

Occasionally toy-ships of twenty or twenty-five tons were used. The brother of Sir Walter Raleigh crossed the Atlantic in such a ship, and perished in it as he attempted to return to England.

It was not a pleasant world which the men and women of Europe had to live in during the sixteenth century. Fighting was the constant occupation of the Kings of that time. A year of peace was a rare and somewhat wearisome exception. Kings habitually, at their own unquestioned pleasure, gathered their subjects together, and marched them off to slay and plunder their neighbours. Civil wars were frequent. In these confused strifes men slew their acquaintances and friends as the only method they knew of deciding who was to fill the throne. Feeble Commerce was crushed under the iron heel of War. No such thing as security for life or property was expected. The fields of the husbandman were trodden down by the march of armies. Disbanded or deserted soldiers wandered as "masterless men" over the country, and robbed and murdered at their will. Highwaymen abounded—although highways could scarcely be said to exist. Epidemic diseases of strange type, the result of insufficient feeding and the poisonous air of undrained lands and filthy streets, desolated all European countries. Under what hardships and miseries the men of the sixteenth century passed their days, it is scarcely possible for us now to conceive.

The English Parliament once reminded James I. of certain "undoubted rights" which they possessed. The King told them, in reply, that he "did not like this style of talking, but would rather hear them say that all their privileges were derived by the grace and permission of the sovereign." Europe, during the sixteenth century, had no better understanding of the matter than James had. It was not supposed that the King was made for the people; it seemed rather to be thought that the people were made for the King. Here and there some