to look after before arriving in his own country.

He next visited Paris, and instead of coming straight home with the diligence that might have been expected, he turned back to Guienne, where he was invited by the Count of Chalons to a tournament.

'Twas in the merry month of May," in the year 1274, "When bees from flower to flower did hum," exactly as they do in the present day, that the parties met lance to lance, each attended by a host of champions. Edward brought one thousand with him, but the Count of Chalons came with two thousand, an incident which at once raised a suspicion that the chivalrous knight intended foul play towards his royal antagonist.

A tournament in sport soon became a battle in earnest, and

the count rushed upon Edward, grasping him by the neck to embrace the opportunity of unhorsing him,Nothing, however, could make him resign his seat, and the Count of Chalons was soon licking the dust, or rather, the saw-dust spread over the arena in which the tournament was given.

Edward was so angry at the trick which had been played, that he hit his antagonist several times while down, and kept hammering at the armour of the count like a smith at an anvil. The Count of Chalons roared out lustily for mercy, but Edward refusing to grant it, continued to "give it him" in another sense for several minutes.

At length the count offered to surrender his sword, which was igno-miniously rejected by the English king, who called up a common foot soldier to take away the dishonoured weapon.

It was not till the year 1274 that Edward thought of returning to England, and he sent over to order his coronation dinner on a scale that would have done honour to a mayoral banquet.

The bill of fare included so many heads of cattle, that the shortest way to get through the cooking would have been to light a fire under Leadenhall Market, and roast the whole of the

contents by a single operation. If such a feast had really taken place, it was enough to put the times out of joint for a twelve-month afterwards. On the 2nd of August, 1274, Edward arrived at Dover, and on the 19th of the same month he was crowned at Westminster Abbey, with his wife, Eleanor. This was the wonderful woman who was erroneously alleged to have sucked the poison from her husband's arm, a feat that has had no parallel in modern times, if we except the individual who undertook to swallow liquid lead and arsenic before a generous British public, and who, by surviving the operation, gave great offence to a portion of the enlightened audience. Edward, on coming to England, found plenty of loyalty, but very little cash; and though he had no objection to reign in the hearts of his people, he felt the necessity of making himself also master of their pockets. A crown without money would have been a mere tin kettle, tied to the head, instead of the tail, of the unlucky dog who might be compelled to wear it. The king turned his attention to the unfortunate Jews, who seemed to be tolerated in England as human bees, employed in collecting the sweets of wealth only for the purpose of having it taken away from them. Edward literally emptied them out of the kingdom, for the purpose of plundering their hives more effectually. He allowed some of them their travelling expenses out of England, but even this was more than they required in many cases, for the inhabitants of the ports saved the Jews the cost of their journey by most inhumanly drowning them.

Edward, however unjust himself, disliked injustice in others; and indeed, with the common jealousy of dealers on a very large scale, he seemed to desire a monopoly of all the robbery and oppression practised within his own dominions.

In the year 1289, the judicial bench was disgraced by a set of extortioners whose existence we can scarcely comprehend in the present age, when a corrupt judge would be as difficult to find as the philosopher's stone, or as that desirable but impossible boon to the briefless barrister, perpetual motion.

The Chief Justice of the King's Bench had actually encouraged his own servants to commit murder, for the sake of the fees that would accrue upon the trial, and, of course, the acquittal of the culprits. The Chief Baron of-the Exchequer had kept all the money paid into court upon every action that had been tried, and was even discovered going disgraceful snacks with the usher in illegal charges upon suitors. As to the puisnes, they had been detected in selling their judgments in banco at so much a folio, and even hiring pickpockets to rob the leading counsel as they went out of court with their fees in their pockets. The Chancellor had spent the money of nearly all his wards, and would never fix a day for a decree until he was positively forced, when he would pronounce a decision unintelligible to all parties. These disgraceful proceedings were made a pretext by the king for taking eighty thousand marks from the judges, his majesty observing, that if he took from them all the marks they possessed, he could not remove the stains from their characters. This shallow sophism, though it might have satisfied the king himself, was not consolatory to the judges, nor was it calculated to reimburse the people for the losses sustained by judicial delinquency. It is said that the first clock placed opposite the gate of Westminster Hall was purchased with a fine of eight hundred marks upon the Chief Justice of the King's Bench, and the popular saying "that's your time of day" is supposed to have arisen from a sarcasm that used to be addressed by the crowd outside to the judicial delinquent.

As a measure of further extortion, Edward became suddenly very particular as to the titles by which the nobles held their estates, and sent round commissioners to demand the production of the deeds by which the barons acquired their property. Earl de Warenne was called upon among the rest, and desired that the commissioners might be politely shown in to him. "So, gentlemen," he mildly observed, "you wish to see the title by which I hold my property." "Exactly so," was the reply, which was followed by a commonplace expression of sorrow at being obliged to trouble him, "It

is no trouble in the least," rejoined Earl de Warenne, drawing a tremendous sword, which he brandished before the eyes of the commissioners, and begged their close inspection of the title by which his ancestors had acquired his possessions.

"You see, gentlemen," he continued, "there is no flaw to be detected, and if after looking at my title you want a specimen of my deeds, I can very speedily give you the satisfaction you require." The historian need scarcely add that the commissioners backed out, with an observation, "that a mere abstract of the title—a drawing of the sword out of its scabbard—was all that could possibly be required." Edward having other fish to fry, had hitherto neglected Wales, but that land of mountains was a scene of frequent risings, which he now determined to "put down" with promptitude and vigour. Llewellyn, the Prince of North Wales, was summoned to London to do homage as a tributary to the English crown, but his ambition having been fired by some prophecies of the famous Merlin, the fiery Welshman sent word that he would not come so far to see Edward, which was equivalent to a declaration that he would see him further. The English king having resolved to punish so

much insolence, about Easter, 1277, crossed the Dee—not the sea, as some historians have alleged—with a large army and blocked poor Llewellyn up in his own principality. His brother David having been made an English baron, and married to the daughter of an English earl, was at first devoted to the English, but his native breezes fanned the still dormant flame of patriotism, and he joined his brother in resisting the foreign enemy. Edward occupied Anglesey, but in crossing over to the mainland he found himself in the most dreadful straits at the Menai. He lost several hundred men, and was obliged to fly for protection to one of his castles, but a king in those days could make every Englishman's house his castle, by unceremoniously walking into it. Llewellyn was somewhat emboldened by partial success, and foolishly advanced to the valley of the Wye, without anyone knowing wherefore. Roger, the savage Earl of Mortimer, was immediately down upon him, and sacrificed him before he had time even to put on his armour, in which he was only half encased when he was cruelly set upon by the enemy. He had buckled on his greaves, and was in the act of putting on his breast-plate over his head when he was decapitated with the usual disregard which was at that time continually shown to the heads of families. His brother David kept cutting about the country with his sword in his hand for at least six months, until he was basely betrayed into the hands of the English. He was condemned to die the death of traitors, which included a series of barbarities too revolting to mention. This sentence, which formed a precedent in the punishment of high treason for many ages, is one of the most disgraceful facts of our history. It casts a stigma upon every Parliament and every generation of the people in whose time this fearful penalty either was or might have been inflicted.

The leek of Wales was now entwined with the rose of England, and Edward endeavoured to propitiate his newly acquired subjects by becoming a resident in the conquered country. His

wife Eleanor gave birth to a son in the castle of Caernarvon, and he availed himself of the circumstance to introduce the infant as a native production, giving him the title of Prince of Wales, which has ever since been held by the eldest son of the English sovereign.

After remaining about a year in Wales, Edward was enabled by the tranquillity of the kingdom to take a Continental tour, in the course of which he was often appealed to as a mutual friend by sovereigns between whom there was any difference. He acted as arbitrator in the celebrated cause of Anjou against Aragon; but while settling the affairs of others, his own were getting rather embarrassed, and he was compelled in the year 1289 to return to England.

Upon reaching home he found that Scotland was in that state of weakness which offered an eligible opportunity to a royal plunderer,The king, Alexander the Third, had died, leaving a little grandchild of the name of Margaret, as his successor. This young lady was the daughter of Eric, king of Norway, who wrote over to Edward, requesting he would do what he could for her in case of her title being disputed. The English sovereign, with a cunning worthy of a certain French old gentleman whom we need not name, recommended a marriage with his son as the best mode of protecting the royal damsel.

The preliminaries were all arranged, and Eric had agreed to forward the little Margaret, who was only eight years of age, by the first boat from Norway to Britain. The child had been shipped and regularly invoiced, when she fell ill, and being put ashore at one of the Orkney Islands, she unfortunately died. On the death of the queen being made known, claimants to the Scottish crown started up in all directions, and it was necessary to find the heir by hunting among the descendants of David of Huntingdon. John Baliol was the grandson of David's eldest daughter, and John's grandmother therefore gave Baliol a right to the crown, which was disputed by Bruce and Hastings, the sons of the youngest daughters of Huntingdon senior, whose only son, Huntingdon junior, died without issue. An opening was thus left to the female tranches, and the introduction of those charming elements of discord—the ladies—into the question of succession, created, of course, all the confusion that arose.

Edward, having advanced to Norham, a small town on the English side of the Tweed, which, as everyone knows, forms a kind of Tweedish wrapper for Scotland, appointed a conference, which took place on the 10th of May, 1291, at which he distinctly stated that he intended regulating the succession to the Scotch throne. At this meeting Edward himself proposed the first resolution, which pledged the assembly to a recognition of the right of the English king not only to do what he liked with his own, but to do what he liked with Scotland also, which did not belong to him. One gentleman, in the body of the assembly, who remains anonymous to this day, ventured to suggest by way of amendment, that no answer could be made while the throne was vacant, and an adjournment until the next morning was agreed upon. No business was, however, done on the morrow, but a further postponement till the 2nd of June was eventually carried. When that day arrived the attendance was numerous and highly respectable, for on the platform we might have observed no less than eight competitors for the crown. Robert Bruce, who

was there in excellent health and spirits, publicly declared his readiness to refer his claims to Edward's arbitration, and all the other claimants did the same. On the next day, Baliol made his appearance and followed the example of the others, and it was agreed that one hundred and four commissioners should be appointed to inquire and report to Edward previous to his giving his final award. There is little doubt that this enormous number of commissioners could only have been intended to mystify the case, and to leave Edward at liberty to settle it his own way; a suspicion that is still further justified by his having reserved the right to add, without any limit or restriction, to the number of commissioners, and thus make "confusion worse confounded" should occasion require.

The wily Edward, pretending that it was necessary to the performance of his duty as arbitrator, got the kingdom, the castles, and other property surrendered into his hands on the 11th of June; though the Earl of Angus refused to give up Dundee and Forfar without an indemnity, which he stoutly stuck up for, and eventually obtained. None of the clergy joined in this disgraceful concession but the Bishop of Sodor, who ought to have been the very first to effervesce. The king himself went to the principal towns in Scotland with the rolls of homage, which were allowed to lie for signature, and he sent attorneys, empowered to take affidavits, into the various villages.

At length, on the 3rd of August, the commissioners met for the despatch of business, and, of course, came to no decision.

In the year following they tackled the subject again, but it was found that the more they talked about it, the more they differed. Edward, by way of complicating the affair still further, summoned a Parliament to meet at Berwick on the 15th of October, 1292, at which Bruce and Baliol were fully heard, when the assembly laid down a general proposition that the lineal descendant of the eldest sister, however remote in degree, was preferable to the nearer in degree, if descended from a younger sister.

This decision left everything undecided, and accordingly Edward gave judgment that Baliol should be king of Scotland, with the simple proviso that Edward should be king of Baliol. The whole affair having been "a sell" got up between the English sovereign and the Scottish claimant, there was no demur on the part of the latter, who swore fealty, as he would have sworn that black was white, had such been the purport of the oath that his master required.

Edward took every opportunity of bullying Baliol, and even ordered him to come all the way to Westminster to defend an action brought against him for money due from Alexander the Third, his greatgrandfather. He was also served with process in the paltry suit of self ats Macduff; and other writs, to which he was forced to appear in person, were continually served upon him. For the smallest pecuniary claim the Scotch king was compelled to come to England to plead, until his patience at last gave way, and he turned refractory.

Edward was now at war with Philip of France, whom Baliol agreed to serve by harassing their mutual enemy.

The Scotch king, who was at heart a humbug and a coward to the core, became exceedingly insolent, from the belief that Edward was somewhat down, and the proper time had arrived for hitting him. The English sovereign, who had been harassed at first by the Scotch cur, soon brought him howling for mercy, which was accorded on condition of his resigning the kingly office, a proposition which Baliol basely submitted to.

Edward made a triumphal progress through Scotland, and taking a fancy to an old stone, upon which the kings had sat to be crowned at Scone, caused the very uncomfortable coronation chair to be removed to Westminster, The people of Scotland had always considered this block to be the corner-stone of their liberties, and its removal seemed to take away the only foundation that their hopes of regaining their independence were built upon. As long as it was in their country, they be-

lieved it would bring them good fortune; but they dreaded the reverse if the stone should be removed even so far as a stone's throw from the borders of Scotland. Edward having appointed the Earl de Warenne governor of the vanquished kingdom, and given away all the appointments that were vacant to creatures of his own, returned in triumph to England. * Hemingford.

