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followed in 1243 by the arrival of the Poitevin relatives of John's queen, Isabella of Angoulême. Aymer was made Bishop of Winchester ; William of Valence received the earldom of Pembroke. Even the King's jester was a Poitevin. Hundreds of their dependants followed these great lords to find a fortune in the English realm. The Poitevin lords brought in their train a bevy of ladies in search of husbands, and three English earls who were in royal wardship were wedded by the King to foreigners. The whole machinery of administration passed into the hands of men



KING AND COURT.  
Probably drawn by Matthew Paris.  
*MS. Cott. Nero D. 1.*

ignorant and contemptuous of the principles of English government or English law. Their rule was a mere anarchy ; the very retainers of the royal household turned robbers, and pillaged foreign merchants in the precincts of the Court ; corruption invaded the judicature ; Henry de Bath, a justiciar, was proved to have openly taken bribes and to have adjudged to himself disputed estates.

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Barons  
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Church

That misgovernment of this kind should have gone on unchecked, in defiance of the provisions of the Charter, was owing to the disunion and sluggishness of the English baronage. On the first arrival of the foreigners, Richard, the Earl Marshal, a son of the great Regent, stood forth as their leader to demand the

expulsion of the strangers from the royal Council, and though deserted by the bulk of the nobles, he defeated the foreign forces sent against him, and forced the King to treat for peace. But at this moment the Earl was drawn by an intrigue of Peter des Roches to Ireland; he fell in a petty skirmish, and the barons were left without a head. Edmund Rich, whom we have seen as an Oxford teacher and who had risen to the Archbishoprick of Canterbury, forced the King to dismiss Peter from court; but there was no real change of system, and the remonstrances of the

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CONSECRATION OF ARCHBISHOP EDMUND.

Drawn by Matthew Paris.

*MS. Roy. 14 C. vii.*

Archbishop and of Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln, remained fruitless. In the long interval of misrule which followed, the financial straits of the King forced him to heap exaction on exaction. The Forest Laws were used as a means of extortion, sees and abbeys were kept vacant, loans were wrested from lords and prelates, the Court itself lived at free quarters wherever it moved. Supplies of this kind however were utterly insufficient to defray the cost of the King's prodigality. A sixth of the royal revenue was wasted in pensions to foreign favourites. The debts of the Crown mounted to four times its annual income. Henry was forced to appeal to the Great Council of the realm, and aid was granted on condition that the King confirmed the Charter. The Charter was confirmed and steadily disregarded; and the

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resentment of the barons expressed itself in a determined protest and a refusal of further subsidies. In spite of their refusal however Henry gathered money enough for a costly expedition for the recovery of Poitou. The attempt ended in failure and shame. At Taillebourg the forces under Henry fled in disgraceful rout before the French as far as Saintes, and only the sudden illness of Lewis the Ninth and a disease which scattered his army saved Bordeaux from the conquerors. The treasury was drained, and Henry was driven to make a fresh appeal to the baronage. The growing resolution of the nobles to enforce good government was seen in their demand that the confirmation of the Charter was



HENRY III. SAILING HOME FROM GASCONY, 1243.

Drawn by Matthew Paris.

*MS. Roy. 24 C. vii.*

to be followed by the election of Justiciar, Chancellor, and Treasurer in the Great Council, and that a perpetual Council was to attend the King and devise further reforms. The plan broke against Henry's resistance and a Papal prohibition. The scourge of Papal taxation fell heavily on the clergy. After vain appeals to Rome and to the King, Archbishop Edmund retired to an exile of despair at Pontigny, and tax-gatherer after tax-gatherer with powers of excommunication, suspension from orders, and presentation to benefices, descended on the unhappy priesthood. The wholesale pillage kindled a wide spirit of resistance. Oxford gave the signal by hunting a Papal legate out of the city, amid cries of "usurer" and "simoniac" from the mob of students. Fulk Fitz-

Warene in the name of the barons bade a Papal collector begone out of England. "If you tarry three days longer," he added, "you and your company shall be cut to pieces." For a time Henry himself was swept away by the tide of national indignation. Letters from the King, the nobles and the prelates protested against the Papal exactions, and orders were given that no money should be exported from the realm. But the threat of interdict

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LEGATINE COUNCIL IN LONDON, A.D. 1237.

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

soon drove Henry back on a policy of spoliation, in which he went hand in hand with Rome.

The story of this period of misrule has been preserved for us by an annalist whose pages glow with the new outburst of patriotic feeling which this common oppression of the people and the clergy had produced. Matthew Paris is the greatest, as he is in reality the last, of our monastic historians. The school of S. Albans survived indeed till a far later time, but the writers dwindled into mere annalists whose view is bounded by the abbey precincts, and whose work is as colourless as it is jejune. In Matthew the breadth and precision of the narrative, the copiousness of his information on topics whether national or European, the general fairness and

Matthew  
Paris  
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justice of his comments, are only surpassed by the patriotic fire and enthusiasm of the whole. He had succeeded Roger of Wendover as chronicler at S. Alban's; and the Greater Chronicle with an abridgement of it which has long passed under the name of Matthew of Westminster, a "History of the English," and the "Lives of the Earlier Abbots," were only a few among the voluminous works which attest his prodigious industry. He was an artist as well as an historian, and many of the manuscripts which are preserved are illustrated by his own hand. A large circle of correspondents—bishops like Grosseteste, ministers like Hubert de Burgh, officials like Alexander de Swereford—furnished him with minute accounts of political and ecclesiastical proceedings. Pilgrims from the East and Papal agents brought news of foreign events to his scriptorium at S. Alban's. He had access to and quotes largely from state documents, charters, and exchequer rolls. The frequency of the royal visits to the abbey brought him a store of political intelligence, and Henry himself contributed to the great chronicle which has preserved with so terrible a faithfulness the memory of his weakness and misgovernment. On one solemn feast-day the King recognized Matthew, and bidding him sit on the middle step between the floor and the throne, begged him to write the story of the day's proceedings. While on a visit to S. Alban's he invited him to his table and chamber, and enumerated by name two hundred and fifty of the English baronies for his information. But all this royal patronage has left little mark on his work. "The case," as he says, "of historical writers is hard, for if they tell the truth they provoke men, and if they write what is false they offend God." With all the fulness of the school of court historians, such as Benedict or Hoveden, Matthew Paris combines an independence and patriotism which is strange to their pages. He denounces with the same unsparing energy the oppression of the Papacy and the King. His point of view is neither that of a courtier nor of a churchman, but of an Englishman, and the new national tone of his chronicle is but an echo of the national sentiment which at last bound nobles and yeomen and churchmen together into a people resolute to wrest freedom from the Crown.



O felix seculum Lactentis infans uapellu. si  
 inter cetera inuaria repant infans  
 ut pareuerit et fili' inu' albidet  
 necus et pater de di genit' imparet.

THREMATIAS PARISIENSIS



## Section VI.—The Friars

[*Authorities.*—Eccleston's Tract on their arrival in England and Adam Marsh's Letters, with Mr. Brewer's admirable Preface, in the "Monumenta Franciscana" of the Rolls series. Grosseteste's Letters in the same series, edited by Mr. Luard. For a general account of the whole movement, see Milman's "Latin Christianity," vol. iv. caps. 9 and 10.]

From the tedious record of misgovernment and political weakness which stretches over the forty years we have passed through, we turn with relief to the story of the Friars.

England  
and the  
Church

Never, as we have seen, had the priesthood wielded such boundless power over Christendom as in the days of Innocent the Third and his immediate successors. But its religious hold



THE PAPAL COURT.

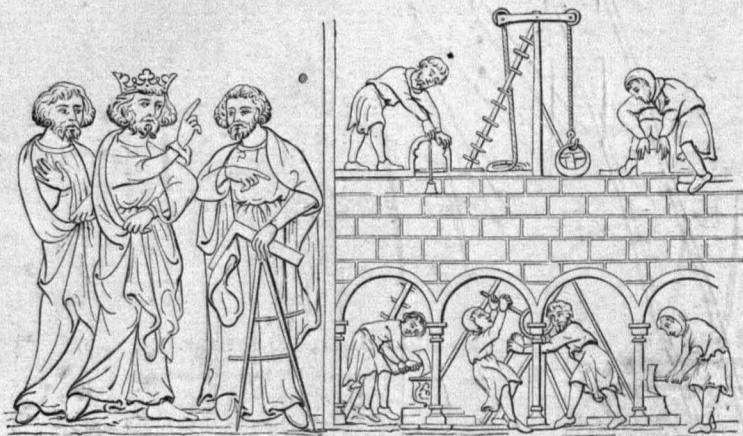
*MS. Camb. Univ. Libr. Ec. iii. 59.*

C. A.D. 1245.

on the people was loosening day by day. The old reverence for the Papacy was fading away before the universal resentment at its political ambition, its lavish use of interdict and excommunication for purely secular ends, its degradation of the most sacred sentences into means of financial extortion. In Italy

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the struggle that was opening between Rome and Frederick the Second disclosed a spirit of scepticism which among the Epicurean poets of Florence denied the immortality of the soul, and attacked the very foundations of the faith itself. In Southern Gaul, Languedoc and Provence had embraced the heresy of the Albigenses, and thrown off all allegiance to the Papacy. Even in England, though there were no signs as yet of religious revolt, and though the political action of Rome had been in the main on the side of freedom, there was a spirit of resistance



KING AND ARCHITECT.

BUILDERS AT WORK.

FOUNDATION OF A MINSTER.  
Probably drawn by Matthew Paris.  
*MS. Cott. Nero D. i.*

to its interference with national concerns which broke out in the struggle against John. "The Pope has no part in secular matters," had been the reply of London to the interdict of Innocent. And within the English Church itself there was much to call for reform. Its attitude in the strife for the Charter as well as the after work of the Primate had made it more popular than ever; but its spiritual energy was less than its political. The disuse of preaching, the decline of the monastic orders into rich landowners, the non-residence and ignorance of the parish priests, robbed the clergy of spiritual influence. The abuses of





INVESTITURE OF ABBOT.

