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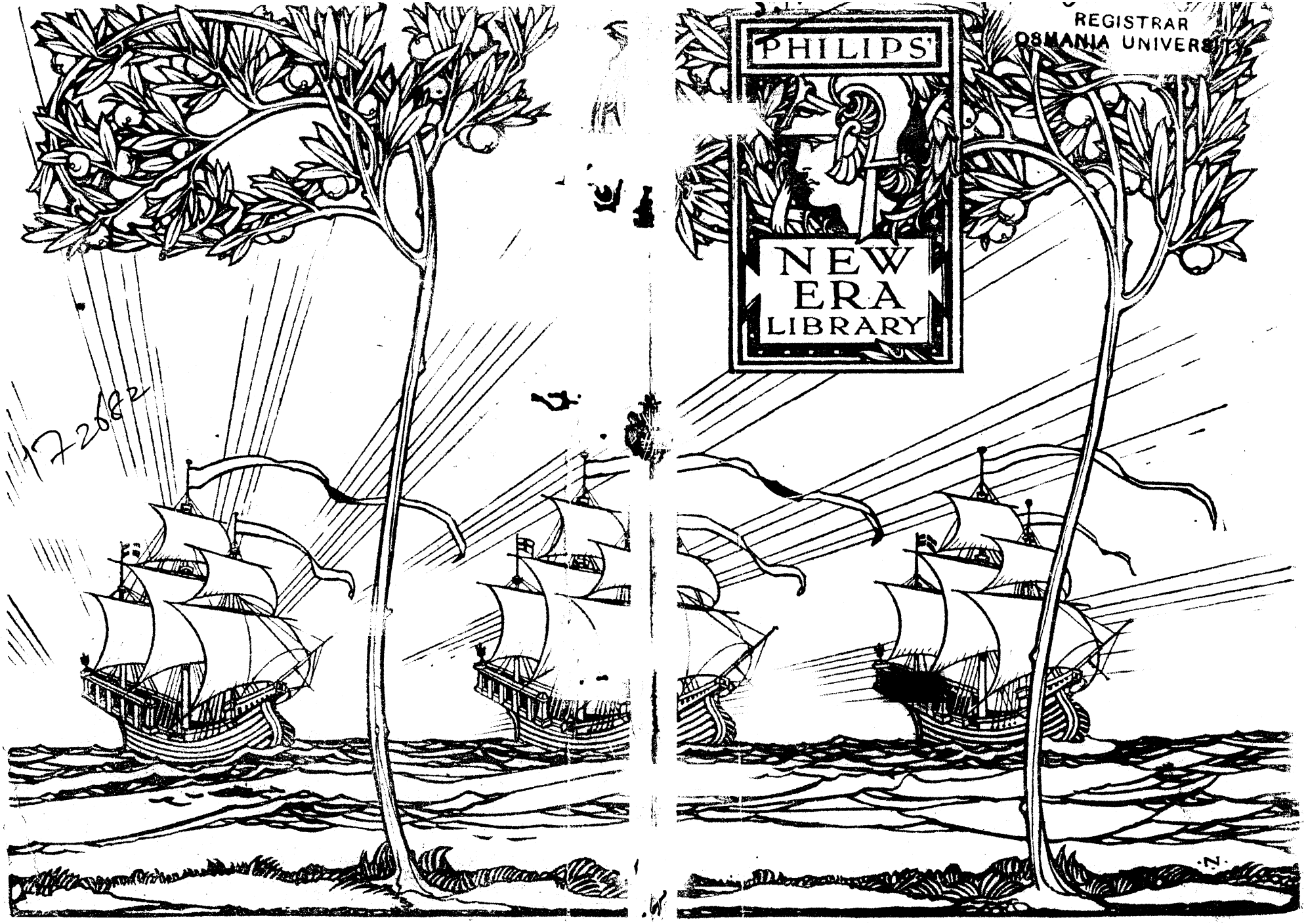

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ENGLAND IN HER DAYS OF PEACE

An Introduction to Social and Industrial History

BY

ELEANOR DOORLY, M.A. (London)

Headmistress of
The Twickenham County School

NEW ERA LIBRARY

THE New Era Library represents an attempt to meet the demand on the part of the general reader for works which are, frankly, merely introductions to a subject and not indigestible tabloid primers. They give in broad outline something of the main principles and sphere of activity of the subject covered by the title or sub-title. They do not profess to be encyclopædic in character, and they assume little if any previous knowledge on the part of the reader.

The explanations are in each case full enough to permit a person, unaided, to get a wide general view of some important topic, unburdened with excessive detail, in order that the larger classical works may afterwards be the more easily attacked by those who desire to pursue their studies further.

In these days it is necessary for the man in the street to know a little of many things. Our aim is to present 'that little' in such a way that it is easily assimilated, and yet so accurate that nothing has to be unlearned at a later stage.

ENGLAND IN HER DAYS OF PEACE

• BY •

ELEANOR DOORLY

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TO

ELIZABETH

PREFACE

HARLES KINGSLEY once surprised his students at the beginning of a lecture in History by telling them that he was not there to teach them history. He added, 'Nobody can do that. I am here to teach you to teach yourselves history.' History is too big to be taught; the most assiduous teacher working with the most diligent pupils could not hope to touch with them anything but a very few selected portions of the vast whole. But no other subject lends itself more cheerfully to the untaught learner. It is an inexhaustible mine of interest, philosophy, amusement, and surprise for the adventurous explorer. So a history lesson, or a history text-book should be, if it is to be good, frankly a temptation, an irresistible temptation, to drink deep at the sources of history. I cannot claim any such virtue for this short book; but it owes its form and its limits to the fact that it has no other aim than to arouse and to suggest. It does not profess to tell a connected story or to teach history. It merely draws a boy's or girl's attention to a variety of subjects which have seemed interesting or little known, or meet to be looked into.

I have called it 'England in her Days of Peace,' but I hope no one will read it imagining that

anywhere, at any time, there is peace. I have tried to give some, all too inadequate, account of the great wars; the war against barbarism, the war against ignorance, against class distinction, against monotony, poverty, indifference, sickness; the battle for food, for joy, for health, for science, for spiritual adventure. In each chapter there is a war, but I have left the reader to guess which, and to decide for himself whether or not there was victory, and, in the sum-total of these victories 'no less renowned,' to decide, if he can, where in glory England stands to-day.

E. D.

TWICKENHAM, *February* 1920.

'Red of the Dawn!
Is it turning a fainter red? So be it, but when shall we lay
The ghost of the Brute that is walking and haunting us yet,
and be free?
In a hundred, a thousand winters?
Ah, what will *our* children be,
The men of a hundred thousand, a million summers away?'

TENNYSON.

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I

THE EARLY INHABITANTS OF BRITAIN

'Time, and the Ocean, and some fostering Star,
In high cabal have made us what we are.'

THE Paris mail flying at 100 miles an hour and 3000 feet above the earth has just left Hounslow. A little distance away, the Plymouth boat-express thunders over its iron path at fifty miles an hour, carrying the passengers that the monster liner, only a few hours before, disembarked to scheduled time at Plymouth, after pounding through the pathless waters for six weeks. Within a stone's throw of her, electric trains, separated from one another by a mere minute, hurry workers and pleasure seekers to the great city of London, which, with its twenty-mile diameter of unbroken streets, is only the biggest of thousands in the narrow space of this small island. Everywhere, splendidly made asphalt-dressed roads ease traffic for motors and wagons and lorries, while above, the air in places is thick with wires carrying telegraph and telephone messages and electric currents for the working of the tramways. And that is only to mention the means of communication that time, geography, and the wit of man have given us. They have given us, too, how much besides?

We can get back, without drawing on our imagination, but following mere historic fact, of

a time when men in England had none of these things, had not even roads, when they had no buildings, no schools, no use of metals, no tools. We think of everything that makes up modern England, as we know her, her buildings, her mines and her factories, her crowded offices, her churches, her schools, her universities, her endless books, her trade and her travel, her science and her art. We ask the question, how did these things come to be ?

The question, like a magic carpet, sweeps them all away and carries us back to a time when the first something gave rise to something else, for everything grew out of something else. The Ionic pillars of stone stand in front of the British Museum because the men of ancient Egypt made their huts of the strong stems of the lotus tied together in bundles. If we go back far enough, we find men who did not build at all, but dwelt in caves, who had no use of metal, no cows to give milk, no horses to draw heavy loads, and who yet in civilisation had advanced greatly beyond the men who preceded them.

We cannot begin at the beginning, because history deals only with men who have left some trace of themselves. It will carry us back some 50,000 or 100,000 years, but if we wish to track men through the pathless ages when man was becoming man, we must turn to the geologist and the biologist and they will tell us of events that cover, perhaps, some 80,000,000 years, they say.

In the far ages, when the ice that had made of all Europe as far south as the Thames Valley one great, extensive polar region, had receded for the third time and England had grown warm again almost to tropical heat, a people are found

here called the men of the Old Stone Age, or Palæolithic men. We picture them wandering timorously in dense forests, armed with no weapon but a pointed stone, yet having to defend themselves against the huge wild beasts of those times, and cowering at nights in clammy caves, which perhaps they had not yet learnt to warm by the use of fire. But even this wild man has not left the world without some of the works of his spirit to delight us. He had a great gift for drawing, and the stones and bones on which he scratched life-like pictures of animals are there for us to see and admire in the cases of the British Museum and elsewhere; while his kinsmen in other parts of Europe even knew how to paint, on their walls and cavern roofs, pictures whose colours have endured till to-day.

In the time of these stone men a gradual lowering of temperature took place, perhaps another Ice Age. Afterwards, when the warmth returned, and the waters of the English Channel broke between us and the rest of Europe and made us an island, another, different, race is found in the land. These are men of the New Stone Age, or Neolithic men, whose date is perhaps 8000 B.C. They are smaller than the men who came before, more skilled in making and polishing their weapons of stone, but they have no gift of drawing. For the first time they have household beasts, the horse, the cow, and the dog. They weave and they bake their pottery. They have left many traces of their busy life. Their weapons and their pottery have been collected from England, Scotland, Ireland, France, Portugal, Spain, Italy, South and North America, Egypt, Japan, and India. This is not a mere list of names. In all these countries, long ago, men's minds worked

along the same lines. Their likenesses were greater than their differences; they were kinsfolk.

A bull's skeleton, with the stone arrow that slew him still sticking between his bones, brings back to us the hunting life these stone men led.

The shafts, ten to forty feet down, with their inter-connecting passages, remind us that they were skilful miners, struggling hard with mother-earth with no machinery and no instrument save the flint they delved so deep to win, or the stag's antlers that served them as pick and chisel and punch. They lighted their mines, too, with cup-like lamps of chalk which still remain, and they had mining accidents, for the skeleton of a miner crushed by a collapse of the mine has been found.

Their round houses had fireplaces near the door to let out the smoke; their stone bridges, made of single rough stones laid across upright stones of giant size, and above all, their great festival place at Stonehenge, fill us with wonder as we think of the strength and skill that must have gone to raise those massive blocks with the help of no mechanical contrivance.

Neolithic man had made progress as compared with the man of the Old Stone Age. The last had chipped his flints, then pressed them; the new stone man ground and polished his and thus won real sharpness in his tools. He could cut down trees and build houses of wood. He had learned to bake clay, to plough with a stone plough drawn by the oxen he had first learned to tame.

He had learned, too, to seek out and to plant millet, wheat, and barley, and to harvest at the right season. In some countries where he built his wooden village on a platform of wood piles in a lake, he is thought to have attained a passable degree of comfort, security, and peace, and

to have lived a happy life in a house comfortable with wooden furniture and all kinds of wooden utensils. A spinning 'wheel' of baked clay which has been found, shows that these stone men could spin and had discovered the use of flax. Some commerce, too, they knew, and were accustomed to buying and selling by barter.

They dwelt so long in the land that the heaps of refuse thrown out of their houses made little hills that the rains and winds of many a thousand years have not yet destroyed. If we dig into these 'kitchen middens,' as they are called, we find many things that show us what kind of people these remote ancestors of ours were, but there is an almost better way of finding out about them, and that is to delve beneath the 'long barrows' or mighty heaps piled over the bodies of their dead. There we find the skeletons and note what long skulls they had; there too we find their weapons and many household objects which were buried with them. The people who came after them, the Goidels or Gaels and the Brythons, had short skulls and buried their dead in 'round barrows,' but by the time these newcomers were old in the land their graves contain skulls that begin to approach in length those of the long-headed men, a sure sign that the two races did not destroy one another.

That some of us are small and dark and longer from forehead to back of skull than from tip of ear to tip of ear suggests to us, continually, if we have inquiring minds, the questions: How far were all Neolithic men one race? how far did they survive in all lands? how nearly related, therefore, are all the peoples of the Earth? To this last question we shall find ourselves driven back again and again.

Meanwhile, this new race, the Goidels, seems to have been stalwart, round-headed, fair-haired, and to have come, originally, from some point in South-East Europe. They brought with them a new discovery—the use of metal, first of bronze and then of iron. It is not difficult to imagine how men first found a use for metal. Probably a piece of surface copper, melted in some fire, was found to be malleable and not brittle, a thing to take on different shapes, but soft and therefore of little use to do the work of those hard, stone weapons used by men. We do not know how long it took mankind to find out that a mixture of tin and copper was harder than either, but they did discover it, and by degrees traders first handed on from one to the other articles of this mixed metal or bronze and then the lesson of how to make them, till all the nations of the ancient world were using bronze as they had once used stone.

We can trace the trade route of these old-world people by the bronze articles of one country, which we find deep buried in others, articles sometimes of great beauty and skilled workmanship. In those far-off days men loved splendour and adornment and fine designs even as we do now, and, because they made fewer things, they made them of greater beauty and durability. We have found their trumpets, their hunting and drinking horns, their bells and knives, their spear heads, their enormous cauldrons and their huge, cinerary urns for the ashes of the dead, and we can picture them in their busy lives making these things. In their workshops there was a fireplace of large stones in the centre and small fireplaces round the wall with chimneys in the thickness of the wall. By the fireplaces were stone

pounders, mortars, and basins, and heavy, flat stones set in the floor for grinding; while broken quartz and slag, and clay-lined fireplaces tell us how they smelted copper and, later, iron. They also made and baked pottery, but they used no potter's wheel.

They were travellers, and ships carved in rocks tell us that they had advanced a long way in navigation. About 1000 B.C. we find them carrying on a great trade with Ireland in gold, and the gold necklets and tiaras from ancient Ireland have never been surpassed for purity and beauty of form and design. A splendour-loving people, indeed they were, for even their very horses were decked with gold peytrels and enamelled trappings.

For five centuries the Goidels were dominant. In 400 B.C. the Britons came, bringing with them the knowledge of the use of iron, the most stubborn of the common metals but, once conquered, the most useful. The first iron mines had been worked by the Hittites about 1200 B.C. on the shores of the Black Sea, hence the knowledge of the use of iron had taken 800 years to reach Britain. Then bronze sank to be the metal of mere ornament and of religion. The ancient or obsolete has so often been held sacred as, for example, when the land for new cities was ploughed with a bronze ploughshare to bring good luck; and the bewilderment in men's minds at the smith and the founders who were, at last, able to soften the hardest metal, took the form of awed superstition, which all through the early Middle Ages imagined supernatural powers for such people as Weyland, the Smith. There is no country in Europe that has not its legends of a devil's smithy.

From the Welsh 'Mabinogion' and the legends

of King Arthur we learn the customs of the Britons. We learn how it was the tribe and not the individual that counted; how if a chief committed a crime it was the tribe who should take the punishment; how if a tribesman wanted a wife, it was the king or representative of his tribe who sought her for him; how strength and beauty of person were considered the best gifts of the gods and the most essential characteristics of kingship; how chivalry and honour were the virtues most loved by the people.

These Britons were divided into many tribes each ruled by a chieftain. They used money, and, in connection with their trade, they made roads which can still be traced in some parts of England. They were great lovers of horses and rode with much skill, being able to stop a galloping horse in an instant. They also drove furiously in chariots, and these chariots they used in war with sharp blades fitted to the wheels to cut down the enemy on either side. But war was rare among them, for they loved best the growing of corn and the tending of flocks.

They were fond of beautiful colour and fine designs, and we have still many of the things they made—shields and helmets and pottery, ornamented with skilful tracery. Their enamels were wonderful, and surpass any modern work of their kind. The oldest are red only, but later blues and greens of exquisite shades were introduced into breastplates, shields, and brooches.

Among the remains of their villages have been found things that bring home to us how very much like ourselves they were. For instance, they used mirrors of highly polished bronze, and their fashionable ladies rouged; their rouge-pots still exist.

While the Goidels had been yielding place to the Britons and they, in their turn, had been learning new skill in fashioning things to render life more comfortable and more beautiful, or becoming more civilised as the phrase goes, in far-off Italy, one city had been making herself the mistress of the known world.

When Julius Cæsar first came to Britain, in 55 B.C., Rome ruled Italy, Spain, Gaul, Greece, North Africa, Asia Minor, Syria, and Palestine. But it was not the extent of her power that made her so important. In the short 700 years of her growth she had risen to a state of civilisation which has scarcely been surpassed by us after another 2000 years. From the City on the Seven Hills by the banks of the Tiber, there radiated north, south, east, and west great roads, built as roads have not been built since, whose surface in places remains to this day scarred with the marks of ancient chariot-wheels—enduring pathways carrying to remotest lands the gifts of the city; and these gifts included law, government, commerce, a new idea of civic virtue, and an altogether unknown interest in writing, literature, scholastic learning, travel, architecture, and in physical exercises for the mere love of bodily beauty. In a word, to Britain, as to their other colonies, the Romans brought some 300 years of modern life, flung like a sudden ray of light between two dark ages of barbarism.

Cæsar made expeditions against the Britons in 55 B.C. and 54 B.C., but it was nearly 100 years later that the systematic conquest of this island by the Romans began. As was their wont, they built great roads—Watling Street, that still runs out of London past Hendon aerodrome to Chester, and there branches, one branch going round the

north coast of Wales and the other going to the north; the Great North Road; the Fosse Way from Lincoln to Bath and the south, which is more as the Romans left it than any other road in Britain; and many others.

The camps upon the roads grew in time into important cities—Londinium, Viroconium, Aquæ Sulis, Eboracum, Isca — cities with fine public buildings, schools, and magnificent public baths with marble columns and hot-air dressing-rooms. In the country, the Romans, and, copying them, the wealthier Britons, dwelt in fine villas. These were heated with hot air, possessed private baths, had floors of exquisite, many coloured mosaic, marble and bronze statues, pictures, glass vases, curtains and carpets from the East, and gardens where new flowers like the geranium and the rose, introduced from Rome, flourished, and fruits grew larger and juicier under cultivation.

Across the north, from Solway to Tyne, the Romans built a strong wall to keep the colony safe from the incursions of the still barbarous Picts, probably descendants of the Neolithic men. The wall was so thick that two chariots could drive abreast on the top; it ran up hill and down dale regardless of any obstacle, a mighty mass of masonry. At every mile was a sentry's post, and at every four miles a camp, so that the whole wall was itself like a great city, for out from the camps stretched the dwelling-houses of the officers' and soldiers' wives and camp-followers. These houses were, like the villas, heated with hot air and not uncomfortable. In the town of the wall could be heard a perfect babel of foreign tongues, for Rome always brought her soldiers from far lands to guard her colony and sent its own sons to keep peace in Spain and Palestine.

We can picture the busy life in that wall town from remnants that have been found. There were foreign merchants trading in rare silks and garments from the East; superstitious soldiers casting halfpennies into holy wells to bring them luck (16,000 of them were found in the well of the nymph Coventina); Christian missionaries gathering groups together to preach of Christ. There was probably the military post arriving, for though there is no record of letters in Britain, letters sent by Roman soldiers to their fathers and mothers have been found in Egypt, and it is unlikely that the military post did not arrive in Britain also.

To the ports of South Britain came the big government ships to carry away the produce of the island, mostly tin and corn; Britain was called 'the granary of the North,' and Rome needed to import large quantities of corn. Probably, too, the ships brought produce to Britain from the East—paper from Egypt and rich embroideries from India. Rome had a fleet of 120 ships bringing Eastern stuffs from India to the Red Sea. Thence the goods travelled by caravan to the Nile and by boat to Alexandria, thence in ten days to Rome, thence to Marseilles and up the Rhone, thence by the valley of the Seine across the Channel to Britain. It is said that in no Roman colony were town houses and country villas more numerous than in Britain, and all of them were unfortified, showing how real was the internal peace that Rome kept.

II

THE ENGLISH

THE Roman colony in this island lasted between three and four hundred years, almost as great a stretch of time as from now backwards to the beginning of the reign of Henry VIII. Like the English in India, the Romans guarded their civilised colony from the attack of barbarian neighbours by the upkeep of fortified frontiers. We have heard something of their fortifications against the Picts. In the south-east, the colony was subject to constant attacks from tribes living in what is now Germany—the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes. The Romans kept a high official, the Count of the Saxon Shore, who was responsible for the repelling of this particular enemy known generically as the Saxons.

Every one knows the story of how, shortly after A.D. 400, when civil trouble and invasion in other parts of the Empire had recalled the Roman armies to Rome, the Britons are said to have called in the help of the Saxons against the Picts, and how the quondam ally turned enemy and ultimate conqueror. What many people do not recognise is how long it took the new-comers to conquer the island. They won the little county of Kent after a thirty years' war. It took another generation to win Hampshire and a century and a half to quell, finally, the resistance of the Britons; while

the moors and the mountains were held against them for many hundred years after.

These new-comers, says the Roman historian, Tacitus, 'have fierce blue eyes, red hair, huge frames fit only for sudden exertion. They are less able to bear hard work. Heat and thirst they cannot at all endure; but to cold and hunger their climate and their soil have accustomed them.'

They brought with them, in their heads, for they probably had no art of writing, a great poem, *Beowulf*, and from it we learn if not exactly what they were and how they lived, at any rate what they would have liked to be, and the life they would have liked to live—that is, their ideals, which are the chief things to know about an individual or a nation; because, consciously or unconsciously, people strive to achieve their ideals.

The poem tells how on a windy headland, Hrothgar, King of the Danes, built himself the festival hall of Hart, 'high up, horn gabled,' wherein with his friends he might hear daily 'harp's voice and clear song of shaper.'

But alas, the game and the glee had scarcely begun when Grendel, the damp-moor dweller, came from his grim haunts and slew, as men slept in hall, thirty of the thanes. Then was woe in the land, and the tale was carried far and near till it reached the ears of Beowulf of the Geats. With fourteen followers, he came to Hart, was met by the 'shoreward,' and taken to the sorrowing king. That night, as all slept again in Hart, Grendel returned. But this time, defeated in wrestling with Beowulf, he fled 'life-sick a-wayward.' But the woes are not over in Hart, for, from 'horror of waters, streams all

a-cold, over the windy nesses,' along 'the perilous fen-paths,' creeps the avenger, Grendel's mother, and slays 'the atheling exceeding good,' Aeschere, the king's own shoulder-fellow. Then Beowulf follows her to her dwelling beneath the lake.

It is a fine tale, worth the reading for its own sake. In it we see 'the misty moorland,' the heavy, unwholesome, uncleared woods, the undrained fens, the wolf-haunted bents of the land from which the Saxons came. We learn how they let philosophical reflections break into their tales, what a language full of pictures they used, calling the sea by such names as 'swan-road' and the ship the 'wave-wearer,' or the 'foamy-necked floater.' We see also that one of their strongest feelings was comrade-faith, the desire to stand by a comrade through thick and thin; that another was love of the sea, and yet another love of generosity.

The Angles and Saxons when they came to England were still divided into tribes. Their kings were not despots, but had their powers subordinated to 'customs.' They could not touch a freeman's life, and they could not make laws without the consent of their tribesmen. The people had the custom of meeting together in councils called *moots*. Each village had its moot, each larger district or 'hundred' had its moot, and the whole kingdom its *folk-moot*. To the moots, which were held on the open moor or on some hill, the freemen went armed, to give or withhold their consent to laws, to muster for war, or to judge offenders.

They worshipped many gods—Tiw, the war god; Woden, the protector of boundaries and giver of victory; Thor, whose wagon they heard

rumbling over the clouds in a storm; Frea, the goddess of sunshine and fertility, to whom the boar was sacred and whose emblem the warriors wore on their helmets; Eostre, the dawn, whose name has given us Easter, as the names of the others have given us the names of the days from Tuesday to Friday. They, too, like the Greeks, worshipped that terrible goddess Wyrd—Fate—from which no one escapes. 'Wyrd pursueth us, cruel and grim in hate,' they said. Their fens, their woods, and their seas seemed to their timid imaginings filled with fire-dragons and nicors and monsters.

Their villages—and they hated towns—were in clearings in the woods. Generally they consisted of a house called the hall, and the wattle and mud cots of poorer men; these were protected by a stockade, a ditch, or a mound, and by a stretch of open ground that served both for pasturage and to protect the village from being caught by the enemy unawares. Any stranger who came through the forest was expected to give warning of his approach by the blowing of a horn.

The inhabitants had their social classes. The hall belonged to the *thegn* or noble. Round him, in later Saxon days, there were in the higher ranks, the yeomen and the priest, and in the lower the hunters, fowlers, craftsmen, merchant pedlars, and potters—all free men; and the bee-keepers, ox-herds, shepherds, woodwards, haywards—unfree men or *thralls*. If, however, a yeoman or ceorl throve so that he had much land of his own 'church and kitchen, bell-horse and borough-gate seat and special duty in the king's hall, then he was of thegn right worthy.' We have their occupations described for us and a picture of their life in Aelfric's *Dialogues*, a little school book

written in Latin and Saxon to teach the boys of the year A.D. 1000 to speak Latin. The teacher asks, 'What are your companions?' The pupil answers :—

Some are ploughmen, some shepherds, some oxherds, some even hunters, some fishermen, some fowlers, some merchants, some bootmakers, some salters, some fishers of the place.

Teacher. What do you say, ploughman ; how do you do your work ?

Ploughman. Oh, master, too hard I work ; there is no so hard winter that I dare to linger at home, for fear of my lord ; but I yoke oxen and plough with the plough ; every day I have to plough a whole field or more.

Teacher. Have you any companions ?

Ploughman. I have a boy driving the oxen with a goad, who also suffers from cold and shouting.

Teacher. What more do you do in the day ?

Ploughman. This beside I do. I have to fill the trough of the oxen with hay and to water them and to carry dung. It is great labour. Indeed it is a great labour, because I am not free.

Teacher. What do you say, shepherd ? Have you any work ?

Shepherd. Indeed I have. At earliest dawn I drive my sheep to pasture, and I watch over them in summer and in winter with my dogs lest wolves devour them, and I bring them back to the fold and milk them twice daily and make cheese and butter, and look after their pen, and am faithful to my lord.

Teacher. Oh, oxherd, what dost thou do ?

Oxherd. Oh, master, I work much. When the ploughman unyokes the oxen I lead them to pasture, and the whole night I stand by them watching on account of plunderers, and then at dawn I hand them over to the ploughman well fed and watered.

Teacher. Is this one of your companions ? Do you know anything ?

Hunter. I know one art. I am a hunter.

Teacher. Whose ?
Hunter. The king's.
Teacher. How do you exercise your craft ?
Hunter. I make a net and place it in a good place, and urge my dogs to follow the wild creatures until they come into the net unsuspectingly, and so they are caught and I strangle them in the net.
Teacher. Can't you hunt except with a net ?
Hunter. Yes, I can.
Teacher. How ?
Hunter. I pursue the wild beasts with swift dogs.
Teacher. What are the biggest beasts you catch ?
Hunter. I take stags and boars and bucks and roe and goats and sometimes hares.
Teacher. Were you hunting to-day ?
Hunter. No, because it was Sunday, but yesterday I was.
Teacher. What did you catch ?
Hunter. Two stags and a boar.
Teacher. How did you take them ?
Hunter. I took the stags in nets and the boar I strangled.
Teacher. How did you dare to strangle a boar ?
Hunter. The dogs brought him to me and I, standing with them, strangled him suddenly.
Teacher. You were very brave, then.
Hunter. A hunter must not be timid, seeing that various beasts dwell in the forest.
Teacher. What do you get by your trade ?
Fisher. Food and clothing and money.
Teacher. How do you catch fish ?
Fisher. I get a ship and place nets in the river and cast a hook and baits.
Teacher. Where do you sell them ?
Fisher. In the city.
Teacher. Who buys ?
Fisher. Citizens. I cannot catch them as fast as I can sell them.
Teacher. What fish do you catch ?
Fisher. Eels, pike, minnows, eelpout, trout, and lamprey.
Teacher. Why do you not fish in the sea ?

Fisher. Sometimes I do, but rarely, because I should need a large boat.

Teacher. What do you catch in the sea ?

Fisher. Herrings, salmon, porpoises, sturgeon, oysters, and crabs, mussels, plaice, soles, cockles, winkles.

Teacher. Do you wish to catch a whale ?

Fisher. No.

Teacher. Why ?

Fisher. Because it is a dangerous thing to catch a whale.

Teacher. Yet many catch whales and escape danger and acquire great wealth.

Fisher. True, but I do not dare on account of the cowardice of my mind.

Teacher. What do you say, fowler ; how do you deceive birds ?

Fowler. In many ways I deceive birds : sometimes with nets, sometimes with snares, sometimes with lime, sometimes with whistling, sometimes with a decoy.

Teacher. Do you know how to tame them ?

Fowler. Yes.

Teacher. And you, merchant ?

Merchant. I say I am useful to the king and leaders and the rich and all people.

Teacher. And how ?

Merchant. I get into a ship with my merchandise and sail beyond the seas and sell my things and buy precious things, which do not originate in this land, and I bring them hither to you with much danger and sometimes I suffer shipwreck with loss of all my possessions, scarcely saving my life.

Teacher. What do you bring us ?

Merchant. Purple stuffs and silk, precious gems and gold, different clothes and perfumes, wine and oil, ivory and copper and tin, sulphur and glass.

Teacher. You leather-wright ; what do you do for utility ?

Leather-wright. I buy hides and skins and prepare them by my art, and make boots of various kinds, leather flasks and vessels, bags and purses, bridles and spur straps.

Teacher. Oh, salter, what profits us your trade ?
Salter. Much. My art profits everything ; no one of you could enjoy a dinner without my art.
Teacher. How so ?
Salter. Who of men would enjoy wholesome food not salted ? All butter and cheese and oil would perish.
Teacher. What do you say, baker ?
Baker. You could for short time live without my art, but not for long ; for without bread all food becomes sickly.
Cook. Without me, you would have to eat raw and unseasoned food.
Teacher. What other comrades have you ?
Pupil. I have smiths, blacksmiths, goldsmiths, silversmiths, coppersmiths, writers.
Teacher. Have you any councillors ?
Pupil. Certainly.
Teacher. What do you say, learned man ?
Learned Man. That my art is the greatest. As it is said in the Gospel ' Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you.'
Teacher. And which of the secular arts is the greatest ?
Learned Man. Agriculture, because the plough feeds us all.

III

THE CONVERSION

N 597 a new element, the Christian religion, came into the national life of the English. Years before, a Roman monk had seen some children of the Angle race about to be sold in the slave market at Rome. This was Gregory, a member of one of the high senatorial families of Rome and once a Prefect of the city. He had become a Benedictine monk and given his palace on the Cœlian Mount to be a monastery. He burned with pity and sympathy for the young slaves in evil case, but he was himself then young and could do nothing for them except perhaps buy them to give them to monasteries. Still he had seen and had understood that in a far-distant, mist-girt island, a whole long century forgotten by Rome and civilisation, a people waited for knowledge, and because it was he who had seen it, he felt that it was he who must find the remedy.

Tradition says he asked to be allowed to go to England himself, but was refused. There have been times, perhaps not many, when fate has been cruel to us, and this was one. No one can read the letters of St. Gregory, as this monk was afterwards called—letters in which he pleaded for the Christian view against St. Augustine's more institutional view—without feeling that, had he come to teach Christianity here, the whole island might have caught and might have kept

something of his own large tolerance and tender sympathy for the ignorant and the mistaken.

In 590 he became Pope, and free to send if not to go. His choice fell upon Augustine, the prior of the monastery he had founded. Augustine set forth, but in Gaul he heard fearsome rumours of the wild Saxons to whom he was being sent. His companions lowered his courage, rather than raised it, and they sent Augustine back with the statement that 'It would be safer to return home than to visit a barbarous, fierce, and unbelieving nation, of whose very language they were ignorant.'

Yet the enterprise was by no means dangerous. Bertha, wife of King Ethelbert, the greatest of the petty kings of England, had already a Christian chaplain, Luidhard. She was the daughter of the King of the Franks, himself a Christian. Augustine and his friends carried letters of introduction from the Frankish bishops, and they were messengers of the Bishop of Rome. They might have expected to be received with respect at least. Many a missionary journey has been far more dangerous, and Gregory reproved them for their fears and bade them go forward.

They landed on Thanet, and sent the king a message that they came to tell him of a faith that would give him 'everlasting joys in Heaven and a kingdom that would never end,' a message easily misunderstood; and many since Ethelbert and his Kentish followers have given their allegiance to the religion of 'get all you can,' mistaking it for that Christianity which has said 'The Kingdom of God is within you.'

Ethelbert cautiously commanded them to remain in the island of Thanet till he was able to listen to them. Then, meeting them in the open air for fear of witchcraft, he listened courteously

while Augustine told him of Christ's death on the cross for the redemption of the world. 'Your words and promises are very fair,' replied the king, 'but since they are very vague, I cannot approve of them so far as to forsake those rites which I, together with the whole English nation, have so long practised. But since you have come from so far, with, as I conceive, a desire to impart to us that which you hold to be true and most beneficial, we will not be grievous unto you, but rather receive you with friendly hospitality, and take care to supply you with needful food, nor will we forbid you to preach and to gain to your faith all whom you can.'

It would be difficult to imagine a wiser or more tolerant answer. To the missionaries was assigned the ancient Roman Christian church of St. Martin at Cantwaraburgh, the Canterbury we know, a dwelling-house and grants of land by the produce of which they might live. We are told that it was not long before the rough Saxons, won by the self-denying lives of the new-comers, a form of preaching that even they could not fail to understand, adopted the new faith in large numbers. In time Augustine was made Archbishop of Canterbury, and a second archbishopric was set up at York.

As the faith spread north and west, the new teachers came into contact with the already Christianised Britons, and found, to their surprise, that these men, on what seemed to them the very outskirts of the world, held a faith which seemed very like their own. The Christian bishops of the Britons, too, were much exercised in mind at the conversion of their enemy. They seemed to have thought that Christianity would never reach them, and they themselves seem never to

have made any effort to convert them. The story, as told by the English Bede, relates that Augustine, in the year 602, invited the British bishops to meet him, to discuss the points in which their faiths differed. The chief of these proved to be one that seems to us of infinite insignificance, namely, at what stage of the new moon Easter should be kept.

When argument did not settle the point, they appealed to miracle without apparently either side remembering the command of Christ, 'Thou shalt not tempt (prove) the Lord thy God.' A blind man was brought in, and first the British, and then Augustine's followers prayed that he might receive his sight; it is related that the former failed and the latter succeeded.

The Britons asked for a second conference. On their way to this, they turned aside to ask the advice of a very ancient sage. 'How shall we know that this Augustine is a man of God?' they asked. 'The Lord,' replied the sage, 'said, "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart." If, therefore, this Augustine is meek and lowly of heart, it is to be believed that he has taken upon him the yoke of Christ and will offer the same to you to take upon you. But if he is stern and haughty, he is not of God and we need not care for his words. Do you contrive that he shall first reach the place of meeting, and if, when you draw near, he shall rise to receive you, hear him submissively, being assured that he is a servant of Christ; but if he shall despise you, who are the larger party, then let him also be despised by you.'

Unfortunately Augustine did not rise before these strangers, and they consequently refused to listen patiently to anything he said or to agree

to any proposition he made. It was another of those apparently small events fraught with great results for a later age. The rift between the Celtic Church and the Saxon Church was never closed. It carried with it many an after-quarrel in religion and politics, of which we shall hear in this book, and an alienation between Celt and Saxon which has been one of the most unfortunate facts in the history of these islands.

It happened that when Ethelbert was dead, the new ruler went back to heathendom, and the multitudes who had adopted the faith as a means of obtaining happiness abandoned it in great masses when persecution made that happiness hard of realisation. Christianity almost passed from the Anglo-Saxons. Ethelburga, however, a Christian daughter of Ethelbert, married Edwin, King of Northumbria, about the time that that northern kingdom was becoming the most powerful in the land. With her she took Paulinus, afterwards consecrated Bishop of York.

Now this Edwin had almost all his life been an exile, and once, when desolate and disconsolate and a hopeless refugee in the hands of one who was about to hand him over to his enemies, a stranger had stood by, saying, 'What wouldst thou give to anyone who should free thee from thy anxieties and persuade thy gaoler not to deliver thee into the hands of thy enemies?' 'All I possess,' said Edwin. 'And what if he assured thee that thou shouldst overcome thine enemies and become a king greater than any English king before?' 'I would give the gratitude which he deserved to anyone who could confer on me such benefits.' 'And how if he could point out to thee a new way of life and salvation better than any thy fathers have

known? Wouldst thou hearken to his voice and obey his counsel?' 'Assuredly I would.' Then the stranger put his hand upon Edwin's head and said, 'When next thou shalt receive this sign, remember what thou hast promised, and fulfil it.'

