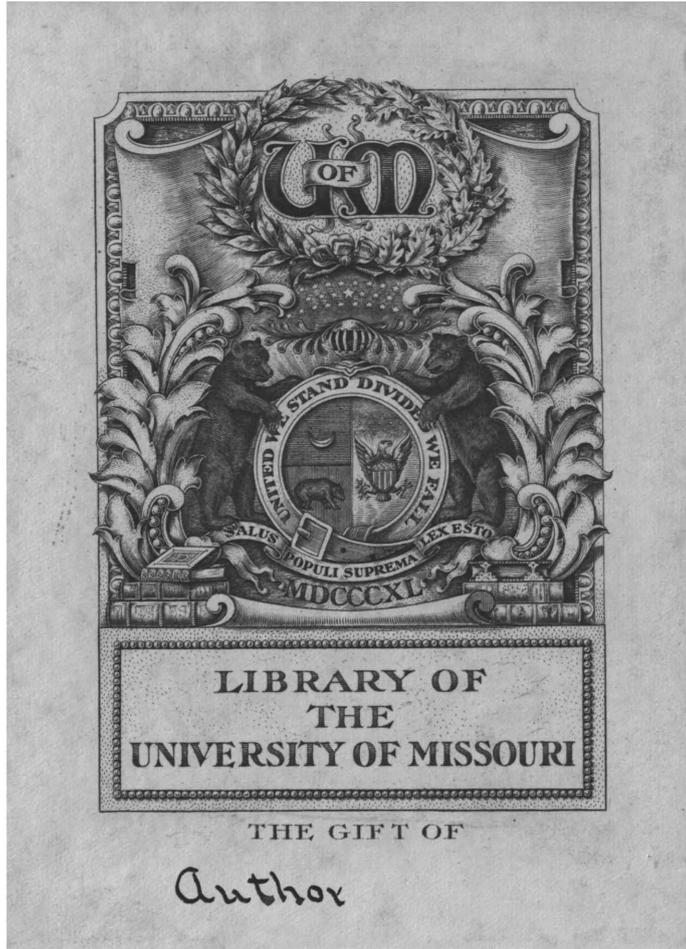


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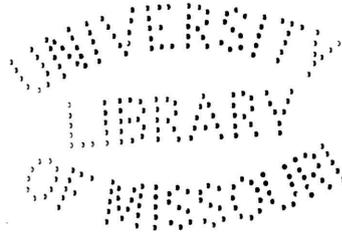


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SOCIETY IN ENGLAND DURING THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY.

A Study in Social History

by

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*Approved for presentation,
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Chapter I

Classes of Society before the Black Death.

In the early fourteenth century the classes of society in England were in a state of transition. Forces had been at work for some time, but there had been no clear manifestations of the changes in social conditions until the close of the thirteenth century. From the time of the Norman Conquest tendencies had been more or less democratic, though the great class of the unfree still existed.

A new epoch in social history begins with the reign of Edward I. The explanation of this lies largely in the character and policy of this ruler. Edward was the first national king, in the true sense of the word, since the Conquest. He was looked upon not as were his predecessors, as a foreigner, but as one who felt an interest in, and a desire to secure that which was best for all his subjects. The last traces of the Conquest had been swept away, and the descendants of those who had lost and those who had won at Hastings had become blended into one people; and they saw in

1. Kemble. Saxons in England- Vol. I., Chap. 8.

2. Green. Short History of English People. Vol. I. p. 390.

Social England- Vol. II. p. 23. "The Reign of Edward I."
A. L. Smith.

Denton- England in the Fifteenth Century- Introduction- p. 32.

1. Edward an earnest, sympathetic king, who was looking out for the welfare of the nation.

On the other hand, Edward inherited from his Angevin ancestors certain qualities of character which influenced the manner and national spirit of the English, and changed the character of classes of society. Chivalry, his Angevin heritage, played a very important part in Edward's life. There was a nobleness, in his nature from which the baser influences of chivalry fell away and it did not, therefore, have the demoralizing effects, on English society that it did on French. Edward's ardent desire was to be a model of the fashionable chivalry of his day. He loved the sentiment, the heroic spirit, the courtesy connected with it. Thus it was that there was created a royal nobility in England.

By the close of the thirteenth century the original noble families of the Conquest had left few direct representatives. There had arisen new families out of the blending together of the Norman and the English. It was from this class that the royal nobility was formed. The immediate cause of the origin of this class was political. After the Conquest all the chief tenants of the king were entitled to seats in the Great Council. However the greater landlords only received direct royal summons to attend

1. Green- Short History of the English People. Vol. I. p. 347.

2. Bateson- Mediaeval England. p. 306.

Social England. Vol. II. p. 5, "The Reign of Edward I."

A. L. Smith.

the meeting. It was their duty to appear. The sheriff, by order of the king, informed others in the country who were entitled to seats, of the meetings, but the presence of the latter was not desired by the king. Now those who received personal summons from the king came to be distinguished from the other landlords. At first they formed an official nobility, whose duty it was to advise the king. They were called the "peers". Gradually the peers acquired social distinctions because of their associations with the king. It was Edward's aim to prevent the peers from holding their positions by hereditary right. He desired to have members of this royal nobility dependent on the king, but he failed in this. It was customary in all European states, in cases where any honor was the reward, for the office to descend from generation to generation. Such became true in regard to the royal nobility in England, the rule of primogeniture prevailed.

Although the royal nobility was created primarily for political reasons, it never the less formed a most important class socially. After the **business** of the Great Council had been transacted, the king **tendered** this body a feast. The court ladies attended these feasts also. The holding of Round Tables was very fashionable. The proceedings began with a **great dinner** at a table arranged round the wall of the room, the **guests** sitting with their backs to the wall and all facing a central space where minstrels and attendants stood. Usually the Round Table dinner was accompanied with dancing and music, followed by a grand **knighting** ceremony. During the reigns of Edward I.

1. Social England vol. II. p. 25. "Religion in England- 1272-1348"
Beazley.

and Edward II. such occasions did not present the ostentation and extravagance that was characteristic of Edward III's court.

Under Edward III. and Philippa, court life was exceedingly brilliant. Elaborate gowns of Italian silks, of gold and silver tissue from Lucca, of Flemish cloth, were needed in number for royal entertainments, feasts and tournaments. Another striking feature of court life at this time was the practice of attiring hundreds of attendants in the same material, which must have made a splendid show on the occasion of great ceremonies.

Edward III., not exactly satisfied with the royal society, instituted a new order of chivalry, in 1344, when he created the Order of the Garter. Fraissart relates that "the kyng assembled togyder erles, lordes, and knyghtes of his realme and shewed them his intention to make an order and a brotherhode of a certayne nombre of knyghtes, and they all iously agreed to his pleasure by cause thei sowe it was a thyng moche honorable and whereby great amyte and love sholde growe and encrease; then the

1. Social England- Vol. II. p. 125. Traill.

Fuller Church History of Britain Vol. I. p. 397.

2. Bateson Mediaeval England p. 302.

Social England, Vol. II. p. 123. Traill.

3. Social England. vol. II. p. 115.

kyng chose out a certayne nombre of the mooste valyatest men of the realme and they sware and sayled to mentage the ordynaunces

1. such as were devysed."

The young man, upon whom the honor of knighthood was conferred, came from the royal nobility, or from the landed aristocracy. Knighthood depended upon one or two things, heredity or some act of valor. Those of the royal nobility who were knighted, were chosen because of noble birth, while those of the landed aristocracy selected, had displayed great courage and bravery, usually on the battlefield; they were "the mooste valyantest men of the realme." Whether the condidates for knighthood belonged to the royal nobility or to the lesser aristocracy the following were necessary requirements of every

3. one who would be eligible to the Order of the Garter: 1. That he be a gentleman of name and arms by father's and Mother's side for three generations; 2. That he must be without spoft or foul reproach; 3. That he must have a competant estate to maintain the dignity of the Order; 4. That he must have never fled in the day of battle; "his soveriegn lord or his lieutenant being in the field." From such requirements it seems that the morals of this order were high. J

1. Fraissart- Chronicles- (Lord Berner's translation).
Vol. I. p. 120.
2. Social England- Vol. II. p. 128, "Knighthood" Traill.
3. Fuller. Church History of Britian. Vol. I. p. 427.
Jusserand. English Wayfaring Life. p. 104.

✓ The king felt it his duty to visit the various parts of his realm in order to look after the interests of the crown. When he started upon one of these journeys, not only

1. was he preceded by twenty four archers in his pay; but he was accompanied by two marshals, 1. an outer and foreign marshal, who in time of war disposed the armies for battle, fixed the halting places on his journey, and at all times arrested malefactors found within twelve leagues around the king; 2. an inner marshal, who guarded the palace and castles, and cleared them as much as possible from courtesans. The chamberlain also accompanied the king; it was his duty to take care that the interior of the house was comfortable; another attendant looked after the wardrobes and kept the accounts. The marshal of the hall was careful that no intruder entered. Many other lesser officers accompanied the king on a journey. Over all was placed the steward, the first officer of the king's household. The king traveled for the most part on horse back,
2. as the roads during the fourteenth century were very dangerous.

While on these journeys, the king preferred to spend the night at the castle of some lord; very often night overtook him, when there was no castle near, in which case he would

3. seek the hospitality of a neighboring monastery. The king was

1. Jusserand. English Wayfaring Life. p. 104.

2. Froissart. Chronicles, - (Ed. by S. Luce). Vol. I. p. 257.

always welcomed.

The officials of the king were forbidden to take their wives upon these journeys. In 1333, in the ordinances of his household, Edward forbids knights, clerks, squires, valets, grooms, in short, all who accompany him, to bring their wives with them, unless they have any post or employment there. It may be said in general women traveled very little. This was largely due to the inadequate means of transportation, and lack of protection.

The royal nobility on journeys imitated very closely the king. There was not the great precaution taken by the attendants in guarding the lord as in the case of the king. A lord on a journey was welcomed by the lord, at whose castle he might chance to stop. Every thing was done to make the lord have a pleasant time. A tie of love bound the members of this class together in a remarkably strong brotherhood. Whether known or unknown, the traveling knight was always welcomed.

The knight seeking hospitality, usually arrived at the country house at night fall. Shortly after his arrival he was invited to partake of the evening meal. In every house there was a large hall where the repasts were taken in common. The visitors ate with the hosts at the table at one end of the room, called the dais. The attendants of the knight were seated at the lower

tables, with persons of their own rank. After the meal was finished, preparations were made for all to retire. The knight usually desired to retire early so that he might get an early start on the morrow. Before leaving, however, another meal was eaten.

✓ The house in the fourteenth century were very primitive in character. The superior class of houses in the country districts consisted of a large room upen to the roof. The earth was the only floor. In the center of the room a fire was lighted when necessary, the smoke escaped from roof and door. Separated by a passage from this room,- the common dining-room and bedchamber of the house,- was usually a kitchen or larder, and sometimes a cellar. As cooking was frequently carried on in the open air, and cooking utensils were part of a traveler's luggage as he passed from one manor house to another, a permanent kitchen was not necessary to a house. The large room was divided into several small cells when the members of the house hold prepared to
 1. retire for the night. This was the accommodation provided for even the royal aristocracy.

1. Social England. Vol. II. p. 56-8, "Architecture under the three Edwards", R. Hughes.

Bishop Swinfields' roll- (1289)- p. C. XXIV.

Denton. England in the Fifteenth Century- p. 44.

[With the rise of a new and higher social class, the peerage, the status of the other social classes were changed. The great landholding class, from which the greater nobility had been created, still claimed a large portion of the population. This class held a very important place in the social organization of this period. It was composed of all the land lords who had been entitled to seats in the Great Council, but who were not held in especial favor by the king, and all the younger sons of the royal nobility. The land holding class was, therefore very large. The "country gentlemen" and knights made up this class.