OFFERING UP FOUNDATION CHARTER.



TRANSLATION OF RELICS.

FOUNDATION OF A MINSTER.  
Probably drawn by Matthew Paris.  
*MS. Cott. Nero D. i.*

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the time foiled even the energy of such men as Bishop Grosseteste of Lincoln. His constitutions forbid the clergy to haunt taverns, to gamble, to share in drinking bouts, to mix in the riot and debauchery of the life of the baronage. But such prohibitions only witness to the prevalence of the evils they denounce. Bishops and deans were withdrawn from their ecclesiastical duties to act as ministers, judges or ambassadors. Benefices were heaped in hundreds at a time on royal favourites like John Mansel. Abbeys absorbed the tithes of parishes, and then served them by half-starved vicars, while exemptions purchased from Rome shielded the scandalous lives of canons and monks from all episcopal discipline. And behind all this was a group of secular statesmen and scholars, waging indeed no open warfare with the Church, but noting with bitter sarcasm its abuses and its faults.

The  
Friars

To bring the world back again within the pale of the Church was the aim of two religious orders which sprang suddenly to life at the opening of the thirteenth century. The zeal of the Spaniard Dominic was roused at the sight of the lordly prelates who sought by fire and sword to win the Albigensian heretics to the faith. "Zeal," he cried, "must be met by zeal, lowliness by lowliness, false sanctity by real sanctity, preaching lies by preaching truth." His fiery ardour and rigid orthodoxy were seconded by the mystical piety, the imaginative enthusiasm of Francis of Assisi. The life of Francis falls like a stream of tender light across the darkness of the time. In the frescoes of Giotto or the verse of Dante we see him take Poverty for his bride. He strips himself of all, he flings his very clothes at his father's feet, that he may be one with Nature and God. His passionate verse claims the Moon for his sister and the Sun for his brother, he calls on his brother the Wind, and his sister the Water. His last faint cry was a "Welcome, Sister Death!" Strangely as the two men differed from each other, their aim was the same—to convert the heathen, to extirpate heresy, to reconcile knowledge with orthodoxy, to carry the Gospel to the poor. The work was to be done by the entire reversal of the older monasticism, by seeking personal salvation in effort for the salvation of their fellow-men, by exchanging the solitary of the cloister for the preacher, the monk for the friar. To force the new "brethren" into entire

Frater Johs de Wallingford. episcopus. Infirmarius.



JOHN OF WALLINGFORD, MONK OF S. ALBANS, 1231—1258.

Drawing attributed to Matthew Paris.

MS. Cott. Jul. D. vii.

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dependence on those among whom they laboured their vow of Poverty was turned into a stern reality; the "Begging Friars" were to subsist on the alms of the poor, they might possess neither money nor lands, the very houses in which they lived were to be held in trust for them by others. The tide of popular enthusiasm which welcomed their appearance swept before it the reluctance of Rome, the jealousy of the older orders, the opposition of the parochial priesthood. Thousands of brethren gathered in a few years round Francis and Dominic; and the begging preachers, clad in their coarse frock of serge with a girdle of rope round their waist, wandered barefooted as missionaries over Asia, battled with heresy in Italy and Gaul, lectured in the Universities, and preached and toiled among the poor.

The  
Friars  
and the  
Towns

To the towns especially the coming of the Friars was a religious revolution. They had been left for the most part to the worst and most ignorant of the clergy, the mass-priest, whose sole subsistence lay in his fees. Burgher and artisan were left to spell out what religious instruction they might from the gorgeous ceremonies of the Church's ritual, or the scriptural pictures and sculptures which were graven on the walls of its minsters. We can hardly wonder at the burst of enthusiasm which welcomed the itinerant preacher, whose fervid appeal, coarse wit, and familiar story brought religion into the fair and the market-place. The Black Friars of Dominic, the Grey Friars of Francis, were received with the same delight. As the



A FRANCISCAN.  
Drawn by Matthew Paris.  
*MS. C.C.C. Camb. xvi.*



older orders had chosen the country, the Friars chose the town. They had hardly landed at Dover before they made straight for London and Oxford. In their ignorance of the road the two first Grey Brothers lost their way in the woods between Oxford and Baldon, and fearful of night and of the floods, turned aside to a grange of the monks of Abingdon. Their ragged clothes and foreign gestures, as they prayed for hospitality, led the porter to take them for jongleurs, the jesters and jugglers of the day, and the news of this break in the monotony of their lives brought prior, sacrist, and cellarer to the door to welcome them and witness their tricks. The disappointment was too much for the temper of the monks, and the brothers were kicked roughly from the gate to find their night's lodging under a tree. But the welcome of the townsmen made up everywhere for the ill-will and opposition of both clergy and monks. The work of the Friars was physical as well as moral. The rapid progress of population within the boroughs had outstripped the sanitary regulations of the Middle Ages, and fever or plague or the more terrible scourge of leprosy festered in the wretched hovels of the suburbs. It was to haunts such as these that Francis had pointed his disciples, and the Grey Brethren at once fixed themselves in the meanest and poorest quarters of each town. Their first work lay in the noisome lazarehouses; it was amongst the lepers that they commonly chose the site of their homes. At London they settled in the shambles of Newgate; at Oxford they made their way to the swampy ground between its walls and the streams of Thames. Huts of mud and timber, as mean as the huts around them, rose within the rough fence and ditch that bounded the Friary. The order of Francis made a hard fight against the taste for sumptuous buildings and for greater personal comfort which characterized the time. "I did not enter into religion to build walls," protested an English provincial when the brethren pressed for a larger house; and Albert of Pisa ordered a stone cloister, which the burgesses of Southampton had built for them, to be razed to the ground. "You need no little mountains to lift your heads to heaven," was his scornful reply to a claim for pillows. None but the sick went shod. An Oxford Friar found a pair of shoes one morning, and wore them at matins. At night he dreamt that robbers leapt on

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him in a dangerous pass between Gloucester and Oxford with shouts of "Kill, kill!" "I am a friar," shrieked the terror-stricken brother. "You lie," was the instant answer, "for you go shod." The Friar lifted up his foot in disproof, but the shoe was there. In an agony of repentance he woke and flung the pair out of window.

It was with less success that the order struggled against the passion for knowledge. Their vow of poverty, rigidly interpreted as it was by their founders, would have denied them the possession of books or materials for study. "I am your breviary, I am your breviary," Francis cried passionately to a novice who asked for a psalter. When the news of a great doctor's reception was brought to him at Paris, his countenance fell. "I am afraid, my son," he replied, "that such doctors will be the destruction of my vineyard. They are the true doctors who with the meekness of wisdom show forth good works for the edification of their neighbours." At a later time Roger Bacon, as we have seen, was suffered to possess neither ink, parchment, nor books; and only the Pope's injunctions could dispense with the stringent observance of the rule. But one kind of knowledge indeed their work almost forced on them. The popularity of their preaching soon led them to the deeper study of theology. Within a short time after their establishment in England we find as many as thirty readers or lecturers appointed at Hereford, Leicester, Bristol, and other places, and a regular succession of teachers provided at each University. The Oxford Dominicans lectured on theology in the nave of their new church, while philosophy was taught in the cloister. The first provincial of the Grey Friars built a school in their Oxford house, and persuaded Grosseteste to lecture there. His influence after his promotion to the see of Lincoln was steadily exerted to secure study among the Friars, and their establishment in the University. He was ably seconded by his scholar, Adam Marsh, or de Marisco, under whom the Franciscan school at Oxford attained a reputation throughout Christendom. Lyons, Paris, and Köln borrowed from it their professors: it was owing, indeed, to its influence that Oxford now rose to a position hardly inferior to that of Paris itself as a centre of scholasticism. The three most profound and original of the school-men—Roger

Bacon, Duns Scotus, and Ockham—were among its scholars ; and they were followed by a crowd of teachers hardly less illustrious in their day.

But the result of this powerful impulse was soon seen to be fatal to the wider intellectual activity which had till now characterized

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Scholas-  
ticism



ALEXANDER HALES, FRANCISCAN, A.D. 1228—1250.  
*MS. Camb. Univ. Libr. Mm. v. 31.*

the Universities. Theology in its scholastic form, which now found its only efficient rivals in practical studies such as medicine and law, resumed its supremacy in the schools ; while Aristotle, who had been so long held at bay as the most dangerous foe of mediæval faith, was now turned by the adoption of his logical method in the discussion and definition of theological dogma into

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its unexpected ally. It was this very method that led to "that unprofitable subtlety and curiosity" which Lord Bacon notes as the vice of the scholastic philosophy. But "certain it is"—to continue the same great thinker's comment on the Friars—"that if these schoolmen to their great thirst of truth and unwearied travel of wit had joined variety of reading and contemplation, they had proved excellent lights to the great advancement of all learning and knowledge." What, amidst all their errors, they undoubtedly did was to insist on the necessity of rigid demonstration and a more exact use of words, to introduce a clear and methodical treatment of all subjects into discussion, and above all to substitute an appeal to reason for unquestioning obedience to authority. It was by this critical tendency, by the new clearness and precision which scholasticism gave to enquiry, that in spite of the trivial questions with which it often concerned itself, it trained the human mind through the next two centuries to a temper which fitted it to profit by the great disclosure of knowledge that brought about the Renascence. And it is to the same spirit of fearless enquiry as well as to the strong popular sympathies which their very constitution necessitated that we must attribute the influence which the Friars undoubtedly exerted in the coming struggle between the people and the Crown. Their position is clearly and strongly marked throughout the whole contest. The University of Oxford, which had now fallen under the direction of their teaching, stood first in its resistance to Papal exactions and its claim of English liberty. The classes in the towns on whom the influence of the Friars told most directly were the steady supporters of freedom throughout the Barons' war. Adam Marsh was the closest friend and confidant both of Grosseteste and Earl Simon of Montfort.