After that, good fortune helped the young prince. He overcame his enemies and ruled the greatest kingdom that up to then had been known in the island, but it was long years before he was to remember the sign. Paulinus had preached Christianity with intensest fervour for some two years in his royal mistress's new home without affecting the king, when, finding Edwin in another brown study, he went to him, and placing his hand upon his head asked him, 'Rememberest this sign? Behold thou hast escaped by the divine favour the snares of thine enemies; thou hast received the kingdom that was promised thee; delay not to stretch out thy hand and grasp the third blessing, even eternal life.' Then Edwin called his *witenagemot* or council of wise men together to consider the adoption of the Christian faith.

Let us try to picture that scene and its meaning. There were present priests of the old religion, hesitating half-believers, humble seekers after truth, and the anxious king whose mind was made up for the new faith, but who wished to take the mind of his nation with him. And what a subject of debate! Never has a Parliament had greater. They had to decide for England between Christianity and heathendom. The high priest of the old faith, Coifi, was the first to declare for the new faith. He said he had served the old gods and got nothing from them. Therefore he was for a change. Doubtless he found the new God just as unsatisfying.

Then an old man rose to speak. 'The life of man,' he said, 'is like a sparrow flitting through your hall, O King, when we are seated round the fire at supper-time while the winds are howling and the snow is drifting without. It passes swiftly in at one door and out at another, feeling for the moment the warmth and shelter of your palace, but it flies from winter to winter and swiftly escapes from our sight. Even such is our life here; and if anyone can tell us certainly what lies beyond it, we shall do wisely to follow his teaching.' The argument of this old-time seeker after knowledge carried the day; northern England became Christian in large numbers. But we may be sure that not many followed the new faith because they were seeking truth like the ealdorman. Most of them must have adopted it because, when the king did, it was fashionable. For when the king was dead and his heathen enemies had won the upper hand, the land became heathen again.

But a certain Oswald, son of Edwin's rival, had been carried for safety, when a baby, to an island on the west coast of Scotland called Iona, where some Christians, who followed the British faith that had so offended Augustine, had built a monastery and taught Christianity to the Scots. There this boy Oswald learned British Christianity, and when it happened that he was able to win back his father's kingdom of Northumbria, he sent to Iona for a preacher to come to reconvert his country. The story goes that the monks of Iona sent a very stern man, who returned to them and told them that the Northumbrians were too stubborn to be taught. 'Perhaps,' said a listening monk, 'it was your harshness which prevented their learning.' This suggestion struck

the other monks as likely, and, turning to the speaker, they told him to go to try what he could do himself with these Northumbrians.

And Aidan went. The monastery from which he came had been founded by Columba, a Briton from Ireland.

Christianity had been established in Ireland by a Briton from Wales called Patrick, he who taught the Irish the doctrine of the Trinity by means of the shamrock leaf, and banished the snakes. Columba, born in Christian Ireland, yet descendant of 'Niall of the Nine Hostages,' and of half the heroes of the famous heathen legends, bade fair in his youth to follow in their footsteps. We hear of him in his strength and his beauty, growing up among the blue, misty mountains of Donegal, loving to stride across the bogland, to breast mighty hills and swim through Atlantic surges: loving, too, and no less, poetry and learning and wisdom.

Like other boys of his day, he was sent to the household of a prince to serve in lowly guise as a page, and while he was there he happened one day on a closed casket containing a wonderfully illuminated book. To the boy books were rare and much beloved. To his master, rare indeed, but mere mascots against the evil eye, things to be kept unopened in a casket. Columba wanted a book of his own, so he would get up in the middle of the night and steal away with a candle to make a copy of this book. He had not finished it when he was discovered by his master and obliged to flee back to his father's kingdom, taking his copy with him. The master, fearing that the power of his book would be gone if a copy were made of it, raised an army and pursued Columba. Columba's father prepared to resist

in war, and for years the fight went this way and that, with varying fortune, till the old master died and peace was restored.

But no peace could come to Columba's heart. He felt that, for his sake, blood had been shed, and no persuasion of his friends could bring him to think that war was righteousness. At last they pitied him so much for the madness of his distress that they bade him take the severest punishment of all upon him. This was to leave his beloved native land.

Setting out in one of the light boats of the period, a coracle made of wattle covered with hides, he and a company of friends dared the stormy channels and came to the wild, rocky, lonely island of Iona. There they made themselves strong cells, and thence they ventured across the current-swept channels to the mainland of Scotland, to carry the Gospel story to the wild men of the mountains and the lakelands.[1] In time a stately monastery arose in that lonely place, and when four priors had ruled from Columba's seat, Aidan went to Northumbria, and the Britons at last undertook the teaching of the English from which they had held back so long.

'On the arrival of the bishop the king appointed him his episcopal see in the island of Lindisfarne, as he desired. Which place, as the tide flows and ebbs twice a day, is enclosed by the waves of the sea like an island; and again, twice a day, when the shore is left dry, becomes contiguous to the land. The king also humbly and willingly in all cases giving ear to his admonitions, industriously applied himself to build and extend the church of Christ in his kingdom:

[1] Compare the above legendary account of St. Columba's going to Iona with that given in St. Adamnan's 'Life.'

wherein, when the bishop, who was not skilful in the English tongue, preached the gospel, it was most delightful to see the king himself interpreting the word of God to his commanders and ministers, for he had perfectly learned the language of the Scots during his long banishment. From that time many of the Scots came daily to Britain, and with great devotion preached the word to those provinces of the English over which King Oswald reigned. Churches were built in several places; the people joyfully flocked together to hear the word: money and lands were given of the king's bounty to build monasteries: the English, great and small, were, by their Scottish masters, instructed in the rules and observances of regular discipline, for most of them that came to preach were monks.' [1]

Perhaps this is the place to tell something of life in a monastery, since the Celtic teachers were monks. The monastery was the home of the monks—they had no other; they who entered left behind all the happiness that having a wife and children means. They gave themselves up to prayer for the world, and they also worked for it at any work that could be done within the monastery. They taught, laboured in the fields, wrote books, assisted at the building and enlarging of the monastery, and sometimes they beautified it by painting the walls or carving the woodwork.

The monastery was generally built round a courtyard. On one side was the church and perhaps the cells of the scribes; facing these were the rooms where the monks slept. The kitchen and dining hall were as far away from the church as possible, so that the noise and smells

[1] Bede's 'Ecclesiastical History.'

should not disturb the monks at their devotions. On the other two sides were perhaps the guest house, the abbot's house, and the hospital.

The monk's day began very early. At midnight a bell rang; the monks rose and went in procession to the church, where they sang matins and lauds; at intervals of three hours after this they held other services in church, and not later than nine in the evening they went to bed.

Each day the abbot, or head of the monastery, saw the monks in the Chapter House and allotted to each his work. Some would write the chronicles or history which most monasteries kept to record what went on in the monastery or the country; others would illuminate in gold and many colours the books that even now make us wonder as we look at their rare and ancient manuscripts; others would teach the boys of the village who were meaning to be priests; others again would see to the buying of food for the monastery or to the selling of the produce of the monastery fields; others would go out to dig or to pick fruit in the orchard, to plough or to reap, according to the season of the year.

In the middle of the morning they had dinner in silence, while one of their number read to them from a holy book. Afterwards they rested, and in the evening they worked again till bedtime.

Celtic Christianity, as Aidan taught it, was not destined to hold the power in England. The Church of the south still held to the Roman worship, and in 664 Oswy, the next King of Northumbria, called a synod or council at Whitby to decide finally between Celtic custom and Roman. Long were the arguments on both sides, Wilfrid from Rome holding speech for his side and claiming that the Romans had been

taught by St. Peter, Colman for the Celts claiming that St. John was the greater disciple. But at length the king asked Wilfrid whether it was not St. Peter to whom had been given the keys of heaven. None could gainsay this. Then said the king, 'I declare for Peter, lest when I come to heaven's gate he shut me out for having sided with his enemy.' Thus, for so wrongheaded an argument, was the Roman way established in England.

It has been said that though the reason was foolish, the decision was fortunate. It turned, as it were, the face of England eastwards towards Europe; she became one with the European nations; she was to mingle in their thoughts, their ambitions, their wars, their treaties, their wisdoms, and their follies. Had she adopted Celtic Christianity her face would have been turned to Iona, towards the West, and she would have been cut off from the Continent by the barrier of a differing faith, a stronger barrier even than the Channel Seas.

The first sign of the new unity in the kingdom was the power given to the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Greek Theodore of Tarsus, to organise the whole Church throughout the kingdom. Theodore found only three bishops in England; he left thirteen. At his death the conversion of England was complete. But people were to find, all too soon and too repeatedly, that Christianity is not a question of Easter moons, which can be settled at synods, nor yet of founding monasteries, nor building cathedrals, but a matter of how men, both priests and those who live in monasteries and those who live without, behave to one another in the common ways of life.

IV

THE LEARNING OF THE EARLY ENGLISH

E have seen in the last chapter how the monasteries were the schools. There scholars learned to read the psalter and to write and speak Latin and even to write Latin verses; there the monks wrote books; there students studied theology; there the historians kept chronicles; there herdsmen and carpenters and smiths gathered to get their rare chance of hearing what men thought and did and of joining in religious discussion. So it is not surprising that English literature, for the most part, originated in the monastery.

At Theodore's cathedral school at Canterbury even Greek was taught, and thence went forth the great Aldhelm, the scholar poet who made Malmesbury Abbey a centre of learning. From the school of York went Alcuin to the court of Charlemagne, to fling round it a glamour of learning and civilisation strange in the ninth century. In the north, Bishop Benedict founded the monastery of Jarrow and instructed masons from Gaul to build it of stone instead of the wood hitherto used for churches. He travelled to Rome, collecting books for his beloved monastery; this monastery was at a later date the home of the Venerable Bede, whose ecclesiastical history is the earliest history of any Anglo-Saxon people

and one of the most delightful histories written anywhere.

From the monastery of Whitby came Cædmon, the first English poet born on English soil who sang in the English tongue. And here one may ask why not say the Saxon tongue? Why did the Angles who settled in the north and not the Saxons who settled in the more important south, give their name to the land and the language—England and the English? The answer is important in this history, which claims to tell of more powerful things than war and statecraft. It happened that, in those early days with which we are now dealing, the poets and the historians were all in the north; hence they naturally spoke of Angle-land, and England it has remained.

Of Cædmon it is told that he was one of those unfortunates who have been born without an ear for music. When the wassail cup went round at the feast, and each man took it and sang a glee in turn, he would leave the table as his turn approached and go forth to his ox-herding, ashamed and grieved. On one such occasion, as he slept amid his oxen, he dreamt that an angel came and bade him sing. 'I cannot sing,' said Cædmon. 'For that cause I left the table but now.' 'Nay, sing,' said the angel. 'What shall I sing?' asked Cædmon. 'Sing,' replied the angel, 'the beginning of created things.' So Cædmon sang:

'Now shall we praise Heaven's guardian
The Creator's might and His mind's thought.'

The head of the Whitby monastery at that time was a woman, the Abbess Hilda. When she tested Cædmon on the following day and found that he had become a poet, she bade the monks

repeat the Bible history, that he might put it into poetry.

About the same time lived Cynewulf, another poet, also Northumbrian, but a very different kind of man from Cædmon. In his early life he was a wandering glee-man or professional bard, 'high placed in hall a welcome guest,' whose light and airy riddles in verse delighted the courtiers; but he lost his popularity, and, lonely and old, turned, he too, to religious poetry.

Some of the most beautiful poems of this time are anonymous. Such are *The Wanderer* and *The Seafarer*. *The Wanderer* describes the feeling of a vassal who has lost his lord.

The most ancient prose writings are compilations of laws. The laws of Ine, King of Wessex, were written about 694. In the Anglo-Saxon *Chronicles* we have the earliest history any Teutonic people wrote about itself. At first the monks made meagre notes on contemporary history, but the *Chronicles* increased in vigour and detail as time went on.

To King Alfred the early English owed the best of their learning. When he came to the throne, the brilliant days of great writers and great scholars had passed. 'Formerly,' he tells us, 'foreigners sought wisdom and learning in this land; now we should have to get them from abroad if we would have them.' He set up a school for the sons of nobles at his court, and sent to Wales for Asser to come to write a history of the reign, and to that history we owe our knowledge of Alfred.

The king himself translated Orosius's *History of the World*. It was not merely a translation, for Alfred cut out what he thought unimportant and put in what he thought interesting. The

story of Othere, the early traveller who voyaged round the coast of Scandinavia and entered the White Sea, is one of these additions. Alfred also wrote down a translation of Boethius's *Consolations of Philosophy* as Asser explained it to him, and he translated the *Pastoral Care* of St. Gregory. 'This I can specially say,' the king was able to write, 'that I have longed to write worthily, so long as I live, and after my life to leave my memory in good works to the men who were after me.'

He devised a way of measuring time, for he had candles made of equal length and enclosed them in lanterns of horn so that they burned equally, and in this way six candles took a day of twenty-four hours to burn and the king was able as he worked to know when he had given the half of his time to the service of God. 'What shall I say,' asks his historian, 'of the cities and towns which he restored and of the others which he built where before there had never been any? Or of the work in gold and silver incomparably made under his directions? or of the halls and royal chambers wonderfully made of stone and wood by his commands?'

V

WILLIAM THE NORMAN

IN the year 1066 a great change began for the English. They who had once been sea-rovers and conquered a foreign land and made it their own, and its inhabitants serfs, were destined to feel the fate of the conquered and, in their turn, to become servants to a foe from over seas.

It was not their first meeting with the Normans, this of 1066. For the Normans were none other than the Northmen or Danes, who had settled on the banks of the Seine. The story has often been told of the strange wanderings of this people, how about the year 800 they used to leave their creeks in Denmark and Norway in their long boats and attack some lonely village. Fiona Macleod has pictured such a night scare for us—the silent sea-coast village in the moonlit midnight; the fierce, blue-eyed, gold-haired Vikings landing from their ships in the distant haven and silently circling the village. 'Then slowly the circle narrowed. A bull lowed, where it stood among the green grass stamping uneasily and ever again sniffing the air. Suddenly one heifer, then another, then all the herd began a strange lowing. The dogs rose with bristling felts and crawled sidelong, snarling with red eyes gleaming savagely. Here and there red flames burst forth and leaped

from hut to hut. Soon the whole rath was aflame. Round the rath of Rumun a wall of swords flashed. If any leaped forth, it was upon the spear of a Viking, or if the face of any was seen it was the target for a swift, sure arrow.' [1]

Such was a Northman's pirate raid. You have read elsewhere how in England they gave up this period of raid and settled down, and so great was their power that Alfred, to win peace, was obliged to give up to them all the land north of a line drawn from Chester to London. The land to the north of the line was called the Danelaw, and Danish influence was so strong there that, even now, the people of Yorkshire use Danish words and many a place has a Danish name. Thus Blubberhouses on the moor above Bolton Abbey is *Blaabaerhuse*—the House of Bilberries.

The Northmen also founded a kingdom in Iceland, a dukedom in Normandy, another in far-away Southern Italy and Sicily, and even, so it is now said, discovered America.

But of all their settlements none learned government and scholarship and art and architecture and religion so quickly as Normandy. It was in 912, nearly 500 years after the English came to England, that Hrolf the Ganger won land on each side of the mouth of the Seine from Charles the Simple, King of France. One hundred and fifty years later, while the English were still building most of their churches of wood, the Norman people had become Christian, had learned the French tongue, had covered their land with monasteries, had built stately abbeys of stone, and had founded schools, already of European fame, to which scholars were flocking from far lands,

[1] Fiona Macleod, 'Barbaric Tales.'

attracted by the tale of the learning and piety to be found in Normandy.

Norman *trouveres* or wandering minstrels sang, in the barons' castles, to ladies doing fine needlework, noble poems like *The Song of Roland.*

William of Malmesbury thus contrasts the Normans and the English. He says, 'The desire after literature had decayed for several years before the arrival of the Normans. The clergy, contented with a very slight degree of learning, could scarcely stammer the words of the sacraments; and a person who understood grammar was an object of wonder and astonishment. Drinking in parties was a universal practice, in which occupation they passed entire nights as well as days. They consumed their whole substance in mean and despicable houses; unlike the Normans and French who, in noble and splendid mansions, lived with frugality.'

The man who had probably done more than any other to make Normandy great was Duke William. He was one of those men who, with a bad start in life and everything against him, was able to conquer all difficulties and bring to success most of the things to which he set his hand. William the Bastard they called him all his life, for, though his father was a duke, his mother was the daughter of a tanner of Falaise, and the proud nobles of Normandy would not be likely to forget it or to lose an opportunity of showing their scorn for the boy. Then his father, Duke Robert, died on a pilgrimage when William was only seven, and the small boy was left as Duke.

On his frontier the King of France was ever watching for an opportunity to lessen the power of his vassal. In Normandy itself great barons

with their armed followers were all seeking to increase their own importance by the destruction of his power. When he was twelve years of age his guardians, who were supposed to work for him, quarrelled and slew one another. The boy-duke summoned his chiefs and chose himself new guardians, one of them the murderer of the former guardians. When he was thirteen he had to lead an army against a baron who, in alliance with the King of France, held his birthplace Falaise, against him. But the town surrendered to him. At nineteen, through much watchfulness and much self-discipline, he was already a wise and valiant man. It was well, for it was then that came his hardest fight. Half his kingdom was in arms, and he himself amongst the rebels at Valognes, almost cut off from his friends; but a headlong gallop took him to Falaise, just in time before the ring of his enemies closed in around him, and in the battle that followed he was victorious.

One would have expected that in those fierce days so young a man, so beset by foes, would have used his victory to destroy his enemies. Not so William. He punished none with death, but he destroyed the rebel castles. In this he proved himself the friend of the labouring man and the poor, for it was the custom in those days for a powerful lord to choose out some rising ground, dig a ditch round it, let a stream run into the ditch and fill it with water, build a tower on the mound whence he and his men could sally forth to fight a neighbour and to rob those who possessed corn or cattle and were not strong enough to defend them.

William chose for his wife Matilda, daughter of Baldwin, Count of Flanders. But the Pope

forbade the marriage, and William's friend Lanfranc, the Abbot of Bec, rebuked him for persisting when the Pope forbade. For this rebuke William banished Lanfranc and, hearing that he had not reached the frontier in the time allotted to him, sent after him to bid him hasten. 'Give me a better horse and I will go faster,' said the abbot. The answer pleased William, who forgave his friend and sent him as ambassador to the papal court to persuade the Pope to reconsider his decision. After six years Lanfranc was able to win the consent of a new Pope. But William had married Matilda before that. He was not the man to wait for anyone's consent, and the pair sought to reconcile themselves with the Church by building two magnificent abbeys that now stand the glory and the boast of the city of Caen. In those days people did not build churches because they were needed. They built them because they wished to build them, and they were far larger than could have been filled by the small populations of those times.

When the Danes ruled England, the Saxon royal house took refuge at the Norman court, and there, Edward the Confessor, as he was called later, learned to love the learning and books, the fair manners and noble houses, and, above all, the churches of his land of exile. When he returned to be King of England, he promised that at his death William should be King of England.

Now the crown of England has never, even in early times, been regarded as the property of the sovereign to will away as he pleased. The English chose their king. At the death of Edward, therefore, the Council of the Realm took no notice of the late king's will, but chose Harold Godwineson to be king. William, who seems to

have believed in the validity of Edward's promise, was very wroth, and more especially so as he had forced an oath from this very Harold that he would help him to be king.

When William received the news of Harold's accession, he determined to win by war what he could not get from promises. But the chronicler tells us that the trees were still growing in the forest from which his fleet was to be made. From December to June he worked at preparations. These were of two kinds, the collecting of a fleet, arms and supplies, and the winning of men's minds to his cause. Could he persuade men that this was a holy war? All wars are holy to either side. William had no difficulty in persuading nobles, who wanted territories in a conquered country, that an insult to their lord touched their own honour. Neither had he much difficulty in persuading the Pope that all thrones were his to give away, and that Harold, who had broken a sacred vow, was an unworthy person for the Pope to uphold. The end of it was that William invaded England, carrying banners blessed by the Pope and regarded by Christendom as a crusader fighting for right against might.

Then, by good luck and skilful leadership, he defeated Harold at Hastings; and afterwards, by good wisdom he had himself chosen King of England by the Witan, after the ancient custom of the English.

It has been said that England has possessed three great creative statesmen. The first created England, the second Great Britain, and the third the British Empire. Of these, the first and probably the greatest was William. He found an England in which men still thought of themselves as men of Northumbria or as men of Wessex,

and in which the king of the south could scarcely claim allegiance from the earls of the north. He made the country one, from the Channel to the Tyne, with all its earls clearly subjects of the one king and all its poorer kind of people calling themselves English. That is why it has seemed worth while, in a history that deals rather with people than with kings, to tell the story of William's life.

VI

FEUDAL TIMES

EUDALISM is the name given to a state of society which has arisen at different times in many parts of the world. Europe between 987 and 1381 was almost entirely feudal. What are the outward signs of such a society, and how may we recognise it? What are the conditions which proclaim a feudal world to inquiring eyes?

In a thoroughly feudalised state the king has little or no authority over the princes, dukes, counts, and other great men of his land. It is true that with impressive solemnity, on their entering into possession of their lands, they knelt before him and swore to be his men and faithfully to serve and obey him. But how lightly sat such oaths upon the Dukes of Normandy, for instance, when, in succeeding years, they quarrelled and warred with their liege lord the King of France. Each petty prince in a feudal state warred with his neighbours, did justice to his vassals, enacted his own laws, and, in general, pleased himself with no regard whatever to the fate of his so-called country.

England was never such a feudal State except perhaps for a few years under Stephen (1135-1154). In feudal France we find the right to make private war and to have private coinage. All the

land is held from the king or from some other lord in return for military service. The administration of justice depends on courts which are the personal possession of some lord and in his eyes a most valuable portion of his possessions, since his income is drawn, in part, from the fines which are the chief form of punishment. England escaped the horrors of that right of private war and the ruinous effect of private coinage; she suffered from the holding of land for military service and from the custom of private justice.

Our knowledge of England in feudal times is drawn from a varying collection of documents none of which were intended by their authors to be an account of the life of the people. The mass of the people were *villeins*, tied to the land on which they lived and accounted little better than 'things.' As such they were of small importance: it entered into no man's mind to write an account of 'things.' We must draw our picture as best we may either from Domesday Book, 1085, a financial account of the land drawn up by William I., or from Henry I.'s Charter of 1100, or from manorial records or from the laws of Henry II. (1154 to 1189). No society stands still: and our picture is intended only to portray in broad outline the feudal elements in English life, constantly changing and covering over a hundred years. It may not be correct for any one year, but it gives a truthful impression of the contrast between feudal and modern days.

It will be convenient here to say something of the life of the English village community known as the *manor*; though not a necessary part of feudalism, the manor is so intermingled with feudal customs that it is difficult to view them apart.

In 1085 William I. wished to tax England and therefore he had to find out what each man possessed; he intended to take a tax of six shillings on each hide of land. But the people then, as now, hated making returns of their income. Hear the old-time chronicler concerning the Domesday Survey:

'The king took much thought and held deep speech with his Wise Men over the land, how it was settled or established and with what kind of men. Then he sent over all England into each shire and had it made out how many hundred hides there were in the shire, and what the king himself had in lands, and of live stock on the land, and what rights he ought to have every twelve months off the shire. Also, he had written how much land his archbishops had, and his suffragan bishops, and his abbots and earls, and, though I tell it at length, what or how much each man that owned land in England had in land and live stock, and how much money it might be worth. So very narrowly he skeired it out that there was not one single hide nor one yard of land, nor even—it is shame to tell of, but he did not find it shame to do it—one cow or one swine left out that was not set down in his record and all the records were afterwards brought to him.'

For the purpose of this survey, England was divided into circuits, each of which was visited by a group of greater tenants; the Bishops of Winchester and Coutances, for instance, were the heads of the commission for Middlesex. They came, in each shire, to the hill where the shire-moot met, and there they took depositions on oath from the sheriff of the shire, the sub-vassals, representatives of the hundred, the priest, the reeve, and six villeins from each manor, and they asked:

The name of the manor—

Who held it under Edward the Confessor—

Who then held it—how many hides there were on the manor, how many ploughs were on the domain, how many villeins, how many cottars, how many bondsmen, how many freemen, how many socmen, how much wood and meadow pasture, how many mills and fishponds, and what was the value of it all in money?

Let us hear how the representatives of the hundred of Hounslow answered.

'Walter de St. Waleric,' they said, 'holds Gisteleworde (Isleworth). It was always assessed for 70 hides. The land is 50 carucates. In the demesne there are 6½ hides, and there are 6 ploughs there. Among the freemen and the villeins there are 28 ploughs and 11 more could be made. A priest has 3 virgates there, and there are 51 villeins each with 1 virgate, and 24 villeins each with half a virgate, and 18 villeins each with half a virgate, and 6 cottagers. A foreigner and a certain Englishman have 4 hides and they are proved knights. Under them reside 12 villeins and bordars, and there are 6 of the lord's villeins who hold 2 hides and half a virgate.

'There are two mills of 15 shillings' value.

'Meadow for the team of 29 ploughs.

'Pasture for the cattle of the vill.

'1½ weirs of the value of 12s. 8d.

'Wood for 500 pigs—For the herbage 12d.

'With all its profits it is worth £70.

'Manor. The same Walter holds Hamntone. It was assessed for 35 hides. The land is 25 plough teams. In the demesne are 18 hides and 3 ploughs. The villeins have 17 ploughs and 5 more could be made. There are 30 villeins each with 1 virgate, and 11 villeins with half a virgate, and 4 bordars each with half a virgate.' [1]

Let us try to get a picture of what life on a manor such as this of Hamntone might be like,

[1] 1 virgate = 30 acres approximately.
1 hide or carucate = 125 ,, ,,
5 hides or 1 knight's fee = 623 ,, ,,

though the customs that follow are taken from the records of several manors, at different dates, and would not probably have all been true of any one manor.

Suppose yourself looking out from the top of some high tower over the manorial lands. There is the church and the priest's house, the lord's hall, and the clustering cottages of the villagers, straggling loosely down a village path—each with its toft or farmyard. Away in the distance are the woods—full of the villagers' pigs feeding on beech-nuts and acorns. Between you and the woods is the common, covered with brushwood and rough grass; nearer still the fields. They are surprisingly streaky and without hedges. Some of them are brown plough-land, some seem waste, and some are green with the early spring crops. Or perhaps, if the manor is very backward, the fields would be divided into two large fields and not three. Next year at this time the waste or fallow land will be ploughed and so on. For the only way the people know of recuperating the land is to leave it fallow.

But the plough-land with its streaks is the most surprising feature of the landscape. There are perhaps forty-five tenants on the manor, thirty of them have about thirty acres each, and fifteen of them have fifteen acres each, but each man's acres do not lie close together; he holds them in one-acre strips, separated from one another by the one-acre strips of the other villeins, and between each strip is a baulk or thin strip of unploughed land. The system meant a great waste of good ground and much walking from one end of the manor to the other. Clearly no man could plough his thirty strips with his own plough, for moving his plough from one to another

would take too much time. The forty-five villeins must have their ploughs in common and so they do.

What sort of life was going on in these homesteads? They had not learned to fear overcrowding or dirt. The family all lived in one room, for the house consisted of nothing else, and their common and constant enemy was plague.

When in health, the villein's duties were first and foremost to cultivate his lord's demesne. He worked for him sometimes three days a week, sometimes more, sometimes less. As you watched from the tower, if it were the right season, you might chance to see him go forth with the two white oxen it was his duty to take to his lord's ploughing. Or perhaps, it was not his oxen he took out, but his horse and cart to carry his lord's corn to be ground at the neighbouring mill, or his lord's goods to be sold at market. 'On the manor of Alsiston in Sussex the tenants were required to carry whenever and wherever they were bidden; but if they could not return by nightfall the expense of the journey was borne by the lord.' Or, maybe his duty of the day was to carry his share of the thirty-four loads of wood for which the tenants in general were responsible.

Or it might have been the feast of St. Peter, and you, who love excitement, would have a chance of seeing the villeins all trooping out to bring the customary offering which they dared not refuse. Watch them laden under new-baked loaves, for each one brings ten, and has to give the platter; under his arm is tucked a hen and on the other arm, under the bread platter, hangs a basket of a dozen eggs. What a scene in hall

it must have been while the steward was marking the paid dues and giving each man a notched stick or tally—the receipt of those times.

In the Record Office in Chancery Lane can be seen some of these tallies, notched and cut down the middle, so that even if the lord said the villein had not paid, the latter could bring his part of the tally and fit it into the lord's part and show how well the two 'tallied.'

But these were not all the dues of St. Peter's Day. Some of the larger holders among the villeins had, in addition, to bring ten rams among them and some had to pay money, which was so rare a thing then, and valuable, that a single shilling was worth a whole ox. For money is like everything else, the more there is of it, the more of it must be given in exchange for things which are scarce. When people had few coins and quite a number of oxen you see what happened and how different things are nowadays.

Ploughing and carrying and paying the dues of St. Peter's Day were, however, by no means all that the villein had to do; there was the harrowing and mowing of meadow land, the making of hay, the harvesting and cutting, ditching, threshing, and hurdle-making.

But though this, which was called *week* work, took three days a week, and *boon* work often took another at the busiest harvesting seasons, yet these duties were not the most irksome of a villein's life. He must often have felt worried when he thought of his death to know that even then *heriot* was due to his lord—that is, that his children would have to give up the best beast he left them and sometimes, too, have to pay a heavy *relief* or fine to allow them to go on living on his holding. Then he was bound by many

regulations; he could not allow his daughter to marry without his lord's consent, or send his son to school or have him made a priest or apprenticed to a trade. He could not leave the manor, and he was punished if he fled and was caught; he could not even sell either horse or ox.

The lord had servants whose duties were to see that the villein did all that was required of him, and sometimes they must have given the villein a disagreeable time.

First there was the *seneschal* or steward, who visited all the manors owned by the lord two or three times a year. 'He should know how much land is in the demesne and the amount of crop it is expected to produce. And if there be any cheating in the sowing or ploughing or reaping he shall easily see it.' Next there was the *bailiff*, an even more obnoxious person to the lazy villein because his duty was to be responsible for a single manor; he lived there. His duty was 'to rise early every morning and survey the woods, corn, meadows, and pastures, and see what damage may have been done.' On him it depended to see that all the tenants performed all the services described above. The *reeve* was elected by the villagers as the best husbandman among them and, thenceforward, he had to watch their work and be responsible for them. It was not a coveted post, and a reeve sometimes paid as much as 40s. to escape the office. As the villeins depended much on what kind of bailiff or reeve they had, so in general the whole manor depended on what kind of lord it belonged to. If the lord were energetic, just, and kind, his officers dared not oppress the people. On the other hand, if he were lazy and easy-going, there was much oppression.

So in the kingdom at large, if the king were strong the lords were kept in order; ordinary dues were exacted and no more. These were paid at the knighting of the lord's eldest son, the marriage of his eldest daughter, and for his ransoming, if by chance he were taken prisoner. These ordinary dues were usually not very irksome. Men hated far more the dues known as *relief*, *wardship*, and *marriage*. The first meant that when a man died, his heir had to pay a large sum for the right to possess his land; the second that an heir, who was a minor, had to be looked after by the overlord; and the third that the overlord had the right to marry an heiress to whom he would.

When William I. was succeeded by his second son, William II., men began to see what these dues might mean. The relief at times was so great that the land or part of it had to be sold to pay it. A minor was so well looked after that, on attaining his majority, he found that the king had used up all his property; and heiresses discovered that the man the king generally chose for them was he who had offered the largest sum of money for their hand. But what William himself did, he took great care to prevent his vassals from doing; so, though his reign was an unhappy one for the lords, the poorer folk were protected. This was true too of Henry I., who succeeded his brother in 1100. But when Henry's cousin, Stephen of Blois, began to reign in 1135, we see what happened under the feudal system at its worst. Here is an extract from the *Saxon Chronicle*.

'When the traitors perceived that he was a mild man and a soft, and that he did not enforce justice, they did all wonder. They had done homage to him, and sworn

oaths, but they no faith kept ; all became forsworn, and broke their allegiance, for every rich man built him castles, and defended them against him, and they filled the land full of castles. They greatly oppressed the wretched people by making them work at these castles, and when the castles were finished they filled them with devils and evil men. Then they took those whom they suspected to have any goods, by night and by day, seizing both men and women, and they put them in prison for their gold and silver, and tortured them with pains unspeakable, for never were any martyrs tormented as these were. . . . Many thousands they exhausted with hunger. I cannot and may not tell of all the wounds, and all the tortures that they inflicted upon the wretched men of this land ; and this state of things lasted the nineteen years that Stephen was king, and ever grew worse and worse. They were continually levying an exaction from the towns, and when the miserable inhabitants had no more to give, then plundered they, and burnt all the towns, so that well mightest thou walk a whole day's journey nor ever shouldst thou find a man seated in a town, or its land tilled.

' Then corn was dear, and flesh, and cheese, and butter, for there was none in the land—wretched men starved with hunger ; some lived on alms who had been erewhile rich ; some fled the country. Never was there more misery, and never acted heathens worse than these. At length they spared neither church nor churchyard, but they took all that was valuable therein, and then burned the church and all together. Neither did they spare the lands of bishops, nor of abbots, nor of priests ; but they robbed the monks and the clergy, and every man plundered his neighbour as much as he could. If two or three men came riding to a town, all the township fled before them, and thought that they were robbers. The bishops and clergy were ever cursing them, but this to them was nothing, for they were all accursed and forsworn, and reprobate. The earth bare no corn, you might have as well tilled the sea, for the land was all ruined by such deeds, and it was said openly that Christ and His saints slept. These things, and more than we can say, did we suffer during nineteen years.'

VII

EARLY JUSTICE

'Time makes ancient good uncouth.'

N that wonderful book *Erewhon*, by S. Butler, a book full of adventures that never could come true, full of wise philosophy or thoughts about wisdom, there is described a weird land called Erewhon. In this land that never was, the people had strange ideas of justice and of punishments. There it was wicked to be ill and only unfortunate to be bad. If the police caught a man with a cold, they took him before the judge and sent him to prison where nothing was done to make him well, and he, more or less promptly, died. If they caught a man who had stolen the silver spoons, they sent for the doctor who sympathised with him, put on his best bedside manner, and prescribed medicines. For in Erewhon, they thought no one could help being wicked, just as we think, or used to think, no one could help being ill. Wickedness in Erewhon was considered to be the fault of a man's education or of his environment. It all sounds very odd and foolish, but Butler wished us to reflect upon the punishments we ourselves give for wrong-doing; they are not particularly wise or successful, because they rarely lead to the reform of the criminal.

It is interesting to examine the kinds of punishments which satisfied the ideas of justice held by our ancestors.

In Anglo-Saxon days, before the Normans, we hear of laws called 'Alfred's Dooms,' which contained regulations of the following character: 'If a man smite a neighbour with a stick or with his fist, let him get him a leech and do his work for him till he is well.'

'If an ox gore a man or woman let it be killed and its flesh thrown away so that no one may eat it.'

No punishment was to befall the master of the ox if he did not know it to be fierce, but if he knew it and refused to shut up the beast, then he was condemned to death; he could, however, redeem his life by paying 'Wirgild,' or the price of a man. If an ox gored a man's servant, 30s. was paid to the man's master and the ox was stoned to death.

In those days, every crime had its money price; for rendering a man deaf the offender paid the injured one 60s.; for putting out his eye 66s. 6⅔d. A man's front tooth was reckoned at 8s., his grinders at 15s., his first finger 15s., and a mere nail 4s.

With the coming of the Normans a great change, or rather many changes, took place in the laws. William I. separated the courts in which clergymen were tried from the courts in which laymen were tried. Before his time the bishops had heard the pleas of clergymen in the ordinary Shire Courts; henceforward, they would hear them in ecclesiastical courts, and clergy would be under a different law from laymen. The severest penalty the Church Courts could inflict was 'unfrocking.' If, for instance, a clergyman

committed a murder, he was tried in a church court; if found guilty, he was unfrocked; that is, he ceased to be a priest and became a simple layman. Doubtless this was a terrible punishment to a true-hearted priest, but to bad priests, just those who came before the law, it would be no punishment at all.

The Shire Court met for ordinary justice in the open air, often on a hill and all free landowners were bound to attend. They it was who had to find the 'dooms' or verdicts. The accuser came to court; he said that the accused was guilty, and the accused replied 'I am not.' Then the accused took an oath that he was not guilty, and brought 'oath helpers' or 'compurgators' who swore to his innocence. And these were not likely to perjure themselves, for the perjurer, so it was believed, would, as a penalty for lying, either be struck dead or turned into a dwarf.

One of the favourite ways of deciding whether a man was guilty or not was by *ordeal*. If the accused could walk blindfold over a red-hot ploughshare, or carry a red-hot iron of a pound's weight three paces, and his hands being bound up for some days showed no sign of having been burnt, he was thought to be innocent.

Then there was the ordeal of cold water. The accused was thrown into a pond; if he floated it was a sign that water would have nought to do with him and therefore he was wicked; he was taken out and executed. If he sank he was innocent, but then he was also drowned.

