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*The Settling of Britain.*

The *raison d'être* of these historical notes is that the essentials of history find next to no place in the school text-books in current use, The compilers of school histories tell us the year in which the Battle of Flodden was fought, or that in which Mary Queen of Scots was beheaded, though these events have no very discernible effects on the lives of the people of Scotland and England to-day. On the other hand, they do not tell us when or why the Feudal System was introduced, or when and how that system was abolished, though the consequences of both the introduction and the abolition remain of momentous importance in the lives of the people to-day. The purely military and sensational episodes of history are narrated with comparative wealth of detail; the rise and growth of fundamental institutions are ignored. Thus every schoolboy knows about the Death of De Bohun, the Douglas's pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and the battle of Otterbourne; but ask a class of secondary-school pupils when the British Political Revolution took place, and you will be told 'We never got that.'

When the school historians do, rarely, indulge in constitutional details they are sometimes wrong in the most elementary particulars. 'A History of the British Empire,' long popular, misled the scholars and teachers of a generation with the information that 'the Three Estates of the Realm, or constituent parts of the Parliament, are the Sovereign, the Lords, and the Commons.' The truth is, of course that the Three Estates are the Barons Spiritual, the Barons Temporal, and the Commons. The Sovereign is not, and, never was, an Estate of the Realm. The making of such a mistake regarding such a matter is, as Carlyle would have said, 'significant of much.' The attitude of mind which makes for elaborate attention to personal details regarding a dead king, while lightly and inaccurately treating a great and permanent institution of most civilised countries, does not tend to sound or large views of the relative importance of historic facts. It is merely interesting to learn that Curtmantle had bow legs and that Elizabeth had red hair; whereas it is important to know that Parliament was in its origin, as it still is in its composition, an assemblage of *direct* representatives of certain classes in society. The fact is that, to the average historian, history is still a collection of battles, sieges, court intrigues, and individual biographies rather than, as it should be, an account of the corporate life and growth of a nation; is still a series of separate incidents, connected only by the sequence of time, rather than a synthetic view of the evolution of a people, in which politics, industry, art, religion, commerce, warfare, geographical discovery, technical

invention, and the popular standard of comfort act and re-act one upon another, shaping, fusing, and determining the character of the national life as a whole.

In spite of the oft-repeated protests of such historical critics as Macaulay, and the example which some few modern historians have set of how history should be written,\* the subject, as taught in schools, continues to be a chronicle of the unedifying deeds and misdeeds of sovereigns and generals. The lives of the great body of the nation, and the social, industrial, and even political changes that took place, are alike ignored, or, at best, but slightly treated. For the details and meaning of these changes, as for the features of a given age, we have to turn to Social histories, Constitutional histories, Histories of Civilization, of Prices, of Work and Wages, 'Economic Interpretations of History,' works on 'The Duties of Civic Life,' and other books of a special historic character. If such details are not of the essentials of history, there are none. That the general history of a period or a country, as ordinarily narrated, fails to include such particulars forms the reason for these pages.

\*Justin M'Carthy's 'Short History of Our Own Times,' for instance. Sir Walter Scott's 'Tales of a Grandfather,' though neither accurate nor up-to-date, is wonderfully comprehensive in conception and method, despite the 'brave neglect' of its style and its excusably romantic bias.

#### *The Period.*

The four centuries from the accession of Alfred the Great (871) to the death of Henry III. (1272) represent the period of the settling or founding of Britain upon the main lines - political, economic, and judicial - on which the United Kingdom stands to-day.

#### *POLITICAL.*

#### *Consolidation.*

When Alfred became King of the West Saxons the island-contained at least ten more or less independent rulers. When Edward I. became King of England and Ireland there were but two besides himself, and before the end of his reign the death of Llewellyn of Wales left but one, the King of Scotland (Alexander III.). During this period (1172) the kilted Kings of Ireland, the Dermods and Donalds, the Murtoughs and Malachies and Mahons, of Leinster and Munster, of Meath and Thomond and Ulster, paid homage to Henry II., as did also the Danish rulers of Dublin and Wexford. As an annalist writes with pathetic brevity, 'Earl Strongbow came into Erin with Dermod M'Murrough to avenge his expulsion by Roderick, son of Turlough O'Connor; and Dermod gave him his own daughter and a part of his patrimony; and Saxon foreigners have been in Erin since then.'