During the early fourteenth century the system by which the land of these "knights and country gentlemen" was cultivated was the manorial system. Originally the system was based on serfdom, but in the early fourteenth century this system was giving way to a system of compensation. The typical manor consisted of a single village in which the land legally belonged to the lord. All the inhabitants had to submit to his seigniorial jurisdiction. Only a small part was actually under the supervision

1. Rogers. Six Centuries of work and Wages- Vol. I. p. 160.
Bateson. Mediaeval England- p. 306.
2. Denton. England in the Fifteenth Century- Introduction- p. 11.
Trevelyan. England in the Age of Wycliffe. p. 184.
3. Social England- Vol. II. p. 95-. "Agriculture"-W. J. Corbett."
4. Pennsylvania Translations and Reprints, Vol. III- No. 5.

of the lord, this part was the demesne. Upon the demesne the lord's household dwelled. A sufficient number of servants were retained here to attend to the household duties. The remainder of the land was occupied by tenants, free and serf, who cultivated their scattered holdings, and in form of compulsory services performed most of the labor on the demesne. The ~~failiff~~, an official appointed by the lord, supervised the work of the tenants.

1. The bailiff held a leading place in the village, and often lived in the manor house, with the lord's household. His duties were those of an overseer, he was also expected to keep the accounts, and to see that nothing was bought or sold unnecessarily. He was assisted in the work of superindendence by subordinates
2. chosen by the tenants; the reve and hayward were the more important of these, whose duty it was to see after the reaping and storing up of the crops.

The inhabitants of a manor were bound together into a single social group, by the authority of the lord over the tenants. There was not, however, any degree of congeniality

3. between lord and tenant. The lord was incomparably better clad

1. Social England. Vol. II. p. 92. "Agriculture." W. J. Corbett.

2. Social England. Vol. II. p. 94. Agriculture- W. J. Corbett.

Rogers- Six Centuries of Work and Wages. Vol. I. p. 163

3. Jessop. Studies by a Recluse. p. 177.

4. Chaucer. Prologue. l. 64-5.

and housed and nourished than his tenants. He might grow fat while they starved. Very often disease and poverty visited the tenants, but the lord gave no heed so long as he was comfortable. Chaucer tells us that the knight;

1. "Never yet no vileyneve nesayde, In al his lyf unto no maner wight," yet he might have looked after the comforts of his servants and tenants, and have made life more pleasant for them.

The knights and country gentlemen displayed the finer traits of character among persons of their own rank. They gave no thought or care for the happiness or even comfort of persons in the lower classes of society. This is the characteristic of Mediaeval altruism.

2. The change in the system of land cultivation from that based on villenage to commutation resulted in bettering the conditions of the villains. When once commutation had been established, the lord provided himself with laborers sufficient to cultivate the soil, and the others sought employment elsewhere. Indeed the lord was glad to let the greater number of laborers leave his estate as they paid him an additional sum for the privilege. Many of the estates were henceforth not cultivated, but turned into sheep farms, which provided a great source of

1. Rogers. Six Centuries of Work and Wages. Vol. I. p. 218.
- Social England.- Vol. II. p. 98. Agriculture W. J. Corbett.
- Trevelyan England in the Age of Wychiffe- p. 186.

of income to the lord.

"Any complete generalization upon the constitutional history 1. of the towns," "the Bishop of Chester rightly observes," is impossible for this reason, that this history does not start from one point or proceed by the same stages, each borough had a separate life, developing a personality of its own, nor had parliament yet begun to legislate away these individual 2. peculiarities." The same may be said of the social history of the boroughs in the early fourteenth century. In general the relations of the borough and gild were the same in most instances, yet there were local variations ranging from practically complete amalgamation of the two elements to the other extreme of open antagonisms.

In the early fourteenth century the natural tendency was for amalgamation of the two elements. The population of a borough consisted of individuals with practically the same aims and ambitions. The borough was made up in large part of those tenants and villians who had secured their freedom from their landlords. Few class distinctions existed in a borough. The chaplains were lawyers; and the monks were the teachers, physicians and litterateurs.

1. Stubbs- Constitutional History.
2. Gross. The Gild Merchant. I.- 72.

Social England- Vol. II. p. 110 "trade and Industry". Hubert Hall

1. The townsmen, for the most part, were connected with commerce
 2. or trade. The policy of Edward I. and his immediate successors
 in regard to commerce was remarkable. The interests of the crown
 were the same as those of the nation. On the eve of the fourteenth
 century the Jews were expelled from England because they were
 3. considered a hindrance to English prosperity.

1. Gross. The Gild Merchant. Vol. I. p. 123.

2. Barnard- Companion to English History- 206.

3. Rogers- Six Centuries of work and wages. 155.

Traill. Social Eng.- II. 115 (Extracts from Holinshed and
 Stowe-)

Denton- England in the Fifteenth Century- Introduction- p. 25

Note- The state of the coinage at the accession of Edward I.
 was a cause of embarrassment to the kingdom. It was difficult
 to obtain money not greatly reduced below its nominal value by
 the dishonesty of "clippers." This crime the king vigorously
 punished. As the Jews were the chief dealers in money, they be-
 came very unpopular, and were finally expelled from England
 by royal act.

The importance of foreign intercourse had become so great that its supervision was not felt to be safe in the hands of the guilds of the cities, so the king took the responsibility of supervising foreign commerce upon himself and his council. Because of this, the English merchants reaped many benefits.

As has been mentioned, the guilds were very closely connected with town life. The purposes of the guild were manifold, it was for social purposes, for religious worship, for help in sickness and burial, for the performance of some definite task, for the increase of trade and commerce, and for the betterment of individual crafts. The members of a guild were mutually bound together by common interests. The guild filled a place in the social life of the fourteenth century which was not provided by any other institution. In many respects the guild and church were similar in their social aspects.

Membership in the guild did not depend upon the civil status of an individual. Women, monks, and heads of religious houses, belonged to the guild, though they were excluded from the right of burghership. The members paid certain fees and agreed upon

1. Social England. "Trade and Industry". Hubert Hall. vol. II. 102.
Gross. Gild Merchant. p. 66.
2. Barnard. Companion to History to Middle Ages. 204. (Warner.)
3. Gross. Gild Merchant- I. 37.

1. certain modes of action. Good behavior and proper ~~manner~~, both at meetings and in ordinary life, were required. Brawlers and those convicted of theft were expelled from the gild. All candidates must be of good reputation and character. If trouble arose between members, it was the duty of the brotherhood "to bring them at once", by arbitration. This self governing body did much for the betterment of its members, and, in general, it influenced higher standards of morality in society. Initiated members were generally obliged to feast the gild and, to provide ~~the~~. Such entertainments were generally held on Sundays.

Others of the villan class who bought their freedom preferred the country to town life. Many of the more industrious ones, after working hard and saving their earnings, were able to buy small strips of land, and become land owners on a small scale. By thrift, they continued to add more land to their original holdings and though they did not enjoy the luxuries of the fourteenth century, still their condition was very much ~~le~~ better than it had been. They formed the yeomanry. It might be said they lived a simple life of the fourteenth century.

Another class of villans and tenants who had purchased their freedom, formed the industrial class. The greater number of such persons lived in towns, and were members of a gild;

2. Rogers. Six Centuries of Work and Wages. p. 179.

1. Companion to English History (Barnard). p. 207. G. T. Warner.
(Lucy P. Smith)

1. the typical craft guild of the early fourteenth century contained
2. three classes: ~~masters~~, journeymen, and apprentices. The interests of all the classes were identical. The young man who would take up a trade must go through definite stages of ~~a~~service before he could become a master worker.
3. There was a feeling of distrust and jealousy toward all foreigners who came to England either as merchants or artisans.
4. Accordingly regulations were made by which the foreigners were handicapped in reference to trade and industry. They were allowed to sell their goods by wholesale to members of the guild, who sold the goods by retail, and thus made big profit on them. Limitations were also made in regard to the length of time

1. Rogers. Six Centuries of Work and Wages. Vol. I. 184.
2. ~~Fox~~ Bourne- English Merchants. p. 19.
Gross. The Guild Merchant. p. 74.
3. The craft guilds had so much in common with the social, religious guilds, on their religious side that they were included in the inquiry which Henry VIII had made. It is not therefore, necessary to discuss the organization and social character of this guild.
Gross. Guild Merchant- p. 47.
4. Fox Bourne. English Merchants- p. 27.
- 84 Social England. II. p. 252. " Commercial History-" W. A. Hewins.
Cunningham- 'Growth of English Industry and Commerce'- p. 334.

foreigners might remain on English soil, and then they were required to pay large sums for the privilege. Certain special 1. privileges were granted alien merchants and trades during fairs, and in some places on market day. The gildmen however had a selfish motive in this, for they perceived that more complete freedom of trade on those days attracted a greater number of people to their mart and thus conduced to their commercial prosperity.

✓ From what has been said of the changes that took place in the relations existing between the lord and his tenants, both free and serf, in the early fourteenth century, it must be obvious that the latter's condition was much improved. It has already been pointed out that there arose from the tenant class, the merchant and burgher classes, many free laborers, the yeomanry, and artisans of various kinds. Now there still remained some 2. tenants on the lord's estate. The number was small as compared with the number ^s several decades earlier. The household servants and those necessary to attend to the demesne were about all the servants that remained.

The villains who worked upon the lord's estate may be divided into two classes; the villain whose forced services had been wholly or partially commuted, but who still remained

1. G. T. Warner- Companion of English History- (Barnard) p. 227.

2. Trevelyan. England in the Age of Wycliffe. p. 186.

Denton- England in the Fifteenth Century. Introduction. p. 13.

Cunninghamp Growth of English Industry and Commerce. p. 334.

a serf, unfree and bound to the soil of the manor by law; and the free laborer, whose legal position as regards personal liberty was practically independent of the lord.

1. Certain classes of laws were made by which none of the villains could give their daughters in marriage without the lord's consent nor cause their sons to be tonsured, i. e., to let them enter the clergy. This illustrates the fact that, as regards the villain, social lines were rigidly and definitely drawn.
2. The huts in which the villains lived were very small, and usually mean and dirty. The unsanitary conditions of this class undoubtedly increased the number of deaths in 1348.

The reign of Edward I. marked an epoch in the social history of the Church equally as important as in the case of the aristocratic and servile classes. It was Edward's policy to establish the Church upon a national basis. That is, it was his aim to subject Papal interests to those of the Crown.

The Mediaeval Church was divided into two great divisions; the regular clergy and the secular clergy. The regular clergy was made up of those persons living under a rule, as the canons, monks, and friars. The secular clergy consisted not only of the arch bishops, bishops, priests, and prelates, but also of a vast number of "clerks" engaged in every manner of employment.

1. Pennsylvania Translations and Reprints. Vol. III. p. No. 5.
2. Rogers. Six Centuries of Work and Wages. Vol. I. p. 68.

This division is not exclusive. The secular were under the jurisdiction of a bishop; the regulars were not. The friars were exempt from all authority save that of the Pope. Many of the monasteries were free from the jurisdiction of a bishop.

The social aspect of the church is of great importance during the first half of the fourteenth century. The higher clergy became more and more tolerant as they felt the growing dependence on the crown; the lower clergy, with the exception of the parish priests were fast losing the religious spirit, and becoming very worldly. Traces of opposition to the clergy appeared frequently

1. Trevelyan. England in the Age of Wycliffe. 105.

C. R. Beazley. in Social England- II. 23-

The history of Church and state under Edward I. is chiefly concerned with legal enactments-; the status of Mortmain in 1279; 2. the writ of Circumspecte Agatis in 1285; and the confirmation of the charters in 1297. By the Statute of Mortmain the crown aimed to restore all lands that had been granted to the Church, with all powers to control them, to the supervision of the State; and by the writ of Circumspecte Agatis, Edward denied the Church's claim in temporal contracts; and by the last act, the confirmation of the charter, Edward resolved to tax the Church property. Heretofore, the Church had been in all essentials independent of the authority of the crown and thus did not foster a national spirit but by these acts Edward determined to make the church subservient, in temporal affairs to the State, thereby creating a strong national spirit.

among the laity, because of interference in politics and society in general. Episcopal influence declined during the reign of Edward 1. yet the church for some time continued to penetrate to every part of society, through the part she played in education in politics, and in the care of the poor and oppressed. It is, therefore, for this reason that the different classes in the Church will be examined.

