

# GREAT ENGLISHMEN

AN HISTORICAL READING BOOK  
FOR SCHOOLS

BY  
M. B. SYNGE

WITH A PREFACE BY DOROTHEA BEALE



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# PREFACE

There is much talk just now of how and what we shall teach; but something is necessary before people can be taught anything:—they must want to learn; and therefore a teacher's chief duty is not to satisfy, but to create a healthy appetite for knowledge.

It is for this reason that I recommend these stories about great Englishmen to the little ones for whom they are written. I think such a book will make them want to know more of the history of their country, will show them that the good and great became so by fighting their way through difficulties, and will lead them to desire that their lives too may be not quite unworthy of

"This land of such dear souls, this dear, dear land."

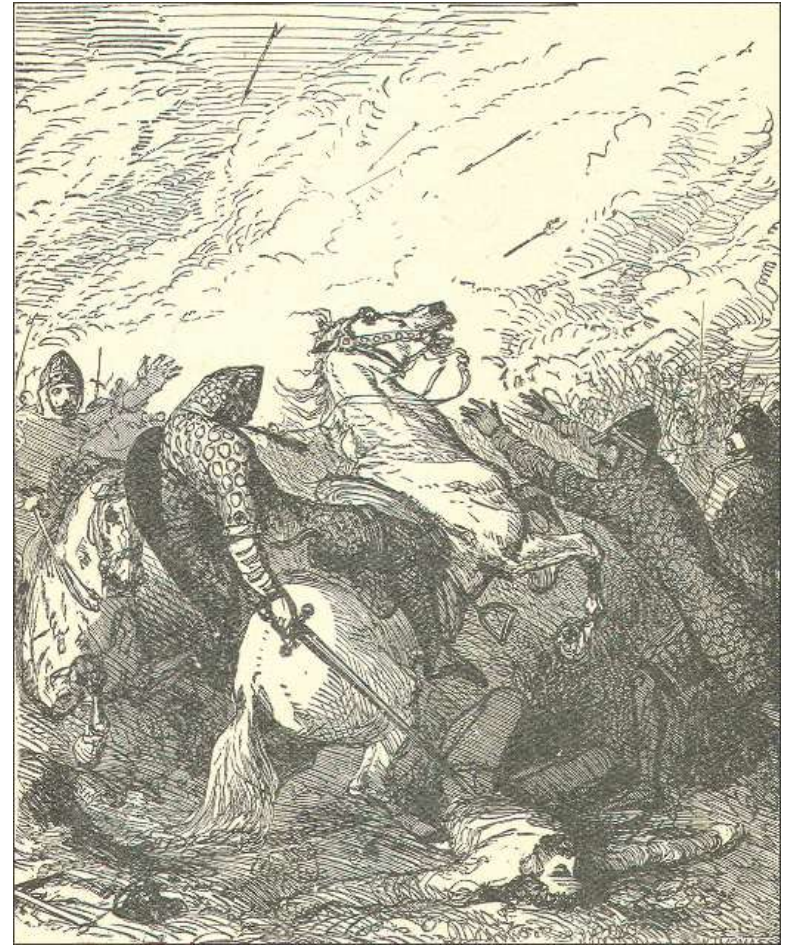
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

BEDE (672-735) .....	4
ALFRED THE GREAT (846-901) .....	6
HAROLD (DIED 1066).....	8
THOMAS À BECKET (1117-1170).....	11
SIMON DE MONTFORT (DIED 1265) .....	14
EDWARD THE BLACK PRINCE (1330-1376) .....	17
GEOFFREY CHAUCER (1328-1400).....	20
JOHN WYCLIF (1324-1384) .....	23
WILLIAM CAXTON (1412-1491).....	25
THOMAS WOLSEY (1471-1530).....	28
SIR WALTER RALEIGH (1552-1618).....	31
SIR PHILIP SIDNEY (1554-1586).....	35
JOHN MILTON (1608-1674).....	37
SIR ISAAC NEWTON (1642-1727) .....	40
ROBERT CLIVE (1725-1774).....	42
WILLIAM PITT (1759-1806) .....	46
HORATIO NELSON (1758-1805).....	49
DUKE OF WELLINGTON (1769-1852).....	54
GEORGE STEPHENSON (1781-1848) .....	60



THE DEATH OF HAROLD.

# CHAPTER I

## BEDE (672-735)

I wonder if you know what a monastery is. If not, I must tell you, or you would never understand about Bede and the place he lived in when he was a little boy.

A monastery is a house where monks live.

In the days of Bede there were a great many more monasteries in England than there are now, and a great many more monks.

There was no printing then, so everything had to be written, and it was part of the duty of the monks to write out the books, for other people had not time. Over all these monks was a man called an Abbot, who taught the young monks and looked after them.

It was very near a great monastery at Jarrow, in the county of Durham, that Bede was born.

About ten years before, another boy, called Caedmon, had lived in these same parts, and that boy had made himself famous by making the first English song. Bede became still more famous by writing the first history about the English people.

When Bede was seven years old he was left an orphan, and sent to the great monastery near his home. He was put under the charge of the old Abbot, whose name was Benedict.

There he lived a very happy life. When still a little boy he was made a chorister, and he loved to sing the old Roman chants with the other monks. He was very fond of study, and he would sit and pore over his books all day, eager to learn all he could.

Little by little he learnt all that was known about the stars at that time; he could read and write well, and do sums.

The Abbot Benedict taught him that his first duty was "to love the Lord God with all his heart;" his second duty, "to love his neighbour as himself," and, "to do unto others as he would have others do unto him."

When he had only been a few years under Benedict, he was placed under another Abbot. There were then twenty-two monks in the monastery.

Very soon after this change, a bad sickness broke out in the monastery, and every one died except "the Abbot and one little boy, who still continued to chant in the midst of his tears and sorrows." This little boy was Bede. The monastery soon filled again, and Bede became one of the best scholars. At the age of nineteen he was made a deacon, which shows how well he must have worked to be thought fit to teach others at such an early age.

Bede says, "It was always sweet to me to learn, to teach, and to write."

Before long he had six hundred pupils, all anxious to be taught by the great scholar, who was so willing to teach all he had learnt himself, with so much patience.

For these pupils he wrote many small books about music, arithmetic, and poetry, to help them; and he wrote the names of some of his favourite scholars in the beginning.

About this time he wrote a large history of the Church of England. He wrote it all in Latin, but Alfred the Great translated it later into English.

This large history tells us about the Pope Gregory, and how he tried to make the people Christians. It tells us, among other things, how one day Gregory saw some beautiful boys with fair skin and long fair hair standing in the market at Rome waiting to be sold as slaves. He asked who they were, and was told they were heathen boys from Britain. Gregory asked again the name of their nation.

"Angles," he was told.

"Not angles, but angels," he replied, "with faces so angel-like. What is the name of their king?" "Ella," they told him.

"Alleluia shall be sung there," cried Gregory, and passed on, resolved to bring about in some way the conversion of England.

And so he did. Not long afterwards he sent a party of monks to England, and very slowly, after much opposition, heathenism was swept away, and our island became the Christian England it has remained ever since.

All this and a great deal more, Bede tells us in his history.

He also wrote a book of verses in the English tongue, of which he was so fond. His last work was a translation of St. John's Gospel into English, which he hoped to complete before his death. This he did though not without difficulty.

Early in 735 Bede had a severe attack of asthma, which left him very weak and in much pain.

Still he worked on among his scholars, wishing to leave them well-taught.

"I don't want my boys to work to no purpose after I am gone," he said, when he was urged to take his much-needed rest.

The tears of his pupils mingled strangely with the old man's seeming gaiety and frequent bursts of English song.

"Learn with what speed ye may," he said cheerfully to his scholars, "I know not how long I may last."

The day before his death he passed another sleepless night, and morning found him weaker than before. His translation was not finished.

"There is yet one chapter more, but it seems irksome for you to speak," said the scribe, perceiving his increased weakness.

"It is easy: take another pen, dip it in the ink, and write quickly," replied his master.

The day wore on.

"There is yet, dear master, one sentence wanting," said the little scribe.

"Write it quickly," was the whispered reply. "It is finished now," said the boy at last.

"Thou hast said the truth, all is finished now. Lift me over against the place where I was wont to pray."

As the last words fell on the ears of the little knot of scholars around him, they obeyed, and so placed on the floor of his cell, his head supported by his sorrowing pupils, Bede chanted "Glory to God," as he was wont to do. As he uttered the last words, he passed quietly away.

Thus died the "Father of English learning," the first great English scholar, England's first historian, loved and honoured to the last, and worthy of the name bestowed on him by later ages, "The Venerable Bede."

## CHAPTER II

### ALFRED THE GREAT (846-901)

I am now going to tell you about one of the best and greatest of our English kings, and I think you will like him, for he was a very good man and did a great deal for his people.

Alfred was born in Berkshire. There is a story told of him, when he was twelve years old. Up to that age he had been very fond of hunting and other sports, but had never learnt to read. One day his mother had a beautiful book of English songs and pictures, so she called Alfred and his brothers and said, "I will give this beautiful book to the one of you who shall first be able to read it."

"Mother, will you really give me the book when I have learnt to read it?" asked Alfred.

"Yes, my son," replied his mother.

So Alfred went, found a master, and soon learnt to read. Then he came to his mother, read the songs in the beautiful book, and took it for his own.

When Alfred was a boy I dare say he heard his father and brothers talking about some cruel men, called Danes, who came from Denmark. These Danes wanted to have England for their own, and fought against the people. They came in bands, swooped down on the villages and towns, killed the poor people, and carried off the children. So you may imagine how the English hated them. They had first entered England more than fifty years before, and Alfred determined he would send them away if he was ever king.

Alfred grew up very brave, and the people were very fond of him. When his father and elder brothers died, he was made king, and all the people rejoiced.

The first thing Alfred did was to collect an army and go to fight against the Danes. He drove them away for a little time, but he felt sure they would soon come again.

So he set to work and built a great many new ships. He drilled the men for fighting, and encouraged them, for they had quite lost all hope of sending the Danes away.

Then, when the Danes came again, as they very soon did, Alfred sent out his new ships, which were long, swift, and steady, to meet them, and would not let them land. A great storm came on too, so they went away.

The next winter they came again and spread themselves in great numbers over Alfred's kingdom. They killed a great many of the king's soldiers, and Alfred was left alone and obliged to hide.

He dressed himself like a peasant, called himself Egbert, and hired himself out to a herdsman to tend cattle. In the evening he would sit over the cottage fire and talk about the Danes to the herdsman and his wife. The herdsman would often say, "I wonder what has become of the poor king," little thinking Alfred was sitting opposite him.

One night the herdsman's wife set some oaten cakes by the fire, and bade Egbert watch them. But what was her rage, when on returning to her room, she found her cakes burnt quite black, and Egbert sitting deep in thought.

"You lazy, good-for-nothing fellow!" she cried. "You have burnt my cakes! You are ready enough to eat them, when they are piping hot, but you cannot turn them!"

Alfred said he was very sorry, but nothing would quiet the woman's anger. Soon after this Alfred left.

One night the herdsman came in, and said to his wife, "You remember our man Egbert?"

"To be sure I do. Lazy fellow!" she replied.

"He was no less person than Alfred, King of England."





ALFRED AND THE HERDSMAN'S WIFE.

"King Alfred!" screamed his wife; "and I gave him that rare scolding about the cakes! He will surely punish me!" But I need not tell you the king did not punish her; he probably had a good laugh over it with his nobles.

After he left the cottage, Alfred went to a place called Athelney. Wishing to know what sort of army the Danes had, the king dressed up as a minstrel in a long cloak, and taking his harp, went into their camp.

The Danes were delighted with the way in which he played and sang, and begged him to stay; but Alfred had seen all he wanted, and returned to Athelney.

Then he called together all his true followers and nobles, placed himself at the head of an army, and soon gained a complete victory over the Danes.

Alfred then took the Danish leader, had him baptized a Christian, and made a peace called the Peace of Wedmore. They settled that Alfred should reign over one half of England and the Danes over the other half. When peace was made, Alfred had more time to devote to his people. I dare say he remembered what pleasure he had taken in reading when a boy, so he determined to make all his young subjects love it too.

He sent for some learned men to come from other countries to teach them, and built several schools, that his subjects might better learn. Alfred took the trouble to translate many books from Latin into English, and wrote many new ones. He was never idle. He divided his day into so many parts. There were no clocks in those days, so Alfred had wax candles made, and notched them across at regular distances. These candles were always kept burning, and at every notch the king would change his employment. One part of every day was spent in praying, reading, and writing; other parts in seeing that justice was done to his subjects, in making good laws, and in teaching the English how to keep away the Danes from their country.

He allowed himself very little time for his own rest, food, and amusement. Alfred was called the "Truth teller." He was very just, very strict, yet mild and forgiving.

Once when the Danish general was fighting against him, Alfred took his wife and two sons prisoners. He would not keep

them, but sent them home again, having treated them very kindly.

One of the very best things King Alfred did for England, was to build a great many new ships. He saw that the best means of keeping the Danes away was to have ships better than theirs to go and meet them on the water and fight them there, instead of allowing them to land and do mischief.

Besides fighting the Danes, Alfred made other good uses of his ships. He sent some to Italy and France to get books and to bring back many things that the English did not know how to make at home.

King Alfred died when he had been king twenty-nine years. He had been ill a long time before he died, but he was very patient and bore great pain without complaining.

Just before he died he spoke to his son Edward and gave him good advice about taking care of the people when he came to be king.

The great desire of his heart was to make England better, wiser, and happier in all ways than he found it, and I think you will say he succeeded.

He was loved for his good heart, as well as for his clever head, and in later years, when the people were oppressed and badly treated, they often wished that the days of good King Alfred, "England's Darling," would come back again.

## CHAPTER III

### HAROLD (DIED 1066)

Edward the Confessor was king of Saxon England. He was a good man, very soft-hearted and anxious to act for the best, but too gentle for such a rude and violent age. He had been a great deal in France, and loved the French people and their ways; he brought over many Norman friends from France too, and gave them high offices in England, and castles to live in.

This displeased the English people, who did not like to see the Normans placed before them, and none was more angry than Earl Godwin, an old Saxon ruler in Kent, who had expected to be noticed by Edward. Hearing that Earl Godwin was about to raise an army against him, Edward was angry, and, for the sake of peace, told Earl Godwin that he and his sons must go right away across the sea for a long time. Earl Godwin was obliged to go, and take his big and high-spirited sons with him.

It is about one of these sons I am now going to tell you. His name was Harold. Very beautiful was Harold to look upon: he had long fair hair reaching to his shoulders in one thick curl, deep blue eyes, which flashed brightly, and a smile which had already won the hearts of the English people.

Earl Godwin did not stay long in exile. He heard how the Saxon England became more and more Norman, and how William, Duke of Normandy, had been to visit Edward, King of England. So the old earl returned and landed quietly on the southern coast with some of his sons. He was welcomed back with cries of joy. "Life or death with Earl Godwin!" rose on all sides, while above the tumult the words "Harold, our Harold!" rang through the air.



It was useless for Edward to try and oppose Earl Godwin; many of the Normans left England, and the earl was once more in favour. Harold, the beloved of the people, was also in higher favour than before.

At last Earl Godwin died, and, to the joy of all, Harold became earl.

Edward, the king, became very fond of the young and handsome earl, and Harold helped him make the laws and rule the people. All this he did very well and wisely, and was soon the greatest man in England under the king. Now Edward was in very bad health, and the question uppermost in every mind was "Who shall succeed?"

Edward had only one relation, a baby grandson named Edgar, too young to reign. All eyes turned to Harold, and on the lips of all were the words:

"If Edward dies before Edgar is of age to succeed him, where can we find a king like Harold?"

William the Norman soon heard how fond the Saxons were of Harold, and how they were wishing to make him king if Edward should die soon. Soon after this, Harold went out in a ship with his brother, was driven to the coast of France, and taken prisoner. When Duke William heard he was in France he had him set free and brought to the Norman court. William was very friendly with the Saxon Harold, for he knew how popular he was in England, and William had made Edward half promise to leave him the throne of England. So he made Harold swear that he would not allow himself to be made king after Edward's death, but would help the Norman Duke. Harold made a faithful promise to support William, and then was allowed to go home again. But he was never the same man again; he had made a promise that he knew he should not keep, he grew thoughtful and downcast, his light merry step became slow and heavy, his bright eyes became more dull and grave, and he shuddered when he thought of that terrible promise.

On his return Harold found Edward the king was worse and not expected to live long; the country was in a disturbed and unsettled state. "But all would go well now Harold, the great earl, Harold the wise, the loved, had come back to his native land. All eyes, all hopes, all hearts turned to him, to him alone!"

Soon after this Edward the Confessor died in the arms of Harold. Whether he appointed Harold or William of Normandy to succeed him as king is uncertain, but certain it is that when the news spread, a cry rose, "We choose thee, O Harold, son of Godwin, for lord and king!" and the earl was crowned amid shouts of "May the King live for ever!"

When Tostig, Harold's brother, heard of his coronation, he was very jealous and angry, and resolved to fight against him.

"Ere the sun is an hour older," he cried, "I am on my road to Duke William."

The Norman Duke was in the forest trying some new arrows with some of his knights. Suddenly a rider came up full speed and drawing William aside, whispered excitedly, "King Edward is dead, and Harold is king of all England!"

"Edward dead! Then England is mine!" cried William, hardly taking in the case.

But England was not his yet!

Tostig, for such indeed was the rider, had a long interview with the Duke, and they resolved to fight against Harold, to try and conquer Saxon England and make the Norman Duke William king instead.

So great preparations were made. Tostig went over to England to try to raise an army against Harold, while William collected men and ships to invade the coast.

Meanwhile King Harold had made himself very dear to his people, he did away with some taxes, he gave higher wages, he trained men for soldiers to defend the land, and spared no pains to make his people happy. But he did not rule over

England long. For very soon he heard that his brother Tostig had collected a large army in the north, and with the King of Norway to help him, was going to attack Northumberland.

Harold marched against them and met them at York. Before the battle, Harold, not wishing to fight against his own brother, sent a message to him offering him peace and lands and honour if he would give in.

"And what shall my ally the King of Norway receive?" asked Tostig.

"Seven feet of English ground for a grave, or a little more, seeing he is taller than other men," was Harold's stern answer.

Tostig angrily refused the terms, and a fierce battle was fought, in which Tostig and his ally the King of Norway were slain.

Four days after this battle, Duke William landed in Sussex, near Hastings, with an enormous army. As soon as Harold heard of it, he marched to London and prepared a large army, with which he went to Hastings. He vowed that he would give battle in person, and prove to his subjects that he was worthy of the crown which they had set upon his head. He was encouraged by his late victory, and hope was mixed with fear.

The night before the battle which was to decide the fate of England, was spent by the Saxons over their fire, singing merrily, eating and drinking,—spent by the Normans in prayer. At last morning dawned, and the dim morning light found Harold and his army on the hill above Hastings ready for the attack. The Normans rushed up the hill, but were soon forced down by the English; again and again they charged up, and again and again they were beaten back. Then a panic arose that William was slain, but the Norman Duke was unhurt, and throwing off his helmet that all might see him, cried, "Strive, and by God's help we will yet win."

