THE NEW BOOK OF KINGS

BY

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If I might give a short hint to an impartial writer, it would be to tell him his fate. If he resolves to venture on the dangerous precipice of telling unbiassed truth, let him proclaim war with mankind—neither to give nor to take quarter. If he tells the crimes of great men, they fall upon him with the iron hands of the law; if he tells them of virtues, when they have any, then the mob attacks him with slander. But if he regards truth, let him expect martyrdom on both sides, and then he may go on fearless.

De Foe.

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DEDICAVIT

J. M. D.

The New Book of Kings.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

"If there be never so many fair branches of liberty planted on the root of a private and selfish interest, they will not long prosper, but must, within a little time, wither and degenerate into the nature of that whereinto they are planted; and hence indeed sprang the evil of that Government which rose in and with the Norman Conquest. . . . And as at first the Conqueror did by violence and force deny that freedom to the people which was their natural right and privilege, so he and his successors all along lay as bars and impediments to the true national interests and public good, in the very national councils and assemblies themselves, which were constituted in such a manner as most served for the upholding of the private interest of their families."—*Sir Harry Vane.*

IN these sentences Sir Harry Vane, the noblest of English men and Republicans, lays bare the tap-root of that thrice-accursed tree of Oligarchy, whose baleful shadow has blighted the lives of so many generations of his countrymen. His pregnant words, penned more than two centuries ago, are true now as then. "The cause"—the Republican cause—the cause of the People against privilege—has yet to be won. Monarchy, Aristocracy, and Plutocracy (the latest development of "private and selfish interest") still, alas! find England the happiest of happy hunting grounds. Sir Harry wrote in the past tense, believing that the serpent of aristocracy had been killed by the Revolution when in sooth it had hardly been scotched. Oliver Cromwell by force and fraud restored "one-man government" in his own person; and to the monarch by the sword not unnaturally again succeeded the monarch by divine right. The nation returned with enthusiasm to its more ancient chains.

Shall it always be so? Shall it never cease to be the reproach of Englishmen that they dearly love a lord?—that they prefer the status of *subjects* to that of citizens?—that they are incapable of rising to the full stature of freemen? Amid the saturnalia of the Restoration, Sir Harry Vane, under the shadow of the scaffold, uttered this prophecy:—"There hath been a battle fought with garments rolled in blood, in which Thou, God, didst own thy servants, though these nations have been thought unworthy any longer to enjoy the fruits of that deliverance. *Thou hast therefore another day of decision to come.*"

Why does Sir Harry's prophecy still await fulfilment? When shall that other day of decision come—as come it must? Why are Englishmen so tolerant of private and selfish interests—so slow to base their institutions on the only sure foundation—the absolute Sovereignty of the People?

The causes are multiple, but one stands out. The reaction against the Protectorate of Cromwell was singularly severe, leaving an indelible impression on the national mind, that to escape from the frying-pan of hereditary monarchy into the fire of military dictatorship is a highly questionable gain. Hence, largely, the despicable spirit of compromise that has animated the domestic policy of English statesmen ever since.

Still "the cause" was not dead. In 1688 it would have reasserted itself, to the sweeping away of all royal and aristocratic "bars and impediments," but taught by experience, the Aristocracy substituted cunning and deception for the weapons of steel that had failed them so conspicuously on the fields of Naseby and Marston Moor. They had recourse to a make-believe rosewater Revolution of their own, by which they changed the dynasty, and, according to Mr. Bright, who never spoke more truly, enthroned themselves. The so-called "Revolution Houses" took the place of the King. Once firmly in the saddle, they effectually strangled freedom at home by embarking the nation in the most criminal enterprises against liberty abroad. The French wars, which dried up every source of income except rent, may be said to have been waged for the preservation of primogeniture and entail, which Pitt—the Bottomless Pitt as some discriminating per-

son called him—and his accomplices apprehended might be unfavourably influenced by the immortal principles of '89.

In time, the deluded people awoke to some sense of their folly. They wrung from the governing caste the Reform Bill of 1832, and it was not long before the People's Charter, that unique embodiment of democratic aspiration, was formulated and demanded, not without menace. In the Charter, the masses, with a correct instinct, recognised that they had found a master-key that would unlock every door in the mighty fortress of privilege. The Oligarchy were not less discerning. They cast about for instruments with which to crush so formidable an assault on their supremacy, and strange to say, Richard Cobden and John Bright came forward as the "saviours of society." With the relatively small reform of free trade in grain the great reform of parliamentary democratization was knocked on the head. A single end was achieved to the sacrifice of the means to many not less important ends. The small reform as usual killed the great one. The Oligarchy was saved once more, and to-day its power is unbroken. Mr. Bright, the tribune of the people, was able to rise with enthusiasm to the middle-class idea of free trade; the national idea of the complete enfranchisement of the people was less within the range of his sympathies. Had it been otherwise—had he and Mr. Cobden, with truer political perspective, postponed the repeal of the Corn-laws to the triumph of the Charter, how different the course of events!

Since then we have had the Reform Bill of '67. Generally speaking, it extended the suffrage without materially increasing the influence of the Commons in what is facetiously called the Commons' House of Parliament. Howbeit, are we not indebted to it for the political existence of that virile museum-closing, Ireland-coercing champion of Democracy, Mr. Henry Broadhurst? With such a net result, what well-instructed elector will have the hardihood to maintain that our reform agitations have been altogether in vain?

Nevertheless, Vane's "other day of decision" has yet to come, and be it ours to hasten its advent. As yet the signs of the dawn are not such as he that runneth may read:—

> "The days of the nations bear no trace
> Of all the sunshine so far foretold;
> The cannon speaks in the teacher's place—
> The age is weary with work and gold,

And high hopes wither, and memories wane;
On hearths and altars the fires are dead;
But that brave faith hath not lived in vain—
And this is all that our watcher said."

Has our Radical-Liberal or Liberal-Radical Ministry of all the talents and of all the virtues, with the Grand Old Man at its head, inaugurated a democratic millennium? I trow not. Open the Hansards of the present Parliament, and you will hardly be able, with a microscope, to discover one measure of real national benefit. Page after page testifies to the anxiety of the vaunted Liberal majority to arrest patriots on suspicion; to expel from the House by "superior force" hon. members trying really to represent their constituents; to violate domicile by day and by night; to abolish trial by jury; to expel aliens; to re-establish the Norman curfew; to suppress freedom of the press and of the platform; to gag Parliament; to appropriate national funds for the payment of impossible rents; illegally to extrude a solitary confessing infidel; to incarcerate a crazy German refugee; to fire defenceless Alexandria in order to gratify Hebrew bondholders and rapacious officials; to give huge money grants and patents of nobility to the chief directors of the revolting work; to build royal yachts at shameless cost; to alienate national land for an old song; and to collect for creditors their bad debts through the agency of national officials; these are so far among the chief achievements of "the most Liberal Administration of the century."

The career of the present Ministry ought to teach the democrats of England several salutary lessons. *Imprimis:* Put not your trust in princes, be they Grand Old Men or Grand Young Men. When one says, "Lo! here I have found the political Messiah in the person of Mr. Gladstone;" or another, "Lo! there I have discovered him in the great caucus-compeller of Birmingham;" let the report be peremptorily discredited. There are no political Messiahs. Great men, like strong liquors, should always be partaken of in small quantities. The Greeks, who ostracised their mighty ones, were not such fools as they have been accounted. The Athenian elector who objected to Aristides because he was so often called the Just, was animated by a correct instinct. The reason is plain The best and the ablest of political

leaders are fallible; and when they fall the cause which they represent but too frequently falls with them by reason of the blind idolatry of their devotees. Take, for example, the most iniquitous war of modern times—the Egyptian. It was blessed by upright Mr. Guinness Rogers, by upright Mr. R. W. Dale, and by the Quakers, simply because it was waged by the infallible Prime Minister. "They are a happy thing, great men and great officers," Sir John Eliot told a timid House, "if they be good, and one of the greatest blessings of the land; but power converted into evil is the greatest curse that can befall it. The greater the delinquent the greater the delict."

It is the firm grasp of well-defined principles of action that can alone really serve individuals or communities in the long run. Men who mistake a Pitt, a Peel, a Palmerston, or a Gladstone for a principle are but in the infancy of political thought. Whatever they may allege, they have not attained to the stature of free men. They are meet subjects for Personal Government.

Another lesson of the day, and that hardly of less moment to democrats: there are not really two parties in the State. There is but one great party, that of privilege, divided into two factions, labelled Whig and Tory, or Liberal and Conservative. Both do much the same things in office. The mimic warfare which they wage with each other no shrewd observer takes seriously. It is merely a pleasant game, of which the stakes are the spoils of office and patronage. It is only when the elector spectators show some symptoms of doubting their sincerity that the combatants show a little heat. An "organised hypocrisy" is but a mild description of an English Government, whether Liberal or Conservative The Liberal and the Conservative are the two thieves between whom the People are evermore crucified. Your root-and-branch Republican to-day ransacks the royal pantry for subject-matter of censure; to-morrow, with Cabinet office within his grasp, he publicly renounces the "scatter-brain principles" of his hot academic youth, and hastens to Windsor to beslobber the royal fist. Long live expediency! Long live self-interest!

Has, then, the whole race of political heroes, of which Sir Harry Vane was the type, perished from off English soil?

Has "that brave faith" of his which, without an effort, nerved him to face the scaffold and the block, really "lived in vain?" Is that "other day of decision" never to come to the long-suffering English people? It cannot be. Its advent is equally desirable and inevitable.

"Have ye chosen, O my people, on whose party thou shalt stand,
Ere the Doom from his worn sandals shake the dust against our land?
Though the cause of evil prosper, yet 'tis truth alone is strong
And albeit she wander outcast, now I see around her throng
Troops of beautiful angels to enshield her from all wrong!"

CHAPTER II.

THE ETHICS OF ROYALTY.

And Samuel told all the words of the Lord unto the people that asked of him a king.

And he said, "This will be the manner of the King that shall reign over you. He will take your sons, and appoint them for Himself, for His chariots, and to be His horsemen; and some shall run before His chariots.

"And He will take the tenth of your seed and of your vineyards, and give to His officers and to His servants.

"And He will take your men-servants, and your maid-servants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to His work."

"And He will appoint him captains over thousands and captains over fifties, and will set them to ear His ground and to reap His harvest, and to make His instruments of war and instruments of His chariots."

"And He will take your daughters to be confectionaries and to be cooks and to be bakers."

"And He will take your fields and your vineyards and your olive yards, even the best of them, and give them to His servants."

"And ye shall cry out in that day because of your King which ye shall have chosen you; and the Lord will not hear you in that day."

And all the people said unto Samuel, "Pray for thy servants unto the Lord thy God that we die not, for we have added unto our sins this evil—to ask a king."—SAMUEL.

THE partiality of the clergy, especially those of the Established Church, for the above passage of Holy Writ is well known to all churchgoers. These spiritual guides never tire of reminding their flocks that monarchy is a sinful institution, repugnant to the Divine Will, and, as such, the inevitable source of misery, oppression and dishonour, national and individual. It is perhaps less generally known that the Archbishop of Canterbury, at the coronation of a new monarch, invariably prefaces the ceremony by reading, for his or her Majesty's benefit, the whole of the 8th chapter of 1st Samuel with extraordinary emphasis.

Nonconformist pastors are not less faithful. In their frequent encounters with latter-day sceptics, secularists,

positivists, and other infidels, whose acquaintance with Scripture is apt to be slender or at second hand, they are wont to silence contradiction by forcibly appealing to our existing social and political condition as the literal fulfilment of this divine oracle. It may be difficult to show how the whale swallowed Jonah, but it is not at all hard to prove that cruel wars, intolerable taxation, scandalous sinecures, and impoverishing land monopolies are the normal concomitants of royalty. Ask those right hon. Republicans, Sir Charles Dilke, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, Mr. Henry Fawcett if it is not so. They know all about it, or at all events they once did!

But, strange to say, with revelation and reason, piety and impiety arrayed against it, this deadly nightshade of monarchy still continues to flourish in our midst, poisoning the very life-blood of society. "The divinity that doth hedge a king," of which Shakspere, the poet of feudalism, wrote—the Swan of Avon's politics seem to have been about as bad as his poetry was good—is not unmindful even of such contemptible specimens of royalty as the Guelphs, regarding the first of whom a Caledonian bard asked with amazement—

"Wha the de'il do ye think we hae gotten for a king?
But a wee, wee German lairdie!
And when they gaed to bring him hame
He was delvin' in his kail yardie;
Sawin' kail and layin' leeks,
But the hose and but the breeks,
Then up his beggar duds he cleeks,
This wee, wee German lairdie."

It is still her Majesty's army, her Majesty's navy, her Majesty's Ministers, nay, her Majesty's Opposition—everybody and everything her Majesty's, except, as shrewd old Cobbett observed, her Majesty's debt, which is national. In the pulpit her Majesty is solemnly prayed for; in the press her great standing achievement of "driving out" is admiringly recorded; at the festive board she is loyally toasted; while the Mint is ever busy stamping the current coin of the realm with her image and superscription.

Why all this praying, recording, toasting, and stamping? We are all, it is to be feared, very great sinners; but why

should royalty, for example, require such an exceptional stretch of the Divine clemency? True, her Majesty's immediate predecessors on the throne have been persons of most disreputable moral character; but did the unremitting orisons offered up for them during their proper lives perceptibly improve their conduct? Not in the least. Indeed, a more startling illustration of the inefficacy of prayer could hardly be had, and it is a wonder that in the late magazine controversy on the subject none of the anti-prayer disputants thought of using it. Can it therefore be that royalty is prayed for in order to show that it is past praying for?

Again, why should her Majesty's health be made the subject-matter of so much bibulous solicitude, so much postprandial laudation? A thousand chances to one the postprandial orator knows nothing whatever of the real character of the royal personage whose merits he extols. What is Hecuba to him or he to Hecuba? He will know something about Hecuba perchance when the memoirs of some veracious courtier like Greville appear; but not till then. With respect to the present monarch the postprandial orator generally discovers two, and only two, cardinal virtues—the one personal, the other political—which fill his soul with the profoundest admiration and thanksgiving.

Firstly, *the Queen has led the life of a respectable matron.* How marvellous in a queen! But were somebody to rise and compliment the orator on similar perfections in his (the orator's) wife, his sister, or his daughter, that erring somebody would not improbably be rewarded by having the handiest decanter thrown at his head. Is it, therefore, the orator's intention to show that hardly anything short of a miracle can prevent queens from falling below the most ordinary standard of female virtue?

Her Majesty's other pre-eminent virtue, the political one, is not less remarkable—*she never interferes with the course of government.* Was ever such a qualification for office, or any kind of human employment whatever, heard of before? Conceive of a chimney-sweep who never swept a chimney, a baker who never baked, a butcher who supplied no meat, a shoemaker who made no shoes, or a head clerk who never entered his office, being complimented for magnanimously abstaining from the discharge of the duties of their respec-

tive callings! Nay, more; conceive of a grateful nation rewarding such abstention by a clear grant to the abstainer and his or her relatives of a million sterling per annum, and the marvel has grown a hundredfold!

But our postprandial philosopher would probably demur to a comparison so odious. Kings and queens, he would contend, are not to be confounded with base mechanical butchers, bakers, and candlestick makers. Admitted, but wherein lies the distinction? It is here. Butchers, bakers, and candlestick makers perform functions useful and indeed necessary to society, whereas those of royalty are at best ornamental.

But he who drives fat oxen should, according to Dr. Johnson, himself be fat. Now the question arises, and with reverence be it put, is Victoria Regina really even an ornamental figurehead? Tastes, of course, will differ, but I venture to affirm, without fear of rational contradiction, that there are at least half a million of ladies in the land whose native grace, dignity, and mental gifts would far surpass those to which her Teutonic Majesty can lay claim—ladies, many of them of independent means, willing to do the national honours without garish splendour, and at their own cost.

Moreover, has it not been laid down on the unimpeachable authority of Mr. Oscar Wilde that true ornament is inseparable from utility? Why, then, if the State must have a figurehead, not apply at once to the Grand Old Man? Is he not ornamental? Is he not useful? Is it not ornamental to be equally at home in the jargon of *bric-a-brac*, and the labyrinths of Dante's Inferno? Is it not useful to be able to fell an oak, to coerce Ireland, and, after the burning of Alexandria, to demonstrate that "we have not been at war with anybody," and all this on strictly Liberal principles?

Again, are the simple hospitalities of the White House at Washington less enjoyable than the tomfooleries of the Court of St. James's? Is President Arthur or President Grévy less a gentleman than the Prince of Wales? Assuredly not. The ornamental argument will not stand a moment's analysis. Royalty is really paid for its inaction, not because it is in its nature ornamental and passive, but because an experience of more than eight centuries has abundantly shown that it is politically dangerous.

The danger from it now is not so much political as social. It acts as a convenient screen behind which there is hardly a job too gross to be hatched. It is the standing symbol of that social injustice and inequality about the effects of which in the East-end of London so much has recently been written. There is a matchless irony in the composition of Sir Charles Dilke's Commission of Inquiry into the Housing of the Poor. To set the Prince of Wales, the Marquis of Salisbury, and other noble lords to investigate the causes of wretched dwellings is more like appointing a committee of wolves to account for a scarcity of lambs than anything I can think of.

Why then so many canting prayers, so many sickening eulogies of an institution so ridiculous, so noxious to the people at large? Simply because the nation is not self-governed. England is ruled by a close oligarchy governing in its own interests, and to that oligarchy royalty is anything but useless.

The people interested in royalty may be roughly divided into two great classes. They are either knaves or fools—persons moved by self-interest or superstition, or, it may be, by a cunning compound of both. Political superstition, like religious superstition, is merely belief without evidence. The privileged ring, and those who are struggling to enter it, compose the former class, which is made up of courtiers, sinecurists, pensioners, peers, parvenus, landlords who neither toil nor spin, self-seeking clergymen, venal writers, lawyers, army and navy officers, snobs, *et hoc genus omne*.

This motley crew have one characteristic in common. They are all dishonestly bent on living luxuriously, and without toil, at the cost of the industrious portion of the community. To them the Crown is a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. Let them be but deprived of its protection, and they would be like sheep without a shepherd. They would be taken in detail, stripped of their borrowed plumes, and relieved of their booty. They magnify royalty and prostrate themselves before it, not because they believe in it—they are too near it not to know how great an imposture it is—but because it effectually dazzles and stupefies the industrious classes—the fools—whose sore toil allows them neither time for reflection nor opportunity for study.

of decision" which good Sir Harry Vane, with the eye of faith, previsedunder the shadow of the scaffold:—

"O, thou that sea-walls sever
From lands unwalled by seas!
Wilt thou endure for ever,
O Milton's England, these?
Thou that wast his Republic,
Wilt thou clasp their knees?
These royalties rust-eaten,
These worm-corroded lies,
That keep thy head storm-beaten
And sun-like strength of eyes
From the open air and heaven
Of intercepted skies."

CHAPTER III.

NORMAN ROYALTY.

William came over the sea,
With bloody sword came he.
Cold heart and bloody hand
Now rule the English land.

SNORRO'S SAGA.

TO realise in some degree the manifold calamities that royalty has heaped on the English people it is not necessary to go beyond the period of the Norman Conquest. The fatal year of Hastings, 1066, will ever remain the blackest in our annals. In that year sixty thousand of the greatest ruffians that could be collected not merely in Normandy, but in all Europe, crossed the Channel, and by sheer brute force possessed themselves of the land. They succeeded in garotting the entire English people, and to this day their descendants, or rather their pretended descendants, on the throne, in the peerage, and in the magistracy, keep a tight grip on the nation's throat. Conquests there have been before and since in the world's history, but never one with results so widely, so enduringly disastrous. The policy of the Norman robber is illustrated to-day not less by the misery and degradation of the Irish peasant, the Indian ryot, and the Egyptian fellah, than by the squalor of the East-end of London and the ruin of agricultural England.

WILLIAM THE NORMAN (1066—1087.)

The leader of the freebooters, variously known as William the Bastard, William the Conqueror, and William the Great, was the son of a tanner's daughter and a Norman duke styled, for sufficient reasons, Robert the Devil. Duke Robert and his predecessors had established in their Neustrian conquest a system of government which William applied to England with sundry amplifications and refinements of his

own. To him we are indebted for the feudal system and the game laws in all their rigour.

William de Jumiège, a Norman writer, gives us to understand that these boons were not always appreciated, even in Normandy, by the peasants and other unprivileged persons, who ought to have known better. They were unreasonable enough on one occasion to rebel, and the gentle Norman commander who corrected them, according to William de Jumiège, "cut off his prisoners' hands and feet, and sent them back in that helpless state to their comrades, to check them from such practices, and to be a warning to them not to expose themselves to something worse. And when the peasants received this lesson they returned to their proper places at the plough." Comment is unnecessary.

William's claim to be King of England was without legal or moral justification. The office had always been, and is now, simply one of trust, conferred by the representatives of the nation for the people's good, and not for the monarch's private advantage. However irregular at times may have been the practice, there is nothing more certain than that there resides in parliament plenary power to depose and to elect kings and queens as it has a mind. It is a right rooted in reason, and the practice of ten centuries. When the Long Parliament formally abolished royalty it resolved that "the office of king in this nation is unnecessary, burthensome, and dangerous." For one or all of these reasons the *régime* of the House of Brunswick might similarly be terminated to-morrow.

The Saxon Witanagemot never hesitated to deal sharply with perverse kings. Æthelwald, of Northumbria was deposed in 765; Alcred in 774; Sigeberht of Wessex in 755; Æthelbred II. in 1013, and Harthacnut in 1037.

Since the Conquest, Parliament in 1327 deposed Edward II. (the first King of England, curiously enough, whose reign had been made to date from the day following his predecessor's death, instead of from the ceremony of election and coronation); Richard II. in 1399, and James II. in 1688. In the case of Charles I., Parliament went a step further. It not merely took away the crown, but the head of the wearer also. Yea, "And what king's majesty," asks the immortal champion of English freedom, John Milton, "sittin-

exalted throne, ever shone so brightly as that of the people o England then did, when, shaking off that old superstition which had prevailed a long time, they gave judgment on the king himself, or rather on an enemy that had been their king, caught, as it were, in a net by his own laws, and scrupled not to inflict on him, being guilty, the same punishment which he would have inflicted on any other?" . . . "This," he continues, "is the God who uses to throw down proud and unruly kings, and utterly to extirpate them and their family. By his manifest impulse being set at work to recover our almost lost liberty, we went on in no obscure but an illustrious passage, pointed out and made plain to us by God Himself." We could put up with a hereditary line of Miltons; but they, alas! do not, like kings, run in families.

Generally, it is true, but not always, the National Council elected the monarch from a particular family. Cnut, the Dane, and Harold, the gallant but unfortunate English prince who fell at Hastings, had no blood relationship to the house of Cerdic. Harold, whose notions of Government seem singularly modern and enlightened, when William modestly demanded that England south of the Humber should be given up to him and his robber horde, proudly replied, "My royalty comes to me from my people, and, without my people's consent, I cannot lay it down." Indeed, it was not till the house of York, themselves usurpers, came on the scene that any serious attempt was made to treat England as if it were a private estate transmissible by primogeniture. To substitute the idea of territorial possession for that of personal and fiduciary office was the mischievous work of the lawyers, who are ever prone to fall into false analogies. Parliament, however, did not fail to reassert its old supremacy. As it had done in the case of the Fourth Henry, so it did in that of the Seventh. It set up a new royal stock, excluding the whole house of York.

To the Yorkist pretention of indefeasible hereditary right the Stuarts sought to add the still more preposterous claim of divine right. Bad gospel came to the aid of worse law. The Convention Parliament treated both without ceremony. For two months, from the 23rd of December to the 13th of February (1688-9), the monarchy was in abeyance. William and Mary, the dutiful nephew and daughter of the exiled

James II., were then invested with regal power; and finally, in 1700, the succession was settled on Sophia of Hanover, granddaughter of James I., and the heirs of her body being Protestants, to the exclusion not merely of the direct line but of the elder children of Sophia's mother, Elizabeth.

The title of the present royal family to the throne is therefore a Parliamentary title, pure and simple, and what Parliament has bestowed it is clearly competent for Parliament to withdraw. All through the centuries royalty has been an unalleviated curse to the English people. It can no more change its essential character than can an Ethiopian his skin or a leopard his spots. A really Liberal Parliament, instead of manacling Ireland and garotting Egypt, would busy itself with the repeal of the Act of Settlement. The intellect and conscience of mankind are alike sick of kings and queens, limited and unlimited, small and great. "Unnecessary, burdensome, and dangerous," should be written with an iron pen on every crown in Europe.

It is the boast of every snob in England that his ancestors "came over with the Conqueror." Well, ancestors, like other people, may be judged by the company they kept. Let us see, then, what manner of man this Conqueror was. Was he a benefactor of his species? Contemporary history is not silent with regard to his achievements. Take this as a sample:—The men of Northumbria were not partial to his kingship, and this is how, according to his unscrupulous panegyrist, Odericus Vitalis, he dealt with the region between Humber and Tyne: "He (the Conqueror) extended his posts over a space of one hundred miles; he smote most of the inhabitants with the edge of the avenging sword; he destroyed the hiding-places of the others; he laid waste their lands; he burned their houses with all that was therein. Nowhere else did William act with such cruelty, and in this instance he shamefully gave way to evil passions. While he scorned to rule his own wrath, he cut off the guilty and the innocent with equal severity. For, excited by anger, he bade the crops, and the herds, and the household stuff, and every description of food to be gathered in heaps and to be set light to and utterly destroyed altogether—so that all sustenance for man and beast should be at once wasted throughout all the region beyond the Humber. Hence there raged

grievous want far and wide throughout England. Such a misery of famine involved the people that there perished of Christian human beings of either sex and of every age one hundred thousand." Truly a charming gentleman this to accompany in any enterprise!