These four centuries not only witnessed a union of principalities: they also saw a consolidation of the English in England and of the Scots in Scotland for purposes of really national defence and government.

### *Lack of Public Spirit.*

The bugbear of the Saxon kings and a great contributory cause of the successful Danish and Norman invasions and occupations was the incapacity of the Saxons to hold together, to act unitedly. The Saxon freeman would repel, if he could, an invader who appeared in his own neighbourhood; but he did not willingly leave the shire, and he was easily persuaded to believe that an enemy was completely routed when he had only temporarily fallen back on suffering a slight reverse. Home-loving by instinct, the thought of the good wife, the bairns, and the farmstead left unprotected, sometimes inclined the Saxon to panic when the day seemed to be going against him afield.

But in truth the parochial character of Saxon defence was not merely a matter of feeling. It was a matter of institutions as well. The *fyrd*, or shire levy, was required, legally, to serve only within its own county, and that for a short period at a time, the service including the manning of the district forts and stockaded mounds which the Saxons had copied as a defensive device from the Danish ravagers. Of course this merely local obligation was in practice frequently departed from; but the danger had to be very great and clear, and that its gravity and clearness were not always recognised is shown by the repeated successes of the Danes, the Scots, and the Welsh. Alfred tried to secure more willing and effective service from the *fyrd* by calling up only one half of the available levy at a time, so that the civil work of the community need not be entirely suspended. That, however, does not appear to have removed the objection of peaceful men to the business of war, although Alfred and some of his successors were able to expel, and for long periods to keep out, the Danes.

Stolid, unimaginative, with no political ideas beyond the folk-moot where he said Ay, Nay, or merely clattered his weapons in token of assent, the Saxon freeman, with all his good qualities, was no active friend to the peace and good order of the land as a whole. He was an Individualist, as his descendants still are to too great an extent. He was the primitive prototype of the man who to-day takes no interest in politics, and selfishly boasts that he 'minds his own business.'

### *Penalty - The Feudal System.*

With this absence of a national ideal, and its practical drawbacks of selfish personal 'independence' and lack of social cohesion, Alfred and the later Saxon kings did their utmost to cope. The 'lordless man' was declared an outlaw and was treated as such. The freeholding Saxon tribesman, himself a master of serfs, had now to set about finding a master in one or other of the neighbouring thegns, at whose hands he would receive in fief the lands he already held in his own right. This was the beginning of the Feudal System in Britain,

Thus the best men of the time - Alfred himself and, later, the great Premier Archbishop, Dunstan - had to degrade the freeman to the position of a vassal as a

penalty for his lack of public spirit - a lack which usually carries, sooner or later, its due penalty everywhere.

### *The Continued Lack.*

But to make the freeholder a villein, liable to compulsory military service under his lord's banner, did not suffice to consolidate and render effective the defence of the country, either on land or on sea. The feudal machinery of defence could not supply the lack of public spirit and a national ideal.

The Danes might ravage Northumbria; but the West Saxons behaved as if that were none of their affair. William of Normandy might land in Sussex as the starting-point of a general invasion; but the Northumbrians, instead of hastening to help Harold against the foreign invader, joined with the Danes under Hardrada and Tostig, the King's own rebel brother, to make the task of their monarch still more impossible. Harold had to defeat this rebellious coalition of his own subjects with the Danish invader ere, by marching night and day, he could give his attention to the Norman. Even then a large part of Harold's muster consisted of ill-armed rustics. That the chivalry of France was repulsed again and again from the rough stockade behind which the Saxons plied their fearful axes, was chiefly due to the desperate valour of Harold's own house-carles or bodyguard\*1 rather than to the general support accorded by the Saxon people to the Saxon king.

