

the thirteenth century, in the frequency with which the 'Great Charter' of 1215 was re-issued by King John's successors. But, by the end of the fourteenth century, the rule that the acts of each King bound his successors was firmly established; and it survived even the so-called 'despotism' of the Tudor monarchs. So that statesmen came to think and speak of the King rather as an institution than an individual; though, to the mass of the people, the personal qualities, real or imaginary, of the monarch long remained of great interest. This change of order in the more influential classes was expressed by the use of the term 'Crown' instead of 'King.' The crown is, of course, an inanimate object, which is kept in the Tower of London; but, by the simple process of using a capital letter in writing it, we make it stand for the Kingship as an institution.

EFFECT OF COURTS OF JUSTICE

The other great change in the character of the Kingship made in the first three-quarters of the thirteenth century was the establishment of the doctrine that, in the administration of justice, the King ought to take no personal share, though it is regularly carried on in his name. We have suggested, already (pp. 12-14), how this change was brought about. Here we have only to notice how powerfully it contributed, perhaps even more than the better-known achievements of Parliament, to make the Kingship constitutional. For, in allowing his judges to decide cases, not according to his own personal views, but according to the 'laws and customs of the realm,' the King was really allowing them to act in his name according to the wishes of his subjects; because, as we have seen before (p. 15), the English 'common law,' which the judges administered, was the expression of the unconscious will of the nation.