But William could not always find convenient bodies of human beings to slaughter. There were unhappy intervals in his life when he was obliged to content himself with shedding the blood of the lower animals. "He made many deer parks," says the Saxon Chronicle, "and he established laws so that whosoever killed a hart, or a hind, or a boar should be blinded; for William loved the high game as if he had been their father."

These fatherly instincts induced him to lay waste an immense area between Winchester and the sea. This tract, subsequently known as the New Forest, embraced sixty parishes, with their churches and villages. These were burned to the ground and the inhabitants left homeless. "So stern was he," says the Chronicle, "that no man durst gainsay his will. Rich men bemoaned and poor men shuddered; but he recked not the hatred of them all."

Howbeit, one good man there was who could not be induced to profit by William's villanies—the Monk Guitand. This faithful priest was summoned from Normandy to receive an English bishopric. He came, saw, and not merely declined the preferment, but asssigned reasons for conduct so unusual in an ecclesiastic. He was sick, he said, and perplexed with many doubts, sorrows, and frailties; but were he ten times fitter to guide others, he would never share in the spoils of blood. "When he thought of the crimes by which England had been won, he trembled to touch it, with all its wealth, as though it glowed with the fire of hell."

While engaged in the congenial task of burning the town of Mantes, William received a fatal injury, and died at Rouen, September 8th, 1087. No sooner was the breath out of his body than bishops, barons, physicians, courtiers fled in horror. The rabble burst into the apartment, stripped it of everything, leaving the monster's carcase naked on the floor. Of his sons, the eldest, Robert, was, at the time, in arms against him; the other two hurried off to secure their share of the spoil.

It was left to a simple Norman knight, "for the honour of God and the Norman name," to secure sepulture for the tyrant's bones. He conveyed them to the Abbey Church at Caen, and had a grave dug for their reception between the choir and the altar. But even then a serious difficulty occured. The Bishop of Evreux had performed the obsequies, and the coffin was about to be lowered into the tomb, when there stood forward from the throng Oscelin Fitz-Arthur, and said, "The ground on which you stand was the site of my father's house. The man who lies dead before you, and for whom you bid us pray, took my father's land from him by force and by wrong, and here, by abuse of his ducal power, he built this church. I claim back the land; and I forbid, in the name of God, that the robber should be covered with ground that is mine, and that he should have a burial-place in my heritage." The truth of Fitz-Arthur's assertion was notorious, and the assembled prelates had to guarantee him ample compensation before the grave was permitted to close over the remains of the Conqueror of England, who had barbarously ordered the body of King Harold to be buried on the beach, like a felon's, below watermark.

By the time of William's death, all England, with insignificant exceptions, had been clutched by his cut-throat followers, while the royal revenue, which in Edward the Confessor's time stood at £40,000 per annum, had, according to Giraldus Cambrensis, reached the extraordinary sum of £1,061 10s. 1½d. per day!

The population of England at the time of the Conquest is set down with proximate accuracy at about two million souls. During the reigns of the Conqueror and his sons, what through the sword, famine, and exile, it was reduced probably by one-third, and not till the time of Charles II. was it found to have more than doubled itself; so frightful was the curse inflicted on the unhappy country by the swarm of thieves from whom royalty and aristocracy are proud to claim descent.

William Rufus (1087—1100.)

William the Conqueror was succeeded by his son, William Rufus—a greater villain even than his father, if his more limited opportunities are taken into account. His profligacy

was scandalous in an age by no means squeamish. He broke into convents, regardless of the vows of the fair recluses, and men talked privately of even worse enormities. He was a meaner robber than his father. On one occasion he took money from a Jew whose son had turned Christian, undertaking to bring the young man back to Judaism. He did not succeed, but he kept half the fee for his royal advocacy. Fifty Saxons accused of poaching had successfully passed the ordeal of fire. Rufus punished them, nevertheless, declaring that God was an unjust judge.

His courtiers were a band of thieves and robbers. In the houses where they were quartered during royal progresses they insulted the ladies, and frequently burned before the owner's door such articles as they could neither conveniently carry off nor sell. "Never day dawned," says the Chronicle, "but he (Rufus) rose a worse man than he had lain down; never sun set but he lay down a worse man than he had risen."

One morning, fresh from a heavy debauch, he went out to hunt in the New Forest, and was some time afterwards found by certain poor charcoal-burners with the arrow of a hunter or an assassin (most probably the latter) in his breast. His younger brother Henry was in the Forest at the time, and may have known something about the transaction. At all events, he showed much alacrity in laying claim to the Crown. It was noted as a judgment of Heaven that Richard, William the Conqueror's second son, as well as a nephew of William Rufus, likewise came to violent ends in the New Forest.

Henry I. (1100—1135.)

Henry I., with better mental gifts than his brother, was a miracle of treachery, vindictiveness, and avarice. His praise of a man was a sure sign that he intended to ruin him. An old favourite boasted that he could build as magnificent a monastery as the king. Henry had him harassed by iniquitous law-suits till he died of a broken heart. Duc de la Barre-en-Ouche, a literary knight, satirized him in a song. Henry had him seized and blinded, and the poor man dashed his brains out in despair. He was not even Henry's vassal. Juliana de Breteuil, the king's natural daughter, objecting to

having her two children's eyes put out, was ordered by her amiable parent to be dragged through a frozen moat. When the last great sea-king, Magnus, was slain in Ireland he left in custody of a citizen of Lincoln an immense hoard of 20,000lbs. in silver. Henry promptly threw the banker into a dungeon and appropriated the treasure. On the death of Gilbert, Bishop of London, Henry seized his effects. The holy man's silver and gold were carried to the king's exchequer in the episcopal boots.

The general pillage—taxation it could not be called—was passing belief. "Those who had nothing to give," says the faithful chronicler, "were driven from their humble dwellings, or, the doors being torn off their hinges, were left open to be plundered; or their miserable chattels being taken away, they were reduced to the extreme of poverty or in other way afflicted and tormented; while against those who were thought to possess something certain, new and imaginary offences were alleged; when not daring to defend themselves in a plea against the king, they were stripped of their property and plunged into misery."

His Saxon subjects he treated with undisguised contempt; while his only son, William, who, before his father's demise, providentially perished in the wreck of the White ship, had repeatedly threatened that when he came to the throne he would yoke them like beasts to the plough. A gluttonous feast of lampreys terminated Henry's career, but his death brought no redress to the miserable people.

Stephen (1135—1154.)

Stephen, nephew of the late king and grandson of the Conqueror, in defiance of his solemn oath of allegiance to Maud, Henry's daughter—kings' are like dicers' oaths—at once sought the kingly office, to which he was elected by the aldermen and Common Council of London! All the horrors of a disputed succession ensued—disputed successions and regencies are among the advantages of the monarchical system of government on which the admirers of royalty seldom enlarge. From end to end, the land was filled with rapine. Stephen was a mere swashbuckler; while Maud was an imperious, unfeeling woman, who could inspire no attachment. The perfection of human anarchy was attained. Everywhere frowning castles, built by forced labour, arose;

their lords were undisguised bandits, who hauled men and women into their foul dens to rob them of their all. "Some," say the Chronicles, "they hanged up by the feet and smothered with foul smoke; others they hanged by the thumbs or the head, while fire was put to their feet; about the heads of others they knotted cords and bound them so that they went into the brain. Some were cast into pits where there were adders, snakes, and toads, and died there. Many of the castles had in them a 'loathy and grim,' which was a drag for the neck, such as hardly two or three men could lift. This was thus applied: being fastened to a beam, the sharp iron was placed round the man's neck, so that he could neither sit, nor lie, nor sleep, but must bear all this iron. Many thousands they wore out with hunger. To till the ground was to plough the sea. If two or three men were seen riding up to a town, all the inhabitants fled, taking them for plunderers. And this lasted, growing worse and worse, throughout Stephen's reign. Men said openly that Christ and his saints had gone to sleep."

It is the unspeakable misfortune of Englishmen that the true history of their monarchy has never yet been written by a competent hand. The Humes, Freemans, Froudes, Macaulays and Greens are scholars and polished writers, but the "root of the matter is not in them." They are respecters of persons, party advocates or word-painters, removed, it may be through no fault of their own, from all living contact and sympathy with the people. Comte's dictum, "The working class is not, properly speaking, a class at all, but constitutes the body of society; from it proceeds the various special classes which we regard as organs necessary to that body"—is the true key to universal history, and they comprehend it not. Royalty, aristocracy, and plutocracy are not organs necessary to the body of society. They are but excrescences. They exist only for reprobation and extinction. "By their fruits ye shall know them;" but by their fruits, alas! they have never been made known by historians to the people of England. Royalty and aristocracy have been treated by nearly all English annalists as if they were the body of society, for whom the workers live, move, and have their being. Wanted—a competent English Historian. None but Republicans and Democrats need apply.

CHAPTER IV.

PLANTAGENET ROYALTY.

God said, I am tired of kings,
I suffer them no more;
Up to mine ear the morning
Brings the outrage of the poor.

My angel, his name is Freedom,
Choose him to be your king;
He shall cut pathways east and west
And fend you with his wing.

EMERSON.

STRIP the lives of the kings and queens of England of the meretricious glamour of historic, or rather histrionic, art, and what remains to be recorded is one long weary catalogue of human folly, depravity, and crime. No wonder our historians give play to their imaginations. If they did not permit themselves that indulgence, they must needs abandon their task in disgust. They would find themselves in a position somewhat similar to that of the criminal who was allowed to choose between the galleys and a searching study of the works of Guiccardini. The convict elected to peruse Guiccardini, but soon discovered his mistake, and went cheerfully to the galleys.

HENRY II. (1154-1189).

Henry II., the son of Matilda, was the first of the Plantagenets who misgoverned England with all their might for more than three hundred years—from 1154 to 1485. His one aim in life was to render the monarchy absolute, and except from the Church he encountered but little opposition. In Stephen's time "Christ and His saints had gone to sleep," and during Henry's reign they can scarcely be said to have waked up. If he did not expressly order the brutal murder of Thomas à Becket, which sent a thrill of horror through Christendom, his words were, to say the least, highly am-

biguous. His notions of religion were peculiar and original. When he did penance at à Becket's shrine, it was from no sentiment of remorse, but because he hoped to cajole the saint to use his influence to get him (Henry) out of certain troubles that then beset him.

For the sake of her large possessions in France, he married a notorious courtesan and *divorcée*. His own infidelities were unbounded. Among his mistresses was the fair Rosamond Clifford, of Woodstock labyrinth fame, whom the virtuous Queen Eleanor is said to have compelled to drink poison by holding a dagger to her throat.

Irishmen in particular have reason to execrate the memory of this king. To him they owe the beginning of their long-protracted national agony. The occasion was befitting. One Irish chief or prince had made off with another chief's wife, and being brought to book for his misconduct by the over-King of Ireland, he posted off to do homage to Henry for his possessions. But years before this auspicious event Henry had concluded that Ireland "was commodious to him," and that it was desirable "to enlarge the bounds of the Church, to restrain the progress of vices, to correct the manners of the people, to plant virtue among them, and to increase the Christian religion!" The Pope had seen matters in the same light all the more clearly that Peter's pence was an uncertain quantity so far as Ireland was concerned. The result had been an annexational Papal bull in Henry's favour.

His last years were not cheerfully spent. His sons, Henry, Richard, and John all rose in arms against him. Eventually he was thoroughly beaten, and driven in headlong flight from his birthplace, Le Mans. As he beheld the flames of the city ascend, he bitterly cursed God. His end was not edifying. His last words were, "Woe is me! Shame be upon me, a conquered king, and may God's curse be upon the children who have stretched me here!" So much for the conqueror of Ireland.

Richard I. (1189—1199).

Henry was succeeded by his dutiful son Richard I. This man was called Lion Heart, by reason of his habits of violence and brawling; while his fellow-crusader, Philip of

France, was known as the Lamb, his manners being courteous and conciliatory. Richard was a mere atrocious blood-shedder, and nothing else. He had plenty of that animal courage which is still to be had in such abundance at the rate of eighteenpence a-day. He was neither statesman nor general. In both these respects he was greatly inferior to the infidel Saladin. He put up every office in the State for sale, in order to raise money for his mad expedition to the Holy Land. His subsequent ransom cost the nation some £300,000—an immense sum for such a worthless bravo.

He appropriately met his death in a petty brawl before the Castle of Chaluz, whose owner had acquired some treasure-trove which Richard coveted. Prowling round the walls with a mercenary band, he was hit by an archer, whose father and two brothers he had killed. On his death-bed Richard is said to have pardoned his slayer; but in point of fact he was flayed alive, while the rest of the garrison were hanged to a man. Sir Walter Scott, and others who have converted this merciless and purposeless scourge of humanity into a hero, have truly much to account for. He himself formed a much more reasonable judgment when, speaking comprehensively of his house, he said, "We came of the devil, and we shall go to the devil."

John (1199—1216.)

Richard was succeeded by his brother John, whose character is summed up in one terrible sentence of contemporary hate: "Foul as it is, hell itself is defiled by the fouler presence of John." He was an incomparable scoundrel, a compound of all the royal vices—cruelty, lust, avarice, faithlessness, ingratitude, blood-guiltiness. To make sure of the crown he murdered his nephew Arthur in cold blood, and threw his body into the Seine. To retain the crown he became the vassal and tributary of the Pope. To his father and to his brother he was the most shameless of traitors. His Court was a brothel. Of right and wrong he recked nothing. Yet this right royal ruffian, who "wearied God," signed Magna Charta, the foundation stone of such liberties as Englishmen possess.

It is the severest possible condemnation of royalty to say that the worst kings are always practically the best. Not

that King John meant any good to the English people—far from it. The very thought of the Charter made him furious. He flung himself on the ground, gnawing sticks and straw like a wild beast. He got his over-lord, the Pope, to disallow every concession, and proceeded with mercenary troops from the Continent, to burn, slay, and harry the country from end to end. But the great avenger, death, was at hand. Gluttony or poison killed him, and Englishmen rejoiced and were exceeding glad.

Henry III. (1216—1272.)

John was succeeded by his son, Henry III., a mere boy. He turned out an imbecile, a despicable braggart, and a tyrant to the full limit of his capacity. He could neither manage a horse nor order a battalion. Men called him *cor cereum regis*, or royal waxen heart. Yet he was a true son of John. In the songs of the day he is "the bitter king," "the enemy of the whole realm, of the Church, and of God." His Court lived at free quarters wherever it moved. The royal retainers robbed in all directions with impunity. One-sixth of the revenue was bestowed on foreign favourites. The Battenbergs, Weimars, and Leiningens are no new inflictions. Magna Charta was wholly disregarded.

But a new spirit of liberty had begun to animate the breasts of Englishmen. A deliverer was at hand. Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, threw down the gauntlet to the royal power. A man of stainless honour and a born soldier, Earl Simon was yet greater as a statesman. He was the father of representative government. Having defeated Henry and his son Edward, he summoned to parliament in 1265 not merely knights of shires, but burgesses of "communes." In physics the discovery of the law of gravitation was all-important; in politics the discovery of the true law of popular representation was not less so. It had escaped the subtlest philosophers of Greece and Rome, and Greek and Roman democracy had made shipwreck in consequence. Little mattered it that the founder of the House of Communes perished in battle within a few months of his imperishable achievement. He was before his time.

The victor of Evesham, Edward, "the greatest of the Plantagenets," as he has been called, showed the quality of

his royal greatness by causing Earl Simon's body to be shamefully mutilated. His head and hands were presented to a second Herodias, Maud, wife of Roger de Mortimer. But the patriot's work neither Edward nor any of his successors, whether Plantagenet, Tudor, Stuart, or Guelph, could undo. Not a civilised people in the world but has taken its cue from Earl Simon. Even the unhappy Egyptians we have seen making a promising attempt with their Chamber of Notables—an attempt, alas! to be stamped out in blood and flame by the Grand Old Man and his Cabinet of all the talents and all the virtues. Need we chide the Henrys and Edwards with such malefactors in our midst?

Edward I. (1272—1307.)

Edward I. succeeded his father, "the bitter king."

"The greatest of the Plantagenets" may be regarded as great beside such colossal criminals as John and Richard III. In no other sense was he great. Compare him with any real benefactor of mankind, and he at once becomes a moral pigmy. Kings and queens to shine at all must be judged by the lowest standard of moral excellence—that is to say by the royal standard. In a royal personage the mere absence of a marked vice becomes an astonishing virtue. What surprises us with regard to princes is not that they are good, but that everything considered, they are not a great deal worse.

When the Prince of Wales's mischievous trip to India was being planned, Mr. Bright announced that H.R.H. was "good natured." What more reasonable therefore than saddle the taxpayer with the cost of the jaunt? Had we not every reason to expect that a prince would be as surly as a bear? For reasons about equally cogent Edward I. has been styled the English Justinian. He was indeed a lawyer in the sense that, when he wished to rob his neighbours in Scotland, Wales, or France of what belonged to them, he generally prefaced his attacks by legal quibbles of which an Old Bailey lawyer might be ashamed. He tried his utmost to set aside the provisions of the Great Charter, and when he found the barons too strong for him he shed some crocodile tears in Westminster Hall, and abandoned the attempt.

By royal decree he made the Jews give up usury on pain

of death, and in London alone two hundred and eighty of them were hanged. The position of the chosen race in England has greatly improved since then. But recently the Liberal Administration sent to Egypt a powerful fleet and army to extort exorbitant interest on their behalf. On the whole, Edward's method was more commendable. Better far hang a few Goschens, Rothschilds, and Oppenheims than burn Alexandria and slaughter thousands of inoffensive fellaheen at Tel-el-Kebir, or of gallant Arabs at El Teb.

It was the one great ambition of Edward's life to impose the Norman yoke on the whole British islands. To effect this object he drained England of men and money, while inflicting on Scotland and Wales untold miseries. Of the two last native princes of Wales, Llewellyn and David, he caused the head of the former to be stuck on the Tower, crowned with ivy the latter he commanded [to be drawn, hanged, disembowelled, and quartered. They had been guilty of the enormity of standing up for the independence of the ancient Cymric race.

But it was in Scotland that Edward's policy of craft and violence met with a check, the consequences of which can hardly be exaggerated. He had little difficulty in cajoling and intimidating the Scottish nobles (the most unpatriotic in Europe) into submission to his yoke; and when that was accomplished, according to feudal ideas and precedents, all should have been achieved. But what was Edward's rage and astonishment very speedily to find himself face to face with a rising of the Scottish people, a phenomenon absolutely new in feudal Europe! They were summoned to arms by a simple country gentleman, Sir William Wallace, without aristocratic connections of any kind.

This extraordinary man was the forerunner of the Kosciuskos, Capodistrias, and Garibaldis of later times. He was the first soldier in Europe who fought, not for a dynasty, but for a nation. He brushed aside all the technicalities of the feudal law, and boldly assumed in the face of the world the title of Guardian of the Realm of Scotland. He showed how burghers and peasants, with spears in their hands, might overthrow the iron-clad knighthood of Christendom, hitherto considered invincible. He was the first to form the British infantry square, and despite feudalism he introduced the

conscription. His motto was "God armeth the Patriot." In Wallace modern democracy found its first great leader.

After repeated successes against overwhelming odds in the field, aggravated tenfold by the abominable treachery of the Scottish nobles in the council, he was defeated by Edward in a desperate battle at Falkirk, and ultimately betrayed to "the greatest of the Plantagenets" for gold. He was hurried to London, tried at Westminster, and drawn, hanged, disembowelled while yet alive, and quartered at Smithfield. It was not pretended that he had ever sworn allegiance to Edward. His great crime was that he had fought for the honour and independence of Scotland after her feudal lords had ignominiously succumbed. He was judicially murdered.

But like Simon de Montfort, his work was done. His example had made the Scots, the poorest and most uncivilised people in Europe, a nation of stalwart freemen, henceforth resolute never to unite with their powerful neighbour except on terms of perfect equality. Had it been otherwise, England would have had not one Ireland, but two on her hands to day. Englishmen, quite as much as Scotsmen, have reason to bless the memory of the Scottish hero. The burghers of Flanders and the herdsmen of Switzerland were not slow to learn the lesson he had taught. No matter that his head, crowned in mockery with laurel, was stuck with that of his eldest brother, Sir John Wallace, on London bridge, feudal ruffianism in mail had received its death-blow in Europe. How puny the greatest achievement of "the greatest of the Plantagenets" with such a result!

"But bleeding and bound though her Wallace wight
For his long-loved country die,
Yet the bugle ne'er sang to a braver knight
Than Wallace of Elderslie;
And the day of his glory shall ne'er depart,
His head unentombed shall with glory be balmed,
From the blood-streaming altar his spirit shall start,
Though the raven hath fed on his mouldering heart,
Yet a nobler was never embalmed,"

CHAPTER III.

NORMAN ROYALTY.

William came over the sea,
With bloody sword came he.
Cold heart and bloody hand
Now rule the English land.

SNORRO'S SAGA.

TO realise in some degree the manifold calamities that royalty has heaped on the English people it is not necessary to go beyond the period of the Norman Conquest. The fatal year of Hastings, 1066, will ever remain the blackest in our annals. In that year sixty thousand of the greatest ruffians that could be collected not merely in Normandy, but in all Europe, crossed the Channel, and by sheer brute force possessed themselves of the land. They succeeded in garotting the entire English people, and to this day their descendants, or rather their pretended descendants, on the throne, in the peerage, and in the magistracy, keep a tight grip on the nation's throat. Conquests there have been before and since in the world's history, but never one with results so widely, so enduringly disastrous. The policy of the Norman robber is illustrated to-day not less by the misery and degradation of the Irish peasant, the Indian ryot, and the Egyptian fellah, than by the squalor of the East-end of London and the ruin of agricultural England.

WILLIAM THE NORMAN (1066—1087.)

The leader of the freebooters, variously known as William the Bastard, William the Conqueror, and William the Great, was the son of a tanner's daughter and a Norman duke styled, for sufficient reasons, Robert the Devil. Duke Robert and his predecessors had established in their Neustrian conquest a system of government which William applied to England with sundry amplifications and refinements of his

own. To him we are indebted for the feudal system and the game laws in all their rigour.

William de Jumiège, a Norman writer, gives us to understand that these boons were not always appreciated, even in Normandy, by the peasants and other unprivileged persons, who ought to have known better. They were unreasonable enough on one occasion to rebel, and the gentle Norman commander who corrected them, according to William de Jumiège, "cut off his prisoners' hands and feet, and sent them back in that helpless state to their comrades, to check them from such practices, and to be a warning to them not to expose themselves to something worse. And when the peasants received this lesson they returned to their proper places at the plough." Comment is unnecessary.

William's claim to be King of England was without legal or moral justification. The office had always been, and is now, simply one of trust, conferred by the representatives of the nation for the people's good, and not for the monarch's private advantage. However irregular at times may have been the practice, there is nothing more certain than that there resides in parliament plenary power to depose and to elect kings and queens as it has a mind. It is a right rooted in reason, and the practice of ten centuries. When the Long Parliament formally abolished royalty it resolved that "the office of king in this nation is unnecessary, burthensome, and dangerous." For one or all of these reasons the *régime* of the House of Brunswick might similarly be terminated to-morrow.

The Saxon Witanagemot never hesitated to deal sharply with perverse kings. Æthelwald, of Northumbria was deposed in 765; Alcred in 774; Sigeberht of Wessex in 755; Æthelbred II. in 1013, and Harthacnut in 1037.

Since the Conquest, Parliament in 1327 deposed Edward II. (the first King of England, curiously enough, whose reign had been made to date from the day following his predecessor's death, instead of from the ceremony of election and coronation); Richard II. in 1399, and James II. in 1688. In the case of Charles I., Parliament went a step further. It not merely took away the crown, but the head of the wearer also. Yea, "And what king's majesty," asks the immortal champion of English freedom, John Milton, "sitting on an

exalted throne, ever shone so brightly as that of the people o England then did, when, shaking off that old superstition which had prevailed a long time, they gave judgment on the king himself, or rather on an enemy that had been their king, caught, as it were, in a net by his own laws, and scrupled not to inflict on him, being guilty, the same punishment which he would have inflicted on any other?" . . . "This," he continues, "is the God who uses to throw down proud and unruly kings, and utterly to extirpate them and their family. By his manifest impulse being set at work to recover our almost lost liberty, we went on in no obscure but an illustrious passage, pointed out and made plain to us by God Himself." We could put up with a hereditary line of Miltons; but they, alas! do not, like kings, run in families.

Generally, it is true, but not always, the National Council elected the monarch from a particular family. Cnut, the Dane, and Harold, the gallant but unfortunate English prince who fell at Hastings, had no blood relationship to the house of Cerdic. Harold, whose notions of Government seem singularly modern and enlightened, when William modestly demanded that England south of the Humber should be given up to him and his robber horde, proudly replied, "My royalty comes to me from my people, and, without my people's consent, I cannot lay it down." Indeed, it was not till the house of York, themselves usurpers, came on the scene that any serious attempt was made to treat England as if it were a private estate transmissible by primogeniture. To substitute the idea of territorial possession for that of personal and fiduciary office was the mischievous work of the lawyers, who are ever prone to fall into false analogies. Parliament, however, did not fail to reassert its old supremacy. As it had done in the case of the Fourth Henry, so it did in that of the Seventh. It set up a new royal stock, excluding the whole house of York.