In the year 1297 William Wallace, commonly known as the hero of Scotland, made his first appearance on the stage of history as a supernumerary, carrying a banner, for we find him engaged in unfurling the standard of liberty. He was at first merely the captain of a small band of outlaws—a sort of first robber—in the great drama in which he was soon to sustain a principal character. He was the second son of Sir William Wallace, of Ellerslie, and had all the qualities of a melodramatic hero, so far at least as we are enabled to judge by a description of him written a hundred years after his death with that minuteness which the old chroniclers were so fond of adopting when they knew that no one had the power of contradicting them.

The celebrated Bower, who continued the Scotichronicon of Fordun, tells us that Wallace was "broad-shouldered, big-boned, and proportionately corpulent," so that his shoulders were broad enough to bear the burden he undertook; and his being corpulent gave him this advantage over his enemies, that if they had fifty thousand lives, he had undoubtedly "stomach for them all.

Mr. Tytler, who will perhaps excuse us for venturing on Tytler's ground, informs us in his History of Scotland that "Wallace had an iron frame," so that we have the picture of the man at once before us. For a quarrel with an English officer he had been banished from his home, and by living in fastnesses he acquired some of those loosenesses which are inseparable from a roving character.

His followers comprised a few men of desperate fortunes and bad reputation, who had turned patriots, as gentlemen in difficulties generally do; for it is a remarkable

fact, that the men who endeavour to discharge a debt to their country are those who never think of discharging the debts which they owe to their creditors. Success, however, covers a multitude of sins, and Wallace with his little band of outlaws, having achieved one or two small triumphs, soon found out the fact that the world which sneers at the very noblest cause in its early struggles, will always be ready to join it in the moment of victory. Wallace having been fortunate in his efforts, soon had the co-operation of Sir William Douglas and all his vassals; just as Mr. Cobden and the Anti-Corn-Law League, after having been denounced as turbulent demagogues, and threatened with prosecution, were assisted on the eve of the fulfilment of their object by the leaders of the Opposition and the principal members of the Government.

Edward, who had been in Flanders during the commencement of the Scotch rebellion, now returned to England, and by way of propitiating his subjects, he summoned a Parliament, at which Magna Charta was again voluntarily confirmed.

It is true he made a cunning effort to insert at the end of it the words "saving always the rights of our crown," which would have been almost equivalent to striking out all the other clauses

of the document. The Parliament hotly opposed the crafty suggestion, which was accordingly withdrawn, and supplies for carrying on the war against the Scotch insurgents were readily granted. In the summer of 1298, Edward came in person to Scotland at the head of a large army. Wallace, instead of waiting for a battle, retired slowly before the forces of the English king, clearing off all the provisions on the way, and thus aiming a blow at the stomach of the enemy.

The invaders advanced, but there was nothing to eat; or as Mr. Tyler well expresses it, "they found an inhospitable desert" where—he might have added—they had occasion for a hospitable dinner. Wallace was now at Falkirk, from which he meditated an attack upon the king, but Edward, having been apprised of his intention, reflected that it was a game at which two could play, and he thought it as well to secure the first innings. The English king accordingly, finding the ball at his foot, took it up immediately, and at once bowled out the Scottish hero. The battle of Falkirk, was fought on the 22nd of July, 1298, and the Scotch loss is variously stated at ten, fifteen, and sixty thousand men. In ordinary matters it is sometimes safe to believe half that we hear, but it would be more judicious to limit one's trust to ten per cent, in the records of history.

* Rapin, vol. iii., p. 72, second edition, quarto, 1727.

The Scotch war had of course been a very expensive business, and Edward had been sponging upon his subjects to an alarming extent during its continuance, In 1294 he had taken from the clergy half their incomes and nearly all their eatables.

His purveyors first emptied their granaries, then robbed their farm-yards and ultimately pillaged their pantries; so that the king having already ransacked their pockets, the "reverend fathers," as he insultingly termed them, were in a very pretty predicament, Their larders were laid waste, their safes were no longer safe, they could not preserve their jam, their corn was instantly sacked, and even their joints of meat, from the leg

to the loin, were walked off or pur-loined by the order of the sovereign.

The pope, who had been applied to for protection when they were being deprived of their cattle, sent over a bull, which proved of very little use, for he soon despatched a second, by which the first was recalled in all its most important provisions.

The trading classes were not so easily robbed, for when the king began to deal with them in his own peculiar fashion, he found them rather awkward customers. Some wool had been prepared for shipping by the London merchants, when the king's agents came woolgathering to the wharfs, and carried it off with a high hand for the use of the sovereign. It is true they promised to pay, and ordered the owners to put it down to the bill; but the traders determined that they could not do business in that manner. They were joined by some of the nobles, and among others by Hereford, the constable, and Norfolk, the marshal of England, who had a joint audience of his majesty, who threatened to hang them if they did not do his bidding. "I will neither do so, nor hang, sir king," was Norfolk's reply, in which Hereford acquiesced; so that it was evident Edward could neither trample on the marshal, nor any longer overrun the constable. Thirty bannerets and fifteen hundred gentlemen whom the king had dubbed knights joined the two nobles in their refusal to dub up, * and Edward was left almost alone. In this dilemma he appealed to the people by the old trick of an effective speech, interlarded with those clap-traps which he knew so well how to employ.

He caused a platform to be erected at the door of Westminster Hall, and appeared upon it, supported by his son Edward, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Earl of Warwick.

Like the schoolmaster who never administered a flogging without saying it hurt him a great deal more than the boy, the king told the people that it was more grievous to him to exact taxes from his dear people than it could be to them to bear the

burden. “I am going,” he exclaimed, “to expose myself to all the dangers of war for your sakes,” and here he pulled out his pocket-handkerchief, behind which he winked at the Archbishop of Canterbury, who thrust his tongue into his cheek to show the prelate’s relish for his master’s hypocrisy.

* Heming. “If I return alive,” continued the royal humbug, “I will make you amends for the past; but if I fall, here is my dear son (step this way, Ned), place him on the throne (hold your head up, stupid), and his gratitude (bow, you blockhead) will be the reward of your fidelity.” Here he fairly swamped his face in tears, while the archbishop turned on a couple of fountains, which came gushing through his eyes, and the meeting was literally dissolved by the practice of this piece of crying injustice towards the people. Not only had he melted the hearts of the traders by this manouvre, but he drew streams of coin for the liquidation of his debts from their pockets. With the cash thus collected he started to join Guy, Earl of Flanders, against Philip le Bel, a very pretty sort of fellow, between whom and Edward there was a contest for the possession of the daughter of the Guy, the fair Philippa.

The English king had, as early as 1294, contracted a marriage for the Prince of Wales with this young lady, who was only nine when the match was agreed upon. The happiness of the Flemish infant of course went for nothing in the game of craft and ambition which was being played by the intriguing French king, who had no other object but the extension of his personal influence. Though he may have been the first, he was certainly not the last Philip on the throne of France to force the inclinations of royal children on the subject of marriage for his own purposes.

Edward the Fourth had expended a large amount of English money in purchasing the support of foreign mercenaries, who had no sooner spent their wages than they discontinued their services. The English king, finding he was likely to get the

worst of it, concluded a truce in the spring of 1298, and left the unfortunate Guy to fight his own battles.

Before Edward's return home, the London citizens refused to pay the taxes, on the ground of their not having been imposed by the consent of Parliament. Many a tax-gatherer lost his time and his temper in going from door to door, and was told, tauntingly, to collect himself, when he sought to collect money for the royal treasury. The king, who was at Ghent, tried the never-failing experiment of another confirmation of Magna Charta, with the addition of what he called—in a private letter to his son—"a little one in," namely, a confirmation of the Statute de Tallagio non concedendo, which was an act declaring that no talliage or aid should be levied without the consent of the Parliament. This was the first occasion upon which the nation was formally invested with the sole right of raising the supplies, but the investment, after all, was not particularly eligible, as the sole right of raising the supplies carries with it the sole duty of finding the money.

Not content with his confirmation of the charter, Edward, in May, 1298, was called upon to ratify, at York, the confirmation itself, and thus spread with additional butter the constitutional bacon. This he for some time evaded by a series of paltry excuses, in which "head-ache," "previous engagement," and "out of town," were pleaded from time to time, until the barons, by following him up, got him into a cul de sac from which there was no escaping. He consented at last to ratify, but, in the most dishonourable manner, he contrived while signing to smuggle in a clause at the end, which, by saving the right of the Crown, rendered the whole document a wretched nullity.

This was a trick he was much addicted to, for he had tried the paltry subterfuge on a previous occasion.

The barons, when they saw the addition, merely shook their heads, murmured something about "a do," and returned to their homes; but Edward thought he should find no difficulty

in coming over the citizens.

He accordingly called a meeting in St. Paul's Churchyard, when the confirmation was read over, amid cheers, and cries of "Hear" at the end of every clause, until the last, when the shouts of "Shame!" "No, no!" "It's a dead swindle!" and "Don't you wish you may get it?" became truly terrible.

Edward retained his usual self-possession during the meeting, but expressed, in side speeches to his attendants, his fears that the citizens were not such fools as he had taken them for.

Making a virtue of necessity—though, by the way, virtues made out of that material very seldom appear to fit, but sit very awkwardly on the wearer—he withdrew the offensive clause at a Parliament that was held soon after Easter.

Edward and Philip, finding it convenient to make up their differences, threw overboard their respective allies, the French king giving up the Scots, and the English sovereign completely sacrificing the poor old Guy of Flanders. This earl has got the name of the Unfortunate, but he better deserves the title of the soft Guy, the silly Guy, or the Guy that, if there happened to be a difficulty within his reach, was sure to blunder into it. He had twice been fool enough to accept an invitation from Philip, and had twice been detained as a prisoner. We therefore have little sympathy with him when we hear of his being deserted by Edward; for "the man who" will continually run his head into a noose, must expect to find the stringency of the string at some time or another.

Peace was made between the French and English kings by means of two marriages; but it seems rash to calculate upon matrimony as a source of quietude. Edward, who was a widower, married Philip's sister, Margaret, and the Prince of Wales was affianced to little Isabella, aged only six years, the daughter of the French sovereign. A treaty was concluded between the two countries on the 20th of May, 1303, by which Edward took Guienne, and gave up Flanders. The unhappy Guy was sent thither to negotiate a peace with his own subjects, but, like

everything else he undertook, the poor old man made a sad mess of it. Returning to Philip with the news of his failure, he was committed to prison, which really, considering all things, seems to have been the best place for him.

He was, at all events, out of harm's way, and prevented from doing mischief to himself and others by his provoking stupidity. He remained in custody till he died, but it was said of him by a contemporary that he was never known to "look alive" during the whole of his existence.

Edward, having settled his dispute with France, had time to turn his attention to Scotland, which had always been his "great difficulty," as Ireland became the "great difficulty" to England at a later period. The English king advanced against the Scotch in a sort of hop-scotch style, first making for the North, then returning to the South, or going to the East, in a zig-zag direction. The Scots soon surrendered, and were allowed to go scot-free, with a very few exceptions. Stirling Castle proved itself possessed of sterling qualities.

It held out against the besiegers with determined obstinacy, and Edward himself came to assist by throwing stones, which caused the remark to be made that the king had been brought to a very pretty pitch through the audacity of the Scotch rebels. When the provisions were exhausted, the garrison made an unprovisional surrender, and the governor gave out that he gave in, with all his companions.

Wallace, having been betrayed into Edward's power, was cruelly murdered; but within six months of his death, Liberty, like a new-born infant, was in arms once more in Scotland. Robert Bruce, the grandson of old Bruce, was the new champion of his native land, and intrusted his scheme to Comyn. The latter proved treacherous, and Bruce, seeing what was Comyn, or rather, what Comyn was, killed him right off out of the way, in a convent at Dumfries. Young Bruce having mustered a party of about a dozen friends, took an excursion with them to Scone, where, in

the course of a kind of picnic party, he was crowned on the 27th of March, 1306, with some solemnity. Edward was at Winchester when he heard the news, and, though very far from well, he determined on being carried to Scotland. Like John, who had been dragged about the country in a horse-box till within a few hours of his death, Edward was packed on a litter and conveyed with care to Carlisle, whence he wished to be forwarded to Scotland. Making a desperate effort, he mounted his horse, and went six miles in four days, a pace which could only have been performed by an equestrian prodigy; for the slowest animal, unless he were a determined jibber, could scarcely have accomplished a task so difficult.

* This anything but "rapid act of horsemanship" was the last act of Edward's reign, for having got to Burgh upon the Sands, he found the sand of his existence had run out, on the 7th of July, 1307. He had lived sixty-eight years, and had reigned during half that time; so that for him the stream of life had been a sort of half and half—an equal mixture—crowned by a frothy, foamy diadem. His remains were, some short time afterwards, sent to Westminster, via Waltham, and were buried on the 8th of October, with those of his father Henry.

* It is possible that the horse hired by the king on this occasion may have been accustomed to draw a fly, the owner of which may have been in the habit of charging by the hour.

