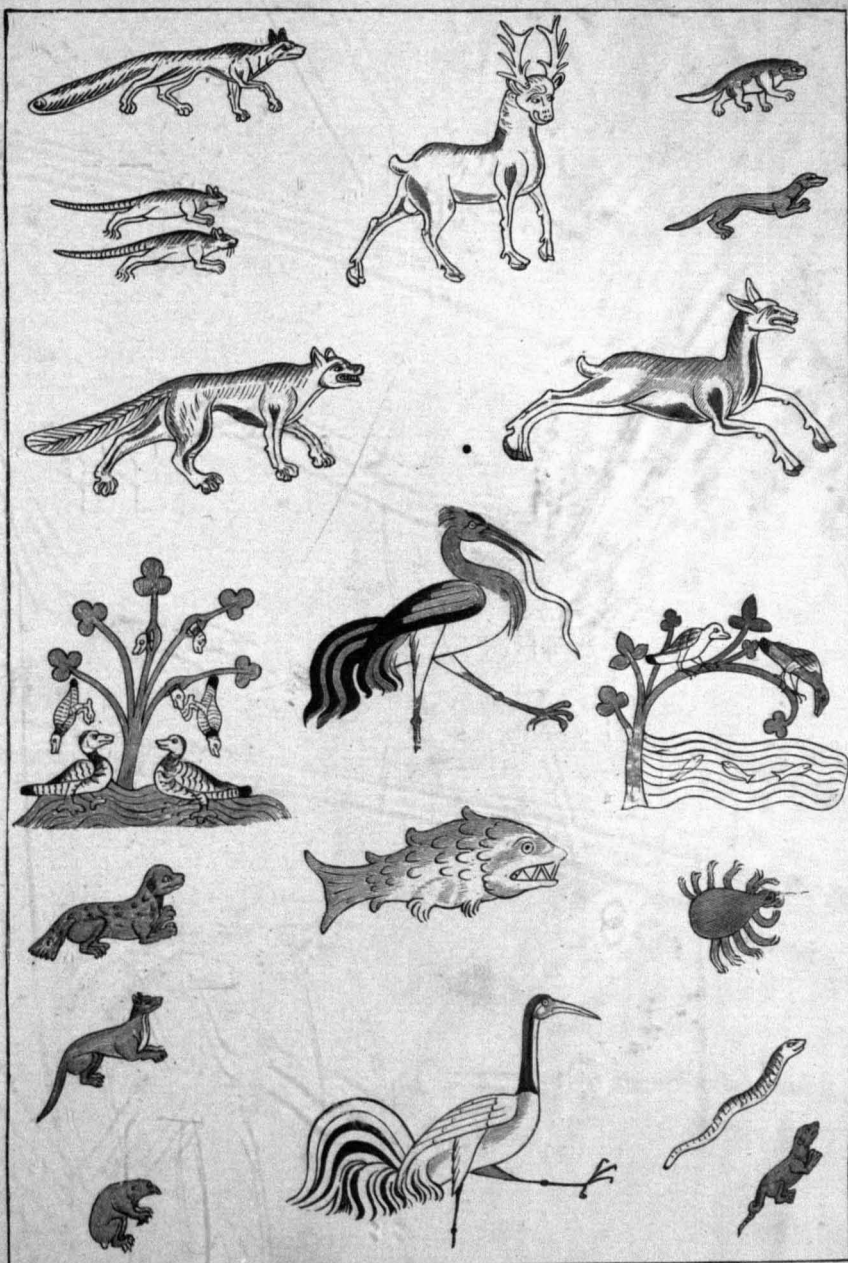


SEC. I  
—  
ENGLISH  
LITERATURE  
UNDER THE  
NORMAN  
AND ANGE-  
VIN KINGS

Gerald  
of Wales

Second, is the earliest work on English law, as that of the royal treasurer, Richard Fitz-Neal, on the Exchequer is the earliest on English government.

Still more distinctly secular than these, though the work of a priest who claimed to be a bishop, are the writings of Gerald de Barri. Gerald is the father of our popular literature, as he is the originator of the political and ecclesiastical pamphlet. Welsh blood (as his usual name of Giraldus Cambrensis implies) mixed with Norman in his veins, and something of the restless Celtic fire runs alike through his writings and his life. A busy scholar at Paris, a reforming archdeacon in Wales, the wittiest of Court chaplains, the most troublesome of bishops, Gerald became the gayest and most amusing of all the authors of his time. In his hands the stately Latin tongue took the vivacity and picturesqueness of the jongleur's verse. Reared as he had been in classical studies, he threw pedantry contemptuously aside. "It is better to be dumb than not to be understood," is his characteristic apology for the novelty of his style: "new times require new fashions, and so I have thrown utterly aside the old and dry method of some authors, and aimed at adopting the fashion of speech which is actually in vogue to-day." His tract on the conquest of Ireland and his account of Wales, which are in fact reports of two journeys undertaken in those countries with John and Archbishop Baldwin, illustrate his rapid faculty of careless observation, his audacity, and his good sense. They are just the sort of lively, dashing letters that we find in the correspondence of a modern journal. There is the same modern tone in his political pamphlets; his profusion of jests, his fund of anecdote, the aptness of his quotations, his natural shrewdness and critical acumen, the clearness and vivacity of his style, are backed by a fearlessness and impetuosity that made him a dangerous assailant even to such a ruler as Henry the Second. The invectives in which Gerald poured out his resentment against the Angevins are the cause of half the scandal about Henry and his sons which has found its way into history. His life was wasted in an ineffectual struggle to secure the see of St. David's, but his pungent pen played its part in rousing the spirit of the nation to its struggle with the Crown.



FAUNA OF IRELAND, AS DESCRIBED BY GERALD OF WALES.  
*MS. Rey. 13, B. viii.*  
 Thirteenth Century.

## SEC. I

ENGLISH  
LITERATURE  
UNDER THE  
NORMAN  
AND ANGE-  
VIN KINGS

## Romance

*Geoffry  
of Mon-  
mouth*

A tone of distinct hostility to the Church developed itself almost from the first among the singers of romance. Romance had long before taken root in the court of Henry the First, where under the patronage of Queen Maud the dreams of Arthur, so long cherished by the Celts of Brittany, and which had travelled to Wales in the train of the exile Rhys ap Tewdor, took shape in the History of the Britons by Geoffry of Monmouth. Myth, legend, tradition, the classical pedantry of the day, Welsh hopes of future triumph over the Saxon, the memories of the Crusades and of the world-wide dominion of Charles the Great, were



HEDGEHOGS AND TREES.

Bestiarium, c. A.D. 1200.

*MS. Bodl. 602.*

mingled together by this daring fabulist in a work whose popularity became at once immense. Alfred of Beverley transferred Geoffry's inventions into the region of sober history, while two Norman *trouvères*, Gaimar and Wace, translated them into French verse. So complete was the credence they obtained, that Arthur's tomb at Glastonbury was visited by Henry the Second, while the child of his son Geoffry and of Constance of Brittany bore the name of the Celtic hero. Out of Geoffry's creation grew little by little the poem of the Table Round. Brittany, which had mingled with the story of Arthur the older and more mysterious legend of the Enchanter Merlin, lent that of

Lancelot to the wandering minstrels of the day, who moulded it, as they wandered from hall to hall, into the familiar tale of knight-



SHOOTING BIRDS IN A TREE.

*MS. Ashm. 1511.*

C. A.D. 1200.

hood wrested from its loyalty by the love of woman. The stories of Tristram and Gawayne, at first as independent as that of Lancelot, were drawn with it into the whirlpool of Arthurian romance; and when the Church, jealous of the popularity of the legends of chivalry, invented as a counteracting influence the poem of the Sacred Dish, the San Graal which held the blood of the Cross invisible to all eyes but those of the pure in heart, the genius of a court poet, Walter de Map, wove the rival legends together, sent Arthur and his knights wandering over sea and land in the quest of the San Graal, and crowned the work by the figure of Sir Galahad, the type of ideal knighthood, without fear and without reproach.

Walter stands before us as the representative of a sudden outburst of literary, social, and religious criticism which followed the growth of romance and the

SEC. I

ENGLISH  
LITERATURE  
UNDER THE  
NORMAN  
AND ANGE-  
VIN KINGS

Walter  
de Map

appearance of a freer historical tone in the court of the two Henries. Born on the Welsh border, a student at Paris, a favourite with the King, a royal chaplain, justiciar, and ambassador, the genius of Walter de Map was as various as it was prolific. He is as much at his ease in sweeping together the chit-chat of the time in his "Courtly Trifles" as in creating the character of Sir Galahad. But he only rose to his fullest strength when he turned from the fields of romance to that of Church reform, and embodied the ecclesiastical abuses of his day in the figure of his "Bishop



SEC. I  
ENGLISH  
LITERATURE  
UNDER THE  
NORMAN  
AND ANGE-  
VIN KINGS

Goliath." The whole spirit of Henry and his court in their struggle with Becket is reflected and illustrated in the apocalypse and confession of this imaginary prelate. Picture after picture strips the veil from the corruption of the mediæval Church, its indolence, its thirst for gain, its secret immorality. The whole body of the clergy, from Pope to hedge-priest, is painted as busy in the chase for gain; what escapes the bishop is snapped up by the archdeacon, what escapes the archdeacon is nosed and hunted down by the dean, while a host of minor officials prowl hungrily around these greater marauders. Out of the crowd of figures which fills the canvas of the satirist, pluralist vicars, abbots "purple as their wines," monks feeding and chattering together like parrots in the refectory, rises the Philistine Bishop, light of purpose, void of conscience, lost in sensuality, drunken, unchaste, the Goliath who sums up the enormities of all, and against whose forehead this new David slings his sharp pebble of the brook.