A third ordeal was the ordeal by battle. The accuser and the accused fought the quarrel out. They each took an oath that they had 'eaten nothing and drunk nothing whereby the law of God may be debased or the devil's law exalted.'

They fought with wooden weapons and the defeated was not slain by his adversary, but afterwards hanged.

At times, and in questions of money, such as the 'Doomsday Survey,' the king's commissioners called together men of repute and questioned them. This was known as holding an *inquest*.

Henry II.'s chief claim to fame is that he instituted the jury not suddenly or at any one time, but by a series of decrees known as *Assizes*. The jurors in those days were men who knew all about the case; they gave evidence, and if the first twelve men chosen could not reach a common 'verdict,' more were added to them till twelve were found agreeing.

It was only by very slow degrees that trial by jury took the place of all the other kinds of trial.

In the case of a criminal, certain men of repute in his district would make a statement that he was suspected of the crime. This statement was made on oath, and the man was sent for trial before a jury of twelve. It is said that the first set of men or indicting jury were the origin of our Grand Jury, and the second set of twelve the origin of our Petty Jury.

Nothing was more uncertain than justice in those early days, and it must have been exciting to the innocent. Every man was in duty bound to follow the hue and cry after a felon; but if the felon could reach the confines of the township the hue and cry ceased, or was taken up by a new set of people, because no one need pursue the criminal beyond his own district.

We hear that in Northumberland in the year 1279 there were 'seventy-two homicides, brought about by eighty-three people, but of these only three were hanged. Sixty-nine escaped, six took

sanctuary (in some church or holy place), two were never identified, one pleaded clergy, one was imprisoned, and one was fined.'

G. G. Coulton tells the following tale[1] of a case at Yelvertoft. 'William of Wellington, the parish chaplain of Yelvertoft, sent John, his parish clerk, to John Cobbler's house to buy candles, namely, a pennyworth. But the same John would not send them without the money; wherefore the aforesaid William waxed wroth, took a stick and went to the house of the said John, and smote this John on the forepart of the head with the same stick, so that his brains gushed forth and he died forthwith.' William took sanctuary in the church of Yelvertoft. Then the four neighbouring townships held an inquest before John of Buckingham, and said on oath that no one was guilty of the murder but William. William confessed the deed, and his punishment was to abjure publicly the realm of England.

He set out to Dover, the port assigned to him, wearing the criminal's dress, a loose white tunic, and carrying a wooden cross to show that he claimed the protection of the Church. He was bound always to keep the road and not to spend more than a night in one place. On reaching Dover he would walk into the sea up to his knees to show that nothing but the lack of a boat kept him from departing, and when a boat was available, he would leave England under oath never to return.

We hear that sometimes under the Normans, if a Norman were found slain and no one knew anything of the slayers, the whole district called the 'Hundred' was fined, and the money went to enrich the Royal Treasury.

[1] 'Chaucer's England,' by G. G. Coulton.

All through the Norman and Plantagenet times the pleadings in the law courts were in Norman-French, which must have been very hard for the English poor man, but since 1363 English has been used. Some of the lesser punishments were very appropriate to the crime; for instance, in 1364, a certain John Penrose was made to drink a draught of his own bad wine while the rest was poured on his head, and he had to forswear the calling of a vintner. Again, a man who sold bad pigeons was put in the pillory, and the bad pigeons burnt under his nose.

VIII

MAGNA CARTA

HERE is no commoner word in the history of these middle years than the word Carta, a writing. Individuals and towns and nations treasured their scrap of parchment, with its huge and dangling seal, whereon was written down that the man or town or people, as the case might be, should have and hold for ever some right, some liberty, which would make their lives bearable and of which their overlord had been wont to deprive them.

But the Great Charter specially deserves its name, and this was the history of its winning. No great event ever happens suddenly. It has its causes far back, often in unexpected things, and it would not be easy to say what was the first event that led to the signing of the Charter.

Richard I., who succeeded Henry II. in 1189, spent nearly all the ten years of his reign away from England, and left his barons to try their hand at governing. His Crusades and his ransoming accustomed the people of England to regard their king, first as the great salesman, and secondly as the cause of crushing taxation. Richard sold such things as the Earldom of Northumberland, the Justiciarship of England, and the sheriffdom of three counties. He would have sold London itself, he said, had he been

able to find a purchaser. The tax for his ransom was one quarter of income added to a quarter of movable property; it was levied three times, and it was only one of the many taxes of that heavily burdened reign.

In 1197, when certain barons were summoned to give the king three hundred knights for another war against his overlord, the King of France, Hugh of Lincoln, wearied by exactions, refused. It was the first sign of approaching revolution.

Before that war was ended Richard was dead, and his brother and successor, John, had lost most of the continental possessions of the English. The new king, from ruling an empire that stretched from the Tweed to the Pyrenees, found himself King of England only, and of an England whose temper was very sore from long-continued military service and defeat. And the army, which still meant the feudal barons and their servants, had at that time a powerful ally in discontent—the Church. In 1204 a great Archbishop of Canterbury, Hubert Walter, had died. According to the custom the king should have nominated and the clergy of the cathedral should have elected the next archbishop. But the monks of Canterbury distrusted the king, and sent their own nominee secretly to get the pallium, the sign of the archbishop's office, from Pope Innocent III. The king heard of what the monks had done, and hurriedly sent his nominee after the first. The two arrived in Rome together, and the Pope, liking neither, and entirely contrary to law and custom, declared an Englishman, who happened to be in Rome, archbishop. This was Stephen Langton.

Then began a duel between the king and the Pope. The king would not allow the new archbishop to land. Therefore the Pope put England

under an *interdict*. This meant that no religious services could take place, and it must be remembered how much more the people of that time would feel such a rule than would the people of to-day. For five long years only baptism and extreme unction were allowed. For five years, there could be no marriages inside the church. There could be no public masses. The dead were buried without prayers in the ditches and highways. The churches and abbeys were closed. Even the church bells were stopped, and no one knew the time, or when to go to work or to stop work, except by the sun.

But the sufferings of his people made no difference to a selfish king like John.

The Pope excommunicated the king. But the king would not allow the *bull* or letter of excommunication to reach England. News, however, of it arrived, and men began to feel that they had no right to serve an excommunicated king. Geoffrey, Archdeacon of Norwich, said so; he was pressed to death beneath a cope of lead. The king suspected the barons of wishing to rebel, and demanded their sons and daughters as hostages.

The wife of one of his friends, William of Braose, very naturally refused to surrender her children, seeing John's records; her husband was starved to death. The barons, who, up to now, had each hated the other, began to draw together in a common hatred of the king.

The lesser people had long been suffering. No one was allowed, for trade or any other reason, to enter the country or to go from it without the king's permission. Torture was used against any who offended the king. A Jew who refused money had a tooth extracted each day

till he yielded. In 1212 John hanged twenty-eight Welsh boy hostages to keep that country from joining his foes.

In 1213 the Pope authorised the King of France to invade England. John at last, seeing an enemy in front and a solid mass of hatred in his own country, determined to surrender to the Pope. At Dover, in the House of the Templars, he surrendered his kingdom to the Pope, and received it back on condition of paying an annual rent of 700 marks for England and 300 for Ireland. Then the new archbishop landed. The king made an alliance against France to revenge himself for his humiliation. He intended, when the war was over, to return for vengeance on his own people.

In his absence abroad, the archbishop, the barons, and the people drew together to resist him. Fortunately for English liberty the peasants of France were able to win a battle against the English king and his German and Flemish allies at Bouvines. John returned defeated, to be forced, however unwillingly, to affix his seal to the writing his barons laid before him at Runnymede on the Thames.

However often Magna Carta may have been set aside and its principles denied since that June day in 1215, it remains a great monument to men's will to be free, to their will to live out their ordinary lives in safety from unlawful terrors.

Here are some of its clauses :—

'12. No scutage or aid shall be imposed in our kingdom save by the common council of our kingdom, except for the ransoming of our body, for the making of our eldest son a knight, and for once marrying our eldest daughter ; and for these purposes it shall be only a reasonable aid ; in

the same way it shall be done concerning the aids of the city of London.

'13. And the city of London shall have all its ancient liberties and free customs, as well by land as by water. Moreover we will and grant that all other cities and boroughs and ports and villages shall have all their liberties and free customs.

'15. We will not grant to anyone, moreover, that he shall take an aid from his freeman, except for ransoming his body, for making his eldest son a knight, and for once marrying his eldest daughter and for these purposes only a reasonable aid shall be taken. . . .

'20. A free man shall not be fined for a small offence; and for a great offence he shall be fined in proportion to the magnitude of his offence, saving his freehold; and a merchant in the same way, saving his merchandise; and the villein shall be fined in the same way, saving his wainage, if he shall be at our mercy; and none of the above fines shall be imposed except by the oaths of honest men of the neighbourhood.

'28. No constable or bailiff of ours shall take anyone's grain or other chattels without immediately paying for them in money, unless he is able to obtain a postponement at the good will of the seller.

'39. No free man shall be taken, or imprisoned, or dispossessed, or outlawed, or banished, or in any way injured, nor will we go upon him, nor send upon him, except by the legal judgment of his peers, or by the law of the land.'

IX

THE GREATNESS OF THE CHURCH

'Is nought so sicker for the soule certés, as is do wel.'

IN the days of the Norman kings and their immediate successors, there were many changes in the English Church. Two the common people of the land must have seen most easily, the beginning of the building of the great cathedrals and the immense increase in the growth and activity of the monasteries. Churches rose in every village, and monasteries in the towns and cities were built after a style hitherto unknown. One cannot help wondering whether in England the people joined in the building with the enthusiasm with which the French built Chartres in France. Brother Haimon, writing about 1145, exclaims :—

'For who ever saw, who ever heard, in all the generations past that kings, princes, mighty men of this world, puffed up with honours and riches, men and women of noble birth, should bind bridles upon their proud and swollen necks and submit them to wagons which, after the fashion of brute beasts, they dragged with their loads of corn, wine, oil, lime, stones, beams and other things necessary to sustain life or to build churches, even to Christ's abode? Moreover, as they draw the wagons we may see this miracle that, although sometimes a thousand men and women, or even more, are bound in the traces (so vast indeed is the mass, so great is the engine, and so heavy the load laid upon it), yet they

go forward in such silence that no voice, no murmur, is heard.' [1]

Chartres, in its wonder of painted glass and carved stone, bears out the tale of its building being a labour of exceeding devotion, and the Norman-English cathedrals of Durham and Winchester and Ely are little behind in beauty. We are told that when St. Hugh set the master mason, Geoffrey de Noiers, to rebuild Lincoln, 'he oftentimes himself bore the hod load of hewn stone or of binding lime.' An ordinance of York in 1370 gives us some idea of mediæval ideas about hours of work. The masons were to be at work in the cathedral 'as early as they can see,' and 'to work all day with one hour for dinner and twenty minutes for drink.' So rich and rare indeed did churches and abbeys become that the clergy themselves began to fear the enthusiasm, which they at first encouraged. 'This superfluity and costliness of building and stone walls is a cause,' wrote Peter, Bishop of Tournay, 'why we have in these days less pity and alms for the poor. Moreover this lust of building is testified by the palaces of princes, reared from the tears and the money wrung from the poor. But monastic or ecclesiastical edifices are raised from the usury and breed of barren metals among covetous men, from the lying deceit and deceitful lies of hireling preachers; and whatsoever is built from ill-gotten gains is in much peril of ruin. . . . St. Bernard wept to see the shepherds' huts thatched with straw, like unto the first huts of the Cistercians who were beginning to live in palaces of stone, set with all the stars of heaven.' [2]

[1] G. G. Coulton, 'The Mediæval Garner,' No. 51.
[2] Coulton, No. 51.

Of this building activity we get some idea, when we hear that 115 monasteries were built during the nineteen years of Stephen's reign, and 113 under Henry II., and that the building of a monastery was not like the building of a mere cathedral. It had its church, often little less magnificent than the cathedral itself, as anyone can see who visits Ripon Cathedral and compares it with the ruined and wonderful Fountains Abbey standing within sight of its towers; the making of a monastery meant the building of vast blocks of guest-houses and dormitories, of an abbot's house, of a dining-hall and kitchen, of a hospital for the sick, of a library and writing cells for the scribes, of stalls and barns; it meant the creation of extensive drainage works to render the unwholesome, water-clogged fields cultivable; it meant the building of roads to ... the produce of the country to the monks, ...ilding of water-mills to grind the corn, and ...servoirs in which to keep the fish for their ...ys; it meant in a word the gathering of ...hole countryside into a vast hive of business. ...e earliest monks, whose daily lives we read of ... earlier chapter, were Benedictines. Before ... time of the Conquest came monks from ...; these crowding new-comers of the twelfth ...ury were the Cistercians, a body of monks who sought out the loneliest places, and who, by the necessities of their own life, though their aim was to find solitude, turned the lonely swamp and moorland into cultivated, populated fields.

The changes of which the ordinary people were perhaps not so directly aware, were yet destined to have a great effect ultimately on their daily lives. These were changes in the ideas of Church government. With the Normans came from the

Continent the idea and practice of a feudal Church; that is, on the Continent, lands had been granted to bishops and abbots by kings and nobles, and those bishops and abbots held them by feudal right just like every other vassal. They performed the feudal services and paid the feudal dues. But they differed in one respect from any other vassal; they could have no sons to inherit their land. When, for instance, a bishop died, his successor had to be chosen. The ancient rule of the Church was that the clergy of the diocese chose the bishop, and the monks of the monastery the abbot. But by degrees it had become the custom for the feudal chief, were he king or duke, to choose the bishop or the abbot. He left the form of election to the clergy and monks, but if they chose some one he did not want, he refused to allow that some one the use of the lands belonging to the bishopric or the abbey.

The bishop, once chosen, had to go through the ceremony of *investiture*. He did homage to the king, and the king gave him the lands attached to his office. Then the king gave him a ring and a crook, the sign that he was to be wedded to the Church and to be the shepherd of his people. A good and wise king, of course, would choose good bishops, but kings were not often both good and wise. Often they chose that man to be bishop who paid the highest sum of money for the honour. This buying of holy office was known as the crime of Simony, after Simon Magus, who offered St. Peter money for the gift of the Holy Ghost. But sin though it was, it was not rare in the early Church. Sometimes, too, the king made a child a bishop, sometimes a mere friend or favourite of his own. Such ill-

chosen bishops seldom did their work well, and the lower clergy also became slack and often wicked.

Under these circumstances it seemed to the great Bishop of Rome, Pope Gregory VII., in the eleventh century, that what the Church needed to give it holiness and strength was that the supreme power in the world should be acknowledged to belong not to kings and emperors, but to the Church itself—that is, to the Pope as the head of the Church and Viceregent of God on earth.

Gregory had many a fight with kings and emperors over this opinion of his. The most interesting is his struggle with Henry IV., Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. This title does not mean that he was Emperor of Rome, or that there was anything holy about his empire, or even that he had an empire at all. It means merely that he had a proud title with immense claims and very little reality behind it. A predecessor of his in the overlordship of the German princes, Charles the Great, had helped a former Pope. That Pope in gratitude had crowned him with a special crown and had allowed him to believe himself the successor to the Cæsars and the superior of all the kings of Europe. So in 1075 Henry IV. bitterly resented Pope Gregory's efforts to force him to improve the government of the Church in Germany.

Perhaps you ask: 'Why in a History of England, suddenly turn aside to hear of Henry of Germany?' The answer is that no part of the history of England can be really understood without comparing it with the history of the whole world, and especially with that of the other European nations; but in a short history

of this kind, when there is so much to be said of England, we can only turn aside, when we must, when, as in this case, English history is in a special sense one with continental.

What Gregory claimed of Henry IV. of Germany —namely, to do homage to himself and submit to his advice—he claimed of all kings in Christendom. Writing to Henry in 1075 he says: 'And now, indeed, inflicting wound upon wound, thou hast, contrary to the rules of the apostolic chair, given the churches of Fermo and Spoleto—if indeed a church can be given or granted by a mere man—to certain persons not even known to us, on whom, unless they are previously well known and proven, it is not lawful to perform the laying-on of hands.'

To which Henry answered, addressing the Pope as 'False Monk': 'Such greeting as this thou hast merited through thy disturbances, for there is no rank in the Church but thou hast brought upon it, not honour but disgrace, not a blessing but a curse. To mention a few notable cases out of the many, thou hast not only dared to assail the rulers of the Holy Church, the anointed of the Lord—archbishops, bishops, and priests—but thou hast trodden them under foot like slaves ignorant of what their master is doing. By so crushing them thou hast won the favour of the common herd; thou hast regarded them all as knowing nothing, thyself alone as knowing all things. Yet this knowledge thou hast exerted, not for their advantage, but for their destruction; so that with reason we believe St. Gregory, whose name thou hast usurped, prophesied of thee when he said, "The pride of the magistrate commonly waxes great if the number of those subject to him be great, and he

thinks that he can do more than they all." We, forsooth, have endured all this in our anxiety to save the honour of the Apostolic See, but thou hast mistaken our humility for fear, and hast, accordingly, ventured to attack the royal power conferred upon us by God, and threatened to divest us of it. As if we had received our kingdom from thee!' [1]

Gregory's reply was excommunication. This meant no sacraments, which would probably have been a punishment little recked of by a rebellious king had it not carried with it outlawry from the society of the day. To an excommunicated man no man owed allegiance, or services, or dues; speech with him became a sin. He might be slain, and no justice would pursue the slayer. Henry, whose power depended on vassal service, sought in mid-winter the angry Pope at the hill-town Castle of Canossa. 'And there,' says the Pope, 'laying aside all the trappings of royalty, he stood in wretchedness, barefooted and clad in woollen, for three days before the gate of the castle, and implored with profuse weeping the aid and consolation of the apostolic mercy, until he had moved all who saw or heard of it to such pity and depth of compassion that they interceded for him with many prayers and tears and wondered at the unaccustomed hardness of our heart.' [2] But the Pope's victory was not final.

William I. of England refused, even as Henry had done, Gregory's claim to supremacy in England: he told him that no English king had ever done homage to a Pope and that he would not begin. He had appointed to the see of Canterbury Lanfranc, once Abbot of Bec, a most

[1] H. H. Robinson, 'Readings from European History.'
[2] Op. cit.

learned scholar, and with Lanfranc's advice the choosing of bishops was so carefully done that Gregory seems to have been content to leave this question of investiture alone in England for a time. But under Henry I. the question rose again.

William II. mocked at religion, and when a bishop died, he simply refused to appoint a new one at all and took the money of the bishop's see. Once, however, when he was treating the see of Canterbury in this way, he was taken ill, and, being superstitious, he sought to appease God by hurriedly appointing an archbishop. It happened that another Abbot of Bec, Anselm of Aosta, like Lanfranc, an Italian, who had gone to Bec in Normandy to seek learning, was at hand. He was dragged to the king's sick bed and forced to accept the archbishopric. 'It is yoking,' he said, 'an old, mild sheep with a fierce, untamed bull.' But Anselm, though one of the gentlest, humblest of men, could be very unsheeplike when the right was in peril. One of William's first acts on getting better was to demand a large sum of money from the archbishop for his appointment. Anselm thought he had a right to a certain moderate due according to feudal law, but to pay more, he considered, would have injured the poor of his flock. William angrily set aside any such argument. 'Treat me as a free man and I devote myself to your service, but if you treat me as a slave you shall have neither me nor mine,' was the archbishop's answer. It won him exile, but many a high-hearted rebel has felt since then kinship with that archbishop.

In his exile on the Continent Anselm found himself again in the midst of the investiture con-

test, and on his recall in 1100 by Henry I. he took up the Pope's side and refused to do homage even to a friendly king. For a time it seemed as if no settlement could be found, but Henry and Anselm were both wise, and, considering the matter calmly, they came to the conclusion that all men, including bishops, have two sides to themselves—a body and a spirit, and that being so, in a difficult case there might be a sharing out of things. The bishop, on his appointment, might do homage to the king for his lands, by which his body and the bodies of his servants lived; and yet receive the ring and staff, the signs of his spiritual power, from his spiritual overlord, the Pope. So it was arranged, and this compromise was also made in the settlement of investiture on the Continent at the Concordat of Worms in 1122.

The mediæval Church was more powerful than any mediæval State. Every one belonged to it. If you were a rebel against the King of England you might find allies among the subjects of the King of Scotland, but if you were a rebel against the Church there was no place to which you could turn for allies. The Church was mightily wealthy. It drew its wealth from voluntary gifts, from vast lands, from endless fines and payments for sins, from fixed dues, called tithes, on every man's possessions. It was wonderfully organised under a single head, and that head was believed to be not only all-powerful, but all-wise, and his decrees to be backed by all the thunders and lightnings of God Himself. It is indeed, beyond its wealth and its organisation, this belief that made the Church so all-powerful, so all-pervading. Every one in those days credited, without any doubting, the Church with

the power to send each individual at death to Heaven or Hell. All their books and all their pictures show this belief. We have only to read and to look, and we can, as it were, see into the minds of the men of the Middle Ages. There is no doubt there. There is also no Science there.

The people had absolute faith in the power of the clergy to do all things, even to upset the laws of nature. They saw nothing strange about such tales as that of St. Goar, who, entering a bishop's chamber, sought a place to hang his coat, and seeing a sunbeam, mistook it for an oaken beam and hung his coat on it successfully; or that of St. Gerald of Lismore, who, threatened with death if he did not perform a miracle, turned the king's dead daughter into a living son; or that of the market woman, who, angry with God for her losses in the market, stole the wafer of the Sacrament and put a toad upon it, and was punished by a black and loathly toad which leapt down her throat when she next attempted to communicate, and turned her body black, so that her husband consented to having her burnt forthwith.

It seems to us strange that the priests and saints should have allowed such things to be believed about themselves, but we must remember three things. First, that, with all their Latin learning, they themselves were very ignorant. They knew no Science, and therefore no reason for the impossibility of the things they believed. Secondly, they and their people had scarcely emerged from a time of heathen superstitions, even worse than the superstitions of the Church. For countless ages, going back to a time when helpless man had no weapon wherewith to

strengthen his puny, natural powers, and everything in nature, the burning sun, the freezing cold, the gloomy forest, even the breaking branch had been a terror, people had been accustomed to think almost everything, living or inanimate, filled with ill-will to themselves. Here are some of these older superstitions, the practisers of which the Church condemned.

III. Whosoever has prepared a table with three knives for the service of the fairies, that they may predestinate good to such as are born in the house.

IV. Whosoever shall have made a vow by a tree or water or anything save a church.

V. Whosoever shall pollute New Year's Day by magic inquiries into the future, after the pagan fashion, or who begin their works on that day, that they may prosper better than in any other year.

VI. Whosoever make knots or sorceries and divers enchantments by charms of witchcraft, and hide them in the grass or in a tree or in a branching road, in order to free their beasts from murrain.[1]

The third cause of the continuation of the terror which beset men's minds in those mediæval days was, unfortunately, the Church's love of power. The heads of the Church, as we shall see later from the life of Roger Bacon, seem not to have wished the knowledge of truth to enter in and take away fear, for they set themselves against what little investigation there was.

But, as Matthew Arnold points out in speaking of this mediæval Church, real power—and the Church had real power—is never built alone on fear. The Church had also won the love of the people. To it they owed everything which, at that time, raised their lives above those of beasts.

[1] Coulton's 'Mediæval Garner,' from Bishop of Exeter's 'Pœnitentiale' (1161-86), p. 115.

In their sickness the Church alone nursed and doctored them; in their ignorance the Church alone taught them; in their health the Church almost alone amused them with its miracle and mystery plays of which we shall hear in the chapter on amusements, with its pilgrimages and its Crusades, with its ceremonies of christenings, marriages, and funerals. In their business it was the great employer.

Perhaps the most lovable side of the early Church may be seen in the story of the friars. There were four bodies of friars. The Dominicans were founded by Dominic of Spain, and made it their chief business to teach the ignorant and the unbelievers; they were called the Preaching Friars. The others were the White Friars, the Augustinian Friars, and the Franciscans.

Of all who have followed Christ, no one seems to have managed to keep so much of the spirit of the Founder of the Faith as Francis of Assisi, after whom the Franciscans are named. Assisi is one of the hill towns of Umbria in Central Italy. It stands on a pinnacle of a hill looking across a deep valley to Perugia, its earliest enemy and rival on the opposite hill. There, about the year 1182, in one of the wealthiest households of a prosperous, combative, go-ahead city was born Francis, son of Bernardino, the cloth merchant. He grew up in wealth and gaiety, was fond of hospitality and boon companions, impulsive, generous; at twenty-two he was taken prisoner when his fellow-citizens were defeated by Perugia. During the illness, probably gaol fever, that followed, he spent his time planning deeds of military glory and preparing to equip himself to join his captain with the splendour of a prince.

But outside this city's walls the outcasts, the

very poor, the sick, the lepers grovelled in the unrelieved misery and filth that the Middle Ages allowed. The story goes that one day Francis, riding across the plain, was accosted by one of these, a leper. He rode on quickly without answering the beggar, but suddenly being moved by compassion he turned and kissed the beggar, and gave alms. The next minute he was alone on the vast plain, and the beggar was nowhere to be seen; Francis felt that he had met his Lord unawares. Whatever the truth of many similar stories of Francis's life may be, there came a moment when he abandoned all his gay living and his father's home, and went forth barefooted, and wearing the single brown cloak with 'the rope that goes all round,' to serve the very poorest and most neglected of all mankind. And this he did in a spirit of gaiety and boundless affection, which has endeared him to all men's hearts, whatever their religion. He seemed to love all humans, all beasts, and all growing things; he loved to praise God for 'Sir brother Sun, who lights up for us,' for Sister Moon, for cloudy and serene air, for all weathers, and for Sister Water, 'who is very useful and humble and precious and chaste.' Soon disciples, fired with his own zeal of love, were added to him, and the friars (*brothers*, from Latin *frater*) went forth into many lands.

Everywhere they were received with the devotion their own devotion called forth. In 1210 they won recognition from the great Pope Innocent III. In 1224 some of them arrived in England. True still to their founder, they landed penniless; even their passage over had been paid for them. For a time they kept their poverty, living on alms.

'Outside the city walls at Lynn and York

and Bristol; in a filthy swamp at Norwich, through which the drainage of the city sluggishly trickled into the river, never a foot lower than its banks; in a mere barn-like structure, with walls of mud, at Shrewsbury; in the "Stinking Alley" in London, the Minorites took up their abode and there they lived on charity, doing for the lowest the most menial offices, speaking to the poorest the words of hope, preaching to learned and simple such sermons—short, homely, fervent, and emotional—as the world had not heard for many a day.' [1]

But gradually after the death of Francis, the friars, too, like the monks, grew forgetful; they, too, collected wealth for their community if not for themselves, and by 1400 could be accurately pictured in Chaucer's Friar.

> 'For there he was nat lyk a cloysterer
> With a thredbare cope, as is a poure scolèr,
> But he was lyk a maister, or a pope;
> Of double worstede was his semycope.' [2]

It is one of the sad things to go to Assisi now, and see how the followers of Francis have raised in honour of him, who chose to possess nothing, a tomb more magnificent than tomb of emperor or Mogul; how Franciscans well clothed, well housed, well fed, pass unseeing among one of the poorest of populations; how with no touch of sympathy they allow animals with untended wounds to suffer on the very threshold of Francis's memorial Church.

[1] 'The Coming of the Friars,' by Jessop, p. 44.
[2] Prologue to the 'Canterbury Tales'—Chaucer.

X

EARLY SCHOOLS AND SCHOLARS

ONE of the greatest changes that ever took place in the world is the change from the old learning to the new that began in Italy at the end of the thirteenth century and reached England in the sixteenth. So before our story gets to that wonderful century let us look back at the old learning.

The earliest monasteries had schools attached to them, and if you turn back to Chapter II. you will find a translation of a part of one of the early school books, a set of questions and answers that Ælfric made in Latin and Old English to teach his boys Latin. This is the account the good boy gives to the master of a day in his life :—

'When I heard the signal I got up from bed and went to church and said the Nocturn (at 3 a.m.) with the brothers. Then we sang the Matins ; after that Prime (6 a.m.), with the Litany and First Mass. Then Tierce (9 a.m.) and the Mass of the Day. Then Sext, and then we ate and drank and slept, and again we got up and sang Nones, and now we are before thee prepared to hear what thou wilt say to us. At 4 we will sing Vespers and at 7 Compline.'

'Have you been whipped to-day ?' asked the master.

'No.'

'And your companions ?'

'Why ask me of these? Each one knows for himself if he has been whipped or no.'[1]

'What do you eat to-day?'

'Roots and eggs and fish and cheese, beans and butter.'

'What do you drink?'

'Ale, if I have it; if not, water.'

'Not wine?'

'I am not rich enough to buy wine, and wine is not drink for boys and fools, but for old men and wise.'

That boy sounds distressingly good, but when you hear his master's ideas you will not be surprised. 'At Nocturns, and indeed at all the Hours, if the boys commit any fault in the psalmody or other singing, either by sleeping or such like transgression,' said a later schoolmaster, 'let there be no sort of delay but let them be stripped forthwith of frock and cowl, and beaten in their shirts only . . . with pliant and smooth osier rods provided for that special purpose.'

'What can you do with them?' another master asked of Anselm. 'They are perverse and incorrigible; day and night we cease not to chastise them, yet they daily grow worse and worse.' Then Anselm answered: 'Ye cease not to beat them? And when they are grown to manhood, of what sort are they then?' 'They are dull and brutish.' 'Then,' said Anselm, 'with what good profit do ye expend your substance in nurturing human beings till they become brute beasts? Ye so hem them in on every side with terrors, threats, and stripes, that they can get no liberty whatsoever; wherefore, being thus indiscreetly afflicted, they put forth a tangle of

[1] This pleasant admiration of the boy who did not tell tales was dropped in later monastic schools, and tale-bearing became one of the rules.

evil thoughts like thorns, which they so foster, and bring to so thick a growth, that their obstinate minds become impenetrable to all possible threats for their correction. Hence it cometh to pass that, perceiving in you no love for themselves, no pity, no kindness, no gentleness, they are unable henceforth to trust in your goodness, believing rather that all your works are done through hatred and envy against them.' [1]

We are told that the good bishop's pleading converted that schoolmaster, but it did not convert the world. The rod continued to be given at the University, to the master of grammar at his ordination, as the very sign of his office, and it was part of the ceremony that he should publicly beat a boy, who was, we are glad to learn, given a groat to comfort him for his sufferings.

All through the Middle Ages school was a sorry place. Hear Erasmus's description of a school he knew in 1529:

'What shall we say of the type of school too common at the present time? A boy scarce four years old is sent to a master about whose qualifications for the work no one knows anything. Often he is a man of uncouth manners, not always sober; maybe he is an invalid, or crippled, or even mentally deficient. Any one is good enough to put over the grammar school in popular opinion. Such a man, finding himself clothed with an unlooked-for and unaccustomed authority, treats his charges as we should expect. The school is, in effect, a torture chamber; blows and shouts, sobs and howls, fill the air. Then it is wondered that the growing boy hates learning; and that in riper years he hates it still. . . .

'Nor can I personally, though few agree with me, advise parents to send their sons to school in monasteries

[1] Coulton, 'Mediæval Garner,' No. 15, p. 37.

or in the houses of the Brethren. For, whilst allowing the teaching brothers to be often good, kindly men, they are usually too narrow and ignorant to be fit to educate children. The monks make a good income out of their schools, which are conducted no one knows how, and are jealously hidden away in inner recesses of the convent. So I strongly urge: Choose for your boy a public school, or keep him at home.'

The lessons of school and university consisted first of the *trivium* or three subjects—that is, grammar, the use of words; rhetoric, the use of speech; and logic, the science of correct reasoning. Later, advanced scholars could add the *quadrivium*, or four subjects—arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music. The trivium and quadrivium together constituted 'the seven liberal arts.' Beyond these again were law, medicine, divinity, and philosophy.

Learning was more international then than now. All scholars spoke a common language—Latin, and could therefore travel with ease and hold an international reputation. Such among early Englishmen were Abelard of Bath, who travelled in Spain, Sicily, and Greece, and studied at Tours and Laon, and John of Salisbury, perhaps the greatest scholar of the twelfth century, who died at Chartres in 1180.

The greatest of the thirteenth century was another Englishman, Roger Bacon. We catch a glimpse of the difficulties that beset a scholar, in the life of this Roger, our first great scientist. He studied at Oxford and Paris. He applied himself to sciences and tongues, and taught languages, geometry, arithmetic, the construction of tables and instruments. He complains that he had sought books of science for twenty years and found them not. Altogether he seems

to have expended about £40,000 of our money in his almost fruitless search for books.

Despairing of the advance of learning in the world, he joined the Franciscans, but there his superiors forbade him to study or to write, and denied him writing materials. They might have succeeded in crushing him, had not the Pope overruled them and commanded Bacon to write a treatise for him. Bacon persuaded his friends to pawn their possessions and to send him writing materials, and so produced the *Opus Maius*, a work on Mathematics, Philology, Geography, Chronology, Arithmetic, and Music. Among his dissertations on instruments, he declared that ships could be driven without oars, carriages without horses, and that men would fly by means of a machine. But his greatest claim to fame is that he first endeavoured to introduce practical experiment as a means to knowledge.

It seems to have been the recalling of all English students from the University of Paris in 1165 that founded Oxford. We find in 1170 a university suddenly there, and we read that in 1186 Gerald of Wales read his *Topography of Ireland* before a vast concourse at Oxford, 'where the clergy in England chiefly flourished and excelled in clerkly lore.'

We must not think of a university as being anything like what it is now. There were no colleges until Walter de Merton founded his college in 1274.

Boys went to the university at thirteen and fourteen, and provided for themselves as best they could. Sometimes, as in Abelard's case, they followed a great teacher into the 'wilderness,' and, 'instead of spacious houses, they built themselves little tabernacles; for delicate food they

ate nought but herbs of the field and rough country bread; for soft couches they gathered together straw and stubble, nor had they any tables save clods of earth.' At Oxford we read that Richard of Chichester lived in one room with three others; that they had one robe among them, and so went out to lectures in rotation; they ate fish or flesh only on Sundays and feast days. We are not surprised to hear that these uncontrolled youths were very riotous.

Many regulations were made to quell their animal spirits. 'No master or scholar might dance with masks or noise whatsoever in the churches or the streets, nor go about garlanded or crowned with a crown woven of leaves or the like.' Tennis and other ball games were forbidden, as was the wearing of 'red and green hose and piked shoes,' and the keeping of 'dogs, fishing-nets, ferrets, falcons, hawks, and other pets.' Freshmen had a bad time; they were supposed to be wild beasts when they arrived, and had to go through a terrifying ceremony of 'humanising.' Their seniors would greet them with pretended horror at the wild-beast smell; then, with shears and pincers, which too often must have come into uncomfortable proximity to their persons, proceeded to deprive them of the horns, beard, claws, and beast-like teeth they pretended to behold.

Street brawls were everyday occurrences; town and gown were constantly at one another. In 1418 'Many scholars, armed in a warlike manner, caused great terror to the Mayor by lying in wait to kill him and his officers.' Scholars from different parts gathered together into 'Nations,' and Scotsmen fought Irish or North fought South wherever opportunity offered. So

we read a certain Michael, a certain clerk named John de Skurf, and one Madoc, a clerk of Wales, went through the streets with swords and bows and arrows, shortly before the hour of curfew, and assaulted all who passed by. Murder was done; but, as clerics could not be hanged for the first murder, all they had to do, as far as the Law was concerned, was to take care for the future.

The townsmen also were guilty; injustice bred injustice. In 1209 a clerk killed a woman by accident and fled for fear of punishment. The burgesses pursued him to his inn, but not finding him there, took his three lodging companions before the king, who forthwith had them hanged. Whereupon all the other scholars fled, some to Cambridge, some to Reading, and some to Maidstone. So, it is said, was Cambridge founded.

In 1274 began the foundation of colleges; Merton College at Oxford was the first. In 1284 Hugh de Balsam, Bishop of Ely, founded Peterhouse in Cambridge. In 1373 William of Wykeham founded Winchester School, and endowed it to support a warden, ten fellows, a headmaster, an usher, seventy scholars, a chaplain, and choristers. But it was to be many a long day before hope came to the English schoolboy and English schools began to learn from foreign scholars to join work and games, and make men, not monks.

In 1320 Bishop Cobham of Winchester founded the first University Library, and in the next century Humphry of Gloucester, brother of Henry v., founded the Bodleian at Oxford. The difficulty of procuring books must have greatly handicapped knowledge, though then, as now, the truth lay in Roger Bacon's words: 'Nor is there any such difficulty in languages or sciences,

but only in the teachers themselves, who will not or cannot teach. For from our youth up we find no profitable teachers. . . . But, if we had capable teachers, I doubt not we should learn more in one year than we now learn in twenty.'

Books were very scarce. The largest library of a church dignitary had fourteen volumes. A list of the works belonging to sixty others gives them an average, apart from prayer-books, of one apiece. A small Bible cost about 40s. or £30 of our money. No trader or burgher possessed a library, and Bishop Richard de Bury sounds strangely modern when he laments that 'Education is despised and money rules the world.'