The character of Edward has been generally praised, but we are compelled to tender a bill of exceptions to the report of previous historians. He certainly added to his dominions, but if this is a merit, it may be claimed for any man who, by fraud or violence, increases his own property at the expense of his neighbours.

The improvements effected in his reign were rather in spite of him than owing to his sense of justice or his liberality. He had the talent of talking people out of their money, but this quality he has only shared with many equally accomplished, but less exalted, swindlers. His attempt to smuggle a clause into Magna Charta, before

the face of the citizens, was an act calculated to ruin him in the City, where putting one's hand to paper is a proceeding that must not be trifled with. His treatment of Wallace proves him to have been a cruel and vindictive enemy; his abandonment of the poor Earl of Flanders shows that he was an insincere and treacherous friend: he was constant to his hatreds, and fickle in his likings: his animosity had the strength of fire, but in him the milk of human kindness was greatly diluted with water. He made some good laws, such as the statute of mortmain, which was first passed in his reign, but so far from there being any truth in the proverb, necessitas non habet legem, it is certain that necessity produced nearly every good law that Edward gave to his people.

In person, he was a head taller than the ordinary size, with black hair that curled naturally, and eyes that matched the hair in colour. * His legs were too long in proportion to his body, which gained him the nickname of Longshanks, though it would have been more respectful to have called him Daddy Long-legs, in allusion to his being the father of his people.

He observed the outward decencies of life, but in this he evinced the strength of his hypocrisy rather than the extent of his morality. It may be worthy of remark, that the title of baron, which had hitherto been common to all gentlemen who held lands of the crown, was in this reign restricted to those whom the king called to Parliament. ** During the monarchy of Edward, Roger Bacon lived and died; but as we have already expressed our antipathy to putting butter upon Bacon, we refrain from any eulogy upon that illustrious character.

* Rapin, * The last of the Non-Parliamentary barons is the well-known Baron Nathan of Kennington. He still claims a seat among the Piers of Gravesend and Rosherrille.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.
EDWARD THE SECOND, SURNAMED OF CAERNARVON.

DWARD the Second was, in common phraseology, a very nice young man when he came to the throne, being twenty-three years of age, and tolerably good-looking, though he turned out eventually, according to one of the chroniclers of the times, "a very ugly customer." His first step on coming to the throne was to send for a scamp named Piers Gaveston, a Gascon youth who was full of gasconade, and had been sent out of England by the late king as an improper character. Young Edward, who had been much attached to this early specimen of the gent., recalled Piers Gaveston, and made him a nobleman by creating him Duke of Cornwall, but never succeeded in making him a gentleman. This step was in direct violation of a solemn promise to Edward the First, who had warned his son against Gaveston, as a bad young man and by no means a desirable acquaintance for an English sovereign. Directly Piers arrived, he and his young master began to play

all sorts of tricks and, by way of change, dismissed the Chancellor, the Treasurer, the Barons of the Exchequer, and all the Judges. The whole of the judicial staff of the kingdom being thrown out of employ, a panic was created in all the courts, and some of their lordships, being unable to meet the demands upon them, were compelled to go to prison. Many were stripped of all their property by the king, at the instigation of Gaveston, and the Chancellor not only lost the seals, but nis watch, and a number of other articles of value. Edward and his friend were determined to pay off those who had been instrumental to the latter's disgrace, ana among others, Langton, the Bishop of Lichfield, was put into solitary confinement, no one being allowed to speak to him, so that the unfortunate Lichfield found him-self literally sent to Coventry.

Gaveston, who was a dashing young spark, nearly sent England in a blaze by his return, for he was very far from popular.

He could dance and sing, was passionately fond of bagatelle, and as to wine, when he took it into his head he could always drink his bottle.

Edward went over to Boulogne, in January, 1308, to get married to Isabella, the daughter of the king of France, and left Gaveston regent of the kingdom.

His majesty soon got tired of a French watering-place, and returned to England for his coronation, which took place on the 24th of February, at Westminster. All the honours were showered upon Gaveston, and instead of giving the perquisites to the proper officers, the king handed them over, one by one, to the favourite. "Put that in your pocket, Piers, my boy," exclaimed Edward, as he transferred to his disreputable friend each article that some officer of state was entitled to. The English nobility, as they saw everything passing into the hands of the Gascon, could only murmur to each other, "What a shame!"

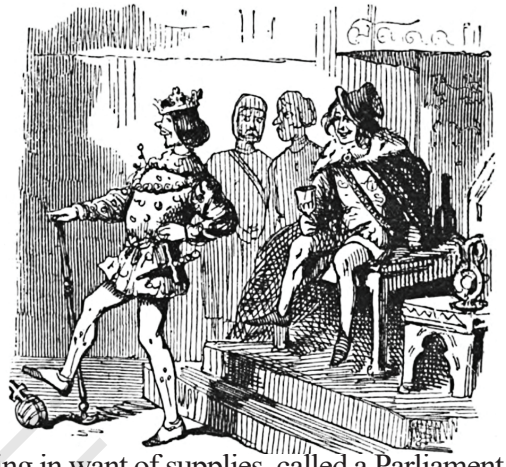
"That's mine, by rights!" and "Well, I never! Did you ever?" But the Bishop of Winchester gave his majesty a dose, by mixing up a pretty strong oath and making him swallow every word of it. He undertook of course to confirm the Charter, which really becomes quite a bore to the historian, who cannot help feeling something of the satiety induced by toujours perdrix, and he draws the humiliating conclusion that his countrymen, having got hold of a good thing, never knew when they had had enough of it. Gaveston's conduct became so overbearing, that a regular British cry of "Turn him out!" resounded from one end of the kingdom to the other.

Englishmen seldom do things by halves, and having once raised a shout, they did not desist from it, but to the howl of "Turn him out," they added a demand for the sovereign to "Throw him over!" With this requisition Edward reluctantly complied, and Gaveston was expelled from England; but only to be made Governor of Ireland, until the king could get the permission of the barons to allow the favourite to come back again.

This, with their usual imbecility, they speedily agreed to, and Piers soon returned to the court, which he filled with buffoons and parasites. Any mountebank who could make a fool of himself was sure of an engagement at the palace.

The king's horse-collars were worn out with being grinned through, and the family circle of royalty was never without a clown to the ring, under the management of Piers Gaveston. The favourite himself became so arrogant that he would dress himself up in the royal jewels, wearing the crown instead of his own hat, and turning the sceptre into a walking-stick.

Il joignoit à cela une vanité ridicule, en effectant deporter sur sa personne les joyaux du Roi et delà couronne me me.—Rapin



Edward, being in want of supplies, called a Parliament in 1309, but the Parliament would not come, which caused him to call again; and the more he kept on calling the more they kept on not coming, until the month of March, 1310, when they came in arms, for they were determined no longer to submit to Gaveston's insolence.

He had offended their order by giving them all sorts of nicknames, which are less remarkable for their wit than their coarseness. He called the Earl of Lancaster an old hog, or, perhaps, a dreadful bore; to Warwick he gave the name of the Black Dog, in reply, perhaps, to an insinuation that he, Gaveston, was a puppy; and the Earl of Pembroke was alliteratively alluded to as "Joe the Jew," by the abusive but not very facetious favourite.

In August, 1311, Edward met the barons at Westminster.

Their lordships would seem to have all got out of bed on the wrong side on the morning of the assembly, for their surliness and ill-temper were utterly unparalleled.

They prepared forty-one articles, to which they insisted on having the consent of his majesty.

Of course, in the catalogue of claims our old friend Magna Charta was not forgotten.

This glorious instrument of our early liberties, was once more touched up, and a new clause introduced, which

imparted freshness to the document.
It provided "that the king should hold a Parliament once a year, or twice if need be," as if the barons had been impressed with the idea that "the more the merrier" was a sound maxim of politics.
The banishment of Gaveston was, however, the grand desideratum, and this was at length consented to by Edward, who on the 1st of November, 1311, took leave of the favourite.
His majesty retired to York, but soon began to ask himself—"What's this dull town to me?" in the absence of Piers, who, in less than two months, was again sharing the dissipations of his sovereign.
The royal party had gone for a change to Newcastle, when the cry of "somebody coming" disturbed the revels of the king and his courtiers. This unwelcome "somebody" was no less a personage than Edward's cousin, the Earl of Lancaster, who had arrived with a few barons for the purpose of, as they said, "giving it" to Gaveston. The king and the favourite escaped from Newcastle in a ship—probably a collier—but the sovereign was heartless enough to leave his wife behind him with the utmost indifference. It was sauve qui peut with the whole court, and the queen was lost in the general scamper.
The favourite, after running as hard as he could, threw himself, quite out of breath, into Scarborough Castle, which was strong in everything but eatables, for the supply of provisions was perfectly contemptible.
Piers Gaveston, who had never been accustomed to short commons, went to the window of the castle, and calling out to the Earl of Pembroke, who was waiting outside, proposed to capitulate,"Can we come to any terms?" cried Piers; but the earl would at first hear of nothing short of an unconditional surrender.
After some parleying, Pembroke exclaimed, "I'll tell you what I'll do for you. If you choose to place yourself in my hands, I'll promise to take you to your own castle at Wallingford."
"You're not joking?" cried Gaveston, as he looked through

the rusty bars of the fortress. “Honour bright,” was the substance of the earl’s reply, and Piers put himself at once into the hands of Pembroke. It was arranged that the king should meet the favourite at Wallingford; but one morning, on the road, he was ordered out of bed at an unusually early hour, when whom should he see, upon going downstairs, but the grim Earl of Warwick! Gaveston began to feel that it was all up with him. Putting him on a mule, they conveyed him to Warwick Castle, where a hurried council was got up—the Duke of Lancaster in the chair—for his trial.

He was, of course, condemned, when he threw himself for pardon at the feet of Lancaster, who kicked him aside, and all the rest gave him a lesson on the Lancastrian system by a similar indignity. A proposition was made in the body of the hall to spare his life, but somebody exclaimed that “Gaveston had been the cause of all their difficulties, and that, when a difficulty came in the way, the best plan was to break the neck of it.

” The stem justice of this remark was instantly acknowledged, and amid savage cries of “Bring him along!” they dragged the favourite off to Blacklow Hill, where, by removing his head from his shoulders, they made what may be called short work of him. Upon hearing the news, the king cried for grief and then

cried for vengeance. After reconciling himself to his loss, he reconciled himself to the barons, and the double reconciliation was greatly assisted by the barons having given up to him (a.d. 1313) the plate and jewels of the deceased favourite.
Edward, on looking round him, found that the "Scots whom Bruce had often led" were making considerable progress. The English king at once ordered an army to meet him at Berwick, and by a given day one hundred thousand men had assembled. Bruce had got scarcely forty thousand, so that the chances were more than two to one against him. He took them into a field near Bannockburn, and spread them out so as to make the very most of them. On Sunday, the 23rd of June, 1314, Edward and his army came in sight.
After some desultory fighting, the monotony of the day's proceedings was relieved by a somewhat curious incident. Bruce, who seems to have been rather eccentric in his turn-out, was riding on a little bit of a pony, quite under the duty imposed upon it, in front of his troops. He wore upon his head a skullcap, over that a steel helmet, and over that a crown of gold, while in his hand he carried an enormous battle-axe.
He and his Shetland were frisking about, when an English knight, one Henry de Bohun, or Boone, came galloping down, armed at all points, upon a magnificent British dray-horse. Bruce, instead of getting out of the way, entered into the unequal combat amid cries of "Go it, Bob!" from his own followers. He instantly fell upon and felled to the earth the English knight, amid the acclamations of the surrounding soldiers. The battle was very vigorously fought on both sides, and victory seemed doubtful, when suddenly there appeared on a hill, at the back of the Scotch, an immense crowd that looked like a new army. The group, in reality, consisted of nothing but a mob of suttlers and camp-followers, who had been kept back by Bruce to look like a tremendous reserve, and who might be called the heavy scarecrows of the Scotch army.

The plan succeeded admirably, for although the English did not receive a single blow, they were completely panic-struck, which had the same effect as the severest beating.
They fled in all directions, with the Scotch in hot pursuit; and it is said that Edward himself had to run for it as far as Dunbar, a distance of sixty miles, with the enemy after him.
According to the Scotch historians, the results of this victory were truly marvellous, for the number of prisoners alleged to have been taken is actually greater than the number of the combatants. The chariots and waggons, it is also said, would have extended for many leagues, if drawn up into a line; but this is merely one of those lengths which are too frequently gone to by the old chroniclers. Though it is impossible that the Scotch could have killed fifty thousand, and made double the number of prisoners out of one hundred thousand men (unless they manufactured fifty thousand additional foes as readily as Vauxhall can put forth its fifty thousand additional lamps), it is, nevertheless, certain that on this occasion England experienced the severest defeat it had encountered since the establishment of the monarchy. Such was the effect created by the battle of Bannockburn, that for some time after three Scotchmen were considered equivalent to a hundred Englishmen. There is every reason to believe that the Scotch were exceedingly vigorous in coming to the scratch at that early period.
Encouraged by the success of his brother Robert in Scotland, Edward Bruce thought that the crown of Ireland was a little matter that would just suit him, and he accordingly passed over to the Green Isle, in the hope of finding it green enough to accept him as its sovereign. He was, for a time, successful in his project, and was actually crowned at Carrickfergus on the 2nd of May, 1316. But after knocking about the country, and being knocked about in the country, for a year and a half, he got a decisive blow from the English on the 5th of October, 1318, at Fagher, near Dundalk. Though he had landed in Ireland with only

five hundred Scotchmen, he was left dead in the field with two thousand of his fellow-countrymen.