To the Yorkist pretention of indefeasible hereditary right the Stuarts sought to add the still more preposterous claim of divine right. Bad gospel came to the aid of worse law. The Convention Parliament treated both without ceremony. For two months, from the 23rd of December to the 13th of February (1688-9), the monarchy was in abeyance. William and Mary, the dutiful nephew and daughter of the exiled

James II., were then invested with regal power; and finally, in 1700, the succession was settled on Sophia of Hanover, granddaughter of James I., and the heirs of her body being Protestants, to the exclusion not merely of the direct line but of the elder children of Sophia's mother, Elizabeth.

The title of the present royal family to the throne is therefore a Parliamentary title, pure and simple, and what Parliament has bestowed it is clearly competent for Parliament to withdraw. All through the centuries royalty has been an unalleviated curse to the English people. It can no more change its essential character than can an Ethiopian his skin or a leopard his spots. A really Liberal Parliament, instead of manacling Ireland and garotting Egypt, would busy itself with the repeal of the Act of Settlement. The intellect and conscience of mankind are alike sick of kings and queens, limited and unlimited, small and great. "Unnecessary, burdensome, and dangerous," should be written with an iron pen on every crown in Europe.

It is the boast of every snob in England that his ancestors "came over with the Conqueror." Well, ancestors, like other people, may be judged by the company they kept. Let us see, then, what manner of man this Conqueror was. Was he a benefactor of his species? Contemporary history is not silent with regard to his achievements. Take this as a sample:—The men of Northumbria were not partial to his kingship, and this is how, according to his unscrupulous panegyrist, Odericus Vitalis, he dealt with the region between Humber and Tyne: "He (the Conqueror) extended his posts over a space of one hundred miles; he smote most of the inhabitants with the edge of the avenging sword; he destroyed the hiding-places of the others; he laid waste their lands; he burned their houses with all that was therein. Nowhere else did William act with such cruelty, and in this instance he shamefully gave way to evil passions. While he scorned to rule his own wrath, he cut off the guilty and the innocent with equal severity. For, excited by anger, he bade the crops, and the herds, and the household stuff, and every description of food to be gathered in heaps and to be set light to and utterly destroyed altogether—so that all sustenance for man and beast should be at once wasted throughout all the region beyond the Humber. Hence there raged

grievous want far and wide throughout England. Such a misery of famine involved the people that there perished of Christian human beings of either sex and of every age one hundred thousand." Truly a charming gentleman this to accompany in any enterprise !

But William could not always find convenient bodies of human beings to slaughter. There were unhappy intervals in his life when he was obliged to content himself with shedding the blood of the lower animals. "He made many deer parks," says the Saxon Chronicle, "and he established laws so that whosoever killed a hart, or a hind, or a boar should be blinded ; for William loved the high game as if he had been their father."

These fatherly instincts induced him to lay waste an immense area between Winchester and the sea. This tract, subsequently known as the New Forest, embraced sixty parishes, with their churches and villages. These were burned to the ground and the inhabitants left homeless. "So stern was he," says the Chronicle, "that no man durst gainsay his will. Rich men bemoaned and poor men shuddered ; but he recked not the hatred of them all."

Howbeit, one good man there was who could not be induced to profit by William's villanies—the Monk Guitand. This faithful priest was summoned from Normandy to receive an English bishopric. He came, saw, and not merely declined the preferment, but asssigned reasons for conduct so unusual in an ecclesiastic. He was sick, he said, and perplexed with many doubts, sorrows, and frailties ; but were he ten times fitter to guide others, he would never share in the spoils of blood. "When he thought of the crimes by which England had been won, he trembled to touch it, with all its wealth, as though it glowed with the fire of hell."

While engaged in the congenial task of burning the town of Mantes, William received a fatal injury, and died at Rouen, September 8th, 1087. No sooner was the breath out of his body than bishops, barons, physicians, courtiers fled in horror. The rabble burst into the apartment, stripped it of everything, leaving the monster's carcase naked on the floor. Of his sons, the eldest, Robert, was, at the time, in arms against him ; the other two hurried off to secure their share of the spoil.

It was left to a simple Norman knight, "for the honour of God and the Norman name," to secure sepulture for the tyrant's bones. He conveyed them to the Abbey Church at Caen, and had a grave dug for their reception between the choir and the altar. But even then a serious difficulty occured. The Bishop of Evreux had performed the obsequies, and the coffin was about to be lowered into the tomb, when there stood forward from the throng Oscelin Fitz-Arthur, and said, "The ground on which you stand was the site of my father's house. The man who lies dead before you, and for whom you bid us pray, took my father's land from him by force and by wrong, and here, by abuse of his ducal power, he built this church. I claim back the land; and I forbid, in the name of God, that the robber should be covered with ground that is mine, and that he should have a burial-place in my heritage." The truth of Fitz-Arthur's assertion was notorious, and the assembled prelates had to guarantee him ample compensation before the grave was permitted to close over the remains of the Conqueror of England, who had barbarously ordered the body of King Harold to be buried on the beach, like a felon's, below watermark.

By the time of William's death, all England, with insignificant exceptions, had been clutched by his cut-throat followers, while the royal revenue, which in Edward the Confessor's time stood at £40,000 per annum, had, according to Giraldus Cambrensis, reached the extraordinary sum of £1,061 10s. 1½d. per day!

The population of England at the time of the Conquest is set down with proximate accuracy at about two million souls. During the reigns of the Conqueror and his sons, what through the sword, famine, and exile, it was reduced probably by one-third, and not till the time of Charles II. was it found to have more than doubled itself; so frightful was the curse inflicted on the unhappy country by the swarm of thieves from whom royalty and aristocracy are proud to claim descent.

William Rufus (1087—1100.)

William the Conqueror was succeeded by his son, William Rufus—a greater villain even than his father, if his more limited opportunities are taken into account. His profligacy

was scandalous in an age by no means squeamish. He broke into convents, regardless of the vows of the fair recluses, and men talked privately of even worse enormities. He was a meaner robber than his father. On one occasion he took money from a Jew whose son had turned Christian, undertaking to bring the young man back to Judaism. He did not succeed, but he kept half the fee for his royal advocacy. Fifty Saxons accused of poaching had successfully passed the ordeal of fire. Rufus punished them, nevertheless, declaring that God was an unjust judge.

His courtiers were a band of thieves and robbers. In the houses where they were quartered during royal progresses they insulted the ladies, and frequently burned before the owner's door such articles as they could neither conveniently carry off nor sell. "Never day dawned," says the Chronicle, "but he (Rufus) rose a worse man than he had lain down; never sun set but he lay down a worse man than he had risen."

One morning, fresh from a heavy debauch, he went out to hunt in the New Forest, and was some time afterwards found by certain poor charcoal-burners with the arrow of a hunter or an assassin (most probably the latter) in his breast. His younger brother Henry was in the Forest at the time, and may have known something about the transaction. At all events, he showed much alacrity in laying claim to the Crown. It was noted as a judgment of Heaven that Richard, William the Conqueror's second son, as well as a nephew of William Rufus, likewise came to violent ends in the New Forest.

Henry I. (1100—1135.)

Henry I., with better mental gifts than his brother, was a miracle of treachery, vindictiveness, and avarice. His praise of a man was a sure sign that he intended to ruin him. An old favourite boasted that he could build as magnificent a monastery as the king. Henry had him harassed by iniquitous law-suits till he died of a broken heart. Duc de la Barre-en-Ouche, a literary knight, satirized him in a song. Henry had him seized and blinded, and the poor man dashed his brains out in despair. He was not even Henry's vassal. Juliana de Breteuil, the king's natural daughter, objecting to

having her two children's eyes put out, was ordered by her amiable parent to be dragged through a frozen moat. When the last great sea-king, Magnus, was slain in Ireland he left in custody of a citizen of Lincoln an immense hoard of 20,000lbs. in silver. Henry promptly threw the banker into a dungeon and appropriated the treasure. On the death of Gilbert, Bishop of London, Henry seized his effects. The holy man's silver and gold were carried to the king's exchequer in the episcopal boots.

The general pillage—taxation it could not be called—was passing belief. "Those who had nothing to give," says the faithful chronicler, "were driven from their humble dwellings, or, the doors being torn off their hinges, were left open to be plundered; or their miserable chattels being taken away, they were reduced to the extreme of poverty or in other way afflicted and tormented; while against those who were thought to possess something certain, new and imaginary offences were alleged; when not daring to defend themselves in a plea against the king, they were stripped of their property and plunged into misery."

His Saxon subjects he treated with undisguised contempt; while his only son, William, who, before his father's demise, providentially perished in the wreck of the White ship, had repeatedly threatened that when he came to the throne he would yoke them like beasts to the plough. A gluttonous feast of lampreys terminated Henry's career, but his death brought no redress to the miserable people.

Stephen (1135—1154.)

Stephen, nephew of the late king and grandson of the Conqueror, in defiance of his solemn oath of allegiance to Maud, Henry's daughter—kings' are like dicers' oaths—at once sought the kingly office, to which he was elected by the aldermen and Common Council of London! All the horrors of a disputed succession ensued—disputed successions and regencies are among the advantages of the monarchical system of government on which the admirers of royalty seldom enlarge. From end to end, the land was filled with rapine. Stephen was a mere swashbuckler; while Maud was an imperious, unfeeling woman, who could inspire no attachment. The perfection of human anarchy was attained. Everywhere frowning castles, built by forced labour, arose;

their lords were undisguised bandits, who hauled men and women into their foul dens to rob them of their all. "Some," say the Chronicles, "they hanged up by the feet and smothered with foul smoke; others they hanged by the thumbs or the head, while fire was put to their feet; about the heads of others they knotted cords and bound them so that they went into the brain. Some were cast into pits where there were adders, snakes, and toads, and died there. Many of the castles had in them a 'loathy and grim,' which was a drag for the neck, such as hardly two or three men could lift. This was thus applied: being fastened to a beam, the sharp iron was placed round the man's neck, so that he could neither sit, nor lie, nor sleep, but must bear all this iron. Many thousands they wore out with hunger. To till the ground was to plough the sea. If two or three men were seen riding up to a town, all the inhabitants fled, taking them for plunderers. And this lasted, growing worse and worse, throughout Stephen's reign. Men said openly that Christ and his saints had gone to sleep."

It is the unspeakable misfortune of Englishmen that the true history of their monarchy has never yet been written by a competent hand. The Humes, Freemans, Froudes, Macaulays and Greens are scholars and polished writers, but the "root of the matter is not in them." They are respecters of persons, party advocates or word-painters, removed, it may be through no fault of their own, from all living contact and sympathy with the people. Comte's dictum, "The working class is not, properly speaking, a class at all, but constitutes the body of society; from it proceeds the various special classes which we regard as organs necessary to that body"—is the true key to universal history, and they comprehend it not. Royalty, aristocracy, and plutocracy are not organs necessary to the body of society. They are but excrescences. They exist only for reprobation and extinction. "By their fruits ye shall know them;" but by their fruits, alas! they have never been made known by historians to the people of England. Royalty and aristocracy have been treated by nearly all English annalists as if they were the body of society, for whom the workers live, move, and have their being. Wanted—a competent English Historian. None but Republicans and Democrats need apply.

CHAPTER IV.

PLANTAGENET ROYALTY.

God said, I am tired of kings,
I suffer them no more;
Up to mine ear the morning
Brings the outrage of the poor.

My angel, his name is Freedom,
Choose him to be your king;
He shall cut pathways east and west
And fend you with his wing.

EMERSON.

STRIP the lives of the kings and queens of England of the meretricious glamour of historic, or rather histrionic, art, and what remains to be recorded is one long weary catalogue of human folly, depravity, and crime. No wonder our historians give play to their imaginations. If they did not permit themselves that indulgence, they must needs abandon their task in disgust. They would find themselves in a position somewhat similar to that of the criminal who was allowed to choose between the galleys and a searching study of the works of Guiccardini. The convict elected to peruse Guiccardini, but soon discovered his mistake, and went cheerfully to the galleys.

HENRY II. (1154-1189).

Henry II., the son of Matilda, was the first of the Plantagenets who misgoverned England with all their might for more than three hundred years—from 1154 to 1485. His one aim in life was to render the monarchy absolute, and except from the Church he encountered but little opposition. In Stephen's time "Christ and His saints had gone to sleep," and during Henry's reign they can scarcely be said to have waked up. If he did not expressly order the brutal murder of Thomas à Becket, which sent a thrill of horror through Christendom, his words were, to say the least, highly am-

biguous. His notions of religion were peculiar and original. When he did penance at à Becket's shrine, it was from no sentiment of remorse, but because he hoped to cajole the saint to use his influence to get him (Henry) out of certain troubles that then beset him.

For the sake of her large possessions in France, he married a notorious courtesan and *divorcée*. His own infidelities were unbounded. Among his mistresses was the fair Rosamond Clifford, of Woodstock labyrinth fame, whom the virtuous Queen Eleanor is said to have compelled to drink poison by holding a dagger to her throat.

Irishmen in particular have reason to execrate the memory of this king. To him they owe the beginning of their long-protracted national agony. The occasion was befitting. One Irish chief or prince had made off with another chief's wife, and being brought to book for his misconduct by the over-King of Ireland, he posted off to do homage to Henry for his possessions. But years before this auspicious event Henry had concluded that Ireland "was commodious to him," and that it was desirable "to enlarge the bounds of the Church, to restrain the progress of vices, to correct the manners of the people, to plant virtue among them, and to increase the Christian religion!" The Pope had seen matters in the same light all the more clearly that Peter's pence was an uncertain quantity so far as Ireland was concerned. The result had been an annexational Papal bull in Henry's favour.

His last years were not cheerfully spent. His sons, Henry, Richard, and John all rose in arms against him. Eventually he was thoroughly beaten, and driven in headlong flight from his birthplace, Le Mans. As he beheld the flames of the city ascend, he bitterly cursed God. His end was not edifying. His last words were, "Woe is me! Shame be upon me, a conquered king, and may God's curse be upon the children who have stretched me here!" So much for the conqueror of Ireland.

Richard I. (1189—1199).

Henry was succeeded by his dutiful son Richard I. This man was called Lion Heart, by reason of his habits of violence and brawling; while his fellow-crusader, Philip of

France, was known as the Lamb, his manners being courteous and conciliatory. Richard was a mere atrocious blood-shedder, and nothing else. He had plenty of that animal courage which is still to be had in such abundance at the rate of eighteenpence a-day. He was neither statesman nor general. In both these respects he was greatly inferior to the infidel Saladin. He put up every office in the State for sale, in order to raise money for his mad expedition to the Holy Land. His subsequent ransom cost the nation some £300,000—an immense sum for such a worthless bravo.

He appropriately met his death in a petty brawl before the Castle of Chaluz, whose owner had acquired some treasure-trove which Richard coveted. Prowling round the walls with a mercenary band, he was hit by an archer, whose father and two brothers he had killed. On his death-bed Richard is said to have pardoned his slayer; but in point of fact he was flayed alive, while the rest of the garrison were hanged to a man. Sir Walter Scott, and others who have converted this merciless and purposeless scourge of humanity into a hero, have truly much to account for. He himself formed a much more reasonable judgment when, speaking comprehensively of his house, he said, "We came of the devil, and we shall go to the devil."

John (1199—1216.)

Richard was succeeded by his brother John, whose character is summed up in one terrible sentence of contemporary hate: "Foul as it is, hell itself is defiled by the fouler presence of John." He was an incomparable scoundrel, a compound of all the royal vices—cruelty, lust, avarice, faithlessness, ingratitude, blood-guiltiness. To make sure of the crown he murdered his nephew Arthur in cold blood, and threw his body into the Seine. To retain the crown he became the vassal and tributary of the Pope. To his father and to his brother he was the most shameless of traitors. His Court was a brothel. Of right and wrong he recked nothing. Yet this right royal ruffian, who "wearied God," signed Magna Charta, the foundation stone of such liberties as Englishmen possess.

It is the severest possible condemnation of royalty to say that the worst kings are always practically the best. Not

that King John meant any good to the English people—far from it. The very thought of the Charter made him furious. He flung himself on the ground, gnawing sticks and straw like a wild beast. He got his over-lord, the Pope, to disallow every concession, and proceeded with mercenary troops from the Continent, to burn, slay, and harry the country from end to end. But the great avenger, death, was at hand. Gluttony or poison killed him, and Englishmen rejoiced and were exceeding glad.

Henry III. (1216—1272.)

John was succeeded by his son, Henry III., a mere boy. He turned out an imbecile, a despicable braggart, and a tyrant to the full limit of his capacity. He could neither manage a horse nor order a battalion. Men called him *cor cereum regis*, or royal waxen heart. Yet he was a true son of John. In the songs of the day he is "the bitter king," "the enemy of the whole realm, of the Church, and of God." His Court lived at free quarters wherever it moved. The royal retainers robbed in all directions with impunity. One-sixth of the revenue was bestowed on foreign favourites. The Battenbergs, Weimars, and Leiningens are no new inflictions. Magna Charta was wholly disregarded.

But a new spirit of liberty had begun to animate the breasts of Englishmen. A deliverer was at hand. Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, threw down the gauntlet to the royal power. A man of stainless honour and a born soldier, Earl Simon was yet greater as a statesman. He was the father of representative government. Having defeated Henry and his son Edward, he summoned to parliament in 1265 not merely knights of shires, but burgesses of "communes." In physics the discovery of the law of gravitation was all-important; in politics the discovery of the true law of popular representation was not less so. It had escaped the subtlest philosophers of Greece and Rome, and Greek and Roman democracy had made shipwreck in consequence. Little mattered it that the founder of the House of Communes perished in battle within a few months of his imperishable achievement. He was before his time.

The victor of Evesham, Edward, "the greatest of the Plantagenets," as he has been called, showed the quality of

his royal greatness by causing Earl Simon's body to be shamefully mutilated. His head and hands were presented to a second Herodias, Maud, wife of Roger de Mortimer. But the patriot's work neither Edward nor any of his successors, whether Plantagenet, Tudor, Stuart, or Guelph, could undo. Not a civilised people in the world but has taken its cue from Earl Simon. Even the unhappy Egyptians we have seen making a promising attempt with their Chamber of Notables—an attempt, alas! to be stamped out in blood and flame by the Grand Old Man and his Cabinet of all the talents and all the virtues. Need we chide the Henrys and Edwards with such malefactors in our midst?

Edward I. (1272—1307.)

Edward I. succeeded his father, "the bitter king."

"The greatest of the Plantagenets" may be regarded as great beside such colossal criminals as John and Richard III. In no other sense was he great. Compare him with any real benefactor of mankind, and he at once becomes a moral pigmy. Kings and queens to shine at all must be judged by the lowest standard of moral excellence—that is to say by the royal standard. In a royal personage the mere absence of a marked vice becomes an astonishing virtue. What surprises us with regard to princes is not that they are good, but that everything considered, they are not a great deal worse.

When the Prince of Wales's mischievous trip to India was being planned, Mr. Bright announced that H.R.H. was "good natured." What more reasonable therefore than saddle the taxpayer with the cost of the jaunt? Had we not every reason to expect that a prince would be as surly as a bear? For reasons about equally cogent Edward I. has been styled the English Justinian. He was indeed a lawyer in the sense that, when he wished to rob his neighbours in Scotland, Wales, or France of what belonged to them, he generally prefaced his attacks by legal quibbles of which an Old Bailey lawyer might be ashamed. He tried his utmost to set aside the provisions of the Great Charter, and when he found the barons too strong for him he shed some crocodile tears in Westminster Hall, and abandoned the attempt.

By royal decree he made the Jews give up usury on pain

of death, and in London alone two hundred and eighty of them were hanged. The position of the chosen race in England has greatly improved since then. But recently the Liberal Administration sent to Egypt a powerful fleet and army to extort exorbitant interest on their behalf. On the whole, Edward's method was more commendable. Better far hang a few Goschens, Rothschilds, and Oppenheims than burn Alexandria and slaughter thousands of inoffensive fellaheen at Tel-el-Kebir, or of gallant Arabs at El Teb.

It was the one great ambition of Edward's life to impose the Norman yoke on the whole British islands. To effect this object he drained England of men and money, while inflicting on Scotland and Wales untold miseries. Of the two last native princes of Wales, Llewellyn and David, he caused the head of the former to be stuck on the Tower, crowned with ivy the latter he commanded to be drawn, hanged, disembowelled, and quartered. They had been guilty of the enormity of standing up for the independence of the ancient Cymric race.

But it was in Scotland that Edward's policy of craft and violence met with a check, the consequences of which can hardly be exaggerated. He had little difficulty in cajoling and intimidating the Scottish nobles (the most unpatriotic in Europe) into submission to his yoke; and when that was accomplished, according to feudal ideas and precedents, all should have been achieved. But what was Edward's rage and astonishment very speedily to find himself face to face with a rising of the Scottish people, a phenomenon absolutely new in feudal Europe! They were summoned to arms by a simple country gentleman, Sir William Wallace, without aristocratic connections of any kind.

This extraordinary man was the forerunner of the Kosciuskos, Capodistrias, and Garibaldis of later times. He was the first soldier in Europe who fought, not for a dynasty, but for a nation. He brushed aside all the technicalities of the feudal law, and boldly assumed in the face of the world the title of Guardian of the Realm of Scotland. He showed how burghers and peasants, with spears in their hands, might overthrow the iron-clad knighthood of Christendom, hitherto considered invincible. He was the first to form the British infantry square, and despite feudalism he introduced the

conscription. His motto was "God armeth the Patriot." In Wallace modern democracy found its first great leader.

After repeated successes against overwhelming odds in the field, aggravated tenfold by the abominable treachery of the Scottish nobles in the council, he was defeated by Edward in a desperate battle at Falkirk, and ultimately betrayed to "the greatest of the Plantagenets" for gold. He was hurried to London, tried at Westminster, and drawn, hanged, disembowelled while yet alive, and quartered at Smithfield. It was not pretended that he had ever sworn allegiance to Edward. His great crime was that he had fought for the honour and independence of Scotland after her feudal lords had ignominiously succumbed. He was judicially murdered.

But like Simon de Montfort, his work was done. His example had made the Scots, the poorest and most uncivilised people in Europe, a nation of stalwart freemen, henceforth resolute never to unite with their powerful neighbour except on terms of perfect equality. Had it been otherwise, England would have had not one Ireland, but two on her hands to day. Englishmen, quite as much as Scotsmen, have reason to bless the memory of the Scottish hero. The burghers of Flanders and the herdsmen of Switzerland were not slow to learn the lesson he had taught. No matter that his head, crowned in mockery with laurel, was stuck with that of his eldest brother, Sir John Wallace, on London bridge, feudal ruffianism in mail had received its death-blow in Europe. How puny the greatest achievement of "the greatest of the Plantagenets" with such a result!

"But bleeding and bound though her Wallace wight
For his long-loved country die,
Yet the bugle ne'er sang to a braver knight
Than Wallace of Elderslie;
And the day of his glory shall ne'er depart,
His head unentombed shall with glory be balmed,
From the blood-streaming altar his spirit shall start,
Though the raven hath fed on his mouldering heart,
Yet a nobler was never embalmed."

MARY (1553—1559.)

To Edward VI. succeeded his sister, Mary the Bloody. Her story is without complexity. She is the sullen, relentless, malignant bigot of English history—the religious persecutor *par excellence*—the female Torquemada. Almost as a matter of course she put to death Lady Jane Grey and her husband, Lord Guildford Dudley, who had aspired to the throne. That was a mere preface to her great undertaking, the extirpation of the Protestant heresy from her dominions.

She settled down to her work with a vigour worthy of her father, the Defender of the Faith. In the Marian persecution it is computed that no fewer than two hundred and seventy-seven persons perished at the stake, to say nothing of other forms of persecution. Five bishops were burnt, twenty-one clergymen, eight lay gentlemen, eighty-four tradesmen, one hundred husbandmen, fifty-five women, and four children! Among those who met their fate with heroic constancy were Hooper, Bishop of Gloucester; Ridley, Bishop of London; and Latimer, Bishop of Worcester; while even Cranmer atoned for previous inconstancy by a courageous end. His heart was found among the ashes, unscathed by the flames. "Be of good cheer!" cried Latimer to Ridley at the stake. "We shall this day kindle such a torch in England as, I trust in God, shall never be extinguished!" Mary literally burnt the Pope out of the kingdom, in spite of the scholarly Legate Pole, who vainly urged on the vindictive woman milder and more Christian measures. After a reign of little more than five years she died childless, in an agony of grief and frenzied distraction, amid execrations all but universal. The cardinal legate died the same day; and "a voice in the night," in our courtly Laureate's drama of "Queen Mary," thus forcibly bids them adieu :—

> "God curse her and her legate! Gardiner burns
> Already, but to pay them full in kind,
> The hottest hold in all the devil's den
> Were but a sort of winter! Sir, in Guernsey
> I watched a woman burn; and in her agony
> The mother came upon her—a child was born—
> And, sir, they hurled it back into the fire,
> That, being but baptized in fire, the babe
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Elizabeth (1559—1603).