Harold's navy, it is believed, would have been more than a match for the mere transport boats in which William crossed the Channel - burning them when he landed at Pevensey - but the Saxon Buscarles,\*2 locally raised, had gone home to their own ports at the time of crisis, and the Saxon fleet was useless save for a career of piracy after the kingdom had fallen into the hands of the Norman.

The numerous serious revolts which took place at intervals, long after the conquest of England, had at least the one feature in common, that they were planless, sporadic, spasmodic, devoid of national unity. The English were not yet a nation.\*3

\*1 The house-carles of Harold's time were a very much stronger force than the handful of *gesiths* who formed the bodyguards of the early Saxon kings. From the time of Canute they numbered several thousands strong.

\*2 Boatmen. The Yarmouth herring boats were called 'busses,' as the Dutch herring boats still are.

\*3 We can now afford to regard the Norman Conquest as representing a beneficial infusion of new blood and new ideas; but the price of this higher civilization must have seemed exorbitant to the six generations of the conquered race that paid it.

### *Scotland.*

Nor were the Scots. In the time of Alfred there was in Scotland the British kingdom of Strathclyde, having its capital at Alclud (Dumbarton). There was an Anglian

kingdom of Lothian, occupying the south-east corner from the Forth to a shifting boundary in Northumbria. The Picts and Scots, united under Kenneth Macalpine, occupied Scotland from sea to sea, with Scone as their capital city. Mar and Moray were under independent Celtic mormaers. The Hebrides, Caithness, Orkney, Shetland, and Sutherland were still held by the Norse jarls. But while these five provinces became united under Malcolm Canmore, that king did homage to the English monarch for his possessions in England. It was not till the reign of Alexander I. that the complete separation and independence of Scotland within its own boundaries was established and recognised.

#### *Parliament.*

The Saxon Witanagemote, or Assembly of the Wise, had great powers, including that of choosing the king; though the succession extended, apparently as a matter of course, collaterally among the king's brothers before it descended to his sons. Descent did not determine the succession; it merely indicated the field of selection; and sometimes, as in the case of Harold the Last, a king was adopted from a source outside the blood royal altogether.

#### *In England.*

With the coming of the Conqueror a period of absolute monarchy set in. The *Curia Regis* of the early Norman Kings was simply a committee of the king's creatures. This regime lasted till the end of Henry III.'s reign, when the first elective Parliament of the Three Estates of the Realm was convened by Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, called by the men of his day Sir Simon the Righteous' The Witanagemote was composed of men of rank, who held seats and voted, not as the delegates of a constituency, but merely by virtue of their social position. They represented only themselves.

The Parliament of 1265, on the other hand, was, in its most important chamber, both elective and representative. The Commons, or Third Estate, consisted, not only of knights of the shire (who alone formed the Third Estate in continental Parliaments), but burgesses of the towns in addition. The voters were freeholders of the annual value of not less than 40s. The word Estate is derived from the Latin *status* - a condition in life. The founders of Parliaments everywhere recognised that the various classes in society could be properly represented only by men belonging to each particular class - a sound view, of which the return of 150 Labour members to Parliament is a partial recognition to-day. The Labour Party represents a Fourth Estate of the Realm. Members of the House of Commons were remunerated on a scale which varied from time to time, and differed as between the knights of the shire and the burgesses, the former being assumed to live more expensively. In the time of Edward III. the rate was fixed at 4s. a-day for a knight and 2s. a-day for a burgess - sums equal to 40s. and 20s, respectively of our money.

#### *In Ireland.*

In Ireland informal meetings of 'eminent persons' belonging, of course, to the English colony, led to the convocation of a Parliament in 1295. Knights of the shire only were summoned at first. Burgesses were not added till 1310. The Parliament of 1354 numbered only 20 members. When the Irish Parliament was abolished, by gross corruption, in 1800, it numbered 300 members.