## Section VII.—The Barons' War, 1258—1265

[*Authorities.*—At the very outset of this important period we lose the priceless aid of Matthew Paris. He is the last of the great chroniclers; the Chronicles of his successor at S. Alban's, Rishanger (published by the Master of the Rolls), are scant and lifeless jottings, somewhat enlarged for this period by his fragment on the Barons' War (published by Camden Society). Something may be gleaned from the annals of Burton, Melrose, Dunstable, Waverley, Osney, and Lanercost, the Royal Letters, the (royalist) Chronicle of Wykes, and (for London) the "Liber de Antiquis Legibus." Mr. Blaaup has given a useful summary of the period in his "Barons' War."]

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SIMON DE MONTFORT.  
Window in Chartres Cathedral, c. 1231.

When a thunderstorm once forced the King, as he was rowing on the Thames, to take refuge at the palace of the Bishop of Durham, Earl Simon of Montfort, who was a guest of the prelate, met the royal barge with assurances that the storm was drifting away, and that there was nothing to fear. Henry's petulant wit broke out in his reply. "If I fear the thunder," said the King, "I fear you, Sir Earl, more than all the thunder in the world."

The man whom Henry dreaded as the champion of English

Simon  
of  
Montfort

freedom was himself a foreigner, the son of a Simon de Montfort whose name has become memorable for his ruthless crusade

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against the Albigensian heretics in Southern Gaul. Though fourth son of this crusader, Simon became possessor of the English earldom of Leicester, which he inherited through his mother, and a secret match with Eleanor, the King's sister and widow of the second William Marshal, linked him to the royal house. The baronage, indignant at this sudden alliance with a stranger, rose in a revolt which failed only through the desertion of their head, Earl Richard of Cornwall; while the censures of the Church on Eleanor's breach of a vow of chastity, which she had made at her first husband's death, were hardly averted by a journey to Rome. Simon returned to find the changeable King quickly alienated from him and to be driven by a burst of royal passion from the realm. He was, however, soon restored to favour, and before long took his stand in the front rank of the patriot leaders. In 1248 he was appointed Governor of Gascony, where the stern justice of his rule, and the heavy taxation which his enforcement of order made necessary, earned the hatred of the disorderly nobles. The complaints of the Gascons brought about an open breach with the King. To Earl Simon's offer of the surrender of his post if the money he had spent in the royal service were, as Henry had promised, repaid him, the King hotly retorted that he was bound by no promise to a false traitor. Simon at once gave Henry the lie; "and but that thou bearest the name of King it had been a bad hour for thee when thou utteredst such a word!" A formal reconciliation was brought about, and the Earl once more returned to Gascony, but before winter had come he was forced to withdraw to France. The greatness of his reputation was shown in an offer which its nobles made him of the regency of their realm during the absence of King Lewis on the crusade. But the offer was refused; and Henry, who had himself undertaken the pacification of Gascony, was glad before the close of 1253 to recall its old ruler to do the work he had failed to do. Simon's character had now thoroughly developed. He had inherited the strict and severe piety of his father; he was assiduous in his attendance on religious services whether by night or day; he was the friend of Grosseteste and the patron of the Friars. In his correspondence with Adam Marsh we see him finding patience under his Gascon troubles in the perusal of the Book of

Job. His life was pure and singularly temperate ; he was noted for his scant indulgence in meat, drink, or sleep. Socially he was cheerful and pleasant in talk ; but his natural temper was quick and ardent, his sense of honour keen, his speech rapid and trenchant. His impatience of contradiction, his fiery temper, were in fact the great stumbling-blocks in his after career. But the one characteristic which overmastered all was what men at that time called his "constancy," the firm immoveable resolve which trampled even death under foot in its loyalty to the right. The motto which Edward the First chose as his device, "Keep troth," was far truer as the device of Earl Simon. We see in his correspondence with what a clear discernment of its difficulties both at home and abroad he "thought it unbecoming to decline the danger of so great an exploit" as the reduction of Gascony to peace and order ; but once undertaken, he persevered in spite of the



SEAL OF SIMON DE MONTFORT.  
*British Museum.*

opposition he met with, the failure of all support or funds from England, and the King's desertion of his cause, till the work was done. There is the same steadiness of will and purpose in his patriotism. The letters of Grosseteste show how early he had learned to sympathize with the bishop in his resistance to Rome, and at the crisis of the contest, he offers him his own support and that of his associates. He sends to Adam Marsh a tract of Grosseteste's on "the rule of a kingdom and of a tyranny," sealed with his own seal. He listens patiently to the advice of his friends on the subject of his household or his temper. "Better is

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a patient man," writes honest Friar Adam, "than a strong man, and he who can rule his own temper than he who storms a city." "What use is it to provide for the peace of your fellow-citizens and not guard the peace of your own household?" It was to secure "the peace of his fellow-citizens" that the Earl silently trained himself as the tide of misgovernment mounted higher and higher, and the fruit of his discipline was seen when the crisis came. While other men wavered and faltered and fell away, the enthusiastic love of the people gathered itself round the stern, grave soldier who "stood like a pillar," unshaken by promise or threat or fear of death, by the oath he had sworn.

The Pro-  
 visions  
 of  
 Oxford

In England affairs were going from bad to worse. The Pope still weighed heavily on the Church. Two solemn confirmations of the Charter failed to bring about any compliance with its provisions. In 1248, in 1249, and again in 1255, the Great Council fruitlessly renewed its demand for a regular ministry, and the growing resolve of the nobles to enforce good government was seen in their offer of a grant on condition that the chief officers of the Crown were appointed by the Council. Henry indignantly refused the offer, and sold his plate to the citizens of London to find payment for his household. The barons were mutinous and defiant. "I will send reapers and reap your fields for you," Henry had threatened Earl Bigod of Norfolk when he refused him aid. "And I will send you back the heads of your reapers," retorted the Earl. Hampered by the profusion of the court and by the refusal of supplies, the Crown was penniless, yet new expenses were incurred by Henry's acceptance of a Papal offer of the kingdom of Sicily in favour of his second son Edmund. Shame had fallen on the English arms, and the King's eldest son, Edward, had been disastrously defeated on the Marches by Llewelyn of Wales. The tide of discontent, which was heightened by a grievous famine, burst its bounds in the irritation excited by the new demands from both Henry and Rome with which the year 1258 opened, and the barons repaired in arms to a Great Council summoned at London. The past half-century had shown both the strength and weakness of the Charter: its strength as a rallying-point for the baronage, and a definite assertion of rights which the King could be made to acknowledge; its weakness in providing no means for the

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enforcement of its own stipulations. Henry had sworn again and again to observe the Charter, and his oath was no sooner taken than it was unscrupulously broken. The barons had secured the freedom of the realm ; the secret of their long patience during the reign of Henry lay in the difficulty of securing its right administration. It was this difficulty which Earl Simon was prepared to solve. With the Earl of Gloucester he now appeared at the head of

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KINGS IN ARMOUR.  
MS. Camb. Univ. Libr. Ee. iii. 59.  
C. A. D. 1245.

the baronage in arms, and demanded the appointment of a committee of twenty-four to draw up terms for the reform of the state. Although half the committee consisted of royal ministers and favourites, it was impossible to resist the tide of popular feeling. By the "Provisions of Oxford" it was agreed that the Great Council should assemble thrice in the year, whether summoned by the King or no ; and on each occasion "the Commonalty shall elect twelve honest men who shall come to the Parliaments, and at other times when occasion shall be when the King and his Council

*Provi-  
sions of  
Oxford  
July 1258*

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shall send for them, to treat of the wants of the King and of his kingdom. And the Commonalty shall hold as established that which these Twelve shall do." Three permanent committees were named—one to reform the Church, one to negotiate financial aids, and a Permanent Council of Fifteen to advise the King in the ordinary work of government. The Justiciar, Chancellor, and the guardians of the King's castles swore to act only with the advice and assent of the Permanent Council, and the first two great officers, with the Treasurer, were to give account of their proceedings to it at the end of the year. Annual sheriffs were to be appointed from among the chief tenants of the county, and no undue fees were to be exacted for the administration of justice in their court.

A royal proclamation in the English tongue, the first in that tongue since the Conquest which has reached us, ordered the observance of these Provisions. Resistance came only from the foreign favourites, and an armed demonstration drove them in flight over sea. The whole royal power was now in fact in the hands of the committees appointed by the Great Council; and the policy of the administration was seen in the prohibitions against any further payments, secular or ecclesiastical, to Rome, in the formal withdrawal from the Sicilian enterprise, in the negotiations conducted by Earl Simon with France, which finally ended in the absolute renunciation of Henry's title to his lost provinces, and in the peace which put an end to the incursions of the Welsh.

1259

Within, however, the measures of the barons were feeble and selfish. The Provisions of Westminster, published by them under popular pressure in the following year, for the protection of tenants and furtherance of justice, brought little fruit; and a tendency to mere feudal privilege showed itself in an exemption of all nobles and prelates from attendance at the sheriffs' courts. It was in vain that Earl Simon returned from his negotiations in France to press for more earnest measures of reform, or that the King's son Edward remained faithful to his oath to observe the Provisions, and openly supported him. Gloucester and Hugh Bigod, faithless to the cause of reform, drew with the feudal party to the side of the King; and Henry, procuring from the Pope a bull which annulled the Provisions and freed him from his oath to observe them,



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regained possession of the Tower and the other castles, appointed a new Justiciar, and restored the old authority of the Crown.