Again they charged up the hill. Then William thought of a plan to make the English leave their post. He ordered his men

to pretend to flee, as if they were retreating. When the English saw it, they raised a cry, and disobeying their brave leader and king, rushed down the hill after the Normans. The Norman trick had done its work. A terrible slaughter took place. The Normans turned on the English. Bravely they fought and bravely fought Harold, the English king. Suddenly William ordered his men to shoot their arrows up into the air. As Harold raised his blue and flashing eyes, an arrow struck one and he fell. One of his brothers knelt over him.

"Fight on!" gasped the king, "conceal my death." He struggled to his feet, tried to raise his battle-axe and deal one more blow for his country, but in vain. He fell down dead, and

"Every man about his king  
Fell where he stood."

The battle was over, the victory was William's, and the Norman Duke spent the night among the slain in feasting and merriment.

And Harold? Harold, the son of Earl Godwin, the last of the Saxon kings, the man who had died fighting for the land and the people he loved so well, was buried beneath a heap of stones on the "waste sea shore."

For "he kept the shore while he lived, let him guard it now he is dead," said William.

And the English wept long and bitterly for their king.

"Oh Harold, Harold!"

"Our Harold—we shall never see him more!"

## CHAPTER IV

### THOMAS À BECKET (1117-1170).

There is a very romantic story told of Thomas à Becket's father and mother. It seems that Gilbert à Becket, his father, when fighting in the Holy Land, was taken prisoner by one of the Saracen chiefs. This chief, who treated him very kindly, had one daughter, who soon fell in love with her father's young prisoner. She helped him to escape to England, and before long followed, bent on finding and marrying him. But she only knew two words in English, and these were "Gilbert" and "London."

When she got down to the sea shore, she cried "London!" "London!" over and over again, until the sailors understood where she wanted to go. When she arrived in London she cried "Gilbert!" "Gilbert!" for many days, but in vain. One day, Gilbert à Becket was sitting in his counting-house in London, when he heard a great noise in the street. On going to the window he saw the foreign lady in her foreign dress walking slowly up and down the street, calling sadly, "Gilbert! Gilbert!" He recognized her, ran into the street, and caught her, fainting, in his arms. They were soon married. In the year 1117 their only son, Thomas, was born.

At the age of ten he was sent to a school in Surrey. He was a gay and clever boy, but not much given to learning. His handsome face and gentle manners made him very popular, and he was noticed by several great men, who saw him at his father's house. A certain Norman baron was especially charmed with the boy, and used to take him out hawking. Another friend was the Archbishop of Canterbury, who, taken by his graceful and winning ways and uncommon cleverness, persuaded him after some time to become a clergyman. He was soon after made Archdeacon of Canterbury. This was a very important post, but

Becket showed great talent, and gained the confidence of the archbishop.

When the new king, Henry II., was crowned, Thomas à Becket was presented to him. The king was a youth very little over twenty, he delighted in clever men, and soon liked Becket very much. The archdeacon was next made chancellor. He had to appoint clergymen to attend the king, to take care of the king's chapel, and to attend meetings. He was very much at court, and wrote all the king's private letters for him, and it is said that, when the work of the day was done, the king and chancellor used to play together like two schoolboys. Becket was very, very rich; his house was furnished with gold and silver vessels; he had most costly meat and wines; he dined with earls and barons, and often, when a merry meal was going on in his house, the king would ride into the hall, jump off his horse, leap over the table, and join in the fun.

Once, when Becket went to France on the king's business, he was preceded by two hundred and fifty singing boys; then came eight waggons, each drawn by five horses; two waggons, filled with costly presents to be given away; twelve horses, each with a monkey on its back, and lastly the chancellor, with his splendid garments flashing in the sun.

"How splendid must be the king of England, if this is only the chancellor !" cried the French people, as they watched the procession.

The king and Becket were riding together through the streets of London, on a cold winter day, when the king saw a poor old man shivering in rags.

"Would it not be kind to give that aged man a comfortable, warm cloak?" said the king.

"Certainly it would," answered Becket, "and you do well, sir, to think of such Christian duties."

"Come," cried the king, "you shall do this act of charity—give him your cloak!"

So saying, the king tried to pull off the beautiful crimson cloak, trimmed with rich ermine. Becket tried to keep it on, and both were nearly falling off their horses, when the chancellor gave in, and the king gave the cloak to the beggar, who walked off in great delight with his prize.

About this time the Archbishop of Canterbury died.

"I will make this chancellor of mine archbishop," thought Henry; "he will then be head of the Church, and able to help me against the clergy."

So the king asked Becket to be archbishop. He did not wish it.

"If I am archbishop, I know full well that I must either lose the king's favour, or set aside my duty to God," answered Becket.

However, he was made Archbishop of Canterbury, and the friendship between him and the king was at an end. "You will soon hate me as much as you love me," he said to Henry on one occasion. The king had mistaken his man; Becket could not go against his conscience, even to please the King of England.

Outwardly the behaviour of the archbishop was much the same, but in private he had changed. He rose early, spent most of the morning in prayer, next his skin he wore hair-cloth, he drank water, ate coarse food, and daily washed the feet of thirteen beggars.

The first cause of dispute between Becket and the king was this. Henry said, when a clergyman did anything wrong he should first be deprived of his office—that is, he should no longer be considered a clergyman at all—and then should be punished as other people. Becket said this was not fair, as a clergyman would thus be punished twice over for the same offence.

Becket was next called upon to agree to a code of laws that had been drawn up in public with regard to the clergy. The archbishop entered the hall, holding in one hand a cross. Bishops

and priests were present begging him to submit, agree with the king, and sign the code of laws. Still he firmly refused. Charges were then brought against him, and his very life was said to be in danger. But his courage rose, and he angrily refused to sign the paper. The bishops entreated him, and a door was thrown open, showing a room of armed soldiers, to threaten him.

At last he gave in, signed it, and retired amid cries of "Traitor! traitor!"

He turned round. "Were I a knight," he said fiercely, "I would make that coward repent."

That night the Archbishop of Canterbury fled in disguise to France. When the king heard of his flight, he seized his possessions, and banished his servants.

Becket was still in France, when Henry had his son crowned by the Archbishop of York. Now it was one of the privileges of the Archbishop of Canterbury to crown the king. So you may imagine Becket's rage when he heard that his rights had been infringed.

He wished for an interview with the king, and it was granted. The meeting was very cordial. As soon as Becket appeared, Henry rode to meet him with his cap in his hand; he dismounted, embraced and begged him to return to England and resume his duties. They parted, and Becket prepared to return from his exile. Near Christmas time he set sail for England.

"There is England, my lord," said one of the monks who had been with him in exile.

"You are glad to see it," replied Becket sadly; "but before many days have passed, you will wish yourself anywhere else."

With great joy was the archbishop welcomed from his seven years' exile; the bells pealed merrily, the roads were strewn with flowers, anthems were sung in the churches, and all the pastors came forth from their village homes to receive a blessing from their archbishop.



Becket then went to London to visit his old pupil, the young king, but he was not allowed to see him.

Meanwhile complaints of Becket came pouring in from the bishops.

As long as the Archbishop Thomas lives you will have no peace," said one.

"Have I no one who will deliver me from this man?" cried the king angrily.

Four knights were present. They looked at one another, and left the court in silence. They had a quick discussion outside, then, mounting their horses, rode away to Canterbury. There they arrived in a few days, and made their way to the house of Thomas à Becket. They found him writing.

"What do you want?" asked the archbishop, as they entered.

"We want you to answer for your offence against the king," replied one.

"Never !" was the firm reply.

"Then we will do more than threaten," said the knights, and going out they put on their armour.

Hearing the distant voices of the monks chanting in the cathedral, Becket said it was his duty to attend. He went in by the old cloisters, and entering the dim cathedral, made his way up the aisle. Suddenly the shadow of an armed knight appeared in the doorway, and a voice asked, "Where is the traitor, Thomas à Becket?"

The service ceased, and the terrified priests threw themselves down in great alarm. It was growing dark.

"Where is the archbishop?"

"I am here," he answered proudly.

Some of the priests begged him to escape or fight, but he only answered, "In the name of Christ I am ready to die."

One of the knights struck him, then another, until in the dim light of the cathedral, under an altar, over which burned the freshly lit lamps, the Archbishop of Canterbury fell down dead. The guilty knights turned, mounted their horses, and rode away into the gathering darkness.

The priests and monks spent the night in the cathedral, watching the body of their beloved master with sorrow and anxiety, and bestowing on the martyr the title of saint.

When the king heard of the crime he was in an agony of grief, he shut himself up alone, and refused food. Never did man repent more bitterly of his hasty words!

The following year he went himself to Canterbury, taking nothing but bread and water on the way. He walked through the streets barefoot, and threw himself prostrate on the ground in the cathedral. He was then beaten eighty times with a knotted cord at his own request, and spent the night alone by the tomb of Thomas à Becket, the man who had once been his playfellow, his friend, and his adviser.

## CHAPTER V

### SIMON DE MONTFORT (DIED 1265)

We know very little of the boyhood of Simon de Montfort. His father had fought in the Crusades and was killed, when his second son, Simon, was about ten years old. Simon was not a little English boy, but was born in France, and spoke French, or a kind of broken English. He was very beautiful to look at, he had a graceful figure and very winning manners. His mother was an heiress in Leicester, but she had lived mostly in France, and the earldom of Leicester was in the hands of the king.

When Simon was about twenty, he determined to go to England to try to get back the earldom of Leicester. His handsome face, graceful manners, and foreign accent, delighted King Henry III. of England, who granted him the earldom, and allowed him to marry his daughter Eleanor.

Simon de Montfort was soon in high favour.

At first the barons looked on him as a foreigner, and hated him, but he soon overcame their dislike by adopting English ways and manners.

At court he was very popular, and his eldest son, Henry, became a favourite playfellow of the young prince.

But at the height of his popularity, the king, for some trivial reason, took a dislike to the Earl Simon, who was obliged to escape to France with his wife. Leaving her in safety in France, he went to the Holy Land, where he made himself famous and gained the affection of all.

By the time he returned to England, King Henry had forgotten his anger, and the next ten years were spent quietly enough. The earl's five sons spent much of their time at the palace playing with the king's children.

At the end of the ten years Earl Simon was sent to govern a part of France which then belonged to England. The people over whom he had to rule were wild and disorderly, and did not like the earl's stern rule and taxes. So after a time they complained to the king in England.

Earl Simon was summoned to appear in court before the king. Now he had done a great deal for the French people, though he was so stern; he had spent all the money Henry gave him, on them, and had spent a great deal of his own money too. This money he begged the king to repay him. The king refused.

"I am not bound to keep my word with a traitor," he said.

The earl was furious and answered angrily.

"I repent me sorely that I allowed thee to come to England," replied Henry.

Simon de Montfort was obliged to resign his post, and again seek shelter elsewhere for a year.

At this time the barons were very powerful; they were rich and proud, and the king was very much afraid of them. The barons wanted to help to govern the country too, and this made Henry very angry. Things were going from bad to worse; the king was weak, and did not keep the laws of the country; and the barons were growing more powerful when Earl Simon again appeared in England.

This time he joined the barons. He had been watching affairs silently for ten long years, till he saw it was time to stir. The people flocked round him when he returned.

Determined on "securing the peace of his fellow-citizens," he met the barons at Oxford to draw up some new laws for the land.

Henry became more and more frightened. He knew he had not kept the laws of the Great Charter, and he feared what might happen.

One day, when on the Thames in the royal barge, the king was overtaken by a sudden and violent storm. He was forced to take refuge at the house of Earl Simon. The earl came to meet him, and bid him not to be alarmed, as the storm was nearly over.

"I fear thunder and lightning not a little, Lord Simon," replied the king, "but I fear you more than all the thunder and lightning in the world."

The meeting of the barons at Oxford was called the "Mad Parliament." All the barons came, and they settled that twenty-four of them should be chosen to see that the king kept the laws of the Great Charter, and that they should meet three times a year, whether the king wished it or no. Besides the barons, twelve "honest men," chosen by the people, were to come to these meetings, or parliaments, and help the barons. This first parliament you must remember, as it was the beginning of what is now called the "House of Commons." The king was made to swear to keep these laws.

"If he refuse to act with the barons of England," said the earl, "not a bit of land shall he have in the whole realm."

For a short time all went on quietly.

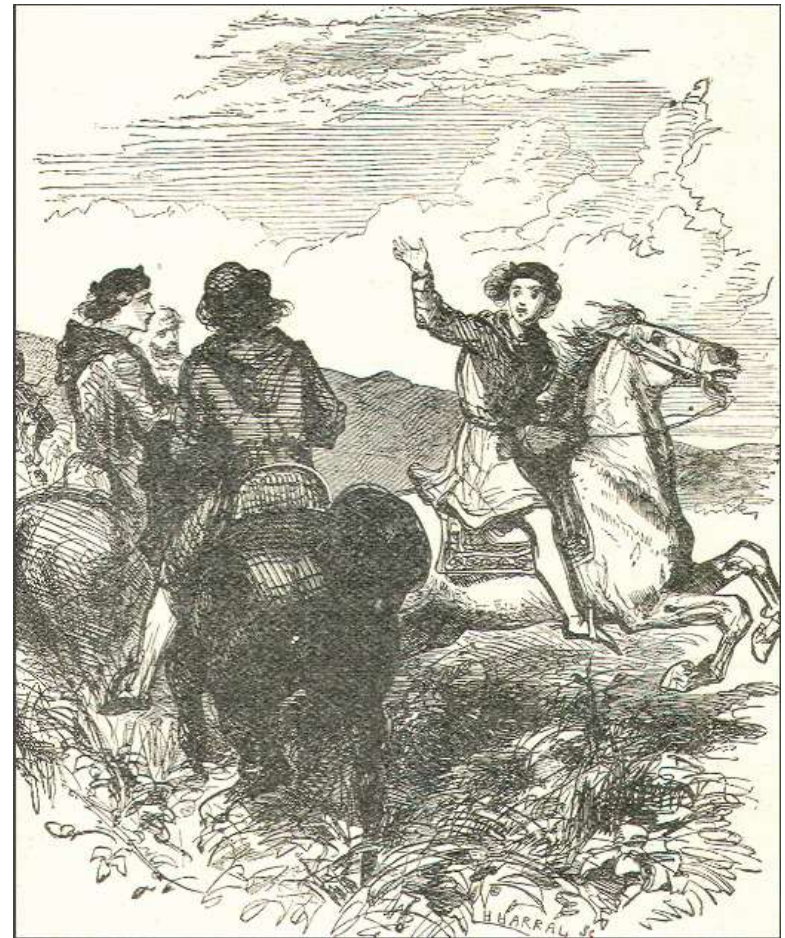
Then the king began to oppose these meetings, and his brother Richard opposed them too.

The people, too, began to be angry, because they said the parliament did not do enough for them.

Neither side wished to fight, so they agreed to ask the King of France to decide. But the King of France knew very little of what had been happening in England, and less of English law, and his decision made the earl very angry. So Simon de Montfort, with all the barons and nobles, marched against the king, who was collecting an army in Sussex.

He marched on and met the king at Lewes, where a battle was fought.

Before the battle the earl talked to his men. He told them Henry III. had broken his promises, governed badly, and not kept the laws; therefore, they must fight. They rushed into battle. Well they fought with Earl Simon at their head, and well too fought the king and his son, but Henry with his son Edward was taken prisoner and his men fled.



EDWARD'S ESCAPE.

Now Simon de Montfort was at the height of prosperity. The people loved him, and made him Protector, and he was very

powerful. One of the first things he did was to call a parliament. As well as the barons, Earl Simon said a knight from each shire might be chosen by the people to sit in this Parliament, and a man from each large town might also come to speak for them.

Although a great many people liked the earl and his way of governing, yet there were still a great many who were loyal to the king and his son. They did not want Henry III. to reign again, but they thought his son Edward might rule better. So they made a plan for the prince to escape from his confinement.

One day the prince said to his attendants, "I should like to ride on horseback this afternoon."

They too thought it would be very pleasant, so all rode out together. The prince made his attendants race till they and their horses were quite tired. He did not race himself, but kept his horse fresh. It was getting late, and all the other horses were very weary and hot, when suddenly the prince spurred his horse, dashed away, and joining some men who were waiting for him at a given place, he disappeared, to the astonishment and dismay of his tired attendants.

The prince then collected an army and marched to meet the Earl Simon. He met him with a few men near a place called Evesham.

"We are dead men, my lord," said one of the barons, as he beheld the royal army advancing.

"I firmly believe I shall die for the cause of God and justice," answered the earl.

A glance at the enemy showed him that the struggle would prove fatal.

"Let us commend our souls to God, our bodies are Prince Edward's," he said to the little group around him.

The unequal contest began; the earl fought bravely. His horse was killed under him, but he fought on foot. His son

Henry, who was fighting with him, lay dead at his feet. Nearly all were killed.

"Fly!" cried the earl to his small band of remaining men.

"If you die, we care not to live," was the brave answer. At last all were killed, and Earl Simon was left alone, sword in hand, but not for long. A blow felled him to the ground, and with a cry of "It is God's grace," "the soul of the great patriot passed away."

"Night fell o'er de Montfort dead,  
And England wept beside him."

So died the Earl of Leicester, called by his loving people, "Sir Simon the Righteous." He had done what he thought was right and best for his country, and perished in the work. We know he was not always right, but we may still say with the poet,

"He died a gallant knight  
With sword in hand for England's right."



## CHAPTER VI

### EDWARD THE BLACK PRINCE (1330-1376)

On the 15th of June, in the year 1330, there was great rejoicing all over England, as the good news spread that the young king Edward III. and the fair Philippa had a little son, to be heir to the English throne. The happiness of the king seemed now complete, and the future hero of England was tended and nursed by his loving mother. He was a lovely child, with fair hair and blue eyes. A great man, writing of him, says, "a more beautiful child was not to be found in Christendom," and artists loved to draw him seated on his mother's knee.

When Edward was three years old he was made Earl of Chester, and four years later he received the title of Duke of Cornwall. He was taught with a small class of boys, about his own age, by Doctor Burley, but was considered "too sacred to be punished" if he was naughty.

His father trained him in all manly exercises, and tried to fit him for the station he hoped he was one day to fill. At the age of ten the Prince was sent to France, where he distinguished himself in tournaments, and promised fair to be some day a great soldier. When he was thirteen, the young Edward was made Prince of Wales. It was a beautiful May morning, when he was led to Westminster Palace, and there, amid the cheers of the people, presented with a silver rod, coronet, and gold ring, and given the title of Prince of Wales.

Two years later he accompanied his father to France, there to be present at his first battle. Edward III. was about to invade France, to try to win the throne. The King of France had died, leaving no children, and Edward, who was his nephew, thought he had more right to the throne than Philip, who had just been crowned king.

So leaving his second son, Lionel, then a boy of eight years old, to govern in his absence, he took Edward, the boy he had trained himself, to give him an opportunity of showing his courage, and using his arms.

Soon after their arrival in France, the king taking the boy and several of his companions into an open field, knighted them. The rivers were all carefully watched by a vast French army, but Edward knew one part of the river Somme which he could ford, though it was very dangerous. Bravely he dashed in, with a cry of "Let him who loves me follow." The Black Prince did not hesitate, but jumped in and went across with his father.

On the 26th of August, 1346, they met the French at Cressy. Edward placed his eldest son in the front line, at the post of honour. Never before had the command of an army been entrusted to one so young. But Edward knew his boy's mettle, and he wished the honour of the day to belong to the young soldier, though it was not without a pang that he stood by the windmill and watched the battle, knowing that at any moment a single blow might strike to the ground his beloved son.