### *Scotland.*

The introduction of Parliamentary government into Scotland does not fall within our period. The first regular Scottish Parliament met in 1318, in the reign of Robert the Bruce, that, indeed, being the act of most abiding significance in the Scottish Deliverer's reign. Well-informed men, making light of the sentiment of nationalism and the passion for independence, have questioned whether the results of Bannockburn did not simply delay the spread of civilization in Scotland. But, so far as we know, no one has ever denied the utility of the great body of Scots Law enacted by successive Parliaments during the four centuries of Scottish legislative independence. The Scots Parliament, abolished by suborned votes in 1707, was a Parliament of one chamber only. After 1427 the members were paid £5 Scots (8s. 4d. sterling) per day during the session of Parliament, this allowance extending to time spent in travelling to and from the place of assembly.

### *Rise of the Towns.*

The growth and prosperity of the towns was looked at with unfriendly eyes by the aristocracy. Writing of the granting of a constitution to London in 1191, Richard of Devizes said: 'What evils spring from these communes can be gathered from the saying about them, that they mean an upheaval of the rabble, a menace to the kingdom, and a lukewarmness in religion.' Prior to this the burgh had practically belonged to one overlord or another; but now the government was vested in the craft guilds, the lord's taxes were commuted, and the burgh was freed from the grosser forms of seignorial oppression.

## *ECONOMIC.*

### *Slavery.*

The Saxon conqueror found the soil of England cultivated by a population of slaves and free and half-free *coloni*. For centuries he kept it so. There was a great export trade in slaves. It was the sight of fair-haired lads from Northumbria exposed for sale in the market-place of Rome that made Pope Gregory the Great vow to transmit Christianity to England. The landing of Augustine, with forty monks, in 597, was the result. The debtor who could not pay was sold into slavery. Slaves were bred and reared for the market. Unnatural fathers sold their sons into bondage. Bristol traded in slaves till the eighteenth century, and the Scottish ports were not free of the same scandal. Sometimes, as in the case of Peter Williamson, of Aberdeen, the kidnapped bondman escaped and returned; though he got little redress from the merchant magistrates who were themselves interested in this white-slave trade.

### *Norman Feudalism.*

The feudal system, introduced by the Saxon rulers, was made more rigid and formal by the Normans. 'Hear, my lord,' swore the vassal as he knelt bareheaded, his hands placed within those of the superior, 'I become liegeman of yours for life and limb and earthly regard, and I will keep faith and loyalty to you for life and death; God help me.' Yet the superior was only a tenant of the Crown, as the vassal was a tenant of the superior. The basis of tenure was military service in the case of both, though this could be escaped by the payment of scutage or quit money, with which the king could and did hire foreign troops. The system of military tenure obtained in England, as a matter of law if not of practice, till 1660, when by an act of the Convention Parliament of Charles II. the landholders voted themselves out of their feudal obligations, making themselves in fact if not in law landowners; though it is but fair to say that they imposed upon themselves a tax of twenty per cent. of their rentals. Except where it has been commuted by the payment of a lump sum, this tax is still paid on the basis of a valuation made in the reign of William and Mary (1692), since when, of course, the value of the land has enormously increased.

### *Feudalism in Scotland.*

We have seen how feudalism was introduced in England by Alfred and Dunstan as a natural punitive consequence of the Saxon's lack of public spirit. The Feudal System was introduced into Scotland during the reign of Malcolm Canmore. Desiring to see his dominions more thickly peopled, and the refinements of life diffused among his Celtic subjects, Malcolm tempted both Norman and Saxon settlers to his northern kingdom by gifts of land, to be held in fief according to the feudal system whose workings he had seen during his residence in England. In Scotland in the eleventh century, as in Canada to-day, land was of less value than population.\*

The feudal system in Scotland did not penetrate to the Highlands. The clan tenure was in theory, if latterly not in practice, different from the ordinary tenure of these islands. The clansmen owed fealty to the chief of their sept and name, but it was a fealty based, not on the use of property derived from him, but on considerations of blood ties, protection accorded, and the sentiment of personal loyalty. The tribesmen were co-owners with the chief of the lands occupied by the clan.