Deserted as he was, the Earl of Leicester was forced to withdraw for eighteen months to France, while Henry ruled in open defiance of the Provisions. The confusion of the realm renewed the disgust at his government; and the death of Gloucester removed the one barrier to action. In 1263 Simon landed again as the unquestioned head of the baronial party. The march of Edward with a royal army against Llewelyn of Wales was viewed by the barons as a prelude to hostilities against themselves; and Earl Simon at once swept the Welsh border, marched on Dover, and finally appeared before London. His power was strengthened by the attitude of the towns. The new democratic spirit which we have witnessed in the Friars was now stirring the purely industrial classes to assert a share in the municipal administration, which had hitherto been confined to the wealthier members of the merchant gilds, and at London and elsewhere a revolution, which will be described at greater length hereafter, had thrown the government of the city into the hands of the lower citizens. The "Communes," as the new city-governments were called, showed an enthusiastic devotion to Earl Simon and his cause. The Queen was stopped in her attempt to escape from the Tower by an angry mob, who drove her back with stones and foul words. When Henry attempted to surprise Leicester in his quarters in Southwark, the Londoners burst the gates which had been locked by the richer burghers against him, and rescued him by a welcome into the city. The clergy and Universities went in sympathy with the towns, and in spite of the taunts of the royalists, who accused him of seeking allies against the nobility in the common people, the popular enthusiasm gave a strength to Earl Simon which enabled him to withstand the severest blow which had yet been dealt to his cause. The nobles drew to the King. The dread of civil war gave strength to the cry for compromise, and it was agreed that the strife should be left to the arbitration of Lewis the Ninth of France. In the *Mise of Amiens* Lewis gave his verdict wholly in favour of the King. The Provisions of Oxford were annulled. Only the charters granted before the Provisions were to be observed. The appointment and

*Mise of  
 Amiens  
 Jan. 1264*



removal of all officers of state was to be wholly with the King, and he was suffered to call aliens to his councils. The blow was a hard one, and the decision of Lewis was at once confirmed by the Pope. The barons felt themselves bound by the award; only the exclusion of aliens—a point which they had not purposed to

submit to arbitration—they refused to concede. Simon at once resolved on resistance. Luckily, the French award had reserved the rights of Englishmen to the liberties they had enjoyed before the Provisions of Oxford, and it was easy for Simon to prove that the arbitrary power it gave to the Crown was as contrary to the Charter as to the Provisions themselves. London was the first to reject the decision; its citizens mustered at the call of the town-bell at Saint Paul's, seized the royal officials, and plundered the royal parks. But an army had already mustered in great force at the King's summons, and Leicester found himself deserted by baron after baron. Every day brought news of ill. A detachment from Scotland

joined Henry's forces. The younger De Montfort was taken prisoner. Northampton was captured, the King raised the siege of Rochester, and a rapid march of Earl Simon's only saved London itself from a surprise by Edward. Betrayed as he was, the Earl remained firm to the cause. He would fight to the

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KING OF FRANCE.  
*MS. Roy. 2 A. xxi.*  
Late Thirteenth Century.

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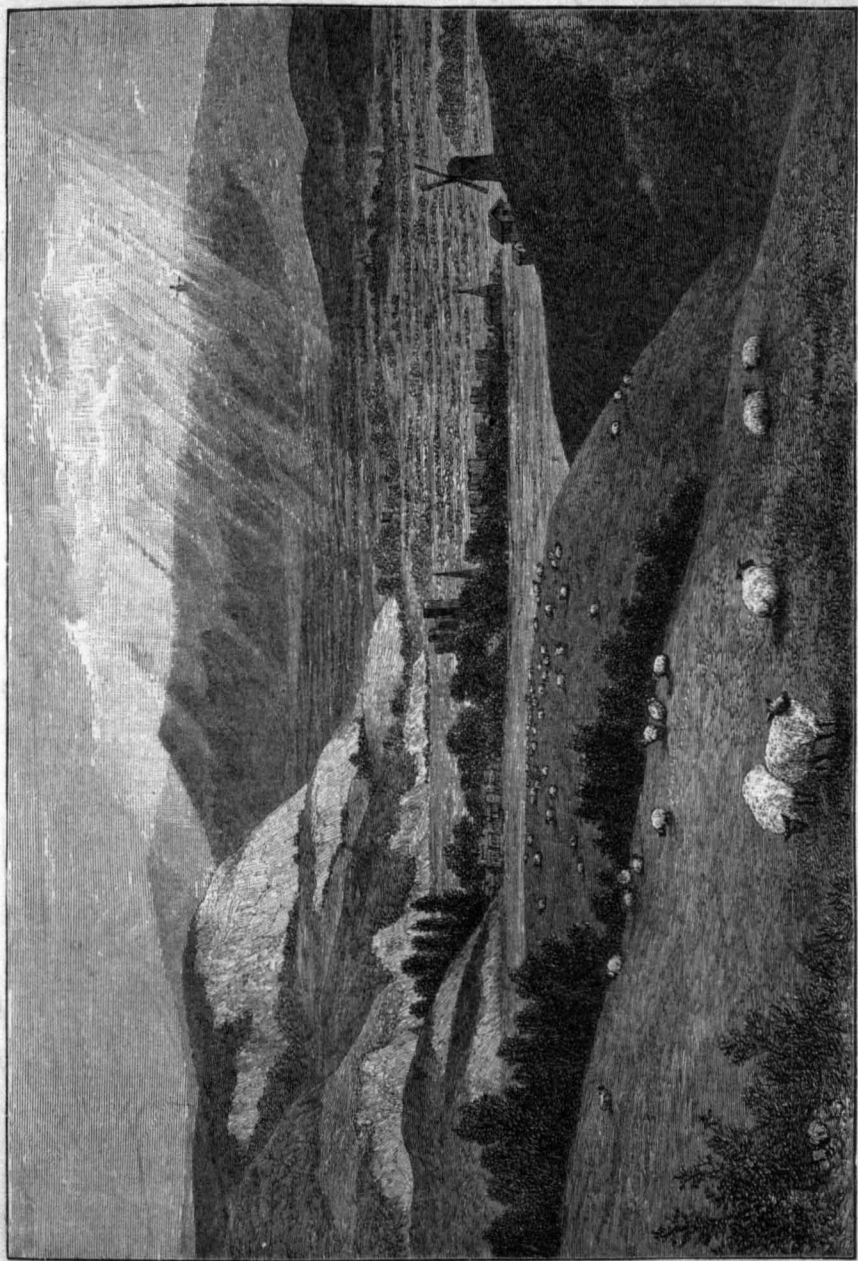
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*Battle of  
Lewes  
May 14,  
1264*

end, he said, even were he and his sons left to fight alone. With an army reinforced by 15,000 Londoners, he marched to the relief of the Cinque Ports, which were now threatened by the King. Even on the march he was forsaken by many of the nobles who followed him. Halting at Fletching in Sussex, a few miles from Lewes, where the royal army was encamped, Earl Simon with the young Earl of Gloucester offered the King compensation for all damage if he would observe the Provisions. Henry's answer was one of defiance, and though numbers were against him the Earl resolved on battle. His skill as a soldier reversed the advantages of the ground; marching at dawn he seized the heights eastward of the town, and moved down these slopes to an attack. His men, with white crosses on back and breast, knelt in prayer before the battle opened. Edward was the first to open the fight; his furious charge broke the Londoners on Leicester's left, and in the bitterness of his hatred he pursued them for four miles, slaughtering three thousand men. He returned to find the battle lost. Crowded in the narrow space with the river in their rear, the royalist centre and left were crushed by Earl Simon; the Earl of Cornwall, now King of the Romans, who, as the mocking song of the victors ran, "makede him a castel of a mulne post" ("he weened that the mill-sails were mangonels" goes on the sarcastic verse), was made prisoner, and Henry himself captured. Edward cut his way into the Priory only to join in his father's surrender.

*Simon's  
Rule*

The victory of Lewes placed Earl Simon at the head of the state. "Now England breathes in the hope of liberty," sang a poet of the time; "the English were despised like dogs, but now they have lifted up their head and their foes are vanquished." The song announces with almost legal precision the theory of the patriots. "He who would be in truth a king, he is a 'free king' indeed if he rightly rule himself and his realm. All things are lawful to him for the government of his kingdom, but nothing for its destruction. It is one thing to rule according to a king's duty, another to destroy a kingdom by resisting the law." "Let the community of the realm advise, and let it be known what the generality, to whom their own laws are best known, think on the matter. They who are ruled by the laws know those laws best,



LEWES, FROM THE DOWNS NEAR MOUNT HARRY.

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they who make daily trial of them are best acquainted with them ; and since it is their own affairs which are at stake, they will take more care, and will act with an eye to their own peace." " It concerns the community to see what sort of men ought justly to be chosen for the weal of the realm." The constitutional restrictions on the royal authority, the right of the whole nation to deliberate and decide on its own affairs, and to have a voice in the selection of the administrators of government, had never been so clearly stated before. But the moderation of the terms agreed upon in the Mise of Lewes, a convention between the King and his captors, shows Simon's sense of the difficulties of his position. The question of the Provisions was again to be submitted to arbitration ; and a parliament in June, to which four knights were summoned from every county, placed the administration till this arbitration was complete in the hands of a new council of nine, to be nominated by the Earls of Leicester and Gloucester and the patriotic Bishop of Chichester. Responsibility to the community was provided for by the declaration of a right in the body of barons and prelates to remove either of the Three Electors, who in turn could displace or appoint the members of the Council. Such a constitution was of a different order from the cumbrous and oligarchical Committees of 1258. But the plans for arbitration broke down, Lewis refused to review his decision, and the Pope formally condemned the barons' cause. The Earl's difficulties thickened every day. The Queen gathered an army in France for an invasion, and the barons on the Welsh border were still in arms. It was impossible to make binding terms with an imprisoned King, yet to release Henry without terms was to renew the war. A new parliament was summoned in January, 1265, to Westminster, but the weakness of the patriotic party among the baronage was shown in the fact that only twenty-three earls and barons could be found to sit beside the hundred and twenty ecclesiastics. But it was just this sense of his weakness that drove Earl Simon to a constitutional change of mighty issue in our history. As before, he summoned two knights from every county. But he created a new force in English politics when he summoned to sit beside them two citizens from every borough. The attendance of delegates from the towns had long been usual

*Summons  
of the  
Commons  
to Parliament*





in the county courts when any matter respecting their interests was in question; but it was the writ issued by Earl Simon that first summoned the merchant and the trader to sit beside the knight of the shire, the baron, and the bishop in the parliament of the realm.