Revival  
of the  
English  
tongue

It is only, however, as the writings of Englishmen that Latin or French, works like these can be claimed as part of English literature. The spoken tongue of the nation at large remained of course English as before; William himself had tried to learn it that he might administer justice to his subjects; and for a century after the Conquest only a few new words crept in from the language of the conquerors. Even English literature, banished as it was from the court of the stranger and exposed to the fashionable rivalry of Latin scholars, survived not only in religious works, in poetic paraphrases of gospels and psalms, but in the great monument of our prose, the English Chronicle. It was not till the miserable



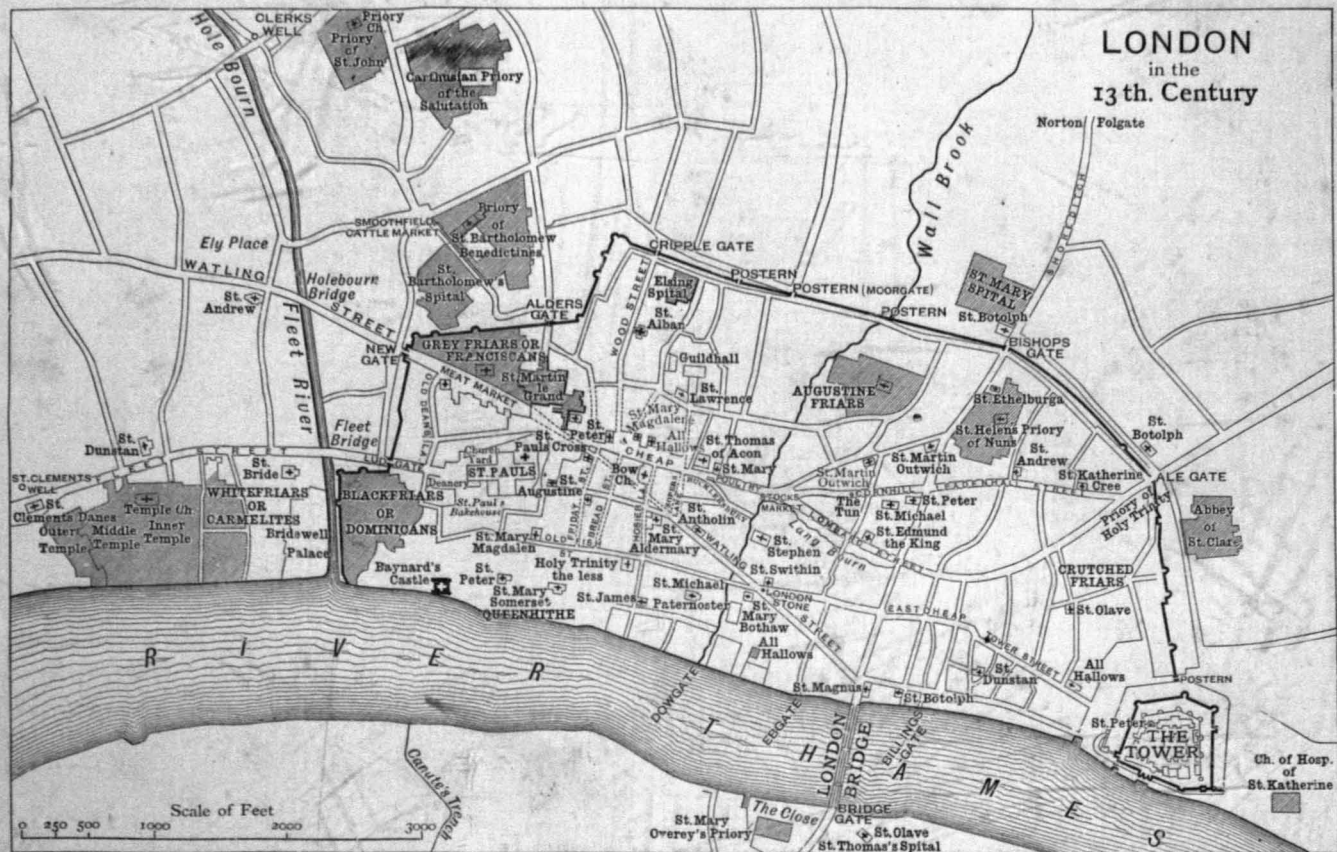
GLUTTONY.  
MS. Arundel 91.  
Twelfth Century.

reign of Stephen that the Chronicle died out in the Abbey of Peterborough. But the "Sayings of Ælfred," which embodied the ideal of an English king and gathered a legendary worship round the great name of the English past, show a native literature going on through the reign of Henry the Second. The appearance of a great work of English verse coincides in point of time with the loss of Normandy, and the return of John to his island realm. "There was a priest in the land whose name was Layamon; he was son of Leovenath: may the Lord be gracious to him! He dwelt at Earnley, a noble church on the bank of Severn (good it seemed to him!) near Radstone, where he read books. It came in mind to him and in his chiefest thought that he would tell the noble deeds of England, what the men were named, and whence they came, who first had English land." Journeying far and wide over the land, the priest of Earnley found Bæda and Wace, the books too of S. Albin and S. Austin. "Layamon laid down these books and turned the leaves; he beheld them lovingly: may the Lord be gracious to him! Pen he took with fingers and wrote a book-skin, and the true words set together, and compressed the three books into one." Layamon's church is now Areley, near Bewdley, in Worcestershire. His poem was in fact an expansion of Wace's "Brut," with insertions from Bæda. Historically it is worthless, but as a monument of our language it is beyond all price. After Norman and Angevin English remained unchanged. In more than thirty thousand lines not more than fifty Norman words are to be found. Even the old poetic tradition remains the same; the alliterative metre of the earlier verse is only slightly affected by riming terminations, the similes are the few natural similes of Cædmon, the battles are painted with the same rough, simple joy. It is by no mere accident that the English tongue thus wakes again into written life on the eve of the great struggle between the nation and its King. The artificial forms imposed by the Conquest were falling away from the people as from its literature, and a new England, quickened by the Celtic vivacity of de Map and the Norman daring of Gerald, stood forth to its conflict with John.

SEC. I  
—  
ENGLISH  
LITERATURE  
UNDER THE  
NORMAN  
AND ANGE-  
VIN KINGS  
—

*Layamon*





## Section II.—John, 1204—1215

[*Authorities.*—Our chief sources of information are the Chronicle embodied in the “Memoriale” of Walter of Coventry; and the “Chronicle of Roger of Wendover,” the first of the published annalists of S. Alban’s, whose work was subsequently revised and continued in a more patriotic tone by another monk of the same abbey, Matthew Paris. The Annals of Waverley, Dunstable, and Burton are important for the period. The great series of the Royal Rolls begin now to be of the highest value. The French authorities as before. For Langton, see Hook’s biography in the “Lives of the Archbishops.” The best modern account of this reign is in Mr. Pearson’s “History of England,” vol. ii.]

“Foul as it is, hell itself is defiled, by the fouler presence of John.” The terrible verdict of the King’s contemporaries has passed into the sober judgement of history. Externally John possessed all the quickness, the vivacity, the cleverness, the good-humour, the social charm which distinguished his house. His worst enemies owned that he toiled steadily and closely at the work of administration. He was fond of learned men like Gerald of Wales. He had a strange gift of attracting friends and of winning the love of women. But in his inner soul John was the worst outcome of the Angevins. He united into one mass of wickedness their insolence, their selfishness, their unbridled lust, their cruelty and tyranny, their shamelessness, their superstition, their cynical indifference to honour or truth. In mere boyhood he had torn with brutal levity the beards of the Irish chieftains who came to own him as their lord. His ingratitude and perfidy had brought down his father with sorrow to the grave. To his brother he had been the worst of traitors. All Christendom believed him to be the murderer of his nephew Arthur of Brittany. He abandoned one wife and was faithless to another. His punishments were refinements of cruelty—the starvation of children, the crushing old men under copes of lead. His court was a brothel where no woman was safe from the royal lust, and where his cynicism loved to publish the news of his victims’ shame. He was as craven in his superstition as he was daring in his impiety. He scoffed at priests and turned his back on the mass even amidst the solemnities of his coronation, but he never stirred on a journey without hanging relics round his neck. But with the supreme wickedness



SEC. II  
JOHN  
1204  
TO  
1215

of his race he inherited its profound ability. His plan for the relief of Château-Gaillard, the rapid march by which he shattered Arthur's hopes at Mirebeau, showed an inborn genius for war. In the rapidity and breadth of his political combinations he far surpassed the statesmen of his time. Throughout his reign we see him quick to discern the difficulties of his position, and inexhaustible in the resources with which he met them. The overthrow of his continental power only spurred him to the formation of a great league which all but brought Philip to the ground ; and the sudden revolt of all England was parried by a shameless alliance with the Papacy. The closer study of John's history clears away the charges of sloth and incapacity with which men tried to explain the greatness of his fall. The awful lesson of his life rests on the fact that it was no weak and indolent voluptuary, but the ablest and most ruthless of the Angevins who lost Normandy, became the vassal of the Pope, and perished in a struggle of despair against English freedom.

The  
interdict

The whole energies of the King were bent on the recovery of his lost dominions on the Continent. He impatiently collected money and men for the support of the adherents of the House of Anjou who were still struggling against the arms of France in Poitou and Guienne, and had assembled an army at Portsmouth in the summer of 1205, when his project was suddenly thwarted by the resolute opposition of the Primate and the Earl of Pembroke, William Marshal. So completely had both the baronage and the Church been humbled by his father, that the attitude of their representatives indicated the new spirit of national freedom which was rising around the King. John at once braced himself to a struggle with it. The death of Hubert Walter, a few weeks after his protest, enabled him, as it seemed, to neutralize the opposition of the Church by placing a creature of his own at its head. John de Grey, Bishop of Norwich, was elected by the monks of Canterbury at his bidding and enthroned as Primate. In a previous though informal gathering, however, the convent had already chosen its sub-prior, Reginald, as Archbishop, and the rival claimants hastened to appeal to Rome ; but the result of their appeal was a startling one both for themselves and for the King. Innocent the Third, who now occupied the Papal throne,

had pushed its claims of supremacy over Christendom further than any of his predecessors : after a careful examination he quashed both the contested elections. The decision was probably a just one ; but Innocent did not stop there ; whether from love of power, or, as may fairly be supposed, in despair of a free election within English bounds, he commanded the monks who appeared before him to elect in his presence Stephen Langton to the archiepiscopal see. Personally a better choice could not have been made, for Stephen was a man who by sheer weight of learning and holiness of life had risen to the dignity of Cardinal, and whose after career placed him in the front rank of English patriots. But in itself the step was an usurpation of the rights both of the Church and of the Crown. The King at once met it with resistance, and replied to the Papal threats of interdict if Langton were any longer excluded from his see, by a counter threat that the interdict should be followed by the banishment of the clergy and the mutilation of every Italian he could seize in the realm. Innocent, however, was not a man to draw back from his purpose, and the interdict fell at last upon the land. All worship save that of a few privileged orders, all administration of the Sacraments save that of private baptism, ceased over the length and breadth of the country : the church-bells were silent, the dead lay unburied on the ground. The King replied by confiscating the lands of the clergy who observed the interdict, by subjecting them in spite of their privileges to the royal courts, and often by leaving outrages on them unpunished. " Let him go," said John, when a Welshman was brought before him for the murder of a priest, " he has killed my enemy ! " A year passed before the Pope proceeded to the further sentence of excommunication. John was now formally cut off from the pale of the Church ; but the new sentence was met with the same defiance as the old. Five of the bishops fled over sea, and secret disaffection was spreading widely, but there was no public avoidance of the excommunicated King. An Arch-deacon of Norwich who withdrew from his service was crushed to death under a cope of lead, and the hint was sufficient to prevent either prelate or noble from following his example. Though the King stood alone, with nobles estranged from him and the Church against him, his strength seemed utterly unbroken. From the first