To the Bloody Mary succeeded the "Virgin Queen," Elizabeth, daughter of Anne Boleyn. As a matter of fact, Elizabeth was hardly less bloody than her sister. She was beyond a doubt the most shameless dissimulator and liar of her own or almost any age. The very fact that she laid claim to purity of life is about the best proof that she was as even charitable observers were compelled to believe, a woman of the most abandoned morals. Her Court Warrington describes as a place "where there was no love but that of the lusty god of gallantry, Asmodeus," where, according to Faunt, "all enormities reigned in the highest degree." Dudley, the husband of the hapless Amy Robsart, the most callous libertine of the day, the queen openly fondled before the whole Court, calling him her "sweet Robin." His bedroom was placed next to her own. She indulged habitually in the coarsest jests, and swore like a trooper. Hatton, Raleigh, Oxford, Blunt, Simier, Anjou, were all reputed among the number of her lovers.

Her hatreds, like her loves, were not speculative merely. They took instant shape. She collared Hatton, spat on Sir Mathew Arundel, and boxed the ears of the earl marshal.

Her vanity was unbounded. When she died her wardrobe was found to consist of nearly 3,000 dresses, all in the most approved "girl of the period" style. She was dissatisfied with certain portraits of herself, which she imagined conveyed an inadequate impression of her charms. She accordingly announced that an authorized portrait would be taken, which alone it should be lawful to reproduce. In point of fact, though it was almost high treason not to praise her charms, she was anything but a beauty. Her eyes were small, her lips thin, her teeth black, her nose hooked, and her hair red; yet when Hatton told her that "to see her was heaven, the lack of her was hell," she regarded him as a discriminating person. When she made a progress the people *en route* were expected to fall down on their knees, and they did so. The genuflexions which she exacted from all were Oriental rather than English. Her train, which was of ridiculous length, was borne by a marchioness.

Her greed was insatiable. While dropping a tear on

"Sweet Robin's" grave she was careful to cause his goods to be sold by auction for the payment of certain debts to herself. The faithful Walsingham, who spent his life and fortune in her service, she allowed to die a beggar.

Secretary Davison, who screened the infamous part she played in the execution of Mary Queen of Scots, she committed to the Tower (where he died), and robbed him of £10,000.

While the nation was in ecstacies over the defeat of the Armada, the Queen was grumbling at the cost of the great deliverance, and making profit out of the spoilt provisions of the fleet.

She was, perhaps, the only soul in England who regarded the Massacre of St. Bartholomew with as much indifference as if it had occurred in the planet Mars. Her sister Mary declared on her death-bed that if her bosom were opened, the word "Calais" would be found written on her heart. If Elizabeth's body had been opened, her heart might have been sought for in vain.

Her cruelties, unlike those of her sister Mary, had not even the poor excuse of religious bigotry. It is doubtful if she had any personal faith. The life she led was Pagan, not Christian. "Her majesty counts much on fortune," wrote Walsingham; "I wish she would trust more in Almighty God." When she persecuted, it was simply to enforce her own supremacy as head of the Church. What the Church taught she cared not. Within twenty years it is calculated that no fewer than two hundred Catholic priests were put to death, while a still greater number perished in the pestilential gaols into which they were cast. Cuthbert Mayne met a traitor's doom chiefly because there was found in his possession a copy of a papal bull or jubilee which he alleged he had bought at a shop out of mere curiosity. Nelson and Sherwood gave unsatisfactory answers, even under the rack, and were, after an interview with the queen, drawn, hanged, and quartered. Campian, the eloquent Jesuit was four times racked, and eventually suffered at Tyburn, along with Shirwin, Briant, and other distinguished Seminarists. It was these shameful severities that at last stirred the sluggish hostility of Spain, and brought the Armada into English waters. Yet the threatened danger was as loyally faced by

Catholics as Protestants—Howard, of Effingham, a Catholic, actually commanding the English fleet.

But it was not Catholics alone that suffered. Two Anabaptists, Peters and Turwert, were committed to the flames, the queen "calling to mind that she was head of the Church, and that it was her duty to extirpate error, and that heretics ought to be cut off from the flock of Christ, that they may not corrupt others." Thacker and Copping, Brownists, perished in like manner, because, by objecting to the Book of Common Prayer, they were held constructively to have questioned the royal supremacy. The gaols swarmed with "recusants." Indeed it is on the whole hard to say why Queen Mary should have a monopoly of the epithet "bloody."

Elizabeth has been credited by most historians with profound political sagacity; but the fact is, she had no settled policy of any kind. Her chief weapons were sickening dissimulation and ceaseless intrigue; and when she died everyone was glad to be rid of her and her crooked ways.

Her last days were terrible to behold. She refused to go to bed by reason of what she enigmatically said she saw there. She kept beside her a drawn sword, which, like *Hamlet*, she from time to time thrust through the arras. She died as she had lived, a cruel, self-willed, heartless woman, possessed of few, if any, of the good qualities which the lying legends called history have ascribed to her.

CHAPTER VII.

STUART ROYALTY.

Three or four wenches where I stood cried, "Alas, good soul!" and forgave him with all their hearts; if Cæsar had stabbed their mothers they would have done no less. *Casca* in *Julius Cæsar.*"

James I. (1603-1625).

JAMES I., son of Mary, Queen of Scots, great grandson of Margaret, daughter of Henry VII. succeeded Elizabeth, the last of the Tudors.

"The Stuarts," it has been said, "might be pardoned their bad hearts for their worse brains;" but that is only a partial excuse for their wickedness. Their folly was no doubt great, but their natural depravity was very much greater. The British Solomon in particular was a choice specimen of every royal vice. Two years before James's decease, Count Tillières, the French ambassador, thus wrote of "the wisest fool in Christendom:"—"The king will have no man about him of condition, intellect, or judgment, but little people who defer to him in everything, who praise his vices as others praise virtues, and who calumniate all men of honour and virtue. He hates such mortally, thinking that they defame and dispraise him; he would fain avoid the sight of them because he thinks their countenances reproach him for his abominable and scandalous life." "At Newmarket," Tillières adds, "he (the king) leads a life to which past and present times present no parallel." "Unhappy people," he continues "to have such a king, who seeketh nothing but to impoverish them to enrich his favourites, and who careth not what cometh after his death."

Even Tillières, who was by no means squeamish, declines to record some of the unnatural crimes in which James I. is known to have indulged, and they cannot even be hinted at in

these pages. The debauchery of the Court was worse than pagan. Secret murders were perpetrated, and the murderers, as in the case of the Earl and Countess of Somerset, continued to enjoy the royal favour. Mrs. Turner, who was executed *vice* that worthy couple for the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury, wondered that the earth did not open to swallow up so wicked a place. It is by no means improbable that James himself was an accomplice in the crime. Of his Court it has been truly recorded: "Impiety the most cynical, debauchery the most unveiled, public and unpunished homicide, private murders by what was called magic, by poison, by hired assassins, crimes natural, unnatural and preternatural were the common characteristics." James held that he was absolutely above the law: consequently he was not accountable to any earthly tribunal.

In a work on "The True Law of Free Monarchy," he had laid it down that "although a good king will frame his actions, to be according to law, yet he is not bound thereto, but of his own will and example-giving to his subjects." By a free monarchy James simply meant a state in which the people were to have no freedom whatever, and it was the logical application of this theory that brought his son's head to the block. "As it is atheism and blasphemy," he said, "to dispute what God can do, so it is a presumption and a high contempt in a subject to dispute what a king can do, or to say that a king cannot do this or that."

By his favourite maxim, "No bishop, no king," he meant that episcopal succession and hereditary regal succession were the only true foundations of Church and State—a doctrine received by the prelates with the greatest acceptance. They declared, at the celebrated Hampton Court Conference with the Puritan divines that this notable discovery of the British Solomon had been directly inspired by the Holy Ghost! The University of Oxford, not to be distanced in loyalty, decreed that "it was in no case lawful for subjects to make use of force against their princes, or to appear offensively or defensively against them." Queen Elizabeth did a good deal to "tune the pulpits;" but James went much farther. He laid it down that kings might "make what liked them law and gospel."

In pursuance of this comprehensive claim, he dismissed

Chief Justice Sir Edward Coke, because he refused to administer the law illegally. He peremptorily ordered parliament to abstain from the discussion of certain "mysteries" of kingcraft beyond their province; and when hon. members said their say, notwithstanding, he sent for the journals of the House, and tore out the record of the proceedings with his own hand. "I will govern," he said, "according to the common weal, but not according to the common will." By "kingcraft" James simply meant comprehensive lying.

Even in the time of Nero, if a State prisoner died before conviction, his family did not suffer loss of the dead man's goods. But James improved on this unsatisfactory state of things. He caused corpses to be produced in court and convicted in order to secure escheat of estates to the Crown.

If he could not reach those who had offended him in one way, he did it in another. A half-crazed Scotsman—Thomas Ross—stuck a silly lampoon on his countrymen on the door of a college in Oxford. James could not get him adequately punished in England, so he sent him to his Privy Council in Edinburgh, who, to please their master, first caused the offender's right hand to be struck off, and then his head.

Yet at this critical moment, when the royal terror daunted all but the bravest spirits, the seeds of liberty were being silently sown. Hereditary kingcraft and episcopal priestcraft could not be imposed without challenge on a people politically convinced that taxation imposed without the consent of parliament is illegal; on a people with an open Bible teaching them that royalty was originally granted by the Almighty under a solemn protest and warning; on Christian men daily reading in their New Testaments, "The princes of the Gentiles bear dominion over them, and their great ones exercise authority upon them, but among you it shall not be so. He that would be the greatest among you let him be the least, let him be the servant of all." Among a really Christian people it is not too much to say that a king could not possiby exist. It is noteworthy that when Christ had occasion to allude to King Herod he described him, not as His Gracious Majesty, but as "that fox."

Even in James I.'s time the storm-clouds of revolution were visibly gathering. In his parliaments of 1614 and 1621 the Pyms, Eliots, and Wentworths—that matchless race of

heroes—began to make their appearance in the House. But as usual, the sins of the father were visited, not on the father, James I., but on the son, Charles I. James died in bed, and Charles laid his head on the block.

CHARLES I. (1625-1649.)

Charles I., who succeeded James I., was not a very complex character. He had an inherited thirst for absolute rule, a fatal attachment to favourites, and no man or party could rely for a moment on that "royal word" of his to which he invariably appealed when he contemplated some act of unusual perfidy. Oliver Cromwell was perhaps not very far wrong when he pronounced Charles "the hardest-hearted man on earth," but he certainly was greatly at fault when he likewise credited him with "great parts and great understanding." "Insincerity," says the impartial Hallam, was "a fault that appeared in all parts of his life, from which no one who has paid the subject any attention will pretend to exculpate him." This it was even more than his tyranny that sealed his doom. It was the impossibility of binding Charles by any compact that nerved the Commons to put him to death. Yet in the unhallowed arts of dissimulation he was a mere child compared with the matchless Oliver himself.

As for the tyranny of the king, it was neither greater nor less than that of his immediate predecessors, James and Elizabeth. He merely walked diligently in their footsteps over ground which their royal hoofs had helped to render impassable.

Hardly was he seated on the throne, when the memorable strife between king and parliament began. The House, led by Sir John Eliot, impeached the royal favourite, Buckingham, one of the most incompetent, reckless, and insolent of his tribe. "I must let you know," wrote Charles to the Commons, "that I will not allow any of my servants to be questioned among you, much less such as are of eminent place and near me." And summoning the members to Whitehall, he told them—"Remember that parliaments are altogether in my power for their calling, sitting, and dissolution; and therefore, as I find the fruits of them good or evil, they are to continue or not to be." This the Commons were very careful to remember when the Long Parliament met. They effectu-

ally provided against the exercise of a power so arbitrary and dangerous; yet even now the Prime Minister can of his own whim or for party purposes turn the Representatives of the People out of doors at any moment. Our rulers would utterly belie themselves if they did not preserve some relict of every State abuse.

Eliot's impeachment of Buckingham was concieved in a strain such as no Tudor or Stuart had ever listened to. "Through the power of State and justice he has dared ever to strike at his own ends. What have been his actions, what he is like, you know. By him came all our evils, in him we find the causes, and on him must be the remedies! *Pereat qui perdere cuncta festinat. Opprimatur ne omnes opprimat!*" (Let him perish who is in haste to ruin everything. Let him be crushed lest he crush everyone.) Eliot and Sir Dudley Digges were at once hurried to the Tower, while the House was speedily dissolved for its insubordination. Illegality followed illegality. But benevolences, forced loans, and ship-money were enforced to little purpose. The people sullenly resisted.

In another parliament the famous Petition of Right was wrung from the king, and Buckingham fell by the hand of the assassin Felton. Felton regarded himself as a public benefactor, and rich and poor drank to his health. The parliament of 1629 was dissolved like its predecessors, but not before it had declared "a capital enemy of kingdom and commonwealth" any minister who should advise the levy of subsidies without consent of parliament, and "a betrayer of the liberty of England and an enemy of the same" whoever should voluntarily comply with such illegal demands.

The king's third parliament was as unbending as the others. It was dismissed, and the king resolved to govern "by such other means as God had put into his hands." For eleven years Charles, Laud, and Strafford had it pretty much their own way. Sir John Eliot, the brave, the learned, the eloquent died in the Tower. Chambers, a patriotic London alderman, for complaining that Englishmen were worse off than Turks, was heavily fined, and died like Eliot in durance. To-day, alas! his civic successors suffer chiefly from excess of turtle and conger eel. The Petition of Right was treated as if no royal assent had been given to it. The apostate Strafford

had undertaken "to vindicate the monarchy for ever from the conditions and restraints of subjects."

But the darkest hour was before the dawn. An unexpected light burst from the North. Presbyterian Scotland rose in arms as one man to resist Episcopal innovations which Charles had forced on that country at the instigation of Laud. James I., from a bitter personal experience, had admonished that narrow-minded ecclesiastic that "he knew not the stomach of that people." The Scots were over the border before the king could organise any adequate resistance, and their decisive action changed the whole aspect of affairs.

In 1640 the Long Parliament was convoked. and the whole fabric of royal tyranny, column by column, and buttress by buttress, fell to the ground. Strafford and Laud went to the block. The king's outrageous attempt to arrest the Five Members in the House itself was the immediate precursor of the civil war. On the field of Naseby the royalist forces were irretrievably shattered.

> Fast, fast the gallants ride
> In some safe nook to hide
> Their coward heads pre-destined
> To rot on Temple Bar:
> And he—he turns and flies,
> Shame to those cruel eyes
> That bore to look on torture,
> But dared not look on war.

The war ended in the complete overthrow of the Royalists, the execution of the king, and the eventual usurpation of the supreme power by Oliver Cromwell, the Puritan Bonaparte of the English Revolution.

About the justice of the king's sentence there can be no rational dispute. He had violated the fundamental laws of the State and involved the nation in torrents of blood. The Commissioners who tried him were men of the highest probity, and of their president, Bradshaw, the worst that Whitlocke could say was that he was "a stout man and learned in the law—no friend of monarchy." Charles declined to acknowledge the authority of the Court on the ground that the English monarchy, being hereditary, he himself was the fountain of all law. Bradshaw overruled the objection, asserting that kingship. on the contrary, is an

efective trust, and that the people are the source of all rights. In a previous chapter the reader may remember this question was examined and solved as Bradshaw solved it.

But all things that are lawful are not expedient. There are numerous "wenches" in society, as Casca said, always ready to cry, "Alas, poor soul!" when a high-placed criminal meets his deserts—aye, even "if he had stabbed their mothers," and out of consideration for these weak vessels, it can hardly be doubted that exile or imprisonment would have been a more politic penalty than death. What was to be dreaded was a monarchical reaction, and that, at all events, the execution of the king did not prevent. It is noteworthy that the illustrious trio, Vane, Blake and Sidney regarded the execution as a grave political blunder.

Oliver Cromwell's account of the ground of *his* action in the matter, as afterwards narrated by his confidant, Lord Broghill, is worth relating:—

"The reason of an inclination to come to terms with him (Charles) was, we found the Scots and Presbyterians began to be more powerful than we (Cromwell and the Independent Army Officers) and were strenuously endeavouring to strike up an agreement with the king and leave us in the lurch; wherefore we thought to prevent them by offering more reasonable conditions. (At this juncture, there is every reason to believe, Cromwell would have been content with the earldom of Essex and the post of generalissimo.) But while we were busied with these thoughts, there came a letter to us from one of our spies, who was of the king's bedchamber, acquainting us that our final doom was decreed that day, What it was he could not tell; but a letter was gone to the queen with the contents of it, which letter was sewed up in the skirt of a saddle, and the bearer of it would come, with the saddle upon his head, about ten o'clock the following night, to the Blue Boar Inn in Holborn, where he was to take horse for Dover. The messenger knew nothing of the letter in the saddle, but someone in Dover did. We were then at Windsor, and immediately upon the receipt of the letter from our spy, Ireton and I resolved to take a trusty fellow with us, and in troopers' habits to go to the inn, which we accordingly did, and set our man at the gate of the inn to watch. The gate was shut but the wicket was open, and our man stood to give us notice when anyone came with a saddle on his head. Ireton and I sat in a box near the wicket, and called for a can of beer and then another, drinking in that disguise till ten o'clock, when our sentinel gave us notice that the man with the saddle was come, upon which we immediately rose, and when the man was leading out his horse saddled we came up to him with our swords drawn, and told him we were to search all who went in and out there, but as he looked like an honest fellow we would only search his saddle, which we did, and found the letter we looked for. On opening it we read the contents, in which the king acquainted the queen that he was now courted by both the

factions, the Scots and Presbyterians, and the Army; that which of them bid fairest for him should have him; that he thought he could close sooner with the Scots than the other. Upon which we speeded to Windsor, and finding we were not like to have any tolerable terms from the king, we immediately resolved to ruin him."

But though Oliver's resolution to despatch the king was there and then taken, he professed to be undecided almost to the last. It was his invariable policy to appear to be led by those he was misleading.

At a later date honest General Ludlow made the following curious notes at a conference convened by Cromwell, in Westminster, between the so-called "Grandees of the House and the Army" and the "Commonwealth's men," or Republicans, of whom Ludlow was one:—

"The Grandees, of whom Lieutenant-General Cromwell was the head, kept themselves in the clouds, and would not declare their judgments either for a monarchical, aristocratical, or democratical government, maintaining that any of them might be good in themselves, or for us, according as Providence should direct. The Commonwealth men declared that monarchy was neither good in itself nor for us; that it was not desirable in itself from the 8th chapter and 8th verse of the First Book of Samuel, where the rejection of the judges and the choice of a king was charged upon the Israelites by God himself as a rejection of Him, and from divers more texts of Scripture to the same effect. And that it was in no way conducive to the interest of the nation, was endeavoured to be proved by the infinite mischiefs and oppressions we had suffered under it; that indeed our ancestors had permitted themselves to be governed by a single person, but with this proviso that he should govern according to the direction of the law which he always bound himself by oath to perform; that the king had broken his oath and thereby dissolved our allegiance. Notwithstanding what was said, Lieutenant-General Cromwell—not for want of conviction, but in hopes of making a better bargain with another party—professed himself unresolved; and having learned what he could of the principles and intentions of those present at the conference, took up a cushion and flung it at my head and then ran down the stairs; but I overtook him with another, which made him hasten down faster than he desired. The next day, passing by me in the House, he told me he was convinced of the desirableness of what was proposed, but not of the feasibleness of it, thereby I suppose, designing to encourage me to hope that he was inclined to join with us, though unwilling to publish his opinion, lest the Grandees should be informed of it, to whom I presume he professed himself of another opinion."

CHAPTER VIII.

REPUBLIC AND PROTECTORATE.

"And what king's majesty, sitting on an exalted throne, ever shone so brightly as that of the people of England then did, when, shaking off that old superstition which had prevailed a long time, they gave judgment on the king himself, or rather on an enemy that had been their king, caught, as it were, in a net by his own laws, and scrupled not to inflict on him, being guilty, the same punishment which he would have inflicted on any other?" . . . "This is the God who uses to throw down proud and unruly kings, and utterly to extirpate them and their family. By his manifest impulse being set at work to recover our almost lost liberty, we went on in no obscure but an illustrious passage, pointed out and made plain to us by God Himself." MILTON.

THE REPUBLIC (1649—1053).

To the Monarchy succeeded the Republic, or Commonwealth. It lasted for four years and three months—down to 20th April, 1653, the date of the Cromwellian *coup d'état*. Short as the period is, it is the grandest in English annals, and the most pregnant with political instruction. On 4th January, 1649, the House resolved: "That the People are, under God, the original of all just power; that the Commons of England in Parliament assembled being chosen by, and representing the People, have the supreme power in this nation; that whatsoever is enacted or declared for law by the Commons in Parliament assembled hath the force of law, and all the people of this nation are concluded thereby, although the consent and concurrence of King or House of Peers be not had thereto." The Monarchy was formally abolished, it being voted that "The office of a King in this nation is unnecessary, burthensome, and dangerous." The Peers were voted simply "useless and dangerous." The Act constituting England a Republic, set forth "that the People of England and of all the dominions and territories thereunto belonging are, and shall be, and are hereby constituted, made, estab-

lished, and confirmed to be a Commonwealth and Free State, and shall henceforward be governed as a Commonwealth and Free State by the Supreme Authority of the People—the Representatives of the People in Parliament—and by such as they shall appoint and constitute Officers and Ministers for the good of the People, and that without any King or House of Lords."

Later in the same year the following affirmation of allegiance was formulated: "I do declare and promise that I will be true and faithful to the Commonwealth of England without a King or House of Lords." —a formula which would suit Mr. Bradlaugh exactly. The Great Seal was ordered to be broken by a workman in face of the House, and a new one substituted—"The Great Seal of England, 1648." On the one side was a map of England and Ireland, on the other the House of Commons in session, with the legend, "In the first year of freedom, by God's blessing restored, 1648." The device was by Sir Henry Martin, the wittiest man in the House, and the staunchest of Republicans.

The executive functions of the House were vested in a Council of State, consisting of forty-one members, quorum nine. At first the President of this Republican Cabinet was elected at each sitting, Bradshaw and Cromwell being frequent occupants of the chair. Eventually the honour of Premiership was monthly. Their instructions were (1) to command and settle the militia of England and Ireland; (2) to appoint and dispose of magazines and stores: (3) to set forth such a navy as they should think fit; and (4) to sit and execute the powers given them for a year. John Milton was appointed the Secretary for Foreign Tongues to this remarkable council at a salary of £300 per annum.

Mr. Gladstone and other Prime Ministers have talked many senseless constitutional common-places on the dangers and inconveniences of large Cabinets, but the achievements of this illustrious Council by sea and land, in peace and war, have had no parallel in English history. In point of administrative efficiency the present Gladstonian Ministry of all the talents were but as pigmies compared with these giants. The members did not require to post off to Balmoral or Osborne to procure a useless royal signature in those times. They were simply members of an Executive Committee of the

House, responsible to no other authority, and liable to removal by vote at the end of their annual term of office. Is there not here a lesson in governmental simplicity for constitution-builders to profit by? Complexity is as objectionable in politics as in mechanics. The simpler the political organism the better. The boasted balance of powers in the British Constitution merely produces rotatory motion. Progress is rendered next to impossible.

Three faults, and only three have ever been seriously laid to the charge of the Republican House and its illustrious Council of State. Firstly it was nicknamed the "Rump," because it sat after the partizans of Charles Stuart had been subjected to Pride's Purge. But Parliament was *fighting* the King, and the expulsion of his supporters from the House was nothing more than an incident—a regrettable incident, I admit—in the war. The ejected would be much less dangerous in the field than in the Council. "We shall now know," said Vane when Colonel Pride appeared on the scene, "who is on the side of the king and who is on the side of the people."

Secondly, it has been asserted by admirers of Oliver Cromwell, as by the dupes of Napoleon III., that the *coup d'état* prevented anarchy. But the fact was that from 1648 to 1653 the country, as a whole, was profoundly tranquil and prosperous. There was, indeed, no anarchy but what was caused by the unprincipled ambition and unscrupulous intrigues of Cromwell. But to do that arch-traitor justice he never for a moment pretended that the Civil Authority was unable to maintain order. He had been one of them and knew better.

The third charge is less easily rebutted. The Republican Administration have been accused, and Cromwell loudly accused them of a desire to perpetuate their own power unduly, but the House was in the very act of passing a Dissolution Bill, substantially in accordance with the famous Agreement of the People, when it was forcibly broken up by the very man who had long been planning its overthrow on the pretext that it would *not* dissolve! Sir Henry Martin's reason for being in no hurry to appeal to the constituencies, was, in the circumstances, equally witty and wise. The Republic was a tender infant, and who "so proper to bring it up as the mother who had brought it into the world?"

PROTECTORS—OLIVER AND RICHARD CROMWELL (1653—1659).

Between the Man of December, 1851, and the Man of April, 1653, there is little to choose. Napoleon turned on his enemies, Cromwell turned on his friends. Cromwell before committing a flagitious act said his prayers: Napoleon drank brandy. But both were the destroyers of Republics, and both earned the everlasting execration of those who regard libericide as the greatest of crimes. However Cromwell came to be looked on as a Republican is a mystery of mysteries!