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It is only this great event however which enables us to understand the large and prescient nature of Earl Simon's designs. Hardly a few months had passed since the victory of Lewes, and already, when the burghers took their seats at Westminster, his government was tottering to its fall. Dangers from without the Earl had met with complete success; a general muster of the national forces on Barham Down put an end to the projects of invasion entertained by the mercenaries whom the Queen had collected in Flanders; the threats of France died away into negotiations; the Papal Legate was forbidden to cross the Channel, and his bulls of excommunication were flung into the sea. But the difficulties at home grew more formidable every day. The restraint upon Henry and Edward jarred against the national feeling of loyalty, and estranged the mass of Englishmen who always side with the weak. Small as the patriotic party among the barons had always been, it grew smaller as dissensions broke out over the spoils of victory. The Earl's justice and resolve to secure the public peace told heavily against him. John Giffard left him because he refused to allow him to exact ransom from a prisoner contrary to the agreement made after Lewes. The young Earl Gilbert of Gloucester, though enriched with the estates of the foreigners, resented Leicester's prohibition of a tournament, his naming the wardens of the royal castles by his own authority, and his holding Edward's fortresses on the Welsh marches by his own garrisons. Gloucester's later conduct proves the wisdom of Leicester's precautions. In the spring Parliament of 1265 he openly charged the Earl with violating the Mise of Lewes with tyranny, and with aiming at the crown. Before its close he withdrew to his own lands in the west, and secretly allied himself with Roger Mortimer and the Marcher barons. Earl Simon soon followed him to the west, taking with him the King and Edward. He moved along the Severn, securing its towns, advanced westward to Hereford, and was marching at the end of

The Fall  
of Earl  
Simon

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June along bad roads into the heart of South Wales to attack the fortresses of Earl Gilbert in Glamorgan when Edward suddenly made his escape from Hereford and joined Gloucester at Ludlow. The moment had been skilfully chosen, and Edward showed a rare ability in the movements by which he took advantage of the Earl's position. Moving rapidly along the Severn he seized Gloucester and the bridges across the river, destroyed the ships by which Leicester strove to escape across the Channel to Bristol, and cut him off altogether from England. By this movement too he placed himself between the Earl and his son Simon, who was advancing from the east to his father's relief. Turning rapidly on this second force Edward surprised it at Kenilworth and drove it with heavy loss within the walls of the castle. But the success was more than compensated by the opportunity which his absence gave to the Earl of breaking the line of the Severn. Taken by surprise and isolated as he was, Simon had been forced to seek for aid and troops in an avowed alliance with Llewelyn, and it was with Welsh reinforcements that he turned to the east. But the seizure of his ships and of the bridges of the Severn held him a prisoner in Edward's grasp, and a fierce attack drove him back, with broken and starving forces, into the Welsh hills. In utter despair he struck northward to Hereford; but the absence of Edward now enabled him on the 2nd of August to throw his troops in boats across the Severn below Worcester. The news drew Edward quickly back in a fruitless counter-march to the river, for the Earl had already reached Evesham by a long night march on the morning of the 4th, while his son, relieved in turn by Edward's counter-march, had pushed in the same night to the little town of Alcester. The two armies were now but ten miles apart, and their junction seemed secured. But both were spent with long marching, and while the Earl, listening reluctantly to the request of the King, who accompanied him, halted at Evesham for mass and dinner, the army of the younger Simon halted for the same purpose at Alcester.

Battle of  
Evesham  
1265

"Those two dinners doleful were, alas!" sings Robert of Gloucester; for through the same memorable night Edward was hurrying back from the Severn by country cross-lanes to seize the fatal gap that lay between them. As morning broke his army

lay across the road that led northward from Evesham to Alcester. Evesham lies in the loop of the river Avon where it bends to the south ; and a height on which Edward ranged his troops closed the one outlet from it save across the river. But a force

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KNIGHT IN ARMOUR.  
*MS. Roy. 2 A. xii.*  
Late Thirteenth Century.

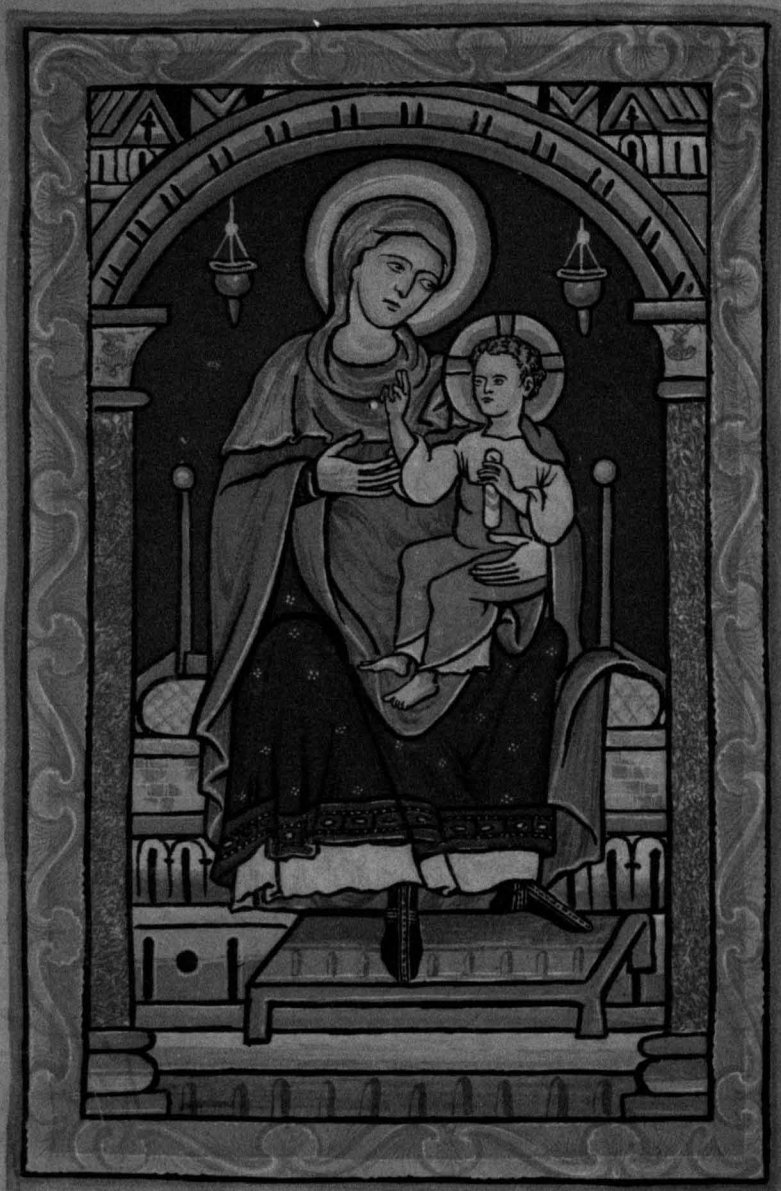
had been thrown over the river under Mortimer to seize the bridges, and all retreat was thus finally cut off. The approach of Edward's army called Simon to the front, and for the moment he took it for his son's. Though the hope soon died away a touch of soldierly pride moved him as he recognized in the orderly advance

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of his enemies a proof of his own training. "By the arm of St. James," he cried, "they come on in wise fashion, but it was from me that they learnt it." A glance however satisfied him of the hopelessness of a struggle; it was impossible for a handful of horsemen with a mob of half-armed Welshmen to resist the disciplined knighthood of the royal army. "Let us commend our souls to God," Simon said to the little group around him, "for our bodies are the foe's." He bade Hugh Despenser and the rest of his comrades fly from the field. "If he died," was the noble answer, "they had no will to live." In three hours the butchery was over. The Welsh fled at the first onset like sheep, and were cut ruthlessly down in the cornfields and gardens where they sought refuge. The little group of knights around Simon fought desperately, falling one by one till the Earl was left alone. So terrible were his sword-strokes that he had all but gained the hill-top when a lance-thrust brought his horse to the ground, but Simon still rejected the summons to yield, till a blow from behind felled him, mortally wounded, to the ground. Then with a last cry of "It is God's grace" the soul of the great patriot passed away.





THE VIRGIN AND CHILD

From MS. Roy. 2 A. XXII, 13th Century

## CHAPTER IV

### THE THREE EDWARDS

1265—1360

#### Section I.—The Conquest of Wales, 1265—1284

[*Authorities.*—For the general state of Wales, see the “*Itinerarium Cambriae*” of Giraldus Cambrensis: for its general history, the “*Brut y Tywysogion*,” and “*Annales Cambriae*,” published by the Master of the Rolls; the *Chronicle of Caradoc of Lancarvan*, as given in the translation by Powel; and Warrington’s “*History of Wales*.” Stephen’s “*Literature of the Cymry*” affords a general view of Welsh poetry; the “*Mabinogion*” have been published by Lady Charlotte Guest. In his essays on “*The Study of Celtic Literature*,” Mr. Matthew Arnold has admirably illustrated the characteristics of the Welsh Poetry. For English affairs the monastic annals we have before mentioned are supplemented by the jejune entries of *Trivet* and *Murimuth*.] (A new edition of the “*Brut*,” and the “*Mabinogion*,” has been issued by Professor Rhys and Mr. J. Gwenogvryn Evans in their series of *Welsh Texts*, 1887, 1890. A.S.G.)

WHILE literature and science after a brief outburst were crushed in England by the turmoil of the Barons’ War, a poetic revival had brought into sharp contrast the social and intellectual condition of Wales.

