

enemy, had he been less a simpleton and a coward the great movement which resulted in Magna Charta might have been frustrated of its effect.

The head and front of this patriotic struggle against John was, according to all historical testimony, Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury, ably seconded by Earl Pembroke, Lord Marshal. The Archbishop had time and again remonstrated with the King, sometimes at the imminent risk of his life. When the time for decisive action had arrived these two men were not found wanting.

And now we may note briefly the chief events that led to the consummation of the nation's desires and the complete discomfiture of the King.

In 1213 John requested his northern nobles to aid him in a war with France. On their refusal the King became exceedingly angered and set himself to devise means of bringing his recalcitrant nobles to a sense of duty. In the meantime two councils had been held at the St. Albans and St. Pauls. The former is the first historical instance of the summons of representatives to a national Council. There were assembled besides the Bishops and Barons, a representative reeve and four men from each township. Here too it was that the reforms which were afterwards effected were outlined.

During the greater part of the next year the King was absent on the continent. While he was there the Barons banded together and pledged mutual and concerted action in regard to their claims. Should these be refused they agreed to withdraw their fealty and make war on the King.

On his return John made strenuous but unavailing efforts to break up the combination against him. The Church was promised a separate charter. Like insidious efforts on the part of the King to gain over the barons were equally without avail.

Pressed by the armed confederacy for their just rights, John shifted and evaded. He asked for further time to consider. His enemies then pushed on to London. The King then agreed to meet them on ground appointed at their discretion to consider their claims and grievances. The place chosen by the barons was Runnymede, a grassy plane about half-way between Odiham and London.

(To be continued.)