It was raining fast, and the bows of the Genoese, who were helping the French, were too damp to shoot properly. The English had kept theirs dry, and now shot their arrows so thick and fast that the Genoese were thrown into great confusion. Philip, the French king, was so angry with the Genoese that he told his men to fall upon them and cut them to pieces. You may imagine what a terrible scene followed. Meanwhile the English, headed by their young and gallant leader, fought well. Suddenly some more of the enemy advanced near the Black Prince, and the struggle became very unequal, as the enemy now numbered forty thousand, and the English not half as many. Seeing the Prince's danger, two knights rushed to the king and begged him to come and help his son.

"Is the boy hurt or dead?" asked the king.

"No," answered the knight, "but he is badly matched, and hath need of your aid."

"Go back, then," said the king, "and tell those that sent you I command them to let the boy win all the honour he may, for, with the help of God, I determine that the glory of this day shall belong to him."

This message was delivered to the Prince, and he set to work with renewed vigour. At last the huge masses of French decreased, they were shot down by the hundred, and many were escaping for their lives. About this point, the blind old King of Bohemia, who was fighting for the French, asked his knights how went the battle. The two beside him answered it was going badly with the French, and they were afraid all would soon be over.

"Lead me to the field, that I may strike one blow in the battle," cried the old king.

The knights dared not disobey, so tying their bridles together, that they might be with him to the end, they led their brave master to the field. There, when the battle was over, and the English were left on the field victorious, the Black Prince found the dead body of the blind King of Bohemia, his horse's bridle still tied to those of his knights, who lay dead beside him, his snowy plumes lying stained and crushed. The Prince gazed at his royal enemy, and at the useless plumes. Then he took the three white feathers, and kept them for his own, together with the Bohemian king's motto, "Ich dien," meaning "I serve."

This motto, "Ich dien," and the three plumes have been borne ever since by "England's heir," the Prince of Wales, and whenever you see them you can think of the Black Prince and the blind King of Bohemia.

When the battle was over Edward quitted the hill; and hurried to the battle-field, where he folded to his arms his brave son. "You are indeed my son," he said; "nobly have you behaved, and worthy are you of the place you hold."

After this victory the Black Prince did not fight any more for some time. Indeed, there was a truce between England and France for a short time.

The truce ended! Edward the Black Prince went to Bordeaux, in France, where he ruled over a part of the country which belonged to his father. After a time, however, he determined to make an expedition into the French provinces. When King John of France, who had succeeded his father Philip, heard of this, he collected a very large army and met the Black Prince near Poitiers. The Prince sent a messenger to find out the size of the French army, and the messenger returned with the news that the enemy's forces were at least eight times the size of the English army. It seemed hopeless to attack such a vast army, but the Prince knew he must either yield or fight, and he chose the latter, with the words "God be our help."

On came the French, "decked in their brightest and best, with the lightest of hearts under the gayest of apparel."

"England shall never have to pay a ransom for me!" cried the noble young prince, as he dashed forward at the head of his men; "if I cannot conquer, I will die gloriously."

A fierce battle took place, the Black Prince "raged like a young lion through the field." John, the French king, fought bravely at the head of his enormous army, but they could not withstand the brave English army. The French began to yield, and fall into confusion; in vain did their leader try and recall them, he was taken prisoner:

"Faint grew the heart of each gallant foe,  
Their leader was taken, their hopes were low."

The battle was lost to the French, and the Black Prince stood victorious on the battle-field of Poitiers, victorious for the second time in his young life over a huge French army.

"And did they chain King John of France?  
Was he in dungeon laid?  
Oh, little ye know what a generous foe

Our English Edward made . . .  
He set King John on a lofty steed,  
White as the driven snow,  
And without all pride, he rode beside  
On a palfrey slight and low."

The Black Prince was the pride of England before the battle of Poitiers; it is not easy to describe the joy of the nation when the victorious prince and his royal captive returned to England after the battle. All looked forward eagerly to the time when their beloved Prince should sit on the English throne.

Soon after the victory at Poitiers, the Black Prince married the "Fair Maid of Kent." She was very beautiful, and the Prince was very fond of her. After their marriage they went to live at Bordeaux.

Now there was a quarrel going on in Spain between Pedro and his brother Henry. Pedro was king, but he was hated by his people and his brother, who wished to dethrone him. The King of France took Henry's side, and Pedro asked the Black Prince to help him. The English were always ready to fight against the French, so the Black Prince said he would help Pedro against Henry and the French king.

He entered Spain with a large army, joined Pedro, and met the French. Scarcely had the battle begun, when the French fled. The Prince then attacked the Spaniards under Henry, and another battle was fought. After a severe struggle the English gained the day, and the Spanish army was obliged to flee.

Now Pedro was a very wicked man, he was known as "Pedro the Cruel." He promised the Black Prince that if he would help him to regain the throne they would share the spoils, and the English should be doubly repaid. But no sooner was the victory won, and Pedro restored to the throne, than he refused to pay the troops, and the Black Prince returned to Bordeaux, unable to pay his soldiers, weary, ill, and miserable. Again and again did he beg Pedro to send the money; the Spanish king made excuses from day to-day, and the money never came.

A fever broke out in the English camp, and the Black Prince caught it, and became very ill. When he was well enough he once more went to Spain. When he found that Pedro was really determined not to pay, he was very angry. The men were clamouring for their money. So the Prince raised a tax in the South of France, hoping in that way to pay the soldiers.

At this time the French king seized the town of Limoges, which belonged to the English. The Black Prince was worn out with disease, trouble, and anxiety. He recovered the town of Limoges, and then ordered that every man, woman, and child in the town should be killed. He was himself carried in a litter through the town, refusing the cries and entreaties of the helpless people, who crowded round his litter, begging for mercy. The Black Prince had won so many victories, he had become proud, and, perhaps, selfish, with all the praise and honour he had won. He was no longer

"A Christian conqueror,  
Generous and true and kind,"

no longer the brave knight who knew how to show mercy in times of peace.

But then you must remember how ill he was, how worn out by fighting, how badly used by Pedro.

Ill health now obliged him to return to his native land. Once more he trod on his English ground, and the English air seemed to revive him. But not for long.

The English people soon saw that their beloved Prince would never rule over them, that their fond hope of having a king in the conqueror of Cressy and Poitiers would never be realized. Day by day the Prince grew weaker, and five years after his return, "the hope, the pride, and the glory of England was no more."

He left several children, the eldest of whom, Richard, succeeded Edward III. as king.

Long and deeply did the country mourn for the hero. He was buried in Canterbury Cathedral, and funeral services were held all over the country.

Perhaps one of the most impressive was that which the King of France had held in Paris, to honour the memory of his respected enemy, Edward the Black Prince of England.

## **CHAPTER VII**

### **GEOFFREY CHAUCER (1328-1400)**

#### **"FATHER OF ENGLISH POETRY."**

If you could suddenly go back five hundred years, you would find yourself among very funny people. You would hear a curious kind of English talked, and you would see the people wearing long hoods and cloaks, not a bit like those we wear now. They would spell their words too quite differently, and I dare say, though it was your own English language, you would not be able to read.

In this England, more than five hundred years ago, there lived a man who wrote a great deal of poetry, and wrote it all in this queer kind of English, called Chaucer. Geoffrey Chaucer was born in London. His father was a wine-seller, a hard-working, honest man, but not rich.

We do not know much about Chaucer when he was a little boy, only we know he must have worked hard and learnt his lessons well, or he would never have been the learned, clever man that he was. I dare say too he was a bright, amusing boy, for as a man he wrote such funny things about people, and he was always merry to everybody. Out of school and after play the boy would probably help his father in the shop, and perhaps fill some of the jars with wine. It was the custom in those days for young men to go to some nobleman's house as a page. Chaucer's father was in attendance on the king, Edward III., so at the age of seventeen, Geoffrey Chaucer was sent as a page to the house of Lionel, the king's son. There he had to wait on Lionel: he rode out with him, learnt to shoot and do many other things that he would never have learnt anywhere else. Lionel and his wife became very fond of Chaucer, and the boy made friends with many great men of the time. Among others he knew John of



Gaunt, a younger brother of Lionel's, who was very kind to him afterwards.

Soon after this Chaucer became a soldier and fought under the king, Edward III., in a battle against the French. He was taken prisoner, and had to stay in France more than a year, till the king paid a ransom. Then he was set free and hurried back to England.

Now you must try and picture to yourself what Chaucer looked like at this time. He did not wear a coat and trousers as men do now, but a long gown of grey or green, with big, loose sleeves, he wore bright red stockings and black boots. On better occasions he wore a tight-fitting tunic with a splendid belt and dagger at his side. On his head he wore a dark hood with a long tail to it. This tail hung down his back, when he was indoors, and was twisted round his head when he went out, to keep the hood firmly on.

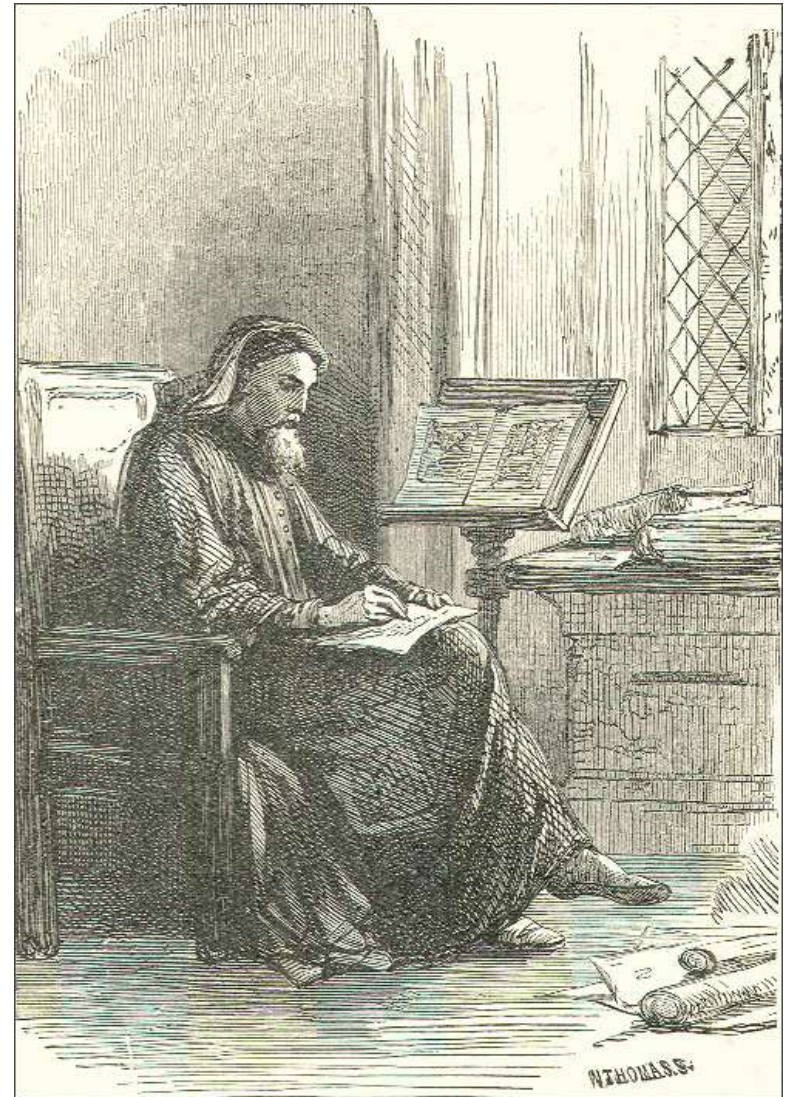
Chaucer had a kind, pleasant face; he never said an unkind thing, though, as I have told you, he was very fond of laughing at people in a merry way. He was rather fat, and had a curious forked beard; he had too a queer habit of staring on the ground, as if he was looking for something very small, but this was mostly shyness.

When Chaucer returned from France, he married one of the Queen's maids of honour. He was very fond of her, and has written about her in his poems. We know that Chaucer had two children; one of them was called Lewis, and Chaucer wrote a paper for him, when he was ten years old. He was very fond of his little Lewis, and speaks to him very lovingly in his paper.

After Chaucer's return he was more at court than ever, and John of Gaunt was his faithful friend. When John of Gaunt was in any trouble Chaucer helped him, and when Chaucer was in difficulty John of Gaunt came to his aid.

After a time the king sent Chaucer to France on private business, and gave him a great deal of money for it. When he

came home he was in high favour with the king, who sent him every day "a pitcher of wine from his own table," and gave him some more work to do.



CHAUCER.

At this time the Black Prince died, and soon after, his father, Edward III. Then the Black Prince's little son was made king, but being only eleven years old, he was too young to reign, so John of Gaunt, his uncle, helped to govern England for him.

Of course John of Gaunt did not forget his friend Chaucer, when he became rich and powerful, but treated him very kindly. But the people of England did not like John of Gaunt. He was severe and grasping, and they were angry with him and all his friends too. So John of Gaunt had to go out of England. As soon as he was gone, the people turned on Chaucer; they said he had done his work badly, and because he was John of Gaunt's friend, they sent him away. His friend could not help him now, and Chaucer had to submit to disgrace and poverty. About ten years before his death, there was another change in England. John of Gaunt returned, and one of his first thoughts was for Chaucer. He gave him some work, and the last few years of Chaucer's life were very busy. When Chaucer was sixty, John of Gaunt died, and his old friend did not survive him long. Chaucer was buried in Westminster Abbey, and a monument has since been raised to the memory of the great poet.

Now you know a little about Chaucer himself, what he was like and how he lived, you will like to hear a little about his poetry and stories. His chief work was called the "Canterbury Tales." He tells us that one fine spring morning he was going on horseback to the tomb of Thomas a Becket at Canterbury. He put up at an inn for one night, and there he found a great many more pilgrims going to the same place. Chaucer, being a merry man and fond of talking, proposed that they should all go on together next day, and to pass the time each of them should tell a story as they rode along. They all agreed cheerfully, and the next day they started. All this Chaucer tells us in delightful poetry; he tells us how when they started the little birds were singing, the buds were bursting in the hedges, the crops were just peeping above the ground, the sun had just risen. Then he describes to us the other pilgrims. There was a young squire, who had very curly hair and wore a tunic embroidered with flowers. He could

sing very well, and dance, and draw pictures. There was also a nun with them; she was very fond of animals, especially dogs, or as Chaucer calls them "smale houndes." He says:—

"Sche was so charitable and so pitous  
Sche wolde weepe if that sche saw a mous  
Caught in a trappe."

Then there was a doctor, and a woman called "The Wife of Bath," who had very few teeth; she was rather deaf, and had a red face. She wore bright red stockings, and a very showy gown. There was a cook too, a ploughman, and many others.

Then Chaucer tells us all the stories told by each of them in his quaint poetry, and these he calls the Canterbury Tales.

He wrote many other poems as well, all quaint and musical and pretty. He loved to write about Nature, the little birds, the May blossom, the green grass, the music of the lark, the little daisy in the field. All was sunshine to Chaucer. His life had not been an easy one: he had been a page, a soldier, a courtier, student, exile and prisoner, he had been in poverty and disgrace, but it left him the same kind, gentle, pleasant man with a good word for all. He loved the English language, he loved the English people, and the English nation was proud of him, as it ever will be of its "first great English poet."

## CHAPTER VIII

### JOHN WYCLIF (1324-1384)

You are not going to hear about a great king or prince now, not about a man who won a great many battles and gained great victories, but about a very great and good man who worked silently and bravely amid much opposition and even hatred. I mean John Wyclif, the first man who translated the Bible into English.

He was born at a place called Wyclif, in Yorkshire. Who his parents were, whether he had any brothers and sisters, how he spent his childhood, we do not know. We lose sight of him entirely till we find him going to Oxford at the age of sixteen.

When he was at Oxford Wyclif must have heard of the state of England at this time—how selfish the clergy were, what large sums of money they sent to the Pope every year, how little they attended to their people and parish, how rich and worldly they were.

When Wyclif heard this, when he knew the way the poor were neglected and forsaken, his heart burned, he longed for the clergy to be reformed and to be shown the right way to do their duty.

He worked very hard at Oxford, with great success. He lived a strict hard life himself, and grew very thin and worn-looking. He had a quick, restless temper and great energy. As they watched the pale face and thin form of Wyclif poring over his books, few men thought what a great reformer he was soon to become.

While Wyclif was working and thinking and writing at Oxford, a terrible illness broke out in England, so terrible that it was called the "Black Death."

By this dreadful plague a very large number of people were swept away, especially in the East of England. Many died in the large towns, amongst which Norwich and Bristol suffered very severely; round Norwich more than half the clergy died, while in Bristol the living could hardly bury the dead. "The sheep and cattle strayed through the fields of corn, and there were none left who could drive them." Harvests rotted on the ground, because there were none to reap, food rose in price, and the whole country cried for help. Although Wyclif was still working very hard at Oxford, his eyes were open to the distress of the country. He wrote a book, for which he had to answer afterwards, in which he said that the "Black Death" was a punishment on the monks and priests for their idleness and neglect of duty. Year after year did Wyclif study at Oxford, before he felt he was worthy to teach others.

At the age of thirty-seven Wyclif was made rector of a parish called Fillingham, in Lincolnshire, and there for seven years he worked hard among his people. He still found time to write pamphlets showing how slothful the priests of this time were, and how influenced they were by the Church of Rome. The Pope appointed many Italians to English livings, and this too Wyclif tried to show was not right. At the end of seven years Wyclif was made head of a college at Oxford, and there he taught well and diligently for many years, though his teaching met with much opposition. Soon after he was given the rectory of Lutterworth in Leicestershire, where he wrote many more tracts and pamphlets.

All this time a quarrel was going on between the barons and clergy. The barons were angry because the clergy refused to give any money for the common good of the country, but gave it all to the Pope and abbots, or spent it themselves. The barons were supported by John of Gaunt, son of Edward III. and brother of the Black Prince, and also by John Wyclif.

Soon after this Wyclif was summoned to appear before the Bishop of London to answer for a book he had written against the clergy. On the appointed day, Wyclif stood in St.

Paul's Church, calm and collected; John of Gaunt stood by his side. The church was crowded from end to end, and a passage had to be forced for Wyclif to pass through the dense throng. The Bishop spoke rudely to Wyclif, and John of Gaunt, the "fiery Duke," answered angrily for his friend. Fierce words passed, John of Gaunt said he would "drag the bishop out of the church by the hair of his head." The people grew angry, and a few rushed to the bishop's side. Others furiously went up to John of Gaunt, and it was with great danger and difficulty that Wyclif and the fiery Duke escaped.

Before the end of the year Edward III. died, and Richard, son of the Black Prince, became King of England. He was not old enough to govern for himself, so John of Gaunt was appointed to rule till Richard was old enough. Now although John of Gaunt seemed to be very kind to Wyclif, and really did do some things for him, yet on the other hand he made Wyclif a tool in his hands to do whatever he wished. It seems rather curious that such a great man as Wyclif should have been mistaken in his friend. Soon after this a dreadful insurrection broke out, and as some of the blame was unjustly laid at Wyclif's door, I must tell you a little about it.