He had been joined, no doubt, by several after his first arrival, but if he had not, it would have been all the same to the chroniclers, who would not have scrupled to kill the same individuals four times over to make a total sufficiently imposing for historical purposes.

The historians would have been invaluable to a minister of finance, for they could always create an enormous surplus out of a vast deficiency.

The Scotch continued their successes until a truce was agreed upon for two years, and thus Edward had leisure to look after domestic affairs, which had been fearfully neglected. Since the death of Gaveston, the royal favourite, there had been just room for one in the not very capacious heart of the English sovereign. A certain Hugh Spencer had been introduced to the court by the barons, as a sort of page, to act as a spy upon the king, and it is a curious fact, that the spencer, or jacket, has been the characteristic of the page from that time to the present.

Hugh Spencer had a shrewd father, who advised his son to care no more for the barons, who had got him his place, but to work it to his own advantage, and make the most of the perquisites.

Young Hugh, taking the parental hint, determined on booking himself for the inside place in Edward's heart, which has been already alluded to as vacant.

Not only did he succeed in his design, but contrived to take up his old father, and carry him along as a sort of outside passenger.

Riches and promotion were showered on the Spencers, who adopted a coat of arms, and made themselves Despencers, by prefixing the syllable de, which can impart a particle of aristocracy to the most plebeian of patronymics.

The Despencers had obtained such influence over the king that he allowed them to do as they pleased; and as they took all the good things to themselves, the nobles—who were getting nothing

began to evince considerable anxiety for the public interest.
The Earl of Lancaster, a prince of the blood, felt his order insulted by the promotion of the two plebeians, and he one day energetically exclaimed, "that Spencers could not have anything in tail, though the king might try to fasten it on to them. Lancaster marched upon London, and pitched his tent in Holborn, among the hills that abound in that locality. He gave out jocularly, that "he had come to baste a couple of Spencers, by trimming their jackets," but he was saved the trouble by a Parliament, which met armed at Westminster, and passed on the two Despencers a sentence of banishment.
They were accordingly exiled in August, but came back in October, presenting an instance of a quick return without the smallest profit. Lancaster retired to the north, and was met at Boroughbridge by Sir Simon Ward and Sir Andrew Barclay, a couple of stout English knights, who stopped up the passage. Lancaster endeavoured to swim across the river, but the tide had turned against him, and he was taken prisoner. The unfortunate earl having been tried, was condemned to an ignominious death, and the mob were allowed to pelt him with mud on his way to execution,—
a privilege of which a generous public took the fullest advantage.
Edward had now to encounter opposition from a new quarter, or rather from two quarters, for his better half, Isabella, the sister of Charles le Bel, was now plotting against him. She left him under the pretence of going to settle some business for him in France, and then refused to return to him. Some ambassadors volunteered to bring her back, but the ambassadors never came back themselves, for they had been in league with the queen, and only wanted an opportunity of joining her.
Their conduct brings to mind the anecdote of a scene that once passed in the shop of a shoemaker. A stranger had tried on a pair of shoes, and another stranger had been trying on a pair of boots at the same moment. Suddenly the shoes decamped without payment, when the boots standing upon their professed swiftness,

offered to go in pursuit of the unprincipled shoes; and as neither shoes nor boots were ever seen again by the tradesman, it is probable that the "false fleeting perjured Clarences" are still being pursued by the immortal Wellingtons. Thus the Earl of Kent, the king's own brother, the Earl of Richmond, his cousin, and others, who had undertaken to go after the queen to bring her back, remained with her, until she returned as an enemy to her own husband. Edward was now compelled to run away in his turn from his angry wife; and rather than encounter the fury of a domestic storm, he got into a ship with young Despencer, to brave the elements.

Old Despencer was taken and hanged, without the ceremony of a trial,The Prince of Wales was appointed guardian of the kingdom on account of the absence of his father, who had been regularly advertised, but had declined to come forward lest he should hear of something to his disadvantage. Having been tossed about upon the waves for several days, he came ashore on the coast of Wales, and hid himself for some weeks, with young Despencer and another, in the mountains of Glamorganshire. His two companions were one day startled by a cry of "We've got you!" and were instantly seized, upon which, Edward exclaiming, "It's no use: you've got the two birds in the hand, and may as well have the one in the bush," rolled out of a hedge and gave himself up to his pursuers.

Young Despencer was taken to Hereford, and hanged at once, upon a gallows fifty feet high; but why severity was carried to such a height is a question we have no means of answering. It has been brutally said by an annotator that the culprit had been accustomed to the high ropes during his life, and it was therefore determined that they should accompany him even to the gibbet. The king was sent in custody to Kenilworth Castle, and Parliament met on the 7th of January, 1327, to consider what should be done with him. His deposition was a preliminary step; for it was the custom in those days to punish first and try the culprit afterwards. It was determined to place his son upon the throne

in his stead, and on the 20th of January, 1327, a deputation went to Kenilworth to receive his abdication, if he liked to give it, or take it by force if he should prove refractory. The king, seeing Sir William Trussel, the Speaker, at the head of his enemies, observed calmly, but sadly, "Alas! the Trussel I depended upon for support has joined in dropping me." He renounced the regal dignity, and on the 24th of January, Edward the Third was proclaimed king, and crowned on the 29th at Westminster.

This proceeding is on many accounts remarkable, and of the utmost value, as settling a point of constitutional practice, which had never before been recognised. It established a precedent for dissolving under extraordinary circumstances the compact between the king and the people. It negatived the alleged "right divine of kings to govern wrong," and proved that it was not always necessary to take violent means for ridding a country of a tyrant. It showed that the crown might be removed from the head without taking off the head and all, which had been hitherto the recognised mode of effecting a transfer of the royal diadem.

The unhappy Edward was kept for a time at Kenilworth; but ultimately by command of Lord Mortimer, who had entire

influence over the queen, the deposed king was removed to Berkeley Castle. Here it is believed he was most cruelly murdered, though it was given out by his keepers that his death was perfectly natural. He died on the 21st of September, 1327, in the forty-third year of his age, and the nineteenth of his reign. No inquiry took place, and although no coroner's inquest was held, "Wilful Murder against some person or persons unknown" is the almost unanimous verdict of posterity. The character of this king has been said to have been chiefly disfigured by feebleness of judgment, which prevented him from knowing what was good for him. He managed, nevertheless, to find out what was bad for his subjects, and he was never at a loss to secure the means of enjoyment for himself and his favourites, at the expense of his people.

In the reign of Edward the Second the order of Knights Templars was abolished, a circumstance which arose from the king of France being short of cash, and casting a longing eye upon the rich possessions of the order. In France they were put to the torture to force them into confessions of crimes they had never committed; but in England the same effect was produced by imprisonment; for instruments of cruelty were never recognised by English laws, or encouraged as articles of British manufacture. The Archbishop of York finding nothing of the kind in the country, wished to send abroad for a pattern, but it must be spoken to the credit of our ancestors, that though, in a pecuniary sense, they were famous for applying the screw, the thumb-screw was never popular.

* Vide Rapin, vol. iii., p. 95, and also a Note in Lingard

Rapin mentions among the great events of this reign, a tremendous earthquake, but it can have been no great shakes, for we do not find any details of its destructive effects in the old chronicles. It occurred on the 14th of November, 1320, to the unspeakable terror of all classes; but it did not swallow up half as much as is swallowed up annually on the 9th of November at the Mansion House in London.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.
EDWARD THE THIRD.

THE young king did not upon his father's death come to the throne, for he had taken his seat upon the imperial cushion eight months before the decease of his by no means lamented parent. Mortimer had caused a medal to be struck in celebration of the accession of Edward the Third, in which he was represented receiving the crown, with the motto, "Non rapit sed recipit," which we need scarcely translate into "He did not snatch it, but got it honestly." * A council of regency was appointed, to which Mortimer, with affected modesty, declined to belong, but he and the queen did as they pleased with the affairs of government. Her majesty got an enormous grant to pay her debts, but knowing the extravagant and dishonest character of the woman, we have reason to believe that she pocketed the money and never satisfied the demands of her creditors. She obtained, also, an allowance of twenty thousand a year, which was better than two-thirds of the revenues of the crown; so that a paltry six-and-eightpence in the pound was the utmost that young Edward could have to live upon.

The Earl of Lancaster was appointed guardian, and began doing the best for himself, after the approved fashion of the period. The attainders against the great Earl of Lancaster were of course reversed, and the confiscation of the estates of the Despencer, afforded some very pretty pickings to the party that was now dominant.

* It is a curious fact that Mortimer should bare been in the medal line, a business in which his namesake of the house of Store and Mortimer has since become so illustrious.

Though the king was too young to govern, his admirers persuaded him that he was quite old enough to fight, and he was

recommended to try his hand against Bruce, who was getting old; so that, in the language of the ring, the British pet was not very ill matched against the Scottish veteran
. The Caledonian Slasher, as Bruce might justly have been called, had broken the truce agreed upon with Edward the Second, and had sent an army into Yorkshire, which plundered as it went every town and village.
The stealing of sheep and oxen was carried on to such an extent by the Scotch troops that their camp resembled Smithfield market, or a prize cattle show. Sixty thousand men gathered round the standard of Edward, but the foreign and native troops quarrelled with such fury among themselves that they had little energy left to be expended on the enemy. Fortunately for the English king the vastness of his army made up for its want of discipline. Bruce, directly he saw the foe, waited only to take their number, and retired with the utmost rapidity, amusing himself with the Scotch favourite Burns, by setting fire to all the villages. The English, instead of following the enemy, waited a night upon the road for some provisions expected by the Parcels Delivery, which had been delayed by some accident. The Scotch were thus allowed to get ahead, and Edward sent a crier through his camp, offering a hundred a year with the honour of knighthood, to anyone who would apprise him of the place where he should find the opposing army.
Thomas of Rokeby, so called from his habit of rokeing about, was successful in the search, and came galloping into the English camp with a loud cry of Eureka, and a demand of "money down," with knighthood on the spot, before he divulged his secret. "You're very particular, sir," said Edward, flinging him a purse, containing his annuity for the first year, and dubbing him a knight by a blow on the head from the flat of the sword, administered with unusual vehemence.

Thomas of Rokeby having pocketed the money, and secured the dignity, pointed to a hill three leagues off, observing, "There they are!" an observation which caused a general exclamation of "Well, it's very funny! To think that they should have been so near us all the while and we not aware of it!"

The English having made for the spot, sent a challenge, inviting the Scotch to meet them in a fair open field, but the proposition was declined, with thanks and compliments.

The English, on the return of the herald, went to sleep, for the presence of the herald always had a soporiferous influence. Edward was exceedingly severe upon the occasion, and commented upon the herald's news, which the king declared was always most unsatisfactory. For three days and three nights, the English lay by the side of the river, having been thrown by the herald into a state of dreamy inactivity. At length, on the fourth day, they woke from their transient trance, when they found that the Scotch had once more changed their position. Edward moved higher up, keeping opposite to the foe, and the two armies lay facing each other for eighteen days and nights, like two great cowardly boys, both afraid of "coming on," but

each assuming a menacing attitude.,There is every reason to believe that the herald had mesmesed the whole of the English troops, for they allowed the Scotch to go away in the dead of the night for want of proper vigilance.

The probability, however, is that both armies were illustrating the proverb, that "none are so blind an those who won't see," and that their aversion to "come on," was mutual.

A truce was concluded, and Edward, according to Froissart, returned "right pensive" to London; but his "right pensiveness" may have been accounted for by the fact that he was on the eve of marriage. His mother had, during her visit to the Continent, arranged to wed him to Philippa of Hainault, a lady who, to judge from her portrait on her tomb in Westminster Abbey, was one of those monsters commonly called a "fine woman." This fineness in the female form consists of excessive coarseness, which is better adapted to the laundry than the domestic circle.

She, however, made Edward an excellent better half—or perhaps a better two-thirds is a more suitable term to indicate the relative proportions of the royal couple. She was brought to London by her uncle John, surnamed of Hainault, and, it being Christmas-time, she was taken out to enjoy all the amusements of the festive season. Jousts and tournaments, balls and dinnerparties, were given in her honour during her stay in town; and on the 24th of January, 1328, the nuptial ceremony was performed with great solemnity.

Edward being now married, was desirous of avoiding that roving life which the constant pursuit of Bruce had rendered necessary. The English king thought it better to settle down into the domestic habits of a family man, which was impossible as long as he was compelled to be out all night, watching the foe and bivouacking with his soldiers. Bruce, who had grown old and gouty, was also eager for peace, which was concluded on the condition of his little boy, David, aged five, being married to Edward's little sister Joanna, aged seven.