Turning to the regular clergy, we find two great and important classes coming under this category, - the monks and 1. the friars. It must not be thought however that harmony existed between the two. On the other hand each harbored hatred and jealousy for the other. The monks were connected with a monastery and lived under a common roof. They were self-supporting. 2. The monastery during the early fourteenth century possessed considerable land, and the system of land cultivation was not very unlike the manorial system of cultivation.

The records of Bury, Winchester, Gloucester and Abingdon, to name only a few, yield for this period very full accounts as to the nature of monastic business arrangements. One is

1. Bateson. Mediaeval England. p. 356.

Jessopp. Coming of the Friars. p. 157.

Rogers. Work and Wages. 160.

2. Bateson . Mediaeval England. 335.

Trevelyan. England in the Age of Wycliffe. 161.

reminded very forcibly of the manor system, as there was a practical identity between the monastic and manorial systems. The Monasteries were very conservative, this quality appears very striking in money matters. By this economical way of living, the monastery grew in wealth and accordingly became a very important element in political affairs. The religious zeal which characterized the monasteries earlier was greatly impaired. The temptation to acquire wealth affected the philanthropic work of the monasteries; not only were the tenants' wages greatly reduced, but the practice of almsgiving, which had formerly been an important feature of the monasteries, became less marked. At first the monasteries strove among themselves to acquire lands and money, but soon they came to rival the great landlords, not only in wealth, but in political power as well, Much jealousy existed, and frequently .

quarrels arose between the monasteries and the laity in political and social questions.

1. In a well managed monastery as at Evesham, the monks were taught to give alms to the poor and to visit the sick. In times of financial stress, however, it was the tendency to cut down the alms-giving. The monastic household varied in the number of attendants and monks in accordance with the prosperity of the monastery. In the early fourteenth century Bury was keeping twenty two servants in its kitchen; Christ Church had thirty eight servant tailors, laundresses, and other servants.
2. The ordinary life of the monastery began at six o'clock in the morning. When the bell rang, all arose, bathed and put on their daily habit. Then they presented themselves at the matin mass. Breakfast followed, that over the monks assembled a Chapel for consultation. After chapel the officials dispersed; and steward to arrange for the meals, and often to provide for hospitality for distinguished guests and their retinue. The precenter to drill the choir boys or to arrange for some function; the infirmarer to take his rounds in the hospital; the cellarer to inspect the brewhouse and baking,
 1. Bateson. Mediaeval England. p. 337.
 Longland. Piers Plowman. C. VII. l. 151-63.
 Chaucer. "Shipmans Tale of the monk abroad," in the Canterbury Tales. B. 1190f.
 2. Jessopp. Coming of the Friars. p. 142.

and any of these officials might find it necessary to go to the fields to look after some bailiff or tenant who could not be trusted. Meanwhile all the cloister was busy. In one part the master was teaching the little pupils the rudiments of Latin, or singing; in another part, monks were busy copying or illuminating manuscripts. While in other parts of the cloister, some were learning by heart the scriptures, or alone in meditation.

The monk was not, therefore, habitually, or even, frequently, a man of vicious life, though when he was allowed outside the cloister wall on business or pleasure he had not a good reputation, contemporaries supposed that the inner life of the monastery was respectable.

The amusements and pastimes of the monks were for the most part, innocent. The garden was always a great place of resort for the monks and gardening was a favorite pastime. Bowls was a favorite and a very common diversion but in the opinion of Archbishop Peckham there were other diversions of a far more reprehensible character. He says at the small priory of Coxford, in Norfolk, the prior and his canons were wholly given over to chess-playing. In other monasteries monks hunted. But the greatest of all delights to the monks of this period was eating and drinking.

1. Jessop. Coming of the Friars. p. 154.
2. Jessop. Coming of the Friars. 161. He makes deductions from Works of Dr. Maitland and Dr. Luard.

It is not definitely decided as to what class or classes
 1. in society the monks belonged. [Careful students, however,
 2. believe the monks came from the gentry class.] An ignorant monk
 was a rarity, and an absolutely unlearned or uneducated one was
 unheard of, and an abbot or prior who could not preach with toler-
 able fluency on occasion, and hold his own as a debator, would
 3. have found himself sooner or later in a very embarrassing
 situation.

Such was the monastic life of the early fourteenth century.
 The monastery soon showed signs of corruption because of its
 accumulation of wealth, and its rivalry with the laity in
 temporal affairs, and declined in its spiritual position.

The dissolution of the monasteries was foreshadowed in the
 blow that the Order of Knights Templars received in the early part
 of Edward II.'s reign. The Templars were military monks, and
 displayed that chivalerous character which was characteristic of
 the aristocratic classes. Many of the Templars were foreigners

1. Jessopp- Coming of the Friars- 161.

Social England. v. II. p. 27. (C. R. Beazley.)

2. Rogers- Work and Wages- 163.

3. C. R. Beazley- Eng. Social Eng. II. 19.

Jessopp. Coming of the Friars. 163.

and this fact caused the English to very soon oppress the Order. The growing power of the Templars in the thirteenth century 1.alarmed both Church and State. Consequently in 1307 Edward II. was requested by the king of France and ordered by the Pope to arrest all Knights Templars within his realm. Edward at first hesitated to carry out the suggestions and orders. The Knights Templars had in no way caused trouble, and the king at first felt that it would be unjust.

After some hesitation, Edward finally yielded, and on December 20, 1307, he issued orders to have all Templars of England arrested and examined on papal charges. The Order of Knights Templars was rapidly suppressed; by 1312 practically all the estate belonging to them had been transferred to the king's subject, who suppressed them.

The suppression of the Templars in itself is not so much importance in the social history of this period, as it is of importance and significance indirectly on social conditions. It throws much light on the condition of morals of England society. 2.As had been said, there was no legitimate excuse for attacking the order. The papal order, together with the national fear of secret organizations and of foreigners were the only reasons for the order to be suppressed. The suppression, however, would not have been severely condemned even on these

1. Social England. V. II. p. 27. C. R. Beazley.

Bateson. Mediaeval England. p. 327.

2. C. R. Beazley. Social England. II. 30.

3. Jusserand. English, Wayfaring Life. p. 302.

grounds, had this been all. Those who had a hand in suppressing the Templars were greedy and avaricious in getting as much of their possessions as possible for their share of the booty. The morals of the English must have been very corrupt, to permit such conduct.

1. The begging and preaching friars soon became victims of the same fate as had the Templars. The friars were a very numerous class in England, however, during the first half of the fourteenth century. Though as early as 1274 they were regarded with some alarm. The friars were vowed to a life of poverty and of humble missionary labour among the poor and unfortunate, and they received the support of the English for a longer period than the Templars.

There were four orders of the mendicant or preaching friars: The Franciscans, Dominicans, Augustinians and Carmelites, ~~Representative~~ century; their members multiplied rapidly and by the middle of the fourteenth century they were numerous.

Popularity of the friars was immense. Paradoxical as it may seem, their poverty had attracted followers and wealth, and their self denial, power. The mean huts where they lodged at first were

1. Jusserand. English Wayfaring Life. 293.
2. Rogers. Six Centuries Work and Wages. p. 248.
Chaucer. Canterbury Tales. 12-14-23-
Langland- Piers Plowman- C. VII. 151-63-
3. Monuments Franciscana. (Ed. Brewer 185-9) Pt. 110 Roll Series.

1. replaced by splendid buildings. The fact that the mendicants secured the corpses of the great, caused them to become unpopular among the rival religious orders; Edward III. "for the repose of the save of the most illustrious Isabella, buried in the choir",
2. made great donation to the Order of Francisans.

For the spread of religious instruction and the creation of religious enthusiasm, the friars were the most active part of the Church. It is true, wealth and power had produced in the mendicant orders, some of their usual consequence. Still they were more popular among the laity than the higher classes of clergy more open to criticism than originally.

3. The friars was trained in the cloister, where he learned such wisdom as books and educated society could give. He lived the life of a cleric among clerics, within the cloister, which was generally situated in or near some town, where the newest
4. ideas and reports carculated. After finishing his education he was assigned certain towns and villages; these he periodically visited. The alms he collected on these tours were brought back to the

1. Bateson. Mediaeval England. p. 345.
2. Trevelyan. England in the Age of Wycliffe. p. 143.
3. Monuments Franciscana- Brewers II. R. S. app. VIII.

1. cloister and added to the common fund. The friar was loyal to his order, and never donated any of his winnings to his own personal possessions.

By the middle of the fourteenth century the friars had accumulated a great deal of wealth, in money and land, the laity began to be greatly alarmed at this condition as a great number of the friars were foreigners. It was only a matter of a few years, before the four orders were treated in the same manner as the Knights Templars had been in 1207-12.

Turning now to the secular branch of the church, consisting of the higher and lower grades of priests, together with a great army of "clerks" we shall see the part they played in the religious and social life of the early fourteenth century was not small.

The bishops had almost absolute power over the secular clergy. They formed a very important class. They were for the most part men of the world; they were not only concerned with religion, but also ^{with} ~~of~~ the state. They held secular offices,

1. Trevelyan. England in the Age of Wychiffe. p. 145.
- Trevelyan. England in the Age of Wychiffe. p. 106.
2. Jusserand. English Way faring Life. 302.
- Jusserand. English Way faring Life. p. 116.
3. Chroniques de London. Ed- Anuyre Camden Society- 54.
- Statutes of Realm.

1. which required much of their time. Contemporaries tell us that worldliness was their characteristic and avarice their vice. But they are not accused by those whom they oppressed of atrocious crime or sinful life. Many of them were hard working men, but worked harder in the interests of the administration of their county than as supervisors of spiritual things.

The bishop visited the various parts of his diocese in order to attend the ecclesiastical courts. Upon these journeys he was attended by many servants of different classes. It reminds one of the lord on a journey. The bishop had constantly in his pay about forty persons; the greater part of these accompanied him on his journeys. Among them were his squires, clerks, kitchen servants and pages.

The morals of the bishop were not high. They could be easily bribed by the wealthy, who would pay a large sum to the bishop, to prevent inquiry into their conduct. Many of the bishops were foreigners, and this was deplored by the English. Among the English dioceses the number of foreigners in the higher offices was very large. The proportion of alien to natives was one to three.

A great number of the secular clergy formed the class of priests. It is this lower class in which is displayed a lively spirit of genuine religious zeal in the early fourteenth century.

1. Jusserand. English Wayfaring Life. 116.

2. Trevelyan. England in the Age of Wycliffe. 116.

Though the demoralization of the higher ranks of secular clergy had some evil effects on this class, yet as a whole the moral standards were very high. The laity loved and trusted the parish priests. Frequently provision was made by the parishoners, that the priest must have a suitable house where he might entertain visitors. The vicarage of a prosperous community was very like a manor of this period. The priest was dependent on his parishoners for his living and he fared well, because of his sincere and tireless interest in the welfare of his people. He was look up to as being the criterion.

2. "He was of hooly thought and work;
 He was also a learned man, a clerk,
 That Christes Gospel trewely woldepreche;
 His parishoners devoutly wolde teche,
 Benygne he was, and wonder diligent,
 And in adversitee ful pacient.

1. Rolls of Parliament Vol. II. 162- (1346)

Many foreigners, because of their superior training in the iniversities of Europe, were given the higher offices in the Church of England; and after the English had recovered from the Norman Conquest, and had become as English Nation, the foreign element was not supported in Church affairs.

Chaucer. Prologue- 477-82. 505; 528.

2. Jusserand- English Wayfaring Life. 302.

Trevelyan. England in the Age of Wycliffe. 153.

"wel ought a preste ensample for to give
 By his clemmease how that his sheep sholde lyve.
 He was a shepherde, and not a mercenone,
 He taught; but first he folired it hym selve."