The people, as you know, did not like John of Gaunt, and they hated him still more when he raised a tax on them, because he wanted money. The tax was the same for rich and poor, and it was this, that caused a general rising. It was worst in Kent. One and all rose under a man named Wat Tyler, and marched to London. John of Gaunt fled when he heard of the large numbers who were coming. The peasants entered London and then desired to see the king.

"I am your king and lord," began the young Richard as he looked at the throng of peasants, "what do you want?"

"We want you to free us for ever," shouted the peasants; "we will no longer be slaves, we will have cheaper rent for our lands, and pardon for the past."

"I grant it," answered the boy king, amid shouts of joy, "if you will all go home quietly." Many did go home, but many still remained under Wat Tyler.

They demanded another meeting with the king; once more Richard met them fearlessly. Hot words passed between Wat Tyler and the Mayor, and it ended in a scuffle in which Wat Tyler was killed.

"Kill, kill!" shouted the crowd; "they have killed our captain."

The young king rode forward, crying, "Tyler was a traitor, I will be your leader."

The crowd melted away and the king returned quietly home.

Some thought that Wyclif had helped to stir up the peasants against the lords by his writings and preaching, at all events he gradually lost the favour of the higher classes. No longer able to rely on support from the wealthy, he applied himself to the poorer classes. He wrote tracts in the English tongue, he went about preaching among them with a body of men, who believed in him and thought as he did. He wore coarse clothes, and walked about bare foot. The people soon learnt to like his "clear, rough, homely English," the speech of the ploughman and trader. He taught them from the Bible, and told them things out of the Bible they had never heard before. For the Bible at this time was a sealed book to the poor; it was all written in Latin, and the poor people did not know any Latin. The more they heard Wyclif talk about the Bible, the more they longed to read it; and their joy was great when they heard that Wyclif had already begun to translate it for them.

In 1381 Wyclif was forbidden to teach any more at Oxford, so he went back to Lutterworth, the rectory that had been given him some years before, to spend some of his last years in finishing his translation of the Bible into English, so that all should be able to read it, rich and poor alike. Many of his



scholars or disciples helped him. It was a long and weary task, but he was buoyed up by the thought that all would be able to have a Bible now, and learn about the good God, after he was dead. He was in weak and failing health, but he worked on silently, faithfully for the people. He finished it some time before his death, and spent the last years of his life in rest and peace at Lutterworth. The Bible was translated, but the translator was not to live to see the good it did in later years.

While at service one day in the parish church at Lutterworth, Wyclif was taken very ill, and the next day the great reformer passed quietly away.

Wyclif had lived before his time: the work he had begun, the sloth and wealth of the priests he had seen and tried to remedy, the power of the Pope in England he had fought against, these things were fully seen and realized two hundred years later, when the great Reformation took place. Wyclif "sowed the first seeds" of the Reformation. His writings were very numerous, and had he never translated the Bible by which he is so well known, his tracts and books alone would have made his name.

Great was the sorrow of his scholars and followers when they heard that their great master and teacher would never be among them again. But they would try and follow his example. Their master had sent them out to teach and explain the Bible to the poor people, they would still go and get many more to help them. Wyclif's followers were called "Lollards." It was a name given them by the enemies of Wyclif, and means "idle babbler."

The great Reformer was dead—the first translator of the Bible into English, the "father of English prose." Wyclif had shone forth as a star amid the darkness, and with his death the darkness again closed in nearly as black as before.

## CHAPTER IX

### WILLIAM CAXTON (1412-1491)

Did it ever occur to you that when the Bible was translated into English, all the copies had to be written by hand; and when Chaucer wrote his long poems, anyone who wanted them had to have them copied? No one knew about printing. No one had ever heard of a printing press at this time. The monks made it their duty to copy out these books. It took a lifetime to copy some, as they painted many of the letters and put beautiful borders round the pages. Then the people had to give a great deal of money for these books, nearly all their money sometimes, and only the rich and learned could read them.

William Caxton was the first man who brought the art of printing into England.

He was born in Kent, in a wild part of the country, where few people lived, where "a broad and rude English was spoken." Probably it was in a lonely farm-house in this wild district that the first English printer spent his early years.

We do not know where Caxton went to school, but he had a good education for those days. He says, in a book he wrote and printed, "I am bounden to pray for my father and mother's souls, that in my youth sent me to school."

When he was about fifteen he was apprenticed to a mercer named William Large, of the City of London. The name "mercier" was given at this time to merchants trading in all kinds of goods. Amongst other things William Large, Caxton's master, did a small trade in books, being very wealthy, so that Caxton had the opportunity of seeing some of the old manuscripts, as the books written by hand were called. There were many apprentices with Caxton: they all wore flat round caps, their hair cut quite close to the head, coarse, long coats, and tight stockings.

They walked before their masters and mistresses at night, bearing a lantern and bearing a long club on their shoulders.

Caxton must have seen the grand procession of Henry VI., who was crowned while he was still serving under William Large.

Henry VI. had just been crowned King of France, and was received in London with all the pomp and show the citizens could produce.

When Caxton had served under William Large for seven years, his apprenticeship was over, and we lose sight of him for a space of seven years more.

In 1441 Large died, leaving Caxton a legacy of a large sum of money, which shows that the boy must have behaved well during his apprenticeship, and won the respect of his master.

The following year Caxton left England to go to the Low Countries, that is, the countries we now call Holland and Belgium. He probably went as a merchant on his own account, but we do not hear much about him there. He learnt French well, and developed a great taste for books and manuscripts. Before long we find him acting as a copyist to the Duke of Burgundy, a very powerful prince in that part. Very tedious did he find this copying, and very soon he threw it aside for another art, which was then becoming known in Germany. I mean the art of printing.

We are not quite certain who really first invented printing, though we know that Caxton first brought it to England.

One story says that there was a man named Coster, who, during his walks in the woods, used to cut letters out of the bark of the trees, by which he made letters and sentences for his children.

He then discovered a kind of ink to put on the blocks of wood, so that they left a mark on the pages. He only printed on

one side of the paper, and then pasted the leaves together. Soon after, Coster made metal letters inside of wooden, some tin, some lead. Finding it answered well, he got some workmen to come and help him. One night, when Coster was out and the other men gone home, one of the workers named John, stole all the metal letters or types, and ran away with them to Germany and set up a printing-press.

But most stories tell us that a man named Guttenberg invented printing.

First he made pictures in wood and impressed them on paper. After a time he made metal types, and printed a copy of the Bible, which took him seven years.

Caxton, of course, heard of this printing, and Guttenberg's name was known all over Germany.

In 1470 Caxton went to Cologne to learn the art of printing, and there, in a small attic, he worked away, knowing what a gain it would be to his country if he could introduce the art. He first printed a "History of Troy" that he had translated from the French. In the preface he wrote, "my pen is worn, my hand weary and not steadfast, mine eyes dimmed with over-much looking on the white paper, and my courage not so ready to labour as it hath been. Age creepeth on me daily."

Still he laboured on, and after an absence of thirty-five years, he returned to England with his treasure, a printing-press, and several printed copies of his "History of Troy" to sell. For in those days there was no proper bookseller, no bookbinder. Caxton had to bind his own books, and very clumsy they looked when they were bound.

The wooden boards between which the leaves were fastened were as thick as the panel of a door. They were covered with leather. Outside on the cover were large brass nails with big heads, and the book was fastened by a thick clasp. The back was stuck with paste or glue laid on thickly. "No one can carry it

about, much less read it," says a man, writing of one of Caxton's printed books.



WILLIAM CAXTON.

At the time when most men would have retired to enjoy ease and comfort, the busy Caxton was plunging with energy into his new work.

Before long he had printed all the English poetry in existence. Special pains did he take to print Chaucer's poems carefully, and several times he tried to improve the type of the "Canterbury Tales."

Busy as Caxton was with his printing, he was yet busier translating books into English for the people to read. It is of no use to tell you all the names of the books he translated and printed, as you could not remember them.

One book he printed for the people was "The love of books." It was written about one hundred years before Caxton printed it, and is very amusing in parts. The author says that people who use books badly should not be allowed to read them. He speaks very severely to those who read with "unwashed hands, dirty nails, greasy elbows leaning over the volume, munching fruit and cheese over the open leaves." Caxton added to this book a great deal about using books rightly.

He was not encouraged in his printing, for the great men were too much taken up with affairs of the country to take notice of him.

Caxton worked on till he was nearly eighty, and he worked up to the day of his death.

"He was not slumbering when his call came, he was still labouring at the work for which he was born."

He died quietly on a sunny summer day, at his house in Westminster, and was buried in a little chapel near.

It was eventide, and the sun was sending its last red streaks of light into the little workshop of Westminster, when four workmen entered, clothed in black, and looking grave, sad, and downcast. The room looked deserted, papers lay about, the ink-blocks were dusty, a thin film had formed on the ink, the machinery looked oily and unused.

The four men drew in their stools, "those stools on which they had sat through many a long day of quiet labour, steadily working to the distant end of some manuscript," working for their master, who would now no more direct their work and encourage them to the end.

"Companions," said one, "companions, this good work will not stop"

"Who is to carry it on?" sadly asked another.

"I am ready," said the first speaker, whose name was Wynkyn.

A cry of joy rose to the lips of the honest workmen, but it faded again as they thought of him they had lost. Tears stood in their eyes as they whispered, "God rest his soul."

"I have encouragement," replied Wynkyn. "We will carry on the work briskly in our good master's house. Printing must go forward."

Thus they settled to carry on the good work their master had begun, the work at which he had laboured so honestly and faithfully, the work by which the name of Caxton will ever be remembered and honoured.

## CHAPTER X

### THOMAS WOLSEY (1471-1530)

Thomas Wolsey was the son of "a poor but honest man." Some people say his father was a butcher, but of this we are not quite sure. He was born at Ipswich in Suffolk in the summer of 1471. He probably went to a school in Ipswich, for he was well-taught, but we hear nothing more of him till we find him at Oxford while still young.

At the age of fifteen he took his bachelor's degree, and was given the title of the "Boy Bachelor." He showed such cleverness and industry that when still quite young he was made head-master of a school in Oxford. He worked hard and well among the boys, and became noted for his energy and at the same time for his pride.

One Christmas holidays the Marquis of Dorset, who had three boys in Wolsey's school, invited him to stay. The Marquis was much struck with the way his sons had been taught, he took a fancy to the clever and handsome master, and having a living vacant at the time offered it to Wolsey. He accepted it, became a clergyman, and went to live at his rectory in Somersetshire. But Wolsey did not behave well there, and only stayed two years.

One day he went with some friends to a fair that was going on in the adjoining town. Wolsey was easily led away by his companions. They all got very drunk and then quarrelled. A noble who was present selected Wolsey as the most guilty, and ordered him to be put in the stocks. Little did he think that the young man with his feet in the stocks, would ere long be the Lord Chancellor of England.

Wolsey next became Chaplain to the Governor of Calais, a great favourite of the king, Henry VII. His master became very fond of him, and told the king about him. Soon after, the king

said he would like Wolsey to be his chaplain. This was just what Wolsey liked; he was a very proud and ambitious man, and he had always wished to be about the king and court. He was now with the king daily. Henry liked him. His manners were graceful, he talked cleverly and amusingly, and all the courtiers tried to win his favour.

Soon after this Henry VII. died, and Wolsey was called upon to attend the now king Henry VIII., a gay youth of eighteen, fond of amusement and skilled in games and sports of all kinds. Wolsey soon became a favourite with the new king. He sang with him, played, joined in his sports, and at the same time helped him to govern and advised him well.

In 1515 Wolsey was made Lord Chancellor of England, and this gave him more power than he had before. The Pope had also made him a Cardinal, that is, one of the clergy who are counted as the highest in Rome and have a right to choose the Pope. These cardinals wear scarlet hats, capes, and shoes, and are next in rank to the Pope himself.

Now Wolsey hoped one day to be Pope himself, but, as you will see, this wish never came to pass.

Cardinal Wolsey was now a very great man. He lived even more splendidly than the king himself. His household was made up of eight hundred persons. In one kitchen he had two men cooks with twelve undercooks, while in his private kitchen he had a "Master Cook," who went daily in damask, satin, or velvet, with a chain of gold about his neck.

The Cardinal himself was waited on by all the officers of the court and four footmen dressed in long coats of rich white fur. Many English nobles placed their children in his household to act as his servants and win his favour. He rode out on a mule entirely covered with crimson velvet, having gilt stirrups.

You must not think that Wolsey's life was all made up of show. His toil was ceaseless. He would rise early and work hard all the morning. Nightfall still found him working: managing

Church affairs, planning schools and colleges, or drawing up despatches to send abroad. He was brisk, vigorous, full of energy and passion, strong and handsome at the age of thirty-seven, weary and old and worn at the age of forty-seven.

Now I must tell you of a cruel thing that Wolsey was the means of doing, and which has left an everlasting stain upon his memory.

There was an old Duke of Buckingham living in England at this time. He looked with envy and jealousy at the "butcher's son," now Lord Chancellor of England, and had several times offended him. Wolsey had tried to gain his good-will, but failed. He therefore told Henry that this Buckingham was a bad man, and accused him too of high treason. Now it is true the Duke of Buckingham had once said that he was the rightful heir to the English throne, but he never meant to dethrone Henry, or take any steps against him. The Duke was brought to trial. He was very popular, being the greatest noble in England, and loud were the cries raised against the Chancellor as the old Duke was led to trial. He was found guilty and condemned to suffer the death of a traitor. Cries and wails rent the air as the Duke of Buckingham was taken to the Tower to be killed. We see the last of him standing at the water's edge ready to step into the barge that was to take him up the Thames, and speaking calmly and sadly to the people: "I must now forsake ye, the last hour of my long weary life is come upon me. Farewell."

One of the best and greatest things Wolsey did was to help on learning in England. He loved it himself, and wished others to love it too. He saw how much better it would be if everyone was taught to read and write, and how much happier they would be themselves. He made rules for a large boys' school in London, which was founded by a great man named Dean Colet, and made reforms everywhere.

Wolsey was not popular: the people did not like him, because he tried to do so much without the king's leave, and once he had even tried to tax the people without leave from the



Parliament. However, Henry still liked him and trusted him entirely.

Up to this time Henry himself had been a good king, and he had done what he thought best for the people, but now we are coming to a very wrong thing that he did; and which led to many more wrong doings. Eighteen years before, Henry had married a Princess Katherine, with whom he had lived very happily for some time. But now he became very fond of Anne Baleen, one of the Queen's maids of honour. She was very beautiful, and lively too, and the king wished to marry her. So he sent to the Pope and begged him to give him leave to divorce Katherine—that is, to send her away. The Pope would not answer at all. Henry then begged Wolsey, as Cardinal, to beg the Pope to give him leave. But Wolsey would have nothing to do with the marriage of Anne Baleen. He would help Henry if he would marry some great princess, because then Wolsey knew it would favour him. This was thinking of himself, and not of what was right, and this is what Wolsey too often did. When the king found that Wolsey was against his marriage, he was very angry, and ordered Wolsey to be put down from all his high offices. When Wolsey heard that the king had forsaken him, his courage gave way and he wept. Soon after he was obliged to give up all his possessions and retire to his country house in the north of England. His parting with Thomas Cromwell, his faithful servant, was very sad, for both master and servant felt it keenly.

"Oh, my lord, must I then leave you? Must I needs forego so good, so noble, and so true a master?" asks Cromwell, gazing at the now worn face of his ruined master.

"Oh, Cromwell, Cromwell, had I but served my God as I have served my king, He would not have forsaken me in my old age!" are the last words that Wolsey cries as his servant Thomas Cromwell goes out to take his place as the king's adviser and Wolsey retires to die alone and friendless.

When Parliament met in 1529 Wolsey was accused of high treason. He was seized while sitting at dinner and taken

prisoner. The next day he started for London, but never arrived. He was ill when he started, but soon became much worse, and at last was unable to support himself upon his mule. His servants walked beside him weeping. They got him with difficulty to Leicester. He was taken to the Abbey and laid upon a bed from which he never rose again. As the great Abbey clock struck eight, a few days after, Wolsey passed away. He was buried by the abbot and monks near the Abbey. No stone was erected to his memory, the spot where he was laid is unknown.

With Cardinal Wolsey ended the first twenty years of Henry's reign and all that had ever been good in it. Wolsey did a great deal for the country: he kept peace with France, he helped on learning, and though he was selfish, proud, and ambitious, yet the name of the man "that once trod the ways of glory "will never be forgotten in the history of England.

## CHAPTER XI

### SIR WALTER RALEIGH (1552-1618)

In the county of Devon, not far from the town of Plymouth, is an old farm-house. It is lonely and solitary, standing on a level piece of ground surrounded by old spreading trees and shut in by woods and copses, at the same time very pretty, with its old thatched roof and heavy oak doors.

Here Sir Walter Raleigh was born. In this old farm-house he spent his childhood, and often in later life did he long to return to the peace and quiet of the country.

Raleigh's boyhood was spent wandering about the green lanes near his home, walking beside the clear streams, often with a book in his hand. For he loved reading and learning, and it is said he often only went to bed for five hours, reading late at night and beginning again early in the morning.

He would grow eager and excited as he read about the battle-field, but much as he loved learning about exploits on land, far better did he like to read of doing so at sea, of fierce conflicts on the wide ocean.

When he was fourteen he went to Oxford. There he met Sir Philip Sidney, and a friendship sprang up which lasted strong and true till death. Both were fond of learning, both eager for fame, though the gentle and sweeter manners of Sidney were a strange contrast to the somewhat harsh manners and iron will of Raleigh.

After three years Raleigh left Oxford without a degree to go to France and help the English to fight for the French Protestants, who were being badly treated by the Catholics.

It is very likely that, with Sidney, he was in Paris on the night of the terrible massacre of St. Bartholomew and from his place of hiding saw the Protestants being killed without mercy.

When he had served his time, Raleigh left the army and returned to England. He went to London and took up his abode near his half-brother, Sir Humphrey Gilbert. He shared Sir Humphrey's longing to go to sea, to see the New World, to fight against the Spaniards in America, to explore unknown tracts and above all to make his fortune from the gold mines. After a time they induced Queen Elizabeth to give them some ships and let them go. So in 1578, Gilbert and Raleigh with seven ships and three hundred and fifty men sailed from Plymouth. But where they went and what they saw, we do not know; we only know that they returned in a year with what remained of their shattered fleet, having failed in their enterprise. Although they had failed, their courage had won for them the admiration of all, and they returned to find themselves popular and sought by great men of the day. On his return Raleigh was sent to rule in Ireland, where he lived several years.

In 1582 Raleigh was introduced to Queen Elizabeth. At this time he was strikingly handsome, he was very erect, very tall and graceful, his face was manly but very stern, his eyes bright and thoughtful. He dressed splendidly, and many of his clothes were adorned with jewels. His armour was made of silver, his sword and bit studded with diamonds, rubies, and pearls, which were so curious and rare that after his death they were put in the Tower of London, where they may be seen now.

Raleigh was very anxious to see the Queen. One day when he was walking near the palace he was commanded by the porter to go away, as her Majesty was just coming forth.

"I will not stir, till I see the Queen come forth," said Raleigh, quietly.

Very soon, amid a crowd of lords and ladies, he saw Elizabeth, tall and erect, in the prime of life, walking in the grounds.

Raleigh pressed forward, his hat in his hand, his rich cloak falling from his shoulder. The night had been rainy, and near where Raleigh stood was a little heap of mud. Here the

Queen stopped. Raleigh dashed forward, and throwing off his cloak laid it on the miry spot, for Elizabeth to step upon. She looked at the noble face before her, nodded her head, and hastily passed on.