The English king gave up all claim to the sovereignty of

Scotland, causing even the insignia of Scotch royalty to be carefully packed and forwarded to Bruce, who, on opening the parcel, was delighted to find himself in possession of the crown and sceptre of his predecessors.

He did not, however, get quite the best of the bargain, for he undertook to pay thirty thousand marks into Edward's court as compensation, in the form of liquidated damages, for the mischief that the Scotch invaders had committed. Bruce had obtained a sort of letter of licence, allowing him to take three years for the payment of the sum agreed upon.

A more formidable creditor, however, took him in execution, for he was called upon to pay the debt of nature within the ensuing twelvemonth. Mortimer, who had advised the peace with Scotland, which was by no means popular, got himself created Earl of March, for it is the policy of crafty politicians to obtain rewards for their most objectionable measures.

It will be remembered that the Earl of Lancaster had been appointed guardian of the young king, but no scapegrace in a comedy ever made such an undutiful ward as the youthful Edward.

He remained with his mother and Mortimer, the latter of whom was particularly distasteful to Lancaster, who endeavoured to get up a party to oppose the favourite. This association was joined by the Earls of Kent and Norfolk, two of the king's uncles, as well as by some other gentlemen, who set forth in an advertisement the reason of their having combined. The statement of grievances was drawn up with the usual tact of red-hot patriots, who always put down a few impossibilities in the list of things to be achieved, for the impracticability of their objects prevents their trade from being suddenly brought to a dead stand-still. There were eight articles in the Lancastrian manifesto, which chiefly aimed at Mortimer and the queen, who soon persuaded Edward that the real object of the advertisers was to deprive him of his crown. "I thought you were the parties pointed at," said the young king to his mother and her

paramour; but the latter merely observing, “My dear fellow, they mean you, as sure as my name’s Mortimer,” soon taught Edward to believe that he was the object of the hostility of the rebellious nobles. Preparations were being made to chastise them, when Kent and Norfolk abandoned Lancaster, who justly complained of having been trifled with.

The humiliated and humbugged Lancaster was glad to accept a pardon, and pay down a considerable sum towards the expenses which had been incurred in preparing for his own discomfiture. Mortimer did not forgive the parties who had contemplated his overthrow, but formed a determination to get hold of them when a good opportunity offered.

He received a number of anonymous letters, informing him that his brother, the late king, was alive in Corfe Castle. “Pooh, pooh,” said Kent to himself, as he perused the first three or four epistles; “I’m not quite such a fool as to be taken in upon that point.

I’m not going to believe my brother is alive, when I happen to have been present as chief mourner at his funeral.

” Every post, however, brought such a pile of correspondence upon the subject that he first began to believe that half of what he was told might possibly be true; and when credulity admits one half of a story, the other half soon forces an entrance. Kent’s anonymous correspondents, not content with declaring the late king to be alive, gave the circumstantiality to their statement which is generally resorted to in the absence of truth, and indicated Corfe Castle as the place where the second Edward was “hanging out” at that very moment.

The credulous Kent, being in doubt as to the fate of his brother, wrote at once to ask him whether he was really dead or alive, saying to himself, as he put the epistle into the post, “There! I’ve written to him now, and so we shall soon settle that question one way or the other.”

The party being deceased, the letter came back to the dead-letter office, and fell into the clutches of Mortimer. Everything

was done to humour the delusion of poor Kent, who, having been told that his brother was confined in Corfe Castle, sent a confidential messenger to make inquiries in the neighbourhood. It is even said that a sort of optical illusion, a jack-o'-lantern, or phantasmagoria, or dissolving-view, had been resorted to, for the purpose of showing a representation of Edward the Second sitting in Corfe Castle at his luncheon, * with a waiter or two in attendance, as a mark of respect to the unhappy sovereign.

Rapin, tom,The messenger returned with the news to Edmund, who determined to use his own eyes, by going to Corfe Castle and judging for himself. When he arrived and saw the governor, that wily official pretended to be much surprised at the secret having been divulged.

He did not deny that Edward was at the castle, but merely remarked that the captive could not be seen. "At all events, you can give him this letter," said Edmund, putting into the governor's hands a douceur and a communication directed to the deceased monarch, offering to aid him in his escape from captivity.

The governor took the billet to the queen, and Edmund was arrested on a charge of endeavouring to raise a deceased individual to the throne. Poor Kent was put upon his trial, and his own letter having been produced, with witnesses to prove his handwriting, the case against him was complete. The whole proceeding was disposed of with the rapidity of an undefended cause; speedy execution was asked for and granted, but the headsman was nowhere to be found, though persons were sent to look for him all over Winchester. A delay of four hours was occasioned, and the generous British public began to expect that they should lose the spectacle they had assembled to witness, when a convicted felon came forward in the handsomest manner, at a moment's notice, to prevent disappointment, by undertaking the part of headsman.

Thus, at the early age of twenty-eight, perished Prince Edmund, on the charge of having sought to put a sceptre in the hands of

a spectre, and raise a phantom to the throne. He left two sons and two daughters, one of whom was a beauty whom we will not attempt to paint, for our inkstand is not a rouge-pot, and if it were we should be sorry to apply its contents to so fair a countenance. She married eventually the eldest son of Edward the Third, who became so celebrated as the Black Prince, and who was born at about the period (1330) to which our history has arrived. The king finding himself a father, determined to be no longer a child in the hands of a tyrannical mother, and he longed for some assistance from his subjects, to enable him to throw off the maternal yoke as soon as possible.

Edward at last opened his mind—a very small recess—to Lord Montacute. A Parliament was being held at Nottingham, where Mortimer and the queen had lodgings in the castle, while the bishops and barons took apartments in the town and suburbs. How to get hold of Mortimer was the great difficulty, for Queen Isabella had the keys of the castle brought up to her every evening, and placed at her bedside. * Her majesty had gone round as usual to see everything safe, and all the candles out; but of course, like other sagacious people, who examine minutely the fastenings of the doors, she never gave a thought to the cellars.

Through one of these the governor (who, like all the great officers of that period—the founders of our illustrious families was a sneaking knave, ready to do anything for money) admitted Montacute and his followers.

They crawled along a dark passage, at the end of which they were met by Edward, who conducted them up a staircase into a room adjoining his mother's chamber.

The queen had gone to bed, but Mortimer, the Bishop of Lincoln, and one or two others, were sitting—probably over their grog—in an apartment close at hand.

Their language had all the earnestness that might be expected from the time of night, and the manner in which they were occupied.

They were, in fact, all talking at once, when Montacute and

party rushed in, knocking down two knights * who sat near the door, and seized Mortimer, in spite of the entreaties of Isabella, who ran screaming out of bed on
hearing the noise and confusion. * Homing, Knyght, Holinshed.
The favourite was dragged off to the nearest station-house, and Edward issued a proclamation the next morning, announcing
his intention to try his own hand at government forthwith.
A Parliament met at Westminster on the 26th of November, 1330, by which Mortimer was tried and condemned, though a short time before he enjoyed the command of a large majority. The favourite had, however, fallen into disgrace, and the old proverb, "Give a dog a bad name and hang him," was literally realised,After the death of Mortimer, Queen Isabella was shut up in a place called the Castle of Risings, on a pension of three thousand a year, according to one historian, four thousand according to others, while Rapin unceremoniously cuts her down to the paltry pittance of five hundred per annum.
It is probable that the last named sum is the nearest the mark, for all agree in saying that "she lived a miserable monument of blighted ambition," and it is obvious that a miserable monument would not require an outlay of three or four thousand a year to keep it in condition during an existence of rather better than a quarter of a century.
Though Edward had agreed to a truce with the Scotch, he did not scruple to take a favourable opportunity of breaking it. Though his sister was married to little Master David Bruce, the nominal king, Edward did not hesitate to turn that young gentleman off the throne, to make way for his creature, Edward Baliol. Young David was sent to France, while Baliol kept up a kind of semblance of royalty, but his rebellious subjects took every opportunity, when the backs of the English were turned, to fall upon and baste the bewildered Baliol. Edward was soon compelled to leave his vassal to get on as he could, for the entire throne of France appeared to be open

to the ambition of the English sovereign.
The French crown seemed to be “open to all parties and influenced by none,” when Edward of England and Philip of Valois became candidates for the vacancy.
The former claimed as grandson of Philip the Fourth, the latter as grandson of Philip the Third, and each party endeavoured to complicate the matter as much as he could by producing a number of perplexing and unintelligible pedigrees.
Philip claimed through his grandfather, who was thought to be a sure card for the French king to depend upon; but Edward tried to play something stronger, in the shape of what he affectionately called that “fine old trump his mother.
” She, however, was objected to as a female, and the question was, to save further trouble, referred to the arbitration of the peers and judges of France, and was decided in favour of Edward’s opponent.
The English king declared the French judges were no judges at all, and refused to be bound by the award; for it was the royal practice of those days to abide by an agreement only so long as might be convenient.
Edward having appointed the Earl of Brabant his agent, coolly demanded, through that individual, the French crown.
The English seconded their sovereign in his preposterous request, and he took advantage of their acquiescence to squeeze out of them all he could in the shape of subsidies, tallages, and forced loans. He raised money by the most disgraceful means, and even pawned the crown with the Archbishop of Treves, who after trying the purity of the gold with the usual test, unpicking the velvet cap, to examine the setting of the jewels, and submitting it to as many indignities as a hat in the hands of an old clothesman, consented to lend about one tenth of its value on the degraded diadem.
The conversation between the parties, though it has not been authentically handed down by the chroniclers,

may be very easily imagined. It is probable that Edward, forgetting the dignity of the king in the meanness of the borrower, may have familiarly asked the Archbishop to "make it a trifle more" than the sum at first offered. It may be presumed that the greedy ecclesiastic would have objected that the crown had been very ill-used; that it got badly treated in the time of John, and that even Edward himself had had a good deal of hard wear out of it, which had rubbed off very much of its pristine brilliancy.

But it was not to the comparatively honest expedient of pawning his own property that the king had recourse, for replenishing his exhausted treasury. When he had got all he could by pledging his own honours, and deposited the sceptre and single ball at the sign of the three, he began the old royal trick of plundering his people. From the inhabitants of Cornwall Edward took nearly all their tin, and every part of England allowed itself to be fleeced for the purpose of affording one man the means of attempting to gratify his ambition at the expense of an entire people. The money thus obtained was devoted to the payment of foreign mercenaries, so that he robbed his own subjects for the double purpose of corruption and usurpation. To enable him to

oppress the French, he bribed the Germans with money obtained by plundering the English.

He sailed on the 15th of July, 1338, with an army rather more select than numerous, and landed at Antwerp, where he had secured himself a friendly reception by sending emissaries before him to marshal the peasantry into enthusiastic groups, and "get up" the spectacle without regard to outlay.

The burghers were called to numerous rehearsals before the appointed day, and on the arrival of the English king they were tolerably perfect in the parts assigned to them.

Edward engaged a few foreign potentates—principally small Germans—to aid him in his audacious enterprise.

Louis of Bavaria, Emperor of Germany, came to terms; the Dukes of Brabant and Gueldres did not refuse his money; the Archbishop of Cologne consented to add a few pounds to his salary; while the Marquis of Juliers, and the Counts of Hainault and Namur, jumped at a moderate stipend for their services.

Every adventurer who was to be had cheap, found instant employment, and James von Artaveldt, a brewer of Ghent, the Barclay or Perkins of his time, made an arrangement for farming out a few of his stoutest draymen.

Philip availed himself of a couple of kings in reduced circumstances those of Navarre and Bohemia besides securing a few dukes who were in want of a little cash for current expenses.

A rope of sand could scarcely have been more fragile than Edward's band of hired followers. Like a Christmas-pudding made of plums and other rich ingredients without any flour to bind it, his supporters, though comprising a compound of dukes, marquises and counts, with even an archbishop and an emperor, was not likely to hold together as long as it was deficient in the flower of an army, a zealous soldiery.

The Flemings and Brabanters having spent his money sneaked off with a promise to meet him next year, and 1338 was consequently lost in doing nothing, By the middle of September,

1339, there was another muster of the mercenaries, with whom Edward started for Cambray, but happening to look back when he got to the frontiers of France, he saw the Counts of Namur and Hainault disgracefully backing out of the expedition.
Having in vain hallooed to them, and finding that the more he kept on calling the more they persisted in not coming, he pushed on as far as St. Quentin, when the rest of his allies struck, and declared they would not go another step without an advance of wages. Edward, who had spent all his own money and a good deal of somebody else's—for he was fearfully in debt—could only say "Very well, gentlemen, I'm in your hands," and turn into the town of Ghent, where he took lodgings for a limited period. While here he amused himself by taking the title of King of France, and he had the French lily quartered on his arms; which, as Philip said when he heard of it, was "like the fellow's impudence."
Edward had previously endeavoured to draw his adversary into a battle, but the latter shirked the contest under various pretexts. Some say that he was ready for a terrific combat and was "just going to begin" when he received a letter predicting ill luck, from the king of Naples, who was looked upon as a sort of Wizard of the South, or royal conjuror.
No fight took place, and Edward ran across to England in the middle of February, 1340, to make a call upon the pockets of his peopleThe Parliament foolishly throwing good money after bad, granted immense supplies, for which the king thanked them in the fulness of his heart, for the fulness of his pocket. Returning to Flanders, he met the enemy at the harbour of Sluys, on the 24th of June, 1340, when a battle ensued, in which Edward astonished his own followers by his most successful début in a naval character.
He gave orders to the sailors as freely as if he had been playing in nautical dramas and dancing naval hornpipes from the days of his infancy.