Finally, a large class of seculars were the clerks. They
 1. were employed in many walks of life. Some of them were engaged
 as teachers in the numerous grammar schools of the county. The
 clerical influence was great, among those who made their living
 by the pen, the clerks employed by the landowners and merchants
 were for the most part in orders. Clerks were employed in the homes
 2. of the great lords, ladies and knights as private chaplains. The
 life of fortunate ones was decidedly easy. Such positions were
 considered more desirable than those of the parish priest.
 Besides those regularly engaged, clerks could be found about the
 great towns, waiting for employment. To this class Langland belong-
 ed. Their life was not very pleasant because of not finding
 employment. The true conditions of the various classes of clergy,
 and the changes taking place in them during the first half of the
 fourteenth century have been outlined as nearly as possible. The
 clergy were very numerous, as shown

1. Trevelyan- England in the Age of Wycliffe- 153.

Cutts- Scenes and Characters of the Middle Age. p. 206.

Rogers. Six Centuries Work and Wages. I. p. 163.

2. Langland. Piers Plowman.

by the poll tax, which excluded the most popular and growing class of regular clergy, the friars, makes them 29, 161 or about one in 1. fifty two of the population male and female over fourteen years of age. In addition the clergy, in the widest sense of the word, included nearly all members of the educated and professional classes.

The influence of the clergy, in the narrow sense, was fast declining, because of corruption and immoral practice, and on the eve of the Black Death, the parish priests were the only ones whose ^{morals} had not been contaminated.

During the early fourteenth century the whole intellectual life of the English nation was centered in the two Universities which served as places of higher education for the regular and the secular clergy, and, therefore, to the professional men. The University of Oxford was renowned especially for its legal and literary character; while Cambridge was predominant in theology and law.

2. The Mediaeval undergraduate students were mainly youths of humble origin, though many older men, as the monks and friars shared their studies. In rank they ranged from the poor scholar who supported himself during the term by the profits of a licensed mendicancy, or manual labor in the vacations, to the privileged sons of earls or lords and nephews of bishops.

1. Social England II. 64. H. E. D. Blakiston.

2. Bateson. Mediaeval England p. 364.

1. At Oxford about the year 1300, the number of students was around three thousand. The students lived in lodging houses known as "halls", where the meals were provided for from a common fund. Some of the wealthier afforded a small chamber as bedroom and study.

2. In the early fourteenth century a professional class of lawyers was just beginning to form itself.

3. Chancer describes one as follows:

"A sergeant of the Lawe was and wye,
 That often had been at the Paroys,
 There was also, ful riche of excellence
 He seemed swich, his wordes werex not so wise
 Discreet he was and of great reverence,
 Nowhere so busy a man as he there was,
 And every statut koude he pleyen by note."

The town people not only took part in the serious and responsible duties of town life, but apparently in an incessant round of gaudies as well. All the commons shared in supporting the minstrels and players. The fair was a great time for the *divolous*. Here the minstrels, dancers, jugglers and the players of various kinds would assemble from all parts of the realm.

1. Traill. Social England II. 64. H. E. D. Blakiston.

2. Traill. Social England. II. 33. T. W. Maitland.

3. Chancer. Prologue. l. 309; 313; 321; 327.

The fair however will be discussed later in the thesis and these persons will be fully dealt with there. These amusements really did not become popular in the sense of being supported by the masses until the latter half of the fourteenth century.

Because of the change in land cultivation, from the manorial to the system by commutation, a large class of persons, who, because of no fixed home, became restless, and wandered over the realm. They depended on gaining their bread by beggary or theft or Statutes were enacted by which it was attempted to crush such a class in society, but so long as they could claim the right of sanctuary, it was useless to enact laws.

1. The early fourteenth century saw very important changes in the military class in England. Edward I. knew how to keep an army together, and to urge it on to victory. In the Scottish wars the long-bow was used and this gained much for the English. The old feudal army was disappointed and a new paid army was superceding it which was not so large as formerly, but much more efficient as shown by the conflicts with the French.

Greater attention was given to the sailors and moval equipments, in general, because of the active part England was now assuming in trade and commerce. The king had all persons not doing their duty removed, and new persons take their places.

1. Social England. Oman. II. 38 "Warfare".
2. Social England. Clames. II. 44 "Navy".

The English were more closely bound together into a nation by the French wars, and as a result of this, ~~the~~ class distinctions became less pronounced. There was a ^{greater} growing feeling of democracy and of equality of classes in England on the eve of the Black Death, than had prevailed since the Norman Conquest. All classes were rising to a better condition when the country was overwhelmed by the great pestilence called the Black Death in 1348-9 with which the next chapter will be concerned.

Chapter II.

The Black Death and its Effects on Society.

Although the conditions of the classes of society were improving during the first half of the fourteenth century, yet society was not, in general, quite so prosperous as in the century preceding. The tendency during the first half of the fourteenth century had been towards prosperity and progress as affecting especially the lower classes. The society which had been established on feudal principles was declining. The individual was now recognised as having certain inherent rights, which could no longer be denied him by those in authority. On this society slowly changing its character from one of feudal relations to one of democratic ideas, fell the awful calamity, the Black Death.

1. In the year of 1348 the Black Death reached England, but it did

1. The Black Death, it is believed, had its origin in China and was carried westward by pilgrims and traders. The first appearance of the disease, in Europe, was at Constantinople in 1347. It spread thence to Cyprus, Sicily, Marseilles and seaports of Italy. In January 1348, it appeared in Avignon and other cities of southern France.

Longman- Life and Times of Edward III. II. p. 303.

Social England- "The Black Death"- II. p. 136 C. Creighton.

Denton. England in the Fifteenth Century, Introduction. 97, 98.

Walsingham.- Chronicles.

not break out there until August. Then it advanced so slowly that a period of three months elapsed before it reached London.

The epidemic in London is said to have ceased about Whitsuntide 1.1349, and to have come to an end in the city of York in July.

By Michaelmas 1349, it had disappeared in all parts of England; thus it lasted about fourteen months from its landing in Dorset in August 1348. The plague reappeared in England in 1361; 1368-9; 1375, and finally in 1390-1. Though it was not so wide spread in any of these visitations as in the first.

The mortality was very great. As yet, historians are not 2. agreed upon the number of victims the Black Death claimed, but all are agreed that the number was enormous. The persons who 1. The Black Death was exceedingly contagious, as Hecker says, "The breath of the sick, who spat blood, caused a terrible contagion far and near, for even the vicinity of those who had fallen ill of the plague was certain death."

2. Hecker. Epidemics of the Middle Ages. (trans by

Dr. Babington (1844) p. 20.

Walsingham- Chronicles- Vol. I. p. 273.

Barnes. History of Edward III. p. 435, 436.

Sebohm- "The Black Death" and its Place in History"

Fortnightly Review- 1865.

T. E. Thorold Rogers. "England before and after the Black Death." Fortnoightly Review- Vol. III.

survived hardly sufficed to bury those who had died. Walsingham asserts that only one-tenth of the population remained. This estimate is doubtless greatly exaggerated; more conservative writers estimate the mortality at one-half the population, and substantiate this by statistics, for certain localities.

The plague attacked all classes, but certain classes suffered more from it than others. In many places a large proportion of the priests died; the mortality, in general, was greatest among the poorer classes. In the West and East Ridings of Yorkshire considerably more than half of the priests died; in 1348 "was such a death in Norwich that there died of the pestilence 57,374, besides religious and beggars". In Bristol the plague raged to such a degree that the living were scarce able to bury the dead.

In order to provide a burial-place for those who died in London, Sir Walter Maunay purchased, in 1348. "A piece of ground called Spittle Craft, containing thirteen acres and a rod, in which place the year following was buried more than 50,000 persons as affirmed by the kings charters, which I have seen,

1. Longman. Life and Times of Edward III. II. 305.
2. Rymer-
3. Seabohn. The Black Death and its Place in History- II. 157.
Fortnightly Review.

Betham- History of Ely.

Morley- Memoirs of Bartholmew Fair. p. 57.

and also by an inscription fixed on a stone crosse in the same
1.place."

Such facts as these are sufficient evidence, to conclude that
the mortality was very great. Many died from neglect and
2.starvation as well as from the plague itself, but it is correct
to say that the Black Death was the indirect cause of such deaths.
Town and country alike had probably lost from one-third to one-
half their populations.

The effect of the Black Death did not stop with thinning the
population. The very life of the people was affected. The
3.national life which had been forming in the few decades previous
to 1348 was demoralized. The surviving rich fell into unheard
of luxury, and extravagance; the monks added lands whose lords had
been stricken, to their estates, and revealed the secular lords in
their manner of living; parish chergy, for the most part, deserted
their charges, to accept more lucrative positions elsewhere;

1. Stowe- Chronicles- (Roll Series) p. 246.
2. Denton- England in the Fifteenth Century- Introduction. 96.
Trevelyan- England in the Age of Wychiffe.
Companion to English History- "The Black Death". Warner 1132.
3. Social England. "The Black Death"- W. J. Corbett. II. 137.
Social England. Vol. II. -. 136. "The Black Death"- Creighton.
Trevelyan England in the Age of Wychiffe. 186.

artisans and laborers were demanding exorbitant prices for their services. In short, each was striving to secure wealth and power for himself at the expense of others. The higher ideals had been swept away, and mercenary ones had taken their places. All were greedy, avaricious and self-interested.

The Black Death was not as destructive among the wealthy classes, as it was among the poor. This may be accounted for by the fact that the houses and surroundings of the wealthy were in a more sanitary condition and did not, therefore, furnish the refuge for disease as did the cramped, filthy huts of the poorer classes.

The last century of pure English Mediaevalism closes with the Black Death. The depopulation of England and the ravages of the epidemic was important in aiding in generating the forces that went to shape society anew upon nonfeudal lines. By 1350 land tenure had ceased to be in reality, though it remained in idea, the one means for the organization of society. Traces of

1. Social England. II. p. 137-138. "Agriculture." Corbeth.
Rogers. History of Prices I. 26, 83.
Cunningham. Growth of English Industry and Commerce 334.
Rogers. Six Centuries of Work and Wages. I. p. 50
2. Rogers. Six Centuries of Work and Wages. I. p. 224.
Denton- England in the Fifteenth Century- Introduction 107.

of artificiality of types which showed that the existing social organization was no longer sufficient to satisfy the needs of man, appeared in the very last years of mediaeval society and the first years of modern. In this transitional period from the mediaeval to the modern, artificiality and fancifulness were especially noticeable in the royal aristocracy. Customs, manners, and social life in general, which were characteristic of this class in the first half of Edward III's reign were not greatly exaggerated, and very extreme.

The royal aristocracy lost relatively very few individuals as victims of the Black Death. The great lords were very largely ignorant of the extreme sufferings of the less fortunate classes. However, the royal household was not slighted; the Princess Joan who was betrothed to Don Pedro, eldest son of the king of Castile, on her way to her affianced husband, was stricken by the plague and died. This misfortune did not cast a gloom long over the otherwise gay and brilliant court of Edward III. The Order of the Garter, which had been established by the king in 1344, was greatly stimulated during the periods immediately after the Black Death. More attention was devoted to amusements than formerly with

1. Social England- II. p. 147. "The Years of Truce and Their Work"- A. L. Smith.
2. Longman. Life and Times of Edward III. II- 306.
Rogers. Six Centuries of Work and Wages. I. p. 224.

a view of shutting out from their lives the misery and wretchedness surrounding them.

A favorite pastime of the lords was the chase. The king enjoyed this diversion whenever he had opportunity. The chronicler tells us that on the occasion of the king's fifteenth anniversary, he, together with a great assembly of earls and barons of England and all the French hostages, hunted in the forests of Rockingham, Sherwood, Clun in Shropshire and various other forests, woods and parks. He spent sometimes, a hundred pounds and, sometimes, a hundred marks, a day in these diversions. Frequently tournaments were held and they were attended by many lords and ladies. Minstrels and dancers always received a welcome among the aristocracy.

The royal nobility spared neither pains nor expense to gratify their every desire and passion, but even this did not satisfy them. In a short time they became discontented with a

2. Bateson. Mediaeval England. p. 310

Social England II. 128. "Knighthood." Traill.

Jusserand. English Way of Life. 196, 197.

Chancer. Canterbury Tales. Squires Tale. R. F. 1. 215-25.

Longman- Life and Times of Edward. III. 293.

Statutes of Realm- 34 Edward III. c. 22.