SEC. II

JOHN

1204

TO

1215

1208

SEC. II  
JOHN  
1204  
TO  
1215  
—

*John's  
deposition*  
1212

The  
Pope's  
vassal

moment of his rule John had defied the baronage. The promise to satisfy their demand for redress of wrongs in the past reign, a promise made at his election, remained unfulfilled; when the demand was repeated he answered it by seizing their castles and taking their children as hostages for their loyalty. The cost of his fruitless threats of war had been met by heavy and repeated taxation. The quarrel with the Church and fear of their revolt only deepened his oppression of the nobles. He drove De Braose, one of the most powerful of the Lords Marchers, to die in exile, while his wife and grandchildren were believed to have been starved to death in the royal prisons. On the nobles who still clung panic-stricken to the court of the excommunicate king John heaped outrages worse than death. Illegal exactions, the seizure of their castles, the preference shown to foreigners, were small provocations compared with his attacks on the honour of their wives and daughters. But the baronage still submitted; and the King's vigour was seen by the rapidity with which he crushed a rising of the nobles in Ireland, and foiled an outbreak of the Welsh. Hated as he was the land remained still. Only one weapon now remained in Innocent's hands. An excommunicate king had ceased to be a Christian, or to have claims on the obedience of Christian subjects. As spiritual heads of Christendom, the Popes had ere now asserted their right to remove such a ruler from his throne and to give it to a worthier than he; and this right Innocent at last felt himself driven to exercise. He issued a bull of deposition against John, proclaimed a crusade against him, and committed the execution of his sentence to Philip of France. John met it with the same scorn as before. His insolent disdain suffered the Roman legate, Cardinal Pandulf, to proclaim his deposition to his face at Northampton. An enormous army gathered at his call on Barham Down; and the English fleet dispelled all danger of invasion by crossing the Channel, by capturing a number of French ships, and by burning Dieppe.

But it was not in England only that the King showed his strength and activity. Vile as he was, John possessed in a high degree the political ability of his race, and in the diplomatic efforts with which he met the danger from France he showed himself his

father's equal. The barons of Poitou were roused to attack Philip from the south. John bought the aid of the Count of Flanders on his northern border. The German King, Otto, pledged himself to bring the knighthood of Germany to support an invasion of France. But at the moment of his success in diplomacy John suddenly gave way. It was in fact the revelation of a danger at home which shook him from his attitude of contemptuous defiance. The bull of deposition gave fresh energy to every enemy. The Scotch King was in correspondence with Innocent. The Welsh Princes who had just been forced to submission broke out again in war. John hanged their hostages, and called his host to muster for a fresh inroad into Wales, but the army met only to become a fresh source of danger. Powerless to resist openly, the baronage had plunged almost to a man into secret conspiracies; many promised aid to Philip on his landing. John, in the midst of hidden enemies, was only saved by the haste with which he disbanded his army and took refuge in Nottingham Castle. His daring self-confidence, the skill of his diplomacy, could no longer hide from him the utter loneliness of his position. At war with Rome, with France, with Scotland, Ireland and Wales, at war with the Church, he saw himself disarmed by this sudden revelation of treason in the one force left at his disposal. With characteristic suddenness he gave way. He endeavoured by remission of fines to win back his people. He negotiated eagerly with the Pope, consented to receive the Archbishop, and promised to repay the money he had extorted from the Church. The shameless ingenuity of the King's temper was seen in his immediate resolve to make Rome his ally, to turn its spiritual thunder

SEC. II  
JOHN  
1204  
TO  
1215



KNIGHT AND SLINGER.  
Early Thirteenth Century.  
*MS. Reg. i D. x.*

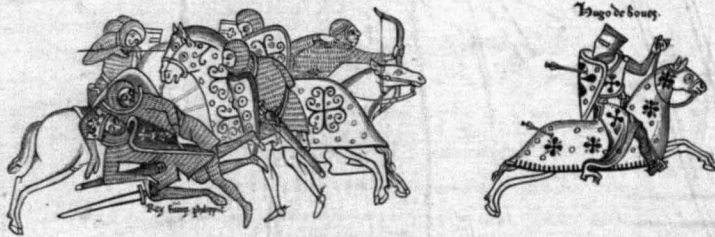


SEC. II  
JOHN  
1204  
TO  
1215

against his foes, to use it in breaking up the confederacy it had formed against him. His quick versatile temper saw the momentary gain to be won. On the 15th of May 1213 he knelt before the legate Pandulf, surrendered his kingdom to the Roman See, took it back again as a tributary vassal, swore fealty, and did liege homage to the Pope.

The  
Battle of  
Bouvines

In after times men believed that England thrilled at the news with a sense of national shame such as she had never felt before. "He has become the Pope's man," the whole country was said to have murmured; "he has forfeited the very name of King; from a free man he has degraded himself into a serf." But we see little trace of such a feeling in the contemporary accounts of the



KING OF FRANCE UNHORSED AT BOUVINES.

Drawn by Matthew Paris.

MS. C.C.C. Camb. xvi.

time. As a political measure indeed the success of John's submission was complete. The French army at once broke up in impotent rage, and when Philip turned against the enemy whom John had raised up for him in Flanders, five hundred English ships under the Earl of Salisbury fell upon the fleet which accompanied his army along the coast and utterly destroyed it. The league which John had so long matured at last disclosed itself. The King himself landed in Poitou, rallied its nobles round him, crossed the Loire in triumph, and won back Angers, the home of his race. At the same time Otto, reinforcing his German army by the knighthood of Flanders and Boulogne as well as by a body of English troops, threatened France from the north. For the moment Philip seemed lost, and yet on the fortunes of Philip hung the fortunes of English freedom. But in this crisis of her fate France was true to herself and her King; the townsmen marched

from every borough to Philip's rescue, priests led their flocks to battle with the Church banners flying at their head. The two armies met near the bridge of Bouvines, between Lille and Tournay, and from the first the day went against the allies. The Flemish were the first to fly; then the Germans in the centre were overwhelmed by the numbers of the French; last of all the English on the right were broken by a fierce onset of the Bishop of Beauvais, who charged mace in hand and struck the Earl of Salisbury to the ground. The news of this complete overthrow reached John in the midst of his triumphs in the South, and scattered his hopes to the winds. He was at once deserted by the Poitevin nobles, and a hasty retreat alone enabled him to return, baffled and humiliated, to his island kingdom.

It is to the victory of Bouvines that England owes her Great Charter. From the hour of his submission to the Papacy, John's vengeance on the barons had only been delayed till he should return a conqueror from the fields of France. A sense of their danger nerved the baronage to resistance; they refused to follow the King on his foreign campaign till the excommunication were removed, and when it was removed they still refused, on the plea that they were not bound to serve in wars without the realm. Furious as he was at this new attitude of resistance, the time had not yet come for vengeance, and John sailed for Poitou with the dream of a great victory which should lay

SEC. II  
—  
JOHN  
1204  
TO  
1215  
—  
1214

Stephen  
Langton



SEAL OF STEPHEN LANGTON.  
*British Museum.* \*

SFC. II  
JOHN  
1204  
TO  
1215

Philip and the barons alike at his feet. He returned from his defeat to find the nobles no longer banded together in secret conspiracies, but openly united in a definite claim of liberty and law. The leader in this great change was the new Archbishop whom Innocent had set on the throne of Canterbury. From the moment of his landing in England, Stephen Langton had assumed the constitutional position of the Primate as champion of the old English customs and law against the personal despotism of the Kings. As Anselm had withstood William the Red, as Theobald had rescued England from the lawlessness of Stephen, so Langton prepared to withstand and rescue his country from the tyranny of John. He had already forced him to swear to observe the laws of the Confessor, a phrase in which the whole of the national liberties were summed up. When the baronage refused to sail to Poitou, he compelled the King to deal with them not by arms but by process of law. Far however from being satisfied with resistance such as this to isolated acts of tyranny, it was the Archbishop's aim to restore on a formal basis the older freedom of the realm. The pledges of Henry the First had long been forgotten when the Justiciar, Geoffrey Fitz-Peter, brought them to light at a Council held at S. Albans. There in the King's name the Justiciar promised good government for the time to come, and forbade all royal officers to practise extortion as they prized life and limb. The King's peace was pledged to those who had opposed him in the past; and observance of the laws of Henry the First was enjoined upon all within the realm. Langton saw the vast importance of such a precedent. In a fresh meeting of the barons at S. Paul's he produced the Charter of Henry the First, and it was at once welcomed as a base for the needed reforms. All hope however hung on the fortunes of the French campaign; the victory at Bouvines gave strength to John's opponents, and after the King's landing the barons secretly met at S. Edmundsbury, and swore to demand from him, if needful by force of arms, the restoration of their liberties by Charter under the King's seal. Early in January in the year 1215 they presented themselves in arms before the King, and preferred their claim. The few months that followed showed John the uselessness of resistance; nobles and Churchmen were alike arrayed against

him, and the commissioners whom he sent to plead his cause at the shire-courts brought back the news that no man would help him against the Charter. At Easter the barons again gathered in arms at Brackley, and renewed their claim. "Why do they not ask for my kingdom?" cried John in a burst of passion; but the whole country rose as one man at his refusal. London threw open her gates to the forces of the barons, now organised under Robert Fitz-Walter as "Marshal of the Army of God and Holy

SEC. II

JOHN  
1204  
TO  
1215

SEAL OF ROBERT FITZ-WALTER.  
*British Museum.*

Church." The example of the capital was followed by Exeter and Lincoln; promises of aid came from Scotland and Wales; the northern barons marched hastily to join their comrades in London. There was a moment when John found himself with seven knights at his back and before him a nation in arms. He had summoned mercenaries and appealed to his liege lord, the Pope: but summons and appeals were alike too late. Nursing wrath in his heart the tyrant bowed to necessity, and called the barons to a conference at Runnymede.



SEC. III  
 THE GREAT  
 CHARTER  
 1215  
 TO  
 1217

### Section III.—The Great Charter, 1215—1217

[*Authorities.*—The text of the Charter is given by Dr. Stubbs, with valuable comments, in his "Select Charters." Mr. Pearson gives a useful analysis of it.]

1215  
 June 15

An island in the Thames between Staines and Windsor had been chosen as the place of conference: the King encamped on one bank, while the barons covered the marshy flat, still known by the name of Runnymede, on the other. Their delegates met in the island between them, but the negotiations were a mere cloak to cover John's purpose of unconditional submission. The Great Charter was discussed, agreed to, and signed in a single day.