Early and late the scholars were alive to the need for educational reform. Bacon gave, in 1270, as the reason for the low state of learning 'the ignorance of teachers. Many thousands become friars who cannot read their psalter,' he says, 'yet they are set to study theology. They have presumed to inquire into philosophy without teachers, so that they are become Masters in Theology and Philosophy before being disciples.' In 1356 Bishop Grandisson attacked the custom of making boys learn by heart without proper understanding, and ordered all masters of grammar schools throughout his diocese to devote their time to making their pupils understand what they learned before they learned it.

Still nearly two hundred years later we find Erasmus writing: 'Great heavens! what a time was that when with vast pretension the verses of John Garland, eked out with amazing commentary, were dictated to the class, learnt by heart and said as repetition! . . . Further, as to the manner of teaching, what confused methods,

what needless toil characterised instruction! And even to-day schoolmasters are not seldom men of no learning at all, or, what is worse, of no character. . . . The critical years of a boy's life are allowed to run to waste; he acquires the habit, which cannot be cured, of giving but a fraction of his time and thought to serious pursuits, the rest he squanders on vulgar pleasures. The parent looks on and does nothing. And yet we hear talk of the "tender youth," "undeveloped capacity," "meagre results"—all so many excuses for wicked neglect of the child in his early years.'[1]

As old Hugh Latimer said: 'Let the preacher preach till his tongue is worn to the root, yet nothing is amended.'

[1] Erasmus, 'Concerning Education,' p. 221.

XI

LIFE IN THE COUNTRY

'We're not too low the cloth to weave
But too low the cloth to wear.'
E. C. JONES.

THE last time we looked on a country village in the day of Domesday Survey, we took notice of the peasants at their work. We did not, it will be remembered, visit the manor house, or the church, or the parsonage, or even the inn, and there might have been no people there except the labourers for all the notice we took of them.

But on this occasion we have more time. We may get some idea of these places and their inhabitants, and of life in the country, from the following account of the journey of two scholars to Cambridge. One of them is supposed to be speaking to us across the ages and telling us of the manner of his journey and of the things he heard by the way.

Our party set out on horseback. None but queens and very great ladies used the cumbrous carriages—very gaily decorated, covered vehicles on low wheels, drawn by five horses. Other women rode behind their men-servants, or were carried in a litter slung between two horses going tandem. Roads scarcely deserved the name; they

were rutty tracks and too few, for it was the landowners who had to repair the highway, and none did it till he was driven to do it. But none of these inconveniences were at all to be compared to the real danger of the road—the highwaymen. Since the Statute of Winchester had ordered the brushwood to be cut back for two hundred yards on each side of the road, these gentlemen were certainly not as terrifying as they used to be when they came on you unawares. Now at least you had time to draw your knife and defend yourself.

We soon ceased to be a very small party, for we overtook some merchants carrying wares to the fair at St. Ives, then a set of travellers consisting of half a dozen musicians with their harps, vielles, tambourines, cymbals, bagpipes, tabors, and horn: with them was one leading a savage-looking bear, which, however, he said was quite gentle and kept him warm o' nights if he had to sleep out. These and the merchants, being travellers by profession, were for the ale-house, but we hoped to make five miles more than they and find better lodging in the monastery guest-house as befitted our rank. The merchants were a large company, travelling together for fear of highwaymen, and, knowing the badness of the road, they had contented themselves with strapping all their wares to pack horses: on the top of two panniers amongst them were some carved posts that must have belonged to a very fine bed, for furniture even had to be carried thus, and at times this was a pretty awkward business.

But the above were not the only followers of the road we were to meet. By the roadside we saw, in the brushwood, a hut, the owner standing by the roadside begging. He was a hermit who was supposed to spend his life in solitude, but

we gathered from his tales, as he joined himself to us for a bit of the way, that his life was seldom lacking for companions. He told us of two pedlars who were travelling ahead of us, of the friars he knew, whose business seemed to him to be chiefly to act as news-carriers. The latest news he had had from them was of a village away to the east, where in the great hall lived an old lady, Petronilla de Gros. One night two gentlemen of birth and a large body of followers came to the Hall, seized Petronilla, set fire to the house in several places, and then forced the poor old woman in her terror to give up to them all her jewels.[1] One of our company happened to know the story to be true, but said it occurred in the time of his grandfather.

While we were listening to the hermit's tales, there met us a pilgrim, easily recognisable by his dress, carrying a scrip for food, a bottle for drink, and his pilgrim's staff. Queer little bits of silver jingled all over him, and we knew he had travelled far, and was, in fact, not a mere pilgrim but a palmer, destined to visit all the resting-places of all the saints, and never to rest himself. From each shrine he brought a little metal image as a proof of having added still another journey to the many of his life.

But it was drawing towards dusk, and the merchants, saying the monastery was more like ten miles than five beyond, we began to think of trying to find hospitality for the night in the village we could see fast appearing on the horizon. Only one lane ran through it; at what might be called the top end stood a very fine church; beyond it, and only just visible, was one of the largest manor houses I had so far seen. On the

[1] Jessop, 'The Coming of the Friars.'

left of the church was the parsonage, and quite a number of decent-looking houses, standing more or less in a straggling line down the road. Opposite them were a considerable number of the miserable huts all peasants lived in, many of them fallen and deserted since the Great Sickness. As our horses splashed through the stream we noticed an uncommonly fine water-mill, and wondered whether the lord of the manor charged a very heavy toll to the peasants when they ground their corn there. It was a crying pity that they were not allowed to grind it in their own houses like the Jews in the Holy Land. As we looked at our travelling companions we hesitated to go to the inn and face sleeping all together in the same room. They were all very well to share the open road with, and the merchants might have been not too disagreeable within doors, but the others were unutterably dirty, and one at least should have been supplied with a bell to warn other men from his company, like the lepers in the country.

So we turned aside to ask hospitality at the parsonage, but Sir Parson was not at home; he was one of those Italians whom the Pope at that time, in spite of the Statute of Provisors, which in 1351 had forbidden the Pope to give livings to foreign priests, so constantly sent to English livings. This Italian, it appeared, had grown tired of his dull country parish, had let his parsonage, and, like the priest Dan Chaucer wrote about, had

> 'Run to Londoun, unto Seint Poules,
> To seken him a chaunterie for soules;
> And leet his sheepe encombred in the myre.'

The living was poor to begin with, and now the lord of the manor had given up to the monastery

part of the tithe or tax paid to the parish priest, so no one who was better than a poor, illiterate peasant would take the living. Therefore the rich freeman had the parsonage, and the deputy-priest was living in a very poor place. 'But you are in luck's way,' said the priest as, with a wry face, he told us that his dwelling was too poor to take us in. 'You have but to go to the manor; Sir Ralph, my lord's eldest son, has been winning his spurs in the French war, and feasting and hospitality at the Hall is without ceasing and without stint.'

So it was. The manor house had been standing rather less than a half century. It was, looked at from the outside, oddly like a stone church, with the same shaped doors and windows. We rode across the drawbridge over the moat into the courtyard where our horses were left. Then we entered through the high-arched doorway which led into a stately passage separated from the hall itself by stone arches. The hall was one of the finest we were ever in, and different from the older halls in that it was on the ground-level instead of on the first storey. Its church-like windows stretched from the ground almost to the roof and gave it a most noble aspect.

The first thing that caught the eye in the dazzling scene upon which we entered was the massive table standing high on a dais at the far end, where my lord and his family in silk and jewels were already at meat; a welcome fire lit the middle of the room, but the wood-smoke, that never properly found its way through the roof, made one's eyes smart. Round the walls stood several tables dormant, and a place at one of them was at once assigned to us.

It would take long to describe that supper.

The tables were all lit with candles; minstrels sang and told tales; the trumpeters introduced the new dishes, and a good jester set us all a-laughing time and again. As was the custom, two of us, sitting side by side, ate from the same platter, but we could not taste all there was to eat—parts of strange fish like whales and porpoises; birds of all kinds, herons, magpies, starlings, sparrows; subtilties in pastry and 'jellies that glittered and gladdened the eye.' We wondered at the beautiful silver ship (the Nef) filled with sweet spices on the high table, and at the great, wrought-silver salt-cellar in front of my lord.

So we fell to with our knives and fingers, feeling glad of the dogs under the table who ate the bones as fast as we picked them, so that no one could see how many plovers' wings we devoured. There was one guest, my lord's sister, a prioress of a great convent, who surprised us all by her strange, foreign doings at table. Before she drank from her goblet, she wiped her mouth. And it was a pretty custom, for it kept the shiny cup free of grease. Well may those who have pretty things have pretty manners!

After supper the guests of the high table washed their hands in the bowls of lavender water that the pages brought them, and retired to the Solar or withdrawing-room. I asked a retainer to show me the house before we lay down to sleep.

At the back of the dais was the store-room, and over this, connected with the hall by a winding stair, the Solar. Leading out of the hall, near the front, was the great kitchen, over thirty feet across, with two open fireplaces and its great oven. The larder was a wonderful place where immense quantities of stuff were stored.

It always seemed a pity to those who thought about it, that so few animals could be kept through the winter because there was not enough food for them. How sick we got of salt meat from November to March. But there was no help. Meat had to be killed when there was no grass for sheep and oxen, and, as it would not keep, it had to be salted. The real misfortune was that salt was so dear that lots of people did not use enough, and then the meat went bad and caused illness among those who were obliged to eat it. It was the custom in many towns to send the bad meat to the hospital to be eaten by the lepers who were already sick. The cook told us that in December there would be not fewer than twenty carcases of oxen in the larder with other fish and meat to match.

The retainer asked us if we would care to see the barns and store-houses and stables, but we were tired and returned to the hall, where already many men and serving-women were beginning to snore comfortably in the straw, as near the fire as they dared lie.

But I could not sleep. There were so many questions I wanted to ask about this strange village, and in the firelight I could see that the eyes of the man who had showed us round were still open, so I pulled myself a little nearer to him and leaning over on my elbow I said, ' I suppose things in this village are the same as anywhere else.'

He looked at me, I thought, too sleepily to answer, but he said, ' I don't know anywhere else. I have never been out of this village, but I 'll tell you what things are like here.' Then he sat up and his eyes gleamed, and he spoke eagerly and fiercely but in a low tone, as if he were

afraid of being heard. 'Didst ever hear John Ball speak?' he asked.

'What,' I said, 'the mad priest from the north?'

'There was nought mad about him,' he replied. 'If he was mad, the others are mad too. In this village, I was coming out of Mass—it must be four years agone now, for I remember my little Kate was born the day after, and I thought the man must be good, coming so to speak, at the same time, and there was a large crowd outside the churchyard, and one speaking to them. There was nothing strange about that; the friars often preached outside, and the people would go to hear them as they would to see a dancing bear. Life here in the village is dull; parson never preaches, he just says the Latin Mass over and over again. It 's a great thing to hear a man talk, so I joined myself to them, and what he said was better than anything I heard before.'

'And can you remember what John Ball said?' I asked.

'Yes, these are his very words: "Things cannot go well in England, nor ever will, until every thing shall be in common; when there shall be neither vassal nor lord, and all distinctions levelled, when the lords shall be no more masters than ourselves. How ill they have used us! And for what reason do they hold us in bondage? Are we not all descended from the same parents, Adam and Eve? And what can they show, or what reasons give, why they should be more masters than ourselves except, perhaps, in making us work, labour and work, for them to spend? They are clothed in velvets and rich stuffs, ornamented with ermine and other furs, while we are forced to wear poor cloth. They have handsome

seats and manors while we must brave the wind and rain in our labours in the fields; but it is from our labour they have wherewith to support their pomp. We are called slaves, and if we do not perform our services we are beaten." [1]

'Now, isn't all that true?' continued my companion in the straw. 'Think of the law which parson says was passed in the thirty-and-sixth year of good King Edward III., the law that fixed what clothes every one should wear according to his rank. And we and our brothers who spin and weave the clothes may not wear them ourselves even if we had the money to buy them with. No, the gentry will have us clean different from themselves, as if we were made from different sod. Yet who are they but descendants of Adam, and

"When Adam delved and Eve span
Who was then the gentleman?"

Yes, it 's written down in their books in Westminster. I 've a great memory, and remember that the parson said that "carters, ploughmen, oxherds, shepherds, all keepers of beasts, threshers of corn, and all the people that have not forty shillings of goods shall not take nor wear any manner of cloth but blanket and russet of twelve pence, and shall wear girdles of linen according to their estate"; and that there were laws for farmers and knights too, but those didn't concern us.

'But we would never have thought of these things if it hadn't been for the other things that have been taking place during all the time since I can remember. I was free once. My eldest brother, he was learned and a chaplain, and he

[1] G. R. Trevelyan, 'The Age of Wycliffe.'

bought my father's freedom and we all became free with him. There were lots more in the village the same; the learned could look at the manor rolls and see it written down for you that such and such a one had bought his freedom, or better still, the freedom of his father. It was a queer thing, they say, that no villein could buy his own freedom, because all the money he had was really his lord's. But anyhow, many a man did buy his freedom when the lord wanted money to take him to the Wars of the Cross and to build his fine house. And isn't it possible now that it would be better to pay a man's wages and have him work for you all the week, than keep him a villein and only have him three days a week? The sheep and the oxen like to have the same hand with them all the time, and so for the matter of that do the ploughed fields and the harvest and the hay. Odd days' work is no work. And so thought villeins and lords, happily enough, until the Death came. And where were you, Sir, during that dreadful year?'

'Not yet come to earth, father,' I laughed.

'And was it as long ago as that?' he mused. 'Till that time came, commutation, as they call it, was going on merrily. The clergy told the lords at confession it would save them from their sins to make a fellow-creature free; and profit told them the same thing. Then came that year. No one who lived through it would ever forget it. I remember, though I was but a stripling, my father, that winter, ploughing in a light sprinkling of snow and a friar leaning on one of the smoking oxen and telling how the king had put off the meeting of Parliament because the foul Death had come to Westminster. People in

foreign parts had been dying like flies, first those who lived round Italy and France and Spain.

'Then a Spanish ship of trade had brought it to Bristol, and so it was in Westminster, which is not far from London, as I 've heard father tell. Well, one day a messenger out of London to Sir Ralph brought the Death here. I did not see him myself, but they say he came to the river, and, instead of fording it, he sat ten yards away and cried aloud for water, and when a man went to see the meaning of the sight of a man crying for water with our broad stream running by him, he was dead. There was no need to look for the black swelling under his arm or the purple patches on his skin; we knew by that time. But we kept away from the dead man, and we kept away from him who had gone to him; and it 's very likely the pestilence came to us on the wind, for it seized all at once.

'In the manor, on the rolls, there were fifty-seven families in the December of the twenty-second year of King Edward III.; six months later there were thirty! Twenty-seven families wiped out without an heir at all, and in the thirty there wasn't a family that hadn't lost some one. I lost my father, my mother, my brother, and two sisters. And there was I left the heir. Parson died, and his successor and his successor again. How good they were! Never for fear of death did they stop from carrying the pyx to a dying man, to shrive and bring comfort to his mind, though his body was racked with pain. Men tell how the Bishop of Norwich stayed in his palace by the churchyard consecrating fresh priests as the others died, even though the corpses were piled so high round his doors that the ground of the churchyard became

a high bank above the road, and the new priest coming for his sacring, would have to hold his nose for the smell.[1] There were not living enough to bury the dead, and the unburied dead were the chief cause why so many died.

'But that was not what I meant to tell you; it 's this village we are talking about. Well, more than half the labourers died, but the work the rest of us had to do wasn't less; it was more. The fields were neglected; some of us were too young to know our job, and some were too old to do it. Those who could work were willing to work double for double pay, and the lords, in a sense, willing to pay. A field of reaped corn is worth any money, when there is nothing else to eat. But if they could get labour for less, they would get it for less, and they began to feel that it would have been better for them if the villeins worked without wages as in the old days.

'So there began a rare looking into old parchments; the lawyers helped. They were ever friends to the lords, and they found many a writing which wasn't right; many a man who thought himself a free man, they said, was not free at all. Oftentimes the writing could not be found. But who was to know that the lord and his steward hadn't destroyed it on purpose, because seldom was more than one copy kept, and that in the manor house. It wasn't fair; no, it wasn't fair.

'But with all this they couldn't settle things. Those that were free got even higher wages, and those who were unfree envied them. Lots of these ran away to work for another lord. It was against the law, but labourers were needed

[1] See Jessop, 'The Coming of the Friars.'

and the secret was well kept. Those who couldn't get in somewhere formed themselves into bands, and took to the woods and troubled honest travellers.

'Then the Lords in Parliament, with the burgesses of the towns, who didn't know of the difficulties of the peasants, made a law called the *Statute of Labourers*. It was in the third year after the Black Death began. Those Parliament people insisted that wages were to be what they had been before the Death, when there were plenty of labourers, and they said that any labourer that asked more was to be punished.

'But you can't make laws for nature. If the wages had all been paid in houses and food and tools, you might have done it. But they were paid in money and money would go nowhere. There was very little grain grown, you see why, and that little was dear. How was the labourer going to get his dear bread with his little bit of money? And it was all dear; the weavers were dead and cloth was dear. And, as John Ball said, the lords had lots of all the things the labourers made, and are the labourers to have none? A man can't work and he starve. The very lords themselves did not keep their own laws. They had to have labourers, and if they couldn't have them for low wages they had them for high.

'And now things are not so bad. We get better wages. But, young man, why should things be bad at all? There was a preacher by here the other day, not a friar; he called himself a "poor preacher." Parson said he was a Lollard, whatever that may be. But what he said was that only the good could possess anything, and every good man possessed all things. And he

told us that if now we see bad men possessing things, yet the time is coming when the good labouring man shall take from the bad lord. He said that he had heard the great John Wycliffe preach this in Oxford University. But there was one who listened who said that John Wycliffe taught quite other, and said that "every man must pay his dues, even to a wicked master."

'But the friars, and they are good men as all allow, say that the Greeks and the Romans, who lived here before our grandfathers, believed that "all things under Heaven ought to be had in common." And it 's true that the apostles did have all things in common, and so we are going to have them also. But it 's my opinion that it won't be in my day nor yet in yours.

'In this village we would be quite content if we could only get our freedom, all of us, our freedom from manor service, and if there was a fixed law that we might all commute our services for a rent of 4d. an acre. That would be a beginning, though I am not saying that there isn't a lot more we want. Why can't they let us use the forest land and catch the wild game for our food? Sir, they that know tell us a great time is coming. A message will go through the land and the labourers will be brothers. We in this village are all of "the Great Society," and we are waiting. When John Ball rings the bell we shall be ready.'

XII

THE PEASANTS' REVOLT

TO the general discontent of the peasantry, described in the last chapter, was added the heavy taxation consequent on a long-drawn-out war which, beginning successfully, had ended in defeat and shame.

Three times within four years a poll tax was levied—that is, a tax on every head. Sometimes it was graduated—that is, a duke might pay 13s. 4d., and a labourer 4d. for himself and his wife. At the last levy, it was noticed that the population had suddenly grown smaller and that nearly every one had as suddenly got married. The thing needed looking into; the Government sent out a new set of commissioners to see what cheating there had been. But the villagers thought this meant the collection of a fourth tax on every head.

Angrily at Brentwood, in Essex, they refused to pay anything more. The king's commissioners, as angrily, commanded their soldiers to arrest the rebels. But the rebels chased the soldiers out of the village, and then themselves took to the woods spreading the long-awaited message. These messages were a kind of rhythmic catchword. One ran as follows:—

'Jack Milner asketh help to turn his milne aright. He hath grounden small, small. The King's Son of

Heaven he shall pay for all. Look thy milne go aright, that the four sails and the post stand in steadfastness. With right and with might, with skill and with will. Let might help right and skill go before will and right before might, then goeth our milne aright. And if might go before right, then is our milne misadight.'

Another was—

'Jack Trueman doth you to understand that falseness and guile hath reigned too long.'

And a third :—

'John Ball greeteth you well all and doth you to understand that he hath rungen your bell.'

The rebellion was afoot, soon all Essex and Kent were astir. Rochester Castle fell, it seemed, at the shout of the unarmed multitude. The mayor and bailiffs of Canterbury were terrified into taking an oath of fealty to 'King Richard and the Commons.' The peasants marched on London, gathering support as they went from the peasants of the home counties, and, whenever they could, taking vengeance on lawyers and burning manor houses to get rid of the rolls that kept them serfs. Armed with their 'sticks, rusty swords, battle-axes, bows coloured by smoke and age, and one arrow apiece,' they reached Blackheath. There, John Ball, whom they had released from prison, preached to them from the text :—

'When Adam delved and Eve span
Who was then the gentleman?'

The gates of the city were shut, but the rebels had many friends within. The poor were on their side; the prentices, accustomed to street fights, longed for a really big fray; so two gates were opened to them and, led by Wat Tyler,

they entered the city. 'Hob and Straw, Piers and Gamelyn stared at sights which neither they nor their fathers nor grandfathers before them had beheld, the mighty city of red-tiled roofs, the endless labyrinths of narrow lanes and winding alleys, the innumerable churches, the wharves where strange seafaring folk spoke tongues they had never heard and used gestures they had never seen.'[1] They reached the palaces and clamoured for the death of those of the ministers of state, who had taken refuge in the Tower.

Then the boy king, Richard II., consented to meet them at Mile End. He asked them what they wanted, and they replied that they wanted to be free men all and have their services commuted for a rent of 4d. an acre—that and no more. These demands the king granted, and the peasants, believing his promises, joyfully hastened back to the city, the king in their midst, to tell their fellows that freedom should be theirs.

Unfortunately, while this meeting was going on, another band of rebels had broken into the Tower and slain the archbishop, to whom they attributed many of their sufferings. Again the king, hoping to make peace, met the rebels at Smithfield. To his demand as to what they desired, they replied: 'freedom,' and, in addition, that the laws of outlawry should be done away with, that the Church should be disendowed, and that the forests should be free for all to hunt in. At one moment, the king's followers seemed to fear that the rebel leader, Wat Tyler, would insult the king. The mayor therefore tried to arrest him, but Tyler resisted and was slain. The rebels all raised their bows to shoot, but the

[1] See Trevelyan, 'The Age of Wycliffe.'

boy king rode into their midst: 'I will be your leader,' he said, and his courage won them. Again they listened to his promises of safe-conduct home if they would go home quietly.

Alas! this king was Richard II., too faithless and too weak to keep his word. At his command a great army pursued the peasants to their homes, hanging and slaying, in brake, in thicket, or on road, wherever a peasant could be caught. Some peasants came to protest to the king himself, but only to get this answer: 'Serfs you are and serfs you will remain.'

So, for three weeks, the slaughter of peasants went on. But they did not remain serfs. At first it seemed as if the peasants' rising had failed, and as if they were worse off than before. But in 1395 the Statute of Labourers was amended; the custom of fixing wages by Parliament was dropped, and the question left to be decided by the Justices of the Peace in each county. In just two hundred years there was not an unfree man left in England, and the rising had taught masters that too great oppression had its dangers.

XIII

LANGLAND AND CHAUCER

THERE are two great books in Early England that tell us how people lived about the year 1380, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and Langland's *Piers Ploughman.* The *Canterbury Tales* are written in an English that even schoolboys and girls can understand with a little attention, while the English of *Piers Ploughman* is much more like a foreign tongue; the *Tales* are about the rich and merry, but the ploughman tells us only of the poor and discontented.

Langland says that 'In a summer season when soft was the sun,' weary and forwandered he fell asleep on the Malvern Hills. And in his sleep there befell him a faery happening. He saw

'A fair field full of folke; of all manner men the mean and the rich;
some were at the plough and played full seldom; in setting and sowing they worked full hard;
and won that which masters with gluttony destroyed.'

He saw, too, those who set their pride in dress; those who gave their time to prayers and penance; hermits who dwelt in cells and cared not to wander about; pilgrims and palmers planning to

travel to Rome who had 'leave to lie all their life after'; he saw merchants, jesters, and janglers, bidders and beggars with their belly and 'their bags of bread full ycrammed'; hermits travelling to the shrine at Walsingham who had taken up a holy calling because they were too lazy to work; friars of the four orders who 'preached the people for profit of themselves.'

He saw the parish priest and the pardoner sharing the silver that the poor of the parish ought to have had, and the parson and the priests complaining to the bishop of the poverty of their parishes since the pestilence time, and asking to be allowed to leave them and dwell in London 'and sing there for Simony, for silver is sweet.'

We see from Langland that few of these people are what they seem. In the field full of folk a marriage is toward. Lady Mead in rich and gay attire is to be married to Falsehood. By this Langland means that in the world riches all go to those who pretend best. But the marriage is stopped by Theology, and the case is tried in court. All Mead's friends, the clerks, the justices, the officials, the shopkeepers, and the merchants speak on her behalf; but Reason calls people to repent of their evil deeds, and every one is so affected by the pleadings of Reason that they all want to know Truth. But no one at all knows where Truth can be found, until the ploughman Piers says he knows, and offers to act as guide, as soon as he has finished ploughing his own half acre. And what he showed them was that the real truth is nothing but 'Do Well, Do Bet, Do Best.' Do Well stands for the man who works hard and is simply honest; Do Bet for the man who adds to these the helping of

others; and Do Best for him who adds to all the rest the love of God. These things the poorest can do, and Langland considers that the teaching of the Law and the Church of his day did not bring men nearer to these ends, but kept them further away from them.

Chaucer tells us how, at the Tabard Inn in Southwark, a company of twenty-nine met one night at the beginning of their pilgrimage to the tomb of Thomas Becket at Canterbury. To beguile the long ride, they agreed to tell two tales out and two tales coming back, and he who told the best tale should have 'a supper at our alle cost.'

All 'merrie England' was there; the knight who 'never yet no vileynye ne sayde, In all his lyf, unto no manner wight'; the young squire 'with lockes curled as they were laid in press'; the yeoman 'in cote and hood of green'; the solemn boasting merchant, the serjeant of the law, the country gentleman who was lord of hospitality in all the countryside; the clerk of Oxford, so poor that his horse is as lean as a rake, who has no coin to repay his friends for the money they lend him for books, save the prayers he so generously offers up for them; there are also representatives of the clergy who, with the exception of the poor parson of a town, are no more agreeable than those of whom Langland speaks.

The monk was there about whom the chief fact was that he loved hunting,

> 'And when he rood men myghte his brydel here
> Gynglen in a whistlynge wynd als cleare
> And eke as loude as dooth the chapel belle';

the friar whom it did not befit to have any

acquaintance with the beggars or the poor, and the horrid pardoner with his wallet

'Bretful of pardon come from Rome all hoot,'

who cheated the people up and down the country, extracting money from them by showing his false relics. The one good Churchman was the 'poure parson of a toen.'

'Wyd was his parishe and houses far asonder
But he ne left nat for reyn ne thonder,
In sicknesse nor in meschief to visite
The ferreste in his parisshe muche and lite
Upon his feet and in his hand a staff.
. . . . . .
But Christes loore and his apostles twelve
He taughte, but first he followed it hymselve.'

The women who were there we shall meet further on in the chapter on 'Women.' As to the tales the pilgrims told, all the life of England is in them too, and by reading them one gets a better picture of what people thought, of how they argued, of the books they read, of the pranks they played, of the characters they admired, than is given in any history book yet written.

XIV

THE TOWN

N early times nearly every borough was a part of some feudal estate; it belonged to a baron or an abbot or a bishop or the king. But as trade grew, wealth grew, and the towns began to see their opportunity of buying their freedom. Kings and lords and prelates needed money, sometimes for castle building, sometimes for armies, sometimes and more than all for going on the Crusades. The desire to go on a Crusade seemed to take Europe like a fever. Whether, as it is tempting to think, life in the Middle Ages was so dull and so uncomfortable that prince and peasant simply welcomed these wars for the Holy Sepulchre in Palestine as a delightful excuse to get away and see the world; or whether they were religiously desirous to place a Christian ruler in the land in which Christ walked; or whether they felt their chance of going to Hell so great that they greedily sought the Pope's promise of salvation to all Crusaders, it is true that for about two hundred years great crowds of men were constantly making their way from Europe to this war in the East. They needed large sums of money for their equipment, for their charities by the way, for their followers, often for their ransom and for their long and dangerous journeys; and they obtained

that money by selling whatever they had to sell —their lands, and their rights over towns and men. The moment of the king's or lord's necessity was the moment of the boroughs' opportunity. So serfs and cities obtained their freedom.

Take, for example, the charter granted by John to Cambridge town in 1201, which gave it the right to have a gild merchant and granted its citizens the right to refuse trial by battle. They were to be 'quit of toll of passage, lastage, pontage, stallage in fair and without and through the ports of the sea of England and of all our lands on this side of the sea and beyond the sea saving in all things the liberty of the City of London.' They might hold a fair in Rogation week, and no one was to disturb those who traded with them.

The gild merchant which we hear of as being established by charter existed in all boroughs in time. It was the Association of the master buyers and sellers of the borough; some lived within and some without, but all paid scot and lot—that is, their share in the borough's expenses. These were said to have the freedom of the city, they were the borough councillors, and their chiefs were aldermen. They were obliged to keep order, serve on juries, keep 'watch and ward,' suppress riots, defend the town against marauders, pave the streets in front of their houses, and make bridges and repair the highways.

In return they had many privileges: they had a right to share in one another's fortunate, cheap purchases; they alone might trade in the town. They also made rules for themselves concerning things they might not do. We gather

that at this time people did not have much faith that the individual would serve the common good unless he were forced to it. All the rules protect the community against the individual trader.

There were three crimes against the 'poor Commons' or, as we should say, the 'poor consumer,' 'engrossing, forestalling, and regrating.' *Engrossing* was the buying of corn while it was still standing, and then keeping it back to force up the price. *Forestalling* was the buying of things cheap on the way to market. *Regrating* was the buying of things all of a kind cheaply in the market itself, through some special knowledge or advantage of position, and then selling dear because you had ousted competition—we call it cornering. One who did these things is described as 'a manifest oppressor of the poor and a public enemy of the whole commonalty and the country.' He was punished by having his stock taken from him and even loss of the city's 'freedom.' It is clear that both duties and privileges went to the burgesses who had money, because it was expensive to buy the latter and the former were costly. Taxation fell with crushing weight on all, and we have in the story of a certain William of the Long Beard a rare glimpse into what the poorer folk were thinking.

'He was sharp of wit and somewhat i-lettered and over-measure a great speeker. Among the people, he blamed the privy deeds and the outrages of riche men that dealt ill with poor men; and so he excited hugely the mean men to love and desire freedom out of measure, so that he associated many to him as though they were bewitched right with witchcraft. And cleped (called) himself the saviour of poor men and

made great boast and brag and said that the outrage of mighty men should be allayed and that in a short time.' But the burgesses with the help of the Government put down the rebellion with little difficulty, driving William even from Sanctuary by firing the place.

The merchant gilds, in some towns at any rate, were not of long duration. As trade grew, each of the greater crafts, such as the weavers, the fishmongers, the fullers, the bakers, made a gild of its own. For a while, there seems to have been no distinct dividing line between merchant gild and craft gild, a member of one might be a member of the other; but in time the duties of the merchant gild seemed to be divided among the craft gilds, and the merchant gilds gradually disappeared. The life of the borough centred in the craft gilds, and the easiest way to obtain the borough franchise or freedom of the town was to become a member of a craft gild. This might also be bought or won by birth or by marriage with a daughter of a gild's man. No one, we are told, would have belonged to a gild if he could have helped it, because he feared the expense and many of the irksome rules which we shall look at presently. So many of these rules were constructed to prevent his helping it, the chief being that no man might trade in a craft's wares unless he were a member of his gild.

In the gild were masters, journeymen, and apprentices. In those days no one took up a trade without a long and careful training in it. An apprentice joined a master-craftsman at about sixteen, and we hear of one that he was given '8d. a year and in his 8th year 6d. a week, that he was to be kept as a prentice should be, that

is to say, meat and drink should be given him, hose and shoes, linen and woollen, and his craft to be taught him and nothing hid from him thereof.' The master had also to teach him 'good demeaning and bearing' and to be answerable for his conduct by night and day. He had a right to beat him, but not too much. If he went beyond the limits allowed he was liable to pay a fine to the craft gild. The apprentice on his side had to be obedient and faithful, to sleep always at his master's house, to do household chars, and not to marry without his master's consent. In spite of these regulations, perhaps because of them, the apprentices were an unruly body, fond of making riot and of rough horse-play about the streets.

When his years of apprenticeship were ended, the apprentice became a journeyman wage-earner, and if he were a successful craftsman, a master. To do this, journeymen in later days had to go through a kind of examination and produce a sample of their work called 'a master-piece.'

Everything in the life of a craftsman seems to have been regulated by the rules of his gild. The gild insisted that he should make good wares and sell good measure. It fixed the breadth and thickness of the cloth he wove and the weight of the loaf he baked. But cheats and profiteers were very common even then. There is a story of a baker, who specially made a hole in the table upon which he placed the dough brought to him to be baked. A small boy sat under the table and took lumps out of the uncooked loaves, so it was not much use for a suspicious customer to stand there and see his own loaf put into the oven and taken out and delivered

to him. It was unaccountably lighter when it came out than when it went in. For the cheating tradesman there were fitting punishments; sometimes the badly made article was taken from him and burnt, sometimes the gild itself had to pay for the spoilt work.

Here are some of the rules of the Spurriers of London :—

'In the first place, that no one of the trade of spurriers shall work longer than from the beginning of the day until curfew rings out at the church of St. Sepulcher without Newgate, by reason that no man can work so neatly by night as by day. And many persons of the said trade, who compass how to practice deception in their work, desire to work by night rather than by day; and then they introduce false iron, and iron that has been cracked, for tin, and also they put gilt on false copper and cracke.

'And further, many of the said trade are wandering about all day, without working at all at their trade; and then, when they have become drunk and frantic, they take to their work, to the annoyance of the sick, and all their neighbourhood as well by reason of the broils that arise between them and the strange folk who are dwelling amongst them. And then they blow up their fires vigorously, that their forges begin all at once to blaze, to the great peril of themselves and of all the neighbourhood around. And then, too, all the neighbours are much in dread of the sparks, which so vigorously issue forth in all directions from the mouths of the chimneys in their forges.

'By reason thereof it seems unto them that working by night should be put an end to, in order to avoid such false work and such perils; and therefore the mayor and the aldermen do will, by the assent of the good folk of the said trade and for the common profit, that from henceforth such time for working, and such false work made in the trade, shall be forbidden. And if any person shall be found in the said trade to do the contrary hereof,

let him be amerced, the first time in forty pence, one half to go to the use of the Chamber of the Guildhall of London and the other half to the use of the said trade; the second time, in half a mark; and the third time, in ten shillings, to the use of the same Chamber and trade; and the fourth time, let him foreswear the trade forever.

'Also, that no one of the said trade shall keep a house or shop to carry on his business, unless he is free of the city; and that no one shall cause to be sold, or exposed, any manner of old spurs for new ones, or shall garnish them or change them for new ones.

'Also, that no one of the said trade shall take an apprentice for a less term than seven years, and such apprentice shall be enrolled according to the usages of the said city.

'Also, that no one of the said trade shall receive the apprentice, serving man, or journeyman of another in the same trade, during the term agreed upon between his master and him, on the pain aforesaid.

'Also, that no alien of another country, or foreigner of this country, shall follow or use the said trade, unless he is enfranchised before the mayor, aldermen, and chamberlain; and that, by witness and surety of the good folk of the said trade who will go surety for him, as to his loyalty and his good behavior.'[1]

The following rules of the white-tawyers or those who put a white surface on leather, show us that some gilds included religious services among their activities, as the freemasons do now, and undertook a kind of insurance benefit on behalf of their members.

'In the first place, they have ordained that they will furnish a wax candle, to burn before our Lady, in the church of Allhallows, near London wall.

'Also, that each person of the said trade shall put in the box such sum as he shall think fit, in aid of maintaining the said candle.

[1] Quoted Robinson: 'Readings from European History.'

'Also, that if by chance any of the said trade shall fall into poverty, whether through old age or because he cannot labor or work, and shall have nothing with which to keep himself, he shall have every week from the said box seven pence for his support, if he be a man of good repute. And after his decease, if he have a wife, a woman of good repute, she shall have weekly for her support seven pence from the said box, so long as she behave herself well and keep single.

'And if any one of the said trade shall have work in his house that he cannot complete, or if for want of assistance such work shall be in danger of being lost, those of the said trade shall aid him, that so the said work shall be not lost.

'And if any one of the said trade shall depart this life and have not withal to be buried, he shall be buried at the expense of their common box. And when any one of the said trade shall die, all those of the said trade shall go to the vigil, and make offering on the morrow.' [1]

Some gilds maintained free grammar schools; the Corpus Christi Gild founded the college of that name. The gilds looked after the unemployed. Sometimes rules were made for these to assemble at certain places at five in the morning, their tools in their hands, and there, employers came to look for them. And we must not forget, in thinking of the crafts gilds, that they provided the play-acting of the Middle Ages; but play-acting and play-writing took such a large place in the life of the English people that they deserve a chapter to themselves.

We have heard a good deal of the government of the town. Let us try to see what the outside looked like.