So complete was the victory of the English that nobody dared inform the French king of the extent of his calamity, until the court jester was fool enough to put the news in the shape of a conundrum to PhilipmThe latter was enjoying his glass of wine and his nut, when the buffoon in waiting declared that he had a nut to crack which would prove some what too hard for his royal master.

"Were it a pistaccio or a Brazil," cried the king, "I would come at the kernel of it." When, however, the riddle was put * and the sovereign had guessed it, the unhappy fool found it no joke, for he was sorely punished for his ill-judged pleasantry.

Rapin, . We have used every possible exertion to obtain a copy of this celebrated riddle, but without having succeeded.

The nearest Approach we have made to it is an old conundrum in the fly leaf of the Statutes at Large, which is nearly as follows:—"What was the greatest fillip to the success of Edward!" There is no answer added, but there can be little doubt that some allusion to Philip's loss giving a fillip to Edward is intended,Edward's success brought round him troops of friends, and finding himself strong, he wrote a letter addressed to Philip of Valois, offering to tackle him singly in a regular stand-up fight man to man, to pit a hundred soldiers against a hundred on the other side, or to pitch into each other's armies by a pitched buttle, embracing the entire strength of their respective companies.

The French king, who was not disposed to give battle, which he thought might end in his taking a thrashing, evaded the matter, by saying that he had seen a letter addressed to Philip of Valois, but as it could not be meant for him, he should certainly decline sending an answer.

This shabby subterfuge succeeded in baffling the English king, who consented to a truce and returned to his own country.

Edward arrived in London late one night in November, without a penny in his pocket.

He went at once to the Tower, where everybody had gone to bed, for he was not expected, and where there were signs of culpable negligence. There was no fire in his room, and nothing to eat; which put him into such an ill-humour, that he had three of the judges called up to be thrown into prison, he turned out the Chancellor, the Treasurer, and the Master of the Bolls, besides committing to gaol a number of subordinate officers. Those who had been employed in collecting the revenue, were the especial objects of his rage, for he expected to have received a large sum, and was irritated beyond measure at the contemptible amount of available assets. Stratford, the Archbishop of Canterbury, on hearing of the king's arrival at the Tower—in what has perhaps been since called a "towering passion," from the historical fact—observed to his informant, "Oh! indeed. Well, I shall be off out of his way," and fled to his official residence, The king sent him a summons, which he refused to attend, and threatened with excommunication any rascally officer who might attempt to execute the process. Want of money soon softened Edward's heart, and Parliament refused a grant

until there had been another confirmation of Magna Charta, which served the double purpose of a blister to draw the people's cash and a plaster to heal their wounded liberties.

In the year 1341, little David of Scotland came over with a little money and a few troops lent to him by the king of France, and with this assistance the Bruce made a tolerably decent appearance in his own country. Edward having projects of wholesale robbery abroad, gave up Scotland as a piece of retail plunder, that was wholly beneath his attention, and concluded a truce with David, who compromised with Baliol, by appointing him to keep watch and ward against the Scottish borderers.

A situation in the police seems to have been a sorry compensation for one who had aspired to a throne, but it is probable that the pride of Baliol was in some degree consulted by nominating him A 1 in his Dew capacity.

One would have thought that Edward had had enough of Continental warfare, and that "look at home" would have been his motto for the remainder of his reign, but he was soon induced to join in a squabble that had arisen about the crown of Brittany. John the Third, the late duke, had lately died, leaving one brother and a niece named Jane, who having the misfortune to

be lame, had got brutally nicknamed La Boiteuse, in accordance with the coarse and unfeeling practice of that chivalrous period. The contest for the duchy was between this young lady, who had married Charles de Blois, the French king's nephew, and her uncle John de Montfort, who professed to have a superior claim, and who savagely pooh-poohed her pretensions by allusions to her infirmity. "Hers is indeed a lame case," he would fiendishly exclaim. "

Why, by my troth, she hasn't got a leg to stand upon.

This argument was the old rule of grammar, that the masculine is worthier than the feminine; but this arrangement La Boiteuse determined to kick against. Charles de Blois, her husband, did homage to his uncle Phil for the duchy—Brittany being a fief of France—while John de Montfort propitiated Edward by doing homage to him as the lawful sovereign. Philip and Edward thus became bottleholders to the two competitors; but through the tardiness of the English king in supporting his man, De Montfort was taken prisoner.

This gentleman had the advantage or the disadvantage as the case may be of being married to a high-spirited woman.

It is fortunate for a man wedded to a vixen wife, when the affectionate virago, instead of making a victim of him, vents her fury upon his enemies.

Mrs. de Montfort had, according to Froissart, "the courage of a man and the heart of a lion." In addition to these fascinating qualities she had the tongue of a true woman. She went about with her child in her arms, holding forth in a double sense, for she held forth her infant, and was continually holding forth on the subject of her husband's wrongs to the populace.

A pretty woman, who takes to public speaking, is always sure of an approving audience; but when she began to give recitations in character, by putting a steel casque on her head and a sword in her hand, the effect was truly marvellous. She took a provincial tour, with the never-failing motto of "Female in

Distress" as her watchword; and a host of young men engaged themselves as assistants under her banner. She threw herself into a place called Hennebon, where she was besieged by the French, but she ran up and down the ramparts with all the agility of a young tigress. She stood firmly among a shower of arrows, and though danger darted across her every now and then—so much that her casque got a rapid succession of taps—she merely observed that she had never been afraid of a living beau and would certainly not shrink from a bow without vitality. Aid was expected from the English, but as it did not arrive the Bishop of Leon began to croak most horribly, and proposed to capitulate. The bishop had been to the larder, and finding provisions running exceedingly low, declared there was nothing left for them but to eat humble pie as speedily as possible. He had succeeded in raising an émeute d'estomac in the garrison, when the countess, who had begged the troops to hold out a little longer, Saw the English fleet from the window of her dressing-room. "Here they are!" cried she as she ran downstairs; and the whole of the inhabitants were soon watching the arrival of the boats with intense interest. Sir Walter Manny commanded the squadron, and after a good night's rest and a capital dinner the next day, which concluded amid a slight shower from the French battering-ram, he declared that he would not run the risk of having any more batter pudding from the same quarter.

"That ram," he exclaimed, "must not again disturb me over my mutton;" and he had no sooner dined than he went forth, followed by a few select soldiers, and broke the instrument to pieces.

The French, having raised the siege of Hennebon, left Lady de Montfort leisure to go over to England for the purpose of getting a present of troops that Edward had promised her.

She was returning to France with her reinforcements when she fell in with a French fleet, and they fell out as a natural consequence. De Montfort's wife rushed on deck in a coat of mail over her petticoat of female, and fought with tremendous vigour.

One of the foe tauntingly told her the needle was a fitter instrument for her than the sword, when she rushed upon him, exclaiming, "I want no needle, fellow, to trim your jacket." She cut the thread of several existences, and there is no doubt that had the gun cotton been discovered in those days, she would have used it for the purpose of whipping, basting, hemming in, felling to the earth, and, in a word, sewing up her unfortunate antagonists. Darkness having set in upon this fearful set out, the battle was cut short, for night dropped her curtain in the middle of the act, and brought it to an abrupt conclusion.

Edward now came over to superintend the war in person, and he began by looking the danger in the face, which he accomplished by lying several weeks opposite the foe—an example that was followed by the other side; and thus the two armies continued to take sights at each other during the entire winter. At length a truce for three years and eight months was agreed upon; but its conditions were not attended to. John de Montfort was to have been released from prison, according to the agreement; but Philip, by pitiful quibbles, found excuses for keeping him in closer custody. At length, the old gentleman escaped in the disguise of a pedlar; but he was cruelly hounded by his enemies, and with a pack at

his back was for some time hunted about, until, by dint of the most dogged perseverance, he arrived safely in England.

Coming to the door of his own house, he set up a faint cry of "Stay-lace, boot-lace, shoe-tie," in a disguised voice, which brought the mistress of the establishment to the window; but she merely shook her head, to indicate that nothing was wanted. Upon this the supposed pedlar threw off his hat and wig, and being instantly recognised, was dragged into the hall, to the surprise of the various servants, until the words, "It's your master come back," furnished a clue to the mystery.

His wife's joy at meeting her "old man," as she affectionately called him, was extreme; but the excitement was too much for the veteran, who went bang off, like an exhausted squib, while Lady de Montfort fell in an explosion of grief by the side of her husband.

The fortune of war had been oscillating with the regularity of a pendulum between England and France, when the Earl of Derby threw himself into the scale with tremendous weight, and turned it completely in England's favour. In the emphatic language of the day, he was "down upon the French like a thunderbolt." Edward went off to Flanders to treat with the free cities for their allegiance, and, in fact, ascertain the price of those friends of Liberty. Louis the Count, though deprived of nearly all his revenue, kept up his independence, and refused to pay allegiance or anything else to Edward,The English king tried to effect a transfer of the loyalty of the Flemings from Louis, the Count of Flanders, to his own son, Edward the Black Prince; and with this view he obtained the support of his old friend James von Artaveldt, the brewer, whose stout gave him a great ascendency over the actions of the people. He addressed to them a good deal of frothy declamation, and endeavoured to brew the storm of revolution; but it ended in very small beer, amid which Artaveldt himself was eventually washed away through the impetuosity of the stream he had himself set in motion. A popular insurrection broke out, and the brewer behaved with great gallantry. He wore a casque on his head which pointed

him out as a butt for the malice of his enemies, He was cruelly murdered, and Edward vowed vengeance when he heard that the lifeless bier was all that remained of his friend the brewer.

In 1346 the English king landed on the coast of Normandy, with an army containing not only the flower of his own troops, but a regular bouquet, in which the English rose was blended with the Welsh leek and a sprig of the Irish shillalah. He marched towards Paris, and his van had even entered the suburbs of that city; but, without attacking the capital, he contented himself with a little arson in the small towns in the neighbourhood. His antagonist was not inactive, and succeeded in getting the English into a corner, from which escape seemed almost impossible.

It was necessary to cross the Somme; but Philip and the river were rather too deep for Edward and his soldiers. Having waited till the tide went down, they took a desperate plunge, and the foe having also resolved on making a splash, the two armies met in the middle of the stream, where they fought with an ardour that was not damped by the surrounding element.

Edward and his troops found as much difficulty in reaching the Bank as if they had made the attempt in an omnibus during one of the

blockades of Fleet Street. At length they succeeded, and after travelling for some distance, they put up in the neighbourhood of the village of Cressy. On the 26th of August, 1346, the English sovereign took an early supper, and went to bed, having given instructions for his boots to be brought to his door by dawn the following morning.

The whole army slept well, considering it was the first night in a strange place; and, having been called by that valuable valet, the lark, everyone was up and down by the hour of daybreak.

Breakfast was scarcely concluded when Edward ordered the army to arms, and sent for the herald in the hopes of getting the news; but from this quarter he learned nothing.

At length he took up his post, and chose three leaders, a column being assigned to each of them.

The first was under the command of his young Bon, Edward the Black Prince, a youth of fifteen, who held very high rank in the army, having been included in every brevet, notwithstanding the brevity of his service.

Two experienced captains the Earls of Warwick and Oxford- were employed under him to do the work, so that the boy prince had nothing to do but to reap the glory of his position.

Heaping laurels under such circumstances was a common practice in those days; and the vulgar expression "with a hook" may have originated in allusion to the reaping of the harvest created by another's merit.

It must, however, be stated in justice to the Black Prince, that he proved himself quite equal to the position in which fortune had placed him. If we examine his character, we shall find in it many good points, and it may fairly be said that the Black Prince was by no means so black as history has painted him. The three divisions took up their position on the hill, and the archers stood in front, forming a semicircle or bow, from which they could more effectually discharge their arrows.

The Battle of Cressy is perhaps one of the most interesting in English history; and though part of it was fought in a tremendous shower of rain, which has caused some frivolous writer of the period to give it the name of Water Cressy, we are not induced by this idle and impotent play upon words to lose our respect for one of the greatest exploits of our countrymen.

Philip slept at Abbeville on the 25th of August, and rising in a terrible ill-humour, set out early in the morning to give battle. He started off in such a fit of sulkiness that he did not even give the word to "march," and breaking suddenly into a run, his impatience carried him far in advance of his army.

By the time he came in sight of the foe, he was ever so much ahead of his own troops, and was obliged to sit down quietly until they had come nearly up to him.