One copy of it still remains in the British Museum, injured by age and fire, but with the royal seal still hanging from the brown, shrivelled parchment. It is impossible to gaze without reverence on the earliest monument of English freedom which we can see with our own eyes and touch with our own hands, the great Charter to which from age to age patriots have looked back as the basis of English liberty. But in itself the Charter was no novelty, nor did it claim to establish any new constitutional principles. The Charter of Henry the First formed the basis of the whole, and the additions to it are for the most part formal recognitions of the judicial and administrative changes introduced by Henry the Second. But the vague expressions of the older charter were now exchanged for precise and elaborate provisions. The bonds of unwritten custom which the older grant did little more than recognize had proved too weak to hold the Angevins; and the baronage now threw them aside for the restraints of written law. It is in this way that the Great Charter marks the transition from the age of traditional rights, preserved in the nation's memory and officially declared by the Primate, to the age of written legislation, of Parliaments and Statutes, which was soon to come. The Church had shown its power of self-defence in the struggle over the interdict, and the clause which recognized its rights alone retained the older and general form. But all vagueness ceases when the Charter passes on to deal with the rights of Englishmen at large, their right to justice, to security of person and property, to good



SEC. III  
THE GREAT  
CHARTER  
1215  
TO  
1217  
—

government. "No freeman," ran the memorable article that lies at the base of our whole judicial system, "shall be seized or imprisoned, or dispossessed, or outlawed, or in any way brought to ruin; we will not go against any man nor send against him, save by legal judgement of his peers or by the law of the land." "To no man will we sell," runs another, "or deny, or delay, right or justice." The great reforms of the past reigns were now formally recognized; judges of assize were to hold their circuits four times in the year, and the King's Court was no longer to follow the King in his wanderings over the realm, but to sit in a fixed place. But the denial of justice under John was a small danger compared with the lawless exactions both of himself and his predecessor. Richard had increased the amount of the scutage which Henry the Second had introduced, and applied it to raise funds for his ransom. He had restored the Danegeld, or land-tax, so often abolished, under the new name of "carucage," had seized the wool of the Cistercians and the plate of the churches, and rated moveables as well as land. John had again raised the rate of scutage, and imposed aids, fines, and ransoms at his pleasure without counsel of the baronage. The Great Charter met this abuse by the provision on which our constitutional system rests. With the exception of the three customary feudal aids which still remained to the Crown, "no scutage or aid shall be imposed in our realm save by the common council of the realm;" and to this Great Council it was provided that prelates and the greater barons should be summoned by special writ, and all tenants in chief through the sheriffs and bailiffs, at least forty days before. The provision defined what had probably been the common usage of the realm; but the definition turned it into a national right, a right so momentous that on it rests our whole Parliamentary life.

The  
Charter  
and the  
People

The rights which the barons claimed for themselves they claimed for the nation at large. The boon of free and unbought justice was a boon for all, but a special provision protected the poor. The forfeiture of the freeman on conviction of felony was never to include his tenement, or that of the merchant his wares, or that of the countryman his wain. The means of actual livelihood were to be left even to the worst. The under-tenants or farmers were protected against all lawless exactions of their lords in precisely

the same terms as these were protected against the lawless exactions of the Crown. The towns were secured in the enjoyment of their municipal privileges, their freedom from arbitrary taxation, their rights of justice, of common deliberation, of regulation of trade. "Let the city of London have all its old liberties and its free customs, as well by land as by water. Besides this, we will and grant that all other cities, and boroughs, and towns, and ports, have all their liberties and free customs." The influence of the trading class is seen in two other enactments, by which freedom of journeying and trade was secured to foreign merchants, and an uniformity of weights and measures was ordered to be enforced throughout the realm. There remained only one question, and that the most difficult of all; the question how to secure this order which the Charter had established in the actual government of the realm. The immediate abuses were easily swept away, the hostages restored to their homes, the foreigners banished from the country. But it was less easy to provide means for the control of a King whom no man could trust, and a council of twenty-five barons were chosen from the general body of their order to enforce on John the

observance of the Charter, with the right of declaring war on the King should its provisions be infringed. Finally, the Charter was published throughout the whole country, and sworn to at every hundred-mote and town-mote, by order from the King.

"They have given me five-and-twenty over-kings," cried John

SEC. III  
THE GREAT  
CHARTER  
1215  
TO  
1217



EFFIGY OF JOHN, ON HIS TOMB  
IN WORCESTER CATHEDRAL.



SEC. III  
THE GREAT  
CHARTER  
1215  
TO  
1217  
John  
and the  
Charter

in a burst of fury, flinging himself on the floor and gnawing sticks and straw in his impotent rage. But the rage soon passed into the subtle policy of which he was a master. Some days after he left Windsor, and lingered for months along the southern shore, waiting for news of the aid he had solicited from Rome and from the Continent. It was not without definite purpose that he had become the vassal of Rome. While Innocent was dreaming of a vast Christian Empire with the Pope at its head to enforce justice and religion on his under-kings, John believed that the Papal protection would enable him to rule as tyrannically as he would. The thunders of the Papacy were to be ever at hand for his protection, as the armies of England are at hand to protect the vileness and oppression of a Turkish Sultan or a Nizam of Hyderabad. His envoys were already at Rome, and Innocent, indignant that a matter which might have been brought before his court of appeal as overlord should have been dealt with by armed revolt, annulled the Great Charter and suspended Stephen Langton from the exercise of his office as Primate. Autumn brought a host of foreign soldiers from over sea to the King's standard, and advancing against the disorganised forces of the barons, John starved Rochester into submission and marched ravaging through the midland counties to the North, while his mercenaries spread like locusts over the whole face of the land. From Berwick the King turned back triumphant to coop up his enemies in London, while fresh Papal excommunications fell on the barons and the city. But the burghers set Innocent at defiance. "The ordering of secular matters appertaineth not to the Pope," they said, in words that seem like mutterings of the coming Lollardy; and at the advice of Simon Langton, the Archbishop's brother, bells swung out and mass was celebrated as before. With the undisciplined militia of the country and the towns, however, success was impossible against the trained forces of the King, and despair drove the barons to seek aid from France. Philip had long been waiting the opportunity for his revenge upon John, and his son Lewis at once accepted the crown in spite of Innocent's excommunications, and landed in Kent with a considerable force. As the barons had foreseen, the French mercenaries who constituted John's host refused to fight against the French sovereign. The whole aspect

of affairs was suddenly reversed.



WILLIAM MARSHAL, FROM HIS TOMB  
IN THE TEMPLE CHURCH, LONDON.

Deserted by the bulk of his troops, the King was forced to fall rapidly back on the Welsh Marches, while his rival entered London, and received the submission of the larger part of England. Only Dover held out obstinately against Lewis. By a series of rapid marches John succeeded in distracting the plans of the barons and in relieving Lincoln; then after a short stay at Lynn he crossed the Wash in a fresh movement to the north. In crossing, however, his army was surprised by the tide, and his baggage with the royal treasures washed away.

The fever which seized the baffled tyrant in the abbey of Swineshead was inflamed by a gluttonous debauch, and John entered Newark only to die. His death changed the whole face of affairs, for his son Henry was but a child of nine years old, and the royal authority passed into the hands of one who stands high among English patriots, William Marshal. The boy-king was hardly crowned when the Earl and the Papal Legate issued in his name the very Charter against which his father had died fighting; only the clauses which regulated taxation and the summoning of Parliament were as yet declared to be suspended. The nobles soon

SEC. III  
THE GREAT  
CHARTER  
1215  
TO  
1217

The Earl  
Marshal

SEC. III  
THE GREAT  
CHARTER  
1215  
TO  
1217

*Fair of  
Lincoln*  
1217

streamed away from the French camp ; for national jealousy and suspicions of treason told heavily against Lewis, while the pity which was excited by the youth and helplessness of Henry was aided by a sense of injustice in burthening the child with the iniquity of his father. One bold stroke of William Marshal decided the struggle. A joint army of French and English barons under the Count of Perche and Robert Fitz-Walter was besieging Lincoln, when the Earl, rapidly gathering forces from the royal castles, marched to its relief. Cooped up in the steep narrow streets, and attacked at once by the Earl and the garrison, the barons fled in hopeless rout ; the Count of Perche fell on the field ; Robert Fitz-Walter was taken prisoner. Lewis, who was investing Dover, retreated to London, and called for aid from France. But a more terrible defeat crushed his remaining hopes. A small English fleet, which had set sail from Dover under Hubert de Burgh, fell boldly on the reinforcements which were crossing under the escort of Eustace the Monk, a well-known freebooter of the Channel. The fight admirably illustrates the naval warfare of the time. From the decks of the English vessels bowmen poured their arrows into the crowded transports, others hurled quicklime into their enemies' faces, while the more active vessels crashed with their armed prows into the sides of the French ships. The skill of the mariners of the Cinque Ports decided the day against the larger forces of their opponents, and the fleet of Eustace was utterly destroyed. The royal army at once closed in upon London, but resistance was really at an end. By the treaty of Lambeth Lewis promised to withdraw from England on payment of a sum which he claimed as debt ; his adherents were restored to their possessions, the liberties of London and other towns confirmed, and the prisoners on either side set at liberty. The expulsion of the stranger left English statesmen free to take up again the work of reform ; and a fresh issue of the Charter, though in its modified form, proclaimed clearly the temper and policy of the Earl Marshal.

## Section IV.—The Universities

SEC. IV  
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THE  
UNIVERSITIES  
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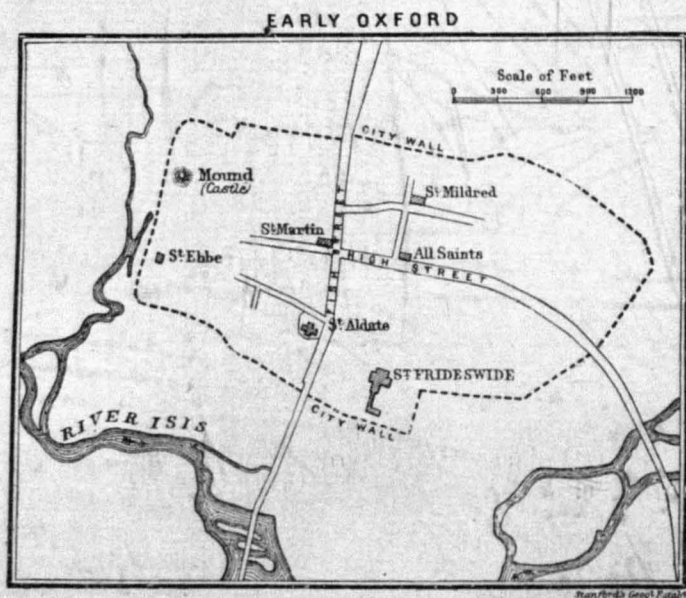
[*Authorities.*—For the Universities we have the collection of materials edited by Mr. Anstey under the name of “*Munimenta Academica*.” I have borrowed much from two papers of my own in “*Macmillan’s Magazine*,” on “*The Early History of Oxford*.” For Bacon, see his “*Opera Inedita*,” in the *Rolls Series*, with Mr. Brewer’s admirable introduction, and Dr. Whewell’s estimate of him in his “*History of the Inductive Sciences*.”]