The character of Oliver Cromwell has been a great bone of contention among historians and biographers. Nor is this to be wondered at, for surely no more religiously unscrupulous, humanely bloody, courageously crafty, and patriotically selfish mortal ever lived. In his own day he deceived, almost down to the *coup d'état*, the very elect of Englishmen—Sir Harry Vane, Blake, Algernon Sidney, Scot, Sir Henry Martin, Sir Peter Wentworth, Sir Arthur Hazelrig, Hutchinson, Ludlow, Bradshaw, and the whole Council of State. If he had been a hypocrite of the ordinary type depend upon it such colleagues as these would have fathomed and frustrated his self-seeking designs in time. But he was a very extraordinary hypocrite. Bishop Burnet, in a couple of sentences, gives what I believe to be the true clue to his later character. "I had much discourse," says Burnet, "on this head (Oliver's profound dissimulation) with one who knew Cromwell well, and all that set of men, and asked him how they could excuse all the prevarications and other ill things of which they were visibly guilty in the conduct of their affairs. He told me *they believed there were great occasions in which some men were called to great services, in the doing of which they were excused from the common rules of morality; such were the practices of Ehud and Saul, Samson and David; and by this they fancied they had a privilege from observing the standing rules.*" This notion once imbibed Cromwell was not merely able to impose successfully on others, but even on himself. In studying the character of Cromwell one continually encounters not a single Cromwell but several. You pay your money and you take your choice. My view of the Cromwellian moral enigma is

simply this:—In youth he was an evil-liver. Presently he suddenly became a Puritan, and the evil spirit having been driven out, he for a time walked in dry places seeking rest and finding none. Later he returned to his house only to find it empty, swept and garnished. "Then goeth he and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man *was* worse than the first."

One man only among his contemporaries seems to have taken his true measure almost from the first—a remarkable man, who died Cromwell's prisoner in Elizabeth Castle, Jersey, at the early age of 39. More than four years before the fatal 20th of April, Lieutenant-Colonel John Lilburne, leader of the Levellers, or Radicals of the day, wrote thus: "The present contest is merely no more than Self in the Highest, and to set up the false saint and most desperate apostate, murderer, and traitor, Oliver Cromwell, by a pretended election of his mercenary soldiers, under the false name of 'godly interest,' to be King of England, that being now too apparently all the intended liberties of the people he ever sought for in his life."

Colonel Streater also saw the drift of Cromwell's intrigues. Brave simple-minded Major-General Harrison had been persuaded by Cromwell to take part against Parliament on the ground that the reign of the saints could not otherwise be inaugurated. Harrison "was assured," he told Streater, "that the Lord General (Cromwell) sought not himself but that King Jesus (Harrison was a Fifth Monarchy man) might take the sceptre." "Christ had better come before Christmas or he will come too late," was Streater's grim response. And too late he did come for poor Harrison, who ultimately found himself, like Lilburne, Cromwell's prisoner.

Nor could he bend stout incorruptible General Ludlow from the paths of rectitude. "Walking," says Ludlow, "one day with Lieutenant-General Cromwell in Sir Robert Cotton's garden, he inveighed bitterly against them (the Commons), saying in a familiar way to me, "If thy father were alive, he would let some of them hear what they deserved;" adding further, "that it was a miserable thing to serve a Parliament to whom, let a man be never so faithful,

if one pragmatical fellow rise up and asperse him, he shall never wipe it off. Whereas," said he, "when one serves under a general, he may do as much service, and yet be free from all envy and blame.' This text, together with the comment which his after-actions put upon it, hath since persuaded me that he had already conceived the design of destroying the Civil Authority, and setting up of himself; and that he took the opportunity to feel my pulse, whether I were a fit instrument to be employed by him to those ends. But having replied to his discourse that we ought to perform the duty of our stations, and trust God with our honour, power, and all that is dear to us, not permitting any such considerations to discourage us from the prosecution of our duty, I never heard anything more from him upon that point."

Major General Lambert, a vain man, but a skilful officer, was more easily seduced from his allegiance to Parliament. The House had resolved to abolish the title of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland as unsuitable in a Republic. Nevertheless, Cromwell would inconsistently insist that Lambert should be sent to that country with the title of Lord Deputy-Lieutenant. The upshot was, that Fleetwood, Cromwell's son-in-law, got the post without the title, while Lambert was so incensed against Parliament that he was easily induced to conspire against it.

But Cromwell liked to have the sword of the spirit, as well as that of the flesh on his side. Where there could be no law, there might be gospel. In the "Life of Henry Neville," a member of the Council of State, there occurs the following:—

"Cromwell on this great occasion sent for some of the chief City divines, as if he made it a matter of conscience to be determined by their advice. Among these were the leading Mr. Calamy, who very boldly opposed Mr. Cromwell's project (to eject Parliament), and offered to prove it both unlawful and impracticable. Cromwell answered readily upon the first head 'unlawful" and appealed to the safety of the nation being the supreme law, 'But,' says he, 'pray Mr. Calamy, why impracticable?' Calamy replied, 'Oh! 'tis against the voice of the nation; there will be nine in the ten against you. 'Very well,' says Cromwell, 'but what if I should disarm the nine, and put a sword into the tenth man's hand, would not that do the business?"

His master-stroke, however, was to get his own regiment which was bound to his interest by large extra pay, made

the guard of Parliament. The wolf being thus secure of his prey, could choose his own time for devouring the flock. This was even a worse machination than the Self-Denying Ordinance, by which cuckoo-like he contrived to deprive all the members of Parliament of their commissions in the army *except himself*. Still the expulsion of Parliament, though the greatest, was by no means one of his most artistic acts of treason. Vane compelled him completely to take off the mask at the last moment. He had hypocritically demanded what he dreaded most, viz. an appeal to the constituencies, and when he was visibly about to have his wishes complied with, he raved like a maniac. Sir Harry Vane was "a juggler without common honesty!" But even in his wild outburst of baffled rage he was prudent. He clutched the Dissolution Bill, which unfortunately had not been printed hid it under his cloak, and carried it to his chambers, where it was seen no more. Cromwell meant to scatter the House for *not* dissolving; as it was, thanks to Vane's superior strategy, he had to scatter it *for* dissolving!

In judging of such a beast of prey as Cromwell, one should never regard for an instant what he said, but mark intently what he did. Vane, admittedly the purest, and as I think the ablest statesman of his age, was "a juggler without common honesty," and the noble band of more than Roman Senators, who clustered around him, were ordered to "give place to better men?" Now, what of the men, the better men, by whom Cromwell replaced the illustrious Forty-one, the Republican Council of State? Himself and the 'Creature Colonels,' as Lilburne aptly called them, Lambert, Harrison, Bennet, Sydenham, Stapely, Desborough! These the better men! Nay, add the two chief of liars and traitors, Monk and Sir Ashley Cooper (afterwards the thrice infamous Shaftesbury), and one is able to see at a glance what Cromwell meant by "better men." He meant men better suited for his own sinister purposes. That two such villains as Monk and Cooper enjoyed Cromwell's confidence is his severest condemnation. Shall not a man be judged by the company he keeps?

To secure at least one honoured name to gild their shame, this junto of knaves and dupes used every art to induce that "juggler without common honesty," Sir Harry Vane, to

join them. His reply was, that doubtless the reign of the Saints had set in, but for his part, he preferred to wait till he got to heaven for his share of the felicity.

No man, both of head and heart, with the single exception of Milton, ever associated with the usurper more, and even Milton, after the fall of Richard Cromwell perceived the error which his blindness largely excused and wrote with feelings of manifest relief of "those unhappy interruptions (the Cromwells) which God hath removed." Oliver's Parliaments were like his Councils of State nominated, manipulated, purged, brow-beaten, dissolved, expelled in a manner that neither Tudor nor Stuart would have dared attempt. When the recalcitrant members of Barebone's Parliament were ejected by Colonel White they admonished him that they were "seeking the Lord in prayer." "You may go elsewhere to seek the Lord," was the cynical response, "for to my certain knowledge He has not been here for many years." Oliver remorselessly distrained for taxes imposed by his sole authority, and when one of his collectors was sued, he threw the prosecuting counsel into prison. He gagged the press; and dividing England into eleven satrapies, governed them by the swords of his major-generals. He beheaded Sir William Slingsby and Dr. Hewitt for conspiracy without so much as the benefit of trial by jury. The cost of his government was unprecedented in the annals of England: enormous sums being spent in espionage. There was not an offence laid to Charles's charge of which Cromwell was not guilty in an aggravated form.

It is not a little curious that, like Charles, Oliver traced his descent on his mother's side to Alexander, Lord High Steward of Scotland—a fact which may to some extent account for his bad character. The name Cromwell was assumed by his great-great-grandfather, one Morgan Williams, on his marriage with the sister of Henry the Eighth's famous minister, Thomas Cromwell, Earl of Essex.

Oliver trusted no one except his secretary Thurloe, and not always him. Thurloe relates how "he was once commanded by Cromwell to go at a certain hour to Gray's Inn, and at such a place deliver a bill for £20,000, payable to bearer at Genoa, to a man he should find walking in such a habit and posture as he described, without speaking one word."

Thurloe went, found his man, and to his dying day knew nothing more of the transaction.

Cromwell's organ of secretiveness was almost criminally large. Late one night in Thurloe's office he began hurriedly to dictate to the secretary a secret dispatch, without observing the presence of Moreland, afterwards Sir Samuel Moreland, who was fast asleep at his desk. Cromwell instantly seized a dagger, and, but for the earnest entreaties of Thurloe, who protested that Moreland was not awake, would have murdered him on the spot.

He had the tyrant's unfailing taste for severe practical jokes. In signing Charles the First's death warrant, it is on record that, taking up the pen, he smeared Sir Henry Martin's face with ink, the latter not failing tc retaliate. In camp he would encourage his troopers to put live coals in each others' boots, in order to enjoy the effects. When his daughter was married to Mr. Rich, heir of the Earl of Warwick—he was an inveterate match maker—he amused himself by throwing about the sack-posset, and by bedaubing the seats with wet sweetmeats in order to spoil the ladies' dresses. "Cromwell," says Cowley in his famous "Vision," "was wanton and merry, unwittingly and ungracefully merry, with our sufferings. He loved to say and do senseless and fantastical things only to do or show his power of doing or saying anything. It would ill befit mine or any civil mouth, to repeat those words which he spoke concerning the most sacred of our English laws the Petition of Right, or Magna Charta. To day you should see him ranting so wildly that no one durst come near him; the morrow flinging of cushions and playing at snowballs with his servants."

His recklessness of human life was almost as great as that of the Roman Sulla, the Prussian Frederick, or the Corsican Bonaparte. His innate ferocity came fully out in his Irish campaign. At the storming of Drogheda he exultingly writes, "Divers of the officers and soldiers being fled over the bridge about 100 of them possessed St. Peter's Church steeple. . . . These being summoned to yield to mercy refused. Whereupon I ordered the steeple of St. Peter's Church to be fired, when one of them was heard to say in the midst of the flames, 'God damn me, God confound me, I burn, I burn.' I

believe all their friars were knocked on the head promiscuously, but two: the one of which was Father Peter Taaff, whom the soldiers took next day, and made an end of." Irish Papists were to Cromwell as were Hittites and Hivites to the Jews of old.

Some despots have been not insusceptible to the sentiment of gratitude but Cromwell was not one of these. Parliament had loaded him with favours conferring on him lands of inheritance worth more than £6000 per annum—an immense sum in those days—out of the confiscated estates of royalists; yet that did not prevent him, when he wished to discredit the Legislature from lamenting that the injured ones were "driven like flocks of sheep by forty in a morning to the confiscation of goods and estates without any man being able to give a reason that two of them had deserved to forfeit a shilling." At other times he would find much consolation in the text:—"He shall be called Maher-shalal-hash-bash, because he maketh haste to the spoil." Latterly, in spite of the Act of Oblivion, he rigorously exacted from all who had borne arms for the King one tenth of their annual incomes!

But with all his craft, hypocrisy and daring he missed the great object of his ambition—the Crown of England. On this he had probably not set his heart before the execution of the king. Attended by a private soldier named Bowtell he went to look at Charles's body. Being unable to raise the lid of the coffin with his staff he forced it open with the hilt of the other's sword. As he gazed on the severed neck Bowtell asked him what form of Government they should now have. "The same as now," was the reply.

But this mood did not last long. One day in November 1652 Cromwell met Whitelocke, prudent lawyer that he was, in St. James's Park when the following dialogue ensued:—

Cromwell. What if a man should take upon him to be king?

Whitelocke. I think that remedy would be worse than the disease.

Cromwell. Why do you think so?

Whitelocke. As to your own person, the title of king would be no advantage, because you have the full kingly power in you already concerning the militia, as you are general; so that I apprehend less envy, and danger, and pomp, but not less power and opportunities of doing good in you, being general, than would be if you had assumed the title of king.

Cromwell. What do you apprehend would be the danger of taking the title?

Whitelocke. The danger, I think, would be this: One of the main points of controversy between us and our adversaries is whether the government of this nation shall be established in monarchy, or in a free state, or commonwealth. Now if Your Excellency shall take on you the title of king, the state of our cause will be thereby wholly determined, a monarchy established in your person, and the question will be no more whether our government shall be by a monarchy, or a free state, but whether Cromwell or Stuart shall be our king and monarch. Thus the state of our controversy being totally changed, all those who were for a Commonwealth (and they are a very clear and considerable party), having their hopes therein frustrated, will desert you.

Cromwell. I confess you speak reason in this; but what other things can you propound that may obviate the dangers and difficulties wherein we are all engaged?

Whitelocke. Propose a private treaty with the King of Scots, (Charles II) securing everybody's interest and civil and religious liberty.

Cromwell. More time and consideration.

Whitelocke adds: With this the general broke off and went to other company, and so into Whitehall, seeming, by his countenance, displeased with what I had said; yet he never objected to me in any public meeting afterwards. Only his carriage towards me from that time was altered, and his advising with me not so frequent or intimate as before.

When eventually offered the crown by a Committee of his mock Parliament in April 1657, Cromwell's language was throughout the hollow negotiations which ensued a miracle of ambiguity, though as to his wishes no man not by nature a dupe can entertain a doubt. Like our Grand Old Man he could become absolutely incomprehensible at will, plunging into a sea of wordy distinctions which defied analysis. But the "great business of the kingship" as he called it was too much of a good thing. Not even the "creature colonels" would hear of it. Lambert, Fleetwood, and Desborough threw up their commissions, while the other officers, headed by Pride, petitioned, or rather commanded the House, "in the name of the old cause for which they had bled." to withdraw the proposal. It was condemned by Republicans and Monarchists alike and had perforce to be given up.

His Jingo policy abroad was singularly unscrupulous and short-sighted. To promote Protestantism he assailed innocuous decadent Spain instead of formidable France. His disastrous attack on San Domingo was as unprincipled as Frederick's seizure of Silesia—an unique act of royal treachery. Blake's splendid naval victories were in nowise owing to Cromwell. Vane at the head of the Republican Admiralty

Committee had made the English Navy. Indeed it was with "foul ships and musty biscuits" that Blake was compelled to face the foe, Cromwell being at the time too intent on the "great business of the kingship" to attend to such trifles. The great Admiral would never for a moment acknowledge the usurper, though he sadly told his men that "it was their duty to fight for their country into whatever hands the Government fell."

At last the Protector's arts of disimulation could deceive no one. Though feared he was all but universally detested. He complained that the "godly interest" had deserted him. Eventually appeared Colonel Titus's terrible indictment—terrible in its truthfulness and remorseless logic—entitled "*Killing no Murder.*" The tyrant read it and smiled no more. His nerves were unstrung by the constant dread of assassination. He habitually wore armour under his clothes, slept as seldom as possible in the same bed, and never stirred abroad without a strong body-guard. His precautions were those of a Russian Czar. His Government was merely a state of siege.

To the last he kept up a show of religion. On his deathbed he asked his chaplain if it were possible for a man once in grace to go to perdition—"No!" replied the chaplain. "Then," said Oliver with a fine touch of 'other worldliness' "I am safe for I know I was once in grace." If so, it were the better for him, for in this world he must ever be classed among the indescribable herd whom Dante admits neither into his Paradiso nor his Inferno "who neither faithful nor faithless were to God but only for themselves." Hence it is that this "grand juggler" as Lilburne called him has no statue.

He had magnificent opportunities. He might have played the part of an Epaminondas or a Washington and his name might have taken the first place on the bead-roll of human distinction. Instead of that he sold the mighty space of his large honours for such trash as never yet delighted the heart of a Brutus. His gigantic apostasy gave the cue to scores of minor traitors. He made patriotism a bye-word and a reproach among Englishmen. His guilty ambition restored the Stuarts, who seemed a minor evil by comparison, and threw back civilisation for a couple of centuries.

He was no "Saviour of Society." 'Self in the Highest' was ever first in his thoughts. I care nothing for the piety of his 'Letters and Speeches:' the Directors of the City of Glasgow Bank were equally pious. I see in him only the Judas Iscariot of the English Republic on whose like let us hope Englishmen will never have occasion to look again.

His son poor "dawdling Dick" next tried the 'protecting' business for a few brief months and then "at one stride came the dark."

CHAPTER IX.

MORE STUART ROYALTY.

Age, thou art sham'd!
Rome, thou hast lost the breed of noble bloods!
O! you and I have heard our fathers say
There was a Brutus once that would have brook'd
The eternal devil to keep his State in Rome
As easily as a king.

CHARLES II. (1660-1685.)

NO sooner had the Cromwellian Protectorate collapsed than the arch traitor Monk set to work. The nation, ashamed as it were of the moral grandeur to which it had attained, with the exception always of such choice souls as Milton and Vane, threw itself in a delirium of servility at the feet of a shameless and treacherous libertine. Charles II. "enjoyed his own again," but for the English people, alas! "what a fall was there!" The rotting bodies of Cromwell, Ireton, and Bradshaw were dug up, hanged on the gallows at Tyburn, then decapitated, and the heads stuck on poles on Westminster Hall, by wretches who never would have dared to look them in the face had they been alive.

At his trial, Major-General Harrison, the bravest of the brave, whose aged frame bore many battle scars, had the hangman placed by his side, rope in hand, to give him a proper foretaste of death, the courtiers enjoying the spectacle in large numbers. He was cut down alive from the gibbet and disembowelled; he saw his entrails cast into the fire; his still beating heart was torn out and shown to the degraded herd. When Cook, the solicitor for the Republic, was quartered, the executioner, rubbing his bloody hands, was made to approach Hugh Peters, who was about to suffer, and ask him how he liked the work.

Sir Harry Vane, the greatest and most spotless statesman of his age, was sentenced to death beeause, as Charles wrote, "He is too dangerous a man to let live if we can safely put him out of the way." Vane was protected alike by statute and by the solemn pledge of the king to the Convention Parliament. But what of that? Though he had declined to sit on the Commission that tried Charles I., he was the soul of the Republican party, altogether too dangerous a man to let live—nay, on the scaffold he was too dangerous to let speak to the multitude. Stretching out his hands, he had said, "I do here appeal to the Great God of Heaven and all this assembly, or any other power, to show wherein I have defiled my hands with any man's blood or estate, or that I have sought myself in any public capacity or place I have been in," when his voice was ordered to be drowned by drummers. kept in readiness under the scaffold, lest his words should find an echo in the bosoms of the people. The trumpeters were made to "murre" derisively in his face while his pockets were brutally rifled. As he laid his head on the block he prayed, "Father, glorify Thy servant in the sight of men that he may glorify Thee in the discharge of his duty to Thee and to his country." "The Lord Jesus go with your dear soul!" cried the agonised crowd. He wore a red silk vest, "the victorious colour" of the Commonwealth. He never once changed countenance, and his severed head was instantly still.

And what of the king who found this man too dangerous to be let live? Could he, in similar circumstances, have made Vane's boast? Assuredly not. On Charles II., if on any man, the terrible judgment may literally be pronounced—*vendidit hic auro patriam*—this man sold his country for gold. While good garrulous Pepys was jotting down, in his famous diary, in regard to the triple alliance between England, Holland and Sweden to curb the ambition of France, that "it is the only good public thing that hath been done since the king came to England," Charles was negotiating with Louis the Fourteenth the secret Treaty of Dover, to which none but himself, his brother James, and two of his ministers, Arlington and Clifford, both Catholics, were privy. For an annual pension of £200,000 from the most Christian king, Charles undertook to declare himself a Romanist, to join

France in making war on Holland, and contingently on Flanders. If the English people should prove restive under so great a humiliation, it was stipulated that Louis should supply an army to "protect" his royal brother "in the execution," to use the language of the French ambassador, "of his design of changing the present state of religion in England for a better, and of establishing his authority so as to be able to retain his subjects in the obedience they owe him."

Like the first Defender of the Faith, Henry VIII., Charles was personally highly qualified to reform the religion of the State. His Court was a model. To his courtiers he was familiarly known as "the Old Goat." On the day that the Dutch fleet burned the English shipping in the Thames, the king supped with the Duchess of Monmouth, and amused himself by chasing a moth. He would quarrel with his mistress in public. She called him an idiot; he retorted, "You are a jade." She had two other lovers at the same time, actors, one of them a mountebank. In these circumstances the king not unnaturally, according to the unimpeachable Pepys, "declared that he did not get the child of which she is conceived at this time. But she told him, 'You ——! You shall own it!'" And own it he did; but by way of consolation he took to himself a couple of actresses as a sort of set-off to the lady's actors.

On another occasion Pepys heard that the king had been "into corners with Mrs. Stewart, and will be with her half an hour, kissing her to the observation of all the world." Again, Captain Ferrers told him, "how, at a ball at Court a child was born by one of the ladies in dancing." It was taken off in a handkerchief. "And the king had it in his closet a week after, and did dissect it, making great sport of it." Pepys was loyal to the backbone, yet he characteristically concludes, "Having heard the king and the Duke (James) talk, and seeing and observing their habits and intercourse, God forgive me, though I admire them with all the duty possible, yet the more a man considers and observes them the less difference he finds between them and other men, though, blessed be God, they are both princes of great nobleness and spirits." What a libel is there here on "other men"!

"Both princes of great nobleness and spirits!" There is a world of significance in this saving clause. It is like John

Bright's great discovery that the Prince of Wales is "good-natured." So also was Charles II. an exceedingly good-natured man. On his death-bed he apologised to his courtiers for taking such an unconscionable time to die. Yet a more abominable scoundrel never breathed.

As was the "Old Goat" so were his courtiers. The future Duchess of Tyrconnel disguised herself as an orange-girl and cried her wares in the streets. Sedley and Buckhurst after midnight ran through the streets nearly nude. Another courtier addressed the people from a window naked.

"The Duke of Buckingham, a lover of the Countess of Shrewsbury, slew the Earl in a duel; the Countess, disguised as a page, held Buckingham's horse, while she embraced him, covered as he was with her husband's blood, and the murderers and adulterers returned publicly as in a triumphal march to the house of the dead man."

But Rochester was the model knight of the Court of the Restoration. He was a poet as well as a gallant. For five years running he was drunk. He and Buckingham rented an inn in the Newmarket Road, where they amused themselves by stupefying husbands with drink and debauching their wives. One of his happiest achievements was to introduce himself, disguised as an old woman, into the house of a miser, whose wife he bore off in triumph. Buckingham finally got the lady, and to the intense gratification of the two peers, the miser hanged himself. Eventually, Rochester turned astrologer, and sold drugs for the vilest purposes. His poems and pamphlets are so filthy that they can scarcely even be named. "Here I first understood by their talk," says the pious, domesticated Pepys, "the meaning of the company that lately were called Ballers; Harris telling how it was by a meeting of some young blades, where he was among them, and my Lady Bennett and her ladies, and their dancing naked and all the roguish things in the world."

Such was Charles and such his courtiers. The darker features to be gathered from the "Mémoires de Grammont" it is impossible to fill in. To compare them with goats were an odious libel on the goats.

By confiscating the principal of loans advanced to the Treasury, the king and his advisers contrived at a blow to make bankrupt half the goldsmiths, then the

bankers, of London. The act was one of undisguised robbery unparalleled in the annals of English Governments. The Great Mogul never filled his coffers in a manner more reprehensible. Charles eventually reached a point when the case-hardened Shaftesbury said of him that he "had brought his affairs to that pass that there is not a person in the world, man or woman, that dares rely upon him or put any confidence in his word or friendship."

On Sunday, 1st February, 1685, when death laid his icy hand on Charles, he was thus surrounded, and thus employed, according to Lord Macaulay:—"A party of twenty courtiers were seated at cards round a large table, on which gold was heaped in mountains. . . . The king sat there, chattering and toying with three women, whose charms were the boast and whose vices were the disgrace of three nations. Barbara Palmer, Duchess of Cleveland, was then no longer young, but still retaining some traces of that superb loveliness which twenty years before overcame the hearts of all men. There, too, was the Duchess of Portsmouth, whose soft and infantine features were lighted up with the vivacity of France. Hortensia Marcini, Duchess of Mazarin, and niece of the great cardinal, completed the group. No gift of nature or of fortune seemed to be wanting to her. But her diseased mind required stronger stimulants, and sought them in gallantry, in basset, and in usquebaugh. While Charles flirted with his three sultanas, Hortensia's page, a handsome boy, whose vocal performances were the delight of Whitehall, and were rewarded by numerous presents of rich clothes, ponies, and guineas, warbled some amorous verses."