RALEIGH AND QUEEN ELIZABETH.

"Your gay cloak will need the brush to-day," observed a courtier.

"This cloak," replied Raleigh, "shall never be brushed while it is mine."

This was their first meeting, but not the last. Elizabeth liked him and was interested in his learned conversation, while his manly face pleased her. But she never took him into her confidence as she did the gentler Sidney, though she was flattered and pleased by the verses Raleigh wrote about her.

Raleigh had been at court some years when he heard that Sir Humphrey was once more about to start for America. Raleigh had a ship built for him, and the Queen sent him a golden anchor to wear, and wished him good luck. The little fleet started, never to return. Away sailed the brave Sir Humphrey towards the west. Bad weather and high winds discouraged the crew, and no land was in sight. At last one night the wind increased, the waves rolled higher than ever, and Sir Humphrey saw that all would soon be over. "We are as near heaven by water as by land," he cried to the terrified seamen. When morning dawned no trace of Sir Humphrey's ship was to be found, and the survivors sailed home to tell the sad tale in England.

Even this failure did not discourage Raleigh, it only made him long more earnestly than ever to try again.

A few months after he heard the news of his brother's death, he fitted out a fleet and started with several other great men for the coasts of America. The next year they came back, having found a rich and fertile piece of land on the east coast of America. The woods were full of hares and deer, the trees were higher and finer than any in England, the few people there were, were handsome, gentle, and kind. Such were the glowing colours in which the new country was painted to the Queen.

Elizabeth was delighted, gave the new country the name of Virginia, and knighted Raleigh. Sir Walter Raleigh then sent

out a hundred men to live in the new colony of Virginia, men that could find no work in England, and were glad to go to a new home, hoping to make their fortunes.

But the colony did not succeed. The Governor who was sent out lost control over the men, who soon became wild and disobedient, refusing to work, and fighting with the Red men who lived near.

Even this failure did not quite discourage Sir Walter Raleigh, and in 1587 he sent out a fresh party of settlers.

During one of Raleigh's visits to America he brought back some potatoes. He found the natives or Red men smoking tobacco through rough pipes of clay. He tried it and liked it very much, and brought some back to England, where nothing was known of it. One day Raleigh was sitting in his room in London, when he took out his pipe, and sending his servant for some ale, he began to smoke. When the servant returned he saw his master covered with smoke. He instantly thought he was on fire, and with great presence of mind, as he thought, threw the ale all over him, and then rushed out of the room shouting that Sir Walter was on fire. Soon after this a great many people tried smoking, and grew tobacco in Yorkshire for a long time, till it was forbidden.

Now Philip of Spain had long planned an attack on England, and at last his forces were ready. So he started his fleet, which he called the Great Armada, to surprise England. But an English fisherman saw the ships as they drew near the coast, and the alarm soon spread over England. And thus, before the Armada arrived, all were ready for the attack. Suddenly a violent storm came on, the Spaniards could not manage their large, ill-built ships, and they were driven away on to the Scotch and Irish coasts. Many were wrecked, and very few returned to Spain to tell their tale of defeat.

Slowly Raleigh was losing the Queen's favour, and at last she put him into the Tower. He grew sad, his heart seemed broken, and one day, after his release, when an old friend said

how glad he was to see him free again, he shook his head sadly, and said:

"No, I am still the Queen of England's poor captive." In vain he tried to win favour again with Elizabeth; "she refused to smile on him as of old."

At last he made up his mind to sail forth once more to America. This time Guiana was the object he had in view, the "Realm of Gold," as it was then called. He went, and has written a great deal about the country, but got no gold, and returned poorer in purse than before. However, this bold expedition, which many had tried before and failed, won for him the favour of the people, and before long Elizabeth once more admitted him into her presence. After this he pleased her by taking part in the war against Spain, in which the English were successful.

Perhaps the greatest triumph in his life was the taking of Cadiz from the Spaniards. A huge English fleet under Raleigh and Howard sailed to Cadiz to prevent a Spanish ship from landing. The Spaniards knew they were coming, but paid little heed, till the vast English fleet swooped down upon the Spanish ships in the harbour of Cadiz. A terrible battle took place. Dreading falling into the hands of the English, the Spaniards threw themselves into the water, many half burnt still hung to the ropes, while others swam some way in the disturbed water and then sunk.

The Spaniards were defeated and the city of Cadiz then sacked.

Once more Raleigh was in favour with the Queen, once more and for the last time he enjoyed the splendour and honour of court life, but not for long.

In 1603 Queen Elizabeth died, and with her death Sir Walter Raleigh fell.

As Captain of the Guard he went to fetch the new king, James I., from Scotland, but he soon plainly saw that James was not going to favour him. First of all, James wished to make

peace with Spain; this would put an end to Raleigh's enterprise and future hopes of glory, and he opposed it.

Elizabeth had favoured great explorers, she had helped on those men who had wished to discover new places and enlarge the English possessions; but these men found no favour in the eyes of her cousin James. He brought over Scots from his native country, and gave them high places in the kingdom.

Soon after James had become king, several plots were discovered, and Raleigh among others was accused of having helped in them.

He was sent to the Tower, and brought to trial. His carriage was sent to take him to Winchester, where the trial was to be held. A mob collected outside the Tower, and no sooner had Raleigh stepped into his carriage than they began to hoot and cry, throwing at him tobacco-pipes, mud, and stones, and crying out that they would go a hundred miles to see him hanged. Although Raleigh seemed indifferent to this outburst of hatred, he felt that his fate was near, that his doom was already sealed.

The cold November morning dawned, and at a given signal Sir Walter Raleigh entered the court, now thronged from end to end with people mute, hushed, and excited. Raleigh stood erect and calm, with a defiant look in his stern grey eyes, as he gazed on many well-known faces and cast his eyes upon the judge. He was accused of having plotted to dethrone James, and place upon the throne Lady Arabella Stuart.

After a long examination he was found guilty. Then he rose and in a loud yet sweet voice he reminded the people of what he had done for the country, of his rule in Ireland, his discovery of Virginia, his discovery of the potato and tobacco, the victory at Cadiz, the perilous voyage to Guiana. He spoke of Elizabeth's trust in him, of her admiration for him. He pleaded for his life, and the grand, eloquent flow of language drew tears from many among that vast throng. They felt that before them stood the greatest man living. But he must be found guilty, the

king had wished it, and Sir Walter Raleigh was condemned to death.

He was taken back to the Tower, and there he wrote a beautiful poem. In vain did his wife entreat James to forgive Raleigh; daily men were led to the scaffold, and daily Raleigh expected to follow them. But day after day, month after month passed away, and Raleigh was left to pine in a miserable cell. At last he was allowed to see his wife and children, whom he loved dearly. Now it was that he began his "History of the World," which has made his name famous. It was printed in 1614, and made a great impression on the minds of all.

During his imprisonment Raleigh had cherished a hope of fitting out another expedition to Guiana. When he was at last released, in 1616, he prepared to go. After much difficulty he got leave from James, and the following year started, sure of success and reward. But this was not to be. As soon as he arrived at Guiana, Raleigh became very ill, he was obliged to give the command to another; the mining expedition failed, the second in command died, all were disappointed, and Raleigh was obliged to return to what he knew to be certain death. James was very angry, and Raleigh was for the last time sent to the Tower to await death. It soon came, and on the 29th of October, 1618, he was led forth to execution. This time he was not hooted and hissed; men thronged to gaze for the last time on the great prisoner, now worn with misery and sickness, yet still stately and resolute, and even cheerful, as he approached the block and bade farewell to the silent crowd below. His head was then struck off. Thus ended the "blackest day in James's black reign, the brightest of all in Raleigh's life."



## CHAPTER XII

### SIR PHILIP SIDNEY (1554-1586)

In the park at Penshurst, in Kent, stands a large oak, unhurt by the storms of three hundred years, planted in memory of the place where Sir Philip Sidney was born. The baby brought joy into the household, which was very sad at that time, on account of the death of Lady Jane Grey and her husband, Philip's uncle, who had lately been killed in a very cruel way. He was the first child, and a great pet with both father and mother.

Great was Philip's delight when a little sister was born, and christened Mary, and when bigger the two children played very happily together in the old park at Penshurst.

When still quite young, Philip was sent to school. He soon made great friends with another new boy called Fulke Greville. He became a sturdy little workman, and put his whole heart into his work as well as into his play.

Here is a part of his father's first letter to him at school:

"I have received two letters from you, one in Latin, the other in French. As this is the first letter that ever I did write to you, I will not have it empty of some advice, which I would have you follow. Be humble and obedient to your master, for, unless you learn to obey others, you shall never be able to teach others how to obey you. Delight to be cleanly as well in all parts of your body as in your garments. Be merry. Think upon every word you speak before you utter it. Above all things, tell no untruths, no, not in trifles. Well, my little Philip, this is enough for me, and too much, I fear, for you. Your loving father, as long as you live in the fear of God, HENRY SIDNEY."

At the end his mother added a little bit:

"Show yourself as a loving, obedient scholar to your good master. Farewell, my little Philip; once again, the Lord bless you. Your loving mother, MARY SIDNEY."

When Philip was fourteen he went to Oxford, and his friend, Fulke Greville, went with him.

He was at this time very manly and graceful, his hair was dark, his skin very fair, his eyes were large and serious, though they often sparkled with fun. Altogether he was very beautiful and loveable.

When he had been at Oxford some time and learnt a great deal, his father wished him to go abroad to learn German and French, so away he went to Paris. He was there during the massacre of St. Bartholomew.

One night the sleeping people were all awakened by a terrible noise, and in a few minutes soldiers rushed out from dark corners and killed all the Protestants who were in Paris. Men, women, and children were slain without pity.

Sidney hid, and was safe, but having seen this dreadful massacre, he had seen enough of Paris, and went off to Germany.

At this time Queen Elizabeth was reigning in England, and when Philip Sidney came back she heard about him and sent for him to come to her court, and his sister Mary too. He spent several years with the Queen. One very curious Christmas he spent at court. Elizabeth was very fond of presents, as many other people are, so on New Year's Day Philip gave her a cambric chemise beautifully worked in gold and silver, and his friend, Fulke Greville, gave her another like it. The court laundress gave her three pocket handkerchiefs, her chambermaid gave her a linen nightcap, and the pastry cook a large quince pie. She also received a great many more such gifts.

Sidney stayed at court some time, but he soon got tired of doing nothing. He wanted to be doing real work in the world, but

Elizabeth could not bear to part from him, and he stayed on at court.

About this time he put some of the Psalms into verse with his sister Mary, and wrote a book called "Arcadia."

Soon after, Sidney was knighted. He came before Queen Elizabeth and knelt down. She touched his shoulder with a sword and said,

"Rise, Sir Philip Sidney." He kissed her hand and rose, a knight.

At last he was freed from court life.

War was going on in the Netherlands—that is, in the country we now call Holland—and Sidney was sent out to command an army.

He joined his uncle Leicester, who was already there, and his uncle sent him to take a town called Axel.

He had a long way to march, but at last arrived. Then he stopped to talk to his men. He told them they were Englishmen, and they must not mind danger and even death to serve their Queen and country. He said his eye would be on them, and no one who fought bravely should be forgotten afterwards.

At midnight Sidney and forty of his best men jumped into a stream, which went round the town, swam over, climbed the walls, and opened the gates, while the people were all asleep. This was Sidney's plan, and very well it succeeded, as you see.

The next thing to be done was to take a town called Zutphen. Sidney was in command, and his uncle was present. Thursday morning was settled for the attack. It was very misty and dull. The English army went bravely forward, and rushed at the enemy.

Sidney's horse was killed under him, but he quickly mounted another and again led his men forward, always keeping in the hottest part of the battle himself. At last they managed to drive back the enemy. The town was taken, but the brave leader

had received his death wound, and he was carried to his uncle faint and bleeding.

And now I must tell you a story about him which will show you how brave and unselfish he was, even when he was in such pain.

He was lying on the field, faint with loss of blood, weary of the roar of battle, his lips dry and hot, when he asked for some cold water to be brought. It came, and he put it hastily and eagerly to his lips.

At that moment he opened his eyes and saw a poor soldier being carried past wounded, weary, and suffering like himself. The poor man looked greedily at the clear, cold water. Sir Philip did not drink, but, handing the water to the soldier, said, in a low voice, "Thy need is greater than mine."

He was then carried off the battle-field, where he had won such glory to die in great pain in a foreign land.

The news of the victory of Zutphen was received with joy in England, but at the news three weeks after of the death of Sir Philip Sidney, the joy was turned to sadness.

All England mourned for him, the Queen amongst them, but the grief of his sister Mary was perhaps the deepest, and very touching are the lines she wrote when she heard of her brother's death.

"Great loss to all, that ever him did see,  
Great loss to all, but greatest loss to me."

## CHAPTER XIII

### JOHN MILTON (1608-1674)

You are now going to hear about John Milton, who stands among the greatest of our English poets.

He was born about a fortnight before Christmas at the "Spread Eagle," in Bread Street, London, when James I. was reigning over England.

His father was a clever man, very devoted to his eldest son, and very anxious to teach him well and rightly. He was very fond of music, and would often sing and play to his little boy, who soon learnt to love it too.

The boy became a singer almost as soon as he could speak, and we soon find him going to the organ for his own pleasure, to pick out little tunes by the ear.

When he was ten years old, his portrait was painted. It still exists, and represents him as a very grave little Puritan boy, with a loving, serious face. His black braided dress fitted close round his little chest and arms, a neat lace frill softened the black as it met his neck, his fair hair was cut close to his round head.

At an early age the little poet was sent to St. Paul's School, one of the few large schools in London at that time. Milton worked very hard. He generally sat up till twelve or one o'clock reading, before he went to bed. His eyes were always weak, and this constant reading made them worse.

He was very fond of reading poetry, and, when he was fifteen, he wrote two hymns, which showed great talent for one so young.

When he was sixteen he went to Cambridge. There he wrote many more poems, all very clever and most very beautiful. He stayed there till he was twenty-three. He was not

tall, and was very slight, his hair was long, his face thin and pale. In his college he was called "the lady," having a gentle and feminine voice. He was still graver and more serious than he had been as a child. When he was twenty-three he wrote one of his most beautiful poems, very short but very sweet; it tells us how anxious he was to live right and do his duty, now he had arrived at manhood.

When he left Cambridge, Milton went to Horton, a village in Buckinghamshire, where his father had gone to spend his last years in peace and quietness.

In the stillness and beauty of the country, Milton wrote many more poems. He loved to sit under the elm trees, watching the birds as they flew happily about, and delighting in the long line of Surrey hills, which were lit up by the setting sun, or purple with autumn heather. Those were happy days for Milton, as his bursts of English poetry show us.

In 1638 Milton went abroad, leaving the care of his old father to his brother Christopher. He had longed to see Italy, and as he stood on the shore of the great deep Mediterranean, the "soft wind blowing from the blue heaven," gazing over the sea of boundless blue, he felt that his dream was at last realized.

He stayed abroad a year and three months, and then, hearing that affairs were gloomy in England, returned home.

"It is not worthy for an Englishman to travel for pleasure abroad, when his country is in trouble at home," he said.

After he had visited his father at Horton, he took lodgings in London, and taught two little nephews of eight and nine. This did not take up much of his time, and he was able to study and write a great deal.

In 1643 Milton married, but not happily. He himself had been brought up a Puritan, that is, a man who was very strict about religion, dressing plainly and severely. His wife was very different: she was gay and frivolous, and cared little for religion.

The first half of Milton's life had been very happy, peaceful, and calm; the last half was not smooth, but very unhappy, and full of misery, while the crushing thought of coming blindness, often made him very sad.

Several times he and his wife had to separate. She died nine years after their marriage, leaving three daughters to be brought up by the poet.

Meanwhile Milton wrote pamphlet after pamphlet, all in his grand, simple English prose.

He saw how much time was given to education, and yet with what slight result. He wrote a pamphlet about it, which did some good.

He wrote too on church matters, and about the government. He said that liberty came first in everything—church, religion, and government.

One of his greatest prose works was a book which he published, begging that more liberty might be given to the press—that is, that more books might be printed without so much difficulty. For in Milton's time there was great trouble in getting a book printed, because every book, before it was printed, had to be read by certain men chosen for that purpose.

In his book Milton asked "if twenty men were enough to judge of the books of all England?" He begged the Commons of England to think of the genius and energy of the nation which was being wasted, because printing was so difficult. This book did a great deal for England, and has made Milton's name famous.

In 1649, affairs, which had been growing from bad to worse, came to a crisis.

Charles I. was executed.

A government was formed, with Cromwell at the head, and John Milton was made Latin Secretary.

He had long felt his eyes growing weaker, but although he knew that in a few years more his sight would be gone, perhaps, for ever, he could not refuse this office, this last service for his country.

The following year the sight of one eye entirely went, and the doctor told him that if he used the remaining eye for reading and writing that would go too.

"The choice lay before me," wrote the poet, "between giving up what seemed my duty, and loss of sight."

I need not tell you he chose the last, rather than shirk duty. In two more years Milton was quite blind. Blind at forty-three! His greatest work not yet begun! He could no longer write, only dictate.

In 1660 Charles II. was placed upon the English throne, and Milton lost his office of Secretary, and not only that but his hopes, his aims, were at an end.

Liberty was gone, Cromwell, "our chief of men," was dead, and Milton's labour of twenty years was swept away.

It was in the moment of overthrow that the blind poet rose to true greatness. His outward hopes were gone, and in his "grand loneliness" he set himself to compose three of the grandest poems in our English language.

The last seven years were the greatest in Milton's life.

He lived in Artillery Street, London, and there, in "a small chamber hung with rusty green, in an elbow chair," he would sit.

Many a foreigner came to see him, not liking to leave England without seeing the blind poet Milton, and they would often find him "in a grey, coarse cloth coat," sitting quietly at the door of his house, enjoying the rays of the sun he could no longer see.

He loved to play on the organ, and would often sing too. He rose early, and went early to bed, though not always to sleep.

Sometimes he would lie awake the whole night trying to make a single line of his great poem. At other times he would compose many pages, and in the morning would dictate the lines almost too fast for anyone to write down.

In 1605 "Paradise Lost" was finished. It is a long poem, written in blank verse—that is, verse without any rhyme. It tells us of Adam and Eve being driven out of the garden of Eden, in grand and beautiful poetry, and of many other things.

At first the book did not sell. People did not understand the name, and until they had looked into it and read a bit of the grand poetry, they did not care to buy it. But after a time more copies were sold, and Milton received many visits from people who wished to see the author of "Paradise Lost." He never got more than £10 for it.

He next wrote "Paradise Regained," which sold well, and then he gave to the world his last great poem.

It was about a blind man named Samson. The Samson he wrote about was very like Milton himself. Samson was blind, like Milton.

"O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon!"

cries Samson, and the words came from the depths of Milton's own heart.

Milton lived three years after the printing of this last poem.

"I shall shortly be with them that rest,"

were the words he put into the mouth of Samson.

He died on a Sunday night in November, and was buried beside his old father.

His grand, pure life was over; he had lived,  
"As ever in his great Taskmaster's eye."

The neighbours missed the old blind man, who sat outside his door, in the old grey coat, enjoying the warm sunshine, but further than this, his death made little difference to the world, for it was not till years after that men saw what a really great poet had lived and died among them.