By some mismanagement, the troops at the back started off quicker than those in front, who began to hesitate still more as they approached the enemy; and thus, one part of the army beginning to back while those behind pressed forward, a state of confusion which can only be described as a dreadful squeege was the immediate consequence.

"Now then, stupid," resounded from rank to rank, and comrade addressed comrade with the words "Where are you shoving to?

The king got hurried head foremost almost into the English camp, in spite of the vehement cries of "Keep back!" which, however, were no sooner acted upon than the rear ranks were seized with a panic, and the soldiery began tumbling over each other like those battalions in tin which in youthful days have fallen prostrate beneath the power of the peashooter.

Philip, who had never intended to take the honour of a foremost rank, was pushed willy-nilly into the front place, like a gentleman who happened to be walking down the Haymarket on an opera night, and found himself suddenly engulfed in a stream which washed him off his legs, and left him high and dry in a stall to which he had been driven by the impetuosity of the torrent. Finding himself in the heat of an engagement in which he had not intended to be so closely engaged, his French majesty called to the Genoese crossbow-men to advance, but they pleaded sudden indisposition and fatigue, when Philip's brother deeply offended them by exclaiming—"See what we get by employing such scoundrels, who fail us in our need!"

The Genoese were rather nettled—that is to say, somewhat stung—by this remark, and made a rush which was worth no more than a rush, for they were really worn out with their morning's walk, and felt fitter to be in bed than in battle.

Though their arms and legs were tired, they still had the full use of their lungs, and began to shout out with tremendous vehemence, in the hope of frightening the English.

This horrible hooting had no effect, and a Scotch veteran, by happily exclaiming "Hoot awa!" turned the laugh in avour of the English.

Upon this, the Genoese gave another fearful yell, when one of Edward's soldiers inquired whether the crossbow-men wanted to frighten away the birds, and gave them the nickname of the heavy scarecrows.

They advanced a step, when the English archers sent forth a volley of arrows, which fell like a snowstorm upon the

Genoese, who, converting their shields into umbrellas, tried to take shelter under them.

Philip was so disgusted with this pusillanimous conduct, that he cried out in a fury, "Kill me these scoundrels, for they stop our way without doing any good!" And the poor Genoese caught it severely from both sides.

During the battle, Edward sat on the tip top of a windmill, situated on the summit of a lofty hill, where, completely out of harm's way, he could watch the progress of the action. While in this elevated position, he was asked by a messenger to send a reinforcement to the Prince of Wales, who was performing prodigies of valour.

"I'm glad to hear it," said the affectionate father; "but," he added, "return to those who sent you, and tell them they shall have no help from me. Let the boy win his spurs," continued the old humbug, who was too selfish to put himself out of the way to assist his son, and would rather have let him perish than make any sacrifice to aid him in his arduous struggles.

When these unaided exertions came to a triumphant issue, the father endeavoured to gain a reflected glory from the brilliance of his son's achievements. It is, however, due to the reputation

of the latter to assert that the glory was all his own; for his selfish father had taken care of himself, while the son fought the battle alone, and won it without any assistance that it was in the power of his parent to have afforded him. Poor Philip fought desperately as long as he could, till John of Hainault, who had several times advised him to "go home and go to bed, for it was of no use," went up to the horse of the French king, seized the bridle, and quietly led him off in the direction of the nearest green-yard. Seeing it was a bad job, Philip requested to be taken to the castle of La Broye, but the gates were shut, and the chatelain, looking out of window, inquired who was knocking him up at such an unreasonable hour. "Me," cried Philip, in the grammar of the period; but "Who's me?" was the only response of the governor. "Why, don't you know me? I'm Philip, the fortune of France."

"Pretty fortune, indeed!" muttered the chatelain, as he came downstairs, keys and candle in hand, to admit his unfortunate sovereign. The king's suite had dwindled down to five barons, * who turned in anywhere for the night, on sofas and chairs, while Philip took the spare bed usually kept for visitors.

Thus ended the memorable Battle of Cressy, from our account of which we must not omit the incident of the king of Bohemia, who, old and blind, was perverse enough to tie the bridle of his horse to those of two knights, and with them he plunged into the midst of the battle. Considering that he could not have seen his way, there is something very rash, though perhaps very valiant, in this behaviour. Nor should we in our admiration of the bravery of the king of Bohemia, forget to sympathise with the two knights, upon whom he must have been a precious drag, by tying his horse's bridle to theirs, and making them no doubt the victims of a most unfortunate attachment.

The king of Bohemia of course fell, for the union he had formed was anything but strength, and the Prince of Wales picking up his crest—a plume of ostrich feathers—adopted it for his own,

with the celebrated motto of Ich Dien. ** The literal meaning of this motto is simply "I serve," but it has been very naturally suggested that "I am served out" would have been a more appropriate translation of the phrase, as long as it appertained to the unfortunate king of Bohemia. Rapin, the French historian, who is naturally anxious to make the best case he can for his countrymen, attributes their defeat at Cressy to the use of gunpowder by the English, who introduced, for the first time in war, a small magazine of this startling novelty. Such a magasin des nouveautés of course would have taken the French by surprise, and would easily have accounted for any little deficiency of valour they might have exhibited. When the battle was over, Edward sneaked out of his windmill, where he professed to have been "overlooking the reserve," and joined his successful son, whom he warmly congratulated on his position. * Froissart.* Doubts have been lately cast on this old story. See theCabinet Portrait Gallery of British Worthies,

The night after the battle was of course a gala night with the English, who lighted fires, torches, and candles, including probably "fifty thousand additional lamps," in celebration of the victory.

So excellent, however, were the regulations on the occasion, that we have not heard of a single instance of disturbance or accident. The day after the battle was disgraced by a series of attacks on some French unfortunates, who not knowing of the defeat of their king, were coming to his assistance. It happened that, as if to make the English quite at home, a regular English fog set in, and some French militia, not being able to see their way very clearly, mistook a reconnoitring party of the enemy for their own countrymen, The French hastened to join their supposed comrades, but soon found out their mistake from the cruel treatment they experienced. Other stragglers who had missed their way in the mist, were also savagely attacked, and when Edward heard the facts, he sent out Lords Cobham and

Stafford, with three heralds, to recognise the arms, and two secretaries to write down the names of those that had fallen. The party returned in the evening, with a list of eleven princes, eighty bannerets, twelve hundred knights, and thirty thousand commoners. We can only say that the herald of those days could not have been such a very slow affair as the Herald of these, and the secretaries must have written not merely a running but a galloping hand to have in so few hours deciphered the arms, and made a list of the names of such an enormous number of individuals.

Having remained over Sunday at Cressy, Edward set out on Monday morning for Calais, with the intention of besieging it. While he was occupied abroad, his enemy, little David Bruce, at the instigation of Philip, attempted to disturb England. After a brief campaign, in which the Scotch king was joined by the Earls of Monteith and Fife, David Bruce was placed in custody. Monteith lost his head for showing his teeth, and Fife would have had a stop put to him, but for his relationship to the Royal Family, his mother having been niece to the first Edward.

Calais was kept in a state of blockade, for the English king had resolved upon hemming in and starving out the inhabitants. John de Vienne, who was the governor, finding provisions getting low, turned what he called the "useless mouths" out of the place, and among these "useless mouths" were a number of women, who must have been rare specimens of their sex to have kept their mouths in a state of uselessness.

The brutal policy of John de Vienne was to continue weeding the population as long as he could by turning out the old and helpless, the women and the children. Seventeen hundred victims were thrust from the town and driven towards the English lines by the Governor of Calais, who was reckless of the lives of the citizens so long as the sacrifice enabled him to hold out and gain a character for bravery.

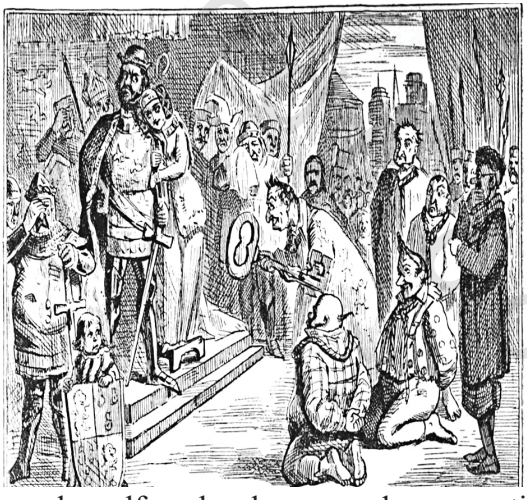
It is easy for a military commander to win a reputation for extreme

heroism if he is utterly regardless of the expense, and chooses to pay for it in the blood of those under his control; but it is the duty of the historian to audit the accounts and justly strike the balance. In looking into the case of John de Vienne we
adjudge him guilty of fraudulent bankruptcy in his reputation, for he sought to establish himself in the good books of public
opinion by trading on the lives of the citizens of Calais, which were his only capital. If he were now before us, we should assume the part of a commissioner, and should say to him, "Go, sir.
We cannot grant you your protection from the heavy responsibilities you incurred when you wasted human life which you were bound to preserve as far as you were able.
You have violated a sacred trust; and we must therefore adjourn your further examination sine die, for it is quite impossible to grant you your certificate."
As long as John de Vienne could find anything to eat, and could have his table tolerably well provided, he held out; but when starvation threatened himself as well as the citizens, he asked permission to capitulate. Edward, annoyed by the obstinacy of the resistance, refused to come to any terms short of an unconditional surrender, but he at length consented to spare the town on condition of six burgesses coming forth naked in their shirts, with halters round their necks, and without anything on their legs, as a proof of their humiliation being utterly inexpressible.
When John de Vienne was apprised of this resolution, he called a meeting in the market-place, and stated the hard
condition which Edward had imposed, but the governor had not the heroism to propose to make one of the party required for the sacrifice. He was exceedingly eloquent in urging others to come forward, and was loud in his protestations that such an "eligible opportunity," such an "opening for spirited young men" would never occur again; but the citizens turned a deaf ear to all his arguments. No one seemed inclined to set a noble example,

but all the inhabitants gave way to a piteous fit of howling, until Eustace de St. Pierre, a rich burgess, drying his eyes and mopping up his emotion with the cuff of his coat, offered himself as the first victim. Five others followed his example, and the six heroes, taking off their trousers, prepared to throw themselves into the breach, and slipping off their slippers, went barefooted into the presence of the conqueror.

He eyed the miserable objects with malicious pleasure, and according to Froissart, insulted the unhappy burgesses by a series of grimaces, like those with which the clown accompanies the ironical inquiry of "How are you?" which he always addresses to his intended victim in a pantomime.

The wretched state of the burgesses shivering in their shirts but not shaking in their shoes, for they were barefooted had a softening influence on all but Edward, who with a clownish yell of "I've got you!" desired that the headsman might be sent for immediately.



The queen threw herself on her knees, and representing that she had never asked a favour of Edward in her life, entreated him to spare the trembling citizens,"Look at them!" exclaimed her majesty, as she dragged one forward and turned him round and round to show what a miserable object he was. "Look

at them! and observe how piteously they implore mercy; for though their tongues do not speak, their teeth are constantly chattering." Edward looked at his wife, and then at the citizens. "I wish," said he to the former, "that you had been somewhere else; but take the miserable beggars and do what you can with them." Philippa instantly took the coil of rope from the necks that were so nearly on the point of "shuffling off the mortal coil," and told them to go and get rigged out in a suit of clothes each, which made the oldest of them observe that "the rigger of the queen was much less formidable than the rigour of the king, with which they had been so lately threatened."

The imbecility to which fear had brought their minds is fearfully shadowed forth in this miserable piece of attempted pleasantry, and it was perhaps fortunate that Edward did not overhear a pun, the atrocity of which he might have been justified in never pardoning.

The six citizens having received their dressing, in a more agreeable shape then they had expected, and having sat down to an excellent dinner, provided at the queen's expense, were dismissed with a present of six nobles each, that they might not be without money in their pockets. As they partook of the meal prepared for them, the wag of the party, whose vapid jokes had already endangered the lives of himself and his companions, ventured to observe that he should look upon the ordinary as one of the most extraordinary events in his life; but as none of the king's servants were at hand to overhear the miserable jeu de mot, it was not followed by the fatal consequences we might otherwise have been compelled to chronicle.

On the 3rd of August, 1347, Edward and his queen made their triumphant entry into Calais, which was transformed into an English colony; and as the residents of that early period were debtors to the generosity of the sovereign, the place has become a favourite resort for debtors even to the present moment.

Edward having returned to England began to try the

squeezability of his Parliament, and got up various pretexts for demanding money.

He pretended to ask advice about carrying on the war with France, but the Parliament suspecting his intention declined giving any answer to his message.

He next had recourse to intimidation, by spreading a report that the French contemplated invasion; and though it was little better than a cry of "Old Bogey," it had the desired effect.

There is no doubt that Edward was guilty of obtaining money under false pretences, for he and Philip had agreed between themselves for a truce, and yet each taxed his subjects under the pretence that war might be imminent.

About the year 1344, according to some, but in the year 1350, on the authority of Stowe, the celebrated Order of the Garter was founded.