As the disease progressed, the queen, whom he had degraded to the level of his concubines, was summoned to the chamber of death, which was cleared of harlots. Last of all, an illiterate Catholic priest, named Huddleston, received the dying man's confession, and admitted him into the communion of the Church of Rome. Meanwhile, infatuated crowds thronged the churches, praying fervently that God would raise him up to be again the father of his people. Happily for themselves, their prayer was not answered, though certainly he was, as was wittily said of Henry IV. of France, the father of his people in more senses than one.

The Pension List is a perpetual reminder of his fatherhood.

By Barbara Villiers, Duchess of Cleveland, he had three sons, the Dukes of Southampton, Grafton, and Northumberland. By Louise de Querouaille, Duchess of Portsmouth, he had the Duke of Richmond; by Nell Gwynne, the actress, the Duke of St. Albans; and by Lucy Walters, the Duke of Monmouth. The costly trio of the present Dukes of Grafton, Richmond, and St. Albans are supposed to be the lineal descendants of the "Merry Monarch." Charles himself was more doubtful on the subject than the British taxpayer.

James II. (1685-1688.)

Charles was succeeded by his brother, James II., the conscientious bigot who "threw away three kingdoms for a mass." James once advised his royal brother to beware of assassins. "They will never kill me," was the caustic reply, "to make you king." Unlike Charles, James II. was neither merry nor naturally humane. He was sullen and cruel. Even John Churchill's adamantine breast heaved with indignation at the mercilessness exhibited by the king after his victory over Monmouth at Sedgemoor. "This marble," he cried, striking a mantelpiece on which he leant, "is not harder than the king's heart!" In "the Bloody Circuit" which succeeded the battle, his thrice infamous instrument, Jeffreys, committed no fewer than three hundred and fifty judicial murders, while eight hundred prisoners were sold into slavery.

James was almost, if not altogether, as great a libertine as his brother, and his taste was much less nice. Lord Chancellor Clarendon's daughter, Anne, whom he first seduced but afterwards married, was no beauty. Her father, the great historian, on being told by King Charles that she was *enceinte* by the duke, exhibited more than Roman fortitude. "He was ready," he informed the Council, "to give positive judgment, in which he hoped their lordships would concur with him—that the king should immediately cause the woman to be sent to the Tower, and to be cast into a dungeon under so strict a guard that no person living should be admitted to come to her; and then an Act of Parliament should be passed for cutting off her head, to which he would not only give his consent, but would very willingly be the

first man that should propose it." There surely spoke a true friend of the monarchy.

The relatives of plain Arabella Churchill were more philosophically devoted to the throne. "The necessities of the Churchills," says Macaulay, "were pressing; their loyalty was ardent; and their only feeling about Arabella's seduction seems to have been joyful surprise that so plain a girl should have attained such high preferment."

Immediately on his accession James called parliament together, but apologised to Barillon, the French ambassador, for so doing. "Assure your master of my gratitude and attachment. I know that without his protection I can do nothing. I know what trouble my brother brought on himself by not adhering steadily to France. I will take good care not to let the House meddle with foreign affairs. If I see in them any disposition to make mischief I will send them about their business. Explain this to my good brother. I hope he will not take it amiss that I have not consulted him. He has a right to be consulted; and it is my wish to consult him about everything. But in this case the delay even of a week might have produced serious consequences."

Next morning Rochester told Barillon, "It will be well laid out. Your master cannot employ his revenues better. Represent to him strongly how important it is that the king of England should be dependent not on his own people, but on the friendship of France alone."

Louis at once collected bills of exchange on England to the amount of £37,000, and sent them off. When Barillon came to the king with the money, James shed tears of delight and gratitude. "Nobody but your king does such kind, such noble things. Assure him that my attachment will last to the end of my days."

In recognition of such gratitude £120,000 more were presently forwarded to corrupt indifferently King, Court, and Parliament. It was deemed advisable to send a special messenger to thank Louis. The gentleman selected for this high office was none other than John Churchill, the brother of Arabella, the founder of the unsavoury house of Marlborough. So prudent a financier was he that instead of his mistresses living on him he lived on his mistresses. Such cases still occasionally come to light in our police courts,

among the most degraded of human kind. Macaulay thus describes John Churchill's start in life :—

"He was thrifty in his very vices, and levied ample contributions on ladies enriched by the spoils of more liberal lovers. He was during a short time the object of the violent but fickle fondness of the Duchess of Cleveland. On one occasion he was caught with her by the king, and was forced to leap out of the window. She rewarded this hazardous feat of gallantry with a present of £5,000. With this sum the prudent young man instantly bought an annuity of £500 a year well secured on landed property." Pope puts the case thus :—

> "The gallant, too, to whom she paid it down
> Lived to refuse his mistress half-a-crown."

After exhausting every other resource of tyranny, the narrow-minded king concluded that he could coerce the Anglican Church. Its prelates had long preached the doctrine of passive obedience, and he foolishly took them at their word. He speedily found, however, that they had only meant passive obedience for dissenters from their own ecclesiastical opinions and emoluments. Not a blow was struck in his defence. Even his daughter Anne, by Churchill's advice, deserted him. His other daughter, Mary, and his nephew, the Prince of Orange, dutifully took his throne. He died in France, in all the odour of monkish sanctity having literally, "thrown away three kingdoms for a mass."

CHAPTER X.

DUTCH AND GERMAN ROYALTY

Whence thinkest thou kings and parasites arose?
Whence that unnatural line of drones, who heap
Toil and unvanquishable penury
On those who build their palaces and bring
Their daily bread? From vice—black, loathsome, vice;
From rapine, madness, treachery and wrong;
From all that genders misery, and makes
Of earth this thorny wilderness; from lust,
Revenge, and murder.

William and Mary (1689—1702).

THE little knot of plotting aristocrats and ecclesiastics who seated William and Mary on the throne in place of James II. saved England from unlimited monarchy and compulsory Romanism. For these evils they substituted unlimited Oligarchy, Continental Wars, Standing Armies, and the National Debt. They sliced down the royal prerogative, but divided the pieces carefully among themselves. Within the last thirty-three years our dukes, earls, and marquises, with their relatives, according to the "Financial Reform Almanack," have looted the Exchequer of more than sixty-six millions sterling! It is for such adequate reasons as these that the calling to the throne of Dutch William in 1688 has been styled "the glorious Revolution." For the aristocracy it was indeed a glorious revolution.

As for Dutch William himself, the praises that have been heaped on him by Whig historians like Macaulay are almost ludicrously overdone. His body was weak and his mind devoid of culture. With a pious, Calvinistic creed, he was as much addicted to wine and women as his feeble health

would permit. His temper was sullen and despotic. If he relinquished any attribute of kingship, it was not his fault. But having no child to succeed him he submitted to successive limitations of his power in exchange for English gold and English blood, which he caused to flow like water in his Grand Alliance and Spanish Succession Wars. The national debt he raised from one million to more than twenty-one millions. As a general he was below mediocrity.

Macaulay has striven to free William's memory from the awful guilt of the massacre of Glencoe, but without success. The extermination warrant was signed by the king at top and bottom, as if purposely to emphasise the inhuman mandate. The chief actors were all promoted.

The East India Company wanted a new charter, and in order to procure it, bribed right and left. £10,000, it was declared, were traced to the king himself.

A commission appointed in 1698 to enquire into the grant of forfeited estates in Ireland reported that 1,060,000 acres, worth £211,623 per annum, had been confiscated since 1689. The grantees were for the most part foreign favourites whom the king loaded with dignities. Bentinck was made Earl of Portland, Zuleisten Earl of Rochford, Schomberg Duke of Schomberg, Auverquerque Earl of Grantham, Keppel Earl of Albermarle, Ginkill Earl of Athlone, and Ruvigny Earl of Galway. But worst of all was the gift by this dutiful nephew and son-in-law of James's private estates, consisting of 95,000 acres, worth £26,000 per annum, to one of his (William's) mistresses, Elizabeth Villiers, Duchess of Orkney. Parliament insisted on resuming these forfeitures, and told the king to his face he was a dishonourable man.

On several occasions he threatened to resign, and it would have been well for England if Parliament had taken him at his word. On the flight of James the country might have become a republic, and saved itself from an endless chain of miseries; but the idea of self-government is always the last that occurs to Englishmen. They never seem to suspect themselves capable of such a thing. *Vult populus decipi et decipiatur.*

While busy planning on a gigantic scale further waste of English blood and treasure in the War of the Spanish Succession, William died in 1702. Mary had preceded him.

Anne (1702—1714).

William and Mary were succeeded by James's younger daughter, Anne. Anne reigned, but certainly did not govern, for thirteen years. She was, as the late Earl of Beaconsfield described Queen Victoria, "physically and morally incapable of government." She was physically lethargic, and mentally imbecile. Of her husband, Prince George of Denmark, Charles II. said, "I have tried Prince George drunk, and I have tried him sober, but drunk or sober there is nothing in him." They were a well-matched couple.

For the better part of the reign the *de facto* sovereigns of England were John Churchill and Sarah Jennings, otherwise Duke and Duchess of Marlborough. It is difficult to say whether William's defeats or Marlborough's famous victories were the more disastrous to all concerned. "What they fought each other for," no one yet has been able to "make out." Eventually the duke's enemies got him convicted of peculation—theft is the Saxon word—and dismissed from his command. He was, perhaps, the greatest of English generals, yet, strange to say, he could not have passed the fifth standard in a Board School to save his life.

George I. (1714—1727.)

To Anne succeeded George I., Elector of Hanover, the first of the ignoble Guelphs. He could speak no English, and his ministers, Carteret excepted, could speak no German. Walpole had to use the medium of dog Latin in his communications with his august sovereign. He surrounded himself with Germans. "The very dogs in England's Court," according to the Scottish Jacobite song, "they bark and howl in German." The king admonished his retinue, from mistress to cook, to lay hold of everything they could get, lest their time among so fickle a people as the English should be short. "The German women plundered," says Thackeray, "the German secretaries plundered, the German cooks and attendants plundered; even Mustapha and Mahomet, the German negroes, had a share of the booty." "Coming," says Lord Mahon, "from a poor electorate, a flight of hungry Hanoverians, like so many famished vultures, fell with keen eyes and bended talons on the fruitful soil of England." And

still, alas! they come, Where the carrion is, there the Teutonic vultures are gathered together.

In his own petty principality George had been accustomed to sell his subjects as mercenary soldiers at so many ducats per head. In England such things could not be done with impunity; consequently the king drew unfavourable comparisons between the two countries, and never remained a moment longer in London than he could help. He appropriated estates left to others under the wills of his wife and his father-in-law by the simple process of burning the obnoxious testaments. In England this offence was then punishable by hanging, and it is quite likely that George signed a few death-warrants as a lesson to such transgressors as himself.

As a husband and as a father his relations were simply brutal. His wife he immured in a dungeon at the age of twenty-eight for a suspected intrigue with Count Königsmark. There she remained till she was sixty; and when her son, afterwards George II., sought to visit her, he was arrested by his father, and narrowly escaped with his life. Königsmark, by the king's order, was brutally murdered. At a later date George deprived his son and daughter-in-law of the custody of their own children, and drove them with ignominy from St. James's Palace.

George I. literally kept a seraglio, with the Oriental accessories of two negro eunuchs, Mustapha and Mahomet. Among the host of his painted women were Frau von Kilmansegge (Countess of Darlington), Frau von Schulenberg (Duchess of Kendal), the Countess of Platen, and the two sisters, Elizabeth and Melusina, of the murdered Königsmark. No such ugly and rapacious harpies had ever been seen or heard of in England. The Duchess of Kendal, being tall and lean, was popularly known as "Giraffe;" while the Countess of Darlington, from her enormous dimensions, was named "the Elephant." In describing George's predilections, Chesterfield went straight to the point—"No woman came amiss to him, if she were only very willing and very fat."

And to such courtesans, ministers and courtiers had humbly to bow if they desired either title, pension, or place. To bribes they were always open. Of the "South Sea Bill" promotion money, no less than £30,000 were traced to their unhallowed coffers. "A train of the deepest villany and

fraud with which hell ever contrived to ruin a nation," was the verdict of a Select Committee of the House of Commons on these corruptions.

The subsidies granted by Parliament for the defence or augmentation of George's Hanoverian Dominions were enormous. While the Englishman and the Hanoverian hunted together, it was invariably the Hanoverian that got the turkey and the Englishman the crow.

George's death, it is said, happened in this wise. His long imprisoned queen pre-deceased him by a few months, but before leaving this world she wrote a letter to her royal spouse in which she protested her innocence, and summoned him to meet her before the tribunal of God within a year and a day. This disquieting epistle a faithful hand placed in his coach as he was entering Germany in the summer of 1714. On reading it he was seized with a convulsion from which he never recovered.

George II. (1727—1760.)

George the First was succeeded by George the Second of our stock of "wee wee German lairdies." He can hardly be regarded as much of an improvement on his father, who, by the way, never, except for State reasons, acknowledged the paternity. He commenced by unceremoniously making away with his father's will. There was, however, a troublesome duplicate in the hands of the Duke of Brunswick, who had to be heavily bribed to give it up. Needless to say the British tax-payer had to pay the bribe. Macaulay thus comprehensively characterises him:—"Not one magnanimous or humane action is recorded of him, but many instances of meanness and of a harshness which, but for the strong constitutional restraints under which he was placed, might have made the misery of his people."

During his reign the nation was never done paying his debts, subsidising his continental allies, and fighting in his Hanoverian quarrels. His allies he changed as often as caprice or the supposed interests of Hanover required. The national debt he more than doubled, raising it to £146,000,000.

The morality of his court was equally incredible and indescribable. Queen Caroline, a woman of bad heart, but mas-

culine head, not merely tolerated the presence of his concubines, but even at times acted as his procuress. His dutiful daughter advocated a beneficial change of mistress from Lady Suffolk, who had become stale; while, to improve the royal temper, Walpole admonished the queen to bring him in contact with pretty Lady Tankerville, "it being impossible that it should be otherwise, since the king had tasted better things," *i.e.*, than Caroline herself.

Both king and queen hated their hopeful son and heir, Frederick, Prince of Wales, father of George III., with undying rancour. "My dear lord," said Caroline, to Lord Harvey, "I will give it you under my hand, if you are in any fear of my relapsing, that my dear first-born is the greatest ass, and the greatest liar, and the greatest *canaille*, and the greatest beast in the whole world, and that I heartily wish he were out of it." Thus spoke a loving royal mother! Her wish was gratified. Frederick preceeded his father to the grave.

But of all the death-bed scenes on record, that of Queen Caroline is, perhaps, the most grotesque and suggestive of the order of moral ideas engendered by royalty. The king blubbered freely, alternately praising his wife's virtues and his own. "You should marry again," moaned the dying woman. "*Non, j'aurai des maîtresses* (No, I will have mistresses), sighed the Defender of the Faith. "*Cela n'empêche pas*" (That is no obstacle), faintly articulated Caroline, and passed, let us hope in charity, into that better land, "where," according to stern republican George Buchanan, "few kings dare enter."

With exemplary fidelity the inconsolable sovereign persevered with *maîtresses*, Ladies Walmoden, Yarmouth, and others, to the last. Truly if ever there was, as Frederick's mother called him, an absolute *canaille* and beast in this world, it was the second of the illustrious house of Guelph.

CHAPTER XI.

GERMAN ROYALTY.

"FARMER GEORGE" AND "THE FIRST GENTLEMAN IN EUROPE."

> Let us speak plain. There is more in names
> Than most men dream of; and a lie may keep
> Its throne a whole age longer if it skulk
> Behind the shield of some fair-seeming name,
>
> —*Lowell.*

GEORGE III. (1760-1820.)

TO George II. succeeded his grandson, George III.—Farmer George, of pious memory. This man reigned longer —nearly sixty years—and possibly did more harm than any of his predecessors on the throne. His intellect resembled in its narrow bigotry that of James II., aggravated by intermittent madness. If James "threw away three kingdoms for a mass," George threw away a virgin continent for a tyrannical caprice.

If George had remained a lunatic the whole of his reign it would have been well for the country. As it was, his sanity was far more to be dreaded than his insanity. His education had been wretched, and the few erroneous ideas that had found their way into his barren brain he pursued with incredible obstinacy. His pliant ministers yielded to him rather than yield up their places. And so it came to pass that this contemptible creature wielded a power for evil far greater than any of his contemptible race. He hated men of talent. Pitt, the elder, was "a trumpet of sedition," and when he died George inveighed against the proposal to erect a public monument to his memory as "an offensive measure

to me personally." Fox's name he struck off the list of privy councillors with his own hand. In the plenitude of his critical judgment, he triumphantly asked, "Was there ever such stuff as Shakespeare?" Only once was he known to have stumbled on a choice remark. With regard to a treatise on Biblical apologetics, he sagaciously observed that "he had never understood that the Bible required an apology."

George's mother, the Princess Dowager of Wales, and her alleged paramour, the Earl of Bute, were the king's earliest mentors, and worse he could scarce have had. Their influence induced him systematically to deceive his ministers. and to display so many other royal gifts and graces, that Phillimore does not hesitate to describe him as an "ignorant, dishonest, obstinate, narrow-minded boy, at that very moment the tool of an adulteress and her paramour."

George's own life was held up by the bishops and other shepherds of souls of his day as a pattern of all the Christian virtues. As Queen Victoria is lauded now for her exemplary morality, so was George III. lauded then. But the fact of the matter was, Farmer George was all the while guilty of an offence not merely against public decency, but against the law of the land, which in the case of a less highly placed criminal would have landed him in Newgate.

In 1759 he married Hannah Lightfoot, a Quakeress, in Curzon Street Chapel, Mayfair, and in 1761, in the lifetime of the said Hannah, he led to the altar the Princess Charlotte Sophia ("snuffy Charlotte") of Mecklenburgh Strelitz. In other words, George III. was a bigamist. In 1762, George, Prince of Wales, "the first gentleman in Europe" that was to be, was born. In 1764, Hannah Lightfoot died, leaving issue whose fate is uncertain. There is, however, an honest couple, well-known in certain circles in London, who claim, and probably with good reason, to be King and Queen of England in virtue of descent from the fair Quakeress. Shortly after Hannah's death, as if to set at rest any doubt as to the legality of the first marriage, George and Charlotte were privately remarried at Kew. Of the illegitimacy of George IV. there can scarcely, therefore, be a doubt. At all events, when the "first gentleman" was impecunious—his normal condition—he did not fail to threaten

his royal parents with an exposure as a means of extorting money. Still, for a Guelph, George III.'s conduct was reasonably decorous.

His chief faults lay in other directions even more disastrous to the nation. He insisted on being his own prime minister and dictating the national policy. And such a policy! He found the national debt some £146,000,000 in amount; he raised it to £900,000,000.

His wars had but one object—to crush liberty, which he hated with a rancour undistinguishable from insanity. For resisting the tea-tax—a notoriously illegal impost—Massachussets was deprived of its chartered rights of self-government, and royalist functionaries superseded the colonial administrators. Political offenders were ordered to be sent home to England for trial. These acts of despotism, against which both Chatham and Burke inveighed, were the result of the king's personal intervention. Members of parliament voting in favour of the repeal of the tea-tax were declared not to be "king's friends." George kept lists of the divisions, and put a stigma against the name of every advocate of liberty.

Nor was this the worst. The means taken to crush the colonists were such as only the most brutal of tyrants would have had recourse to. Even Frederick of Prussia expressed his unqualified disgust. The Czarina of Russia was appealed to in vain to supply 20,000 Muscovite troops to re-establish the royal authority in New England. Recourse was then had to the Duke of Brunswick, the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel, and other German princelings accustomed to kidnap and sell their subjects as mercenaries to the highest bidder. In this way 17,000 Germans were conveyed to the scene of action, while the Creek and Cherokee Indians were encouraged to do their worst on the scalps of the descendants of the Pilgrim Fathers.

In vain Chatham and Fox with their matchless eloquence denounced the royal methods of conquest; crown patronage and royal bribery did their work. The war went on, and the upshot was "the Free and Independent States" of America. After charging George with an evident design to establish an absolute despotism, the famous Declaration of Independence runs:—"In every stage of these oppressions we have peti-

tioned for redress in the most humble terms. Our petitions have been answered only by repeated injuries. A prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant is unfit to be the ruler of a free people." George III. was the father—the involuntary father—of the American Republic, the mightiest and most enlightened commonwealth that the world has ever seen.

> For He, who flung the bright blue fold
> O'ermantling land and sea,
> One third part of the sky unfurl'd
> For the banner of the free!

Truly the crazy tyrant builded more wisely than he knew!

The war cost England well nigh £140,000,000! And so little was George satisfied with these trifling sacrifices of honour, blood, and treasure, that he threatened to resign his sceptre by reason of their insufficiency.

A wise people would have taken the maniac at his word, and following the illustrious example of our kin beyond sea, have established a sister Federal Republic, giving self-government to Ireland, and laying the basis of a true and lasting union with the United States. It is not too much to say that monarchy has ever acted on the grand possibilities of the English race like an extinguisher.

Nor did George confine his malignant detestation of justice and good government to America. He put forth all his strength to defeat Fox's statesmanlike India Bill, and succeeded. He canvassed the peers, many of whom he had created for reasons other than their deserts, and induced them to reject the measure. "Thank God!" he cried, "it is all over, so there is an end to Mr. Fox." That brave and tenacious friend of freedom was accordingly driven from power.

Almost as a matter of course, the influence of the Court was exercised on behalf of the culprit during the long impeachment of Warren Hastings, who was eventually acquitted. Hastings, it was alleged and firmly believed, judiciously conveyed to the king certain priceless diamonds, which perhaps were not needed to secure the royal countenance for so great an oppressor of his kind.

The part which George took in the iniquitous attempt to restore the Bourbons to the throne of France has been cloaked

in a great measure, by the misdeeds of delinquents—so much more responsible—like the younger Pitt and Edmund Burke. Yet from first to last the king and the "king's friends" fanned the flame with might and main. To say that England which had expelled the Stuarts, should have abortively squandered more than £1,000,000,000, not to speak of the hecatombs of slain, to restore the Bourbons at the behest of a mad Guelph is really to question the sanity of the entire British nation. But so it was. Of the handful of discerning men who tried to stem the torrent of folly and wickedness some were exiled, some imprisoned, some slaughtered, and all calumniated.

In January, 1820, the king died, deeply lamented by all who did not know him. Previous to his decease he had been repeatedly stark-mad, quite obviously "physically and morally incapable of government." The "first gentleman in Europe" had in these unhappy circumstances acted as regent, discharging the royal functions as only the first gentleman could.

The Regent and his amiable brothers exerted themselves with true filial piety to relieve the sufferings of their miserable parent. But occasionally they took a method of testifying their sympathy which would perhaps occur to none but royal minds. They tied the paternal leg to a bed-post, and played "bait the bear" with their august sire, who would run at them with demoniacal shrieks and jabber as far as his tether would permit.

And so entertaining was the sport that these amiable uncles of Queen Victoria would roar with laughter at a spectacle so comical. Nor did the entertainment cease in the sick chamber. The Prince had a talent for mimicry, and when he and the Duke of York went to Brooks's would convulse the company with close imitations of the insane parental gestures and ravings. But it is put on record by Jesse that "the brutality of that stupid sot (York) disgusted even the most profligate of his associates." Singularly enough a loyal parliament bestowed £10,000 a year on the said sot for paying two weekly visits to his afflicted father!

George IV. (1820-1830).

The reign of George IV. is crammed with little but adulteries, lies, and debts. The former are too filthy, and the

latter too monotonous, for detailed narration. Like his father, George IV. was a bigamist. In December, 1785, he married Mrs. Fitzherbert with whom he openly lived as his wife. He, of course, denied the contract when it suited his purpose; but after his death his executors, the Duke of Wellington and Sir William Knighton, admitted the validity of the proofs.

In April, 1794, he led to the altar Caroline of Brunswick. "Led to the altar" is here used in a metaphorical sense, for George was in a condition to be led, not to lead. He was so drunk that his two royal brothers could scarce keep him on his feet. He fairly astonished his grace of Canterbury by rising from his knees before the ceremony was half over. Caroline in after life may not have been a pattern of matronly virtue, but the English people with a correct instinct stood by her, holding that she was more sinned against than sinning. To procure evidence in the famous divorce suit against her, the Secret Service Money of the State was freely drawn upon.

The First Gentleman was, in fact, as expert a wife-beater as any coal-heaver, and his language habitually smacked of the brothel. When Napoleon's death was announced to him in the words, "Your majesty's bitterest enemy is dead," George jumped to the hasty conclusion that Caroline was no more, and joyfully exclaimed, "Is she, by God!" He was in Ireland, where he had arrived "in the last stage of beastly intoxication," when the news of the poor lady's actual demise reached him. "This is one of the happiest days in my life," he soon afterwards remarked. Nor was he less heartless to the women he "protected" than to those he married. Lady Jersey, Lady Conyngham, Lady Hertford. "Perdita" Robinson, and a host of others discovered, by bitter experience, that Thackeray was right when he affirmed that George owed everything to his tailor.