4. Knighton- Chronicles. Col. 2627.

Longman- Life and Times of Edward III. Vol. I. 294-6.

with the luxury and extravagance in which they had been indulging. They were, as yet, trying to maintain their old feudal grandeur and prestige, but their life was very corrupt and degrading, which aided in destroying their power.

What has been said of the effects of the Black Death on the royal aristocracy may, to a lesser degree, be repeated of the effects on the landed or lesser aristocracy. This class felt more keenly the ravages of the Black Death than the former. Many landlords were carried away by the plague, and the surviving members of the household had to assume the responsibility of maintaining the estate; in other instances, the landlord survived, but his wife and children had succumbed; or in other cases the entire household died. There were, however, those households among the landed aristocracy who escaped the disease. These individuals were little affected by the misfortunes of their less fortunate brothers. In fact, they indulged more in pleasures and frivolities than ordinarily. They were not inclined to assist those who were in distress; they wished rather to forget them; hence they lived more retired lives and occupied themselves with

1. Social England- II. 139-40. "Agriculture "- Corbett.

1.p.9 Chaucer. Prologue to Canterbury Tales. 1. 331-338.

2.p.9 Denton- England in the Fifteenth Century. p. 107.

Trevelyan- England in the Age of Wychiffe. 187.

Rogers- Six Centuries of Work and Wages. I. 306, 312.

Knighton- Chronicles- II. 62.

amusements of various kinds. Such a person Chaucer describes in the following:

1. "A Frankeleyn was in his campagne,
To lyuen in delit was enere his wone,
For he was Epicurus owne sone,
That held openioun that pleynd delit
Was verraily felicitee parfit."

The landlord class, even the more fortunate ones, were soon occupied with the problem of cultivating their estates. Many manors were deprived of all the laborers, both free and serf, by the Black Death and the landlord had much trouble in securing laborers to cultivate the soil; if he were successful in securing help, he had to pay high wages, his income was, at best, much less than it had formerly been. The lord had to make many concessions to the laboring class which had never arisen under the old memorial system. (The land lord class could no longer be the masterful, domineering class it had once been.) An attempt was made to reestablish the old regime by acts of Parliament, but they served only to hasten the Peasant's Revolt. Circumstances favored the laborers, and although the landlords did succeed in having them legally bound to the soil, the laborers secured

3. Rogers.- Six Centuries of Work and Wages. I. p. 52,53.
Social England. Vol. II. p. 138. "Agriculture"- Corbeth.
Trevelyan.- England in the Age of Wychiffe. p. 186.
Smith.- Lives of the Berkeleys- p. 128.

1. recognition of their rights in the Rising of 1381. [The country gentlemen remained, but in character he was transformed. He was no longer to be merely the "parfit gentil knight" but he assumed a new position in society, one of importance and trust, which will be discussed later.]

The effects of the Black Death on the merchant and burgher classes are rather interesting. Longland and Chaucer give us many hints and suggestions as to these classes, especially in regard to their social life. The Black Death carried away many of the members of these classes; but those who survived rapidly built up their business. In a very short time many merchants had amassed comfortable fortunes in their intercourse with foreign countries and they must have been a very hospitable class if we may rely on the one in the Canterbury Tales as being typical of the class:

3. "A merchant whilome dwelled at St. Denys,
That riche was, for which men held him wys;
A wyf he hadde of excellent beautie,
And compaignable and revelous was she.

1. Chaucer- Prologue. l. 73.

2. Chaucer- Canterbury Tales- l. 1191-1201.

Stowe- Chronicles of the Reign of Edward III.

Denton- England in the Fifteenth Century. 129.

Rogers. History of Prices and Agriculture. Vol. II. p. 569.

3. Chaucer- Prologue. 270-284; Canterbury Tales. B.

1190-1625. (Shipmans Tales): 1214-1245 (Merchants Tales) Landland.

Which is a thing that causeth more dispence
 Than worth is all chiere and reverence
 That men hem doon at faster and at dounees."
 "This noble merchant heeld a worthy hous,
 For which he hadde alday so great repair
 For his largesse."

Town life was prosperous on the whole, after destruction of the Black Death had been removed. In 1357, Henry Picard, Mayor of London, Feasted Edward III. John of France, Davod, King of Scotland and the king of Cyprus, and the king's sons, save the Black Prince, who was in France and the suites attendant on the various royalties.

1. Stow related the episode thus:

"And afterward the sayd Henry Picard kept his hall against all the comers who soever that were willing to play dice and hazard. In like nammer the Lady Margaret, his wife, did also keepe her chamber to the same intent. The of Cyprus playing with Henry did win fifty marks being very skilful in that arte; but Henry being very skilful in that arte altering his hand did afterwards winne of the same king the same fifty markes and fiftie markes more; which when the same kind began to take in ill parte; although he dissembled the same, Henry said unto him; "My lord and king, be not agreived, I covet not your gold, but your play, for I have not bid you hither that I might greive you, but that amongst other things, I might try your play," and gave him his money again, plentifully bestowing his own amongst the retimie: besides he gave many rich gifts to the king and the other nobles and knights which dined with him, to the great glory of the citizens of London in those days."

1. The merchants travelled to other countries and carried many new ideas back to England. They gave much attention to dress.
2. and fashions, and the towns people naturally patterned after them. The merchants also carried ideas of what was going on in the outer world, and how things were managed in France and elsewhere, to England and these topics were subjects for thought and conversation. A very clever merchant who was careful of his personal appearance we find in,

"A merchant was ther, with a forked beard,
 In motlie, and hye on horse he sat;
 His bootes clasped faire and fetisly;
 His resons he spakful solempnelly,
 Sowing always then cress of his wynnyng,
 He wolde the see were kept for anything
 Betwix' Middleburgh and Crewelle."

- In stead of there being a great surplus of artisans and free laborers, as formerly, there was a scarcity of labor in England
3. after the Black Death. The suffering of the laboring

1. Stow- Chronicles.-

Chaucer- Prologue- l. 271-281; 398-410.

2. Chaucer- Prologue- 270-77.

Denton- England in the Fifteenth Century- 107.

Smith- Lives of the Berkeleys- p. 127.

classes during and immediately after the Black Death can scarcely be described. Poverty and famine surrounded them on every side. Great numbers were carried away by the disease, and still others by starvation and neglect. Those who survived, however, greatly improved their condition, both from a social and an economic stand point.

Many of the landlords had large tracts of land lying uncultivated, owing to their tenants having died without leaving successors; this land they were obliged to work for themselves in addition to their old demesne lands or else allow it to lie idle. If laborers were secured to work these lands, the lord had to pay them high wages. The laborers appreciated the situation, and they seized this opportunity to better their condition. For the slightest excuse laborers would leave one lord and secure employment elsewhere. Laborers were indispensable to the lords and because of this, they sought to improve their condition by securing concessions from the lords. As Langland puts it, only a few years later than 1350: "Laborers that have no land to live on but their hands, disdained to live on penny ale or bacon,

1. Corbett- "Effects of the Black Death on Agriculture classes"- Social England. II. 142.

Langland- Vision of Piers Plowman-c. XII.

2. Rolls of Parliament- 1351.

Trevelyan- England in the Age of Wychiffe. 186.

Ashley- Economic History. I. 1, 29.

but demanded fresh flesh or fish, fried or baked, and that hot and hotter for chilling of their maw; and but if they be highly hired else they chide and wail the time that they were made workmen."

The landlords became alarmed at the insolence of the laborer, and tried through acts of Parliament to fix the wages in all England on an uniform basis. The first attempt made was in 1351, known as the Statute of Laborers. "Because a great part of the people and especially of workmen and servants late died of the pestilence, many, seeing the necessity of masters and great scarcity of servants will not serve unless they may receive

1. excessive wages." The statute attempted to arrange the relations between master and employed, in a way favorable to the master, but it was only temporary. Even in the preamble of the statute of 1351 there is a concession that "it is given the king to understand that the said servants have no regard of the said ordinance but to their case and singular covetise do withdraw themselves unless they have livery and wages to the double or threble of what they are want to take to the great damage of the great men." Nevertheless laws were enacted from time to time which were increasingly severe on the laborers. At last the laborers were again bound to

1. Statutes of Realm Edw. III.- 1351.

Jusserand- English Way faring Life.- 257.

Rolls of Parliament II. p. 178.

2. Jusserand- English Way faring Life. p. 255.

Gross. The Gild Merchant. 73.

3. Social England- II- 258, Hewins.

the soil by legislation, and were not allowed to travel without letters of authorization. Runaway laborers were ordered to be outlawed and branded with an "F" for this facility.

Many however, risked being caught, and ran away, going to sections where they were not known, and securing employment of various kinds. Some were hired by merchants, and many took to a trade, as some of this class had done before 1348. Others preferred a wandering life, and some relied on theft and robbery for their existence.

The artisans were growing in numbers, and they were becoming skilled, workmen. The progress made by this class during this period was due to some extent to the foreigners who came into the English towns, Edward III. for the most part, was glad to have the home industries improved and developed, hence there were no very great restrictions placed upon foreigners. Besides the colonies of Flemish experts in the Western and Eastern counties, other artisans came to England from the continent. Though highly colored, Fuller's picture of the weaver in the yeoman's household is probable in its main features. We may say that not only were the foreign artisans scattered among the artisans and trading classes in England, but that the new comers trained up a considerable

2. Cunningham- Alien Immigrants- 108- of

2 Social England- II. 105- 'Trade and Industry.' Hall.

Gross. The Gild Merchant- 110-114.

3. Fulter- Church History of Britain- II. 285.

population, who were competent to carry on the trade.

Those persons who had not left the lord's estate, after the decline of the manorial system, but remained serfs or viliáns, numbered a great many at the time of the Black Death, but they were greatly thinned by its ravages, for they lived in little, 1. unsanitary huts, and they received very little or no medical attention. They also had very little to eat and they only intensified their sufferings. Those who managed to live, were very soon determined to follow their more fortunate brothers who had secured their freedom earlier, and now formed the great class of free laborers. The Statute of Labourers of 1351 directed against free laborers, also applied to this servant or villáin class. The landlords succeeded in keeping them in bondage, until they together with the other laborers revolted in 1381.

The Black Death marked an important epoch in the history of the church and clergy. It was then that the church lost its great influence over the people. The disease attacked all classes of

1. Hecker. Epidemics of the Middle Ages. p. 20.

Seeböhm. "The Black Death and Its Place in History"- in the Fortnightly Review. (1865)-

Rolls of Parliament Vol. II. p. 227.

Jessopp- Coming of the Friars. p. 222.

Rogers- Six Centuries of Work and Wages I. 165.

Social England- II. 30 "Religion"- Beazley-

Stowe- Chronicle- p. 246.

the clergy, both regular and secular, and the mortality was very high. Thenceforth a decline in learning and morals was observed among the clergy. Many of the church offices were rendered vacant, and many of the vacancies were filled by persons unfit to hold the position both as to their education, and morals. No wonder the clergy were ridiculed by Langland and Chaucer!

The monasteries were greatly changed by the Black Death.

After much serious study, Professor Jessopp, says that it is

1. impossible to estimate the effect of the plague upon the religious houses, but he is inclined to think that the monasteries suffered very greatly from the terrible visitation and that the violent disturbance of the old traditions and the utter breakdown in the old observances acted very disastrously upon them. "In fact," he says, "they were (never) again what they had been."

2. In the large wealthy monastery of St. Albans, out of fewer than sixty inmates forty seven died of the plague. Some houses even lost all their inmates. Boccacio Dwells upon the effect which the mortality had on the character of the survivors, and how it

1. Jessopp, Coming of the Friars, p. 222.

Rogers, Work and Wages, p. 165.

Stowe, Chronicles, p. 246.

2. Denton- England in the Fifteenth Century- 98.

Barnes. History of Edward III. p. 433.

Knyghton- Chronicles-

made men callous, reckless, heartless, cruel and licentious. The monks were no exception. Wycliffe declared that life in the world was better than life in a cloister. He laid great stress on the enormous wealth locked up in the hands of the abbots, useless to the state and society.

The monks were no longer the educated men they formerly had been. They devoted their time now in frequenting the taverns and leading reckless lives. They were, in truth, very worldly men.