To all outer seeming Wales had in the thirteenth century become utterly barbarous. Stripped of every vestige of the older Roman civilization by ages of bitter warfare, of civil strife, of estrangement from the general culture of Christendom, the unconquered Britons had sunk into a mass of savage herdsmen, clad in the skins and fed by the milk of the cattle they tended, faithless, greedy, and revengeful, retaining no higher political organization than that of the clan, broken by ruthless feuds, united only in battle or in raid against the stranger. But in the heart of the wild people there still lingered a spark of the poetic fire which had nerved it four hundred years before, through Aneurin and Llywarch Hen, to its struggle with the Saxon. At the hour of its

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Welsh  
Litera-  
ture

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lowest degradation the silence of Wales was suddenly broken by a crowd of singers. The song of the twelfth century burst forth, not from one bard or another, but from the nation at large. "In every house," says the shrewd Gerald de Barri, "strangers who arrived in the morning were entertained till eventide with the talk of maidens and the music of the harp." The romantic literature of the race found an admirable means of utterance in its tongue, as real a developement of the old Celtic language heard by Cæsar as the Romance tongues are developements of Cæsar's Latin, but which at a far earlier date than any other language of modern Europe had attained to definite structure and to settled literary form. No other mediæval literature shows at its outset the same elaborate and completed organization as that of the Welsh. But within these settled forms the Celtic fancy plays with a startling freedom. In one of the later poems Gwion the Little transforms himself into a hare, a fish, a bird, a grain of wheat; but he is only the symbol of the strange shapes in which the Celtic fancy embodies itself in the tales or "Mabinogion" which reached their highest perfection in the legends of Arthur. Its gay extravagance flings defiance to all fact, tradition, probability, and revels in the impossible and unreal. When Arthur sails into the unknown world, it is in a ship of glass. The "descent into hell," as a Celtic poet paints it, shakes off the mediæval horror with the mediæval reverence, and the knight who achieves the quest spends his years of infernal durance in hunting and minstrelsy, and in converse with fair women. The world of the Mabinogion is a world of pure phantasy, a new earth of marvels and enchantments, of dark forests whose silence is broken by the hermit's bell, and sunny glades where the light plays on the hero's armour. Each figure as it moves across the poet's canvas is bright with glancing colour. "The maiden was clothed in a robe of flame-coloured silk, and about her neck was a collar of ruddy gold in which were precious emeralds and rubies. Her head was of brighter gold than the flower of the broom, her skin was whiter than the foam of the wave, and fairer were her hands and her fingers than the blossoms of the wood-anemone amidst the spray of the meadow fountain. The eye of the trained hawk, the glance of the falcon, was not brighter than hers. Her bosom was more snowy than the breast

hyma mal p'trethit: o'p'tro  
 a g'rent ual' erin.  
**A**thur aduod's dala l'ps y'g'ar  
 llion ar'lyric. ac v'dis ar'unt  
 sech m'f'ed p'alc. a'p'm'm'p' nad  
 he. Ar'lyg'ym d'ey'v'ly'w'ith dala l'ps  
 do'ur y'no: h'ar'ys h'ig'p'ichaf he y'ny g'  
 uo'eth o'ed g'ar' l'ho'i y'ar uo'z ac p'ar d'm.  
 A'v'g'ruo'z a'v'ic a'f'ar' n'ch b're'n'm' ar'ona  
 bc. a'ed'v'at h'is a'f'ar' p'ar' a  
 h'ym'p' l'ar'ill a'bar'v'ent. h'ar'p' a'f'ar' d'v'la  
 u'ab'v'oei p'ri' h'ym'p' y'ny'p' b'  
 o'ny'bei u'ar' a'gh'em'p'on y'ny'ch'v'oei  
 a'p'ham'v'ei e'f' y'g'haer' l'ho'i y'nd'ia h'ar'p' a'  
 e'g'ly's a'f'ar' a'ach'v'it v'ith v'oe'r'e'm'ent.  
 G'ar' u'ad'v'ach'v'it. e'g'ly's p'ar'v'ith' ac d'  
 v'it' ac h'ar'v'oei. Ar'el y' d'ich'm'uar. ac  
 r'ian'ed. Ar' d'v'oei a'v'ic y'z d'v'it' m'ar' d'ic e'v'ch  
 e'it. ar' b'ed'v'ar'ed. h'ar'p' a'f'ar' ar' l'v'oe  
 g'p'on e'v'it. A'v'ic e'g'ly's e'v'it a'v'p'oei g'  
 n'ab v'e'm'te'u'lu. ac v'v'ald'm'e'i y'v'ber'm'af.  
 h'ar'ys e'f' v'ar'p'ar'v'oei v'oe'd'at m'v'v'ar'v'at ac  
 u'v'as v'oe'd' v'oe'd' b'ema'f' ar' y'v'ab' v'e'm'te'u'lu.  
 ac v'v'ic a'v'ic y'v'ar'v'oei v'oe'd'at m'v'v'ar'v'at ac  
 a'v'v'ic a'v'ic y'v'ar'v'oei v'oe'd'at m'v'v'ar'v'at ac  
 v'v'ic a'v'ic y'v'ar'v'oei v'oe'd'at m'v'v'ar'v'at ac

FACSIMILE OF PART OF MABINOGION.

'Red Book of Hergest,' Welsh MS. Fourteenth Century; now belonging to Jesus College,  
 Oxford; exhibited in Bodleian Library.



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of the white swan, her cheek was redder than the reddest roses." Everywhere there is an Oriental profusion of gorgeous imagery, but the gorgeousness is seldom oppressive. The sensibility of the Celtic temper, so quick to perceive beauty, so eager in its thirst for life, its emotions, its adventures, its sorrows, its joys, is tempered by a passionate melancholy that expresses its revolt against the impossible, by an instinct of what is noble, by a sentiment that discovers the weird charm of nature. Some graceful play of pure fancy, some tender note of feeling, some magical touch of beauty, relieves its wildest extravagance. As *Kulhwch's* greyhounds bound from side to side of their master's steed, they "sport round him like two sea-swallows." His spear is "swifter than the fall of the dewdrop from the blade of reed-grass upon the earth when the dew of June is at the heaviest." A subtle, observant love of nature and natural beauty takes fresh colour from the passionate human sentiment with which it is imbued, sentiment which breaks out in *Gwalchmai's* cry of nature-love, "I love the birds and their sweet voices in the lulling songs of the wood," in his watches at night beside the fords "among the untrodden grass" to hear the nightingale and watch the play of the sea-mew. Even patriotism takes the same picturesque form; the Welsh poet hates the flat and sluggish land of the Saxon; as he dwells on his own, he tells of "its sea-coast and its mountains, its towns on the forest border, its fair landscape, its dales, its waters, and its valleys, its white sea-mews, its beauteous women." But the song passes swiftly and subtly into a world of romantic sentiment: "I love its fields clothed with tender trefoil, I love the marches of *Merioneth* where my head was pillowed on a snow-white arm." In the Celtic love of woman there is little of the Teutonic depth and earnestness, but in its stead a childlike spirit of delicate enjoyment, a faint distant flush of passion like the rose-light of dawn on a snowy mountain peak, a playful delight in beauty. "White is my love as the apple blossom, as the ocean's spray; her face shines like the pearly dew on *Eryri*; the glow of her cheeks is like the light of sunset." The buoyant and elastic temper of the French *trouvère* was spiritualized in the Welsh singers by a more refined poetic feeling. "Whoso beheld her was filled with her love. Four white trefoils sprang up wherever she trod." The touch of pure fancy removes

its object out of the sphere of passion into one of delight and reverence.

It is strange, as we have said, to pass from the world of actual Welsh history into such a world as this. But side by side with this wayward, fanciful stream of poesy and romance ran a torrent of intenser song. The old spirit of the earlier bards, their joy in battle, their love for freedom, their hatred of the Saxon, broke out in ode after ode, in songs extravagant, monotonous, often prosaic, but fused into poetry by the intense fire of patriotism which glowed within them. The rise of the new poetic feeling indeed marked the appearance of a new energy in the long struggle with the English conqueror.

Of the three Welsh states into which all that remained unconquered of Britain had been broken by the victories of Deorham and Chester, two had long ceased to exist. The country between the Clyde and the Dee had been gradually absorbed by the conquests of Northumbria and the growth of the Scot monarchy. West Wales, between the British Channel and the estuary of the Severn, had yielded to the sword of Ecgeberht. But a fiercer resistance prolonged the independence of the great central portion which alone in modern language preserves the name of Wales. In itself the largest and most powerful of the British states, it was aided in its struggle against Mercia by the weakness of its assailant, the youngest and least powerful of the English states, as well as by the internal warfare which distracted the energies of the invaders. But Mercia had no sooner risen to supremacy among the English kingdoms than it took the work of conquest vigorously in hand. Offa tore from Wales the border land between the Severn and the Wye; the raids of his successors carried fire and sword into the heart of the country; and an acknowledgement of the Mercian over-lordship was wrested from the Welsh princes. On the fall of Mercia this passed to the West-Saxon kings. The Laws of Howel Dda own the payment of a yearly tribute by "the prince of Aberffraw" to "the King of London." The weakness of England during her long struggle with the Danes revived the hopes of British independence. But with the fall of the Danelaw the Welsh princes were again brought to submission, and when in the midst of the Confessor's reign the Welsh seized on a quarrel

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England  
and the  
Welsh



after Freeman's William Rufus.

Walker & Bontall sc.

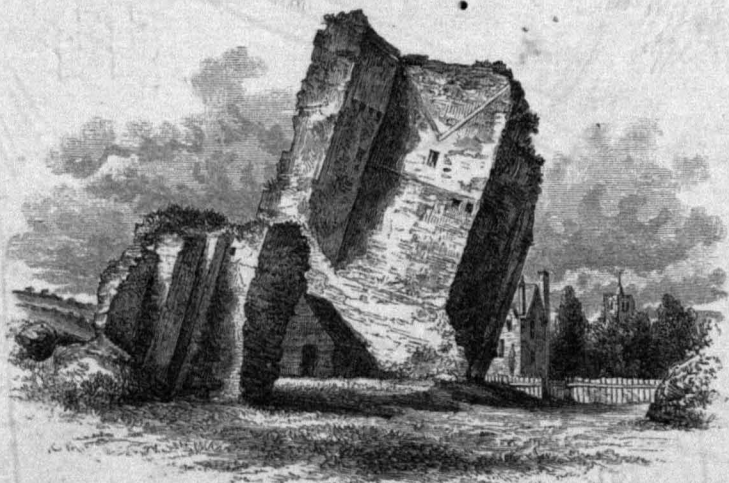
MAP ILLUSTRATING THE WELSH WARS OF WILLIAM RUFUS AND HENRY I.  
Freeman's "William Rufus."

between the houses of Leofric and Godwine to cross the border and carry their attacks into England itself, the victories of Harold re-asserted the English supremacy. His light-armed troops disembarking on the coast penetrated to the heart of the mountains, and the successors of the Welsh prince Gruffydd, whose head was the trophy of the campaign, swore to observe the old fealty and render the old tribute to the English Crown.

