

freeman, unless respite were given by the free will of the latter.

The Charter went on to confirm to all cities, towns, burghs, and seaports, as well as to the capital, their ancient rights and customs. To the foreign merchant was granted the privilege of travelling throughout the kingdom, and to the subject, the liberty of leaving the same, except in time of war. These provisions were designed for the benefit of the people in general, but being mere confirmations of ancient rights, we do not consider any discussion of them necessary.

One of the most important articles of the Charter, and one that exhibited a firm determination to uphold democratic principles of government, had reference to the royal forests. These forests dated from the time of William I. In their formation a large extent of country was laid waste, and a considerable portion of the population rendered destitute, and all this wanton destruction of property to satisfy the caprice of a tyrant in providing a hunting-ground for him. They were his private possessions, and all laws concerning them emanated from him alone. To kill "the king's venison" entailed a penalty of loss of life or members. Besides this there were numerous petty ordinances most annoying to those dwelling upon the adjoining property. To remove the grievances arising from the execution of these laws, all forests that were made since John's accession were thrown open, and twelve barons in each county were appointed, under oath, to inquire into the evil customs of forests and warrens, foresters and warreners, and after having given forty days notice to the king or to his judiciary, should these evil cus-

toms continue, to adopt measures for their suppression. Thus were the monstrous iniquities of this institution, which had its existence only in the mutilated constitution of the Conquest, wiped out, and a galling autocracy demolished.

As the charter of Henry I protected the under-tenants of the barons from the lawless exactions and injustices of their lords in the same manner as the barons were protected from the infringements of the crown, the Magna Carta stipulated: "that every liberty and custom which the king had granted to his tenants, as far as concerned him, should be observed by the clergy and laity as far as concerned them". This article laid down the broad foundation upon which the Charter rested: liberty and equity to all freemen. It must be admitted that slaves received no recognition, but they could not claim to enjoy any of the privileges of freemen.

With the exception of some temporary clauses dealing with the correction of the late transgressions of the crown, we have now seen the chief provisions of the great charter of liberties which was wrung from John, or as he declared "granted through a pious regard for God, and a desire for the benefit of the people." Many of the measures which were taken to redress the grievances that existed, also devised means to prevent their recurring. In this respect, the enactments regarding the judicial legislation of the kingdom, and those requiring the abolition of the royal government of the forests, stand out prominently. But the reforms effected can be looked upon only as guiding lines to direct the course of the crown in its relation to established legislation, and not