If we may put faith in an old fable, it originated in the Countess of Salisbury having danced her stockings down at a court ball; when the king seeing her garter dangling at her heels, took hold of it and gave it to her, exclaiming, Honi soit qui mal y pense, which was a cut at some females who pretended to be shocked at the incident. Their smothered exclamations of "Well, I'm sure!""Upon my word!" and "Well, really I never!

Did you ever?" were thus playfully rebuked by Edward the Third, who afterwards made the words we have quoted the motto of the Order. We need scarcely tell our readers in this enlightened age that Honi soit qui mal y pense is equivalent to saying that those who see harm in an innocent act, derive from themselves all the evil that presents itself.

Edward's old enemy, Philip of France, was now dead, but his son and successor, John, continued the truce, or renewed the accommodation bill, which was entered into for the purpose of stopping proceedings on either side.

In state affairs, as in pecuniary matters, these temporary arrangements are seldom beneficial, for they cause a frightful accumulation of interest, which must some time or other be paid off or wiped out at a fearful sacrifice.

The Continental successes of the English king were marred by the trouble that Scotland gave to him, and he was often heard to say that "though he could make the French poodle—by whom he meant the king of France—do as he pleased, he hated the constant barking at his heels of the Scotch terrier." He therefore determined on attempting to buy the country out and out. So, going over to Roxburgh, he asked Baliol point-blank what he would take for the whole concern, exactly as it stood, including the throne, the title-deeds of the kingdom, and the crown and sceptre. "Let me see. What has it cost me?" said Baliol, evidently contemplating a bargain; but Edward interrupting him with "A precious deal more than it is worth," somewhat modified the figure that was on the tip of the tongue of the Scotch sovereign. "Will fifty thousand marks be too much?" observed the vendor, with an anxious look.

But Edward's rapid "Oh, good morning!" instantly told the wary Scot the shrewdness of his customer. "Stop, stop," said Baliol; "I like to do business when I can.

What will you give? for I'm really tired of the thing, and would be glad to accept any reasonable offer."

Edward resumed his seat, made a few calculations on a scrap of vellum with a pocket-stile, and then, jumping up, exclaimed, "I'll tell you what I'll do with you.
I'll give you five thousand marks down, and an annuity of £2000 per annum."
The bargain was struck. With the title-deeds laden, Edward joyfully flew to his own country, and he had scarcely turned his back when "Adieu!" said Baliol; "you are not the first humbug who, coming to cheat, have got cheated yourself."
The fact was, that the Scotchman, with characteristic cunning, got the best of the bargain, for the crown had been fearfully ill-used, the sceptre had got all the glitter worn off by the hard rubs it had endured, and the throne would cost more to keep in substantial repair than twice its value.
Edward having bought up the country, began to exercise the right of ownership by setting fire to little bits of it.
He marched through the Lothians, where he met with loathing on every side, and set Haddington as well as Edinburgh in flames, which caused Scotland to be prophetically called the Land of Burns by a sage of the period.
While the king was thus engaged at home, his son Edward, the Black Prince, so called from the colour of his armour, which he had blackleaded to save the trouble of keeping it always bright, was occupied in France, where he fought and won the famous battle of Poictiers, The truce had, with the customary faithlessness of royalty in those days, been broken.
Young Edward, having a small force, made a most earnest appeal to his army, and said something very insinuating about "his sinewy English bowmen,"Before the commencement of the battle, a diplomatist of the name of Talleyrand, who seems to have been worthy of his celebrated modern successor, rode from camp to camp trying to arrange the affair, and making himself very influential with both parties. John was, however, so confident in the superiority of his numbers that he declined a

compromise, except on the most humiliating terms, to the Black Prince, who looked blacker than ever when the degrading proposition was made to him.

On the 19th of September, 1356, the battle began with a duet played by two trumpets—one on each side—but this did not last long, for neither party desired to listen to overtures. The French commenced the attack, but they came to the point a little too soon, for they actually ran upon the arrows of the English bowmen. The Constable of France tried to inspire courage into the troops on his side by roaring out "Mountjoy! St. Denis!" but a stalwart Briton, telling him to hold his noise, felled him to the ground. A strong body of reserve, who carried their reserve to downright timidity, fled without striking a blow. They had scarcely drawn their swords, and received the word of command to "cut away," when they did literally cut away, and having cut refused to come again. John of France flourished his battle-axe with ferocious courage; but at last he received two tremendous blows in the face which brought him to the ground. His son Philip, a lad of sixteen, fought by his side, encouraging him with cries of "Give it 'em, father!" which aroused the almost exhausted John, and caused him to recover his legs. Every kind of verbal insults was offered to him by the enemy, and particularly by the Gascons, who indulged in a great deal of their usual gasconade. "Stand and surrender!" cried a voice; to which John replied, "If I could stand, I would not surrender, but I suppose I must fall into your hands." With this he tottered into a circle of English knights, by whom he was nearly torn to pieces in the scramble that arose for the royal captive. Some among the crowd of his victors endeavoured to induce his majesty to place himself under their charge, and one or two began to talk to him in bad French, when Sir Denis, a real Frenchman, who had been dismissed from the service of his own country and entered that of England, addressed the monarch politely in his native tongue. John was in the act of of-

fering up his glove to this gentleman as a token of surrender, when the royal gauntlet was torn to pieces by the surrounding knights, who all wanted to have a finger in it, Everyone was eager to claim the French monarch, who seemed on the point of being torn to pieces like a hare by a pack of ill-bred hounds. "I took him," exclaimed fifty voices at once, when the Earl of Warwick, rushing into the front, thundered forth in a stentorian voice, "Can't' you leave the man alone?" and drawing John's arm within his own, led off the conquered king to the camp of Edward.

Warwick took little Philip by the hand, and presented father and son to the Black Prince, who received them with much courtesy.

He invited them both to supper, waited on the French king at table, and soothed his grief with probably such kind expressions as "Poor old chap!""Never mind, old fellow!" and other words of respectful sympathy.

The Black Prince made them his companions to London, which they entered in the character of his prisoners, on the 24th of April, 1357. The pageant was very magnificent, the citizens hanging out their plate to do honour to the occasion; and the windows were filled with spoons, just as they are when a modern Lord Mayor's show is to be seen within the city.

Edward had now a couple of kings in custody; but in November, 1357, one of them, David Bruce, was released, upon drawing a bill for one hundred thousand marks on his Scotch subjects. There can be no doubt that the latter were regularly sold by their weak-minded monarch, who had become the mere creature of the English sovereign. John remained in captivity in London, while Edward carried the war into France; but having got nearly as far as Paris, he was caught in a shower, which completely wet him down, and diluted all the spirit he had, up to that point, exhibited.

* The wind was terrific; but it was not one of those ill winds that blow nobody good, for the blow it inflicted on the courage of Edward made good for those he came to fight against. The French justly hailed the rain as a welcome visitor, for it completely softened Edward by regularly soaking him.

On the 8th of May, 1360, peace was concluded, and John was set at large on condition of the payment of three million crowns of gold, which was rather a heavy sum forgetting one crown restored to him. Some hostages were given for the fulfilment of the bargain; but poor John found he had undertaken more than he could perform, and though he did not exactly stop payment, it was because he had never commenced that operation. He was exceedingly particular in money matters, and it annoyed him not to be able to fulfil his pecuniary arrangements. Some of his bail having bolted, he could bear the degradation no longer, and he voluntarily went over to London, where he put himself in prison, as a defaulter, though others say it was a love affair in England, rather than his honesty as a debtor, which brought him up to town. The royal insolvent did not long survive, for he died in the month of April, 1364, at the Palace of the Savoy; and it was tauntingly said of him by a contemporary buffoon, that the debt of nature was the only debt he had ever paid.

Froissart, Knyght, Rynier, and Company.

The Black Prince, who had been created Duke of Aquitaine,

governed for his father in the South of France, but was induced to espouse the cause of one Pedro, surnamed the Cruel, who, for his ferocious conduct, had been driven from the throne of Castile. Bertrand du Gueselin, a famous knight in his day, and Don Enrique, the illegitimate brother of the tyrant, had expelled him from his dominions, when the Black Prince, tempted by offers of an enormous salary, undertook to restore Pedro to his position.

Edward fought and conquered, but could not get paid for his services; and, as he had undertaken the job by contract, employing an army of mercenaries at his own risk, he was harassed to death by demands for which he had made himself liable, Captains were continually calling to know when he intended to settle that little matter, until he got tired of answering that it was not quite convenient just now; and he that had never turned his back upon an enemy, ran away as hard as he could from the importunity of his creditors. Pedro, abandoned by his chief supporter, agreed to a conference with his half brother Enrique; but cruelty seems to have been a family failing, for the couple had scarcely met when they fell upon each other with the fury of wild beasts, and Pedro the Cruel was stabbed by Enrique the Crueller, who threw himself at once upon the throne. * * Froissart.—Mariana.

Charles of France now thought that the harassed mind and declining health of the Black Prince afforded an eligible opportunity of attacking him. His Royal Highness resisted as well as he could; but he was so exceedingly indisposed that he was carried about on a litter from post to post, as if he had been compelled to rest at the corner of every street through sheer exhaustion.

He marched, or rather was jostled, towards Limoges, the capital of the Limousin, which he stormed in two places at once; and at the sight of the pair of breaches he had made, the women fled in inexpressible terror and confusion. His conduct to these poor defenceless creatures was merciless in the extreme; and this one

incident in the life of the Black Prince is sufficient to give to his name all the blackness that is attached to it. Some allowance may, however, be perhaps made for the state of his health, which now took him to England to recruit—not in a military but in a physical sense—but it was too late, for he died at Canterbury, on the 8th of January, 1376, to the great regret of his father, who only kept the respect of the people through his son's popularity.

Edward the Third had been for some time leading a very disreputable life, and had been captivated by one Alice Perrers, to whom he had given the jewels of the late queen, and who had the effrontery to wear them when abroad in the public thoroughfares. Among other freaks of his dotage was a tournament which he gave in Smithfield—the origin, no doubt, of the once famous Bartholomew Fair—where Alice Perrers figured in a triumphal chariot, as the Lady of the Sun, the king himself appearing in the character of the Sun, though it was the general remark that, as the couple sat side by side, the Sun looked old enough to be the father.

It was towards the close of this reign that Wycliffe, the celebrated precursor of Huss, Luther, and Calvin, as well as the curser of popery, began preaching against the abuses of the Catholic clergy. His cause was espoused by the Duke of Lancaster, who had been in power since the death of the Black Prince, and who is said to have taken Wycliffe's part so ardently, as to have threatened to drag the Bishop of London by the hair of his head out of St, Paul's Cathedral.

Considering that the priest was all shaven and shorn, it would have been difficult for Lancaster to have carried out his threat by tugging out the bishop in the manner specified.

It is a curious fact that this alleged attack on one of the heads of the church was soon followed by a general burden on the national poll, in the shape of a poll-tax, which was imposed to provide for the renewal of the war, as the truce in existence was on the point of expiring.

Edward had now become old and miserable; for having done

nothing to gain the affection of others, he was abandoned at the close of his life, by even the members of his own family. One or two sycophants clung to him, in the hope of getting something; but his children had all separate interests of their own, for the cold and selfish conduct of their parent had driven them quite away from him, He endeavoured to give decency to the close of his existence, by a general amnesty for all minor offences; but it was now too late to gain him friends, and the wretched old man was left alone with Alice Perrers. He died in her arms at his villa at Sheen, near Richmond, on the 21st of June, 1377, and she took advantage of being by his side at his death, to rob him of a valuable ring, which she took from his finger in his last moments, when he was too weak to resist the robbery. Were the shade of Edward the Third to present itself before us for a testimonial, we should advise the spectre, for its respectability's sake, not to ask us for a character.

Much good was done in the reign we have been describing; but this is only another illustration of the well-known truth that the prosperity of a country does not always depend on the virtues of the sovereign. Perhaps the most valuable measure passed by Edward was an act limiting to three principal heads the cases of high treason, of which a hundred heads, all filled with teeth, might until then have been considered symbolical.

This wholesome statute had at least the effect of changing a Hydra into a Cerberus, The leash of crimes that this Cerberus was empowered to hunt down were, conspiring the death of the king, levying war against him, or adhering to his enemies.

A curious question arose some time afterwards under the last of these three divisions, when a loyal subject was nearly being condemned for adhering to the king's enemies, though it appeared he had adhered only in the sense of sticking to them, with a view to punish them.

The conduct of Edward the Third to David Bruce, his brother-in-law, was unjust in the extreme; and though the Black

Prince made his way by his own talents, he does not appear to have owed his advancement to any assistance that his father ever afforded him. Some useful alterations were made in the law, and the power of the Commons advanced; but the taxes were fearfully increased, as if the liberality of the people was expected as an equivalent for the liberality of the Government. The money collected was not altogether wasted in war, for some of it went in the building of Windsor Castle, of which William of Wickham was the architect.

The first turnpike ever known in England, was started also under Edward the Third, between St. Giles's and Temple Bar, where to this day the successor of the ancient pikeman rushes forth to levy a toll on carts that enter the city.

On the same principle, that out of evil good often comes, Edward the Third may be regarded as a benefactor to his subjects.