2. "Amongst all his gestes (the merchant's) grete and small.

There was a monk, a fair man and a boold,-
 I trowe of thirty wynter he was oald,-
 That ever in oon was comynge to that place.
 This yonge monk, that was so fair of face,
 Aqueynted was so with the goode men
 Sith that hir firste knoweliche began,
 That in his hous as familiar was he
 As it is possible any freend to be.

If anything, the friars were more severely criticised by contemporaries than were the monks. Many persons became friars after the Black Death in order to secure a living with very little

1. Trevelyan. England in the Age of Wycliffe. 159-60.

Jessopp- Coming of the Friars- 154.

2. Chaucer- Canterbury Tales. 1214-1223.

3. Note- Langland in Piers Plowman, is especially bitter in his satire on the corruption of the friars. (C- XII.) and in the Canterbury Tales, Chaucer also portrays, the very low morals of the friars.

(Prologue. 208-30)

exertion. The friars did not assist and comfort the people, who were in distress, as had been their want. They had lost all religious zeal and had become very worldly and self-interested. The characters of the monk is reflected in the following quotations:

1. "A frere ther was, a wanton and a merye,
 Ful wel beloved, and famulier was he
 With frankelyns overal in his cuntre,
 And eek with worthy ~~w~~ommen of the town;
 Ful sweetly herde he confession,
 And plesaunt was his absolucioun,
 He was an easy man to give penance;
 For into a poore ordre for to give
 Is sign that a man is wel i-shreve.
 He knew wel the travernes in every town
 And every ostiller or gay tapsters."

and again:

"I was a frere ful money a day,
 Therefore the sothe I wote.

But when I sawe that their lyving
 Acordyd not to their preching
 Of I cast my frer clothing,

1. And wyghtly went my gate."

2. The Black Death had made the parish priests scarce, and like the laborers, they took advantage of the scarcity to try to improve their social position. How low their position was, is

1. Chaucer. Prologue- l. 208f.

2. Rogers. Six Centuries of Work and Wages. I. 248.

illustrated by the chronicler's remark that these limitations of their stipends "forced many to steal." Many of the parish priests deserted their charges and fled to London to secure more lucrative positions. When the Black Death had spent its fury; it was necessary to supply the places of the parochial clergy who had either died, or deserted, with illiterate laymen who had lost their wives, and raw youths, below the canonical age, were hurriedly ordained and sent into the parishes.

The great army of clerks, who were employed in various walks of life, were thinned by the pestilence. Those who survived, had no trouble in securing employment. The majority of the clerks were to be found in the towns during this period. The character and morals of this class were changed very little by the Black Death, from what they had been, if we may take the

- 2. Wright. Political Poems and Songs. I. 264-9.
- Denton- England in the Fifteenth Century. 98.
- B. Trevelyan- England in the Age of Wycliffe- 124.
- Chancer- Prologue- 285-f. Canterbury Tales- E. 1-56.
- A. Walsingham- Historia Anglica. I. 297.

clerk of the Canterbury Tales as typical of the class.

1. "A clerk ther was of Oxenford also
 That into logyk longe y-go
 As leene was his hors as is a rake,
 And he was not right fat, I undertake,
 But al he that he was a philosophere
 Yet hadde he but little gold in cofre;
 But all that he myght of his frendes heute
 On bookes and lernynge he hit spent.
 Of studie took he most cure and moost heeds
 And gladly worlde he lerne and gladly teche."

The Black Death dealt a severe blow to learning and education. The decay of the Universities and of learning generally in England proceeded from this date, until the introduction of classical studies under the Tudors. The clergy, as had been pointed out, no longer demanded higher education which could be secured only at the Universities.

Although misery and suffering were present among all classes as a result of the ravages of the Black Death, yet, for the most part, people did not look entirely on the dark side of life. Following the Black Death much attention was given to

1. (Blakiston) Social England- "Learning"-II. 235.
2. Trevelyan. England in the Age of Wycliffe- 122.

Statute of Realm 15 R. II. 6.

Leach- English at the Reformation- 105.

1. amusements and diversions. There were classes of persons, whose business it was to furnish entertainments, and performances
 2. for the people. Though we hear of such persons earlier, it was only the wealthy classes who supported them; after the Black Death they were very popular among all classes. They were way farers, and they brought with them forgetfulness of troubles; these were the minstrels, jugglers and dancers.

The minstrels and jugglers chanted out songs and romances to the accompaniment of their instruments and the dancers in the meanwhile performed various feats. At a time when books were rare, and theatres did not exist, poetry and music were carried from generation to generation by these entertainers. Such guests were always welcome. They were at every feast. The minstrels were excellent story-tellers, and they were especially welcomed at the castles for their warlike stories, their tales of love and their lively songs. They re-
 3. ceived many gifts from the nobility in recognition of their talents. There were others of this class who attended the fairs, and were in fact very great attractions. They also

1. Jusserand- English Way faring Life Ch. I.

Morley- Memoirs of Bartholomen Fair.

Jusserand- English Way faring Life 195.

Chancer's- Sir Thopas-

2. Wright- Domestic Manners and Sentiments- (1862) p. 181.

Jusserand- English Wayfaring Life 188.

1. frequented the inns and taverns, and helped to while away the otherwise long, dreary evenings.

Langland says there were only two amusements at table,-

2. to listen to minstrels, and when they are silent, to talk religion. Minstrels were very popular as entertainers, and they were later used also as a means of inciting the Peasant Revolt
3. by singing satirical political forms. They aroused the people in this way as do the newspapers of today.

The wandering class was greatly recruited after the Black Death. Many of the laborers joined this class after having had trouble with the landlord class. The class was numerous and increased unceasingly, in spite of Statutes. The past lives of the persons, who joined this class was very obscure. There were two great types who formed this class; the criminal and the vagabond. The criminal class was composed of organized bands of brigands,
4. of occasional thieves and sharpers and malefactors of all kinds, and of different outlaws, who were struck with that civil death to which the lover in the "Nut Brown Maid" made allusion.

1. Chaucer- Canterbury Tales- Wife of Bath Tale.

Jusserand- English Wayfaring Life- 258.

2. Langland- c. 35-39.

Jusserand- English "Wayfaring Life"- 253.

3. Jusserand- English Wayfaring Life. 207.

Wright- Political Songs and Poems- (1859)

4. Skeat's- Specimens of English Literature- (480) 1887, p. 96.

The sentence of outlawry was usually the turning point for a wanderer, and after sentence was passed upon him he was forced to lead a life of brigandage. When in danger of being caught in crime, they sought protection in a sanctuary. Here the fugitive became one of a little group of men with sometimes a few women among them, gathered together for the same reason. They formed a company apart from the rest of the world and lived a life of their own. If the surroundings were agreeable they might live thus for some time.

2. Others of this homeless class were the vagabonds. They depended on alms for their support. The number of beggars became so great that statutes were enacted to check them. Prohibitions were renewed against going out of a man's own district.

The wanderer must stop and serve whoever paid him, not merely if he were a serf, but even if he belonged to the class of laborers, artificers and other servants. Many however, continued their aimless life; Langland shows the shameless beggar who goes, bag on shoulder asking from door to door, who could very well if he desired, gain his bread and beer by work; he knows a trade but prefers not to exercise it.

1. "And can sommonere craft in cas he wolde hit use,

1. Dr. Trenholme- Right of Sanctuary in England- 70.

2. Jusserand- English Wayfaring Life. 261.

1. Statutes of the Realm- I. 48. 6 Ed. III.

1. Thorgh whiche crafte he conthe

Come to bred and ale."

^{of commerce, the means}

Owing to the growth of navigation were improved. The sailors were skilled in their art, and are a very self important class of men. Some of the ships were used to convey as many as a hundred passengers besides the crew, so it was important that they be capable because of the lives of the passengers. The seaman made life very uncomfortable for the passengers; the captain says.

3. "Some ar lyke to cowgh and frone

Or hit be full ny dnyght;"

and then turning to his men:

"Hale the bowelyne! now, oere the shete!

Cooke, made rely anoon our mete,

Our pylgryms have no lust to ete

I pray God give him rest!"

Go to the helm!.what, how! no mere?

1. Longland. Piers Plowman- Text. C. X. 1. 155.

2. Jusserand- English Wayfaring Life-

Social England- II. 183- "The Navy- Clows.

2. Chancer- Prologue. 388-410.

3. Foeder- 12 Hen. VI- Vol. X. p. 567-69.

Note- Piracy was practiced on a very large scale during the fourteenth century and it was not looked upon as dishonorable. All goods taken upon the high seas were divided, part was given to the king, and the remainder was left to the crew.

Social England- "The Navy"- Clows- II. 184.

Stewart, fellow! A pat of here!-

'Ye shalle have sit, with good chere,

Anon all of the best.

The classes in society had undergone many changes during the period following the Black Death. The old mediaeval ideas were breaking down in all classes, and it is more clearly seen in the way in which the nobility make a last effort to retain the old feudal society by having the laborers bound by law to the soil, but which terminated in the Peasant Revolt of 1381. The effects of which will be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter III

Social Conditions at the Close of the Fourteenth Century.

At the close of the fourteenth century the classes of society differed considerably from what they they had been at the beginning of the century. The wars, and the Black Death together with the economic conditions which resulted from them, accounted in part for the changes in society; however, these were not the only influences. The most important cause lay in the very organization of society itself. The aristocratic classes, perceiving the danger which threatened society, because of the freedom and privileges many of the villian class had secured by the system of computation of praedial labor, determined to restore the old social regime, that is, to reestablish society upon a feudal basis. In order to accomplish this, they had certain acts passed by Parliament by

1. which peasants were legally transformed into serfs and bondmen.

At the moment when the peasants were being harassed by the demand for personal services in cultivating the lord's lands, a

2. fresh element was added to their growing discontent. The war in Brittany required all the money that could be raised from the impoverished people of England. A tax new in its severity, though not new in its form, was levied on every one over the age of

1. Trevelyan, *England in the Age of Wycliffe*, p. 30-1; 192; 193.
2. Denton, *England in the Fifteenth Century*, 108.

fourteen years. The whole body of laborers became at once very
 1. discontented. The clergy, during the war with France had been
 taxed at a higher rate than the laity, accordingly their sympathies
 and self-interest were with the insurgents.

The demand for freedom had become so prevalent among the lower
 classes in society, that united effort was made on their part to
 resist the taxes imposed upon them. The lords in their efforts to
 enforce the laws, only incited and hastened the revolt of the peasant
 class. Such were, in brief, the social and economic conditions of
 the Rising of 1381.

It remains to indicate more definitely the ideas by which the
 rebellion was inspired. The idea of personal freedom was brought
 forcibly before the peasant by the rapid commutation of service for
 1. Walsingham. Vol. I. 312; 393; Denton. England in the
 Fifteenth Century- 110; Trevelyan England in the Age of Wycliffe
 195.

Denton- England in the Fifteenth Century- 108.

In 1376, when the poll tax was first imposed, it was limited
 to a groat for each person above the age of fourteen, except
 from beggars. When two years afterwards, a similar tax had been
 collected, it was graduated according to the income of the various
 classed of the nation.

Walsingham I. 323; Cotton's Abridgment, 145.

Rolls of Parliament. Vol. II. 364 (1377).

Rolls of Parliament III. p. 58.

economic reasons. The institution of slavery had long been opposed by the Church, but the Abbots and Bishops, who held manors all over England, had not yet seen any inconsistency between Christian brotherhood and the status of the serf. The peasantry and their humble parish priests, however, saw it for themselves. Besides the democratic tendencies of the Christian spirit, the belief in a common origin, was a very valid argument against hereditary serfdom. The popularity of this view is shown by the watchword of the insurgents,

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

The rebellion was more marked in some localities than in others. The insurrection in Kent and Essex were the most violent, and were similar. In Essex the trouble began by the tax collector threatening the liberty of those inhabitants, who refused to pay their taxes. This caused indignation among the peasants, and a crowd was soon collected to avenge their wrongs. The peasantry through out the country rapidly fell into line with the leaders of the rebellion. The first acts of violence were committed against the king's officers; but in a very short time the Rising was principally directed against the social grievances from which villians and laborers suffered. It was as Walsingham described it, "A Rising of the rustics whom we call serfs or bondsmen together with the rural

1. Jessopp. Coming of the Friars. p. 159.

Chaucer. Prologue- l. 479- 527.

inhabitants who began to riot for their liberty and to be free of their lords and to be held in servitude to no man."