## CHAPTER XIV

### SIR ISAAC NEWTON (1642-1727)

It is said that when Isaac Newton was born, which was on Christmas day, he was such a wee baby, that they might have put him into a quart mug. He was so tender and small that they did not think he would ever live to be a man, but he did live, and became a very great man too.

His father died when he was a baby, but his mother watched over her only child with great care, and when old enough sent him to a day-school. When he was twelve he went to school. At first he did not get on well, but later he worked hard and rose till he was the head boy in the school. While the other boys were playing, Isaac would sit apart thinking, working long and hard sums, and making models of machines and windmills. Although he was a "sober, silent, thinking lad," and did not join in the games, yet he took pleasure in watching them. He invented the flying of paper kites in the air for the boys, and made a paper lantern, by the light of which he went to school on dark winter mornings. He was also very fond of drawing, and writing verses.

When Isaac was fifteen, his mother wished him to leave school and learn to manage his father's farm and estate. To teach him the art of buying and selling, his mother sent him to market every Saturday with a trusty servant. The young scholar did not like this, and no sooner were the horses put up, than he would forsake the servant, and going to an old garret in the town, would read old musty books till it was time to return.

He hated tending the sheep and watching the cows, and while he read his book or made water-wheels in the stream, the cows would tread down the corn and the sheep stray away, and bring disgrace upon the boy Isaac.

One day his uncle found him sitting under a hedge with a book in his hand, working out a most difficult problem. Struck with his serious look and eagerness to do the sum, his uncle begged that he might be sent back to school. His mother gave in, and with joy and gladness the boy returned to his studies.

When he was eighteen he was sent to Cambridge.

It so happened that there was a great teacher at Cambridge at that time. He was delighted with Isaac Newton, who was already far advanced in his knowledge of the stars, light, sums, and machines.

For many years he worked very hard, but in 1665 a dreadful plague broke out, and he was obliged to leave Cambridge for a time.

On his return he made a wonderful telescope, which was shown to King Charles II., who was reigning. Thus his name became known for the first time in public.

One day Isaac Newton was sitting quite alone under an apple-tree in his garden. He was thinking very deeply, when suddenly an apple fell off the tree close beside him.

A new idea darted across his mind.

Why did that apple fall down to the ground?

Why should it not have gone up or in another direction? There must be something to pull it down.

What is that something? The Earth, yon say. This power that the Earth has of making things come towards it, or *fall*, as we commonly say, is called the Force of Gravity, and Newton was the first to think of this, as he sat beneath the apple-tree in his garden in Lincolnshire.

The following year he was made a fellow of his college, and soon after made teacher, or professor of mathematics.

All this time he was finding out many new things about light, and in a few years he wrote a book all about the things he

had found out about tides, the moon, light, new laws, and comets and stars. The book was received very well, and everyone talked about Newton.

"Does Mr. Newton eat, drink, or sleep like other men?" asked a Frenchman when he had read the book. "He seems to live in another world."

After this he wrote many other learned books.

He was very much disappointed once. For twenty years he had been studying the nature of colour and light, and spent a great deal of time and money. At last he felt able to write a book about it. This took him a long long time, but at last it was ready to go to the printer.

It was a cold winter morning, and Newton was going to chapel. He left his papers on his study table, with a lit candle standing near.

No sooner had he left the room than a breeze blew the flame of the candle, the precious papers caught fire, and Newton returned to find them entirely burnt. When he saw what had happened, Newton was nearly mad with grief and trouble, and he did not get over it for many weeks.

When Queen Anne came to the throne, she made Isaac Newton a knight for all he had done and his great cleverness.

Sir Isaac Newton was very absent. He would become quite lost in thought, and often forget affairs of life.

One day a learned doctor came to see Newton about dinner time. He found dinner ready on the table, but no Newton was there. After waiting a long time, and being very hungry, the doctor lifted the cover and found a boiled chicken. It looked so good that he sat down and began to eat. When he had finished it, he put the bones back on the dish, put the cover on, and sitting down by the fire, waited for Newton.

After a time Newton entered, said he was sorry to have kept him waiting, and asked him if he had dined.

"Yes," answered the doctor.

Newton then sat down and took the cover off the dish.

"Bless me!" he cried, as he saw the remains of the chicken, "who would have thought it? I forgot that I had dined!"

The story goes no further, but we will hope that the doctor explained, and that Newton had some dinner after all.

In 1704 Newton wrote a book on light which made his name more famous than ever.

He had a wonderful temper, and was never made angry by anything. One evening he had been busy working problems, when he was called away. On his return he found that his pet little dog had torn all his papers to pieces. He looked sadly at the fragments for a few minutes, and then, turning to the dog, said, "Ah, Diamond, Diamond, you little know what mischief you have done!"

Newton was very modest. Although all England was talking of him, and his books were widely spread, although he must have known that he was the greatest thinker living, yet he was never proud, he never boasted of his cleverness, and when asked a question he would often say, "Ask someone else who knows better than I do."

But after a time Newton's mind and health gave way after so much learning and studying. He was in great pain, but he never groaned or murmured, and went on with his duties to the end. At last, in his eighty-fifth year, he died, just three months before George I., King of England. He was buried in Westminster Abbey, and a monument was raised to his memory. At Cambridge, in the chapel of his college, there is a statue of white marble, in which Newton stands in a long, loose gown, looking upwards in deep thought. But no statues are needed to remind us of the great man who did so much for science and learning,—of the great Sir Isaac Newton.

## CHAPTER XV

### ROBERT CLIVE (1725-1774)

Most of India now belongs to England, but when Robert Clive was born it was not so. Part of that country was governed by native chiefs, part belonged to France and was governed by French rulers, while a very small portion was in the hands of an English Company for the purpose of trading. This Company engaged English clerks to keep accounts and ship cargoes, and paid them very badly, while the members themselves grew rich by private trade, Robert Clive was the eldest of a large family. He was born in Shropshire, but when quite young he was sent to live with an uncle near Manchester. There he became very ill soon after he arrived, and his uncle found him a cross, self-willed boy, with an angry temper, no self-control, fond of fighting, and not much else. But he was no ordinary child.

One day when quite a little boy, he climbed nearly to the top of a very high steeple, and sat on a stone spout, looking down calmly on to the terrified people below.

On another occasion, when some boys were trying to turn a dirty water-course into the shop door of an unpopular dealer, the boy threw himself into the gutter, and there lay till the mischief could be repaired.

Clive was an idle boy, and no favourite with his masters at school. Wherever he went he was called an "unlucky boy"—one of his masters, it is true, saw something good in him, and went so far as to say he would make "a great figure in the world," but most agreed in saying he was a dunce.

His parents expected nothing from him, and, when he was eighteen, they sent him to a friend in India "to make his fortune or die of a fever." He had a bad passage out lasting over a year, and when he arrived found that the friend under whose

care he was to be placed had just sailed for England. So the boy found himself alone, penniless, and friendless in a strange country. He found work in an office, but was miserably paid for it. He was very shy, and being rather of a proud nature, did not make any friends. The climate made him feel ill and low; there was no one to look after him; he pined by day and night for his home.

"I have not enjoyed one happy day since I left my native land," he said in a letter home, not long after he had arrived.

The Governor lent him some books, and Clive spent much of his spare time in reading and learning.

Twice in desperation the poor, homesick, and uncared-for boy tried to shoot himself with a pistol, and twice he failed.

"Surely," he cried, at the second failure, "surely I am reserved for something great!"

Suddenly a new path was opened before him; England was at war with France, and the French seized the Company's warehouses in India. They then took Madras, where Clive's work lay, and obliged him and the other Company servants to flee.

No more work could be done at present, and Clive entered the army, with hundreds of other young men, to fight against the French. He fought well, and his bravery and courage were soon noticed by his captain, who raised him to a higher rank in the army.

Now the French were growing more and more powerful. Clive saw this, and with true military genius, suggested to his captain that an attack on Arcot, a French fort, might surprise the French general and thwart his rapidly growing power.

The captain approved, gave him the command of five hundred men, and sent him to take the French fort of Arcot, 1750. The young captain started bravely off. The weather was stormy, but he did not mind, and pushed on through thunder and lightning and rain to the fort.

The French were quite taken by surprise at seeing the English army approach, and, too frightened and unprepared to fight, they left the fort, which Clive entered in triumph with his men.

When the French recovered from their surprise, they collected together about three thousand men, intending to retake their fort.

But Clive knew them. In the dead of the night he marched out of his fort with his men, attacked the sleeping French, slew numbers of them, and returned to his camp without having lost a single man.

When this news reached the head of the French, a tremendous army of them was sent to the fort at Arcot to besiege Clive and his men. Clive had by this time sent away some of his men and some had died, so he was left with only three hundred, and very little food. For fifty days the French besieged the fort, and the young captain defended it bravely with his handful of men.

Food gradually disappeared, and it became evident that they must soon give in, unless fresh troops were sent to help them.

There is a most touching story told of some of Clive's soldiers at this time, when the food was nearly gone. About two hundred of them were black men, natives of India, who were helping the English. These men, hungry and tired, we may be sure, after fifty days' siege, came to their captain, and begged him to give more food to the English soldiers than to them, for they could stand the want and hunger better. The thin gruel which was strained from the rice would do for them, they said.

At last the French resolved to storm the fort. Clive, having heard of the plan, had busied himself all day with preparations. In the evening, he threw himself down to sleep, utterly tired out, telling the soldiers to wake him at the first alarm. He had not slept long, when he was aroused and at his

post in a minute. The French attacked by hundreds. They had brought with them huge elephants with great pieces of iron fixed on their foreheads to try and breakdown the gates. But when the English fired on them, the poor elephants turned round in a fright and rushed into the midst of the French, trampling many under foot. A struggle went on between Clive and the French for over an hour, the French losing heavily. Night fell, and Clive with his little band of weary men passed an anxious time, expecting a fresh attack every minute, but morning dawned to find the enemy entirely gone.

The siege was ended, the brave young captain had saved Arcot, and brought glory to the English arms.

Soon after this Clive joined his old commander and several more victories were won over the French.

At last Clive's health failed; he had never been quite well since he went out, and now, in 1752, he was obliged to return to England.

He went back a very different man from the poor despised boy who had been sent out ten years before to "seek his fortune or die of a fever," a soldier, loved and respected, brave and popular, with money enough to keep himself and his family. He was heartily welcomed at home.

"The lad is not such a booby after all," was his old father's comment, and Clive was yet to live to see tears of joy and pride roll down the old man's cheeks.

He had not been two years in England, when Clive heard he was wanted badly in India; so he again started for Bombay.

At this time the ruler of part of India was a Nabob—a young man, very weak, very hated, very cruel. He hated the English more than any other people, and determined to kill as many as he could. So he went to Calcutta, took the town, seized a hundred and fifty English people, and had them shut up in a room—a small, hot room with only one window very high up on the wall, and that window barred with thick bars. The fierce

Indian sun poured down, not a breath of air could enter—the poor English people could hardly move, so tightly were they packed. In vain they cried for mercy. In vain they appealed to the guards—those heartless men only replied from outside the door that the Nabob was asleep, and would be very angry if anyone woke him.

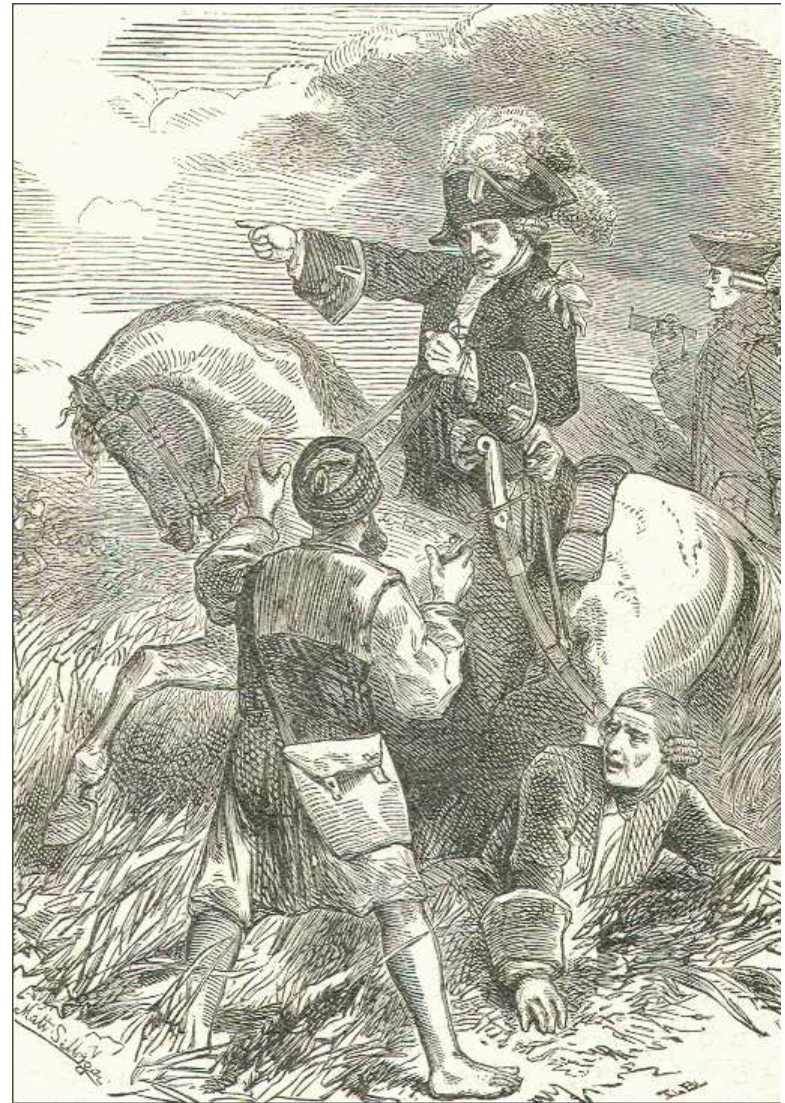
Many of the poor prisoners went mad; they trampled each other under foot; they fought for the place nearest the window; they prayed and screamed. The cruel guards only held lights to the window, and laughed mockingly at their frantic struggles.

Gradually as the long night passed, the struggles ceased, the screams died away, and low moans were the only audible sounds. At last morning dawned. The Nabob woke and ordered the doors to be opened. Twenty-three fainting people alone staggered out! the rest lay dead in heaps upon the floor! Even now, though over a hundred years have passed since that horrible crime—even now the Black Hole of Calcutta cannot be spoken of without a shudder.

You can imagine the anger and resentment that arose in every Englishman's heart, as the news spread. Clive was chosen to march against the Nabob, at the head of a vast army, and subdue the inhuman man.

Then followed the battle of Plassey, 1757, about which you must never forget, for it was one of Clive's mightiest victories. The Nabob lay near Plassey with an enormous army, nearly twenty times as large as Robert Clive's. Clive marched to the opposite bank of the river, and there halted. For almost the first time in his life, the general was undecided. Should he attack at once that huge army, or should he wait till more soldiers came up to help? He consulted his officers. Most of them said "Wait." Clive left them, and went alone into a shady wood for a short time to think. He soon returned, bright, bold, and decided. "Be in readiness to attack to-morrow," was his order.

They crossed the river, and did not rest till they were within a mile of the enemy. Clive could not sleep; he could hear music from the Nabob's camp, and he could not help thinking of the terrible loss of life there would be, if they lost the day.



CLIVE AT PLASSEY.



At last the day broke, "the day which was to decide the fate of India."

The battle began; the English fought well, and many of the Nabob's best men fell. Disorder arose among the soldiers; the Nabob himself grew frightened, and ordered his men to draw back. Clive saw it, and gave the order to rush forward; his well-trained soldiers obeyed, and a terrible slaughter of the enemy took place.

In an hour all was over, and Clive was left conqueror, not only of the field of Plassey, but of the British Empire in India.

After this, riches, presents, honours were heaped upon Clive; "he walked between heaps of gold and silver, crowned with rubies and diamonds."

But his conduct was not as pure as it should have been. He received bribes from native rulers without the knowledge of England, and sank low to deceive a native merchant, who was playing false to him. These failings, this unmanly conduct, were brought up against him later, when he had changed his course, and was doing his best to rule well and purely.

Three months after this great victory, Clive once more sailed for England. Honours awaited him at home; the King, George III., thanked him in person for his services to his country, and he was declared to be a "heaven-born general." Clive sent large sums of money to his parents and sisters, and ordered a certain sum to be paid yearly to his old commander.

He had not been long in England, when news reached him that India was again in a very disturbed state. The body of men that had been left to govern, ruled badly and could not agree—the cry was, that "Clive and Clive alone could save the empire which he had founded."

So Clive was appointed Governor of the British Empire in India, and sailed for India.

He found matters even worse than he had expected, and at once began a reform; but it was not easy to govern a country

which had never been ruled uprightly and cleanly, and Clive had to call up even more courage than he had displayed at the siege of Arcot or on the battle-field at Plassey. Gradually people and things yielded to his iron will, and the two years that followed were perhaps the most glorious of his life.

At the beginning of his rule, plots were formed against him, but Clive had a few faithful officers, and some of the black men stood by him to the end. Some of the plots were discovered, the young offenders punished lightly, the old ones severely. All plots very soon ceased, and the name of Clive was enough to restore peace.

Lord Clive might have got a vast amount of wealth at this time, neighbouring princes would have given any sum to win his favour, but he firmly refused it all for himself.

He had not been Governor more than a year and a half, when he was obliged to return on account of his health.

Once more he left the country he had conquered, the country over which he had ruled so well and honourably for two years, never to return to it again.

But he was not received with outstretched arms and cries of welcome as before, he was not loaded with appointments and honours. Complaints of him were pouring in, he was accused of having taken money and received bribes, his enemies brought to light the old wrongs and mistakes of his early rule in India; and Clive's last years were very bitter and unhappy. Added to this, bad news arrived from India, a bad famine was going on, and the blame was all laid at Clive's door.

Clive had long suffered from a very painful disease. As long as he had work to do, and people to live for, he had braved it; but now the pain grew worse, he had nothing to do, no one to live for; he could never go back to the country where he was loved and honoured.

He grew low in spirits, irritable in temper, and at last, in his forty-ninth year, worn out by bodily pain, broken down with

disappointment and "wounded honour," the great soldier and statesman died by his own hand late in the autumn of 1774.

Great as he was, Clive had many faults; some very grievous ones, which call forth our deepest pity, but I have not dwelt on them, as what I want you to remember is that Robert Clive was one of the greatest self-trained soldiers England has ever had—brave, courageous, firm; and his name stands and ever will stand high on the roll of conquerors.

## CHAPTER XVI

### WILLIAM PITT (1759-1806)

William Pitt was born on a bright May day in the year 1759, when the name of his father was on the lips of all, and England was ringing with news of fresh victories. But before the children were old enough to understand that their father was a great man, his popularity was almost over. He was very fond of his children, but the one that found most favour in his eyes was his second son, William, a thin, tall boy, with grave eyes and pale, thoughtful face.

From babyhood William had taken an interest in grave subjects; from the time he could read he would pore over difficult books; while his clever and sensible sayings amazed his parents and teachers. When he was seven years old, and his father had just been made Earl of Chatham, and given a seat in the House of Lords, the little William cried out:

"I am so glad I am not the eldest son. I want to speak in the House of Commons, like papa!"