At the Reformation, one half of the land of Scotland (according to Sir Walter Scott) belonged to the Church, and one cause of the ready acceptance of Protestantism by the Scottish nobility was the renunciation, by the Reformed clergy, of Prelacy, of formal political power, and of legal claims upon the confiscated lands. It is possible to admire this unworldly spirit of the Scottish clergy while regretting its practical consequences in the diversion of the Church lands from public to private uses. The endowments and teinds of the Scottish Church are an insignificant substitute for the vast properties administered by the Church in pre-Reformation days, largely for hospitable, charitable, and educational purposes, in addition to religious teaching.

What the Church renounced and the poor lost, the nobles hungrily devoured, without gratitude and as a matter of course.

For Scotland the military tenure was not legally abolished till 1747, the Jacobite rising of 1745-6 having called attention to the mischievous power which the Scottish feudal superiors still possessed of dragging peaceable men out to fight in quarrels in which they had no interest.

\*Nowadays philanthropy reverses King Malcolm's wise policy, and encourages emigration, especially from the parts already most thinly peopled. These are now, on the principle of contraries, termed 'congested districts.'

### *The Appropriation of Britain.*

But while the feudal system provided for the defence of the country, which to-day costs us over £116,000,000 annually,\* there were, side by side with the feudal estates, millions of acres of common land. According to the Domesday Book, there were, in addition, in England alone, 1922 manors, 68 royal forests, 13 chases, and 781 parks whose revenues went into the public purse. According to constitutional authorities, these properties were strictly inalienable; but they have mostly been alienated; and the net revenue from the Crown Lands was in 1925-6 only £950,000. At the Reformation Henry VIII. resumed possession of the monastery lands as being Crown property, and it is calculated that the capitalised value of these would now be over a hundred millions sterling. But the monastery lands, the common lands, and the Crown lands have mostly been either enclosed by Act of Parliament, given away to royal favourites, or gradually and covertly filched by the neighbouring proprietors. Thus in the reign of Charles I. it was found that Rockingham Forest, one of the royal demesnes, had been encroached upon by the adjoining landholders till it had shrunk from sixty to six miles in width. A Commission being appointed, in 1633, to deal with these appropriations, many noble depredators were not only deprived of large tracts of the land they had annexed, but were fined in addition. An old rhyme runs:-

Why prosecute the man or woman

Who steals the goose from off the common,

And leave the larger felon loose

Who steals the common from the goose?

The enclosure of public lands, however, continued long after the time of Charles I. So late as 1820 the Duke of Rutland of the period enclosed 2,000 acres of common land in the Derbyshire parish of Holmesfield, and actually charged the parishioners with the expense of the Act under which his appropriations were made! In the hundred and twenty years from 1760 to 1880 no less than ten million acres were transferred from public to private ownership.

Thus by a process spread over a thousand years, and natural and necessary enough in its beginnings in the time of Alfred, but in its later stages plain robbery, whether legal or illegal, were the people of Britain made aliens in the land of their birth, the soil passing to a handful of owners who have done less to give it the value it now bears than the meanest hind who lives upon it by their sufferance.

\*The cost of the Navy was £58,100,000 in 1926-7, of the Army, £42,500,000, and of the Air-Force, £16,000,000.