Towns in the Middle Ages were more like large, walled villages. The long vacations at the Universities and the Law Courts are said to go back

[1] Quoted Robinson: 'Readings from European History.'

to the time when all men, even town-dwellers, had to be free to help with the harvest. Even in London all the Southwark shore of the river was green with trees and fields; St. Giles' and St. James's were both in the depths of the country, and gardens attached to houses or monasteries carried the country even within the city gates. In 1302 we have a certain Thomas Bart promising to indemnify London from fire arising from his thatched cottages and to roof them with tile, so that probably in the previous century thatched cottages were common. Bounties were to be paid to any one who built with stone or brick. Bricks were first made in Essex in 1406, and reached London in 1442.

Shops were open booths, and all the wares for sale were exposed. The streets were narrow; roads sloped to the side along which ran 'kennels' to carry away the filth; the top stories of the houses were overhanging and almost meeting, and the stairs leading to them were outside; from every shop hung a huge sign, which cleared the heads of the passers-by by sometimes only a foot or two.

Refuse was, for the most part, piled in the street. An ordinance of 1281 forbade swine in the streets. Any found there might be killed. The first urban sanitary act did not come till the end of the next century. It enacted that dung, filth, garbage, and entrails of beasts killed, that infect the air, were not to be laid in ditches and rivers, but to be carried away, and that mayors and bailiffs were to see that it was done.

Daily buying and selling was done in the booth, but much mediæval trading took place at fairs, when traders from home and from abroad took their wares to distant towns. The principal

fairs were those of St. Ives in Bedfordshire, Stourbridge and Winchester, but there were, of course, many others. These were often held in the churchyard and on a Sunday. The ordinary town authorities were set aside, and a special mayor and bailiffs appointed for the fair; all ordinary town buying and selling was stopped, and everybody was supposed to buy everything at the fair.

Beforehand there would be great stir, for the villeins had been for days engaged in putting up rows of booths. Separate quarters were allowed to different towns and to different wares; very carefully the regulations of the market set out where the 'best, the middle-class, and the smaller' should be placed, where should be placed earthenware, gloves, cattle, bread, ale, leather, or fish.

Foreign goods could be bought at fairs, and were then eagerly sought after. Picture the narrow, crowded alleys between the booths; the many-coloured clothes, at a time when each nation still had the custom of wearing its gay, richly embroidered national dress; listen to the babel of outlandish tongues as merchants from Venice or Genoa pressed their rich silks or velvets or carpets from the East; as Norwegians with their tar, or Gascons with their wine, or Flemings with their cloth, strove to fit their goods into the narrow and sometimes unsatisfactory quarters allowed to them. See the English goods brought to be exchanged against them: 'wool, the source of England's wealth in the Middle Ages, tin from Cornwall, salt from the Worcestershire springs, lead from the Derbyshire mines, iron from the Sussex forges, and cloth which the drapers were wont to purchase at home and abroad about Michaelmas for the fairs ensuing.

Here the bailiff purchased his farm implements, and store of salt and sheep and medicines and fish for Lent, the noble his armour and steed and falcons, the lady her robes and dresses.'[1] The Church even bought its chalices, books, and vestments at fairs.

In this mixed medley many a question of right and wrong must have arisen. So fairs were often granted their own courts called 'Piepowder,' *pied poudré*, 'the court of the dusty feet,' because it was the court for the traveller, who had no time to wait for the slow ordinary courts.

These townsfolk, apprentices, and journeymen had many amusements besides plays. Each of the Church festivals had its own games. On Shrove Tuesday, for instance, the boys brought out their cocks to fight; afterwards they played ball while their elders looked on. Every Friday in Lent there were tournaments, when the young men of the city opposed the courtiers. The whole period from October 31st, All-Hallows' E'en, to the Feast of the Purification, on February 2nd, was consecrated to the 'Lord of Misrule'; then mummings and maskings and all kinds of gaieties took place. Easter had its processions. On May day, 'Everyman would walk into the sweete meadows and greene woods, there to rejoice his spirites with the beauty and savour of sweete flowers.' There went on in the summer, dancing, wrestling, casting the stone, and in the winter bear-baiting.

The people loved pageants such as the one that took place in London in 1236, when Eleanor of Provence passed through the city on her way to marry Henry III. 'The city,' we read, 'was adorned with silke and in the night with lamps

[1] Lipson, 'Economic History of England.'

without number.' The citizens rode forth to meet the king and queen 'in long garments embroidered with gold and silks of divers colours—their horses gallantly trapped and every man bearing a cup of gold or silver in his hand and the king's trumpeters sounding before them.' The craft gilds took part; the fishmongers, for instance, provided four immense gilt sturgeon each on a horse, four silver salmon also on horses, and forty armed knights on horses made to look like hake.

XV

THE MIND'S AMUSEMENTS

'In 1843—one of the chief causes of crime—the lack of recreation.'

N this our tale we have not yet reached that pitiable state of mind of the mid-nineteenth century. Before the coming of the Puritans many were the forms of recreation; and the one of them most loved was the drama.

Play-acting began in church. The one thing the people of the Middle Ages were most particular to teach was religion. But the peasant found it very hard to learn and very hard to understand. So the priests adopted the ancient custom of the Jews, who taught everything by symbol and picture. Those symbols sometimes influenced the building of the church, as when a rood screen was put up across the chancel to show the unapproachable holiness of God; sometimes they were actions repeated over and over again by the priest, as when candles were held up at the reading of the Gospel to show that it illumined the darkness of men's minds.

Sometimes they were a set of actions, ceremonies, and dressings-up reserved to explain the idea of one or the other of the festivals. Gradually such a ceremony as this last would be separated altogether from the service, though still shown in church. Later it was made more

elaborate; scenery and conversation were introduced, and it was shown in the church porch. Such an elaborated ceremony grew to be called a *Mystery*, and the subject was one of the Bible stories from either the Old or the New Testament. Soon the Mysteries were separated from the church altogether, and acted in the churchyard, the village green, the market place, the street. In those later days the actors had ceased to be the priests, and were for the most part members of the craft gilds. Events from the lives of the saints were also acted, and these were known as *Miracle* Plays.

The first play written in English that is mentioned by name is 'The Play of St. Katherine.' It was acted by the boys of Dunstable. The costumes were borrowed from the choir boys of St. Albans Abbey, and, after all these centuries we can still appreciate the feelings of the borrowers when the costumes were burnt by accident the night after the play. The writer, Geffrie, afterwards Abbot of St. Albans, died while Stephen was on the throne.

Soon all the plays were collected into cycles; those that had to do with the Gospel and the prophecies of Christ's birth were in the first cycle, the Christmas one; the Easter cycle contained such plays as 'The Last Supper,' 'The Trial of Christ,' and 'The Harrowing of Hell,' the latter a very popular play about Christ's descent into hell after the resurrection. But both cycles were played sometimes on one great day, the feast of Corpus Christi. Each play was allotted to a gild; the goldsmiths had 'The Visit of the Three Kings' because they had to supply crowns; the glovers performed 'The Sacrifice of Abel.'

The theatre was the whole street: the stage

was a movable car. When the first act was finished, the car moved on to those who had not yet seen it, and the second act began where the first had been. Sometimes there were as many as forty-eight plays in a cycle. York, Chester, and Coventry had apparently the best plays. Some of the plays are very amusing ; for instance, all the play-writers seem to have decided that Mrs. Noah didn't like the idea of the Ark, and in the play she continues spinning till the cold waters of the Flood touch her feet. The Devil also was a favourite personage whose impertinence, recklessness, and ubiquity kept our forefathers laughing.

Here is an example of the conversation from the play of ' Adam ' :—

Eve. Eat it, Adam—thou knowest not what it is—Let us take this good thing now it 's so near.
Adam. Is it good ?
Eve. Thou shalt know. But thou canst not know until thou tastest.
Adam. I am afraid.
Eve. Forget that fear.
Adam. I won't do it.
Eve. Thou art wrong to hesitate.
Adam. Well, well ! I 'll take it.
Eve. Eat and see, afterwards thou shalt know good and evil. I shall eat it first.
Adam. And I after.
Eve. Of course ! (She eats.) I have tasted it ! O God what a flavour ! I have never known such a delightful sensation. It has a flavour that——

By degrees people began to invent their own stories for the plays, but they were still influenced by the desire to teach religion, so, instead of making the characters ordinary men and women, they made them virtues and vices and other

symbolic figures. The best of this kind of play, or *morality*, was 'Everyman,' which is still acted, often to large audiences. The characters are Death, Everyman, Friendship, Relationship, Riches, Goodworks, Knowledge, and so on.

An *Interlude* was another kind of early play acted at feasts, or thrown in as a relief in long *moralities*. The characters were no longer qualities, but professions like the 'Pardoner and the Friar,' a play of John Heywood, which is a gay satire on two religious professions.

Plays such as these would have been considered dull had people had any other amusements for their minds.

But the novel, to which we are so accustomed, did not begin till nearly 1600, when Thomas Deloney wrote his historical novels, and the ballads, narrative poems, heroic tales were all, as far as the poor or even the middle classes were concerned, told or sung, and it was not every one who was lucky enough to meet a tale-teller or a minstrel every day.

The drama, which perhaps, in the end, may be counted the chiefest honour to England's name, sprang suddenly from those humble beginnings to heights that in no land, except Greece, have been surpassed.

All men have tried to find a cause for the sudden glory of the Elizabethan time. Some have said it was the great Queen. At any rate she gave her people peace, a new rare quality then, and carrying with it the chance to young men to plan and think and dream, with life instead of death ahead. It is recorded of Elizabeth that she said that war was 'the last

means and the worst,' and she alone with Shakespeare of all the English race showed no excitement about the Armada.

Some have said, and they were probably right, that the sudden greatness came because of the lifting of the dead hand of the Church. For the first time in England all things were lawful to be thought; men knew not what things were lawful to be done, and were agog to give their new freedom of thought way.

This sense of immeasurable possibility is just what marks most the first great dramatist, Kit Marlowe, whose 'Tamburlaine the Great' was produced in 1587. 'Nature,' he says, 'doth teach us all to have aspiring minds'—his heroes' desires are for infinite things. The Jew of Malta would have 'infinite riches in a little room'; Dr. Faustus seeks dominion that 'stretches as far as doth the mind of man.' Tamburlaine exclaims:—

> 'Why, then, Casane, shall we wish for aught,
> The world affords in greatest novelty,
> And rest attemptless, faint and destitute.'

But if there were suddenly 'sky-aspiring intellects' to write the plays, did the audiences melt away from thoughtful plays and seek the merely sensational? They were a theatre-going people. The first theatres were erected in 1575; they were the 'Curtain' and the 'Theatre' at Holywell. Twenty-two years later the city authorities were finding the theatre-going of the people a nuisance. It was a very democratic entertainment, and there were those who objected that 'your stinkard has the self-same liberty to be there in his tobacco fumes which your sweet courtier hath,' and that 'your common carman

and tinker claim as strong a voice in their suffrage and sit to give judgment in the play's life and death as well as the proudest Momus among the tribe of critics.'

The sumptuous theatres, more stately than those in Italy, seemed too a 'continual monument of London's prodigality and folly.' And the growing Puritanism of the nation was shocked that on Sunday they were 'so full as possible they can throng.' But perhaps their worst 'inconvenience' in the eyes of authority was that they gave 'opportunity to the refuse sort of evil-disposed and ungodly people that are within and about this city to assemble themselves, being as heretofore we have found, by the examination of divers apprentices and other servants, who have confessed unto us that the said stage plays were the very places of their rendezvous, appointed by them to meet such others as were to join with them in their designs and mutinous attempts; being also the ordinary places for masterless men to come together to recreate themselves.' The Lord Mayor and aldermen complained to the Privy Council that 'they maintain idleness in such persons as have no vocation and draw apprentices and other servants from their ordinary works and all sorts of people from resort unto sermons and Christian exercises.'

Did such an audience rise to a real appreciation of Shakespeare? Did a people who could not read delight in his hard speeches? At any rate, they went to hear them. At any rate, to those eager Renascence minds he dared to offer in his plays deep psychology, philosophic thought, and rhythmic speech.

These plays were, as it were, a piece broken off from life itself. All life was in them. Early

England had emphasised, as we have seen, the religious side of the life of man. The Greeks and the Romans in the plays, from which the English learned much, emphasised his intellectual and passionate side. It was the peculiar mark of the Elizabethans to love the whole of man. For them, his whole life from birth to death is meet for the highest drama, his tortured thinkings, his pleasures, his follies, his romps and merry-makings, his hates and his loves, his uncleannesses and his heavenly longings. 'What a piece of work is a man!' cries Hamlet; 'how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals!'

In 1642 by order of the Puritans, then powerful, the theatres were closed. Puritan is the name given to the extremists among the reformers of the Church.

The immense gulf between the teaching and the conduct of monks, priests, and clergy of all ranks made the people feel, as soon as they began to think about it at all, that the Church had to be reformed.

The reformers were of two main classes, the scholars like Erasmus, who held that man can improve if men patiently teach him right, and men of action like Henry VIII. and Luther, for whom the scholar's way is too slow, and who would use government, or even the sword, to change both men's faith and men's conduct.

Unfortunately for the world the scholars were over-borne. New faiths of many varieties were implanted in the countries of Europe by order of king, or duke, or parliament. A hundred

years of warfare was the result. If the bettering of national conduct that has taken place, may in some cases be traced to the Reformers, at their door must be placed, as the lines at the head of this chapter signify, a great deal of national sin.

For in England, after Elizabeth, men of the new faith tended to be of that sterner section of Protestants called by their enemies in scorn, but very truly, Puritans. They refused to realise the truth that 'we taste nothing pure,' that everything in the world is mixed good and evil. They believed that everything is either wholly good or bad. So because some plays were bad, they thought all plays bad and forbade them. Because some games led to bad habits, they forbade all games.

But one Puritan at least was able to combine their lofty way of living according to principle with a worthy taking part in the best pleasures. John Milton answered their attacks on plays by writing the masque of 'Comus,' and their efforts to purify literature by means of the censorship by publishing a tract called 'Areopagitica,' in which he nobly opposed his own party and declared himself upon the side of Freedom.

'He that can apprehend and consider vice with all her baits and seeming pleasures,' he wrote, 'and yet abstain—he is the true warfaring Christian. I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and seeks her adversary, but slinks out of the race, when that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat.'

XVI

THE RENASCENCE

'Tempo era dal principio del Mattino.'

THE word Renascence means re-birth. Just as the trees which have been gaunt and bare, apparently dead, and bound by the frosts of winter put forth new life in the spring, so the freedom-loving, adventuring thought of man, which during those Middle Ages of which we have been learning had been bound by the wintry discipline of religious fear and authority, broke forth alive again, and free to set out upon the way of infinite discoveries.

Nothing happens suddenly. The universities had, in spite of all their defects, kept scholars in touch with one another and the desire for knowledge alive. The Crusades had kept men travelling and taught them much geography. The monasteries had, though often in a state of horrible neglect, preserved books. The towns had given men wealth and made leisure possible. In Italy, where the Renascence was destined to begin, the towns were more alive than anywhere else. Out of one of these Italian towns, Florence by the Arno, there came, about the year 1300, a book, that showed that the Renascence was about to begin. It was Dante's *Divine Comedy.*

Up to then all books their authors thought important had been written in Latin, and there-

fore meant solely for the scholars. Only in the rarest people like Roger Bacon was there any mental interest in anything save in religion. People enjoyed themselves, because human nature could not help it, but for the most part they were taught that enjoyments were unworthy of serious people, whose only occupation should be the preparing themselves for heaven; physical nature, both man's and Earth's, was despised.

The *Divine Comedy* differed from other books in that it was written in the language of the common people and took for granted that we all, not only the scholars, have minds. It is true its subject was religious—the pilgrimage of Dante through Hell and Purgatory and Heaven; its author was still on the edge of the Middle Ages. But it is full of other interests, of human love, of admiration for literature and fine writing, of interest in secular history, of love of country, of interest in landscape, and in the mere flowers that grow; and we catch in it the first glimpse of that craving to have your own country united, free and independent, which we call the spirit of nationality and which becomes one of the chief subjects of history from the sixteenth century to our own day. It took for granted also that man's mind is not to be taught only, but to be delighted and aroused to think.

After Dante, Petrarch (1304-1374), a poet too, and a Florentine, sought to recover for the world the nearly forgotten, great books of ancient Rome; not the books they had been using of queer Latin made up by priests and scarcely to be understood by those who know classical Latin, but the real books, Cicero's public speeches, Vergil's poetry, Livy's history, and the Latin translations of Greek books, for in his day no one in

Western Europe knew Greek, and he himself had tried to learn it and failed.

'In antique culture' he saw 'the everlasting solace and the universal education of the human race.' He persuaded Boccaccio (1313-1375) to learn Greek, middle-aged though he was; this was that Boccaccio who made a book of tales told by a group of imaginary gay Florentines in hiding from a plague, and so set an example to our own Chaucer to give us our first real Renascence book, *The Canterbury Tales*. But this first learning of Greek was a more wonderful thing than it is easy to tell in a few words; it was not merely learning a new language. The ancient Greeks were a wonderful people. Their books were the most wonderful part of them. They had daring intellects that sought truth with never an intellectual fear.

When the men of Western Europe began to read Greek, they met geographers who had made maps on right scientific lines quite different from their own wretched imaginings—maps that made it possible for journeys to be taken. They met men of science, who had tried to find out the origin of life and the explanations of the earth. They met historians who had told the Past with interest and truth. They met philosophers who had discussed right and wrong, and how men should make states or republics, and who had brought human reason to the deciding of what we should mean by 'good.' Also they met poets and play-writers who had penetrated deep into human hearts and shown the joy and the grief of life, in words of a beauty of which none had heard the like since the Middle Ages began.

Soon to the men of that great morning the learning of Greek became a joy that not age,

nor poverty, nor press of business could deny them. Francesco Filelfo journeyed all the way from Padua to Constantinople to learn it. When a Greek Chrysoloras was appointed in 1396 to a chair of Greek at Florence, a certain lawyer tells us 'I held it wrong to desert law, but crime to desert Greek. What I received from him (Chrysoloras) in times of waking occupied my mind in hours of sleep.' In 1453, when the Turks took Constantinople, it at last became easy to get Greek teachers, because the Greek-speaking Christian inhabitants of the city fled to the West.

But long before that day the new mind of men was producing works that made their age of the Renascence the fellow of the age of Pericles, which was the great age of Greece.

In 1423 Vittorino da Feltre began his Renascence school. By that time noblemen had gone back to the state of mind that made Philip, King of Macedon, write when he appointed Alexander's tutor: 'I thank the Gods not so much for making me a father as for giving me a son in a time when he can have Aristotle for his tutor.' So in Italy nothing was considered to cast such a glamour over a princely household as the presence of a great schoolmaster. Gian Francesco Gonzaga, Marquis of Mantua, commended his boys and his girl to Vittorino. A house in the park became the school. It was called La Giocosa—the pleasant house—and decorated with frescoes of children at play, and its broad corridors and lofty, well-lighted rooms made it, as Vittorino meant it should be, 'A House of Delight,' for he believed in beautiful surroundings.

He banished luxury, for he held that 'high

thinking ' can only exist with ' plain living.' He allowed no exclusiveness. The sons of princes and of commoners came, some paying large fees and others to free places ; there was a maintenance grant paid as a treasury grant to parents. The test of a pupil's right to education there was not birth, wealth, or position; it was that he should be *dignus* and should repay the trouble spent upon him.

Vittorino impressed upon a boy the sacredness of the unreturning moment, the duty of the individual to the State, to God, and to himself. He held with the Greek philosopher Plato that the youngest should have the best teacher, and that the great ideal was ' a beautiful mind in a beautiful body.' He paid the utmost attention to his pupils' health, sending them often on school journeys to visit the beautiful places of their country. In that school they learned swimming, riding, fencing, archery, tennis, and gymnastics, as well as Latin, Greek, and mathematics. Children were taught individually, and the head master would go early in the morning, candle in hand, to waken a promising scholar for an early morning hour with the Greeks.

Besides the world of knowledge for its own sake, the men of the Renascence discovered art for its own sake. The Middle Ages had painted pictures and carved sculptures always with the object of teaching religion. It is said that they gave their saints unnaturally long necks to show how they were straining towards heaven. The artists and sculptors of the Renascence, like the Greeks, painted portraits and carved statues to approach nature as nearly as possible, and with such wonderful power did they work, that no pictures since have equalled theirs. Among their

artists were Raphael and Leonardo da Vinci, the painter of the wonderful *La Gioconda*, and Michael Angelo—sculptor, poet, mathematician, painter, and architect.

Then there was the new world of Science. At Bologna, Copernicus the Pole studied astronomy, and learned those ideas of the roundness of the earth and its motion round the sun that would have transformed men's ideas of the Universe had not the Church, that liked people to think that the Earth was still and all the Universe circling round it, been strong enough to force him to keep his discoveries hidden for nearly half a hundred years. So we must put off looking at that most far-reaching effect of the Renascence till we come to the later discoveries.

In another way the men of the Renascence showed their adventuring spirit. They took to the ocean. Taught to travel by the Crusades and the custom of pilgrimage, men had performed daring journeys over land, like that of Marco Polo to the court of Kublai Khan, he who 'did a stately pleasure dome decree,' a journey extended in after years to many Asiatic countries and even to China.

But, when it was a question of crossing the ocean, men were timid. They had been taught that beyond the Western edge of the world was Hell; and could they not see its ruddy fires each evening at sundown? In those uncharted seas were whirlpools and sandbanks, mists and darkness haunted by dragons and strange sea-serpents. And even those who did not believe such things had the real difficulty of getting lost among pathless waters in days before the compass had found its way to Europe. This it did probably in the thirteenth century, the

Crusaders having met with the idea of the magnetic needle in the East. Chinese sailors used a little wooden figure of a man set on a pivot. In the outstretched hand of the figure was held a magnet.

When the Turks became powerful in the Eastern Mediterranean, and travel by the old land routes across the Suez isthmus became dangerous, many navigators, making use of the compass, tried to find a way by sea to the lands whence the rich cloth and spices came.

Portugal at first led the way, discovering the Canaries, Madeira, and the Azores. Their Prince, Henry the Navigator, did all he could to encourage voyaging. In 1442 his sailors reached the Guinea Coast of Africa, and in 1486 Bartholomew Dias rounded the Cape of Good Hope.

Six years later came the world's great voyage. Columbus, a Genoese pilot, who was one of the supporters of the idea that the world was round, travelled to the kings of Europe asking for aid to fit out an expedition which, by sailing West, should reach the East. Henry VII. of England seems to have missed the chance, for England, of discovering America, through the sea-storm that delayed his receiving Columbus's messenger. The Portuguese king tried to steal the sailor's plans instead of equipping him for the voyage. Ferdinand of Spain was too busy fighting the Moors; and it seemed as if Columbus would have failed when, as he asked hospitality at a monastery gate, he found a monk with leisure enough to listen to a dream of the future. This monk won for Columbus the interest of Queen Isabella of Spain. By her help he fitted out three little ships and sailed from the Canaries into the mysterious West.

It was a brave moment. The captain with his faith in the new world; the means of getting there so infinitely weak—those frail and tiny sailing ships; the difficulties so appalling, as only those who have watched Atlantic waters pile themselves mountain high, can know; his human fellows so timid, so unbelieving, so all against him, ready to slay him almost, rather than to leave the safe shelter of the things they knew. Is it not a picture of all those lonely souls, who have led forward to the lands of gold?

It is a tale to read and to tell round the fire in the evenings—the tale of the long days lengthening from week to week, of frightened sailors, first scanning the horizon for land; then of angry sailors kept from mutiny only by the leader's constant watchfulness; then of that strange stirring of heart and questioning when, on the grey waters, some sailors caught sight of a floating river weed, so different from the weeds of the sea. Then that sunset and the something in the mist, a light that was not a star and at last the dawn and victory and the shout of 'land!'

Another voyage was as great and daring. In 1520 Magellan the Portuguese sailed to the south of the new continent. His tiny ship in the wintry, storm-racked strait met as foul weather and as adverse fortune as ever afterwards came to be connected with the name Magellan Strait. The starved, frozen crew would fain have returned the way they came, but their fierce leader told them that even though he had to eat the leather casings of the ship's cables he would get through. And to be glad to soften leathern casings with salt water and so eat them proved not the severest of the miseries of that most agonising voyage. But at last the leader's faith

and iron will won their reward and the little ship broke through, 'the first that ever sailed into that silent sea.' The captain was so glad that 'for joy the tears fell from his eyes, and he named the point from whence he saw that sea' (which from its wonderful calmness he called the Pacific) 'Capo Desiderato.'

When they came to the Philippines they met merchants from Europe, trading with the East, and concluded that they had at last gone East by going West. Unfortunately, though his ship sailed right round the world, Magellan himself lost his life in trying to force Christianity upon the natives of the Pacific Islands. It was a sad ending to so great an enterprise that the folly of his own cruelty should have brought death to the great sailor who had weathered the fiercest storms that wind and waters could raise.

What had England to do with all this? She caught the awakening. The Renascence came to England just as every other continental movement came, like Christianity, or the Black Death, or the Reformation, or in later times the wars of religion, or the Revolution, or any other bad fortune or good fortune.

But in England, except in the three things the Drama, Science, and Travel, it produced none of those bright, startling geniuses who made the Italian Revival so wonderful.

English scholars like Grocyn, Linacre, Lily, and Colet, though they learned in Italy from Italian masters, returned to this country, less ready than their masters to copy the Greeks and more ready to use Greek as a means of teaching aright the doctrines of the New Testament.

The difference can very easily be seen in the English Renascence school of St. Paul's that

Colet founded, in 1510, under the shadow of the Cathedral. It was to be for 153 children, the traditional number of the miraculous draft of fishes. They were to enter without restriction of nation or country, provided they were 'of good parts and capacities' and could read and write. They were to be taught Latin and Greek, and 'such authors that have with wisdom joined pure and chaste eloquence, and especially Christian authors who wrote their wisdom in clean and chaste Latin, whether in prose or in verse, for my intent is by this school specially to increase knowledge and worshipping of God and our Lord Jesus Christ and good Christian life and manners in the children.'

The school building consisted of one large room divided into an upper and a lower school by a curtain. There was to be a 'High Master' and a sub-master and a chaplain. The harshness of the old schools was to be done away with. In all his regulations the gentleness of the founder is visible.

But the school met with much opposition, as people were afraid of 'heretical Greek.' Sir Thomas More wrote to Colet that he did not wonder at their anger, as from this school would come forth those who would expose and upset their teaching.

'A certain bishop,' wrote Colet, 'who is held, too, to be one of the wiser men, has been blaspheming our school before a large concourse of people, declaring that I have erected what is a useless thing, nay, a bad thing, nay, (to give his own words) a temple of idolatry! Which, indeed, I fancy he called it because Greek poets are to be taught there.'

The discovery of the art of printing perhaps

did more than anything else to bring in the new age. For, as man had conquered beasts with the tools his brain enabled him to use; so the man, who could use the garnered wisdom of other years, found, in his brain, a weapon to win from the strong of hand, more and more of the fruits of earth.

The first printed books were just single sheets, images of saints and playing cards. Then came block books, when a whole page was cut in wood by a wood-engraver, covered with ink, and stamped on parchment.

The greatest invention was that of movable type made by Gutenberg at Mayence about 1439. The earliest specimen of printing by such type was the Indulgence issued by the Pope to obtain help against the Turks. In 1462 Mayence was sacked by Adolph Von Nassau and the printers scattered; as a result the art spread rapidly in Europe. Perhaps the best of all printing houses was the Aldine Press founded at Venice by Aldus Manutius.

Printing came to England with Caxton in 1477. He had been governor of the Merchants Adventurers at Bruges, and had learned printing perhaps in Bruges with Colard Mansion. The first book published in English was *Recuyell of the Historie of Troye*, and the first from the printing press at Westminster, *Dictes or Sayengis of the Philosophers*. In the first three years Caxton printed over thirty books, of which the most interesting to us was the first edition of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.

XVII

ENGLISH SEAMEN

'Where lies the land to which the ship would go?
Far, far ahead, is all her seamen know.'

T first these adventurous voyages all fell to the Spanish and Portuguese; so much so that the Pope drew an imaginary line north and south called the Papal Line of Demarcation, and declared that all new discoveries west of it should belong to the Spaniards and all east of it to the Portuguese.

When England began her exploration, east and west were therefore barred, and she had to turn to the north. In 1490 a Venetian, John Cabot, had settled in Bristol. To him, in 1497, Henry VII. granted letters patent to sail with English sailors in an English ship to 'the Eastern and Western and Northern Seas,' and the result of the voyage was the discovery of Newfoundland and Labrador.

In 1498 Cabot's son, Sebastian, sailed forth to discover a way round the north of North America to the Spice Islands of the East. But to 'his great displeasure,' he tells us, the land he found was running continually to the north, and he was obliged to return home, the first of a long line of adventurers destined to disappointment in the search for the North-West Passage. The English king dismissed him from his service and he went

to Spain. But there failure dogged him, and, returning to England, he founded a Company for 'the Discovery of Regions, Dominions, and Islands and places unknown.' One of the first enterprises connected with the name of this company was the voyage of Sir Hugh Willoughby, with Chancellor as his pilot, to the northern seas of Europe. Willoughby's own ship lost its way with one other of the expedition, and the crews were frozen to death in Lapland, but Chancellor sailed till he came 'at last to the place where he found no night at all, but a continued light and brightness of the sun shining clearly upon the huge and mighty sea.' He reached the White Sea, travelled over the 1500 miles to Moscow in a sledge, met the Czar, and opened up trade for the first time between England and Russia.

Almost at the same time Englishmen were venturing into a darker land than Russia—Africa. In those days Africa was a land of mystery, full of strange and unnatural beasts, the realm of Prester John, King of Ethiopia, whose wealth was imagined to be able to buy the world. In 1553 Pinteado and Windham set out to the Gold Coast for treasure. That coast was probably little different then from now—an expanse of mud and lush rotting vegetation, fever-stricken, and insect-bitten. Of the one hundred and forty who set out and who found much gold and untold wealth of spice that they could not bring back, only forty fever-stricken and dying men returned.

In 1576 Martin Frobisher, bitten too with the dream of finding a North-West Passage, with two ships, called after the archangels *Michael* and *Gabriel*, sailed down the Thames while the Queen herself waved him good luck from her palace

windows. But the *Michael*, timely fearful, deserted in the river and the little *Gabriel* found away in the west nothing but an ice-haunted fjord since called Frobisher Strait. She could not make her way through it, and was obliged to bring back her captain disappointed but caught by the call of the North, and determined never to rest from his struggles with the ice and snow till he had found what lay beyond them.

One of Frobisher's crew found a black stone which the gold refiners thought contained gold. They therefore fitted out a second expedition for Frobisher in 1597, but this was no more successful than the first. The third expedition was caught in the ice-pack, and the North-West Passage remained a secret till the voyage of Sir John Franklin in 1845.

Quite other was the vision that tempted Walter Raleigh. It was not his desire to trade and bring back wealth to make men in England more prosperous, but to take English men and English women into far places, where, descending in lands of unheard-of fertility, they might stretch the borders of England beyond her coasts and make a new England in a new world. Fired with these visions of colonisation he sent out in 1584 a certain Amades to take possession of part of the American shore in the right of the ' Queen's most excellent majesty.' For the first time those who set out might regard the ship not as their home but as a mere means of transport; they might allow themselves to get tired of its narrowness and dream of the home towards which they were going.

It was a fair land at which they arrived, a land of great trees and sweet scents, of mountains and valleys and fruit. At first they saw no sign of

human life, but presently one black canoe came towards them, and a single Indian boldly came aboard. They gave him gifts, and he in return gave them great quantities of fresh-caught fish and took them to see the king, his brother. So with friendship and greeting the first dwelling of the English amongst the red men began. But it is grief to tell how it went on. A red man stole a silver cup, and the English, in revenge, marched to the native town, burnt it, and set fire to all the corn. They meant, they said, to teach the natives a lesson; but what a lesson it was they taught!

While the ship went home, a small band under a man named Lane remained to settle. The climate was hot, the settlers were few; they could not live without corn, and corn will not grow without much labour expended upon the soil. So the settlers forced the natives to work for them, and the natives planned rebellion. Lane asked the native king for a conference, which was granted, and the white man's Governor used the opportunity to order a massacre of all his hosts; so the red man's quick sympathy and eager hospitality were turned into unrelenting hate. The small band of settlers found themselves faced with starvation, and when, one day, a messenger arrived breathless to say that Francis Drake, with a small fleet, was on the coast and ready to do whatever the settlers asked of him, they had but one request—to be taken home.

Later, Raleigh sent out a relief ship under Sir Richard Grenville which left fifteen other settlers; but those were all killed by the natives, and nothing remained to show the next settlers the place of their abode save a few bones.

Still believing in his vision, Raleigh sent out a

third expedition under Governor White. This expedition took women as well as men, and it needs some imagination to grasp the courage of the women who went. White's daughter was one of them; her daughter was the first English child to be born on American soil. In twenty years the colony suffered untold misery from privations and the attacks of Indians until, in 1610, a further set of colonists, sent there by James I., found just a remnant of seven people who all that time had had no message from the homeland.

Between the two Americas runs the narrow mountainous isthmus of Panama, then called Darien. Englishmen had come to this side of it; they knew the land at the sea's end, but what lay beyond the mountain wall they did not know —no Englishman had seen—till on a day, as it is said, one Francis Drake climbed a hill and then a tree on the hill, and saw that Ocean beyond the West which is the Ocean of the East. No wonder that he prayed that he might sail a ship just once upon that sea. No wonder that he faced all dangers and all difficulties to do it.

In misty November he, with four others, set sail out of Plymouth Sound in the *Pelican*, Queen Elizabeth's blessing being upon the high adventure. But even so early in his course storms drove him back, and it was the 13th of December before he got away again. After they left the friendly islands of the African coast, for fifty-four days the ship sailed on without sight of land. In April they reached the River Plate, revictualled, and scrapped two ships that misbehaved, for Drake was of those who give no second chance to man or ship. A little lower down the coast it was his friend Doughty, whose rebellion

threatened the success of the sailing, who was scrapped. Drake landed, gave the accused an English trial before a jury of the crew, and having heard the verdict of guilty, executed the criminal, it is said, with his own hands.

Then came the Strait of Magellan. Above the puny ship towered rock-like cliffs snow-capped; in front of her raced the swirling currents of that treacherous water. But fortune favoured her. As the *Pelican* she entered the straits; she came out from them on September 6th as the *Golden Hind.*

Drake had his will, and sailed an English ship on the Pacific. Three years after she left Plymouth, the *Golden Hind* came home, having circumnavigated the earth and brought her captain with her, the first ship to accomplish just that.

It seems as if no power of imagination can grasp the wonder of deeds like these when we remember the lack of charts and chronometers, the frequent danger of mutinies, the bad food, the privations and diseases, the slow sailing, and the unbelievably tiny ships, which were the common circumstances of their doing.

XVIII

WOOL

'Amongst all manual arts used in this land, none is more famous for desert or more beneficial to the commonwealth than is the most necessary art of clothing, and therefore as the benefit thereof is great, so are the professors of the same to be both loved and maintained.'—THOMAS DELONEY.

WE have heard something of the difficulties that arose after the Black Death had killed half the farm labourers of England; both masters and men thought that the quarrel between them was all a matter of wages. But it was really more than that. There were not enough labourers for the needs of the land. So those who owned the land turned much of it into pasture, for land under pasture needs far fewer men than land under the plough.

This pasture was used for sheep-rearing, as there was an unlimited demand for English wool. Unfortunately it is very difficult to keep the scales of life balanced. First there had been too much work and too few labourers. Then when the landlords lessened the work in this way, there was soon too little work and too many labourers, so that great misery came to those who could get no work. Sir Thomas More described this plight when he wrote *Utopia*. 'Utopia' means 'nowhere.' It was written at a time when new lands were just being discovered, when any sailor

pushing through deep forests and up unknown rivers, might come, as the discoverers of Mexico and Peru actually did come, upon ordered and splendid states, whose inhabitants had been civilised for years beyond all counting, and who lived in fine cities among noble buildings and works of art.

It was a fascinating dream to have, that some day some one might light upon a country where they had found out how to live happily and joyously, without poverty or sin, giving to each man all his desire, without depriving any other man of his. The picturing of such ideal commonwealths became the fashion. More began it, and mocked himself as he did so by calling it Utopia. The description of this ideal country, however, occupies only the second part of *Utopia*; the first part gives us a description of England, and this is how More writes of the turning of arable land into sheep pasture.

'Your sheep that were wont to be so meek and tame, and so small eaters, now, as I have heard say, have become so great devourers and so wild, that they eat up, and swallow down the very men themselves. They consume and destroy, and devour whole fields, houses and cities. For look in what parts of the realm doth grow the finest and therefore the dearest wool, there noblemen and gentlemen, yea and certain abbots, holy men, no doubt, not contenting themselves with the yearly revenues and profits, that were wont to grow to their forefathers and predecessors of their lands, nor being content that they live in rest and pleasure nothing profiting, yea, much annoying the public weal, leave no ground for tillage, they enclose all into pastures; they throw down houses; they pluck down towns, and leave nothing standing, but only the church to be made a sheep-house. . . . For one shepherd or herdsman is enough to eat up that ground with cattle, to the occupying whereof

with husbandry many hands were requisite. And this is also the cause why victuals be in many places dearer now.' [1]

Let us, at the moment when wool, England's 'worthiest and richest commodity,' seemed to be becoming the cause of her greatest misfortunes, go back and hear something of its history.