The boy took a keen interest in all that was going on in the country, and he was able to understand many things that were beyond grown-up men.

When he was twelve, William knew far more than his elder brother, who was three years older.

But his parents saw that this intense study could not go on. The boy was growing very fast, he was often ill, and so weak, that many people thought the tall, slender boy would never live to be a man. It was impossible for him to go to school in such a state of health, so his work was carried on under his father and a tutor.

At the age of sixteen he went to Cambridge, and two years after took his degree. He knew Greek and Latin very well, and left all behind in his knowledge of arithmetic and Newton.

His voice was very clear and deep. He had been taught by his father, a great speaker, to manage it well, and in later years was once laughed at for having been "taught by his dad on a stool."

When he was nineteen he went with his father to the House of Lords to hear a great debate. His father, Earl of Chatham, was very weak and ill, but he would go to raise his voice for his country. He made one of the greatest speeches he had ever made, but the exertion was too much for him, and the old statesman fell back in a fit, to be borne from the House by his son William.

He died soon after, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Three years after his father's death, William Pitt was elected to sit in the House of Commons. Soon after Parliament met, a great debate took place, and Pitt was called upon to speak for his party.

He was not prepared, but, without waiting, the young man rose, and calmly and quietly began to speak. Much was expected of the old earl's son, but not so much. The silver clearness of his voice, his proud, lofty manner, and well-chosen words, not only delighted, but astonished the House.

"Pitt will be one of the first men in Parliament," said one member to Fox, a great speaker.

"He is so already," answered Fox, while Burke, moved even to tears, murmured,

"It is not a chip of the old block—it is the old block itself!"

After this William Pitt spoke often, always brilliantly and well.

When he was just twenty-three he became Chancellor of the Exchequer, and one of the cabinet.

Now the head of the government is, as you know, the king or queen, under them is the prime minister, who chooses a certain number of trusty men to form the cabinet. So you see this was a grand step for such a young man as William Pitt.

So well did he discharge his duties, that two years later the young statesman was made prime minister of England.

A difficult task was before him, for there were many great speakers in Parliament, but not a single able one on his side.

In the new Parliament, however, the tide was turned. The nation was on his side, the king was on his side, and backed by these the young prime minister could do much.

Perhaps his greatest triumph at this time was settling the government of India.

He saw there was much injustice and bad government going on in the country so lately won by Clive. So he planned a new government, by which the natives and Englishmen were ruled alike with justice.

In 1788 the king, George III., became insane, and unable to govern the kingdom. Long debates took place as to who should be regent, to govern till the king was well enough to rule again himself. Pitt, who said the Prince of Wales ought to be regent, but not have full power, was supported by the people. In every debate he gained, the bill was passed, and the prince was about to be made regent, when the king got well, and the nation was wild with delight.

Pitt was now at the height of his power and glory. His noble temper, his love of England, his desire for peace, had won him the esteem of all. He did not care for personal gain, the good of his country was his one object. He was too proud to rule at all unjustly. "Pride was written in the harsh lines of his face, was

marked by the way in which he walked, in which he sat, in which he stood, and, above all, in which he bowed."

Among his friends he was greatly loved, he was loving, clever, and even amusing at times. He was always very busy reading or writing, or drawing up plans for government.

In 1793 Pitt's greatest time arrived.

A terrible war was waging in France. Holland, Spain, Austria, Prussia, all declared war against her, and England longed to join.

To keep peace was Pitt's great object, to remain neutral was the only course to take. But the whole country clamoured for war. Pitt stood alone in England, refusing to "bow to the growing cry of the nation for war," till at last he could struggle no longer, and France wrenched from his grasp the peace he had clung to so bravely.

From this moment Pitt's power was at an end. His pride kept him at the head of affairs, but Pitt was a peace minister, and quite unfitted to conduct a war.

One part of Pitt's conduct during the last eight years deserves high praise.

He was the first English minister who tried to do good to Ireland and succeeded too.

A union was made with that country, and Pitt further wanted the Roman Catholics to be allowed to sit in Parliament, but the king refused to listen to him.

Pitt therefore resigned, having held office for over seventeen years.

Some time after, he was offered the post of a secretary of state, but he angrily refused, and talked of it with bitter mirth.

"Which office was offered to you?" asked one of his friends.

"Really," answered Pitt, proudly, "I had no desire to hear."

Three years after, he again returned to power, but not for long.

Failure was fast killing him. Napoleon's victories were telling upon him, although the news of Nelson's battles revived him for a time. His sleep was broken; all who saw him saw misery written upon his face.

He tried to form a union against Napoleon, hoping to check his power, but at last the blow came.

One day rumours were about that Napoleon had defeated a huge Austrian army at Ulm.

"Do not believe a word of it," said Pitt to those who were spreading the news, "it cannot be true." The next day he received a Dutch newspaper. He knew no Dutch. It was Sunday, and all offices were shut, so he took the paper to a friend who had been in Holland. The rumour was too true. Pitt heard the news silently, he tried to bear up, but the shock was too great. He never got over it.

Four days after, the news arrived of the battle of Trafalgar, and seemed to revive the unhappy minister, but only for a time.

He appeared in public for the last time, and was called upon to speak. He rose:

"England has saved herself by her courage—she will save Europe by her example!" were his last words in public.

He slowly sank, his voice became hollow, his form wasted, and on the 23rd of January, 1806, William Pitt died, murmuring to the last, "My country! how I love my country!"

He was buried in Westminster Abbey, beside his great father, the Earl of Chatham.

"Glorious was his course  
And long the track of light he left behind him."

## CHAPTER XVII

### HORATIO NELSON (1758-1805)

"England expects every man to do his duty."

This was Nelson's motto through life; these were the last words signalled from the masthead of the "Victory," as his final attack began; these are the words I want you always to remember when you hear the name of Horatio Nelson.

Nelson was the son of an English clergyman.

He was born at Burnham Thorpe, a small village in Norfolk. When he was nine years old, his mother died, leaving his father to provide for eight children. At an early age young Nelson was sent to the Norwich Grammar School, and later to a school at North Walsham.

Of his school life several stories have been told. Here is one. The brothers William and Horatio were going back to school on their ponies after the Christmas holidays. The snow was very deep, and the boys thought this would be a good excuse for turning home again.

"The snow is too deep to venture further," said William, as he met Mr. Nelson in the hall.

"If that indeed be the case, you certainly shall not go," replied the father, "but make another attempt, and I will leave it to your honour. If the road be found dangerous, you may return: yet remember, boys! I leave it to your honour."

Off they set again. The road was almost impassable as they got further, with mounds of snow, but although the danger was great, Horatio refused to return, saying:

"We have no excuse! Remember, brother, it was left to our honour."

When Horatio was twelve years old he one day read in the county newspaper that his uncle had been made captain of a large ship.

"Do, William," he said to his brother, "write to my father and tell him I should like to go to sea with uncle Maurice."

Early one cold and dark spring morning, Mr. Nelson's servant arrived at the North Walsham school to take Horatio to his uncle's ship.

He cried very much at parting from his brother William, and even the thought of being soon on the sea, could not comfort the boy sailor as he turned and caught the last look of his sorrowful brother and playmate.

When he arrived, he found that after all his uncle's ship was not going to sail at present. So his uncle, not wishing to disappoint the boy, put him on board a ship bound for the West Indies. He was very unhappy at first; the poor boy would pace up and down the deck with no one to speak to; he was not strong; but after a time he enjoyed the sea, and when he returned he was ready and anxious to join a ship bound to the North Pole.

At first they said he was too young to be taken on such a voyage of danger, but he begged so hard that they allowed him to try. The ship sailed in June. By July they had got so far north as to be shut in on all sides by ice; nothing was to be seen but large fields of ice, and the men could get out of the ship and run and jump on it. They tried to cut out a way for the ship, but the ice soon closed in again.

One night Nelson and a young companion seeing a bear at some distance, set off after it. They were not missed for some time. About three in the morning they were discovered in the act of attacking the huge bear. The captain signalled for them to return. Nelson saw it, and though called upon to obey by his companion, he refused.

"Let me get one blow at him!" he cried.

Happily at this moment the captain, seeing the danger the boys were in, fired, and the bear rushed away in great fright.

When the boy returned the captain scolded him severely for his conduct.

"Sir, I wished to kill the bear, that I might carry its skin to my father," answered the boy, pouting.

This story shows how brave and fearless young Nelson was, though he was not very wise in those early days.

For six weeks the ship remained stuck; then a wind rose, they got into open sea, and before long found themselves back in England.

He grew very fond of the captain and the sailors, who in return loved him for his bravery and pluck, and were ready to serve him.

At twenty-one Nelson was made captain of a ship, and he made many voyages to various places, everywhere being loved and honoured for his great bravery and kind heart.

Missing over many years, we find him just made captain of a large ship to sail after a French fleet going along the Mediterranean, for England was at war with France. He started in the beginning of May in 1793, and had a good voyage to the Mediterranean.

Hearing the French were at Bastia, a town in the island of Corsica, the English went there, and Lord Hood, who was in command of the whole English fleet, wished to attack.

Many of the sailors and captains refused, saying it would be hopeless, as the French were so strong. But Nelson was resolved.

"We are few in number, but we are of the right sort," he said. "My seamen are what British seamen ought to be!"

The sailors trusted their captain as he trusted them, and bravely they attacked the strong town of Bastia. For more than

forty days the siege went on. The French were very strong and had long been getting ready for the attack, but the English were resolved to take the town, and at last the four thousand French laid down their arms, and twelve hundred British soldiers and sailors entered the town.

Several sieges and battles followed this success at Bastia. During one a shot struck the ground near Nelson and drove sand and gravel into one of his eyes. He said nothing of it, though the pain was very great, till the day's work was over, and he found that the sight of that eye was gone.

You will see how Admiral Nelson was loved and honoured, when you hear that three times during one battle his life was saved by an old seaman, who threw himself before his master to receive the blow instead of him.

In one of these battles Nelson lost his right arm. He was fighting against the Spaniards, who were helping the French. It was a very dark night, and Nelson tried to land without being seen by the enemy. They pushed for the shore and raised a loud cry, when suddenly a body of Spaniards rushed forward, and the loud roar of cannon showed only too plainly that the enemy was prepared for the attack. Numbers of the brave seamen were killed and wounded at once, and Nelson gave orders to retreat. At this moment Nelson received a shot through his right elbow and fell, still grasping the sword which had belonged to his uncle Maurice, in his left hand.

His son-in-law Nesbit, who loved dearly his captain, heard him exclaim:

"I am shot through the arm; I am a dead man!"

Nesbit went to him, placed him at the bottom of the boat, and taking the silk handkerchief from his neck, bound up the wounded arm. Nelson desired to be raised up that he might see what was going on.

Nesbit raised him. Suddenly a wild shriek rang through the darkness of the night, and Nelson strained his eyes to see one



of the ships sinking with all on board. Nelson heeded not the pain he was suffering, and with one arm he rescued many of the drowning crew. The pain then became terrible, and he was taken to one of the large ships to have his arm cut off.

The one-armed hero then returned to England in bad health, and for many months was obliged to rest.

Nelson, the open, brave, simple sailor, loved his country; he felt that every Englishman was his brother and treated each as such. He loved success and rejoiced in it like a boy; he never thought of defeat before a battle. And yet Nelson was not a learned man; he was untaught. What he had learned he had taught himself as a boy by noticing things around him. In later life he trusted to genius at the moment, and never planned his attacks beforehand. Every sailor on board not only loved him with their whole hearts, but admired him because they could understand his brave simple life; they could trust him when the moment of action arrived.

News reached England that Napoleon was fitting out a fleet at Toulon with an intent of taking Egypt.

Nelson was appointed to command an English fleet, and sail to the Mediterranean to watch the enemy's movements.

For several weeks he could hear nothing of them, till one day news arrived that the French had taken the island of Malta, and were making for Egypt.

Nelson's mind was made up in a minute.

Orders were given to sail for Egypt and the Nile, and on the first of August the English fleet beheld the bay at the mouth of the Nile crowded with ships bearing the French flag, drawn up in line of battle.

None thought the English admiral would dare attack such a strong line.

They did not know our English hero; they did not know what a brave heart beat beneath that medaled coat!

"Fear? I never saw fear! What is it?" he had asked his grandmother when he was little more than a baby.

He could not answer that question when he was forty.

He was resolved to attack.

"If we succeed, what will the world say!" said one of his captains.

"There is no if in the case," replied the admiral; "that we shall succeed is certain. Who may live to tell the story is another question." The battle began at six in the evening and raged fiercely all night. About half-past eight Nelson was shot in the head and fell. He was carried below where the surgeon was attending a poor sailor who had been badly wounded. When he saw the admiral carried down, he left the sailor and hastened to attend Nelson, who was supposed to be dying.

"No," murmured the brave admiral, "I will take my turn with my brave fellows!"

Nor would he submit to have his wound dressed till all the others who were waiting had been attended. The wound was not so severe as had been thought, and a cry of delight arose from the suffering sailors as they heard that their beloved admiral would recover.

While Nelson was lying below, he suddenly heard a cry on deck that the Orient, a large French ship, was on fire and sinking with all on board. In the tumult he crept up on deck, and startled all by suddenly ordering that relief should be sent to the enemy. Boats were put out, but only a few out of that large crew were saved. The flames rose higher and higher, and the burning ship shone as bright as day! Many jumped overboard, many stood at their post to the last.

Morning dawned to find two French ships alone unconquered, and these saved themselves by flight.

Thus ended the battle of the Nile, 1798, one of the greatest and most glorious naval battles ever gained by the

English. Nelson was at the height of his glory. His name was on the lips of all. Wherever he went his fame, his glorious victories, his bravery, were talked of.

The French had been oppressing Italy, and the Italians were so delighted with the defeat they had just endured, that they could not thank Nelson enough.

When the news reached the Queen of Naples, she burst into tears and clasping her children to her, cried, "Oh, brave Nelson! God bless and protect our brave leader! Oh, Nelson, Nelson, what do we not owe you! Victor, Saviour of Italy!"

Nelson's next victory was that of Copenhagen. The Danes, the Russians, and Swedes, partly French at heart, partly afraid to offend France, had all joined together resolved on defeating the British navy, which was so powerful. Nelson was second in command, but the commander-in-chief put such trust in him that he allowed him to manage affairs and give the orders.

"The greater the number, the more glorious will be the victory. I wish there were twice as many," said Nelson, as he paced the deck, impatient for the attack to begin.

At last the battle began, and the enemy was successful. The gallant Nelson was badly placed, and the commander-in-chief watched with anxiety the danger of his position.

"I will make the signal for retreat; for Nelson's sake, I will do it," he said. "If he feels he can go on, he will not obey; if he is being defeated, he can retreat with no blame to himself."

The signal was made, but Nelson did not see it. An officer told him that the signal had been made to leave off action.

"Leave off action?" cried Nelson, as if he could not understand their meaning. Then turning to the captain, he said bitterly:

"I have only one eye. I have a right to be blind sometimes." With these words he put the telescope to his blind eye.

"I really do not see the signal!" he cried, with a touch of triumph; then added angrily:

"Fly from the enemy? Never! Never!"

Four hours after the battle began, the tide of success turned. The enemy's shots came slower; at last the ships yielded to the British flag, and the victory of Copenhagen was complete.

After this Nelson went back to England, hoping for rest to get up fresh strength. But he had not rested many days before he was once more called to fight for his country.

The French fleet was busy in the Mediterranean again; an English officer had been defeated, and the country cried for Nelson to go and fight. He eagerly obeyed the summons, and left the English shore for the last time.

Hundreds were collected to see the last of their beloved hero, whose noble face they were never to see again. And the "Victory" sailed off with the great admiral on board.

The English fleet arrived at Cadiz on Nelson's birthday, the 29th of September, 1805.

There Nelson waited till he could hear further details of the enemy's movements.

It was not till the 21st of October, that Nelson gave orders to sail from Cadiz, knowing that the French fleet lay off Cape Trafalgar.

Nelson got all in order for an attack, and then seeing that all was as it should be, he went down to the cabin alone.

Somehow he felt this would be his last battle, he only prayed for a great and glorious victory. When he returned to the deck, he found the men eager to begin.

"England expects every man to do his duty!" As the words gleamed from the masthead of the "Victory," a deafening shout rent the air, a shout from the very hearts of the English sailors!



NELSON'S LAST FAREWELL.

"Now," said Lord Nelson, "I can do no more. I thank God for giving me this great chance for doing my duty."

The English ships in two long columns dashed into the French lines, led on by Nelson and Collingwood. The mode of attack was new to the French, and as the English advanced the French admiral exclaimed that such courage must win the day.

Nelson wore the coat he had fought in so often before, with medals and stars. This made him easily seen by the enemy, and some of his men begged him to take them off.

"In honour I gained them," was the answer, "in honour I will die with them."

Soon after the attack began a shot struck the deck of the "Victory" and passed between him and Captain Hardy, who stood near. Both started and looked at each other. Nelson smiled.

"This is too warm work, Hardy, to last long," he said.

The "Victory" was engaged with a great French ship. Twice Nelson thought it had yielded, and twice had ordered his men to stop firing. From this ship, which he had twice spared, he received his fatal wound.

He fell, and Captain Hardy with three sailors lifted up their brave leader.

"They have done for me at last, Hardy," he murmured.

"I hope not," cried Hardy.

Knowing that his men would be discouraged if they saw him wounded, he took out his handkerchief and covered his face, as he was being carried to the cabin, although in great agony.

Nothing could be done for him, and the wounded hero lay below, while the battle raged above. At every cheer which told of victory, a smile of joy passed over his face.

At last Hardy came down.

"Well, Hardy," said Nelson, "how goes the day with us?"

"Very well," replied Hardy.

"I am going fast—it will all be over soon," murmured the Admiral, as the faithful Hardy bent over him.

Hardy then hurried on deck with a bursting heart.

In another hour he returned to the cabin and clasping the hand of his beloved Admiral he told him that the day was theirs, the victory won.

"Anchor, Hardy, anchor," said Nelson, raising his voice. Hardy answered that another admiral was now in command.

"Not while I live, Hardy," said Nelson, trying to sit up. "Do you anchor."

These were his last commands.

"God bless you, Hardy. I have done my duty; I praise God for it."

Hardy then left him—for ever.

Thus Nelson died: he had lived to hear the victory was won, he had done his duty to the end. The pride and hero of England was no more. Tears were mingled with joy as the news of the victory at Trafalgar and the death of Nelson arrived in England.

"God gave us the victory—but Nelson died." These words show how the death of Nelson was coupled with the joyful news of the success.

But the name of Nelson will live for ever: his example will ever shine brightly on the list of naval conquerors, and his signal will live as long as the English language lasts:

"England expects every man to do his duty."

## CHAPTER XVIII

### ARTHUR WELLESLEY, DUKE OF WELLINGTON (1769-1852)

We have now come to the last and greatest of our English conquerors—a man whom you will love for his simple, true, noble life; a hero you will honour for his modest greatness, his bravery, his true idea of duty—Arthur, Duke of Wellington.

Where he was born or on what day we do not know, but it is curious to think that the two great rival generals, Napoleon and Wellington were born the same year. We hear little of Wellington, till he was eleven years old. His father was Lord Wellesley. He did not take much notice of his little boy Arthur, who was not clever at his books like his elder brothers.