As a gambler, he repudiated his debts of honour, because honour he had none, and if he was not a turf swindler, his contemporaries in the affair of his horse Escape slandered him most foully. He professed to present George III.'s library to the nation, was secretly paid for it, and then received the effusive thanks of parliament for his munificence! With regard to so vile a creature as "the first gentleman in Europe" it is

abundantly safe to reverse the ordinary legal maxim, and hold him guilty of everything till he is proved innocent. "He leads," says Greville, "a most extraordinary life—never gets up till six in the afternoon. They come to him and open the window curtains at six or seven in the morning; he breakfasts in bed; does whatever business he can be brought to transact in bed too; he reads every newspaper quite through, dozes three or four hours; gets up in time for dinner, and goes to bed between ten and eleven. He sleeps very ill, and rings his bell forty times in the night; if he wants to know the hour, though a watch hangs close to him, he will have his *valet de chambre* down rather than turn his head to look at it. The same thing if he wants a glass of water; he won't stretch out his hand to get it. His *valets* are nearly destroyed, and at last Lady Conyngham prevailed on him to agree to an arrangement by which they wait on him on alternate days. The service is still most severe, as on the days they are waiting their labours are incessant, and they cannot take off their clothes at night and hardly lie down. He is in good health but irritable." And these be your Gods, O Israel!

The only thing he left behind him which was worth anything was his old clothes, which realised £15,000—a miserable asset for a sovereign who, though his reign was brief, must have cost the country some twenty millions sterling.

The political harm which he did was comparatively small, but what time he could spare from the more congenial pursuits of fiddling, tailoring, dancing, drinking, gambling, and worse things was chiefly devoted to mischief.

The best thing that can be said of him is that he was not worse than his brothers, York and Clarence, and that, like his father, he suffered from occasional lunacy. He had heard so much about Waterloo that he ultimately convinced himself that he had led a murderous charge of cavalry on that decisive battle-field under the name of General Brock. "Did I not do so, Arthur?" he would on occcasion demand of the Duke of Wellington. "I have often heard your majesty relate the incident," was the diplomatic reply.

George the First was reckoned vile—viler George the Second;
And what mortal ever heard any good of George the Third?
When from earth the Fourth descended, Heaven be praised,
the Georges ended.

CHAPTER XII.

MORE GERMAN ROYALTY.

It is the third Gate of Barbarism—the Monarchical Gate—which is closing at this moment. The nineteenth century hears it rolling on its hinges. *Victor Hugo.*

WILLIAM IV. (1830—1837.)

WILLIAM IV., who succeeded George IV., was a curious contrast to the "First Gentleman in Europe." Nobody ever accused William of being a gentleman. He was absolutely lacking in personal dignity, and kept his ministers and courtiers in perpetual anxiety lest he should do something that would make royalty ridiculous in the eyes of what Burke called "the swinish multitude." His ecentricities were in the last degree droll, and remind one more of Sancho Panza's attempts at government than anything else.

"His first speech to the council," says Greville, "was well enough given; but his burlesque character began even then to show itself. Nobody expected from him much real grief, but he does not seem to have known how to act it consistently. He spoke of his brother with all the semblance of feeling, and in a tone of voice properly softened and subdued; but just afterwards, when they gave him the pen to sign the declaration, he said, in his usual tone, "This is a damned bad pen you have given me!"

In another passage the Clerk of the Council thus characterises him:—"He was a man who, coming to the throne at the mature age of sixty-five, was so excited by the exaltation that he nearly went mad, and distinguished himself by a thousand extravagances of language and conduct, to the alarm and amusement of all who witnessed his strange freaks; and though he was shortly afterwards sobered down

into more becoming habits, he always continued to be something of a blackguard, and something more of a buffoon."

He had about the same regard for the press of the country as his father, George III., had for Shakspere. "After breakfast," adds Greville, "he reads the *Times* and *Morning Post*, commenting aloud on what he reads in very plain terms; and sometimes they hear, 'That's a damned lie!' or some such remark, without knowing to what it applies."

But his freaks, though certainly strange, were not always amiable. At a certain levee he would insist that an unfortunate wooden-legged lieutenant should kneel down; while the president of the Royal Academy, who on one occasion chanced, among other portraits, to point out to him that of the late Admiral Napier, was amazed to be told, "Captain Napier may be damned, sir! and you may be damned, sir! and if the queen was not here, sir, I would kick you downstairs, sir!" Indeed, it were hard to say whether the blackguard, the buffoon, or the madman predominated in the character of "the bluff Sailor King"—nay, saving the mark! "the Reformer King."

For the Post of Lord High Admiral of England he had but one qualification—profane swearing. In other respects his incapacity was so marked that resignation was forced on him. But though unfit to be a cabin boy he was quite good enough to be made a king. When king, he wasted the time of the Council by rambling, incoherent speeches to such an extent that Mr. Greville makes the following note:—"We are kept about three times as long by this regular, punctual king as by the capricious irregular monarch who last ruled us."

His zeal as a reformer was entirely on the adverse principle. His aversion to the reformers, particularly Lord John Russell, was extreme. When his son Adolphus told him that a dinner ought to be given for the Ascot races, he said, "You know I cannot give a dinner; I cannot give any dinner without inviting the Ministers, and I would rather see the devil than any one of them in my house." As Duke of Clarence, the slave trade had enjoyed the full benefit of William's distinguished patronage, and when king he expressly declared in writing that nothing in the world would ever induce him to sanction vote by ballot or manhood suffrage. During the first Reform Bill agitation, when the people in

many places were starving by thousands, his only anxiety seems to have been to bring about a collision between the reformers and the military. What distressed him most was the orderly character of the meetings, which afforded no sufficient pretext for violent interference. Though he did not ultimately dare to veto the Bill, his deceitful and protracted opposition brought the country within twenty-four hours of revolution. Mr. John Arthur Roebuck's comment on the part played by the king is to the point—"very weak and very false; a finished dissembler." At a somewhat later date William astonished the guests at a diplomatic dinner, at which the American ambassador was present, by declaring "that it had always been a matter of serious regret to him (William) that he had not been born a free, independent American." This was dissembling, no doubt, but it can hardly be called "finished." William's function was to burlesque royalty, and in that *rôle* he was always tolerably successful.

When Dr. Allen came to do homage to him for the See of Ely, William graciously said to him, "My lord, I do not mean to interfere in any way with your vote in Parliament except on one subject, the Jews, and I trust I may depend on your always voting against them."

But this bizarre monarch, though he could not control home legislation as he wished, peremptorily insisted on the full measure of his prerogative with regard to foreign affairs. Earl Grey was admonished that no diplomatic despatches were to be sent off without the king's "previous concurrence," and this important point is still conceded to the reigning Guelph, even though "physically and morally incapable."

In early life William's debts were of a very pressing nature, and he and his brothers Wales and York had recourse to a singularly successful method of raising money. They issued joint and several bonds to an enormous amount, bearing interest at six per cent. These were taken up chiefly on the Continent, the foolish holders fancying that royal securities must be exceptionally secure. They found it otherwise, to their cost, receiving neither interest nor principal. Five or six of them were so ill-advised as to come to England, in the hope of being able by legal process to charge the revenues of the Duchy of Cornwall. They were at once arrested under

the Alien Act by order of the Secretary of State, and deported to France, where they were seized and guillotined for carrying on treasonable correspondence with the enemy—as severe a commentary certainly as could well be imagined on the wise injunction, "Put not your trust in princes."

William's treatment of Mrs. Jordan, by whom he had nine children, was peculiarly heartless even for a king. Charles II.'s last words to his brother James were, "Don't let poor Nell (Gwynne) starve." But no such lingering sentiment of honour seems ever to have entered into William's callous bosom. Mrs. Jordan died in a foreign land, deserted and in the deepest poverty. Her numerous offspring, the Fitzclarences, William did indeed handsomely provide for—at the public expense; while Mr. Ford, her previous "protector," was knighted, and made a stipendiary magistrate at Bow Street.

Fourteen of the Fitzclarence fraternity have held or hold no fewer than twenty-one public offices and pensions—all gross jobs—which have already yielded them £220,500!

Who paid the Bill?
"I," said John Bull,
"Because I'm a fool.
I paid the Bill."

(Victoria 1837 ——.)

William was succeeded by his niece, Queen Victoria, daughter of his brother, the Duke of Kent, our present Monarch. With regard to this lady, we are asked to believe all manner of incredible things. She is reported to be an incarnation of all the personal, political, and domestic virtues. But eulogies of kings and queens during their lives should always be received with the greatest caution. Very seldom is the real character of English princes known to their contemporaries. Lord Tennyson tells us of "the fierce light that beats upon a throne," and simple-minded folks repeat the well-turned phrase till they deem it the embodiment of a reality. It is, in fact, with the greatest difficulty that a single ray of public light can be made to penetrate the dark recesses of a Court. If, for example, the same fierce light that beats on the presidential chair of the United States were

to be applied to the thrones of Europe, they would all, including that of Queen Victoria, be burned up in a fortnight.

Mr. Henry George generously proposed in a memorable speech in St. James' Hall to allow the Queen, as a widow woman, £100 per annum out of the rent or revenue of the national soil. Her services to the State as a Queen he correctly estimated at *nil*. Not so reckon the discerning British taxpayers. They pay her over £600,000 a year on the score of queenship; while her late husband, the Prince Consort, who impudently told us that "Parliamentary Government was on its trial," received altogether £630,000 for marrying her! "What is called Monarchy," says the immortal Thomas Paine, "always appears to me a silly, contemptible thing. I compare it to something kept behind a curtain, about which there is a great deal of bustle and fuss, and a wonderful air of seeming solemnity; but when by any accident the curtain happens to be open, and the company see what it is, they burst into laughter,"—or, he might have added shrink into loathing.

We have seen in previous chapters what the lives of the kings and queens of England have been, from the Norman Conquest downwards, for a period of more than eight centuries. It is a record that reads more like the Newgate Calendar than any other kind of literature; from beginning to end one long revolting tale of ingratitude, deceit, selfishness, rapine, torture, tyranny, waste, lust, madness, bloodshed, murder—atrocious misgovernment. And we are now asked to believe that an institution which for so many centuries has produced such fruit as naturally as a thornbush produces thorns, has become suddenly respectable and innocuous. The Ethopian has been pleased to change his skin, and the leopard his spots. I, for one, do not credit it. A good queen is as much a contradiction in terms as an amiable wolf, cheerful lightning, or a benevolent earthquake. That which has been is that which shall be, and there is no new thing under the sun. Royalty cannot change its character.

It is not that kings and queens are worse naturally than other men and women. It is the institution that corrupts and degrades them below the level of their fellows. Let us demand the abolition of kingship in the interest of kings as well as in the interest of those whom they misgovern. No

community has a right to place man or woman in a position where the temptations to vice are such as to render virtue next to impossible. Royalty is essentially an immoral institution, for the existence of which monarchists are more responsible than monarchs. The Hebrew prophet, Samuel, once and for all drew the moral, economic, and political lineaments of royalty in ineffaceable characters. (See 1 Sam., viii.). It is an institution that can neither be cured nor longer endured.—*Delenda est Carthago.*

And with the big kings or monarchs must go the smaller kings or peers who shine by light borrowed from the throne. In a word, the time has come when the whole system of aristocracy and land monopoly, on which it rests, must be brought to an end—a peaceable end, if possible, but at all events to an end. The people demand two things—a complete system of representative government and the restoration of the land. With the former royalty, with the latter aristocracy, is incompatible. Both must therefore fall. The people must begin sternly to agitate for the repeal of the Act of Settlement. "The third Gate of Barbarism—the Monarchical Gate—is closing." The first Gate of Civilisation—the Republican Gate—is ajar, and soon will be flung wide open. Long live the Republic!

"At the birth of each new era,
With a recognising start,
Nation wildly looks at nation,
Standing with mute lips apart,
And glad Truth's yet mightier man-child
Leaps beneath the Future's heart."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE COST OF THE CROWN.

"These gilded flies,
That bask within the sunshine of a court,
What are they? The drones of the community!
They feed on the mechanic's labour;
The starved hind for them compels the stubborn glebe
To yield its unshared harvest.
And yon squalid form, leaner than fleshless misery,
Drags out his life in darkness in the unwholesome mine
To glad their grandeur;
Many faint with toil
That few may know the cares and woes of sloth."

—SHELLEY.

"THE bitter cry of outcast London" has at last, let us hope, smitten the dull ear of society. All the fashionable world has gone "a-slumming." The journals teem with suggestions, and the pulpits follow suit. It is conceded on all hands that the poor are altogether too poor and miserable, and that something must be done for them, and done quickly. But where to begin is the difficulty. The rich and powerful are willing to give charity, but the dwellers in the slums ask for something very different. Their demand, however inarticulate, is for political equality and social justice, and these are precisely the concessions that the so-called upper classes never do make, except on compulsion.

The community is divisible into three great classes—beggars, robbers, and workers. The robbers make the beggars, and the workers toil for both. Now, is it not very remarkable that among so many philanthropic advisers it should seemingly occur to none that the first thing to be done is to get rid of the robbers? Who are the robbers? An ill-defined company, doubtless, but their chief, their shield and buckler, is, as a matter of course, the occupant of

the throne. Hereditary royalty, at the top of society, necessarily implies hereditary poverty at the base.

Here we have a single family of perfectly useless royal people making away with a million per annum in the very teeth of the apostolic injunction which forbids those who will not work to eat. A million per annum would support 20,000 East-end of London families, say 120,000 souls, in comparative affluence. Yet philanthropists stand aghast at the inadequacy of the remedial means at their disposal. The Queen and her family must already have cost the nation considerably over twenty millions sterling — an almost fabulous sum to pay for purely imaginary services. The indirect cost of the Crown as the fountain of corruption in church, army, navy, and diplomacy, it is impossible to estimate. How any people not absolutely demented could ever have permitted such a senseless expenditure is well-nigh incomprehensible.

Before Norman William landed in England there was hardly a manor or ecclesiastical benefice in the country that he had not by anticipation apportioned among himself and his fellow robbers. His own share was, to be sure, a handsome one, and though repeatedly confiscated and largely alienated, the Crown lands were still of considerable value at the Revolution of 1688. If they ever did belong to the kings of England as individuals—that is to say, as private estates—they completely lost that character when James II. fled to France. They then reverted to the nation, and parliament, as representing the nation, used them as it had a mind. The pretence that the Guelphs have some personal right to the duchies of Lancaster and Cornwall, from which they are permitted to draw large revenues, is as hollow as their more general claim to all the Crown lands. The Crown lands are in the strictest sense national lands, and ought, for the sake of accuracy and clearness, to be always so designated. Any revenue accruing to royalty from such sources is contributed by the nation as surely as if it arose from the tax on tea or on tobacco. It is important to remember this, as apologists of the monarchy have succeeded in breeding considerable confusion in the public mind on the subject.

If the whole of the royal salaries were taken directly from the Consolidated Fund the cost of the Crown would then

appear in all its shameful enormity. But its exact amount it is all but impossible to set down, so numerous and varied are the royal perquisites that turn up in the most unexpected sections of the national accounts. Sir Charles Dilke and Mr. Bradlaugh have both gone into the matter energetically, and both have in a measure been foiled. The Chancellor of the Exchequer ought to be made to furnish an exact balance sheet, setting forth every farthing of royal income and expenditure. Patriotic Mr. Broadhurst will perhaps see to this when he can spare time from the more pressing duties of coercing Ireland and preserving working men from the abominations to be seen in art museums on Sundays.

Let us now look for a moment at the little bill of costs so far as we are permitted to know it.

THE QUEEN.

Civil List	£385,000
Perpetual pension in lieu of prisage and butlerage on wines in Duchy of Lancaster	803
Ancient fee voted in Civil Service Estimates	101
Net income from Duchy of Lancaster	41,000
Repairs of palaces and appurtenances occupied by the Queen	15,665
Repairs of palaces partly occupied by the Queen	6,356
Royal yachts as estimated by Sir Charles Dilke	100,000
Naval aides-de-camp to the Queen	1,460
Military ,, ,, ,, ...	1,150
Queen's Plates for Scotland	218
,, ,, Ireland	1,562
Queen's bounties in Scotland	1,300
,, ,, Ireland	90
Queen's limner	97
,, ,, historiographer	184
,, ,, clockmaker	16
Windsor Castle turncock	201
Ratcatcher, turncock, and labourers at Buckingham Palace..	201
Albert Memorial attendants	120
Expenses of royal household in naval estimates	1,296

Altogether this retiring German lady, according to the estimate of the Financial Reform Almanack, costs the nation no less than £619,379 per annum! She receives from a grateful people for doing nothing more in one year than an American Chief Magistrate does in sixty, for being about the hardest worked man on the Continent. Truly, "always a wonderful people the English!" as Mr. Carlyle would have said.

Nor is this robbery—and it would be a misnomer to call it by any other name—perpetrated in a straightforward Captain Kidd-like manner. When the House of Commons settled the amount of the Civil List it was careful to divide the vote into so many fixed portions. Thus: for the Queen's privy purse, £60,000; for household salaries, £131,000; for tradesmen's bills, £172,500; for bounties, £13,200. It was intended by parliament—foolishly intended, no doubt—that all the moneys not appropriated to Her Majesty's privy purse or private use should be rigorously spent in maintaining the dignity of office of the Chief of the State. Indeed, so careful were the faithful Commons to secure this object, that they inserted a clause in the Act to prevent savings, except of trifling amount, in any one category from being carried to any other. Now, it is well known that a good many sinecure offices in the royal household have been abolished: but what has become of the savings? Have they gone back to the Exchequer, as they were clearly bound to go? Not at all. They have, in defiance of the Act, found their way into the privy purse, or the Queen is very much belied. But what is worse, the £172,000 allocated for "tradesmen's bills" have notoriously never been spent. For many years there has practically been no court; consequently it is safe to conclude that a good £100,000 a-year have gone into the privy purse from that source alone. Ministers who have been parties to such breaches of trust, whether Liberal or Conservative, deserve not merely moral reprobation, but legal impeachment: and there have been times in the history of England when they would have been impeached. They are very much more to be blamed than the Queen, who, according to "our glorious constitution," can, of course, "do no wrong."

It is one of the many perfections of the said constitution that if the Monarch were to commit a murder to-morrow, there is no provision for bringing her to justice. The Queen against the Queen, in an indictment at the Old Bailey, would be a constitutional *reductio ad absurdum*, which would nonplus the united wisdom of bench, bar, and parliament.

But though it is surprising enough that the nation should have to pay over £600,000 a-year to a Queen Do-Nothing, it is yet more astounding that the lady cannot maintain her

own family out of that sum. With a grasping avarice that nothing could exceed, she has called on parliament time after time to quarter her sons and daughters on the taxes wrung from the toiling masses. The sin of bringing into the world children whom they cannot or will not support is one frequently hurled at working men and women. When their offspring come on the rates, there is not a voice lifted up in their justification. But what does this royal person do with impunity? She charges the nation some £170,000 per annum for the maintenance of her able-bodied sons, daughters, and relatives.

Now, the amazing feature of this unheard-of imposition is that the whole family are absolutely unfit to render the State any responsible service whatever. The royal supersition aside, what part, for example, in this world's business would any discerning man be disposed to assign to the Prince of Wales? Could he be trusted to drive a 'bus or a hansom? If so, that would be about the likeliest occupation for him. When the *noblesse* were happily cleared out of France, many of them earned an honest, if not very useful, livelihood by turning dancing masters; but the Heir Apparent is altogether too clumsy to compete in any such line of life. As for any form of intellectual labour, that would clearly be beyond him. In a Republic political life would be closed to him. In the United States it is not too much to say that he would have no chance of being elected even a parish constable by reason of his "record." As for the Duke of Edinburgh, does anyone imagine that he could ever have become an Admiral of the Fleet, had he had to rely on his merits instead of his birth? He might have attained to the state and dignity of an A.B.; but it is extremely doubtful if he would have had talent and perseverance to get further up the ladder. As for Connaught, nobody could imagine him any more than the Commander-in-Chief ever getting beyond the rank of drill-sergeant. Of the late Duke of Albany it might have been safe to predict that, had he lived longer he would have been fit to assist with advantage at penny readings, or even to act as a copying clerk. But surely there is nothing very extraordinary in this—nothing to justify the oceans of mendacious ink that have lately been shed in his praise. In a world of sorrow, where "every moment dies a man, every moment one is

born," his death was of no public consequence whatever. His most memorable achievement was, characteristically enough, a heartless speech at Liverpool against out-door relief for the poor! Yet let us see how a grateful and starving people delight to reward such nonentities.

Crown Princess of Prussia	£8,000
Prince of Wales	40,000
Princess	10,000
Duke of Edinburgh	25,000
Princess Christian	6,000
Marchioness of Lorne	6,000
Duke of Connaught	25,000
Late Duke of Albany	25,000
Duchess of Cambridge	6,000
,, Mecklenburgh-Strelitz	3,080
Duke of Cambridge	12,000
Princess Mary of Teck	5,000

If these indisputable figures represented the entire cost of the Guelphic brood there would be less to be said though much to be condemned. But there are, as in the case of the Queen, sundry tantalising perquisites, difficult—nay, impossible to fix, and indeed almost surreptitious in character. For example, the Prince of Wales has £55,000 from the Duchy of Cornwall, which, by a fiction, is treated as his private property. He has likewise, as Duke of Cornwall, a snug perpetual pension of £16,216, granted in lieu of "post groats and white rents." When this little job was perpetrated in 1838 the entire revenue of the duchy was £11,536; so that compensation was given on the principle that the part is greater than the whole, a discovery that would certainly have astonished Euclid. Altogether Wales and "the Sea King's daughter from over the Sea," cost the nation over £120,000 per annum, or twelve times as much as the American Presidency! Always a wonderful people the English!

There are, besides, innumerable other thoughtful provisions made at the expense of the taxpayers for the convenience of travelling royalty; and when they condescend to take up their abode in public buildings it is amazing what sums have to be expended in "repairs." These tenants of the State are the worst imaginable. They are about twenty degrees worse than the worst Irish tenants ever known. They not merely pay no rent, but they recklessly destroy their land-

lord's property. They are Socialists with a vengence. The State does everything for them on a scale of munificence, and they do nothing for the State. Is there a Socialist working man in Soho or Clerkenwell who ever in his wildest dreams made such heavy demands on the State as these insatiable Guelphs, whose muddy German "blood" constitutes their sole claim to public consideration? It may be asserted without exaggeration that there is scarcely a family in England with a less creditable record.

Is it possible that this degrading monarchical superstition can survive in England much longer? Has the schoolmaster now been abroad so long in vain? Will the English people never take their destinies into their own hands, and close the long era of monarchical and aristocratic robbery? Are we never to have a Government that can hear the bitter cry of the outcast, and hearing, act? We know the goal. The goal is the *Democratic Republic*. Every minor reform is a delusion and a snare. Let us therefore walk in faith, and listen to the prophets. Listen more especially to the Right Hon. Sir Charles Dilke, at Newcastle-on-Tyne (6th November, 1871): —"There is a widespread belief that a Republic here is only a question of education and of time. It is said that some day a Commonwealth will be our Government. Now history and experience show that you cannot have a Republic without you possess at the same time the Republican virtues; but you answer, Have we not public spirit? Have we not the practice of self-government? Are we not gaining general education? Well, if you can show me a fair chance that a Repubic here will be free from the political corruption that hangs about the Monarchy, I say for my part—and I believe that the middle classes in general will say—let it come!" Amen.

CHAPTER XIV.

PROGRESS IN LIBERTY.

A land of old and just renown
Where freedom slowly broadens down
From precedent to precedent.

BROADENS slowly down! Alas, how slowly! English freedom, such as it is, is the resultant of more than eight centuries of struggle between selfish forces striving to supplant each other and to secure the mastery.

Kings, ecclesiastics, aristocrats, plutocrats, have happily never been able to form an enduring alliance among themselves, otherwise the sparse national liberties about which we sing such loud hosannahs would at this day be absolutely non-existent.

In the most primitive times the strong killed the weak and ate them. That was the age of *cannibalism*. Later, the conquerors made captives in battle and set them to labour for them. That was the age of *slavery*. By-and-by the slaves were permitted to retain some portion of their earnings for their own use. That was the age of *serfdom*. The fourth, or present stage of human evolution is *wagedom*. The producer's toil is treated as a chattel to be purchased in the cheapest market. He gets subsistence-money—no, not always that—while the non-producer revels in rent, interest, and profit. That is the gospel according to Bright. The fifth era of development, when co-operative industry shall supersede competitive or internecine production, has hardly yet dawned. It is in the womb of the future, and its heralds, like their precursors at every antecedent stage in the progress of the race, must look for nothing but misrepresentation, obloquy, and persecution.

There are practically four forms of government in the world —viz,, Monarchy, Aristocracy, Oligarchy, and Democracy. In no country does any one of these forms exist in an altogether unmixed state. Russia is as nearly as possible an absolute monarchy, or one-man Government; but even the Muscovite despotism is "tempered by assassination." On the other hand, the United States Constitution, grandly democratic as it is, imposes many checks on the popular will, copied by its framers from the monarchical institutions of Europe. The English Government—it would be absolutely wrong to speak of the English constitution, for constitution there is none—is a cunning compound of monarchy, aristocracy, oligarchy, and democracy, which produces the minimum of advantage and the maximum of disadvantage inherent in each system.

Let us consider for a moment how monarchies, aristocracies, oligarchies, and democracies are constituted. In every State there is a governing mind and an executive force. The executive force may, for practical purposes, be defined as the police, armed or otherwise. When an individual like the Czar of Russia or the Emperor of Germany obtains firm hold of overwhelming armed force, monarchy exists in its simplest form. But simple or mixed, it always strives to control the army.