From the turmoil of civil politics we turn to the more silent but hardly less important revolution from which we may date our national education. It is in the reign of Henry the Third that the English universities begin to exercise a definite influence on the intellectual life of Englishmen. Of the early history of Cambridge we know little or nothing, but enough remains to enable us to trace the early steps by which Oxford attained to its intellectual eminence. The establishment of the great schools which bore the name of Universities was everywhere throughout Europe a special mark of the new impulse that Christendom had gained from the Crusades. A new fervour of study sprang up in the West from its contact with the more cultured East. Travellers like Adelard of Bath brought back the first rudiments of physical and mathematical science from the schools of Cordova or Bagdad. In the twelfth century a classical revival restored Cæsar and Vergil to the list of monastic studies, and left its stamp on the pedantic style, the profuse classical quotations of writers like William of Malmesbury or John of Salisbury. The scholastic philosophy sprang up in the schools of Paris. The Roman law was revived by the imperialist doctors of Bologna. The long mental inactivity of feudal Europe broke up like ice before a summer’s sun. Wandering teachers such as Lanfranc or Anselm crossed sea and land to spread the new power of knowledge. The same spirit of restlessness, of inquiry, of impatience with the older traditions of mankind, either local or intellectual, that had hurried half Christendom to the tomb of its Lord, crowded the roads with thousands of young scholars hurrying to the chosen seats where teachers were gathered together. A new power had sprung up in the midst of a world as yet under the rule of sheer brute force. Poor as they were, sometimes even of servile race, the wandering scholars who lectured in every



SEC. IV  
THE  
UNIVERSITIES

cloister were hailed as "masters" by the crowds at their feet. Abelard was a foe worthy of the menaces of councils, of the thunders of the Church. The teaching of a single Lombard was of note enough in England to draw down the prohibition of a King. When Vacarius, probably a guest in the court of Archbishop Theobald, where Beket and John of Salisbury were already busy with the study of the Civil Law, opened lectures on it at Oxford, he was at once silenced by Stephen, who was then at war with the Church, and jealous of the power which the wreck of the royal authority was throwing into Theobald's hands.

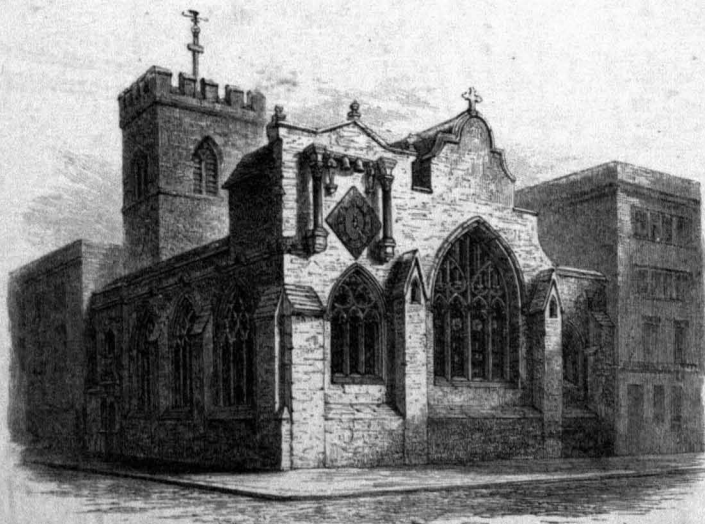


**Oxford**

At the time of the arrival of Vacarius Oxford stood in the first rank among English towns. Its town church of S. Martin rose from the midst of a huddled group of houses, girt in with massive walls, that lay along the dry upper ground of a low peninsula between the streams of Cherwell and the upper Thames. The ground fell gently on either side, eastward and westward, to these rivers, while on the south a sharper descent led down across swampy meadows to the city bridge. Around lay a wild forest



SOUTH VIEW OF NORTH GATE OR BOCARDO, WITH TOWER OF  
S. MICHAEL'S CHURCH, OXFORD.



OLD CHURCH OF S. MARTIN, OXFORD.  
Re-built temp. Edward III.; demolished in eighteenth century.  
*Skelton, "Oxonia Antiqua Restaurata."*

SEC. IV  
THE  
UNIVERSITIES

country, the moors of Cowley and Bullingdon fringing the course of Thames, the great woods of Shotover and Bagley closing the horizon to the south and east. Though the two huge towers of its Norman castle marked the strategic importance of Oxford as commanding the river valley along which the commerce of Southern England mainly flowed, its walls formed, perhaps, the



WATCH-TOWER ON HYTHE BRIDGE, CALLED "FRIAR BACON'S STUDY."

Twelfth or Thirteenth Century.

*Skelton, "Oxonia Antiqua Restaurata."*

least element in its military strength, for on every side but the north the town was guarded by the swampy meadows along Cherwell, or by the intricate network of streams into which the Thames breaks among the meadows of Osney. From the midst of these meadows rose a mitred abbey of Austin Canons, which, with the older priory of S. Frideswide, gave the town some ecclesiastical dignity. The residence of the Norman house of the

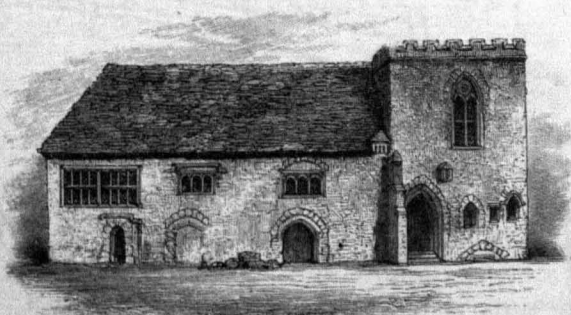
D'Oillis within its castle, the frequent visits of English kings to a palace without its walls, the presence again and again of important councils, marked its political weight within the realm.

SEC. IV  
THE  
UNIVERSITIES



HYTHE BRIDGE AND CASTLE TOWER, OXFORD.  
*Skelton, "Oxonia Antiqua Restaurata."*

The settlement of one of the wealthiest among the English Jewries in the very heart of the town indicated, while it promoted, the activity of its trade. No place better illustrates the transformation of the land in the hands of its Norman masters, the sudden



HOME FOR CONVERTED JEWS, OR DOMUS CONVERSORUM, OXFORD.  
Founded 1235; demolished 1750.  
*Skelton, "Oxonia Antiqua Restaurata."*

outburst of industrial effort, the sudden expansion of commerce and accumulation of wealth which followed the Conquest. To the west of the town rose one of the stateliest of English castles, and in the meadows beneath the hardly less stately abbey of



SEC. IV  
THE  
UNIVERSITIES

Osney. In the fields to the north the last of the Norman kings raised his palace of Beaumont. The canons of S. Frideswide reared the church which still exists as the diocesan cathedral, while the piety of the Norman Castellans rebuilt almost all the parish churches of the city, and founded within their new castle walls the church of the Canons of S. George. We know nothing of the causes which drew students and teachers within the walls

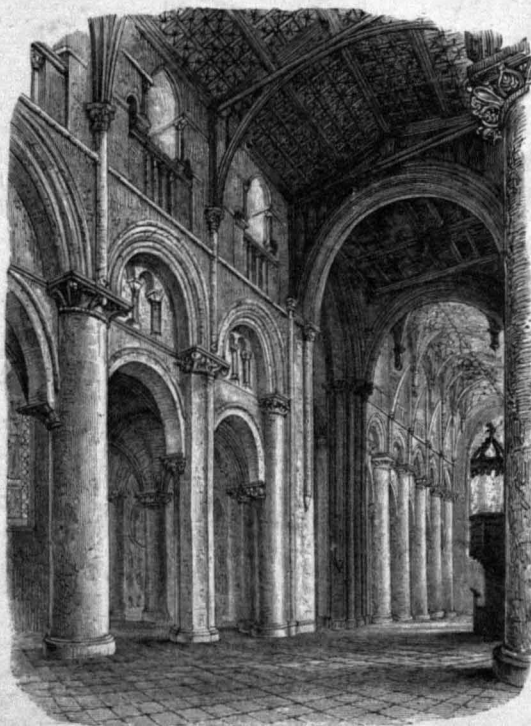


REMAINS OF OSNEY ABBEY.  
*From an engraving by W. Hollar.*

of Oxford. It is possible that here as elsewhere a new teacher had quickened older educational foundations, and that the cloisters of Osney and S. Frideswide already possessed schools which burst into a larger life under the impulse of Vacarius. As yet, however, the fortunes of the University were obscured by the glories of Paris. English scholars gathered in thousands round the chairs of William of Champeaux or Abelard. The English took their place as one of the "nations" of the French University. John of Salisbury became famous as one of the Parisian teachers.

Beket wandered to Paris from his school at Merton. But through the peaceful reign of Henry the Second Oxford was quietly increasing in numbers and repute. Forty years after the visit of Vacarius its educational position was fully established. When Gerald of Wales read his amusing Topography of Ireland to its

SEC. IV  
—  
THE  
UNIVER-  
SITIES  
—



S. FRIDESWIDE'S PRIORY CHURCH (NOW THE CATHEDRAL), OXFORD.  
*Ingram, "Memorials of Oxford."*

students, the most learned and famous of the English clergy were, he tells us, to be found within its walls. At the opening of the thirteenth century Oxford was without a rival in its own country, while in European celebrity it took rank with the greatest schools of the Western world. But to realize this Oxford of the past we must dismiss from our minds all recollections of the Oxford of the present. In the outer aspect of the new University there was

SEC. IV  
THE  
UNIVERSITIES

nothing of the pomp that overawes the freshman as he first paces the "High," or looks down from the gallery of S. Mary's. In the stead of long fronts of venerable colleges, of stately walks beneath immemorial elms, history plunges us into the mean and filthy lanes of a mediæval town. Thousands of boys, huddled in bare lodging-houses, clustering round teachers as poor as themselves in church porch and house porch, drinking, quarrelling, dicing, begging at the



SEAL OF OXFORD UNIVERSITY, c. 1300.  
*Ingram, "Memorials of Oxford."*

corners of the streets, take the place of the brightly-coloured train of doctors and Heads. Mayor and Chancellor struggled in vain to enforce order or peace on this seething mass of turbulent life. The retainers who followed their young lords to the University fought out the feuds of their houses in the streets. Scholars from Kent and scholars from Scotland waged the bitter struggle of North and South. At nightfall roysterer and reveller roamed with torches through the narrow lanes, defying bailiffs, and

cutting down burghers at their doors. Now a mob of clerks plunged into the Jewry, and wiped off the memory of bills and bonds by sacking a Hebrew house or two. Now a tavern row between scholar and townsman widened into a general broil, and the academical bell of S. Mary's vied with the town bell of S. Martin's in clanging to arms. Every phase of ecclesiastical controversy or political strife was preluded by some fierce

SEC. IV  
THE  
UNIVER-  
SITIES



SEAL OF OXFORD CITY.  
*Ingram, "Memorials of Oxford."*

outbreak in this turbulent, surging mob. When England growled at the exactions of the Papacy, the students besieged a legate in the abbot's house at Osney. A murderous town and gown row preceded the opening of the Barons' War. "When Oxford draws knife," ran the old rime, "England's soon at strife."