### *Serf Tenures.*

The serf and his unfree dependants (who could be married only with the consent of the seigneur) constituted the majority of the population, which in the middle ages was distributed over the country instead of being huddled in towns. Under Saxon as well as under Norman rule the craftsmen were freemen, some of them, such as the potter, travelling from village to village. But the cottager, the copyholder, and the field labourers were serfs, although the actual conditions of life of these classes varied in detail. In the early days of the Saxon occupation the house servants were absolute chattel slaves, to be bought and sold. The Saxon cottager had a minimum holding of five acres; his Norman successor half a virgate - not less than twelve acres. He owned stock and paid rent, never more than sixpence an acre, and usually considerably less. One demand of the labourers in the Peasants' Revolt was that the rent of land should not exceed fourpence an acre. Sometimes the rents were nominal. By one free tenant a pound of pepper (value 1s. 6d.) is given annually for nine acres. On Cuxham Manor, in Oxfordshire, the serfs gave (for their twelve acres) a halfpenny on November 12, a penny every time they brewed, a quarter of seed-wheat at Michaelmas, a peck of wheat, four bushels of oats, and three hens on November 12, and at Christmas a cock and two hens and twopenceworth of bread. The value of these payments and services is put at 9s. per annum, 3s. only being rent for the house and land occupied by the serf, the remaining 6s. simply the penalty of serfage. In addition, the cottage serf (Saxon, *cotsetla*; Norman, *coterelli*) had to give labour on the lord's demesne at the call of the bailiff.

### *Wages and Prices.*

Under the Normans the cottagers became practically freemen. They paid 1s. 2d, to 2s. a-year for their cottages, and had to give a day or two at hay-making, for which they were paid a halfpenny. They were also bound to give one to four days at harvest-work, when they were fed at the lord's table, were allowed a loaf of bread each, and had sixpenceworth of beer among them. During the rest of the year they were free to work for wages on the lord's demesne.

But while fare and lodging were as described, there was at least rude plenty. There was much hiring of casual labour, and before the great rise in wages caused by increasing prosperity and the Black Death (1348), which cut off one-half of the labourers, wages are given as 6d. an acre for ploughing, a penny for hoeing, and

2½d. for mowing. Women were paid a penny a-day for such work as weeding. Cultivation cost the lord of the demesne about £1 an acre, and at this rate all authorities are agreed that the labourer was fairly well off - a penny having 30 to 40 times its present purchasing power. By the fourteenth century wages for artisans were, as recorded, sixpence a-day, and for labourers fourpence. A list of prices obtaining in the fifteenth century gives eggs at 25 a-penny, hens and rabbits 2d. each, chickens ½d. to 1d., hogs 2s. 3d., sheep 1s. 2d. to 1s. 4d., oats 1s. 2d. to 2s. 4d. a quarter. The outside price of a labourer's board was a shilling a-week. The working day did not exceed eight hours. These conditions relate to what is described as 'The Golden Age of Labour.'

The Scottish Golden Age is placed in the period of peace and prosperity extending from the reign of Malcolm Canmore to the death of Alexander III.; but the nearest approach to definite data is the elegy in Wyntoun's 'Cronykil' beginning -

Quhen Alysander oure King was dede  
That Scotland led in luive and le,  
Away wes sons of Ale and Brede,  
Of Wyne and Wax, of Gamyn and Gle.  
Oure gold was changyd into lede.

#### *JUDICIAL.*

##### *The Wergild.*

In Saxon times the law had been administered by the thegns in the hundred-moots, or courts of the hundred or district. But each family had to be its own policeman. If a member of the family was slain his kindred had the right to maintain a blood-feud with the family of the transgressor till recompense was made. The State had the right to make the injured family accept a price or 'wergild' for the dead man's life. Every man had his price. Thus a thegn was worth six ceorls, and if a ceorl killed a thegn he was either sold into slavery or his own life paid the forfeit, since he had not the wherewithal to pay the wergild.

##### *Trial by Jury.*

In the reign of bustling Henry II. trial by jury began to be introduced. Prior to the last quarter of the thirteenth century the guilt or innocence of an accused person was in the eye of the law established by one or other of the three ordeals - fire, water, or battle - or by compurgation, the sworn testimony of eleven of the accused's neighbours that he was innocent. It was from the practice of summoning witnesses that the jury system originated. The possession of a mind unbiassed as regarded the

crime to be tried would have been no recommendation of a juryman in those early days. The jurymen were the neighbours of the accused. They were witnesses who came to give evidence themselves rather than adjudicators to decide upon the testimony given by others. It was only as population grew and life became more complex that the office of juror assumed its present character.