This history has no beginning; we just find the wool trade, in the twelfth century, established all over the land in villages as well as in towns, as far north as Durham and Yorkshire, as far south as Hampshire, as far east as Norfolk, as far west as Shropshire, and all over the Midlands as well. It included the trades of carding, spinning, weaving, fulling, dyeing. In one town, Bristol, in 1312, one-fifth of the townspeople were engaged in this industry.

English cloths were exported, at any rate, as early as the thirteenth century, and we read of Spanish merchants being robbed of cloth of Stamford, Beverley, and York. We hear also that the Oxford Parliament of 1258 enacted that raw wool should not be exported but made into cloth in England and that all English people should wear woollen clothes made in the homeland. Perhaps such regulations as those may have accounted for the falling off in cloth-making, though some people said it was because the gilds were so exclusive and prevented people from becoming weavers.

But, be that as it may, in the fourteenth century there were few weavers in England and those not very skilled. So Edward III. invited Flemish weavers, who were suffering from civil war in their own country, to come over to settle in

[1] Thomas More, 'Utopia.'

England and teach the English weavers new and better methods of making cloth. The Statute runs: 'All the cloth-workers of strange lands, of whatsoever country they be, which will come into England, Ireland, Wales, and Scotland, within the king's power, shall come safely and surely, and shall be in the king's protection and safe-conduct, to dwell in the same lands, choosing where they will; and to the intent that the said cloth-workers shall have the greater will to come and dwell here, our sovereign lord will grant them franchises as many and such as may suffice them.' [1]

This experiment was very successful, and the cloth trade revived. Sometimes the kings, when they wanted money, allowed export, sometimes they forbade it. On the whole, in those days, people did not believe in free trade, but constantly renewed laws forbidding the export of raw wool and bidding the English wear only cloths made in England, so that manufactures should not be imported. The result was a great increase in the number of cloth-makers of all kinds and great wealth accruing to the kings from the customs on exported cloth. England had begun to be an industrial instead of an agricultural country.

But apparently the new industry did not, at once, give work to the out-of-work agriculturists; hence the distress described by More. The new weavers were the journeymen turned out of their towns by the exclusiveness of the gilds, who settled in the villages and took to making cloth. Now always, when one tries to tell a tale or to describe the state of a trade or a country, there are two sets of facts that contradict one another.

Lipson, 'Economic History of England.'

One person, who tells the tale, sees one set of facts, while a second person sees quite another set. And the thing that would be interesting to know, and that is so hard to find out, is which is the bigger set of facts, the truth about the majority. Thus, for instance, we are told that in the fifteenth century this expansion of the wool trade made the towns of England rich. One street of London, says an Italian, had more wealth in its goldsmiths' shops than could have been found in all the shops of the four greatest Italian cities. But, on the other hand, we hear, from all parts of the country, complaints of the falling-off in the wealth of the towns.

> 'The towns go down, the land decays . . .
> Great men maketh nowadays
> A sheep-cote in the church. . . .
> Commons to close and keep ;
> Poor folk for bread cry and weep ;
> Towns pulled down to pasture sheep ;
> This is the new guise.' [1]

With the wool trade, at any rate, came in a separation between employer and employed such as had not been known in England before: the capitalist made his appearance. A capitalist is one who uses his money to set others to work at a trade. He may not know anything of the trade itself ; he may be like that Mayor of Canterbury who, once 'victualler, took upon him the occupation of the making of cloth and lived like a gentleman.'

In 'The Pleasant History of John Winchcombe' we have a description of the workpeople of such a capitalist clothier in times when all went well.

[1] Quoted by Lipson, 'Economic History of England.'

Within one roome, being large and long,
There stood two hundred loomes full strong.
Two hundred men, the truth is so,
Wrought in these loomes, all in a row,
By everi one a prettie boy
Sate making quills with mickle joy ;
And in another place hard by,
An hundred women merrily
Were carding hard with joyful cheere,
Who singing sat with voyces cleere.
And in a chamber close beside
Two hundred maydens did abide,
In petticoats of Stammell red,
And milk-white kerchiefs on their head ;
Their smocke sleeves like to winter snow
And each sleeve with a silken band
Was featly tied at the hand :
These prettie maids did never linn
But in that place all day did spin.
Then to another loome came they,
Where children were in poor array,
And everyone was picking wool,
The finest from the coarse to cull.
And these, their labours to requite,
Had everyone a penny at night,
Beside their meat and drink all day.
Within another place likewise
Full fiftie proper men he spies ;
And these were shearmen everyone,
And hard by them there did remaine
Full four score rowers taking paine.
A dye-house likewise had he then,
Wherein he kept full fiftie men ;
And likewise in his fulling mill,
Full twenty persons kept he still.'

'. . . then he was brought into the warehouses, some being filled with wool, some with flocks, some with woad and madder, and some with broad cloathes and kersies readie dyed and drest, beside

a great number of others, some stretcht on the tenters, some hanging on poles, and a great many more wet in other places.' [1]

When things went ill and perhaps such a capitalist as he who employed all these workpeople had to pay heavy taxes or lost money in other ways, he lowered wages or dismissed his workpeople. Then the law of those days remonstrated with him, with what result we are not told. Here is the remonstrance sent in 1586 by the Queen's Privy Council to the Justices of the Peace in Somersetshire: 'that whereas their lordships are informed that the poorer sort of the people inhabiting about the city of Bath and other towns on the easterly parts of the county of Somerset, wont to live by spinning, carding, and working of wool, are not set on work whereby in this time of dearth of corn and victual they lack their common and necessary food, a matter not only full of pity, but of dangerous consequence to the state, if speedy order be not taken therein; Her Majesty, therefore, tendering the one and careful of the other hath given commandment that they forthwith . . . consider of the present inconvenience and how it may be redressed, and for that purpose especially they are hereby authorised to call before them the clothiers and other men of trade in the several places within the county where the people do complain of lack of work, and in Her Majesty's name to require and command such of them as have stocks and are of ability to employ the same as they have heretofore done, so as by them the poor may be set on work; and if any of them upon any frivolous excuses shall refuse to obey Her Majesty's commandment therein, they shall certify their names

[1] Thomas Deloney, 'Jack of Newbury.'

and what their excuses be that consideration may be had of them accordingly.' [1]

Among the complaints against those capitalist clothiers that are interesting is one that they allowed bad cloth to be sold and so brought shame upon England, and another that they overcharged the consumer.

About the middle of the sixteenth century another set of immigrants from Holland, then suffering under the tyranny of the Duke of Alva, also came to England and settled mostly in Norwich, and gave still another impulse to the fine wool trade.

So the trade grew, under what was known as the *domestic system*, up to the great changes in manufacture that took place in the eighteenth century. By the domestic system is meant that weaving was done in the scattered homes all over the country; the man of the house had the loom and did the weaving; and his family did the spinning for him, often in the winter evenings after the field work was done. That 'domestic system' sounds very pleasant. It brings up a picture of a fire-lit cottage, the man of the house at the heavy loom, with its regular clank, and of the quiet labouring woman and her children who had been standing all day, sitting down to those graceful spinning wheels.

The clothier or middleman travelled round supplying the raw wool and collecting the woven cloth. He bought the raw wool and sold the cloth, so he took all the risks of the trade, and it must be said he paid himself for these with nearly all the profits. Daniel Defoe, the author of *Robinson Crusoe*, in his book on 'A Tour through

[1] Lipson, 'Economic History of England.'

Great Britain,' thus describes the cloth trade of Leeds in 1722 :—

'The Clothiers come to Leeds early in the morning with their cloth; and, as few bring more than one piece, the Market-days being so frequent, they go to the Inns and Public-houses with it, and there set it down.

'At about six o'clock in the Summer and about seven in the Winter, the Clothiers being all come by that time, the Market Bell at the Old Chapel by the Bridge rings; upon which it would surprise a Stranger to see in how few Minutes without Hurry or Noise or the least Disorder, the whole Market is filled, and all the Boards upon the Tressels are covered with Cloth, as close to one another as the Pieces can lie longways, each Proprietor standing behind his own piece, who form a Merchantile Regiment, as it were, drawn up in a double line, in as great Order as a Military one.

'As soon as the Bell has done ringing, the Factors and Buyers of all Sorts enter the Market, and walk up and down between the Rows, as their Occasions direct. Some of them have their foreign Letters of Orders, with Patterns sealed on them, in their hands, the Colours of which they match, by holding them to the Cloths they think agree to. When they have pitched upon their Cloth, they lean over to the Clothier, and, by a Whisper, in the fewest words imaginable, the Price is stated; one asks, the other bids; and it is agreed or not agreed in a Moment.'

XIX

THE POOR LAW

O those who were masters in wool, and those who could keep their work in wool, prospered. Let us see what became of the less fortunate people. In the beginning of a statute of 1534 we read 'a marvellous number of this realm be not able to provide for themselves, their wives, and their children, but be so discouraged with misery and poverty that they fall daily to theft and robbery or pitifully die for hunger and cold.' The 'marvellous number' consisted of a motley assembly of people, those who were old or ill, the labourers thrown out of work by enclosures who could not get fresh work in industry; old soldiers, for whom there were no pensions, and who, having been trained to nothing but warfare, found themselves at a disadvantage under 'the Tudor peace'; poor scholars endeavouring to make their way to the University who had not been fortunate enough to obtain licences to beg; bear-wards, mummers, sailors waiting for a ship or aweary of the sea, gypsies, physiognomists, palmists, unlicensed pedlars and tinkers, minstrels, people whose occupations were on the one hand precarious, and on the other increasingly objectionable to the new Puritans; and able-bodied

labourers, who had dared to refuse the 'reasonable wages' offered by masters.

For the better ordering or the suppression of these, the government was continually trying to make laws. As early as Richard II. the 'poor laws' began to endeavour to cure poverty by punishment, but it was not until the time of the Tudors that the matter was seriously taken in hand. The Church had commanded its people to give freely to the poor and the monasteries had to a large extent done so, but both they and the world outside were not long in discovering that gifts may bring good to the giver, but are dangerous to the receiver. A class of professional poor, knowing they could depend upon charity, very quickly grew up. They learned an incredible number of tricks for making false sores, for contorting their bodies into shapes horrible to see, and for getting rid of one limb or another, so that they not only became themselves liars and deceivers, but they also set a fashion of a lucrative trade and continually increased their numbers.

In Henry VII.'s reign a law was passed which dealt with vagabonds under two heads :—

1. The old or sick who really could not work were to be sent to their place of birth and there kept.

2. Hardy vagabonds, including shipmen, soldiers, and clerks of the University, were no longer to be kept in prison because their 'long abiding' there had been found expensive. Instead they were to spend three days and three nights in the stocks for the first offence, and six days and six nights for the second. These numbers were afterwards reduced to one and three respectively.

But these gentler measures seem not to have been effective, and in 1530 a sterner measure was used. Anyone convicted of vagabondage was to be taken to the nearest market-town 'to be tied to the end of a cart naked, and to be beaten with whips throughout the same market-town till his body be bloody by reason of such whipping.' Afterwards he was sent home and there set to labour. Fines were imposed on parishes that did not so deal with their vagabonds and on any individual who harboured vagabonds. Scholars, sailors, and pardoners seem to have been especially obdurate, as it is enacted that, though the above penalty was to be the same for them for the first occasion, if they were caught again they were to be scourged for two days, set in the pillory, and lose an ear; and for the third offence they were again to be scourged and pilloried and to lose the other ear.

But beggary continued and grew. These earlier laws had been vague about what happened to a beggar after he had been forcibly sent home, but in 1536 it was enacted that the local authorities were to receive him, 'keep and find' him, and that for this purpose they were to collect money in church on Sundays and holy days. All giving to beggars except through the poor-box was forbidden. Children between the ages of five and fourteen found wandering were to be openly beaten with rods and apprenticed to a master.

In that year and after, the number of beggars that the country at large had to deal with was increased by Henry VIII.'s suppression of the monasteries. And therefore the government, worried by the worsening of the malady they thought they were curing, became even more savage in their regulations. In 1547 it was

enacted that vagabonds might be branded with a hot iron, or even killed outright, or sold as slaves to a master who had the right to put an iron collar on their necks. Special habitations, however, were to be put up for the aged poor, the curate was to preach a sermon to raise alms for them, and special 'collectors' were to be appointed on a special day of the year. These 'collectors' are the originals of the 'overseers of the poor.'

In 1563 the first Poor Law of Elizabeth fined these overseers if they refused to serve, and also 'voluntary' contributors who refused to contribute after due persuasion. At this time a search was made for vagabonds, and it was found that there were 13,000 'masterless' men in the land.

There were four Poor Laws in the reign of Elizabeth; the last was passed in 1601, and remained the poor law of England till 1834. All together these laws established 'overseers,' and churchwardens who were appointed each year at Easter; they fixed a compulsory rate for the support of the poor, and they provided that the unemployed were to be set to making hempen and woollen yarn. They arranged for the apprenticeship of the children of paupers to masters who were to teach them a trade; and they provided for the building of '*houses of correction*' in which beggars were to work.

XX

THE BIRTH OF MODERN SCIENCE

'"What is truth?" said jesting Pilate, and would not stay for an answer.'—FRANCIS BACON.

THERE is in myth a golden apple that tempted a woman to know. There is in history a tower that leaned and tempted a man to think. And, both in the myth and in the history, men said that knowledge and thought were unlawful for the children of men.

There was a famous day in history when Galileo Galilei, armed with round things to be dropped and instruments to test their rate of falling, walked up the broad and winding stairway to the top of the leaning tower of Pisa, and proceeded to find out for himself if what the book said about the rates at which bodies fall, was true. Does it seem a simple, amusing, almost boyish thing to do, and at the best not very important? It was one of the world's great hours, out of which was born the Science of Motion and the power of all the mighty moving things that man has since made or transformed for his own use.

But, though Galileo did not know this, the deed itself was not without its danger. The book he proposed to test was Aristotle's, the science book of the Middle Ages, which said that a weight one hundred times heavier than another would

fall to the earth one hundred times faster. The time was one of severe persecution for those who did not simply obey and believe; on the statute books of the University of Oxford, which in those days ranked as free and liberal, it was written: 'Masters and Bachelors who do not follow Aristotle faithfully are liable to a fine of five shillings for every point of divergence.' And the guardians of opinion were capable of far severer penalties.

They had, Protestants and Catholics alike, banned Copernicus's book on the motion of the earth because it had dared to say the earth went round the sun. It was not long before they burned at the stake Giordano Bruno, he who ventured to call himself 'the awakener of those who sleep,' because he taught that Aristotle was entirely wrong, and that the monks who trusted to him were destroyers of the joy of life.

Perhaps, too, Galileo, as he dropped his weights and introduced to the world the method of practical experiment for which Roger and Francis Bacon had pleaded, might have let his eyes rest on the beautiful 'Campo Santo,' or burial-place beside the Tower, and have remembered the Orcagna pictures with which its walls are adorned. These pictures of the Age of Faith, which he was for the moment defying, suggest better than any words can do the mental courage of the early men of science. For there in those pictures the artist showed in storied gloom what men really thought, with deep conviction, of the soul's fate of those who defied the Church.

If we want to understand what knowledge meant in those times to those who sought her, let us contemplate the painter Orcagna's busy devils packing neat bundles of rebel souls into

hell; or Marlowe's Dr. Faustus in his last agony of fear of eternal punishment crying 'I 'll burn my books,' as if having books were the worst of crimes; and the last, perhaps weirdest scene of all in the fight of light against darkness, the old Galileo kneeling before the officers of the Church, he who had discovered the laws of motion, he who had opened the eyes of the world to the truth of the stars, and mumbling at their foolish bidding, that indeed those laws were wrong, those stars misunderstood. But that time was when he was old. From his tower he had proved that Aristotle was wrong, that all bodies fall thirty-two feet a second faster in every second they fall, that is, that all bodies fall with the same velocity—in a vacuum.

This in due time suggested to Sir Isaac Newton the questions: 'Are all things falling? Are all the planets falling towards the sun? Are all the moons falling towards their planets?' From the answer to that question came the Law of Gravity, which but for Galileo Newton might never have discovered.

In 1608, the year of Milton's birth, a Dutchman Lippershay discovered the principle of the telescope. Galileo, with only a hint of this invention, made first a telescope to magnify distant objects three times, and shortly after one to magnify them thirty-two times.

On the 7th January 1610 men first looked into the heavens with eyes that saw, first trod that path of truth among the stars, which was to carry them along distances that overwhelm the mind, to discoveries that make life better in the very intimacy of the home. With that first telescope they saw the causes of the moon's light, the fact that the Milky Way is a collection of

stars, the satellites of Jupiter, the phases of Venus, the spots on the sun, and the 'seas' of the moon.

Science, from the outset, has been international. Unlike commerce, it has been trammelled by no monopolies. The Italians worked out the movements of the planets, but thought they moved in circles. A German, Kepler, proved they moved in ellipses. Newton, using the work of both, discovered Gravity and the Calculus. This he did in the years 1665 and 1666, when he was thirty-three years old and the Royal Society was five.

In France, Descartes, relating Geometry and Algebra and simplifying both, made possible the measurement of all movement, as the differential and integral calculus of Newton and the German Euler had made possible the measurement of all distance. When we say 'all' in Science, we mean 'all.' We mean that by these discoveries we have been enabled to measure distances so small that we can find the exact size of creatures so minute that 25,000 of them will fit, end to end, into an inch, and distances so great that even if you travelled night and day with the velocity of a ray of light, you might take thousands of years to get there.

Thus, in the growth of Science, Mathematics and Physics led the way, Chemistry came next, and Biology last. It was John Maxow who, in 1674, while experimenting with candles and small animals, discovered oxygen and so became the founder of Chemistry, but the real development of that science waited for the nineteenth century, and we shall hear of it later.

XXI

ENCLOSURE AGAIN

'There is not a calamity or distress incident to humanity, either of body or of mind, that is not humbly endeavoured to be mitigated or relieved, by the powerful and the affluent, either of high or middling rank, in this our happy land, which for its benevolence, charity and boundless humanity, has been the admiration of the World.'—JUSTICE PARK, 1831.

E heard in the Tudor times of the enclosure of commons for pasture. In and about the eighteenth century we hear of enclosure for ploughing. It was a time of great stir in agriculture. Jethro Tull's invention of a drill and machine for sowing had reduced the seed required to a fifth, and his advice on weeding had increased the yield of all ground. Lord Townshend, Walpole's brother-in-law, reintroduced marling and liming, after the custom had been neglected about four hundred years. He also had experimented in rotation of crops, and had advocated the enclosure of open fields for the sake of those experiments. Coke in Norfolk had shown what marvels in increased produce resulted from a sixfold rotation of wheat, turnips, barley, clover, rye, and grass in enclosed fields. Root crops made winter feeding of cattle and sheep possible, and experiments in their breeding added almost inconceivably to their food and wool-producing qualities.

Next came mechanical ingenuity applied to the

time-worn methods of farming: in 1781 an improved drill-plough, in 1787 a harrow, in 1798 a thresher, in 1784 a sowing machine, in 1799 a reaper, in 1800 a winnowing machine, and in 1816 a haymaking machine. Machinery had begun to take the place of hands in the work of the fields.

But the open field did not, with all its disadvantages, at once yield place to the enclosed. The farmer still had to waste land to keep grassy baulks between his strips and his neighbours' strips; he still wasted time in walking to his outlying strips; he still had to win the consent of his fellows in a parish meeting to any changes he wanted to introduce or to any improvement like drilling, which could only be effectual if neighbours worked together. He could not grow winter crops to serve as feed for his cattle, for the common fields had to be thrown open after the harvest. Because he had to let his cattle pasture with all the other cattle, they frequently caught diseases and died. He longed, when he was prosperous, to buy up all the weedy, thistle-strewn strips of feckless neighbours, make a neat one-piece farm, put a hedge or many hedges round it, and farm well with all the new improvements.

It was not only that he wanted to make money; he lived in an age that was called the 'age of prose,' and he and his fellows loved common sense, good cultivation, and yew hedges clipped into neat peacocks. He had no patience with commons aflame with gorse or any beauties of wild nature. When the reformer Cobbett said that 'nothing in England was more displeasing than the Cotswolds, except Hindhead,' he was voicing the opinion of the time. Dr. Johnson

said of the Highlands that 'their uniformity of barrenness can afford very little amusement to the traveller.'

And so, just because he was so typical of his age, the common-sense farmer found himself easily listened to in Parliament. All the members of Parliament then were landowners or representatives of landowners. Neither peasant, nor artisan, nor professional man had a vote or any influence in Parliament. The landlord-farmer had only to ask for an Act of Parliament to allow him to enclose common lands, and it was granted him. Up to 1800 there were 1700 Parliamentary Acts of Enclosure; between 1800 and 1844 there were 2000.

Agriculture went ahead, the land produced unbelievably more corn than ever before, and the national wealth grew. Perhaps that would have been quite satisfactory, if the commons had been as bare as they often looked. Instead, they were the grazing places of all the villagers' cattle and the fuel-mine of every villager. When they were enclosed, each villager, who once had had his scantling of a money wage, his cow that gave his children milk, his pig and his geese, and his fuel for the fetching, had nothing but his wages, and even those were of less purchasing power than they had been, for it has been estimated that though wages rose 60 per cent. between 1760 and 1813, the price of wheat rose 130 per cent., and wheat and potatoes were practically the only food of the labourer. But it was the cow that made the real difference. Recently a once wealthy Englishwoman who, married to an Austrian, had been obliged to stay the war through in Vienna, was asked how she and her children had borne the famine. 'Of course we spent all our money,'

she said, 'but we had a cow, and as long as we could get fodder, things were all right.' On that point the centuries agree, it is the cow that makes the difference.

The users of commons were allowed by law to petition against enclosure, but only occasionally were the petitioners heard, as in the case of the Stanwell enclosure. Those petitioners were near London and able to present their petition in person. On February 18, 1767, 'The owners and occupiers of cottages or tenements in the parish of Stanwell' stated that they had 'the right of common on the large common of Hounslow Heath,' that the lord of the manor had caused parts of the 'moors within the parish to be fenced in and enclosed with pales for his own sole and separate use, and that the dividing and enclosing the said commons, moors, and waste-lands within the said parish will greatly injure and distress many.'

The petition was supported by 'owners and occupiers' in the parishes of Harmondsworth, Cranford, Isleworth, Twickenham, Teddington, Hampton, and other villages in the neighbourhood of the common; and the enclosure was put off for twenty-two years. But the evil day came in the end.

For the most part, although the laws allowed for objections, by the nature of the case these could seldom be heard. The peasants could neither read nor write; they knew their traditional rights, the custom of 'use of common' handed down from father to son, but they were hard put to it, to give in writing, as they were bidden to do, their legal claim to what they knew was theirs. They were too poor to engage lawyers, too poor to journey to law-courts, and, even when

they did perform the journey, were too shy and too bewildered to put their case.

The only resistance of which they were capable was to pull down the enclosing pales, but for this the military was easily called out against them. Sometimes the enclosing bill even forced the dispossessed to put up the hated palings at their own expense.

The face of the country, and life in the country, were quite changed. At the beginning of the century there had been more small freeholders in England than in any other country in Europe; a few years after its close there were fewer. Every freehold had had its cottage. As enclosure progressed, in many villages, the cottages, as they became vacant, were pulled down and the landlord refused to have others built, forcing the villagers to emigrate abroad or to the slums of the new cities or to make hovels on the roadside for themselves out of mud and sods. The small farmer, who did not do any of these things, became a day-labourer or went to the workhouse.

So full did the workhouses become that the local magnates found their actions reflecting on themselves in the rise of rates, and they ordered the lessening of food to workhouse dwellers.

Outside the workhouse, the labourers' standard of food changed too. Once upon a time in the open fields he could glean wheat enough for his family and beans enough for his pig to be worth six or seven weeks' wages. Now all that was gone. Meat and bacon were seldom seen on his table, cheese became a luxury, milk in the south was almost unprocurable. When he found his wages in his own village too low he could not go to find work elsewhere. There were laws, known as Settlement Laws, which forbade a poor man to

leave the parish where he was settled, or to enter another without a certificate from the overseer. If workmen were wanted by the overseers of a given town they were admitted without certificates, but if manufacturers and labourers wanted the labourer to enter and the overseer objected, labour had to do without its market and the market without its labour.

The poor were not free to go from place to place seeking work. Neither could they join together and use their numbers to get justice, for the Government's fear of the French Revolution had caused the passing of the Treason and Sedition Laws which made meetings illegal, and workmen were additionally burdened by the Combination Laws, which forbade them to form societies for the purpose of raising wages.

In 1795 there was a brief interesting revolt of the women. They revolted against high prices, against the profiteers of those days, and seized boats laden with wheat or took possession of shops and sold goods at a fair price. This price they handed back to the shopkeeper.

Distress was so acute that some remedy had to be found. A minimum wage was suggested, a wage rising in proportion to prices, allotments, and the removal of the Combination Laws. All were rejected.

At the Pelican Inn, Speenhamland, in the year 1795, was made by the Justices of the Peace, assembled with other ' discreet ' persons, the suggestion which, adopted far and near over the land, did more harm to England than probably any other single measure in her history.

The suggestion was simple and kindly, but unwise. Every labourer was to have his wages made up to a fixed sum reckoned in bread. If the em-

ployer paid him low wages, the rates would add such a sum as would allow him to have three gallon loaves a week for himself and one and a half for his wife and each child. The effect of this provision was :—

1. No employer would think it necessary to pay high wages, because the rates would take his burden from him.

2. The labourers would do scarcely any work, for the less work they did the less certainly they would be paid by their employers, but their wages would not vary.

3. The more children they had, the better off they were.

4. It was better to be a pauper than thrifty and well-set-up. Employers liked employing paupers because the rates paid part of the wage. It was the constant complaint of respectable labourers who had saved a little money that, when they lost their situations, they had to spend their savings and become destitute before any one would employ them. So wages fell and fell. Men grew lazy and pauperised ; the less able, less independent sections of the population increased enormously.

Across the Channel the army of France was marching,[1] promising to the peasantry of every conquered country freedom from taxes and tithes and privileges of the nobility. Government and governing classes trembled in every nation lest the ideas which had made the Revolution in France — ideas of 'Liberty, Fraternity, and Equality'—should reach their own peasants and should inspire them to destroy, as the French had destroyed. While there was yet time, the English found Speenhamland to pacifv the

[1] See chapter on 'Liberators.'

peasants' discontent and to degrade them below the point where men have the self-respect to rebel.

But when the French war was over in 1815 came the first reckoning time. During the war there had been great trade, and great wealth to be made in agriculture. The price of ground produce had been so high that it had paid to cultivate even ground that gave a very small return; the army absorbed much of the surplus population. But with the return of peace, the land seemed crowded with unwanted people; unemployment prevailed, and, with the opening of the ports and the return of the Continental workmen to work, profits fell.

A series of bad harvests added to the distress. In the south wages varied between 9s. and 3s. a week, the standard of living fell from nine gallon loaves per family of five in 1795 to six in 1831. Goldsmith's 'Deserted Village,' Cobbett's political pamphlets, Fielding's novels, and the Parliamentary papers are full of the misery of the poor in that land that the politicians delighted to call 'the admiration of the world.'

But the tale of their misery is not yet fully told. There remain the Game Laws and the punishments.

Around the starving, in the newly enclosed moors, in the copses behind their hovels, there was food for the catching, rabbits in plenty, wild birds in crowds; but they were preserved for those who had no need of them, save for the so-called sport of shooting. The law of 1800 punished with imprisonment and hard labour any one taking a rabbit. For the second offence, it was imprisonment with public whipping. Because the severity of the punishment led the

poacher to try to defend himself, often violently, against his would-be captor, a new law added the penalty of death for anyone who resisted. And when the poacher, who had poached because his children were starving, and defended himself because his imprisonment would have deprived them altogether of their living, was brought before his judge, it was often before none other than the game-preserver, whose natural enemy he was. 'There is not,' said Lord Brougham, 'a worse constituted tribunal on the face of the earth, not even that of the Turkish Cadi.' It is difficult to believe that there were more savage sentences. Justices hanged men, husbands and fathers, for poaching. Landlords actually set spring guns to kill and maim the inadvertent trespasser.

In 1830, when revolution was afoot in Europe, the English labourer of the southern counties rose against his miseries. The causes of the rising were enclosures, the Combination Laws, the Corn Laws, and Speenhamland. The agricultural labourer found allies among his less unhappy fellows, the village smith and wheelwright, the tailors and carpenters, sometimes even among the farmers. The most obvious of his foes were three: the overseers, the clergy whose tithes were the excuse for his low wages, and the threshing machines that threw him out of work. So he set about breaking the last; he and his friends carted away a few overseers in dung carts to any destination they asked for, so long as it was away from the village, and they demanded the abandonment of tithes. For wages they wanted half-a-crown a day.

They also terrified their rulers by sending threatening letters signed by the mysterious but uncomfortably suggestive name 'Swing.' Thirteen

of the southern and eastern counties seem to have been involved in the revolt, but the suffering was severest in Hampshire and Wiltshire.

The peasants killed not a single one of their oppressors, but for their machine-breaking, rick-burning and threatening letters, 457 of them were transported, about 400 imprisoned, and 3 executed.

If one of a mob asked and obtained money, even half-a-crown, he and each of his companions were liable to the death penalty. But the magistrates inflicted death only on a chosen few, selected at their discretion and executed in the presence of the other condemned. *The Times* correspondent writes of such an execution: 'I cast my eyes down into the felon's yard and saw many of the convicts weeping bitterly, some burying their faces in their smock frocks, others wringing their hands convulsively, and others leaning for support against the wall of the yard and unable to cast their eyes upwards.'

Picture what transportation meant to the rest! They were simple, country men and boys, who had perhaps never seen a ship or the sea, and scarcely heard a tale of foreign parts. Travel was hard and very slow for the wealthy. In a convict ship, with its passengers packed as tight as human beings could fit, of all ages, some criminals and vile, the long journey to Tasmania must have been horrible beyond thought. Many died on the way. But misery of mind must have been greater even than misery of body. These were men with all the ordinary affections and human tendernesses, and they were torn from wives and sweethearts and children and parents—torn for ever, for life, since few found their way back over the waste of waters when the seven years were done.

And all for what? They were not men of bad character—many of them were spoken of before the tribunals as the very ideal of young peasant manhood, clean-hearted, strong-limbed, gentle, brave, eager to help a comrade, ready to stand in the front rank of danger to help their kind. But to the gentlemen of the England of that day they were 'the dangerous classes,' meet to be exiled from an England that needed them, that their sufferings might terrorise those who remained, into submissiveness.

Note.—The greater part of this chapter is founded on the Hammonds' 'The Village Labourer,' from which the quotations are taken.

XXII

THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

Our blood splashes upward, O gold-heaper;
And your purple shows your path;
But the child's sob in the silence curses deeper
Than the strong man in his wrath.
'The Cry of the Children.'

WE have heard something of England's great trade, the wool trade. We have seen it supreme, without a rival in the country; we have seen it carried on in every county and wellnigh in every cottage; we have seen it at its best in the east and the west, among the flat lands and the hills, where the sheep throve most.

But toward the end of the eighteenth century the scene changes. The wool trade has left the country and gone to the cities; it has been localised in the north; and it has become only one of the greatest trades; cotton and coal and iron rival it.

Perhaps the first step in the change was the invention, in 1736, of Kay's flying shuttle, which made the weaving of double widths possible, since the weaver no longer needed to be able to touch hands round his machine. Next, in 1770, came Hargreave's spinning-jenny. The old spinning-wheel had wound one thread only; the new jenny wound eight at once, and a later machine twenty to thirty threads at a time. Spinning had always

been given to outdistancing weaving, because more people could manage a wheel than could manage a loom. This disproportion was further increased by Arkwright's water frame, which made possible the spinning of very fine thread, and Compton's 'mule.' The latter is the parent of the great modern spinning machines, which work 1000 spindles at once. Weaving threatened to be left far behind; the spinners were thrown out of work, and much discontent and machine-breaking ensued. But in 1785 Cartwright patented a power loom to be worked by water power instead of hand, and weaving could again keep pace with spinning, and later Watt's steam-engine took the place of water in driving machinery. Since then machines have done more and more of the actual work of spinning and weaving. Northropp's loom, patented in 1892, needs only one man to control every twenty-five looms.

The change from water power to machinery had had the effect of bringing the factories from the banks of streams to the place where iron and coal were available. The use of steam-engines for pumping gave an immense impetus to mining. Coal from under the northern counties took the place of the charcoal that had been made from the woods of the south. Iron-smelting ceased to be done in picturesque wooden factories with leather bellows worked by oxen, among the charcoal-burners' forests, and followed coal, to help make the new, grim, smoke-laden collection of factories that is the chief feature of the cities of the north.

The nearer together the iron for the machines, the factory for using them, the coal for driving them, and the men, women, and children for working them, the cheaper the things produced.

A great demand for workmen's houses arose around the new factories. Nothing was known or cared about sanitation or water supply; the cottages were run up haphazard, some with cellars that could be let for still poorer homes; the spaces between the earlier rows were filled up with back-to-back houses—disease traps—through which air and light could scarcely enter; large old houses were divided into tenements. Slums had come, apparently, to stay.

Unfortunately the theory called *laissez-faire* was fashionable then, the theory that every man will do the best for himself if you leave him free to do it, and that the best for each is the best for all. Probably the last part is true, but the first leaves out of count the simple fact that many men are too ignorant to know what is best even for themselves.

The story of the freedom of the early factories is interesting. Much of the work within them was very easy, so it was given to children. Factory agents travelled about the country inviting parents to sell their children and relieving the workhouse of the cost of keeping children. They wanted them for work in the new factories. The children entered on their duties between five and seven years of age and they were bound apprentice till they were twenty-one. They picked up cotton from the floor for perhaps fourteen hours a day, with aching backs, half suffocated with dust and unwholesome flue, or they tended machinery, into which in their tiredness they sometimes fell.

At dinner they had black bread and porridge for food and forty minutes for rest. At the end of the day they sometimes hid in the oven, because they were too tired to go home, and when

found and beat outside the factory gates, they slept there if they could find anywhere to hide.

Even to a slave owner it seemed incredible that 'any human being could be so cruel as to require a child to work twelve and a half hours a day.'[1] Yet in some mills at times, the work lasted from 3.30 A.M. to 9 P.M., and there were cases of worse hours than these. And when nature failed and children slept they were awakened with a heavy iron stick. 'I have read,' said Lord Shaftesbury, 'of those who sacrificed their children to Moloch, but they were a merciful people compared to Englishmen in the nineteenth century, for those mothers destroyed at once their wretched offspring . . . but we, having sucked out every energy of body and soul, toss them on the world a mass of skin and bone, incapable of exertion and brutalised in the understanding.'

To the first Sir Robert Peel, himself a cotton manufacturer, we owe it that in 1802 the factories lost the first stone in their 'freedom.' No child under twelve might work more than twelve hours —night work was abolished. Children were to have new clothes once a year and some education. This Act was violently opposed by the mill-owners, who prophesied that nothing but bankruptcy could follow the waste of time involved in its provisions. A second Act was passed in 1819. The third Act in 1833 said that children between nine and thirteen were to work only eight hours a day, children between thirteen and eighteen, only twelve hours. Every child was to be certified by a doctor as fit and to have some holidays. Inspectors were appointed. Even then, after twenty years of understanding of factory conditions, the Bill was unpopular. Again employers

[1] Hammond, 'The Town Labourer.'

tried to prove that anything less than fifty-nine hours a week for children of eleven would ruin the mills. In 1834 Lord Shaftesbury, to whose efforts much of the improvement in the law was due, was hissed by the undergraduates of Oxford for the part he had played. History often makes us wonder if it will be the men we hiss or the men we cheer that the year 2000 will count heroic. Or, as Robert Burns put it,

> 'O wad some power the giftie gie us,
> To see oursels as others see us.'

Factory laws continued. By their action, they have ensured, among other things, an eight-hours day even to adult workers, safeguards against dangerous trades, sanitary conditions of work, and proper precautions against accident.

The laws which at first applied only to the cotton and woollen factories have been gradually applied to all places, where several people work together, and, as each trade is brought under inspection, still new revelations of man's cruelty to man come to light. For example, in 1878 was passed an Act for inspecting sewing-machine trades. There were 2000 sewing-workshop occupiers in London employing on an average eight hands apiece. The workshops were found to be 'small, crowded, very dirty, overheated, and unventilated.' The wages were 'shockingly low, and the hours long and irregular.' In 1886 Lord Dunraven obtained a Select Committee to inquire into this sweated trade, which reported, after two years, that 'No slaves were in so unhappy a condition as these free citizens of a free city.'

But it is not the employer who was alone to be blamed. As Ruskin wrote, 'Whenever we buy such goods, remember we are stealing somebody's

labour. Don't let us mince the matter. I say, in plain Saxon, stealing, taking from him the proper reward of his work and putting it into our own pocket.' In 1891 it was enacted that every factory should keep a list of its out-workers (often the most miserable of all) and also a list of the wages paid to the workers, that inspection should be extended, and that the Home Secretary should cause rules to be drawn up for every trade or process which seemed dangerous or unhealthy. The Factory Act of 1895 provided, among other things, that the weekly hours of work for children should not be more than thirty, for women and young persons sixty, and it compelled local authorities to make reports on the improvements which the inspectors recommended.