But the turbulence and stir was a stir and turbulence of life. A keen thirst for knowledge, a passionate poetry of devotion, gathered thousands round the poorest scholar, and welcomed

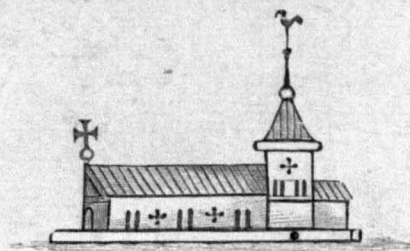
Edmund  
Rich



SEC. IV  
THE  
UNIVERSITIES

the barefoot friar. Edmund Rich—Archbishop of Canterbury and saint in later days—came to Oxford, a boy of twelve years old, from the little lane at Abingdon that still bears his name. He found his school in an inn that belonged to the abbey of

Eynsham, where his father had taken refuge from the world. His mother was a pious woman of the day, too poor to give her boy much outfit besides the hair shirt that he promised to wear every Wednesday; but Edmund was no poorer than his neighbours. He plunged at once into the nobler life



HOSPITAL AT OXFORD BUILT BY HENRY III.,  
1233.

Drawn by Matthew Paris.  
*MS. Roy. 14 C. vii.*

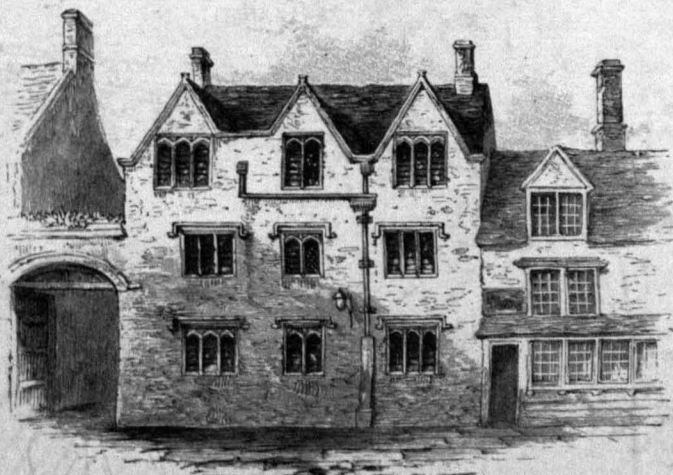
of the place, its ardour for knowledge, its mystical piety. "Secretly," perhaps at eventide when the shadows were gathering in the church of S. Mary's, and the crowd of teachers and students had left its aisles, the boy stood before an image of the Virgin, and placing a ring of gold upon its finger took Mary for his bride. Years of study, broken by a fever that raged among the crowded, noisome streets, brought the time for completing his education at Paris; and Edmund, hand in hand with a brother Robert of his, begged his way, as poor scholars were wont, to the great school of Western Christendom. Here a damsel, heedless of his tonsure, wooed him so pertinaciously that Edmund consented at last to an assignation; but when he appeared it was in company of grave academical officials, who, as the maiden declared in the hour of penitence which followed, "straightway whipped the offending Eve out of her." Still true to his Virgin bridal, Edmund, on his return from Paris, became the most popular of Oxford teachers. It is to him that Oxford owes her first introduction to the Logic of Aristotle. We see him in the little room which he hired, with the Virgin's chapel hard by, his grey gown reaching to his feet, ascetic in his devotion, falling asleep in lecture time after a sleepless night of prayer, with a grace and cheerfulness of manner which told of his French

training, and a chivalrous love of knowledge that let his pupils pay what they would. "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust," the young tutor would say, a touch of scholarly pride perhaps mingling with his contempt of worldly things, as he threw down the fee on the dusty window-ledge, whence a thievish student would sometimes run off with it. But even knowledge brought its troubles; the Old Testament, which with a copy of the Decretals long formed his sole library, frowned down upon a love of secular learning from which Edmund found it hard to wean himself. At last, in some hour of dream, the form of his dead mother floated into the room where the teacher stood among his mathematical diagrams. "What are these?" she seemed to say; and seizing Edmund's right hand, she drew on the palm three circles interlaced, each of which bore the name of one of the Persons of the Christian Trinity. "Be these," she cried, as her figure faded away, "thy diagrams henceforth, my son."

SEC. IV

THE  
UNIVERSITIES  
SITES

The story admirably illustrates the real character of the new training, and the latent opposition between the spirit of the Univer-

The Uni-  
versities  
and Feudal-  
ism

PART OF AUSTIN FRIARY, OXFORD.

Founded A.D. 1268; demolished 1801.

*Shelton, "Oxonia Antiqua Restaurata."*

sities and the spirit of the Church. The feudal and ecclesiastical order of the old mediæval world were both alike threatened by

SEC. IV  
THE  
UNIVERSITIES

the power that had so strangely sprung up in the midst of them. Feudalism rested on local isolation, on the severance of kingdom from kingdom and barony from barony, on the distinction of blood and race, on the supremacy of material or brute force, on an allegiance determined by accidents of place and social position. The University, on the other hand, was a protest against this isolation of man from man. The smallest school was European and not local. Not merely every province of France, but every people of Christendom, had its place among the "nations" of Paris or Padua. A common language, the

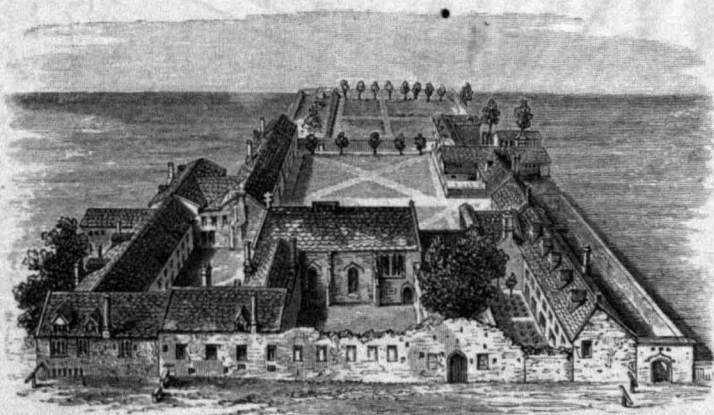


BIHAM HALL AND POSTMASTER'S HALL, OXFORD.  
Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries.  
*Skelton, "Oxonia Antiqua Restaurata."*

Latin tongue, superseded within academical bounds the warring tongues of Europe. A common intellectual kinship and rivalry took the place of the petty strifes which parted province from province or realm from realm. What the Church and Empire had both aimed at and both failed in, the knitting of Christian nations together into a vast commonwealth, the Universities for a time actually did. Dante felt himself as little a stranger in the "Latin" quarter around Mont Ste. Geneviève as under the arches of Bologna. Wandering Oxford scholars carried the writings of Wyclif to the libraries of Prague. In England the work of provincial fusion was less difficult or

important than elsewhere, but even in England work had to be done. The feuds of Northerner and Southerner which so long disturbed the discipline of Oxford witnessed at any rate to the fact that Northerner and Southerner had at last been brought face to face in its streets. And here as elsewhere the spirit of national isolation was held in check by the larger comprehensiveness of the University. After the dissensions that threatened the prosperity of Paris in the thirteenth century, Norman and Gascon mingled with Englishmen in Oxford lecture-halls. At a later time the rebellion of Owen Glyndwr found

SEC. IV  
THE  
UNIVERSITIES



GLOUCESTER HALL (NOW WORCESTER COLLEGE), OXFORD.  
*From an engraving by Loggan, c. 1673.*

hundreds of Welshmen gathered round its teachers. And within this strangely mingled mass, society and government rested on a purely democratic basis. Among Oxford scholars the son of the noble stood on precisely the same footing with the poorest mendicant. Wealth, physical strength, skill in arms, pride of ancestry and blood, the very grounds on which feudal society rested, went for nothing in the lecture-room. The University was a state absolutely self-governed, and whose citizens were admitted by a purely intellectual franchise. Knowledge made the "master." To know more than one's fellows was a man's sole claim to be a "ruler" in the schools: and within this



SEC. IV  
—  
THE  
UNIVERSITIES  
—

intellectual aristocracy all were equal. When the free commonwealth of the masters gathered in the aisles of S. Mary's all had an equal right to counsel, all had an equal vote in the final decision. Treasury and library were at their complete disposal. It was their voice that named every officer, that proposed and sanctioned every statute. Even the Chancellor, their head, who had at first been an officer of the Bishop, became an elected officer of their own.

The Uni-  
versities  
and the  
Church

If the democratic spirit of the Universities threatened feudalism, their spirit of intellectual inquiry threatened the Church. To all outer seeming they were purely ecclesiastical bodies. The wide



BUILDINGS OF MERTON COLLEGE, OXFORD.

Early Fourteenth Century.

*Skelton, "Oxonia Antiqua Restaurata."*

extension which mediæval usage gave to the word "orders" gathered the whole educated world within the pale of the clergy. Whatever might be their age or proficiency, scholar and teacher were alike clerks, free from lay responsibilities or the control of civil tribunals, and amenable only to the rule of the Bishop and the sentence of his spiritual courts. This ecclesiastical character of the University appeared in that of its head. The Chancellor, as we have seen, was at first no officer of the University, but of the ecclesiastical body under whose shadow it had sprung into life.