*Peine forte et dure.*

But an accused person could, as late as the eighteenth century, refuse to be tried by a jury. Fearing the prejudices of his neighbours, or having only too good reason to fear their just award, he could offer himself for any of the three ordeals. To compel the recalcitrant one to accept a trial by jury, they could imprison him, starve him, and heap weights upon his naked body as he lay on a dungeon floor till they squeezed the life out of him. But if he died in this way his heirs still inherited his property, whereas had he accepted trial and been convicted, his effects might have been confiscated. The *peine forte et dure* was not abolished till 1772, nor the last of the ordeals till 1819.

The Great Charter, granted by John in 1215, while it curbed the royal power and initiated the reign of statute law in place of government by royal charter so far as England was concerned, established also several important judicial rights. Two of the grand clauses of the Charter run:-

No freeman shall be taken, or imprisoned, or disseised, or outlawed, or banished, or any ways destroyed, nor will we pass upon him, nor will we condemn him, unless by the lawful judgment of his peers, or by the laws of the land.

To no man will we sell, or deny, or delay right or justice.

The rights thus granted had to be re-affirmed and fought for over again in the reign of Charles I.; but it was a great matter to have the Charter to which appeal could be made.

## *SOCIAL.*

*The Condition of the People.*

But this progress - political, judicial, feudal, municipal - was confined to the freemen. The lot of the serf showed little improvement. Even so late as the time of Chaucer that kindly observer could, with only too much truth, describe the widow's home in the line,

Full sooty was her bower and eke her hall.

The cottage of the labourers consisted of one apartment partitioned across the floor, the pigs and poultry being housed on one side, the family eating and sleeping on the other. There was no chimney. The smoke had to escape as it might by the doorway and the chinks in the ill-joined wooden or wattled walls. Living miserable lives, it was

little wonder that both men and women should spend much of their time carousing, gossiping, and quarrelling at the village alehouse. Disease was common, though cases of leprosy were not so rife as the number and extent of the lazar houses would lead us to suppose. Drunkenness, to which, primitively, most people are prone, was encouraged by the amount of salted food eaten. With no root crops to serve as winter food for cattle, beeves were mostly slaughtered at the end of autumn and the flesh salted for winter use. Save game and fish, there was during the winter no flesh food that was not pickled. In six shires there were no fewer than 727 salt-works. Although in the time of the Angevin kings there were thirty-eight vineyards in England, there were few potherbs to act as anti-scorbutics in the dietary of the people. To the introducers of carrots, cabbages, and turnips we owe more than to the kings and generals who consumed but created not.

### *Housing of the Well-to-do.*

The house of the well-to-do Saxon was a wooden hall, with bedrooms and a bower surrounding it, all on the ground floor. The kitchen and other offices were outhouses, and in fine weather (as shown in illuminated manuscripts) cooking was done out of doors. This applies also to the Norman times. The Norman house, whether built of stone or wood, was, fundamentally, an affair three rooms - the hall, a lofty apartment occupying the whole height of the main building; behind it, and on a lower level, a vaulted cellar which served as general storeplace; and, over the cellar, the *solar* or private apartment of the master of the house and his family. The title of *solar*, meaning sun-chamber, is a significant commentary on the mediaeval idea of a house as a darksome place of safety and shelter rather than of pleasure. The *solar* is confessedly the only decently-lighted room in the house. And even in it the windows, as may be seen from existing examples, were small.

Access was gained to the solar from the dais, or raised platform at the upper end of the hall. It was the sitting-room and bedchamber, not only of the family, but of the guests, male or female, of their station in life. A measure of privacy was secured by hangings suspended between the beds; but on this there was no very strict insistence. The 'chivalry' of the middle ages was superficial, and the relations of dame and squire were free and easy. The walls of the solar were wainscoted and the floor carpeted.