The nineteenth century, which began so badly, saw the workman come to be regarded as a free citizen with all his legal disabilities removed.

In 1867 the artisan won the vote, and in 1884 the agricultural labourer. In 1871 the last laws against trade unions went. In 1875 the Law of Conspiracy was abolished.

Trade unions had, of course, not waited till then to come into being. The agitation of 1824 and 1825 had weakened the Combination Laws. That agitation is largely connected with the name of Francis Place. He began life as a journeyman tailor, was so poor that with his wife and the first one or two of his fourteen children he lived in one room. But his poverty did not take from the vigour of his mind, from his interest in intellectual pursuits, or from his determination to reform the world for himself and his fellows. He was no mere theorist, but made himself felt in his country's laws, chiefly perhaps in the People's Charter, wherein he demanded universal suffrage, annual

parliamentary voting by secret ballot, the payment of members of Parliament, equal electoral districts, and the abolition of the property qualification for members of Parliament.

The early trades unions, working for the most part somewhat secretly among only the separate crafts of each town, were regarded even so with great distrust, if not terror, by their opponents. Hear the Duke of Buckingham: 'The mischief they created was well known to the Government, their interference with trade, their atrocious oaths, impious ceremonies, desperate tyranny, and secret assassinations.'

In 1834 six labourers of Dorset were transported for attempting to form an Agricultural Labourers' Union. And the trade union, as we know it, embracing all the followers of a trade in the country, did not come in till after the middle of the nineteenth century. The Amalgamated Society of Engineers was formed in 1850, and won by strike, in 1871, a nine hours' day. The year after that the agricultural labourers of Wellesbourne drew together round Joseph Arch, once hedger and ditcher and later member of Parliament, and began the Agricultural Labourers' Union. Arch himself tells us how on a wet morning in February 1872 three men came to talk to him at his work. 'Things could not be worse,' said they; 'wages were so low and provisions so dear, that nothing but downright starvation lay before them unless the farmers could be made to raise their wages.' . . . 'When I saw,' said Arch, 'that the men were in dead earnest and had counted the cost and were determined to stand shoulder to shoulder, till they could squeeze a living wage out of their employers, and that they were the spokesmen of others like-minded with

themselves, I said I would address the meeting that evening at seven o'clock.'

Mr. Ben Tillet first attempted, but failed, to organise the dockers. In 1889 he, with John Burns and Tom Mann, organised the Gasworkers' and General Labourers' Union, and succeeded in reducing the working day in London gasworks from twelve to eight hours.

In the same year John Burns led a famous strike of the stevedores. They had never followed a leader, and were quite unaccustomed to acting together for a cause. They had, as it happened, public sympathy for their low wages, and obtained much help from the Colonies. Fears of their success led to the formation, in 1890, of the 'Shipping Federation' for strike breaking, whose intention was, wherever a strike was threatened, to 'collect' strike-breakers, carry them to the spot, and agree with employers to give them preference in employment. In 1893 their work was tested at Hull. But, in spite of terrible unemployment at the time, the workmen stood by one another.

In 1900 the Labour Representation Committee was formed to bring about direct representation of labouring men in Parliament. The result was the beginning, in 1906, of the Labour Party; the payment of members of Parliament, which followed in 1911, made it possible for a man, however poor, to be chosen to represent his fellows in the Common Council of the Realm.

XXIII

THE GROWTH OF SCIENCE

'The world's great age begins anew,
The golden years return.'

FROM the first, modern science was applied to the understanding of the earth and the making of instruments, in the widest sense of the word, by which men might live better.

As physics and mathematics were the first sciences to be developed, so they were the first to be applied, and the steam-engine and the locomotive are the first great practical results of science.

While Adam Smith was writing his *Wealth of Nations* to persuade men to do away with the restrictions on trade that the Middle Ages loved, and to allow free competition, James Watt, an engineer, came to Glasgow. That the Hammerers would not let him work in the city, because he was not of their craft, nor born there, strengthened Adam Smith in his views.

The University, however, where Watt had a friend in Black, the discoverer of latent heat, welcomed him as a workman. And it was while repairing the model of a steam-engine invented by Newcomen that Watt had the inspiration that enabled him to produce the first steam economically enough worked to be useful. The early steam-engines were needed, for the most

part, for pumping water out of the newly opened coal pits. To apply them to traction was another matter.

The story goes that a certain Murdoch invented a steam-engine that would run, but, fearing lest his idea might be stolen, he took it out at night to test it. He filled it with water, lit the fire, raised steam, and started the engine, and slowly it began to move; then faster and still faster it went, till, meeting a slope, it escaped entirely from its distressed owner. When he caught up with it, he found it standing safe in the road and the vicar of Redruth on his knees beside it, not trying to steal its secret, but praying for deliverance from this unaccustomed devil.

In 1812 Stephenson produced a steam-engine which at Killingworth pulled eight wagons containing thirty tons of coal, uphill, at the rate of eight miles an hour.

Soon, at Helton Colliery, steam-engines were used on the level with rope haulage to help with the inclines. In 1825 Stephenson begged to be allowed to try steam haulage on the Stockton-Darlington tramway. The owners, who let him, were brave men, for many people chose to think that it was wrong to interfere with Nature, and the outcry of the Church was strong against the new discovery. In 1830 the Manchester to Liverpool railway was opened, still in face of strenuous opposition, and for the first time the iron road was run across a bog—the great Chat Moss. It was the first natural difficulty the trains conquered. They have since passed over airy bridges, through mountain tunnels, under great cities, carrying knowledge to the dark in mind, food to the famine stricken, and every alleviation of common life to the common man.

Closely allied to these applications of the science of force and velocity have been the results of the discovery of Electricity.

Dr. Gilbert, a physician of Queen Elizabeth's, seems to have been the first to investigate electrical properties. In 1752 Benjamin Franklin tested the theory that electricity and lightning are the same thing, and gave us the lightning conductors. Volta, in Italy, discovered the manner of production of the electric current, and Michael Faraday, in 1832, found the means of generating such currents in a machine; he made the dynamo.

The first telegraph was set up by the Great Western Railway in 1839, from Paddington to West Drayton, and the line was extended in 1843 to Slough. In 1845 interest was aroused in the new invention by the fact that a murderer, who escaped by train after his crime, found police summoned by telegram awaiting him at Paddington. That was almost magic to our ancestors.

In 1877 Edison and Bell invented the telephone. In 1888 Hertz demonstrated experimentally that electric discharges produced waves in the surrounding ether. In 1895 the half Italian, half Irish Marconi found the means of projecting electric waves to a distance, that is of telegraphing without wires.

In the following year, the first wireless station was set up in the Isle of Wight, but a message could be sent only $1\frac{3}{4}$ miles. The distance was gradually increased till, in 1901, a message was sent between St. John's, Newfoundland, and Poldhu in Cornwall. Transatlantic communication was an accomplished fact, and since then wireless messages have reached Australia. Nowa-

days voyagers on the ocean are in constant communication with land, and get their daily paper in mid-Atlantic, and lonely pioneers in Central Africa or the Amazonian forests may hold converse with the outside world.

The first Chemistry was concerned with the constituents of air. Next Lavoisier made a balance, with which he was able to prove that nothing passes 'into Nothingness,' that all matter, though it changes its form, exists for ever somewhere. Next engines run by heat showed that this heat became 'work done'—that energy also did not disappear. Later, the German Mayer suggested that the combustion caused in the human body by respiration also originated the energy by which that body worked. The laws of science are the same for living man and iron.

The chemistry of the 'elements,' those substances so simple that they cannot be simplified, has made great strides. 'The old philosophers,' as Marlowe called them, had thought that there was one element—water. The Middle Ages believed in four—earth, air, fire, and water. The beginning of the nineteenth century knew twenty-six. We now know eighty-three. Dalton, a Cumberland quaker, showed that an element has all its atoms or particles of the same kind, but that these atoms differ in weight and size from the atoms of other elements. This is the Atomic Theory, and by its aid the elements have been classified by the weights of their particles. Each new element, as it has been discovered, has found its place in this scale of weights.

Of all the instruments that have revealed new substances, the spectroscope, which is connected with the names of Newton, Fraunhofer, Bunsen, and Kirchoff, has probably been the most wonder-

ful. Every differing element, however apparently like any other element, has, when in the vaporous state, its own distinctive influence on a ray of light passing through it. The spectroscope, which enabled the chemist to examine rays, has not only proved the means of discovering many new elements in the substances which compose our own world, but has also partially revealed the make-up, and told us something of the movements, of the sun and stars. The investigation of other rays than those visible ones which we call 'light' has brought to man much useful knowledge—of the healing element radium, for example, discovered by Monsieur and Madame Curie in 1898, of the X-rays, invaluable to the surgeon, and of those electromagnetic waves that give us wireless telegraphy.

In 1800 Wollaston discovered the decomposition of substances by means of electricity. It was a fertile discovery, leading on to the use of electricity in such diverse things as the illustration of books, the making of soap, of cheap aluminium, of electro-plate, and, probably most important and surprising of all, the freeing of the earth from any fear of exhaustion of the food-bearing properties of the soil. By electricity it is now possible to make unlimited manure from the unlimited air.

To read the story of coal-tar is nothing else than to open a new and stranger chapter of the *Arabian Nights'* dreams. We go back to 1681, when two men, Becker and Serle, were granted a patent for 'a new way of making pitch and tarre out of pit coal, never before found out or used by any other.' Then for more than 100 years we forget the 'tarre out of pit coal.' It begins, some time after the year 1798, to force itself on

the notice of many, especially on that of the people who have to clear it away as the thick, black, oily, evil-smelling nuisance. A man named Murdoch, engineer to the firm of Boulton and Watt, has found out how to get illuminating gas from coal. He distils coal by heating it to some 1830° Fahrenheit, and the result is gas and coke, both useful products, and tar and a watery liquid containing ammonia, both apparently not only useless but disagreeable. So tidiers of the gas-works dig it deep into the earth, where it manages somehow to pollute streams and get them into trouble.

But in 1838 John Bethell takes to using it to make his 'pickle' for trees. It is a wonderful idea, and his pickle gets improved and the method of applying it. In the end, a cubic foot of timber can be made to drink up a gallon of creosote (the pickle) and so to last in spite of the destructiveness of water and insects for three times its natural life. All the railway sleepers, all the docks, all the wooden ships last longer, and the valuable forests of the world are spared. In 1858 Perkin of Greenford in Middlesex lights on a process by which he makes the colour mauve out of that same tar, and the Germans, following him, extract from it all the many hued and beautiful aniline dyes.

But that is only the beginning: out of coal-tar come motor fuels and explosives, exquisite perfumes and flavouring essences, disinfectants, saccharin, drugs, and anæsthetics, and literally thousands of other products of the most diverse nature.

But among the chemists the most outstanding personality is Sir Humphry Davy. Like Wollaston, he was chiefly engaged in transforming sub-

stances by electric action, but his name is more widely known because of the safety lamp that he made for mines, a lamp covered with a wire gauze that, being made of metal, formed a cooling screen between the flame inside and the inflammable gas outside. When the lamp was made, it was Davy himself who tested its efficacy; trusting his life to his belief in his invention, he carried the lamp into the explosive fire damp. An incident in his life is of somewhat melancholy interest to those who live in an England of such different temper. During the Napoleonic Wars he was awarded by Napoleon the prize for the greatest improvement in the electric battery in the year 1806. To that great man, who could, in the troublous campaign of the Nile, show scholarship enough to take an interest in the Rosetta Stone and save it for civilisation, it seemed natural to honour a distinguished scientist who happened to belong to an enemy land.

The last of the sciences to develop was Biology, the study of living things; and startling as have been the results brought about by the others, perhaps it is biology that has done and promises to do the most to change the world we live in and our thoughts about it. The epoch-making book on Biology is Darwin's *Origin of Species*, published in 1859.

Before Darwin, people more or less believed that all living things had been from the beginning pretty much what they are now, that each species or kind of living creature had always been as separate from the others as it is at present. Darwin told us that, instead, every living thing has a history and has grown out of something more different from itself than the *Aquitania* is from the sheepskin filled with air which the

Chaldeans used for crossing the Euphrates; and, more wonderful still, that the remote ancestors of men were related to the remote ancestors of fishes and of all other things.

With these two ideas as a foundation, biology leads us to infinite and patient searchings among the plants, the microbes, and the animals, for the realisation of that vision of a perfect world whence sin and sickness have been blotted out and all the inhabitants, in their fulness of perfection, recognise the oneness and harmony of all created things.

XXIV

ROADS

THE inhabitants set their dogs at us merely because we were strangers. Human figures, not their own, are seldom seen in these inhospitable regions. Surrounded with impassable roads, with no intercourse with man to humanise the mind, nor commerce to smooth their rugged manners, they continue the boors of nature.'

One would think this an extract from some book of travels among the nomads of the desert. It refers to Bosworth in the county of Leicester, only one hundred and fifty years ago.

To whatever page of history we turn, to whatever place on earth we travel, we find the road the joiner of man to man, the sorter out of his misunderstandings, the one hope of world's peace, the pathway, along which we find that knowledge of our fellows which, as Charles Lamb said, makes our hating them impossible.

Two travellers of the eighteenth century give us a graphic description of our roads. Defoe made a famous journey all over England in 1723. His account of his travels was as unaccustomed and strange to the people of his own time as travels in Thibet would be to us. The other was Arthur Young, whose travels led him to advocate an improvement of the roads for the sake of agriculture.

From Defoe, we hear that the northern roads were the worst, so that wheeled vehicles could scarcely pass along them, and the chief men of the Border were so cut off from civilisation that they still lived in fortified houses. Great forests still covered large portions of England and undrained fens others.

Along the roads out of London to the East, which were commonly the most crowded with traffic, you would meet droves of sheep coming up to Smithfield market; long strings of packhorses walking in single file with the leader wearing bells and all carrying loads, perhaps of sole, turbot, whiting, or cod; troops of geese a thousand or two thousand strong, or droves of turkeys three hundred or a thousand together walking up to town for Michaelmas or Christmas; wagons drawn by teams of six or eight horses; public coaches or private chaises with gay postillions.

There was anything but dulness then upon such roads as existed. We hear of an old lady drawn to church by six oxen; of judges on circuit 'dug out of a bog or hauled out of a slough by means of plough horses'; of travellers lost among the false tracks the wagons made to avoid the roads, or riding to 'the saddle skirt' in water, or even drowned on the road.

Far on in the century, Young tells us of roads with ruts four feet deep, and indeed the Devonshire lanes are as they are because the traffic cut right down below the level of the surrounding land. The road from Billericay to Tilbury ran for twelve miles between such close hedges that when two carriages met, one had to be lifted over the hedge to let the other pass.

Nor were these the only troubles of the road;

highwaymen had not ceased from roads so near London as Hyde Park and Hounslow Heath even in the days of Horace Walpole. A traveller set out armed as if for war.

In 1663 was made the first turnpike road which was to be kept up by tolls. In 1650 the first public coach ran from London to Dover, and the introduction of such a means of travel raised a fury of protest. Coaches were going to destroy the breed of riding horses they said, and make men into weaklings unable to endure 'frost, snow, and rain or to lodge in the fields'; they were to ruin the clothes trades, seeing that travellers on horseback were liable to spoil their clothes far more than those in coaches and were obliged to carry several changes with them.

In 1734 it took nine days from Newcastle to London. In 1760 a coach, advertised as 'The flying machine on steel springs,' did the journey from Sheffield to London in three days, at a cost of £1, 17s., not counting accommodation. Gradually a regular system of mail coaches was established which, by 1784, managed by means of relays to keep up a speed of twelve miles an hour, but their amenities seem to have been few. 'What advantage is it to men's health,' exclaims a traveller, 'to be called out of their beds into these coaches an hour before day in the morning, to be hurried from place to place till an hour, two, or three within night; in so much that after sitting all day in the summer time stifled with heat or choked with dust, or in the winter time starving and freezing with cold or choked with filthy fogs, they are often brought into their inns by torchlight, when it is too late to sit up to get a supper; and next morning they are forced into the coach so early that they can get no breakfast.'

The mail coach had been made possible by the improvements in road-making which began with the work of John Metcalfe. In 1765 he constructed his first road from Harrogate to Boroughbridge. He had been blind from six years old, owing to smallpox, but he could find his way across country better than a seeing man, and he was the first to run a safe road to carry traffic across a bog by laying a foundation of heather.

Thomas Telford, from a remote village in Scotland, continued the work of Metcalfe, and made 920 miles of road and 1200 bridges in eighteen years, the most famous of his bridges being the one across the Menai Strait.

John M'Adam advised using only small stones for the surface of roads, and has given his name to macadamised roads. In 1850 the custom began of strengthening the road by rolling; a steam-traction roller took the place of horses in 1866, and the next year the first steam-roller was used. Next followed wood pavements, laid on concrete foundations and dressed with asphalt, while, on the introduction of motors, dust was prevented by the use of limestone dipped in coal tar—a preparation known as *tarmac*.

In 1913 the International Road Congress stated that English roads were the best in the world.

Of the history of the iron road we have heard elsewhere. The idea of inland water roads was slow in coming to England, though they had been long known in Holland, in Languedoc, and in Mesopotamia from remote antiquity.

James Brindley, a wheelwright serving the Duke of Bridgewater, was set thinking how to convey the duke's coal cheaply from the pit at Worsley to Manchester and Liverpool. Coals were then carried in panniers on horseback and cost the

consumer 40s. a ton, while a horse could carry only a quarter of a ton. Rivers failed as roads, because they ran frequently downhill, and traffic found it difficult to return up them. To make a canal, the problem was how to flatten out the river.

To do this Brindley constructed aqueducts to carry the water high in the air and dug tunnels to carry it below the level of the earth. His canals at last connected the Worsley collieries with Manchester and Liverpool and, later, the northern towns with Birmingham and the Midlands, and the waters of the Mersey with those of the Severn and the Trent. Unfortunately the railways, jealous of the carrying trade of the watermen, bought up, in later days, the waterways of England, and so destroyed them that now, when their cheap, if slow, transport would be invaluable, they are almost beyond repair.

England's great road is the sea road, but that must have a chapter to itself. Of the telegraph, the telephone, and the 'wireless'—great and far-reaching 'lines of communication'—we have already heard. There remains the air road.

As long ago as Friar Bacon and Leonardo da Vinci, there were visions of travel by air. Dr. Blake, after the discovery of hydrogen, suggested that a balloon filled with it would rise into the air. And in 1782 the brothers Montgolfier experimented with small paper bags filled with hot air, and at last raised a balloon 35 feet in diameter which carried passengers—a sheep, a cock, and a duck.

The first men to travel in the air were de Rozier and d'Arlandes, who went up in 1783. In 1794 France first used a balloon for observation in war. In 1836 Green travelled from Vauxhall

to Germany. Dirigibles began with the experiments of the brothers Roberts in 1784, but it was not till 1852 that Giffard constructed his cigar-shaped balloon driven by an engine. In 1883 Tissandier used an electric motor. In 1904 Santos Dumont, having improved on this, made his second and successful journey in the air from St. Cloud to the Eiffel Tower and back. In 1900 Count Zeppelin had had his first rigid airship built on Lake Constance.

Heavier than air machines were first experimented on by Sir George Cayley as far back as 1769, when he made a toy of feathers with a screw propeller, which actually rose from the ground. He was on the right lines, but subsequent inventors lost themselves in attention to wings.

The aeroplane was destined to grow out of the glider. In 1896 Lilienthal perfected a glider by which he could jump from 50 feet and glide safely to earth, and, about the same time, the brothers Wright actually flew by means of a glider to which they afterwards affixed an engine. In 1905 they flew 25 miles in thirty-eight minutes, and the vehicle of the air-way was found.

XXV

SHIPS

'These splendid ships, each with her grace, her glory,
Her memory of old song or comrade's story,
Still in my mind the image of life's need,
Beauty in hardest action, beauty indeed.
"They built great ships and sailed them" sounds most brave,
Whatever arts we have or fail to have;
I touch my country's mind, I come to grips
With half her purpose thinking of those ships.'

JOHN MASEFIELD.

HIPS have been, as the poet puts it, so much his 'country's line,' that we are apt to forget that there have been long periods in history when she did not excel in ships, when pirates infested her seas, robbed and burnt her coast towns and went near to destroying her trade. Up to the nineteenth century, indeed, the periods when Britannia ruled even her inshore waves were the exception and not the rule. Edward III. and Henry V. stand out as the first of the early kings who kept down the pirates. The trouble grew again under Henry VI., and, except with the Tudor interval, the sea robbers were masters of the Channel up to the reign of Charles I. About 1614 we are told that 600 Dutch Busses, engaged in the herring fishery, caught and sold us our own fish, and took our money, and that 'the English country people, poor, idle, negligent, are constrained to beg bread of these plump Hollanders.' Charles I.'s famous

collection of ship-money was, in the earlier years, meant to provide ships to clear the coast of the pest, but piracy did not cease till 1818.

The merchant and the seaman's enemies were three—the pirates, the wreckers, and the coast.

The first public effort to light the coast was made by the Tudors, who gave the matter to the care of 'The Brotherhood of the most glorious and undividable Trinity' at Deptford. The brethren, we hear, prayed for the mariners, but for a time did little else; later, they undertook the care of the Thames estuary, supplying and erecting lights and signals. Next they sold to speculators the right to build lighthouses and to collect tolls from mariners. In this way the Skerries and the Smalls Rock at Bristol got their lights. Every now and again on some remote coast, we come across battered wooden towers seeming to answer no purpose. They are remains of the early lighthouses, a mere wooden standard with a pot of burning coal or pitch at top. The last coal fire beacon was put out at St. Ives in 1822.

The first wooden Eddystone Lighthouse was put up by Winstanley in 1700, and washed away in 1703.

In 1756 Smeaton, a Yorkshire man, undertook the problem of building a lighthouse strong enough to resist an Atlantic storm on that outlying rock. He said from the first that the tower should be of stone, but no one would believe that any way could be found of attaching stone firmly enough to solid rock to resist the beating of waves hundreds of feet high. The building of the lighthouse needed from the first utter patience; the rock was like no other site. For weeks together the engineer could not approach near enough to look

at the rock. When he could land, he had to make his observations hurriedly while the tide was low; when the work began, every step onward had to wait the pleasure of the sea, and many a coming to work meant risking the life of engineer and workmen. But Smeaton's plan of dovetailing stones into the living rock and into one another has defied the Atlantic storms for 150 years.

Now every danger post about our coasts is marked by mighty lights, some of 1,000,000 candle-power, carried in towers or on lightships, and having each its special signal of rotatory lights. In fog, sound signals warn ships, and lately, submarine signalling has been introduced by which signals are sent under water from the lighthouse and received by tanks fitted to the side of ships. The tanks contain a microphone, which is connected by electric wires to a telephone on board. So a captain's ears if not his eyes will now tell him exactly where he is when he is near land, however impenetrable the night.

But, out on the unlighted ocean, as the liners and the tramps and the trawlers beat out along their grey, unfurrowed miles and come as straight to port as the Irish mail running into Euston, does any captain or bored voyager give a thought to the plain working landsman, who taught the ships to find their way?

When the eighteenth century began, ships had three instruments to help them. The compass gave them their general direction, the log their speed, and the sextant their approximate latitude. They sometimes arrived 200 miles from their destination. The Spanish and the Dutch and the English governments, at different times, offered prizes to anyone who should discover a means

of setting ships on a surer path. Sir Isaac Newton tried and failed. In 1710 it was announced that £10,000 would be paid to anyone who could devise an instrument to bring a ship within 60 miles of her port of destination, £15,000 to bring her within 40 miles, and £20,000 if she arrived within 30 miles.

John Harrison was a poor working carpenter with a hobby. In the evenings, or in odd bits of time snatched from work, he pottered about with pendulums and wheels, and discovered what every observant person knows about most clocks—that the weather affects them, that their metals expand in heat and contract in cold. John Harrison must have asked himself if all metals did that; and at last he made a pendulum clock, the pendulum of which was constructed of brass and iron rods arranged in such a way that the contraction of one compensated the expansion of the other. His clock varied less than one minute in ten years.

But a pendulum clock was no good for the sea, so Harrison applied his plan to a wheeled clock. In 1735 he tested his invention on two ships, and, at the end of the voyage of one of them, the captain's log was found to be 90 miles out and the new clock right. In 1761 Harrison's fourth chronometer, a clock little bigger than a watch, took the sailing ship *Deptford* across the Atlantic to the West Indies and brought her within 18 miles of her destination, when the captain's log was 180 miles out.

He had won the biggest prize right out, but the government of his country thought so large a sum of money as £20,000 not good for a poor man. They paid him £2500. He had bought his own materials, made his own tools, taken

time from his proper trade, and given unmeasurable benefit to the countless numbers of all who 'have their business in great waters'; but his long life was spent in poverty, earning a bare living wage, and when at last, after the much trying of his friends, the government consented to reward him more adequately, he was too old to profit by their tardy justice.

The sea road, then, by 1761, was made straight. The ships were soon, with the invention of the steam-engine, and the Bessemer process of treating steel, to surrender half their beauty of form, their wood and sails, and to put on speed, size, comfort, security.

In 1802 the first steamer, the *Charlotte Dundas*, was built in Scotland. In 1819 a sailing ship used steam to help her from America to England. In 1840 the Cunard Line was founded; their ships, using great wooden paddles, made 8½ knots an hour, while the sailing clippers in the China trade were making 17 knots. The first iron ship came from New York in fourteen days in 1845. In 1858 was launched the huge *Great Eastern*, built by Brunel and meant to carry 4000 passengers, but her chief interest in history is that she was used to lay the Atlantic cable in 1865.

In 1893 Parsons invented the turbine for separating cream from milk, and it was found that this odd little engine fitted in a larger form to ships greatly increased their speed. And in these days, the *Aquitania*, of 47,000 tons, carries 4000 people across the Atlantic at the rate of 23 knots an hour.

But every ship, whether she still sails, or is a steaming Leviathan like the *Mauretania*, consuming 1000 tons of coal a day, carries her tell-tale Plimsoll line, reminding all who watch her

bows as they cleave the waves that men, till they were prevented by the law, had the heart, for greed of gold, to drown ships and sailors.

Samuel Plimsoll, like John Harrison, is one whose work lives on woven into the stuff of all our lives. With nothing short of anguish he marked how the owners sent out ships, some unseaworthy, some laden so deep in the water that they had no chance against a storm. His investigations showed that the insurance money was more valuable to those owners than the cargoes, and that the loss of sailors' lives was appalling. In 1876 the Merchant Shipping Act ordered that no ship should be laden so heavily that her 'load' line, since known as the Plimsoll Line, came below water. It was the beginning of a series of Acts which have given British ships an honoured name for the care of crew and passengers.

XXVI

SOME WOMEN

This apple is not ripe, it is not sweet,
Nor rosy, sir, nor golden: eye and mouth
Are little moved by it; yet we would eat.
We are somewhat tired of Eden, is our plea.
We have thirsted long; this apple suits our drought;
'Tis good for men to halve, think we.'

'Ballad of Fair Ladies in Revolt.'

FAR away from the times we have been hearing about, in the background of the story of British women, we find Boadicea, the warrior queen, the believer in the freedom of small nations, the woman who knew no fear of piercing weapons or of the deeds of men. While her husband lived, the Iceni, her people, had made a union with the Roman conqueror and lived as allies, but on the death of the British king, the Romans seized his property, proceeded to do as they liked with his kingdom, and met the objections of his widow by having her scourged in public and the members of her family sold into slavery. Then it was, in A.D. 61, that the fierce queen called her people to war, led them herself into the battle, and, being defeated, made her last protest for right against might by taking poison. Though she was a Briton and not an Englishwoman, her statue guards Westminster Bridge and sends the mind of the thoughtful passer-by on strange excursionings.

The next woman of whom we hear, but almost

as scantily, is that Abbess Hilda, who was thought worthy to govern the monastery of men at Whitby. It was her wisdom and encouragement which enabled the poet Cædmon to write poetry. Then there was Alfred's daughter Ethelfleda, who, left a widow by the ruler of Mercia, governed her own land with great wisdom and helped her brother to extend his. She, too, led her own armies to fight. She was a builder of towns and fortresses, was admired for the greatness of her mind, feared by her foes and much beloved by her subjects for her devotion to their welfare. We hear that she scorned pleasure and gave all her time to the duties of her high position. She reminds us of Matilda, the wife for whom William the Conqueror had so great respect that he did not hesitate to leave her to govern his newly conquered land of England when other duties called him to Normandy. This Matilda beguiled her leisure with weaving in tapestry the events of her husband's life. These tapestries still exist at Bayeux, and are most useful to us in showing us the costumes and some of the customs of those times.

Of queens and ladies of high rank, we hear a good deal in history, but if we wish to get some idea of what was the life of ordinary women we have to turn for the most part to the songs, the tales, and the romances. Among the pilgrims that Chaucer describes as travelling to the tomb of Becket at Canterbury there are three women. There is a cloth-maker, the 'good wif of byside Bathe,' so excellent at her trade that she surpassed the famous weavers of Ghent and Ypres, but a loud, unpleasant, purse-proud woman herself, always pushing first and angry if anyone took her place. She had travelled widely, even

to Cologne, Rome, and Jerusalem. She dressed ostentatiously with fine kerchiefs weighing ten pounds upon her head and stockings of scarlet red and was never at a loss for conversation and probably vulgar jests.

There were also two nuns, of whom one, the Prioress, is as mincing and affected as the good wife is bold and vulgar. All her interests are centred in elegant manners at table, and in being as attractively dressed as her nun's garment would allow. But in all the company of Canterbury Pilgrims there are only three women; perhaps when we remember how much more women were supposed to stay at home then than now, we ought to be surprised that there are even three.

In the tales themselves we meet many another woman out of real life. There is the cottager, 'a poure wiydwe, sondel stape in age' who dwelt in a narrow cottage with her two daughters.

'Thre large sowes hadde she, and namo;
Three keen and eek a sheep that highte Malle.
Ful sooty was hir bour, and eek hire halle
In which she eet ful many a sklendre meel;

. . . . . .

No wyn ne drank she, neither whit ne reed;
Hir bord was served moost with whit and blak,—
Milk and broun breed,—in which she foond no lak;
Seynd bacoun and somtyme an ey or tweye,
For she was, as it were, a maner deye.
A yeerd she hadde, enclosed al aboute
With stikkes, and a drye dych withoute.'[1]

There was the young wife the old carpenter was so jealous about, because he had forgotten that

[1] Nun's 'Priest's Tale,' 'Canterbury Tales.'

'man sholde wedde his simylitude.' She was 'long as a mast and upright as a bolt,'

> 'Ful more blisful for too see
> Than is the new little pear tree.'

There was patient Grisildis who

> 'Her olde poore father fostered,
> A fewe sheepe, spinning on field she kept.
> She wolde not be idle till she slept.
> And when she homeward came she wolde bring
> Wortes or other herbes, times oft,
> The which she shredded and boiled for her living
> And made her bed full hard and nothing soft.'

We remember how a neighbouring marquess, having fixed the wedding day and got ready the cheer and ceremonies, walked into her cowshed, and bade her father give her to him to wife without more ado or preparation. Then you remember how he tested her love by putting on her unheard-of shames and indignities and terrors that we think nowadays should have made her rebel. But in those days people thought it was a great thing to have a really obedient wife, however little of personal dignity she might have. 'The wife ought to suffer,' they said, 'and let her husband have the words and to be master.'

In 1575, and that was a long time after Chaucer, a Dutchman writing of English women says: 'Wives in England are entirely in the power of their husbands, their lives only excepted.' That was, of course, a very essential exception and we have the satisfaction of hearing from him that the wives went their own ways gaily. 'They sit before their doors, decked out in fine clothes in order to see and to be seen by all passers-by. In all banquets and feasts they are shown the greatest of honour; they are placed at the upper

end of the table where they are the first served. . . . All the rest of their time they employ in walking and riding, in playing at cards or otherwise, in visiting their friends . . . and making merry. . . . Although the husbands often recommend to them the pain, industry, and care of the German or Dutch women, who do what men ought to do both in the house and in the shop.'

But to return to Chaucer's time, the women of whom we have heard, though, perhaps somewhat odd, strike us as real. But there was in the Middle Ages a body of people who made for themselves an imaginary picture of woman and invented a set of rules about how she was to be treated. These were the Knights, and the rules by which they guided their lives were known as the Laws of Chivalry.

The training of a knight was long and earnest. At seven the young noble became a page in another noble's house; there he learned to serve humbly at table or help his lord or lady in any way they required of him. Sometimes at twelve a solemn oath was required of him that 'he would defend to the uttermost the oppressed, the widow and the orphan, and that women of noble birth should enjoy his special care.' Later he became a squire with various duties at the feast, such as carving before his lord, bringing in the bowls of scented water, and preparing the hall for games, dancing, and minstrelsy. He was also taught his soldier craft and attended his lord in battle or at tournaments; but we are concerned with him only in the house, where duties which the natural boy could scarcely have loved were brightened by the heavenly maiden for whose benefit or in whose presence he did them. We read that she was always distant, far above him, and, like

Canacee, of a beauty that to tell 'Myn English eek is insufficient.'

When afterwards, with most solemn ceremony, he became a knight, he swore

> 'To love one maiden only, cleave to her
> And worship her by years of noble deeds
> Until he won her.'

Women who were young and beautiful and nobly born, in the days of chivalry, were treated with exaggerated respect, flattered in prose and rhyme, endowed with all virtues and all wonders, but the knights who did these things treated their poorer sisters with a contempt and cruelty that shock us. It is recorded that in 1379 Sir John Arundel's squadron, being caught in a storm, and his ship having some sixty women on board, mostly nuns and their girl pupils, the commander had them thrown overboard to lighten the ship.

We are lucky in possessing a great mass of letters largely written by the women of one family in the fifteenth century. These Paston letters give us a very welcome insight into the life of an upper middle-class family during that uncomfortable time in history when the Wars of the Roses were going on. It was a time when deeds of violence were rife, when, though the forms of justice were good enough, they were only forms, and offenders were accustomed to get off scot free. Margaret Paston, wife of John, we gather from her letters, was a great business woman and a brave, who not only administered a large household and landed property, but fortified her house and beat off armed attack on it in the absence of her husband.

We are introduced to her before her marriage.

We hear of her coming to her husband's house practically betrothed, having seen his father but not him, 'yet she made him gentle cheer in gentle wise.' Her mother-in-law, Agnes, suggests to the father-in-law that he should provide her a gown for the trousseau, while her mother will 'add thereto a goodly fur.'

When John later is ill, away from home, she writes: 'My mother behested another image of wax of the weight of you to our Lady of Walsingham and she sent four nobles to the four orders of friars at Norwich to pray for you, and I have behested to go on a pilgrimage to Walsingham and to St. Leonards for you. . . . I would you were at home if it were for your ease, and your sore might be as well looked to here as it is there ye be now, lever even than a gown, though it were of scarlet. My mother greeteth you well and sendeth you God's blessing and hers. She prayeth you, and I pray you also, that you be well dieted of meat and drink, for that is the greatest help that you may have now to your health-ward.' Sometimes she addresses him 'right worshipful husband,' but his address to her is 'mine own dear sovereign lady.' Her commissions to him on later and happier journeys are diverse; sometimes it is ten pounds of quince jam she wishes him to bring home, or dates and cinnamon; sometimes a length of silk to match the pattern she sends; sometimes crossbows to defend the house since the rooms are too low to use the longbows.

She is not happy about her son who is away with a master. 'Pray Greenfield to send me word faithfully how Clement Paston hath done his endeavour in learning. And if he hath not done well, nor will not amend, pray him that he

will thoroughly belash him and so did the last master and the best that ever he had at Cambridge.'

This is the way she plans her daughter's marriage: 'My mother prayed him (a visitor) to get for her one good marriage if he knew any, and he said he knew one should be of a 300 merks by year the which is Sir John Cley's son, that is Chamberlain with my Lady of York, and he is of age, eighteen years old. If you think it be for to be spoken of, my mother thinks that it should be got for less money now in this world than it should be hereafter, either that one, or some other good marriage.'

There is a boy at Eton, and here is part of a long letter to his elder brother: 'Right reverend and worshipful brother, after all duties of recommendation I recommend me to you desiring to hear of your prosperity and welfare, which I pray God long to continue; letting you weet that I received a letter from you in the which was six pence with which I should buy a pair of slippers . . . also you sent me word in the letter of 12 pounds of raisins and figs the which I have not delivered.' Then comes the point of his letter, for he wishes to marry; this time he has seen the girl, and her brother tells him that the money and plate are ready but no income until after her mother's decease. As to leaving Eton, 'I lack nothing but versifying which I trust to have with a little continuance.' . . .

Apparently unmarried girls had a poor time. Of John Paston's sister we hear from her cousin Elizabeth: 'She was never in so great sorrow as she is nowadays for she may not speak with no man, whosoever come. . . . And she hath since Easter the most part been beaten once in the week

or twice and sometimes twice on one day and her head broken in two or three places.'

They were public-spirited, these women of the fifteenth century, and we hear that when Humphry of Gloucester was Protector, a group of women from the Stocks Market in London entered the House of Lords and told the Protector in the name of the women of England, it was shame to allow his wife to struggle alone against her foes in the Netherlands. The monkish chronicler who records the fact makes no comment about its being a unique occurrence. In the reign of Elizabeth, one great land-owning woman, at any rate, whose husband had the right to send two representatives to the Commons, claimed that right as his widow and sent her representatives to speak for her, as she said, as if she were there present.