A far more desperate struggle began when the wave of Norman conquest broke on the Welsh frontier. A chain of great earldoms, settled by William along the border-land, at once bridled the old

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KEEP OF BRIDGENORTH CASTLE,  
Built by Robert of Belesme.

marauding forays. From his county palatine of Chester, Hugh the Wolf harried Flintshire into a desert; Robert of Belesme, in his earldom of Shrewsbury, "slew the Welsh," says a chronicler, "like sheep, conquered them, enslaved them, and flayed them with nails of iron." Backed by these greater baronies a horde of lesser adventurers obtained the royal "licence to make conquest on the Welsh." Monmouth and Abergavenny were seized and guarded by Norman castellans; Bernard of Neufmarché won the lordship of Brecknock; Roger of Montgomery raised the town and fortress



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in Powysland which still preserves his name. A great rising of the whole people in the days of the second William at last recovered some of this Norman spoil. The new castle of Montgomery was burned, Brecknock and Cardigan were cleared of the invaders, and the Welsh poured ravaging over the English border. Twice the Red King carried his arms fruitlessly among the mountains, against enemies who took refuge in their fastnesses till famine and hardship had driven his broken host into retreat. The wiser policy of Henry the First fell back on his father's system of gradual conquest, and a new tide of invasion flowed along the coast, where the land was level and open and accessible from the



CARDIFF CASTLE.

The Keep built by Robert FitzHamo's Son-in-law, Earl Robert of Gloucester.

sea. The attack was aided by internal strife. Robert Fitz-Hamo, the lord of Gloucester, was summoned to his aid by a Welsh chieftain ; and the defeat of Rhys ap Tewdor, the last prince under whom Southern Wales was united, produced an anarchy which enabled Robert to land safely on the coast of Glamorgan, to conquer the country round, and to divide it among his soldiers. A force of Flemings and Englishmen followed the Earl of Clare as he landed near Milford Haven, and pushing back the British inhabitants settled a "Little England" in the present Pembrokeshire. A few daring adventurers accompanied the Norman Lord of Kemeys into Cardigan, where land might

be had for the winning by any one who would "wage war on the Welsh."

It was at this moment, when the utter subjugation of the British race seemed at hand, that a new outburst of energy rolled back the tide of invasion and changed the fitful resistance of the separate Welsh provinces into a national effort to regain independence. A new poetic fire, as we have seen, sprang into life. Every fight, every hero, had suddenly its verse. The names of the older bards were revived in bold forgeries to animate the national resistance and to prophesy victory. It was in North Wales that the new spirit of patriotism received its strongest inspiration from this burst of song. Again and again Henry the Second was driven to retreat from the impregnable fastnesses where the "Lords of Snowdon," the princes of the house of Gruffydd ap Conan, claimed supremacy over Wales. Once a cry arose that the King was slain, Henry of Essex flung down the royal standard, and the King's desperate efforts could hardly save his army from utter rout. In a later campaign the invaders were met by storms of rain, and forced to abandon their baggage in a headlong flight to Chester. The greatest of the Welsh odes, that known to English readers in Gray's translation as "The Triumph of Owen," is Gwalchmai's song of victory over the repulse of an English fleet from Abermenai. The long reigns of the two Llewelyns, the sons of Jorwerth and of Gruffydd, which all but cover the last century of Welsh independence, seemed destined to realize the hopes of their countrymen. The homage which the first succeeded in extorting from the whole of the Welsh chieftains placed him openly at the head of his race, and gave a new character to his struggle with the English King. In consolidating his authority within his own domains, and in the assertion of his lordship over the princes of the south, Llewelyn ap Jorwerth aimed steadily at securing the means of striking off the yoke of the Saxon. It was in vain that John strove to buy his friendship by the hand of his daughter Johanna. Fresh raids on the Marches forced the King to enter Wales; but though his army reached Snowdon it fell back like its predecessors, starved and broken before an enemy it could never reach. A second attack had better success. The chieftains

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Revival

1157

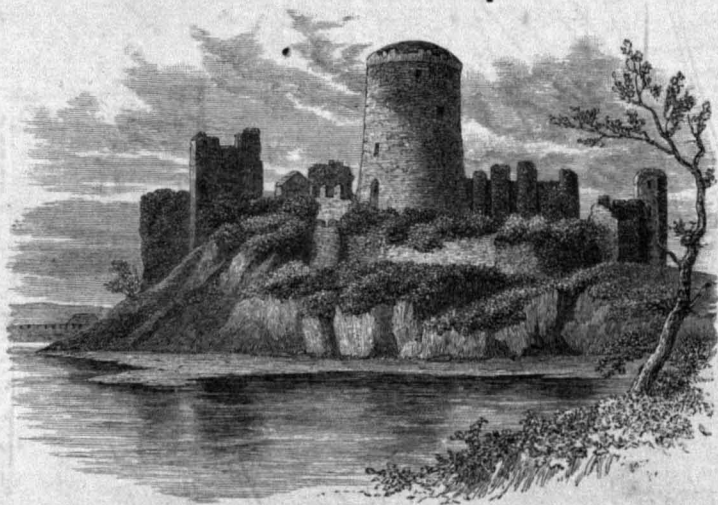
1194-1283

*Llewelyn  
ap  
Jorwerth*  
1194-1246

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of South Wales were drawn from their new allegiance to join the English forces, and Llewelyn, prisoned in his fastnesses, was at last driven to submit. But the ink of the treaty was hardly dry before Wales was again on fire; the common fear of the English once more united its chieftains, and the war between John and his barons removed all dread of a new invasion. Absolved from his allegiance to an excommunicated King, and allied with the barons under Fitz-Walter—too glad to enlist in their cause a prince who could hold in check the nobles of



PEMBROKE CASTLE.  
Early Thirteenth Century.

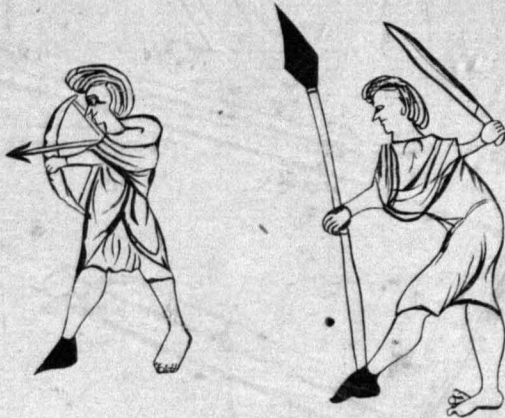
the border country, where the royalist cause was strongest—Llewelyn seized his opportunity to reduce Shrewsbury, to annex Powys, where the English influence had always been powerful, to clear the royal garrisons from Caermarthen and Cardigan, and to force even the Flemings of Pembroke to do him homage.

Llewelyn  
ap  
Iorwerth  
and the  
Bards

The hopes of Wales rose higher and higher with each triumph of the Lord of Snowdon. The court of Llewelyn was crowded with bardic singers. "He pours," sings one of them, "his gold into the lap of the bard as the ripe fruit falls from the trees."

But gold was hardly needed to wake their enthusiasm. Poet after poet sang of "the Devastator of England," the "Eagle of

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WELSH SOLDIERS.

Thirteenth Century.

*Chapter House Liber A, Public Record Office.*

men that loves not to lie nor sleep," "towering above the rest of men with his long red lance," his "red helmet of battle crested with a fierce wolf." "The sound of his coming is like the roar of the wave as it rushes to the shore, that can neither be stayed nor appeased." Lesser bards strung together his victories in rough jingle of rime and hounded him on to the slaughter. "Be of good courage in the slaughter," sings Elidir, "cling to thy work, destroy England, and plunder its multitudes." A fierce thirst for blood runs through the abrupt, passionate verses of the court singers. "Swansea, that tranquil town, was broken in heaps," bursts out a triumphant poet; "St. Clears, with its bright white lands, it is not Saxons who hold it now!"



WELSH ARCHER.

Thirteenth Century.

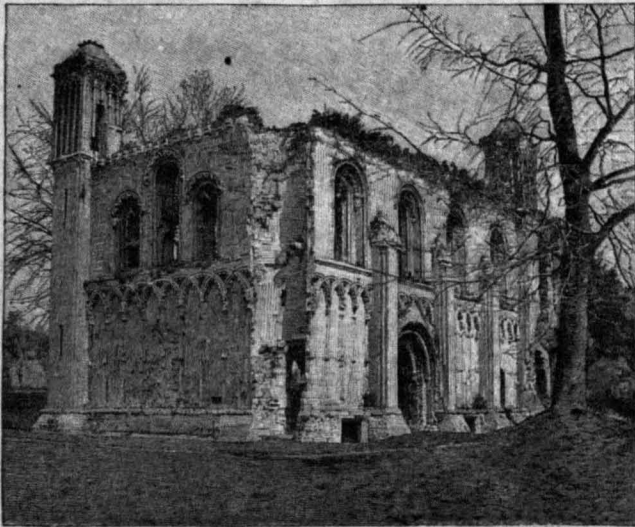
*Chapter House Liber A, Public Record Office.*

"In Swansea, the key of Lloegria, we made widows of all the



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wives." "The dread Eagle is wont to lay corpses in rows, and to feast with the leader of wolves and with hovering ravens glutted with flesh, butchers with keen scent of carcasses." "Better," closes the song, "is the grave than the life of man who sighs when the horns call him forth to the squares of battle." But even in bardic verse Llewelyn rises high out of the mere mob of chieftains who live by rapine, and boast as the Hirlas-horn passes from hand to hand through the hall that "they take and give no quarter." "Tender-hearted, wise, witty, ingenious,"