Why do we see the Prince of Wales made a Field-Marshal; Connaught promoted to one of the most responsible commands in India; Edinburgh sent to command the Channel Fleet; to say nothing of the position of the Duke of Cambridge as Commander-in-Chief of the British army? The reason is obvious. These men never mean—indeed, could not be trusted by reason of their incapacity—to command against a foreign foe; but in the event of the English people resolving to rid themselves once and for all of the burden and disgrace of royalty, what easier for them than to take advantage of their military rank to stifle Republican aspirations in blood?

When a small number of families succeed in obtaining possession of the soil of a country along with control of the armed force, then an Aristocracy pure and simple is formed. England is the nearest approach that exists to a pure Aristocracy, and, as in the case of the monarchy, mark the anxiety of its members to obtain control of the armed forces of the

State. Hardly by any chance can the most meritorious private soldier in the British army get beyond the rank of a non-commissioned officer. Hence the severe but just taunt of the first Napoleon, that our troops are a host of lions led by asses. And such is still the condition of the British army, military examinations and the abolition of purchase notwithstanding. But to officer the army is in the last resort to keep aristocracy alive.

Where a minority in a State—a minority that is neither monarchical nor territorially aristocratic—controls the disciplined force, then we have a pure Oligarchy. Such were the governments of Sparta, Rome, Carthage and the Italian Republics of the middle ages.

In modern England the distinctive element of oligarchy is plutocracy, which, unfortunately for public liberty, is but too often the humble handmaiden of monarchy and aristocracy. Successful merchants and manufacturers are but too frequently willing to barter their well-dowered daughters in matrimonial exchange for mortgaged acres and tarnished titles. Monarchy, aristocracy, and plutocracy in combination form a close Oligarchy or rule of the few, with aims sharply opposed to those of the Democracy or party of the people. At present this triple Oligarchy have everything pretty much their own way. They live by taxes, rent, interest, profit, and place.

"Still press us for your cohorts,
And when the fight is done,
Still fill your garners from the soil
That our good swords have won.
Still, like a spreading ulcer
That leech-craft may not cure,
Let your foul usance eat away
The substance of the poor."

But the chained lion of democracy, who lives by the sweat of his brow, has at last begun to think—to reflect on the miserable condition to which the superior cunning of the few has reduced the many. "The people at large," wrote the penetrating Aristotle, "may always quash the vain pretensions of the few by saying, 'we, collectively, are richer, wiser, and nobler than you.'" And the vain pretensions of the few the many will at last know how to quash. The many must learn to control the executive force in their own interests, as monarchs, aristocrats, and oligarchs have hitherto controlled

it in theirs. In such a government kings, peers, and plutocrats can have no place. The three estates of the realm will then be reduced to one, viz., a democratic House of Commons —as in the time of the Commonwealth.

When the Long Parliament was expelled by the armed force and its treacherous chief the thread of political progress was rudely snapped; and ever since English public life has been destitute both of vigour and sincerity. But it is a long road that has no turning. Ideals like those of Vane, Hampden, Pym, Eliot, and Milton cannot finally be lost. The broken thread of seventeenth century Republicanism must be re-united with that of the nineteenth century. When an English Constitution comes to be framed, there should be no copying of the American, French, or Swiss Constitutions, with their monarchical reproductions of Senates and Presidents. What the far-sighted statesmen of the Commonwealth strove ultimately to establish was biennial parliaments, returned by the widest and most equal suffrage practicable. The House thus constituted was to elect a large Executive Committee for one year; this committee or Council of State to choose its own president monthly or otherwise, as it had a mind. By this means, good administrators, irrespective of party, could be secured, and the reprehensible idolatry of Grand Old Men prevented. The executive committee, forty-one in number under the Commonwealth, was divided into sub-committees for the different departments of State. These after deliberation, reported first to the full Council and then to the House, and if their policy was affirmed there was an end of the matter. If we had a Foreign Relations Committee, for example, like that of the United States, acting in a straightforward manner, instead of a conclave of Cabinet Ministers meeting in secret like a band of conspirators to involve the nation in iniquitous wars without so much as a pretence of consulting parliament, how different the financial burdens of the people to-day! In the Commonwealth parliament the figure-head was Mr. Speaker, and all commissions issued, and appointments made by the House were signed by him as nominal Chief of the State. By these simple arrangements the Republican Parliament of England combined simplicity and efficiency of administration in a manner never attained by any English Government before nor since.

And now by what means is the strong triple alliance of monarchy, aristocracy, and plutocracy to be overthrown by the toil-worn half-dazed giant of democracy? First, the giant must, above all things, attend to his political and general education. This task, his sore toil and grinding poverty render doubly difficult, but it is an imperative duty which, left undischarged, will be found an insuperable barrier to his emancipation. Were the giant but fully conscious of his rights and his irresistible strength, he would shatter the triple alliance of his enemies as easily as Samson snapped asunder the withs with which the Philistines had bound him. In order to grasp and retain the whole machinery of Government in his hand he has but to keep two objects steadily in view. He must possess himself of equal manhood suffrage and the land. These acquisitions are necessarily antecedent to all others. To the old watchwords of democracy, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," *Property* must now be added. Liberty to starve or to be driven into exile is not a kind of liberty worth having.

It is at this point that Mr. Henry George's land gospel comes to be of such vital importance to the British democracy. It smites at the very root of aristocracy and monarchy. Give every man, woman, and child in the country an equal inalienable interest in the national soil, and the feet of the democratic giant are at once planted on a rock. The whole earth is a natural monopoly, and cannot, therefore, become a true subject of free trade, much less of entail or strict settlement. Granted this—and it is impossible seriously to dispute it—the only question that remains is how to secure to each son and daughter of Adam an equitable share. The problem may be more difficult than Mr. George seems to think; but after all it is only a question of detail. In Russia the men of the *Mir* divide the land periodically, according to the number of mouths in the commune, and there is an end of the matter. But in England the population is vastly more urban, and such a primitive method of distribution might be found inapplicable; though M. Laveleye does not hesitate to recommend its gradual adoption, and the Highland Crofters Commission have (*mirabile dictu*!) just recommended something very like a communal tenure.

But the democratic giant need not harass himself too much

with details. Suffice it for him to assert his equal right to the soil with the Westminsters, Portlands, Devonshires, and Sutherlands. Our Bramwells and Argylls have attempted in a feeble way to deny the doctrine of equal land rights; but they could not have taken up more dangerous ground; for if there are no natural rights, what remain but natural mights? If the Oligarchy have might on their side to-day, they cannot complain if the Democracy, feeling their strength, exercise their might of numbers to-morrow. Better secure exemption from all taxes, with a reasonable provision for widows and orphans, than run the risks of the French *noblesse* in 1789.

But in addition to Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, Property, *Faith*—faith in God and Man—faith that the noblest aspirations of the soul will ultimately be justified by the severest revelations of science is needed for all abiding progress. The far-seeing and devoted Robespierre was right when he said:—"Atheism is aristocratic. The idea of a Great Being who watches over oppressed innocence and punishes triumphant crime is essentially the idea of the People." Mankind cannot live by bread alone. The new Socialistic Gospel, though an improvement on false and barren atheism, is, after all, only a gospel for beavers. It tells nothing of that "one far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves," which from the dawn of history has inspired all true religion and philosophy.

"Our little systems have their day,
They have their day and cease to be,
They are but broken lights of Thee,
And Thou, O Lord, art more than they."

The Norman Conquest found the English people well advanced in the essentials of a rude liberty. They enjoyed much more equal land and suffrage rights than Englishmen do at this moment. With the introduction of feudalism in all its rigour they were reduced to serfdom. Before William the Conqueror, and his fellow-freebooters set a foot in England, they divided between themselves, on paper, every manor and every ecclesiastical benefice in the country, and the spoils were subsequently divided with scrupulous exactitude. Here was robbery, if you please. Not a word about compensation. And, singularly enough, the present race of landlords, who are so horrified at Mr. Henry George's proposal to put rents

into the Exchequer instead of their pockets, make it their special boast that their ancestors "came over with the Conqueror." They glory in their descent from robbers. But Mr. George's objects are not at all to their minds, and no wonder. What their forefathers, real or pretended, did, was to take from the many and give to the few. That, indeed, was robbery pure and simple. Mr. George, on the contrary, though he would deprive no son or daughter of Adam of his or her natural stake in the bounty of Providence, would take their ill-gotten possessions from the robber few and restore them to the lawful owners, the lackland many. Mr. George's scheme is not one of robbery, but of confiscation in the original etymological sense of the word. Confiscation means the appropriation of the estates of robbers, traitors, and other felons to the uses of the fiscus or national treasury. It is in this sense that the American economist is a confiscator, and no other. He is not a robber. It is his landholding calumniators that are the robbers, and the inheritors of stolen property. They began at the Conquest by an act of universal robbery, and they continue the process under the very eyes of the people to this day.

An authority no less weighty than Sir James Caird has calculated that between the years 1857 and 1875 the landlords of the United Kingdom added to the value of their estates a sum, if capitalised, of £331,000,000 at a cost to themselves of £60,000,000! Here was a clean sweep in eighteen years of £271,000,000, for which these aristocratic lilies of the field did "neither toil nor spin." One moiety of this huge "find" was of course taken from the tenant farmers in the shape of uncompensated improvements, while the remainder was filched from the nation at large as "unearned increment."

Mr. Samuel Laing, M.P., a recent convert from Whiggery to Radicalism, and one of the greatest living authorities on railways and finance, has lately given us, in the "Nineteenth Century," a notion of the way in which "unearned increment" is created. £50,000,000 over market value, he tells us, have been paid to the landlords of the United Kingdom for the land taken for purposes of railway construction. The railways have at the same time improved real estate to the almost fabulous extent of £150,000,000 while relieving it of one

half the rates! Here truly is robbery, if we had the trick to see it. A few hard concrete nuts like these given to the landlords and their friends to crack were worth bushels of abstract theories, however irrefragable in themselves.

At the head of the feudal system stood the king. He was in theory, and to a large extent in practice, the universal landlord. The Crown lands alone when Domesday Book was compiled consisted of no fewer than 1,442 manors. In Saxon times they were strictly national property, inalienably set apart to meet the expenses of Government. They were dissipated by the descendants of the Conqueror, and in some respects the results were not unfortunate. If kings had not been improvident, they would have had no need for national subsidies or parliaments to grant them. The extravagance of kings was the opportunity of the people. When the Commons voted any extraordinary supply they generally contrived, in exchange, to wring some small concession of liberty from the reigning tyrant. This is the history of English freedom, down even to the time of George III.

After the king came the royal vassals, or tenants *in capite*. The king was their immediate suzerain, to whom they owed homage, fealty, and military service. These royal vassals in the same way parcelled out their domains among less potent robbers, towards whom they stood in the relation of suzerains. By these means England was transformed into a camp, and what had been won by the sword was maintained by the sword, supplemented by the hardly less formidable weapon of feudal law. The Norman freebooters indeed elaborated a system of government so ingeniously compounded of violence and cunning, that to this day the mass of the people groan under it, while taught to believe that they are in the enjoyment of a "glorious constitution" that is the envy and admiration of the whole world.

The first great landmark in the development of English freedom is, perhaps not incorrectly, held to be Magna Charta. By that instrument the barons, spiritual and temporal, emancipated themselves from the arbitrary thraldom of the king. For the serfs, that is to say the great mass of the population, they did nothing except to stipulate that fines should not extend to the deprivation of their tools. Still, Magna Charta was a beginning. It was the first break in

cast-iron feudalism, and foreshadowed, however faintly, the representative system of government.

Next appeared on the scene the great figure of Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, the founder of the House of Commons. In 1265 he summoned to parliament for the first time the representatives of towns, or, to put it otherwise, of moveable property. This was beyond doubt the introduction into the body politic of a new force—the force of numbers, or democracy.

But it was not till the communistic preaching of John Ball and the rising of Wat Tyler that the serfs began to raise their bowed heads. Tyler was treacherously assassinated and the insurrection suppressed, but the moral effect of the movement was very great throughout rural England. What Simon de Montfort did for the trading or middle class at the cost of his life was hardly surpassed by what Wat Tyler effected for the serfs by the sacrifice of his.

Another blow of a different kind was struck at feudalism in the reign of Richard II. The first peer by patent was created in the person of John de Beauchamp, Baron of Kidderminster. A *territorial* was thus changed into a *personal* dignity, and by this means land, to some extent, was stripped of the legislative power hitherto attached to it. At a later period it was decided that peerages were held merely *in trust*, and that absenteeism or poverty entailed, the former forfeiture of estates, the latter loss of dignity. Absenteeism and bankruptcy in these more enlightened days are no disqualification for the duties of a hereditary legislator, any more than "physical and moral incapacity" in a queen.

During the Tudor period, as has been already shown, the dial of national liberty went back many degrees; yet a new factor was introduced into politics. In the reign of the very worst of these tyrants, Henry VIII., the principle of the sovereignty of the people, as expressed by *public opinion*, first took root. Henry, Edward, and Elizabeth, by repeatedly changing the national faith, compelled the people to think for themselves in matters ecclesiastical. Discarding false opinion or superstition in religion, a large section of the nation was led to challenge false opinion or superstition in politics. The Puritan party—the political ancestors of the Radicals of to-day—slowly grew in numbers, resolution, and clearness of democratic aim.

Their first great achievement was to wring from the king the Petition of Right, rendering illegal arbitrary imprisonment, billeting soldiers, martial law, forced loans, benevolences, and generally taxation without the consent of parliament. The second great and tragical blow struck by this new and incalculable power of *public opinion* was the trial and execution of "the man, Charles Stuart," for treason to the Sovereign People. The bruit of this unparalleled event is yet resounding throughout the world, and loosening everywhere the knees of tyrants.

When wilt Thou save the people, Lord—
Oh, God of mercy, when?
Not kings and thrones but nations;
Not chiefs and lords, but men.

CHAPTER XV.

SALUS PUBLICA SUPREMA LEX.

The One and the All are, as ruling powers, the only final quantities. The Few and the Many are either instalments and compromises, or quackeries, delusions, and names.—*Partridge.*

The Cromwell of this age is an intelligent, resolute, and united People —*Goldwin Smith.*

THE unhappy restoration of the Stuarts brought with it a whole train of evils, from which the nation still suffers. In 1660 a House of Commons, in which the landlords were supreme, relieved their estates of all feudal dues, then amounting to about one-half of the entire revenues of the State. Military service, purveyance, aids, relief, premier seisin, wardship, alienation, escheat, all disappeared in a day. In their place were substituted Excise duties. By 12 Charles II. c. 24 the great bulk of taxation was for the first time transferred from the land to the people, who have borne it ever since. In 1883 the revenue proper—*i. e.*, exclusive of receipts from the Post-office, Telegraphs, &c.—amounted to £73,128,000. Towards this sum Customs and Excise alone contributed £46,587,000. The Land-tax yielded £1,055,000! Our rulers tax the vices of smoking and drinking at home as a means of murdering Afghans, Zulus, Egyptians, and Soudanese abroad. Raise all taxes from the land, and we shall speedily hear of the last of these enormities.

For every shilling paid over the counter for cocoa, 1¼d. is for tax; for coffee, 1½d.; for currants, 2½d.; for raisins, 2½d.; for tea, over 4¼d.; while a shilling's worth of spirits is raised to 4s. 4¼d.; and a shilling's worth of tobacco to 6s. 8¾d. The smoker who buys an ounce of tobacco for 3d. pays 2½d. for tax and ½d. for tobacco. And this is exemplary free-trade England! It is noteworthy that this infamous statute of Charles II., which abolished the feudal burdens of the land-

lords, while leaving them in full enjoyment of their privileges, was carried by a majority of two, the numbers being—for the measure, 151; against, 149.

The Land-tax was fixed in 1692 at 4s. in the pound of *true annual rental*, but the landlords soon found this charge too onerous, and in 1697 they reduced their payments to a fixed sum, which was raised in 1798 to £2,037,627, and declared to be perpetual, subject to redemption. To-day the tax, if honestly levied on *true annual rental*, would yield about £35,000,000. Had it been honestly levied all along, there would have been no National Debt, and probably very few wars. Landlord parliaments, it is pretty certain, would have been careful to keep out of wars for which they themselves would have had to pay, and pay at once out of rent instead of the mortgaged wages of industry.

Still, the Restoration period was not wholly unfavourable to liberty. The Act of Uniformity drove two thousand Presbyterian clergymen out of the Church, and laid the foundation of political as well as ecclesiastical nonconformity deep and strong. Standing armies were declared to be illegal, and the Habeas Corpus Act guaranteeing to the people immunity from arbitrary imprisonment was passed. Nevertheless, standing armies exist to our cost, and during the present parliament we have seen nearly a thousand Irishmen and Irish women under lock and key at one time "on suspicion."

The expulsion of the Stuarts and the choice of William as king by a majority of two votes in the Convention Parliament made England beyond cavil an elective monarchy. The Act of Settlement has only to be abolished in order to bring royalty to a legal end, for what parliament has done it is clearly competent for parliament to undo. To the Dutch king's reign we are indebted for the Civil List as well as the abominable funding system, which enables "sovereigns and statesmen" by anticipating revenue to carry on flagitious wars at the cost of posterity.

In George the First's time, parliament passed the Septennial Act as a temporary measure to keep out the Pretender. Honourable members have since fraudulently retained it on the Statute Book to keep themselves in power a little longer.

As early as 1780 a great public meeting in Westminster demanded Annual Parliaments, Universal Suffrage, Equal Electoral Districts, Payment of Members, No Money Qualification, and Vote by Ballot. The then Duke of Richmond, who was president of the "Society for Constitutional Information," and Charles James Fox, considered these propositions reasonable, and maintained their urgency. Yet more than a hundred years have elapsed, and with the exception of vote by ballot not one of them has been made good. There is nominally, it is true, no money qualification demanded of parliamentary candidates, but they have to bear the charge of official election expenses, and that is a money qualification in the very worst form. Who shall say that in this "land of old renown freedom has not *slowly* broadened down from precedent to precedent?"

The Reform Bill of 1832 was a step towards the emancipation of the people, but a step marked by the basest perfidy on the part of the middle class, who, once inside the fortress of citizenship, faithlessly helped to bolt the door in the face of their working-class brethren, whom they had solemnly undertaken promptly to admit. This treachery brought into existence the famous People's Charter, which was first published in May, 1838. It re-affirmed with emphasis the Richmond-Fox "points" of 1780, and secured an amount of zealous and intelligent advocacy unparalleled in the history of political reform. It gave birth to a generation of workmen patriots, whose honourable "records" are among the most precious memorials of their day and country.

But the Oligarchy was not to be overthrown by such feeble weapons as reason, eloquence, and justice. Peaceable meetings were broken up by armed force, and the leaders of the movement were arrested, imprisoned, and exiled. The late Napoleon III. endeared himself to "Society" by playing the part of an Anti-Chartist special constable.

Though stifled by oligarchic force and fraud, the democratic cause, however, was not dead, but it unhappily slumbered for many years. In 1867, Mr. Benjamin Disraeli caught the Whigs bathing, and made off with the suffrage clothes in which they had for years been masquerading as friends of the people. It was decided to admit, by "a leap in the dark," urban artisans to citizenship, but carefully to

exclude their brethren in the country, as well as the whole class of agricultural labourers. Of course, no honest effort was made either by Conservatives or Liberals to redistribute political power; consequently, as usual the flattering promise of reform made to the ear has been broken to the hope. The vast interest of labour—the only interest in a properly-constituted society—is represented in the House of Commons by two members all told, and one of these unfortunately, generally acts as henchman and decoy-duck to the capitalist.

On the other hand, the peers have no fewer than 272 relatives in "the People's House;" the Fighting Interests, 168; the Landlords, 282; the Lawyers, 122; Liquor, 18; Money (bankers, &c.), 25; Literary, Professional, and Scientific Interests, 94; Placemen (past and present), 113; and Trade, Commerce, and Manufactures, 155.

The producing classes, while contributing at least three-fifths of the revenue, have certainly not more than a score of even passable representatives in parliament. The spending classes have the rest, the fighting interest alone making away with no less than thirty millions of the national income!

Now, however, it is proposed to redress some of these startling anomalies. For the first time in the history of parliamentary reform we have a Ministry which almost unsolicited comes forward to extend the liberties of the people. They have raised the banner of household suffrage in the counties and encouraged the hope that a Redistribution Bill is to follow. But desirable as it is in every way that the toilers in field and mine should be promptly enrolled in the ranks of citizens, it is quite possible to effect this object, as was done by the Bill of 1867, without perceptibly altering what Lord Salisbury calls "the balance of the constitution." Household suffrage in the boroughs has given us six years of Tory Jingoism, supplemented by Whig coercion in Ireland, the thrice-infamous bondholders' war in Egypt, and a crushing expenditure never exceeded in time of peace by the worst of recent Governments.

The cure for these and many other evils that afflict the body politic is to be found in the numerical equalisation of constituencies—in the one man one equal vote contention of the Chartists. To extend the franchise without redistribution is merely to increase the cost of elections, and thereby

make the "rich man's club at St. Stephen's" even less accessible to honest poverty than it is at present. The equalisation of voting districts, on the other hand, would undoubtedly "alter the balance of the Constitution," transforming oligarchic England into a democracy, in which those who toil and spin might lead lives really worth living.

This being so, the question arises whether the franchise being once conceded to the counties, there will be any anxiety on the part either of Liberals or Conservatives to proceed to redistribution. All previous experience is against the supposition. Time—twenty or thirty years—it will plausibly be alleged, is needed to get at the wishes of the new voters whose choice of candidates will meanwhile lie between Dives and Crœsus. This is the rock ahead, and genuine democrats must beware lest their bark be wrecked within measurable distance of the land of promise.

The anomalies of our representative, or rather misrepresentative, system can hardly be exaggerated. One hundred and eighty borough constituencies, with 3,500,000 inhabitants, return 231 members to parliament; while seventy-one others, with 11,500,000, return only 129 representatives! Forty-two boroughs, with less than 7,000 inhabitants, have one member each; while 178 towns, with an aggregate population of 3,630,000, and in no case counting less than 10,000 souls, are for voting purposes included in counties. Could there be a better reason than this for getting rid once and for all of the obsolete distinction between boroughs and counties? While say a Lambeth journalist, accustomed to handle every political topic of the day, has the twenty-fifth thousandth part of a representative in parliament, the enlightened Portarlington voter has the hundred and fortieth share in an honourable member all to himself! Could the perverse ingenuity of man invent a more preposterous system of government? Indeed, slight as have been the achievements of British democracy, as compared with the triumphs of our Republican "kin beyond sea," they are great and laudable in view of the mighty barriers which the craft of oligarchy has erected on every hand.

But barrier or no barrier, ultimate victory is assured. Democracy, it has been well said, like death, never gives up a victim, never abandons an ideal. It is something that the

people should know what they want. With equal land and suffrage rights democracy becomes possible. Without both it is impossible, and liberty, its offspring, remains unborn. A great future, a mighty inheritance, is opening up to the honest toilers of every land. The triple alliance of monarchy, aristocracy, and plutocracy is strong, but it can and shall be broken. Even if they are let alone they are sure ultimately to quarrel among themselves. The profit-monger will quarrel with the rent-monger because the latter neither toils nor spins, or for some other reason. Providence is on the side of the heavy democratic battalions. The people will at last enjoy their own and sit down under their vine and fig-tree, with none to make them afraid. The golden age—the age of Republican brotherhood—"when man to man the world o'er shall brothers be, an' a' that," is not in the past, but in the future. To us it is given to see it only in visions and glimpses, as Moses saw the Promised Land from the height of Mount Pisgah; to see it only, like him,

> "Who, rowing hard against the stream,
> Saw distant gates of Eden gleam,
> And did not dream it was a dream."

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This is a very clever little book. The best point in Mr. Davidson's work is that he seems to have shaken himself clear almost if not altogether from middle-class prejudices. The history of the great Middle-Class Revolution of the seventeenth century has yet to be written. Mr. Davidson's sympathy with the Levellers and genuine Republicans is so manifest that he would start with much in his favour. It needs some pluck even now to write this sentence, "judging of such a beast of prey as Cromwell we should never regard for an instant what he said but mark intently what he did.—*Justice.*

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The "New Book of Kings" is an astounding one and in any other country would be almost certainly suppressed. It is a savage attack on the Monarchy and strange to say on the present government.—*Dublin Daily Express.*

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The style of the "New Book of Kings" is able and agreeable but its rampant Radicalism is calculated to appal even the followers of Mr. Chamberlain.—*Newcastle Daily Journal.*

Mr. Morrison Davidson's "New Book of Kings" is a curious specimen of the literature with which extreme politicians occasionally favour us. Written with masculine vigour and no want of that it is yet about the most remarkable perversion of history that one could reasonably expect to see.—*Glasgow Herald.*

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Its thoroughness raises a doubt as to its honesty. It should be read but read with reserve and inquiry.—*Eastern Morning News.*

A wholesome spirit runs through the whole work. Every line should be read by all who either believe or believe not in Kings.—*The Centaur.*

Now and again efforts have been made to bring to light the real characteristics of the Kings and Queens of England. Possibly the most vigorous and truthful work upon the subject is the "New Book of Kings." Mr. Morrison Davidson spares no one; and he gives evidence of his statements. Every political or historical student should have the "New Book of Kings."—*Boston Guardian.*

A perusal of "The New Book of Kings" will astonish the student of political history as to the number of evil things which can be raked together to the prejudice of Monarchs.—*Edinburgh Daily Review.*

His criticism of past and present English Royalty is often fair enough but it is often coarse and altogether out of proportion.—*Bradford Observer*