The floor of the hall was called the *marsh*, a name which would often be appropriate enough, despite the covering of rushes and boughs with which it was strewn. It had no fireplace. When there was a fire it was made in the centre of the floor, the smoke escaping as it might by a louvre or lantern in the roof. Through the high-set, narrow, unglazed windows birds entered and flitted overhead. The family ate at a cross table set on a dais, the servants from boards set on trestles along the sides of the hall. At the conclusion of the meal these boards were removed, and the servants, male and female slept where they had eaten, sometimes on mattresses spread on the floor, but often on straw or rushes. Saxon and Norman alike slept 'in naked bed.' An amusing series of instructions for the management of a household enjoins the mistress to teach her servants 'prudently to extinguish their candles before they go into their

bed, with the mouth or with the hand, and not with their shirt.' That is, they were not to undress in bed and throw their last garment over the candle to put it out.

In the high, narrow Scottish keep of later days the cellar, hall, and solar were set one on top of another.

### *Hours.*

Late hours are a luxury of civilization. The Saxons and early Normans rose early. The rhyme which extols the virtues of 'early to bed and early to rise' does not specify an hour for either the lying down or the rising up. But the Norman rhyme ran -

Lever á cinq, diner á neuf,  
Souper á cinq, toucher á neuf,  
Fait vivre d'ans nonante et neuf.

That is to say -

To rise at five, to dine at nine,  
To sup at five, to bed at nine,  
Makes a man live to ninety and nine.

### *Travel.*

'The Canterbury Tales' convey the impression that, despite the bad roads, the absence of wheeled conveyances, and the dangers from thieves both high and low, there was a good deal of moving from place to place. The impression is heightened by the explanation given of some of the words, referring to locomotion, that have come down to us from the Middle Ages. Thus roamer meant a person who had repeatedly travelled to Rome; a saunterer was a person who had made, or was making, the pilgrimage to the Sainte Terre or Holy Land; to canter was to pursue the amble associated with those who rode to Canterbury. But travel was confined to the well-to-do or to those who preyed upon them, such as the crafty Pardoner sketched by Chaucer. The knight, the franklin, the merchant, the master mariner, the well-conditioned Wife of Bath might be able to afford the time and money required for a journey to London and thence to Canterbury; but the only industrious person of humble means who is found in the company is the Ploughman, who, however, is not a serf or even a free wage-labourer, but a small farmer. The unfree villager of the period had neither the means nor the liberty to travel beyond his own parish, much as he would have wished to make the pilgrimage to all manner of holy places; for, with all his grossness, the serf was intensely devout and credulous.

### *CONCLUSION.*

We are apt think of the middle ages as non-progressive, as stagnant with an oriental stagnation, But the many changes briefly indicated in these pages as having taken place in the four centuries 871 - 1272 show that Britain has never stood still for long; that if her peoples acquire increased liberties and rights it is only by the public spirit and sustained civic courage of the best men among them; and that if liberty and right languish or are curtailed, the explanation is to be sought in popular apathy quite as much as in any necessary aggressiveness or stubbornness of the powers that be.

The fact, indeed, is that popular rights have in this country been multiplied with little effort or endurance on the part of the people as a whole, except, indeed, in Ireland, where the 'tree of liberty' has been abundantly watered with the blood of martyrs. Where Italians, Poles, and Irishmen often fought and died in vain, Englishmen and Scotsmen succeeded in gaining their ends with a comparatively moderate amount of agitation. At the least promise of redress of grievances the mass of the people promptly fell away from their leaders. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the great armies of the two Peasants' Revolts went home contented with promises that were not fulfilled; and the death of Walter the Tiler in 1381, the death of John Cade in 1450, were alike accepted by their followers with fatalistic resignation as proofs that the popular will could not count in public affairs. By a happy process, in which they have borne little part, the people of Britain now possess both political power and a measure of education, and the more intelligent workmen are turning both to account for the political, economic, and social ends of the largest class in the nation. The future at last has elements of hope for the masses, who, having helped the aristocracy and then the plutocracy to fight their battles, are now arming and mustering for a great victory on their own account.

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