LADY CHAPEL, GLASTONBURY.  
Built 1184—1189.

he was "the great Cæsar" who was to gather beneath his sway the broken fragments of the Celtic race. Mysterious prophecies, the prophecies of Merlin the Wise, floated from lip to lip, to nerve Wales to its last struggle with the invaders. Medrawd and Arthur would appear once more on earth to fight over again the fatal battle of Camlan. The last conqueror of the Celtic race, Cadwallon, still lived to combat for his people. The supposed verses of Taliesin expressed the undying hope of a restoration of the Cymry. "In their hands shall be all the

land from Brittany to Man: . . . a rumour shall arise that the Germans are moving out of Britain back again to their fatherland." Gathered up in the strange work of Geoffry of Monmouth, these predictions made a deep impression, not on Wales only, but on its conquerors. It was to meet indeed the dreams of a yet living Arthur that the grave of the legendary hero-king at Glastonbury was found and visited by Henry the Second. But neither trick nor conquest could shake the firm faith of the Celt in the ultimate victory of his race. "Think you," said Henry to a Welsh

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LLANTHONY PRIORY, NEAR ABERGAVENNY.  
Built 1200—1220.

chieftain who had joined his host, "that your people of rebels can withstand my army?" "My people," replied the chieftain, "may be weakened by your might, and even in great part destroyed, but unless the wrath of God be on the side of its foe it will not perish utterly. Nor deem I that other race or other tongue will answer for this corner of the world before the Judge of all at the last day save this people and tongue of Wales." So ran the popular rime, "Their Lord they will praise, their speech they shall keep, their land they shall lose—except wild Wales." Faith and prophecy seemed justified by the growing

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Llewelyn  
ap  
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strength of the British people. The weakness and dissensions which characterized the reign of Henry the Third enabled Llewelyn ap Iorwerth to preserve a practical independence till the close of his life, when a fresh acknowledgement of the English supremacy was wrested from him by Archbishop Edmund. But the triumphs of his

arms were renewed by Llewelyn the son of Gruffydd, whose ravages swept the border to the very gates of Chester, while his conquest of Glamorgan seemed to bind the whole people together in a power strong enough to meet any attack from the stranger. Throughout the Barons' war Llewelyn remained master of Wales. Even at its close the threat of an attack from the now united kingdom only forced him to submission on a practical acknowledgement of his sovereignty. The chieftain whom the English kings had till then scrupulously designated as

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'Prince of Aberffraw,' was now allowed the title of "Prince of Wales," and his right to receive homage from the other nobles of his principality was allowed.

The  
Conquest  
of Wales

Near, however, as Llewelyn seemed to the final realization of his aims, he was still a vassal of the English crown, and the accession of a new sovereign to the throne was at once followed by the demand of his homage. The youth of Edward the First had already given promise of the high qualities which distinguished him as an English ruler. The passion for law, the instinct of good government, which were to make his reign so memorable in our history, had declared themselves from the first. He had sided with the barons at the outset of their struggle with Henry; he had striven to keep his father true to the Provisions of Oxford.

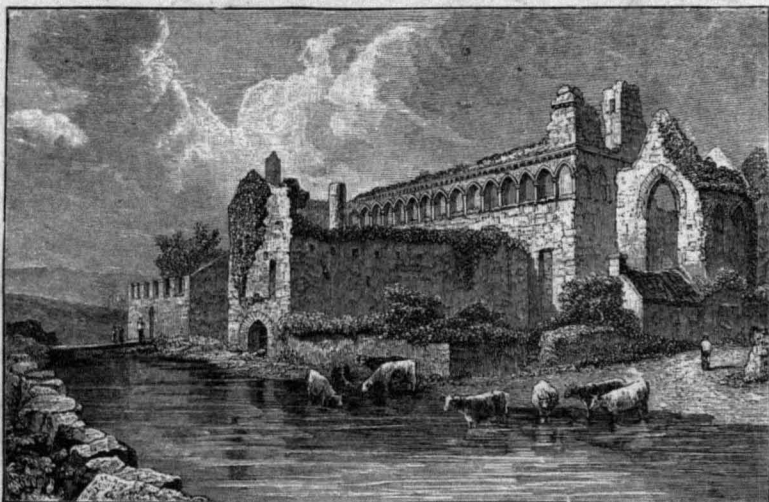


GRUFFYDD, SON OF LLEWELYN, TRYING  
TO ESCAPE FROM THE TOWER, 1243.

Drawn by Matthew Paris.  
MS. C.C.C. Camb. xvi.

It was only when the Crown seemed falling into bondage that Edward passed to the royal side; and when the danger he dreaded was over he returned to his older attitude. In the first flush of victory, while the doom of Simon was yet unknown, Edward stood alone in desiring his captivity against the cry of the Marcher lords for his death. When all was over he wept over the corpse of his cousin, Henry de Montfort, and followed the Earl's body to the tomb. It was from Earl Simon, as the Earl owned with a proud bitterness ere his death, that Edward had learned the skill in warfare which distinguished

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BISHOP'S PALACE, S. DAVID'S.

him among the princes of his time. But he had learned the far nobler lesson of a self-government which lifted him high above them as a ruler among men. Severing himself from the brutal triumph of the royalist party, he secured fair terms to the conquered, and after crushing the last traces of resistance, he won the adoption by the Crown of the constitutional system of government for which the barons had fought. So utterly was the land at rest that he felt free to join a crusade in Palestine. His father's death recalled him home to meet at once the difficulty of Wales. During two years Llewelyn rejected the King's

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*Death of  
Henry III  
1272*



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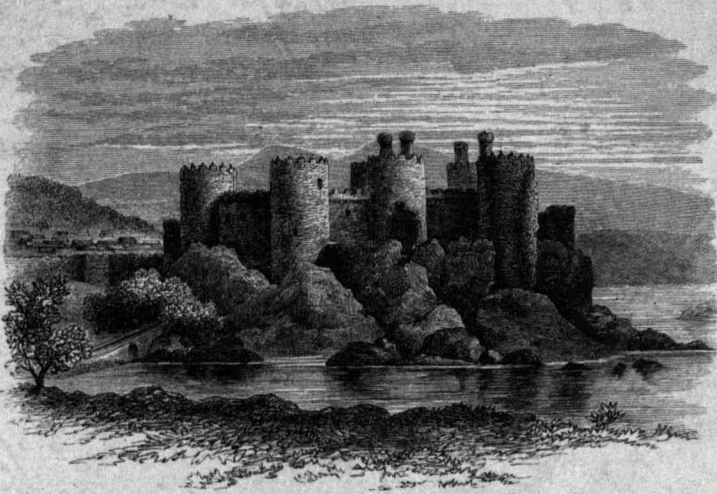
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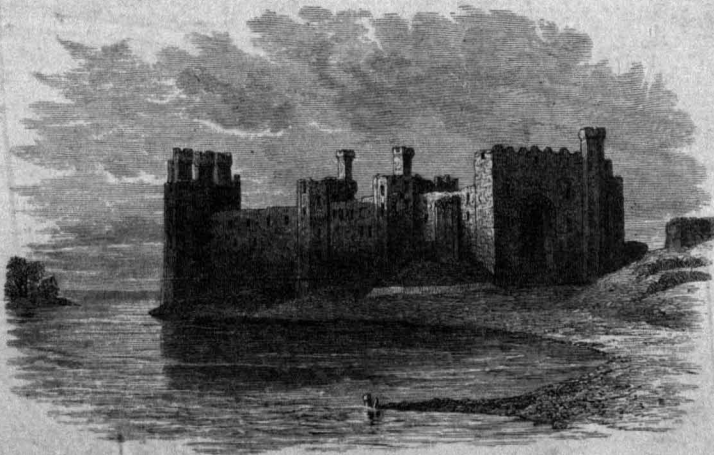
repeated summons to him to perform his homage, till Edward's patience was exhausted, and the royal army marched into North Wales. The fabric of Welsh greatness fell at a single blow; the chieftains of the south and centre who had so lately sworn fealty to Llewelyn deserted him to join his English enemies; an English fleet reduced Anglesea, and the Prince, cooped up in his fastnesses, was forced to throw himself on the royal mercy. With characteristic moderation his conqueror contented himself with adding to the English dominions the coast-district as far as Conway, and providing that the title of Prince of Wales should cease at Llewelyn's death. A heavy fine, which he had incurred was remitted, and Eleanor the daughter of Simon of Montfort, who had been arrested on her way to join him as his wife, was wedded to him at the English court. For four years all was quiet, but the persuasions of his brother David, who had deserted him in the previous war, and whose desertion had been rewarded with an English lordship, roused Llewelyn to a fresh revolt. A prophecy of Merlin had announced that when English money became round the Prince of Wales should be crowned at London; and a new coinage of copper money, coupled with the prohibition to break the silver penny into halves and quarters, as had been usual, was supposed to have fulfilled the prediction. In the campaign which followed the Prince held out in Snowdon with the stubbornness of despair, and the rout of an English detachment which had thrown a bridge across the Menai Straits into Anglesea prolonged the contest into the winter. Terrible however as were the sufferings of the English army, Edward's firmness remained unbroken, and rejecting all proposals of retreat he issued orders for the formation of a new army at Caermarthen to complete the circle of investment round Llewelyn. The Prince sallied from his mountain-hold for a raid upon Radnorshire, and fell in a petty skirmish on the banks of the Wye. With him died the independence of his race. After six months of flight his brother David was arrested and sentenced in full Parliament to a traitor's death. The submission of the lesser chieftains was followed by the building of strong castles at Conway and Caernarvon, and the settlement of English barons on the confiscated soil. A wiser instinct of government led

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CONWAY CASTLE

Edward to introduce by the "Statute of Wales" English law and the English administration of justice into Wales. But



CAERNARVON CASTLE.

little came of the attempt; and it was not till the time of Henry the Eighth that the country was actually incorporated  
Y