Life and property every where were in peril. Manor houses were broken into and sacked by mobs on whose merest whim hung the life of the inmates. Many of the gentry sought refuge in the woods. Although the upper classes did well to fly their lives, yet death was not the certain fate of those who fell into the hands of the insurgents. There was no attempt to annihilate the class of

1. Many free laborers who had previously taken to the woods and the runaway willians, joined the insurgents. For years before and after the rebellion, the waste places and the woodlands were the haunts of these desperate men. Popular fancy delights in exploiting the daring deeds of Robin Hood and his men in Sherwood Forest, who were for the most part lawless and dangerous characters in society.

Gower had illuminated his long and wearisome epic on the Peasants Rising by a single passage of intense interest. He describes in the first person, the sufferings of those who had to hide from the rebels in the woods and wastes. In the seclusion of the forest his poetical nature is unmoved by the beauties of glade and dell; he feels only the weary horror of the wet woods, the fear of death that dogs his failing footsteps through the brake; the hunger that drives him to grow the acorus with the herds of swine and deer. (Gower- Vox Clamantis Bt. I- Ch. XVI.

2. Walsingham I.- 454.

Trevelyan- England in the Age of Wycliffe 214.

3. Powell- The Rising in East Anglia-

landlords or gentlemen. Those nobles, it is true, who were unpopular, were murdered; but the majority were spared on condition

1. of surrendering obnoxious charters or of supplying food and money. Some were forced by the rebels to march with them, or in certain cases, to assume apparent command, so as to give to the rebellion
2. an element of strength and dignity otherwise wanting. The clergy were treated just as the laymen. They were not promiscuously massacred, but a bad minister was to these men no less a bad minister because he was an Archbishop; a landlord was no less a bad landlord because he was an Abbot. Religious houses were attacked just as the manor houses were attacked, by serfs demanding their freedom.

Matters grew worse until the peasants led by John Ball, Wat Tyler and Jack Straw marched into London. Here they put to death many unpopular persons, among whom was the Archbishop of Canterbury, the supposed author of the poll tax. Richard II. then a young boy, succeeded in ^{by giving them charters of freedom} quieting the insurgents, from villanage, and they dispersed to their homes. The revolt of the peasants was soon put down; but the main object of their rising had been gained. The custom of commuting the old labor rents for money payments became universal, and villanage rapidly disappeared.

All classes of society were more or less directly connected with the Rising itself, and the effects of the Rising were felt by all classes. The closing years of the fourteenth century were years of

1. Rogers. Six Centuries of Work and Wages. Vol. I. Ch. 9.
2. Trevelyan. England in the Age of Wycliffe.- 219.

social disorder. A decline in moral and a disregard for law characterized this period.

- After the Peasants' Rising there was a marked decline in
1. the position of the baronage. Having lost their high political power, their social position was consequently impaired. The barons were not favorites of the king during this period, and were not feasted and entertained by him, as had been the custom during the preceding reigns. Though the barons felt themselves socially superior to the lesser aristocracy, yet their social
 2. life was not one to be emulated. They became very corrupt and led very reckless lives, during the closing years of this century.

There arose a new class of persons in society who took the places of those barons who were held in disfavor by the king.

3. Several of Richard II's favourites came from the gentry class. Besides these more or less honorable recipients of the royal favor, there appear to have been a number of more insignificant and needy gentlemen attached to the court, who, after making what they would out of a foolish and generous master, finally brought him to ruin. The court life during this period lacked dignity and had a very demoralizing influence on society.
2. The court expenditure of favorites was the principal complaint against Richard. Until about 1389 Richard's "household" expenses were on a level with those of Edward III. which had caused such dissatisfaction. After that year they rose still further. (Walsingham II. 68-9; Sir J. H. Romsay, Antiquary IV- 209; Trevelyan, England in the Age of Wycliffe- 273-4.

In political affairs the lesser aristocracy had triumphed over the baronage, and this fact was of considerable importance as bearing on their social life. The lesser aristocracy were not, however, in a flourishing condition, either politically, economically, or socially during the last years of the fourteenth century. In numbers they had been greatly discontent among them on account of scarcity of labor. Many of their estate were for the most part, uncultivated, and this caused, financially great alarm.

1. Many of their houses had been ransacked and demolished by the peasants in 1381; all these things very seriously affected the social condition of the lesser aristocracy.
2. The last years of the fourteenth century were very active years for the lesser aristocracy. As a rule, they were occupied

1. Social England II.-245-77 "Agriculture-" Corbett.

Jusserand. English Wayfaring Life. 258.

2. Chaucer. Prologue- 60-75.

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in recovering from their losses, and in restoring their devastated estates. There was, therefore, little time left for the gaities and pastimes in which the "Parfit gentil knight." delighted so much in the generation previous. The knight and country gentleman realized that if they were to be the strength and leaders of the nation in the future, they must be prepared to meet the responsibility. Of necessity, then, they gave up their old habits of luxury and idleness, and became active and alert in their endeavor to restore social order, and to make their position in society secure.]

The merchant class was changed very little by the Peasants' Rising. It is true, they did not find as ready market for their goods, as when the aristocratic classes were in a more prosperous financial condition, but still they continued to make sufficient profit to justify them. The English merchants secured from Richard II. charters by which the foreign merchants were almost entirely prevented from entering the country, and this greatly improved their trade. Just as during the preceding period, the

1. Cunningham. Alien Immigrants 65.

Gross. The Gild Merchant. I. 171.

Chaucer. Prologue. 445-476; 388-410; Canterbury.

Tales 4370-88; Longland- Piers Plowman C. XII.

Denton- England in the Fifteenth Century- 78.

Gross. Gild Merchant. I. 173.

2. Green. Town Life in the Fifteenth Century- 67.

English Merchants continued to be the chief means of communication between England and the continent. The merchant's house remained a favorite resort for the idle and "Elite" class.

The Rising did not disturb the towns to the extent that it did the rural districts, but its effect upon them was not meagre. The town population was increased by the fact that many of the peasant class took up their residence there; and they were not, in general, a desirable addition to society. The towns were, however, in fairly prosperous circumstances though the morals became lax. They were popular places for the idle and reckless to assemble, and this class being so great the places of amusement ^{were increased.} ~~the taverns and inns~~ were the favorite rendezvous of these persons.

The influence of the Peasants' Rising was especially important in changing the artisan class. After the Rising there were many persons who desired to learn some trade. The number of these persons was so great that the organization of the crafts became such that only those who possessed superior ability could become master workmen; any one desiring to take up a trade was

3. Chaucer- Prologue 445-76; 751-78; Canterbury

Tales 4370-92; Langland- Piers Plowman

B. K. VII. 354-75. Greene- Town Life in the Fifteenth Century- I. 145.

4. Bateson- Mediaeval England. 401.

Cunningham- Alien Immigrants 63.

Gross. Gild Merchant. I. 45.

1. Required to go through definite stages of service in order to be admitted to their class. The number of apprentices was large, and the fact that only the more capable were promoted, secured for the English a very highly skilled class of artisans, and they were protected by the gild or craft of which they were members. Non-gildmen were forbidden to keep shop or to sell wares by retail; similar restrictions were placed upon foreigners. The right or power of regulating modes of entertainment to foreign artisans was left to the town. In fact, the whole commercial and industrial activity of England lay in the towns which dotted the eastern and southern coasts. Commerce and industry were of considerable importance, and the persons connected with them were skilled and proficient in their occupations.

The villian class and free laborers were the leaders of the Peasants' Rising, and their aim had been to better their condition. The king, in order to suppress the Rising, had granted them freedom from villianage. Though there is difference of opinion as to what extent the peasant class really did triumph by the Rising of 1381, contemporary evidence points to the fact

1. Rogers. Six Centuries of Work and Wages- 475-; Gross, Gild Merchant Vol. I. 45, II. 24, 46. (Fletcher- "English Town Life" in Social England- II. 260) Hewins-"Commercial History"- in Social England. II- 256-9.

that serfdom or villinage continues to exist through the
 1. fifteenth century and far into the sixteenth. On the whole, there
 was no sweeping change in the social condition of this class.
 However, the changes already in progress were accelerated and
 assured their ultimate triumph.

Many of the landlords, in order to restore their estate, hired
 peasants; in such cases, their condition was very similar to what
 it had been before the Rising, with the exception that the land
 lord was more considerate of the labourer. Life was not quite so
 burdensome as it had been for the peasant, but still it was void
 of any pleasures and comforts. Many of the villains were cast
 upon society after the Rising. Some of whom were unable to secure
 2. work from their former landlords, while others feeling that they
 were free to do as they pleased, determined not to spend the

1. At Wilburton, for instance, in the Isle of Ely, no change was
 effected until Tudor times, and we read of royal manors where
 Elizabeth found serfs to emancipate in 1574. Such instances
 were in all probability exceptional, but they certainly were
 in keeping with the lament of Fitz-herbert, when he wrote in
 1523 that the country was still disgraced by the retention of
 villinage.

Corbett- The Peasants(Rising- Social England. II.- 49-52.

Trevelyan- England in the Age of Wycliffe. 103.

Greene- Town Life in the Fifteenth Century. p. 74.

2. Greene- Town Life in the Fifteenth Century. 79.

remainder of their lives in serving despised landlords. Consequently many peasants left the manor, - some taking up a roving, aimless life, and who usually joined the outlaw or criminal class, while others made their way to towns or cities, seeking employment more to their liking. The latter were a valuable addition to the town. They found employment with the merchant or artisan class. All who reached the towns and cities were not, unfortunately of this class. Many vicious and dangerous characters frequented the towns, and were a menace to society. These will be dealt with further, as members of the homeless and criminal classes.

The condition of the peasant class, in short, during the closing years of the fourteenth century differed very little from the condition of the free laborers and villians of the preceding period. The tendencies which were noted in those times assumed a more definite form in this period, and the road to extinction.

The church had been declining in its spiritual position during the entire century. Especially was this true in regard to the higher clergy both secular and regular. The decline in spiritual affairs had been due to the attention that was given to political and worldly affairs, by which spiritual things were lost sight of.

1. Jusserand- English Wayfaring Life. 261.

Trevelyan. England in the Age of Wycliffe.- 159.

2. Chaucer. Canterbury Tales. 1214-23; 1232-41; Longland Piers Plowman, B. K. VIII. 151-63; B. X 305-12; 321-9.

The monasteries were during the last years of the fourteenth century, extremely worldly. They had ceased to be of the great value they had once been to society, by maintaining high standards of life and being educational and religious centers. The monks were, for the most part, very dissipated and corrupt in their morals, during this time and they afforded just topics for criticism and ridicule, which were dealt with by Chaucer and Langland.

The social condition of the friars differed little from that of the monks. However, the relation existing between the friars and the monks was one of enmity. The friars used almost any means to induce poor boys who had gone to Oxford, to join the Franciscan or Dominican convent. Once he had taken the vows, the novice was caught, for in no way could he be released from this life long bond. This, the seculars especially, regarded as unjust, the more so as it brought Oxford into discredit among the parents who did not wish their sons to become friars. The friars gained the ill-will of the monks in a greater measure, by denouncing the possessions of the Church. In fact, the friars became unpopular among all classes. They had suffered from their popularity, the offscouring of men had rushed into their ranks, to enjoy their exemptions and live more securely on alms than they could without the mendicant habit.

2. Maxwell- Lytès' History of Oxford- II. 193, 275; (Rushdall's Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages. II. pt.2.)

1. Chaucer- Prologue, 207-268, and Miller's Tale. 2. Trevelyan Langland- BK. VII, 151-63; BK. IX, 305-12; 321-9. England in the Age of Wycliffe. 298.

The best men among them aimed high; but for the majority the old vows of poverty had lost their meaning and served only to shelter a multitude of sturdy and not too religious beggars.