At Oxford he was simply the local officer of the Bishop of Lincoln, within whose immense diocese the University was then situated. But this identification in outer form with the Church only rendered more conspicuous the difference of its spirit. The sudden expansion of the field of education diminished the importance of those purely ecclesiastical and theological studies which had hitherto absorbed the whole intellectual energies of mankind. The revival of classical literature, the rediscovery as it were of an older and a greater world, the contact with a larger, freer life, whether in mind, in society, or in politics, introduced a spirit of scepticism, of doubt, of denial into the realms of unquestioning belief. Abelard claimed for reason the supremacy over faith. Florentine poets discussed with a smile the immortality of the soul. Even to Dante, while he censures these, Vergil is as sacred as Jeremiah. The imperial ruler in whom the new culture took its most notable form, Frederick the Second, the "World's Wonder" of his time, was regarded by half Europe as no better than an infidel. A faint revival of physical science, so long crushed as magic by the dominant ecclesiasticism, brought Christians into perilous contact with the Moslem and the Jew. The books of the Rabbis were no longer a mere accursed thing to Roger Bacon. The scholars of Cordova were no mere Paynim swine to Adelard of Bath. How slowly indeed and against what obstacles science won its way we know from the witness of Roger Bacon. "Slowly," he tells us, "has any portion of the philosophy of Aristotle come into use among the Latins. His Natural Philosophy and his Metaphysics, with the Commentaries of Averroes and others, were translated in my time, and interdicted at Paris up to the year of grace 1237 because of their assertion of the eternity of the world and of time, and because of the book of the divinations by dreams (which is the third book, *De Somniis et Vigiliis*), and because of many passages erroneously translated. Even his Logic was slowly received and lectured on. For St. Edmund, the Archbishop of Canterbury, was the first in my time who read the Elements at Oxford. And I have seen Master Hugo, who first read the book of Posterior Analytics, and I have seen his writing. So there were but few, considering the multitude of the Latins, who were of any account in the philosophy of Aristotle;

SEC. IV  
—  
THE  
UNIVER-  
SITIES  
—  
Roger  
Bacon  
1214-1292

may, very few indeed, and scarcely any up to this year of grace 1292."

We shall see in a later page how fiercely the Church fought against this tide of opposition, and how it won back the allegiance of the Universities through the begging Friars. But it was in the ranks of the Friars themselves that the intellectual progress of the Universities found its highest representative. The life of Roger Bacon almost covers the thirteenth century; he was the child of royalist parents, who had been driven into exile and reduced to poverty by the civil wars. From Oxford, where he studied under Edmund of Abingdon, to whom he owed his introduction to the works of Aristotle, he passed to the University of Paris, where his whole heritage was spent in costly studies and experiments. "From my youth up," he writes, "I have laboured at the sciences and tongues. I have sought the friendship of all men among the Latins who had any reputation for knowledge. I have caused youths to be instructed in languages, geometry, arithmetic, the construction of tables and instruments, and many needful things besides." The difficulties in the way of such studies as he had resolved to pursue were immense. He was without instruments or means of experiment. "Without mathematical instruments no science can be mastered," he complains afterwards, "and these instruments are not to be found among the Latins, nor could they be made for two or three hundred pounds. Besides, better tables are indispensably necessary, tables on which the motions of the heavens are certified from the beginning to the end of the world without daily labour, but these tables are worth a king's ransom, and could not be made without a vast expense. I have often attempted the composition of such tables, but could not finish them through failure of means and the folly of those whom I had to employ." Books were difficult and sometimes even impossible to procure. "The philosophical works of Aristotle, of Avicenna, of Seneca, of Cicero, and other ancients cannot be had without great cost; their principal works have not been translated into Latin, and copies of others are not to be found in ordinary libraries or elsewhere. The admirable books of Cicero de Republica are not to be found anywhere, so far as I can hear, though I have made anxious inquiry for them in different parts of the world, and

by various messengers. I could never find the works of Seneca, though I made diligent search for them during twenty years and more. And so it is with many more most useful books connected with the science of morals." It is only words like these of his own that bring home to us the keen thirst for knowledge, the patience, the energy of Roger Bacon. He returned as a teacher to Oxford, and a touching record of his devotion to those whom he taught remains in the story of John of London, a boy of fifteen, whose ability raised him above the general level of his pupils. "When he came to me as a poor boy," says Bacon, in recommending him to the Pope, "I caused him to be nurtured and instructed for the love of God, especially since for aptitude and innocence I have never found so towardly a youth. Five or six years ago I caused him to be taught in languages, mathematics, and optics, and I have gratuitously instructed him with my own lips since the time that I received your mandate. There is no one at Paris who knows so much of the root of philosophy, though he has not produced the branches, flowers, and fruit because of his youth, and because he has had no experience in teaching. But he has the means of surpassing all the Latins if he live to grow old and goes on as he has begun."

The pride with which he refers to his system of instruction was justified by the wide extension which he gave to scientific teaching in Oxford. It is probably of himself that he speaks when he tells us that "the science of optics has not hitherto been lectured on at Paris or elsewhere among the Latins, save twice at Oxford." It was a science on which he had laboured for ten years. But his teaching seems to have fallen on a barren soil. From the moment when the friars settled in the Universities scholasticism absorbed the whole mental energy of the student world. The temper of the age was against scientific or philosophical studies. The older enthusiasm for knowledge was dying down; the study of law was the one source of promotion, whether in Church or state; philosophy was discredited, literature in its purer forms became almost extinct. After forty years of incessant study, Bacon found himself in his own words "unheard, forgotten, buried." He seems at one time to have been wealthy, but his wealth was gone. "During the twenty years that I have specially laboured in the attainment



SEC. IV  
THE  
UNIVERSITIES

of wisdom, abandoning the path of common men, I have spent on these pursuits more than two thousand pounds, on account of the cost of books, experiments, instruments, tables, the acquisition of languages, and the like. Add to all this the sacrifices I have made to procure the friendship of the wise, and to obtain well-instructed assistants." Ruined and baffled in his hopes, Bacon listened to the counsels of his friend Grosseteste and renounced the world. He became a friar of the order of S. Francis, an order where books and study were looked upon as hindrances to the work which it had specially undertaken, that of preaching among the masses of the poor. He had written hardly anything. So far was he from attempting to write, that his new superiors had prohibited him from publishing anything under pain of forfeiture of the book and penance of bread and water. But we can see the craving of his mind, the passionate instinct of creation which marks the man of genius, in the joy with which he seized the strange opportunity which suddenly opened before him. "Some few chapters on different subjects, written at the entreaty of friends," seem to have got abroad, and were brought by one of his chaplains under the notice of Clement the Fourth. The Pope at once invited him to write. Again difficulties stood in his way. Materials, transcription, and other expenses for such a work as he projected would cost at least £60, and the Pope had not sent a penny. He begged help from his family, but they were ruined like himself. No one would lend to a mendicant friar, and when his friends raised the money it was by pawning their goods in the hope of repayment from Clement. Nor was this all; the work itself, abstruse and scientific as was its subject, had to be treated in a clear and popular form to gain the Papal ear. But difficulties which would have crushed another man only roused Roger Bacon to an almost superhuman energy. In little more than a year the work was done. The "greater work," itself in modern form a closely printed folio, with its successive summaries and appendices in the "lesser" and the "third" works (which make a good octavo more) were produced and forwarded to the Pope within fifteen months.

The Opus  
Majus

No trace of this fiery haste remains in the book itself. The "Opus Majus" is alike wonderful in plan and detail. Bacon's

main plan, in the words of Dr. Whewell, is "to urge the necessity of a reform in the mode of philosophizing, to set forth the reasons why knowledge had not made a greater progress, to draw back attention to sources of knowledge which had been unwisely neglected, to discover other sources which were yet wholly unknown, and to animate men to the undertaking by a prospect of the vast advantages which it offered." The developement of his scheme is on the largest scale; he gathers together the whole knowledge of his time on every branch of science which it possessed, and as he passes them in review he suggests improvements in nearly all. His labours, both here and in his after works, in the field of grammar and philology, his perseverance in insisting on the necessity of correct texts, of an accurate knowledge of languages, of an exact interpretation, are hardly less remarkable than his scientific investigations. But from grammar he passes to mathematics, from mathematics to experimental philosophy. Under the name of mathematics was included all the physical science of the time. "The neglect of it for nearly thirty or forty years," pleads Bacon passionately, "hath nearly destroyed the entire studies of Latin Christendom. For he who knows not mathematics cannot know any other sciences: and what is more, he cannot discover his own ignorance or find its proper remedies." Geography, chronology, arithmetic, music, are brought into something of scientific form, and the same rapid examination is devoted to the question of climate, to hydrography, geography, and astrology. The subject of optics, his own especial study, is treated with greater fulness; he enters into the question of the anatomy of the eye, besides discussing the problems which lie more strictly within the province of optical science. In a word, the "Greater Work," to borrow the phrase of Dr. Whewell, is "at once the Encyclopædia and the *Novum Organum* of the thirteenth century." The whole of the after works of Roger Bacon—and treatise after treatise has of late been disinterred from our libraries—are but developements in detail of the magnificent conception he had laid before Clement. Such a work was its own great reward. From the world around Roger Bacon could look for and found small recognition. No word of acknowledgement seems to have reached its author from the Pope. If we may credit a more recent

SEC. IV

THE  
UNIVERSITIES

SEC. V story, his writings only gained him a prison from his order.  
 HENRY THE "Unheard, forgotten, buried," the old man died as he had lived,  
 THIRD and it has been reserved for later ages to roll away the obscurity  
 1216 that had gathered round his memory, and to place first in the  
 TO great roll of modern science the name of Roger Bacon.  
 1257

### Section V.—Henry the Third, 1216—1257

[*Authorities.*—The two great authorities for this period are the historians of St. Albans, Roger of Wendover, whose work ends in 1235, and his editor and continuator Matthew Paris. The first is full but inaccurate, and with strong royal and ecclesiastical sympathies : of the character of Matthew, I have spoken at the close of the present section. The Chronicles of Dunstable, Waverley, and Burton (published in Mr. Luard's "*Annales Monastici*") supply many details. The "Royal Letters," edited by Dr. Shirley, with an admirable preface, are, like the Patent and Close Rolls, of the highest value. For opposition to Rome, see "*Grosseteste's Letters*," edited by Mr. Luard.]

Hubert  
de Burgh

The death of the Earl Marshal in 1219 left the direction of affairs in the hands of a new legate, Pandulf, of Stephen Langton who had just returned forgiven from Rome, and of the Justiciar, Hubert de Burgh. It was an age of transition, and the temper of the Justiciar was eminently transitional. Bred in the school of Henry the Second, he had little sympathy with national freedom ; his conception of good government, like that of his master, lay in a wise personal administration, in the preservation of order and law. But he combined with this a thoroughly English desire for national independence, a hatred of foreigners, and a reluctance to waste English blood and treasure in Continental struggles. Able as he proved himself, his task was one of no common difficulty. He was hampered by the constant interference of Rome. A Papal legate resided at the English court, and claimed a share in the administration of the realm as the representative of its over-lord, and as guardian of the young sovereign. A foreign party, too, had still a footing in the kingdom, for William Marshal had been unable to rid himself of men like Peter des Roches or Faukes de Breauté, who had fought on the royal side in the struggle against Lewis. Hubert had to deal too with the anarchy which that struggle left behind it. From the time of the Conquest the centre of England

had been covered with the domains of great nobles, whose longings were for feudal independence, and whose spirit of revolt had been held in check, partly by the stern rule of the Kings, and partly by their creation of a baronage sprung from the Court and settled for the most part in the North. The oppression of John united both the older and these newer houses in the struggle for the Charter.