In the Renascence time we come upon the really learned women like Margaret Roper, Sir Thomas More's daughter, or Lady Jane Grey or Queen Elizabeth, who knew Latin, Greek, German, Hebrew, French, and Italian; who knew too how to make a bankrupt, faction-torn, foe-beset country into the mighty nation that England became in her reign. But these things belong to political history.

When we hear of the high public positions held by women in the Renascence time, of their learning, and of the freedom of their daily lives, we wonder why, in the eighteenth century, they seem again to be the pretty butterflies, worshipped in word and scorned in heart, that they had been in the days of chivalry.

This is how Addison of the *Spectator* writes of them: 'The toilet is their great scene of business, and the adjustment of their hair the prin-

cipal employment of their lives. The sorting of a suit of ribands is considered a very good morning's work; and if they make an excursion to a mercer's or a toy-shop, so great a fatigue makes them unfit for anything else all the day after. Their more serious occupations are sewing and embroidery, and their greatest drudgery the preparations of jellies and sweetmeats. This I say is the state of ordinary women; though I know there are multitudes of those that move in an exalted sphere of knowledge and virtue, that join all the beauties of the mind to the ornaments of dress, and inspire a kind of awe and respect as well as of love into their male beholders.'

And the picture is not much improved in the pages of the writers of the time; but there were exceptions, and one of them, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, knew Greek, was a wit, a letter writer, an advocate of women's freedom, and an innovator who was brave enough to try inoculation for smallpox before it was popular or safe.

When Jane Austen draws for us those charming pictures of the women of 1796 to 1817 they have not greatly changed. The Bennett family in *Pride and Prejudice* have little to do except to pay visits and to dress and to think of marriage. They are so delicate that a chance wetting means a sure cold, and a cold is an alarming occurrence. But they are delicately refined and delicately witty. Her books are a comedy of manners. Charlotte Brontë's are a tragedy of manners. Jane Austen, living her life in an eighteenth-century country parsonage, is content with all the limitations that hedge her round.

Charlotte Brontë, living hers in an early nineteenth-century parsonage, breaks her spirit in a protest which is silent, only to be divined through

the bitterness of her books. She was greedy for knowledge, but, as there was no school near, she and her sisters had to go to a boarding school. There, though it was out on the moors, crowded conditions and bad food caused fever that weakened her own constitution and caused the death of two of her sisters. On Sundays the children had to walk two miles and sit through two services in an unheated church in one of the coldest districts in England, with only a meal of sandwiches in between the services. She tells us about it in *Jane Eyre*, and we gather that the school gave her little of the knowledge she craved.

Her biographer, Mrs. Gaskell, after setting down a list of the painters whose works Charlotte said she wished to see, writes: 'Here is this little girl in a remote Yorkshire parsonage, who has probably never seen anything worthy the name of a painting in her life, studying the names and characteristics of the great old Italian and Flemish masters, whose works she longs to see some time, in the dim future that lies before her.' That is somewhat symbolic of her life. Out of the lonely country parsonage, where knowledge must have penetrated with such difficulty, came great books full of protest against the times, full of the knowledge of human nature, full of tragedy and wisdom.

With the founding of the North London Collegiate School in Camden Town in 1850, higher education began for women, and with it, though the result was not immediately visible, the opening to women of every closed door. The philosophers and writers helped. In 1869 John Stuart Mill wrote his essay on 'The Subjection of Women,' which was nothing else than a demand that they should take part in government and have equal rights with men throughout the State.

In the novels and poems of George Meredith we have the picture of an entirely new woman. 'It is,' says G. M. Trevelyan, 'a favourite theme of Mr. Meredith, the novelist, that true love must be based on equal rights; that woman must be a free agent; that she must be allowed to have a mind, and that without a mind she cannot have a soul for perfect love.' Meredith's women are intellectual women, matched in argument with men; they are women of action who destroy parties or make nations; they are open-air women like his daughter of Hades—

> 'For hours in the track of the plough
> And the pruning-knife, she stepped.
> And of how the seed works, and of how
> Yields the soil, she seemed adept.'

And they are beautiful women, no whit lacking in the charms of womankind; they are, in a word, what the higher education wishes to produce, women fit to be gardeners and teachers, doctors or lawyers or statesmen, wives and mothers. This to Meredith is the woman's motto: it might be the motto of all who fail in strength of arm:—

> 'Men too have known the cramping enemy
> In grim brute force, whom force of brain shall awe:
> Him our deliverer, await we!'

XXVII

LIBERATORS

'Life, for our birth-right, must give
A free son's portion of earth;
A purpose and pleasure in living,
Owing none thanks for the giving.'

G. W. YOUNG.

TO Brutus' question, 'Who is here so base that would be a bondman?' there is, and never has been, but one answer:—

'None, Brutus, none.'

Yet, when we go a step further and consider what we mean by a bondman, and whether anyone, not ourselves, ought to desire to be a bondman, the answer is not so unanimous. Is the free dog he, muzzled, collared, and led by a chain on the footpath, or he, who, because he was none of these things, lies mangled and bleeding under the sudden car wheels? Or even he, sleek and unshackled, walking obedient at his master's heel with no wish to stray? Or he, masterless, lank with hunger, sidling from rubbish heap to rubbish heap with a self-defensive snarl for every rival?

And men have been bound for much the same reasons as dogs—to prevent them from injuring others, from injuring themselves; or hero-worship, or political faith or patriotism, has made them willingly obedient; and their freedom has led to similar catastrophes and to

a similar comfortless competition for the means of life. It would be difficult to find any man who has been no bondman to government or law or custom or necessity or disease or narrow-mindedness or circumstances. Yet none is so base, who would willingly be a bondman.

We see ourselves bound on every side, and we hate our chains. Sometimes violently in revolutions, sometimes patiently by long study of science and the laws of nature, we have broken the most irksome here and there and refitted others, so that they help us instead of galling us. We have made up our minds that freedom is something different from prosperity and well-being; that the right to arrange our own lives in our own way is a precious thing, even if we do it less well than others could do it for us, and we have been feeling our way very slowly towards some knowledge of the nature of Freedom.

Philanthropists

In the year 1773 John Howard became High Sheriff of Bedford. It was his duty to understand prisons and to come closely into contact with the unfree. There had been high sheriffs of Bedford before, and of other places, but this high sheriff differed from the rest in that he prepared to do his duty. He determined to understand prisons and to come closely into contact with prisoners. So he began to inspect prisons, not only at Bedford, but in different parts of England.

He found, in the first place, that many people were in prison who had no right to be there. Sometimes a man was imprisoned, tried, and found innocent. He should have been set free, but during his imprisonment he had had to pay

fees to the gaoler and turnkey, and if he had had no money he was sent back to prison, sometimes for months, till the sum was paid. Sometimes merely unfortunate people were imprisoned, people who had lost their money and were in debt. These were put into irons that bit into their flesh and sometimes caused mortification. They were at the mercy of their gaolers, and were at times so cruelly treated that they lost their limbs or even went mad. Sometimes the assizes took place only once in seven years, and it was possible for an innocent man to remain all that time in gaol awaiting trial.

The prisons were unventilated, the sewers often stopped up, and gaol fever therefore constantly occurred. Rats ran over the prisoners as they slept, and worse plagues plagued them. It was said that if the magistrates had gone into the prisons they would soon have been in their graves.

In three years Howard travelled 10,000 miles, visiting the most objectionable cells in England and abroad, often risking his health and his life while he sought for ideas of prison reform. In 1784 an Act was passed for the improvement of the sanitation of prisons, but reform was slow in coming, and it was 1869 before imprisonment for mere debt was abandoned.

Howard had thought that it would be better for prisoners to live alone than in the terrible crowds in which he found them; and in 1865 an Act was passed providing for the solitary confinement of prisoners. But nowadays scientific men have found that solitude drives people mad, and plans are being thought out for making prisons places of education, so that the prisoners, who have once injured the community, may learn how to serve it instead.

Prison reform is connected with the names of John Howard and Elizabeth Fry, not so much for what they did as for what they tried to do. We remember Sir Samuel Romilly for his efforts to make punishments less savage. He learned at school, where his master was 'ignorant, severe, and brutal,' to think that over-severe punishments were useless. He saw, in an England where 200 crimes were punishable with death and a man was hanged for stealing five shillings, people being as bad as they could have been if there had been no punishments at all. In 1808 he bought a seat in Parliament, and proposed to abolish the death penalty for stealing from the person of another. But opposition was strong, one young peer exclaiming that he was 'for hanging all.'

Two years after, when Romilly tried to get thieves who stole five shillings let off death, the House of Commons passed the Bill, but the Lords turned it out, and seven bishops voted against it; the next year a commission was appointed to go into the whole question, and by degrees, small act by small act, punishments were made more human, till now, in England, only four crimes are punishable with death, and in some countries the death penalty has been done away with altogether, with the result that murders in those countries are fewer than they used to be.

The time was the year 1767, the place an unremarkable street in unremarkable Wapping. The central figure, a black man, homeless, bewildered, beaten to the extent of injury, and turned out by his master to try the mercy of the world. It was all very ordinary seemingly, but again it was one of the world's great moments, wherein came the

chance event that changed the face of earth for a whole race.

For three unutterable centuries, since the Portuguese first made slaves of black men, as they said, for the purpose of making them Christian and so saving their souls, in the villages of Africa, fathers, mothers, and children had been torn from one another and from the simple life they knew, to be carried down strange paths and across the ocean, to be sold as merchandise in the West. The terror, the heart-break, the physical suffering involved, no imagination can realise. It had been going on for 300 years. And then this slave named Strong, no more a sufferer than any of the rest, needed a doctor, and the doctor's brother burned with sudden indignation at it all, and out of his indignation grew Clarkson and Wilberforce and Buxton and William Lloyd Garrison and Abraham Lincoln, and the war between North and South, and much else besides.

But to return to the story; when Strong's master heard that Granville Sharp, the doctor's brother, was protecting his slave from him, he sold him to be shipped to Jamaica. Sharp ordered him to be released, because he had been arrested without a warrant, but the captain of the ship refused to let the slave go and held him with his own hand. Then Sharp had the captain charged for assault, and a lawsuit followed. But to his great disappointment he was told that, according to law, a West Indian slave did not become free when he landed on English soil. By that time the lawyers were interested and went deeply into the matter, and in 1772 twelve judges gave a verdict that to tread English ground makes a man free. There the matter seemed to rest for eleven years.

But in 1783 a captain of a slave ship threw 132 sick slaves overboard, and the owners tried to recover their value from the insurance company. In the trial of the case the owners said they did it to save water for the rest, and the jury decided that, as the ship was in danger, the owners had acted rightly and could recover their losses from the insurance company. Sharp got to work, and simply flooded the country with accounts of what had happened. He was determined that at least people should know. Clarkson wrote an essay on slavery which he showed to the younger Pitt, and Wilberforce brought the matter before Parliament. In 1788 Pitt moved a resolution to consider the slave trade; in 1807 a Bill was passed abolishing the trade in slaves.

But the slaves, who were slaves already, remained. Thomas Fowell Buxton made it his life's aim to free them. The opposition to him was very fierce. People said the owners would be ruined; others said the lands would fall out of cultivation; others said the tales of slaves' sufferings were exaggerated; others said that slaves were well treated and were very happy. And many, indeed, were; a man does not generally destroy his own property. The slaves were at times well fed and kindly treated, but they had no rights against their owners; they were always at another's mercy. In 1833, the year after the Reformed Parliament met, at a cost of £20,000,000 seven hundred thousand slaves were freed. In 1841 France, Austria, Russia, and Prussia followed England's example and adopted the English law against slavery. William Lloyd Garrison, who had watched the fight for the freedom of slaves in England, went to America and began

a campaign for the same object that was finally won by Abraham Lincoln.

Like Sir Samuel Romilly, Lord Shaftesbury tells us he learned his horror of oppression and cruelty from experiencing both at his preparatory school. Fortunately he enjoyed Harrow, where he was afterwards sent, and it was while there that, moved by the sight of the disrespect shown at a pauper's funeral, he made the resolution 'to help the poor and him that hath no friend.' His first public efforts were on behalf of the factory children of whom we have heard, his next for the chimney-sweeps.

These 'climbing boys' were sometimes kidnapped, sometimes bought from their parents, sometimes taken from the workhouse. They were generally between five and eight years old, as they had to be small to get up the long, crooked chimneys. They climbed naked to save their clothes, and if they were timid their feet were pricked from below; if they hurt themselves, fines were deducted from their wages. Shaftesbury was able to overcome opposition in Parliament, and to get a bill through forbidding sweeps to employ these boys.

The next child-slaves to feel the effect of his mercy were the underground workers. In the mines the naked children were harnessed by chains to small trucks which they pulled along passages, just high enough for them to creep through on hands and knees; or else under the name of 'trappers' they opened and closed underground doors for twelve or fourteen hours a day, or stood ankle deep in water to work a pump.

Next, since his heart was large enough for everybody, he became President of the Royal Society

for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Then he took up the city waifs, and began to encourage their emigration to more kindly and more generous lands, and perhaps the last people to call him friend, before he died in 1885, were the little slaves of the tight-rope—tiny, frightened children who had to face many a terror of giddy heights and many an accident before the skill was acquired that a thoughtless public dared to demand.

The Vote

Next we have the winning of political freedom, the right of the people to take part in making the laws by which they are governed—that is, the right to vote and to sit in Parliament, and to find remedies for their own discontents. When the nineteenth century opened no Roman Catholic, no Jew, no atheist, no artisan, no farm labourer, no woman had a vote, and very few of the other classes either. The lords and bishops sat in the House of Lords and represented themselves, and many of them also sent representatives to the House of Commons.

The members of the Commons were representatives of the boroughs and of the freeholders of the counties. But the men of the boroughs did not elect their representatives. These were chosen in some boroughs by the corporations only, and these corporations were not, as they are now, elected. They were a close body, who only admitted their friends to their number and whose vote was often bought by some lord. Other boroughs had, for one cause or another, disappeared, but their representatives sat in Parliament and were chosen by the landowner to whom the deserted land belonged. So Dun-

wich, 'a pitiful handful of sorry cottages,' had two members, and Birmingham, a growing manufacturing town, had none. The first to win the franchise were the Roman Catholics. In 1828 County Clare elected Daniel O'Connell, a Roman Catholic, as their representative in the Parliament. The Duke of Wellington was Prime Minister at the time, and he recognised that the electors were in deadly earnest and that to set aside their will would cause rebellion. In 1829 his Government therefore passed the Catholic Emancipation Bill.

The next year saw Europe in revolution and, in England, the fall of the Tory Government, and a Whig Government in power under promise to bring in a Reform Bill. Their first bill, introduced by Lord John Russell, was rejected, and this was not surprising seeing that only about a third of the members of Parliament were elected at all. What is surprising is that at the general election public excitement was able to influence the majority in the Commons, even though so few members depended on election. The second Bill got through the Commons, but was thrown out by the Lords. Then indeed excitement ran high, and there were riots in some places. Sydney Smith compared the Government to the famous Dame Partington, who, coming out of her cottage on the beach one day, found the spring-tide just coming up to her doorstep. She fetched her besom and, with fury, tried to sweep it back. As well try to sweep back the Atlantic as the people when they want something. Inside the House of Lords they were not so sure of the nature of the tide, and thought they could hold out. The Whigs resigned, and the Duke of Wellington tried to form a ministry.

It was then that Francis Place produced his poster—*To stop the Duke, go for gold.* The unrepresented Commons went for gold, and the banks were faced with ruin. The Duke advised the Peers to stay away from Parliament, and to let the bill through. So in 1832 the vote was won by men of the middle classes, and householders and shopkeepers of the town. In 1867 another Reform Act gave the vote to the men artisans and lodgers of the town. The 1884 Act gave it to farm labourers, and the 1918 Act gave it to women over thirty who occupied rooms to the value of £10 a year.

Schools

Among the liberators must come public education. People who can neither speak for themselves, nor read what others are saying, nor understand their own thoughts, nor write down their complaints, cannot be called free. But England was content for long periods of her history to leave the majority of her people in such a condition.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, almost the only schools for the children of the poor were the Sunday schools that Robert Raikes had tried to encourage, and the monitorial schools of the Quaker Lancaster, where the elder scholars taught the rest. The grammar schools of the middle classes were almost abandoned, and their masters drew their salaries in some retreat away from the school. The schools for the rich, too, were pitiably few and pitiably bad. Lord Shaftesbury says of the one he attended at the Chiswick Manor House in 1808: 'Nothing could have surpassed it for filth, bullying, neglect, and harsh

treatment of every sort,' and it was probably the best of its kind.

Bills for providing education were from time to time introduced, but they were all thrown out until the Reformed Parliament in 1833 granted £20,000 for school buildings. It is said, however, that at the same time they allotted £50,000 to repair the king's stables, which shows how important even they thought education to be. They threw out a very good Bill by Roebuck, which proposed to make education compulsory, and to set up evening continuation, infant, and trade schools. In 1839 a Ministry of Education was established to supervise expenditure, but it seems to have had little effect on the schools. As late as 1843 a Mr. Horner reported that in an area of eight miles by four, in one of the most populous and enterprising districts around Oldham and Ashton, out of a population of 105,000, there was not one public day school for the children of the worker.

In 1850 an inspector describes a school thus: 'The utter incapacity of the teachers; the small, crowded room; the intermixture and often the predominance of infants; the scarcity of books, the battered and dirty condition of those they have; the larger proportion of the children doing absolutely nothing for nine-tenths of their time; the noise, and the close and tainted atmosphere—these things render a visit to such mock schools a most painful duty.'

Up to 1870 it may be said that few children knew more than reading and writing. In that year Gladstone's government passed the Elementary Education Act, which was to provide schools for all, both boys and girls. In 1876 attendance at school was made compulsory, and

five years later there were four million children in the schools as against the one million who had been there in 1865.

The first college for women, Queen's, in London, had been founded in 1848. The first girls' high school, the North Collegiate School, was founded by Frances Mary Buss in 1850. Girton was founded in 1869, and about ten years afterwards the Oxford Women's Colleges and Newnham.

Perhaps one of the best things that has happened to children was the handing over, in 1902, of elementary education to the care of the County Councils. A county is a small enough area to take an interest in its own children, and yet large enough to provide the money that an expensive thing like education needs. The Act of 1902 also allowed the counties to provide secondary schools, and many of them made eager use of the permission. The Acts of 1906 and 1907 provided for the medical inspection of schools and the feeding of the poorest children.

The great Education Act of 1918, which may well be called the Children's Charter, has at last provided that the school days of the poor shall be long enough to allow them to get some real education, and that free medical treatment, out-of-school leisure, improved schools, and many other things shall ensure to the boys and girls of England the old Roman ideal, *mens sana in corpore sano*, a healthy mind in a healthy body.

As we hear of the new free schools, into which the poorest may enter, built round a spacious courtyard with a swimming-bath in the centre and spray baths round, with their great assembly halls and their lofty class-rooms, their books, their pictures, their highly trained teachers, we are reminded of Vittorino's *villa giocosa*, the house

of joy. It has been a long, weary time in coming; it is still rare; but as a symbol of England's new care for all her children, it is a triumph to rank with the victories of Science.

Prophets

In the year 1726 Voltaire, the Frenchman, visited England. No one would have thought there was anything world-shaking in that. But this man was the arch-rebel of all time, and what he saw in England led him to write a book, *Lettres sur les Anglais*, in praise of liberty. It was the first rustle among the leaves that heralded the storm, the greatest wind of liberty that has ever been, that swept through men's minds tearing down custom and convention and government and settled privileges of nobility and even religion itself. And men call it the French Revolution. The French Government commanded his book to be publicly burnt because it was 'scandalous and lacking in the respect due to King and Government.' For Voltaire had two supreme gifts, the gift of saying things so clearly and so exquisitely that all kinds of people were convinced by him, and the gift of mocking, which made it very difficult for anyone to defend the old shams he mocked.

No one ever hated war more than he; for him it had no splendours; he describes the sins and disease and the unspeakable misery which are its results, so openly, with such direct and terrible pictures, that people nowadays think his book not fit to read, though they allow their governments to send out armies to live through the same things. He attacked the Church, because it was opposed to science, and above all he stood

up for the rights of common men. He admired the merchant and the craftsman, and thought they ought to be as much respected as the noble.

He joined with Diderot and others to produce the *Encyclopédie*. This was a book on every subject from A to Z, and it is easy to imagine the stir it made, containing as it did, either in the text or in the notes, all the new knowledge as well as all the old, and every new and forbidden opinion. Naturally its publication was forbidden, but when men want a thing they get it, and the *Encyclopédie* reached the subscribers. John Morley says of the Encyclopedistes that 'it was this band of writers . . . who first grasped the great principle of modern society, the honour that is owed to productive industry.'

Another who made people think, and therefore feel the chains that bound them, was J.-J. Rousseau. Voltaire appealed entirely to men's minds; Rousseau appealed to their feelings. He told them they had lived too long in cities among the artificialities of civilisation. He tried to persuade them to return to nature, to live simply as when the world was young. Voltaire's quick wit saw defects in 'the natural man,' and in thanking Rousseau for his book he said: 'It filled me with a desire to go on all fours.' But less thoughtful people, weary of that neat, conventional eighteenth century where everybody had a rank he could not leave, and even every word a place, longed to break free and take to the woods and fields.

Rousseau's book, *Le Contrat Sociale*, begins, 'Man is born free and is everywhere in chains,' and goes on to prove that there should be no ruler but the sovereign people. The first words were not true, but the people, who had been despised,

neglected, ruled, and injured for so many centuries, eagerly grasped the idea that law should cease to be the will of the king and should become ' The expression of the general will . . . the same for all.'

These were some of the thoughts that France had been set thinking, partly by the free colonies of America, partly by England, mostly by her own great men who had improved on all they had learned. And the France that thus began to think was a very wretched France indeed; but we have no time to hear about her misery, a misery arising from selfish kings, feudal oppression, and national bankruptcy. Her wretchedness and her thinking together caused her, in 1789, to rise up suddenly to sweep away all the old things and to create a new world—not only in France but all over Europe. Unfortunately she tried to do it by war, and so failed. But in spite of war, her thoughts and ideas of liberty penetrated to other lands, and in all the countries of Europe, when the war was over, we find, as it were, a freshening, spring-like spirit, a new love of nature and simple things, a new interest in simple and poor people, a new effort after freedom, which we recognise as growing directly out of the writings of the Liberators of France.

The interpreters of this spirit were the poets. They led men out of the drawing-rooms of the eighteenth century into a new world out of doors, a world all the more loved because it had been neglected so long. Wordsworth wrote of mere flowers, ' a crowd, a host of golden daffodils.' Nothing in nature or man was common in his eyes. He chose for his flower the commonest of all, the lesser celandine, and he thought it was quite natural to write poetry about such ordinary

people as reapers or leech-gatherers or old Cumberland beggars. Liberty is often his theme, and some of his most beautiful sonnets glorify the free.

'Once did she hold the gorgeous East in fee;
And was the safeguard of the West: the worth
Of Venice did not fall below her birth,
Venice, the eldest child of Liberty.'

'We must be free or die,' he says, 'who speak the tongue
That Shakespeare spake; the faith and morals hold
Which Milton held.'

Coleridge, his friend, caught men away into mystery lands full of airy music and weird dooms, lands where Kublai Khan raised his stately pleasure dome,

'Where Alph the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.'

Or where the Ancient Mariner, 'long and lank and brown as is the ribbed sea-sand,' could hold a man with nothing but his glittering eye and force him to listen to the telling of his 'ghastly tale.'

Then there was Keats, who reminded men that freedom is a matter of the mind, that every lover of books can wander at will in the widest spaces, and every lover of beauty can cast off the chains of pain and hopelessness.

Byron took men on pilgrimage with Childe Harold, and showed them the countries of Southern Europe, splendid once, now sunk under oppression, and helped for a few brief years to arouse in Englishmen enthusiasm for other lands' freedom. Moore, too, with his Irish melodies, almost made them think that Ireland should be free.

Shelley bewitched them with word-music, such as they had never heard before, and roused them to rebel thoughts about skylarks and bees and west winds.

'Wherefore Bees of England forge
Many a weapon, chain, and scourge
That these stingless drones may spoil
The forced produce of your toil.'

Hear his prayer to the West Wind: see how well he knew that the poet's thoughts are sparks to kindle the thoughts of other men.

'Be thou, Spirit fierce,
My spirit! be thou me, impetuous one!
Drive my dead thoughts over the universe,
Like withered leaves, to quicken a new birth;
And by the incantation of this verse,
Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind.
Be through my lips to unawakened earth
The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?'

These were only the heralds of that great company of nineteenth-century poets, who loved nature and music and liberty with passionate love and taught men so; a company of which the Brownings, Swinburne, Meredith, Arnold, William Watson, and Masefield are perhaps the leaders—poets who, in the words of O'Shaughnessy, can say:—

'We are the music makers,
And we are the dreamers of dreams,
Wandering by lone sea-breakers,
And sitting by desolate streams;
World-losers and world-forsakers,
On whom the pale moon gleams:
Yet we are the movers and shakers
Of the world for ever, it seems.'

XXVIII

THE GREATEST OF THE GREAT

'Especially our duty at present is . . . to lighten the monstrous misery of our fellows, not by windy dogmas, but by calm science.'
SIR RONALD ROSS.

FRANCE, asked through the medium of a daily newspaper who was her greatest man, replied without hesitation: 'Pasteur.' It is an interesting subject for the reader of history to decide 'What is the greatest thing a man can do?'

This chapter tells of some of the men whose glory is to have relieved 'the monstrous misery' of their fellows by saving them from suffering, from disease, and from the great mourning for those who die untimely.

In the England of the old days stalked the ever constant terror of smallpox, disfiguring, blinding, slaying its victims in hovel and hall and palace even. Few could hope to escape. But somewhere about the year 1768, the boy medical student, Edward Jenner, heard a milkmaid say: 'I shan't get smallpox, because I have had cowpox.'

The protectiveness of cowpox was an old tradition among milkmaids, but it had never occurred to anyone to try experiments to see if there were truth in what the milkmaids said. So ridiculous the idea seemed that, though Jenner

began to work on it almost at once, it was twelve years before he dared to tell the results of his experiments even to a friend. It was sixteen years more before on May 14, 1796, he ventured to perform his first vaccination. Opposition to his new idea was strong. To some, vaccination seemed a wickedness forbidden by the Bible, to others a danger likely to give the patient not only the disease but the characteristics of cows. Even to-day, though smallpox has become a very rare disease among the vaccinated, though the unvaccinated still catch it and die, there are people who lose their lives and risk other people's by refusing vaccination.

Jenner's discovery of preventive inoculation, that is of giving people a mild form of a disease to prevent their getting a serious kind, was to wait more than half a hundred years before the scientific principle on which it was based was to be established and applied to other diseases.

In the meanwhile Sir Edwin Chadwick attacked another cause of disease, dirt. In 1839, at his suggestion, Lord John Russell directed the Poor Law Commissioners to conduct a general inquiry into the sanitary condition of the country. Their report was made in 1842. It took town by town, but the condition of one did not differ greatly from that of another. For the most part there were no sewers; where they existed they were neglected; offensive smells commonly rose from house drains, refuse was thrown straight from the houses into the streets, water was inadequate, being often, as in the case of Bradford, sold from carts at three gallons a penny.

In 1847 the cholera visitation caused the passing, in 1848, of the First Health Act. But although the next visitation, 1848-49, killed 55,201 people

out of the comparatively small population of that time, and the third in 1853-54 destroyed 24,216, opposition to the health 'agitators' was again strong. Lord Shaftesbury wrote in his diary under date May 14, 1852: '*The Times* has taken up the note of the undertakers, the water companies, and the whole tribe of jobbers who live on the miseries of mankind, and are hunting the Board of Health through brake and briar and hope to be "in at the death."

'I walked yesterday to review my old haunts in Westminster, and looked at the wretched children in Pye Street: sick, sick, sick, to see how little years of labour had done.

'Nov. 17. The Board of Health is to be destroyed, its sin is its unpardonable activity.

'Aug. 9, 1853. It is not wonderful, though sad, when we remember the interests that it has been our duty to approach and handle. We roused all the Dissenters by our Burial Bill, which was, after all, defeated; the College of Physicians and all its dependencies, because of our independent action and singular success in dealing with cholera. All the Board of Guardians; for we exposed their selfishness, their cruelty, their reluctance to meet and to relieve the suffering poor in the days of the epidemic.'

The 1858 Public Health Act gave the care of public health to the local authorities. In 1875 a further Act drew up a code of duties for these bodies, and their supervision was entrusted to the Local Government Board. Now, in 1920, the long-needed Ministry of Health is about to begin its duties.

The next scene carries us to a lecture-room in France. Some one had suggested, nay, stated as a fact, that the infinitesimal particles of life that,

entering a man's blood, cause disease, are each and every one separately alive and has each and every one had a parent; that unless such a microbe is carried in some way to human beings, they would not catch epidemics, there would be no epidemics. The lecturer treats the thing as a jest. As he speaks of a certain most terrible disease he says: 'Let anyone, if he can, show me the microbe that causes that.' Out of the audience rises an insignificant man, takes a chalk, and on the demonstration board draws a few lines. 'Tenez, voici sa figure,' he says and sits down again—'that is his face,' the face of man's enemy, or rather this time of woman's, but it is all the same, the face of one of that mighty army of the infinitely small who have killed more humans than all the wars of all the ages, and the man who could draw his portrait was Louis Pasteur, chemist.

The story of his life is one of the most marvellous in history, but there is not time to tell much of it here. In the tale of a country's wars, the story goes abroad from time to time to tell how men killed and brought back debt, poverty, and disease. In the tale of a country's days of peace, the story goes abroad to tell how country learnt of country and brought home fresh means of life.

Pasteur did not directly set out to find cures; he was not a doctor. He was one who simply liked to know. He was puzzled by two acids alike, yet unlike. He would not let them be, and at last he found that they were made up of the same kind of crystals, except that in the one crystals rotated the plane of polarised light to the right, in the other to the left. He sought these acids even in foreign countries. He found that yeast

produced one of them. Next he found the nature of fermentation which yeast sets up. All ferments are caused by living, tiny bodies—microbes. Pasteur declared that wine would not ferment, that vinegar could not be made, that nothing would go bad, if foreign bodies did not reach it. He proved his point by exquisite experiments, and in the course of one of these he discovered how to treat milk—to *Pasteurise* it, as we say—so that it should contain no microbes.

At the time the French silk industry was dying out because of the sickness of the silkworm. Pasteur went to live in the silk district, and tried separating healthy worms and keeping the eggs of healthy worms from the disease and dirt of the unhealthy worms. He saved the silk industry, and incidentally gave his country more wealth than the Franco-Prussian War took from it.

A disease from which animals in England, France, and other countries died in herds was anthrax. Pasteur, who from his study of yeast, had learned how to grow bacilli in the laboratory, declared that if animals were inoculated with these home-grown bacilli, they would have a mild attack of anthrax which would do them no harm and prevent them from catching the real disease. He was mocked at by many, but he proposed to his enemies that a public experiment should be performed and they agreed. His opposers chose fifty sheep; he inoculated twenty-five of them, and twenty-five remained uninoculated. Then the fifty were given anthrax. On a given day, said Pasteur, twenty-five will be dead and twenty-five alive.

When the day arrived, Pasteur went to the pen. He was greeted by a mighty shout of congratulations, for twenty-two of the uninoculated sheep

were already dead, two were dying, and the twenty-fifth died before nightfall. The twenty-five inoculated were all quite well.

But these were only animals. Pasteur's later triumph was in isolating the bacillus of that dread disease rabies, of which in those days many people died in fiercest agony. He knew how to cure dogs long before he ventured to try the effect of that particular inoculation on humans. When a mad dog bites you, you may, or may not get rabies. It may begin after twenty days or after six months. It is never certain that humans will be affected by any food or poison in the same way as animals. But one day a small boy was brought to Pasteur. He had been very badly bitten by an assuredly mad dog. His mother besought the scientist not to hesitate. So the first human was inoculated with the serum of rabies. They say he slept the night through calmly, but that Pasteur did not sleep that night or for many nights. So was found the cure for rabies in man, and the story of medicine since Pasteur has been the history of the hunt for the germ of each disease and of its *culture* to produce the serum to destroy it.

Out of Pasteur's investigations with acids and ferments other chemists have learned how to build up new compound substances and have founded the separate branch of chemistry known as stereo-chemistry. By it they have been able to make wonderful new medicines which cure diseases long thought incurable. But Pasteur himself left the making of new compounds for the study of microbes, and so 'the chemist, the student of beer and silkworms, became the revealer of the causes of most disease.' His pupil, R. Koch, discovered the bacillus of consumption in 1881,

and other pupils have found the antitoxin of diphtheria, inoculation against plague and typhoid, and the serum treatment of tetanus.

Perhaps the greatest of those who learned from Pasteur in the early days was Lister the surgeon. When he began to practise, the expression *compound fracture* was a word of horror to surgeons. If a leg bone was simply broken, it was nothing, a matter of setting and all was well. But if in the breaking, the bone had come through the skin, then inflammation followed and the leg was amputated, but inflammation began again in the new wound; perhaps the stump was amputated but still inflammation followed till the patient died. Lister brooded with utmost pity over the recurring deaths from this cause.

Then came Pasteur's early discoveries in fermentation, and Lister thought, 'What if inflammation is a process of fermentation set up by something which gets into the wound from outside?' So he decided that in future he would, in operations, use carbolic acid which would poison any possible microbes. The deaths from compound fracture were reduced from one in every three to one in a hundred. At Edinburgh, where, in 1869, he was appointed to the Chair of Clinical Surgery, Lister told the students that after they had cleaned the wound and their own hands, they were to imagine everything coated over with thick, wet, green paint, then they would touch nothing.

In time, as he discovered the power of carbolic acid, he obtained more and more satisfactory results by weakening the solutions he used. His method was known as antiseptic surgery. Nowadays surgeons use aseptic surgery, that is, they do not seek to slay the microbes, but they cleanse

everything with that surgical cleanliness which is cleaner than all other cleanliness, so that there are no microbes. But Lister was the pioneer, he bore the mockery and the opposition, and he showed the way. He showed the way too, not only in science but in humanity. Like Pasteur, he was a great-hearted gentleman; a pupil of his told the writer that he would welcome his poorest patient as if 'he had sent in a prince's visiting card,' and none was so outcast or so childish but had the great surgeon's fullest attention and care. Once when a little girl told him her doll had had an accident, he sat on her bed and sewed on the torn leg.

We must not leave this chapter without mentioning those who risked or gave their lives to save men from pain or death. In 1847 Sir James Simpson experimented on himself with anæsthetics, which, for all he knew, might have put him to sleep for ever, and so discovered chloroform, which has made many a life-saving operation possible.

Sir Ronald Ross studied hundreds of mosquitoes in trying to find a cure for malaria, and when he was removed from a malaria-haunted district to a more healthy one, protested with such effect that he was sent again to his mosquitoes. He found that a special mosquito is lived on by the malaria parasite, and that by its bite alone men get malaria. Through the draining of swamps and the destruction of the mosquito breeding-grounds, malarial districts have, in a few years, become health resorts, and the wretched peasants who were bound to the soil have been saved from the weary, shivering, destroying sickness.

In 1900 the United States carried out a similar investigation with regard to yellow fever, and

when the particular mosquito had been found and taken from a yellow-fever patient, Dr. Lazear allowed himself to be bitten. He took the fever and died, as did also the English experimenter Myers. But they and the other brave but more fortunate men who took part in the experiments, proved that the mosquito alone gives yellow fever. The Panama Canal and the union of the Western and Eastern oceans are some of the results of this discovery, for a little grey gnat had guarded the Isthmus of Panama from the progress of civilisation more effectually than mountains or warlike tribes, but a few men of science and petroleum oil defeated him at last.

And lastly a group of scientists is now working in several countries at once to discover the true workings of the human mind, and so to reveal the causes of wrong-doing and to produce the cure for crime.

We look back over the long years of history, and we remember the savage punishments: the ears cut off, the hangings and the drawings and the quarterings, the noisome dungeons, the cruel transportations, and the crowded executions, with which men have tried, and tried in vain, to force their fellow-men to live for the common good. But the more the punishments were increased, the more became the crimes is the final verdict of history. Then first a mere writer, with a jest, as we heard in the chapter on justice, suggested the question ' Is it not rather the doctor than the executioner that these criminals need ? '

And now these new scientists who have added the study of man's mind to that of Nature have answered, ' It is indeed the man of science, call him what you will, the man of science in the widest sense of the word, the man who studies

facts and who seeks the true truth, that is all the world's wrong needs to set it right.'

These students of mind, or Psycho-analysts, as they are called, have discovered that, just as an almost invisible thing like a grey gnat kept strongest men from living in the Isthmus of Panama, so a mother's or a nursemaid's unscientific ignorant treatment of a tiny baby may prevent it quite entirely, when it is grown up, from living as anything but a criminal.

It is a terrible, but a wonderful thought. There is fear in it and a great hope. For, if it is true that by our ignorance alone we manufacture criminals in their babyhood, then by the knowledge of child care spread into every remotest home in the land, we may, in the end, make a world of righteous men.

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