However depreciated they were at the end of the century, the friars did not lose all hold over the people. Henry IV of the House of Lancaster usurped the throne and soon found that he must reckon with the friars. A good many among them were indignant with his enterprise, and preached in the country during the first years of his reign, that Richard II. was still living and was the true king, thus causing considerable confusion and doubt among the people. Their power over the people in religious affairs was, notwithstanding, declining, and they met with much opposition at the hands of the hollards.

The secular clergy likewise had lost much of the religious zeal which had characterized it during the first part of the century. Especially was this true of the higher clergy, the bishops, and the abbots. The majority of them had become land holders and were involved in politics more or less, which had a bad effect on their religious position. They were very corrupt and worldly men,

1. Eulogium Historiarum (Mes. Haydon. Roll Series London)

Vol. III.- 392- (1858).

Jusserand- English Wayfaring Life- 305.

2. Chancer- Canterbury Tales- 1299-1309- "The Arch deacon"

; Langland Piers Plowman- C. VII-IX; C. XVII 28-42.

and the people lost confidence in and respect for them. Though the bishop and the abbot were careful to take cognisance of the mistakes and weaknesses of other persons, yet they failed to perceive their own, and this inconsistency caused much discontent among the people.

While the older religious sects were losing the respect and support which had once been theirs, a new class of religious persons arose, who carried with them the panacea for spiritual ills. They were the pardoners or quaestors; they were given a hearty welcome by all persons desiring spiritual relief or absolution from their sins. Though some of the pardoners were sent out by the Church, and were thus authorized to give comfort to those in distress, yet there were many persons who became false pardoners, that is, they were not working for the welfare of the church, but for their own personal gains. The latter were very bold and made much sport of the corruptness, but they were in fact quite as corrupt. They distributed indulgences to the people, dispensed with the execution of vows absolved the perjured, homicides, usurers, and other sinners who confessed to them, and for a little money granted remission of sins ill-atoned for,

1. Trevelyan- England in the Age of Wycliffe- 135, 136, 137, 138.

Chancer. Prologue- 622-667; 668-750.

Letter of Richard d'Augerville, Bishop of Burham.

2. Chancer- Canterbury Tales- 6. 463-970.

and were given to a multitude of other abuses.

The pardoners had issued from mere nothingness, greedy, with glittering eyes, as in the Canterbury Tales, "Such glorying eyghen hadde he as on hare." They were true vagabonds, infesters of the highways, who having nothing to care for, boldly carried on their deception. Much profit accrued from these practices. Chancer's pardoner gained a hundred marks a year. As he says:

I preche no thyng but of coveityse

3. Therefore my turn is yet, and ever was,

Radix omnium malarum est cupiditas."

1. The pardoner met with greatest success among the ignorant and superstitious classes. But these persons were not long kept in their ignorance, and the pardoners did not reap the benefits of their evil practices for any length of time. Towards the close of the fourteenth century, the people began to awaken to new religious conceptions, and the prosperous days for the pardoner were ended.

4. Practically the only class of clergy, either secular or regular, who did not lose their religious zeal in these very

1. Jusserand- English Wayfaring Life. 312-23.

4. Bateson- Mediaeval England- 355-6.

Jassopp. Coming of the Friars- 159.

3. Chancer- Prologue C. 479-527.

1. disturbed times, was the parish priests. In general, they did not become corrupt and degraded, though there were individuals among them who did, yet as a class, their lives were pure and their aims sincere. The parish priests were discontented with the social conditions, the inequality and injustice, for religious motives, and not for their own personal gain. For this reason the priests sympathized with the peasants in the Rising of 1381. They felt that serfdom was contrary to the religious teachings, and it was upon these grounds, and not for selfish interests that they lent their support. The parish priests declined in power, as a result of the teachings of Wycliffe, in that he attacked the very fundamental principles upon which the Church was established.

The movement led by Wycliffe had considerable importance on society. At the outset, however, his teachings did not conflict with the parish priests. His object was to teach the simple truths of the Gospel. But when he passed from plain expositions to criticism and denunciation of what he deemed to be evils in the existing system of the Church, jealousy and strife were inevitable.

2. The followers of Wycliffe were called hollards, and this new party

1. Poole. Social England- "Religion"- II. 171-4.

Trevelyan. England in the Age of Wycliffe. 317.

~~Trevelyan. England in the Age of Wycliffe. 317.~~

2. Chaucer- Prologue- 477-90; 505-528.

held firmly together. Individual eccentricity had little place among the preachers who could be easily recognised by their long russet colored gowns, their peculiar speech, the sanctity of their demeanour, their habit of basing every argument on some injunction found in the Bible. They preached no doctrines subversive of order or hostile to lay property on the contrary, they cultivated the friendship not only of the wealthy citizens, but of the knights and gentry. Small land holders also gave them countenance when they came on their rounds. This patronage was of the utmost importance; for when the unauthorized preacher walked into a new village, his russet gown at once betrayed his errand, and if both the landlord and the parson were against him, his chance of getting a hearing was small. But on friendly ground his reception was very different. The protection and assistance afforded by so many landlords in the latter years of the fourteenth century was enough to instil into the minds of the preachers the distinction that Wycliffe had made between clerical and lay property.

The hollards were likewise well received by the ruling classes in the towns. Under such favorable auspices in country and town, these preachers whose enthusiasm and energy even their foes did not deny, produced an extraordinary effect. According to Knighton. Chronicles- E. S.- II.- 174-98; 262.

Jusserand. English Wayfaring Life. 280-1.



to a beicester monk, every second man was a hollard. This must not be treated as a statistical fact but only as a strong expression. Half the population had perhaps been impressed more or less favorably by these preachers, but few were ready to sever their relations with the Church authorities. But it must be said that they had awakened the people to the condition of the church, and prepared the way for changes in future generations.

Higher education was not encouraged to nay great extent during the latter years of the fourteenth century. This was due largely to the conditions existing within the University. The University was split into two parties, the seculars regarded themselves as the University proper, and consisted of secular clergy, priests like Wycliffe, or deacons and clerks in lower orders. These men were students first, and churchmen second. Their rights were protected against all aggression from Church or State, by the great number of undergraduates, living in a squaléd lodging-house of the city. The ordinary undergraduate, as well as the townsman, possessed a sword, which he girded on for his protection on a journey or for any other special cause, so that the riots in the streets of Oxford were affairs of life and death, and the feud of town and gown' a blood feud.

1. Trevelyan. England in the Age of Wycliffe.- 319.

Social England II. 148-9 A. L. Smith.

Social England II. 290-1- Religion- R. L. Poole.

2. Leach- English Schools at the Reformation- 103-8.

Trevelyan. England in the Age of Wycliffe 294-7.

Walsingham- Chronicles II.- 11-12.

Side by side with the secular University lived the regulars, the monks and friars, but at this time they had lost their higher ideals, and they did not emphasize the importance of learning, as they had previously. The curriculum of study became very narrow and the University did not maintain the high intellectual position of earlier times. There were very few persons who studied law, as compared with the earlier University, and, those who did, failed to receive good instruction. Lawyers were denounced by Wycliffe. Like other writers of his day he bore witness to their corruptions and extortions. They were, he said, the instruments of any villainy which great men wished ^{to perpetrate. They helped the latter} to oppress the poor. In Piers Plowman the lawyers fare no better:

"Thow had bet meet a mist on Malverm Hills
Than get a man of their month, till
Money be them shewd".

As has been pointed out, the number of persons cost upon society with no aim in life was very great as a result of the Peasants' Rising of 1381. This condition greatly supported the
2. idle and frivolous class of persons. The minstrels, indeed, were very important in arousing the peasants to revolt in 1381, by the
1. Trevelyan. England in the Age of Wycliffe. 299.

Knighton. Chronicle- II. 193.

2. Jusserand English Wayfaring Life. 207.

Rolls of Parliament- III. 508.

1. satirical poems and songs which they recited or sang. The character of entertainments given by the minstrels and jugglers was not of the high character that had prevailed formerly under Edward I. and Edward II. In the latter years of the century the royalty failed to support them, and because of this, the entertainments became much coarser and lacked refinement. The ignorant and uncouth peasants, and the idle supported the minstrels and this accounts for the change. The effect produced upon society was very demoralizing.

The criminal class, after the Rising was greatly increased. The highways were thronged with desperadoes who dared commit the most atrocious crimes. They lived in bands and were held in awe 2. by all persons; Whenever they were not out marauding expeditions they lived in the woods; but when they were threatened by the law, in order to be more secure, they sought shelter in a sanctuary. They were dreaded and feared especially by travellers, who had no chance of escaping them, and whose life was at their mercy. Though Robin Hood and his men are portrayed as being very brave and daring, and also showing those finer qualities of gallantry

1. Jusserand. English Wayfaring Life. 209.

Greene. Town Life in the Fifteenth Century I. 147.

Chancer- Wife of Bath's Tale and Parson's Tale.

Jusserand- English Wayfaring Life. 155.

Statutes of Realm I. 250.

1. Langland- Piers Plowman- C. X.

Jusserand- English Wayfaring Life- 157.

and honor, yet, in reality they were desperate men and a great danger to society.

Probably not so threatening to society as the robbers and thieves, but still a source of great annoyance, was the great class of beggars. They chose this life, rather than earn a living by working upon the manor, or in taking up some trade after the disturbances of 1381. Many of these persons preferred the life of a hermit to that of raving over the country. The hermit usually selected as his abode a place near a highway and

1. lived there on the charity of the passersby. To become a hermit a man must be resolved on an exemplary life of miseries and privations. These rules were broken without scruple in the latter part of the fourteenth century. Inside his dwelling the not very devout creature in hermit's garb might lead a
2. rather pleasant life, and it was so hard elsewhere.

The confusion and disorder in society during the latter part of the fourteenth century was largely due to the inability of the government to enforce the law. The military system had proved itself insufficient. The king was powerless to act against

3. the nobles, because his only military resources were the resources commanded by the nobles themselves. His army consisted of numerous small bodies of archers and men at arms belonging to earls, dukes, knights and professional

1. Langland. Piers Plowman. C. VII. 364-70; 394; C. I. L. 30. C. X. 195.

Statutes of the Realm 2. R. II. 6.
Piers Plowman- C. IV. 34-48.

3. Oman- "Warfare". Social England- II. 173-79.

soldiers of fortune hired by the government for the greater or less time. Such troops did well for the French wars, and even on an occasion like the Peasant's Rising, when the upper classes were threatened by a common danger. But the king could not use them against the upper classes, and here was where the great danger lay, as regards the national welfare, and Richard II. did not have sufficient resources to hire soldiers to supplant the army of the nobles.

The reign of Richard II. was upon the whole disastrous both for the royal and the commercial navy of the country. The defective discipline of the fleet may be judged from the facts that in 1377 when the Earl of Buckingham and Lord Fitz-Walter were supposed to be co-operating against the French at Brest, they were, in reality fighting one against the other, and when the leaders did at length co-operate, the seamen mutinied. The ships seem to have been transformed into floating deus of vice and barbarity. Trade suffered to some extent by the inability of the Government to protect it; yet acts were designed for the encouragement of trade. One measure, adopted in 1390, and which foreshadowed the navigation Laws of a much later date, enacted that "all merchants of the realm of England shall freight in the said realm the ships of the said realm, and not foreign ships, so that the owners of the

1. Clowes- Social England- "The Navy-" II- 182.
Chancer- Prologue- 270- 283; 388- 409.
2. Statutes of Realm- Richard II.

1. said ships may take reasonably for the freight of the same."

In this very calamitous epoch of the fourteenth century we have seen the institutions of early changing from the mediaeval to the modern; and in the change every class was thrown into confusion. Especially the change from feudal to modern methods of land-tenure and field labor, more advanced than any of the other changes in process, convulsed society, and in one short but terrible crisis almost wrecked the state. Closely connected with this, the inadequacy of the Mediaeval Church, ^{to English} needs was apparent in many ways, and a great attempt was made at the close of the century to fulfill these needs. Both in Church and State, the lowest ebb of society was reached in the closing years of the fourteenth century in the change from the mediaeval to the modern.

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