SEC. V  
HENRY THE  
THIRD  
1216  
TO  
1257



CORONATION AND UNCTION OF A KING.

*MS. Camb. Univ. Libr. Ec. iii. 59.*

C. A. D. 1245.

But the character of each remained unchanged, and the close of the struggle saw the feudal party break out in their old lawlessness and defiance of the Crown. For a time the anarchy of Stephen's days seemed revived. But the Justiciar was resolute to crush it, and he was backed by the strenuous efforts of Stephen Langton. The Earl of Chester, the head of the feudal baronage, though he rose in armed rebellion, quailed before the march of Hubert and the



## SEC. V

HENRY THE  
THIRD

1216

TO

1257

1224

*Langton  
and the  
Charter*  
1216

1223

*Hubert's  
Fall  
Langton's  
death*  
1228

Primate's threats of excommunication. A more formidable foe remained in the Frenchman, Faukes de Breauté, the sheriff of six counties, with six royal castles in his hands, and allied both with the rebel barons and Llewelyn of Wales. His castle of Bedford was besieged for two months before its surrender, and the stern justice of Hubert hanged the twenty-four knights and their retainers who formed the garrison before its walls. The blow was effectual; the royal castles were surrendered by the barons, and the land was once more at peace. Freed from foreign soldiery, the country was freed also from the presence of the foreign legate. Langton wrested a promise from Rome that so long as he lived no future legate should be sent to England, and with Pandulf's resignation in 1221 the direct interference of the Papacy in the government of the realm came to an end. But even these services of the Primate were small compared with his services to English freedom. Throughout his life the Charter was the first object of his care. The omission of the articles which restricted the royal power over taxation in the Charter which was published at Henry's accession was doubtless due to the Archbishop's absence and disgrace at Rome. The suppression of disorder seems to have revived the older spirit of resistance among the royal ministers; when Langton demanded a fresh confirmation of the Charter in Parliament at London, William Brewer, one of the King's councillors, protested that it had been extorted by force, and was without legal validity. "If you loved the King, William," the Primate burst out in anger, "you would not throw a stumbling-block in the way of the peace of the realm." The King was cowed by the Archbishop's wrath, and at once promised observance of the Charter. Two years after, its solemn promulgation was demanded by the Archbishop and the barons as the price of a subsidy, and Henry's assent established the principle, so fruitful of constitutional results, that redress of wrongs precedes a grant to the Crown.

The death of Stephen Langton in 1228 proved a heavy blow to English freedom. In 1227 Henry had declared himself of age; and though Hubert still remained Justiciar, every year saw him more powerless in his struggle with Rome and with the tendencies of the King. In the mediæval theory of the Papacy, the constitution of Christendom as a spiritual realm took the feudal form of the

secular kingdoms within its pale, with the Pope for sovereign, bishops for his barons, the clergy for his under vassals. As the King demanded aids and subsidies in case of need from his liegemen, so it was believed might the head of the Church from the priest-

SEC. V  
HENRY THE  
THIRD  
1216  
TO  
1257



CONSECRATION OF A BISHOP.  
Probably drawn by Matthew Paris.  
*MS. Cott. Nero D. i.*

hood. At this moment the Papacy, exhausted by its long struggle with Frederick the Second, grew more and more extortionate in its demands. It regarded England as a vassal kingdom, and as bound to aid its overlord. The baronage, however, rejected the demand of aid from the laity, and the Pope fell back on the clergy. He demanded a tithe of all the moveables of the priesthood, and a threat of excommunication silenced their murmurs. Exaction followed exaction, the very rights of the lay patrons were set aside, and under the name of "reserves" presentations to English benefices were sold in the Papal market, while Italian clergy were quartered on the best livings of the Church. The general indignation found vent at last in a wide conspiracy; letters from "the

## SEC. V

HENRY THE  
THIRD  
1216  
TO  
1257

1229

1230

whole body of those who prefer to die rather than be ruined by the Romans" were scattered over the kingdom by armed men; tithes gathered for the Pope and foreign clergy were seized and given to the poor, the Papal commissioners beaten, and their bulls trodden under foot. The remonstrances of Rome only revealed the national character of the movement; but as inquiry proceeded the hand of the Justiciar himself was seen to have been at work. Sheriffs had stood idly by while the violence was done; royal letters had been shown by the rioters as approving their acts; and the Pope openly laid the charge of the outbreak on the secret connivance of Hubert de Burgh. The charge came at a time when Henry was in full collision with his minister, to whom he attributed the failure of his attempts to regain the foreign dominions of his house. An invitation from the barons of Normandy had been rejected through Hubert's remonstrances, and when a great armament gathered at Portsmouth for a campaign in Poitou, it was dispersed for want of transport and supplies. The young King drew his sword and rushed madly on the Justiciar, whom he charged with treason and corruption by the gold of France; but the quarrel was appeased, and the expedition deferred for the year. The failure of the campaign in the following year, when Henry took the field in Brittany and Poitou, was again laid at the door of Hubert, whose opposition was said to have prevented an engagement. The Papal accusation filled up the measure of Henry's wrath. Hubert was dragged from a chapel at Brentwood where he had taken refuge, and a smith was ordered to shackle him. "I will die any death," replied the smith, "before I put iron on the man who freed England from the stranger and saved Dover from France." On



HENRY III. SAILING TO BRITANNY,  
1230.

Drawn by Matthew Paris  
MS. Reg. 14 C. vii.

Hubert de burgo dis  
calciatus in eamisia  
solu an altare de dyro  
na morte orando xps  
ea aduenit em cures  
lond hostes em



Hoc ē spere et duob. alus  
lois fecitibz. ap d hof eug  
bustū. 7 capilla p d dmsi.

HUBERT DE BURGH IN SANCTUARY  
AT MERTON, 1232.

Drawn by Matthew Paris.

MS. Roy. 14 C. vii.

the remonstrances of the Bishop of London Hubert was replaced in sanctuary, but hunger compelled him to surrender; he was thrown a prisoner into the Tower, and though soon released he remained powerless in the realm. His fall left England without a check to the rule of Henry himself.

There was a certain refinement in Henry's temper which won him affection even in the worst days of his rule. The Abbey-church of Westminster, with which he replaced the ruder minster of the Confessor, remains a monument of his artistic taste. He was a patron and friend of artists and men of letters, and himself skilled in the "gay science" of the troubadour.

SEC. V  
HENRY THE  
THIRD  
1216  
TO  
1257

Henry  
III.  
and the  
Aliens

From the cruelty, the lust, the impiety of his father he was absolutely free. But of the political capacity which had been



HENRY III. CARRYING THE HOLY BLOOD IN PROCESSION TO WESTMINSTER, A.D. 1247.

Drawn by Matthew Paris.

MS. C.C.C. Camb. xvi.

the characteristic of his house he had little or none. Profuse, changeable, impulsive alike in good and ill, unbridled in temper



SEC. V  
HENRY THE  
THIRD  
1216  
TO  
1257

and tongue, reckless in insult and wit, Henry's delight was in the display of an empty and prodigal magnificence, his one notion of government a dream of arbitrary power. But frivolous as the King's mood was, he clung with a weak man's obstinacy to a distinct line of policy. He cherished the hope of recovering his heritage across the sea. He believed in the absolute power of the Crown; and looked on the pledges of the Great Charter as promises which force

had wrested from the King and which force could wrest back again. The claim which the French kings were advancing to a divine and absolute power gave a sanction in Henry's mind to the claim of absolute authority which was still maintained by his favourite advisers in the royal council. The death of Langton, the fall of Hubert de Burgh, left him free to surround himself with dependent ministers, mere agents of the royal will. Hosts of hungry Poitevins and Bretons were at once summoned over to occupy the royal castles and fill the judicial and administrative posts about the Court.

His marriage with Eleanor

*Rex henricus & Alienor.*



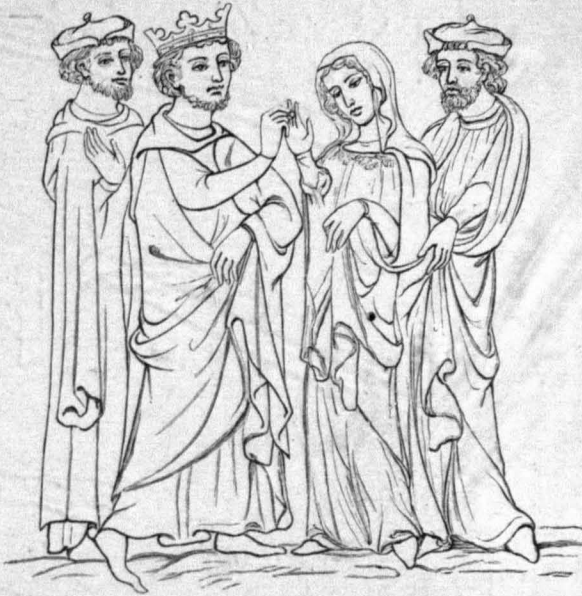
MARRIAGE OF HENRY III.  
Drawn by Matthew Paris.  
*MS. Roy. 14 C. vii.*

1236 of Provence was followed by the arrival in England of the Queen's uncles. The "Savoy," as his house in the Strand was named, still recalls Peter of Savoy, who arrived five years later to take for a while the chief place at Henry's council-board; another brother, Boniface, was on Archbishop Edmund's death consecrated to the highest post in the realm save the Crown itself, the Archbishoprick of Canterbury. The young Primate, like his brother, brought with him foreign fashions strange enough to English folk. His armed retainers pillaged the markets. His own archiepiscopal

fist felled to the ground the prior of St. Bartholomew-by-Smithfield, who opposed his visitation. London was roused by the

SEC. V

HENRY THE  
THIRD  
1216  
TO  
1257



A ROYAL MARRIAGE.  
Probably drawn by Matthew Paris.  
*MS. Coll. Nero D. i.*

outrage; on the King's refusal to do justice a noisy crowd of citizens surrounded the Primate's house at Lambeth with cries of



EDMUND, SON OF HENRY III., IN HIS CRADLE, 1244.  
Drawn by Matthew Paris.  
*MS. Reg. 14 C. vii.*

vengeance, and the "handsome archbishop," as his followers styled him, was glad to escape over sea. This brood of Provençals was