

Arthur in 1203. Be this as it may, one of the consequences of the Prince's death was the loss to the Kings of England of the major portion of their continental possessions. The gain to this nation is said to have been the final adoption by the Norman nobles of England as their home.

The characteristic of the first seventy years of this century is the hearty co-operation of the spiritual and lay barons in the great task of annihilating monarchy in the country and substituting for it the government of King, Lords, and Commons.

In 1215, the nobles, headed by Archbishop Langton, presented themselves in arms before King John and compelled him to sign Magna Charta. To sections twelve, fourteen, eighteen, thirty-nine, forty, and forty-one, I direct the special attention of those not at present familiar with them. In 1258, the nobles, headed by Simon de Montfort, assembled in arms at Oxford and passed, at what was afterwards termed the Mad Parliament, the "Oxford Statutes," which, among other matters, provided that twenty-four persons should be appointed to secure the faithful execution of the laws, and that those persons should be responsible to Parliament, which should assemble three times a year; that four knights should be chosen by the freeholders of each county to attend the Parliament; and that it should be their duty to inquire into grievances within their respective districts, and deliver their inquiry to Parliament. In 1265 Simon de Montfort and the nobles who supported him required that two burgesses should be returned to Parliament for every borough in each county. In 1297 the statute usually styled "Confirmatio Chartarum" re-enacted the Magna Charta, with important additions, one of which made the presence of the burgesses in Parliament indispensable, another made taxation without the

consent of Parliament, illegal. In this instance, Edward I., who reigned from 1272 till 1307, co-operated with the Lords and Commons. Sir Matthew Hale, says of Edward I.:—"He is well-styled our English Justinian; for, in his time, the law, as if by a bound, obtained a very great perfection." He says the Acts of Parliament in the time of this king are full of excellent wisdom and perspicuity, yet brevity. It would be an error, however, to conclude that Edward I. was guiltless of arbitrary and violent measures.

*The Fourteenth Century.*—Though it is not clear when the two Houses of Parliament first had a separate existence, it is generally admitted that they sat separately, at least, in 1343. In 1352 the Commons began to take the initiative in popular measures, and in 1376 they impeached the Lords Latimer and Nevil, together with four commoners, for illegal practices.

During the reign of Richard II. (1377 to 1399) the nobles divided, and, distracted by rival factions, were, for the time being, unable to support the Commons in their struggle with the Crown; the result was that Richard succeeded in making the royal will the only law. There always has been a limit to British endurance of tyranny, of whatever nature, or from whatever quarter. Nobles and commons, heedless of other matters, flocked to the standard of Henry of Lancaster, and Richard was deposed.

*The Fifteenth Century.*—In 1406, and apparently without any intention on the part either of the king or the Lords to give offence to the Commons, Henry IV. and the Lords discussed the then condition of the country and the question of a grant. The Commons, however, protested. They declared that it was an infringement of the Constitution for the king to take notice of matters pending in Parliament, and maintained it to be