Arthur Wellesley was sent to Eton at the age of eleven. There we have a story of him, and only one.

One of his friends was bathing one day, when Arthur Wellesley took up a clod and threw it at him for fun.

"If you do that again, I will get out and thrash you," cried the bather, angrily.

To tease him Wellesley threw another and another. The bather landed and struck Wellesley. A sharp fight began, but although Wellesley was smaller than his friend, he won. Little did the bather think that boy would one day be England's hero, and beat many an army stronger and larger than his own.

It was settled that Arthur Wellesley should be a soldier. So he was sent to France to be trained, and there he stayed till he was eighteen, when he was made a lieutenant in the army.

He was a shy, awkward lad, in whom no one saw anything to admire. One night he was at a large ball, and not being able to find a partner to dance with, he sat down near the

band to listen to the music. When the party broke up, and the other officers went home after a gay and happy evening, Lieutenant Wellesley was left to travel home with the fiddlers. When in after years he became a great man, whose deeds and victories were talked of by all, the lady who had given the ball, said to him, laughing:

"We should not let you go home with the fiddlers now!"

When he was twenty-one he got a seat in the Parliament of Ireland, where he spoke well and to the point.

"Who is that young man in scarlet uniform with such large epaulettes?" once asked a visitor who was in the House of Commons.

"That is Captain Wellesley," replied his friend. "I suppose he never speaks?"

"You are wrong; he does speak sometimes, and when he does, believe me, it is always to the point," said his friend, somewhat proudly.

Three years after this he became a Major in the regiment now known as the "Duke of Wellington's Own," and soon after fought his first battle in the Low Countries.

After this he went to India, where his brother had been lately made Governor-General, and was therefore able to help on his young brother, Arthur Wellesley.

In 1797 he arrived, and found India in rather a disturbed state.

A native named Tippoo had seized the throne at Mysore, and although he seemed outwardly to be peaceable, he was really in league with the French, who were raising an army to help him against the Governor of India.

At last measures were taken against him, Tippoo was defeated, and slain, and Arthur Wellesley, who had been very brave and shown himself very capable, was made Governor of Mysore.

He at once set to work to draw up rules and laws for the people, he travelled about to see the state of the country, that he might better know how to rule them.

He had not ruled long, when he heard that a native army was again going to fight.

Wellesley was at this time placed in command of part of the English army. He marched towards the enemy, expecting to be joined by another regiment very shortly. But this was not to be. He suddenly came upon the enemy's huge army near Assays.

He must either fight without waiting for help from the rest of the army, or he must retreat, and so encourage the enemy. Wellesley knew his men, and resolved to attack. He crossed the rapid river which flowed between him and the foe, and found himself face to face with an army ten times the size of his own. He did not waver, but bravely rushed on the enemy. The charge threw them into confusion, but they resisted bravely for a short time till they were obliged to give way and leave Wellesley victorious. This was the first battle Wellesley had fought alone, and he had reason to be proud of it, for it was one of the most severe ever fought.

This subdued the natives for a time.

In 1805 Wellesley returned to England. He had left it a young officer, little known, less admired. He returned, still a young man, a leader of armies, looked up to and honoured for his kind heart, and open, noble manners. His men loved him. He was always ready to show them kindness, to provide for their comfort, to watch those who were sick and wounded, to promote those who had fought bravely and well.

Wellesley arrived in England just a month before Nelson started to fight his last battle, and win his last victory. It is said that the two great men met one day for a short time—the young Wellesley, who was just beginning a career which would end in so much glory, the old Nelson whose glorious career was drawing to its close.

England and France were at war still in 1808, and Wellesley, now Sir Arthur Wellesley, was sent out with an army to help the Spaniards to drive the French out of Portugal.

Napoleon, Emperor of France, wanted to add Spain and Portugal to his vast possessions, and the English offered to help the Spaniards drive them away. Wellesley was received with honour at Lisbon, and the town was very well lit up in the evening to show him how welcome he was. He at once began to prepare for battle, and soon found the French at Oporto, a town on the west coast of Portugal. He took them quite by surprise, and drove them out in one morning. Then the English entered the town, and Wellesley and his officers ate up the good dinner which had been carefully prepared for the French commander that evening.

The next great battle he fought was that of Talavera, an inland town on the river Tagus. The English army was ill provided with food, and watched, perhaps with envious eyes, the French army opposite making a hearty meal before the coming struggle. The fight began, and the French dashed forward sure of victory, but they were driven back by Wellesley and his brave soldiers.

After this victory Sir Arthur Wellesley received the title of Lord, and at the peace was made Duke of Wellington.

On the morning of one of his great battles the Duke was at breakfast with a friend. He sat silent, and deep in thought, but as he ate the egg that was set before him, his friend noticed that he made some very wry faces. Suddenly the Duke seemed to awake from his reverie, and looking up, said:

"By-the-bye, is that egg of yours fresh? Mine was quite rotten."

The Duke always planned his battles beforehand, and this was one of the secrets of his many victories.

At last he drove the French out of Portugal. It yet remained to drive them out of Spain, and beyond the Pyrenees, to their own country. This too the great Duke did.

He met the French army at a place on the borders of Spain. Joseph Bonaparte, now King of Spain, brother of the great Napoleon, had already retired from Madrid with a large French army. Wellington, as soon as he saw the army, resolved to fight, and planned the battle.

At dawn on a misty June morning the battle of Vittoria began. A stern fight ensued. For some hours neither side seemed victorious. At last Joseph Bonaparte was seen retreating. Still the French held their ground. But the English advanced on all sides, and Wellington, who never saw more clearly than amid the smoke and confusion of a battle-field, now saw that the French in the rear were giving way. In a short time the great Duke once more stood victorious on the field of action, watching the beaten and retreating French. Never did such a vast mass of spoil fall to the share of an English army. Baggage, chests of money, powder, clothes, all were left behind by the flying French. A general rush took place to seize the forsaken treasure, and soon the whole plain was strewn with lace, feathers, silks, satins, and pomatums, while even the common soldiers might have been seen that night marching about the camp arrayed in turbans and plumes, carrying about French monkeys, lap dogs, and parrots.

Wellington had driven Joseph Bonaparte from his kingdom in Spain, and had therefore crushed the French power in Spain.

Not satisfied with this, he resolved to go into France and crush them there.

But his men were spoilt with so much success and plunder, and they behaved very badly. The Duke told them he would not enter France unless they would promise not to plunder any more. He further told them that he should send back all offenders to England with a report of their conduct. He had many brought to trial, and before long order was again restored.



Victory followed victory in France, and defeat and loss at last obliged the French commander to retreat altogether.

Meanwhile Napoleon was very uneasy. He was forsaken by all save his faithful guard. At last he was forced to sign a paper saying he would give up the throne of France. He was given the island of Elba, and thither he went, the fallen chief, to govern in solitude.

Here was news for Wellington.

Napoleon had resigned! The war was over!

Cheers rent the air, as thousands flocked to their great leader, who was received with a perfect uproar.

The Duke could now return to England, which he had not seen for five long years.

The leave-taking of his army was very sad. The soldiers loved their leader. The leader loved his men. They had fought together for five years, without once being defeated or disgraced in any way. He had taught them to fight, but he took no honour to himself as he thanked them for their bravery and good service.

In the summer of 1814 the Duke of Wellington once more set foot on his native soil.

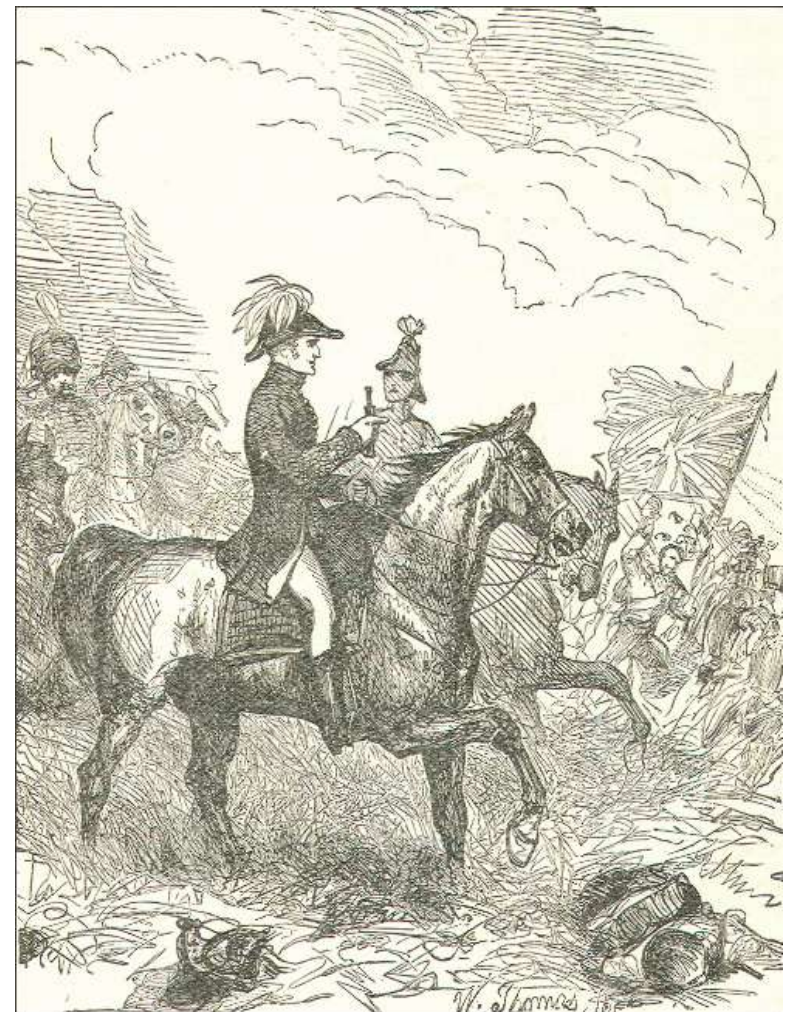
He found the nation nearly mad with delight. The nation's hero had come back. They would show their love for him, their pride in him, if it were possible.

The people drew his carriage through the streets of London, and bore him on their shoulders to his house.

When he went to take his seat in the House of Lords, a vast crowd was waiting to hear the voice of their well-loved Duke. He spoke very modestly of all he had done, and laid great praise on his officers and soldiers, though all felt that it was the man who stood before them, with high forehead, neat figure, and keen blue eye, to whom chief praise was due. Wellington could not stay long in England. He had work to do in Paris, and later in Vienna, and the thought of pleasure never crossed his mind

when duty was to be done. He had not been long at Vienna, when like a thunder-clap came the news that Napoleon had left Elba and intended to reign once more over France.

All Europe prepared for an attack—Prussia, Russia, Austria, England. He should be crushed, if it were possible.



WELLINGTON AT WATERLOO.

Wellington hurried to the Low Countries, knowing that Napoleon was sure to attack them first. There he collected as large an army as he could, chiefly English and Prussians, and trained the men well and carefully. The other allies also raised large armies, but all the forces together were not as large as the French army under Napoleon. Already Napoleon had left Paris. His last words as he stepped into his carriage, were "I go to measure myself with Wellington." He had beaten nation after nation, but never the English. Now the struggle was at hand. Napoleon's plan was to prevent the Prussians from joining the English, which they had not yet done. He met them at Ligny, and though he defeated them, he lost many men. He then advanced to the field of Waterloo, where Wellington awaited him. The Duke had long before planned the position for his armies, he knew the country round as well as any native, he knew that by protecting Waterloo he could keep the capital, Brussels. Wellington would not begin the battle, hoping the Prussians might yet arrive before Napoleon attacked.

The morning of the 18th of June, 1815, dawned at last, and early the British troops were astir. By eight o'clock they were ready armed, only waiting for the attack. Napoleon too rose early, and spent the morning reviewing his troops.

"At last I have them, these English!" he said proudly.

"Sire," said one of his officers, "I know these English. They will die ere they quit the ground on which they stand."

"Bah!" answered Napoleon. "You think that because he defeated you, Wellington is a great general!"

It was Sunday. A drizzling rain had been falling all night, and the ground was moist and heavy.

Soon after eleven Napoleon gave orders to attack, and the French rushed forward.

Long and stern and bloody was the conflict. The air was thick with smoke, and shells rained without ceasing.

The English had filled the large chateau of Hougoumont, which stood on the field. The French at once rushed on it, and tried to take it. Again and again they failed. The English defended it bravely, and though flames issued from the tower, and shells burst around they held out nobly.

Wellington rode along his front lines from time to time. Once, when expecting a severe charge from the French, he cried to the front regiment:

"Stand fast, 95th; we must not be beaten. What will they say in England?"

At one time the battle seemed to go badly with the English, several brave men had fallen, and many hearts were failing, when the Duke cried out:

"Never mind; we'll win this battle yet. Hard pounding, this, gentlemen. Let's see who will pound the longest."

The French never stopped firing, and they began again with extra violence, as they rushed up the hill, where the English were lying. Just as they gained the top, the English started to their feet, and poured on them a terrible fire. The French were driven down the hill, and three hundred killed.

"Let the whole line advance!" cried Wellington, for the first time since the battle had begun.

The order was received with shouts from the men, and the great mass, which had stood so patiently since early morning, swept grandly forward down the slope.

At that moment the setting sun gleamed for the first time through the heavy clouds, and shone on the British bayonets as the army rushed to victory.

The French army was thrown into confusion. Napoleon tried to rally them, but in vain. He struggled to the last, and then crying out that "all was lost," he galloped from the field of Waterloo, a fallen and defeated man!

It was with very mixed feelings that the Duke lay down wearily on his straw bed that night. The victory had been dearly bought by the lives of the brave, and while the rest of the world was talking of nothing but his greatness and victory, Wellington was praying that he might never have to gain another victory at such cost of life.

Next morning when the doctor brought the list of dead and wounded to read to the Duke, he found him in bed, his face still black with the powder and dust of the great battle. He ordered the doctor to begin. It was a long list, and after he had read about an hour, he looked up.

There sat the great Duke, his hands clasped together, while tears were making long furrows on his battle-soiled cheek.

"Go on," he cried. "For God's sake go on. Let me hear all. This is terrible!"

The doctor finished, and then withdrew, leaving his chief, the conqueror of Waterloo, in an agony of grief.

Meanwhile Napoleon had fled, hoping to escape, but that was not possible, and he was obliged to give himself up as a prisoner. He was sent to the island of St. Helena, where he died six years after the defeat.

Peace was made with France, and Wellington went back to England.

His soldier's life was over. His statesman's life about to begin.

In 1828 the Duke of Wellington was made prime minister, and the following year he had a great triumph in passing a bill, which saved England from civil war.

Up to this time Roman Catholics had not been allowed to sit in Parliament. Now in this year several seats in the House of Commons became vacant, and one of these had to be filled by an Irish member. The Irish people chose a Roman Catholic to go to Parliament, although it was against the rules.

Now Wellington, the prime minister, and one or two more great statesmen, who had formerly opposed the measure, saw very plainly that if they did not allow this Irish member to take his seat, war would break out in Ireland, which would bring misery on the nation.

Wellington begged the King to allow him to bring in a bill allowing this Irishman and other Roman Catholics to sit in the house. But many were against him. Some said that he must be a dissenter himself, some accused him of change of opinion, some said war would be better. But the "Iron Duke" was firm. He knew what civil war was, better than any other man in England.

"I am one of those who have passed a longer part of my life in war than most men," he said in a long speech in the House, "and if I could avoid even one month of civil war in the country I love so well, I would give my life in order to do it."

The Duke shuddered as he thought of the horror of civil war, the miseries of which he well knew. The bill passed at last, and the Duke's triumph was complete.

When Queen Victoria came to the throne in the year 1837, Wellington became her trusted adviser and friend till his death, fifteen years later.

The Duke passed away in his eighty-third year, very quietly, after a short illness. The suddenness of his death fell heavily on the nation, for he had filled so large a space in the eyes of everyone, that each felt he had lost a true friend. Speakers in Parliament vied with one another as to who could speak highest in praise of the great warrior and statesman.

He was buried in St. Paul's Cathedral. Soldiers from every regiment in the kingdom, messengers from every foreign nation came to pay a last token of respect to the great hero. He was laid beside Nelson, "that most beloved of sailors," who half a century before had been borne to rest beneath the lofty dome of St. Paul's.

Thus died "England's greatest son," the grandest, truest man that modern times have seen, the wisest most loyal subject that ever served the English throne, the man "whose life was work," "who never spoke against a foe," "who never sold the truth to serve the hour." And though the great Duke's voice is silent now, he has left us an example which will never die.

"Till in all lands, and thro' all human story,  
The path of duty be the way to glory."

## CHAPTER XIX

### GEORGE STEPHENSON (1781-1848)

About eight miles from Newcastle, and on the river Tyne, there stands a little village, and in this little village stands a labourer's cottage with whitewashed walls, clay floor, and rafters overhead.

It was at this cottage, on a bright June day, that George Stephenson was born, and the cottage still stands to mark the birthplace of the man to whom we owe our railways.

His father, Robert Stephenson, or "Old Bob," as he was called in the village, was a labourer at the village colliery. His wages were very poor, and barely enough to support his wife and six children. He was very fond of birds and animals, and in the winter time he generally had a flock of tame robins round him.

One day he took his little boy, George, to see a blackbird's nest for the first time. He held the little fellow in his arms, and let him peep down between the branches at the nest full of little birds. Though only a baby, he never forgot the sight, which awoke in him an intense love of birds and animals such as his father had.

George led an ordinary village life. He played about out of doors, ran errands, and in course of time was allowed the honour of carrying his father's dinner to him, and, to his great delight, seeing the robins fed.

When he grew a little older George begged to have some real work. A widow near needed a boy to herd the cows. George applied, and he was appointed, and to his great joy received twopence a day.

It was light work, and he had plenty of spare time on his hands, which he spent in bird-nesting and making whistles out of

the reeds. But his chief amusement was making little engines out of clay, like those he had seen at the colliery where his father worked. A boy named Bill used to help him, and the two young engineers played happily together, while the cows grazed peacefully in the fields.

As George grew older he was set to lead the horses while ploughing, "though he was scarce big enough to stride across the furrows," and a short time after he went to help his father at the engine. He had longed for this step, and great was his joy, when at fourteen, he was made fireman at the wages of a shilling a day.

George was tall, and very strong and bony. He was a good runner, and foremost in all the village sports. He was a steady boy, and worked very hard. At the age of seventeen he was manager of an engine, and had already got ahead of his father as a workman. His duty was to watch the engine, and see that it worked well, and that the pumps drew water properly. His engine was a sort of pet to him, and he was never tired of watching it, cleaning it, and taking it to pieces.

But all this time George Stephenson had never learnt to read any more than his fellow-workmen. Sometimes they would get someone who could read, to read out pieces from the newspaper, and they listened eagerly to the accounts of Nelson and Napoleon, who were then surprising Europe by their victories.

Stephenson soon found out that he could never learn well about the engine if he could not read what had been written of it in books, so he joined a night-school in the village. Here he soon learnt to read, and make pot-hooks, and at nineteen was very proud of being able to write his name.

He then went to another master to learn how to do sums. He worked very hard and steadily. He would take his slate to work with him, and then every spare minute he did a sum, and took them to the master in the evening. Thus he got on very quickly, and soon knew as much as was needed.

When he was twenty-one he was an expert workman, and so honest and steady that all looked up to him. About this time he had saved money enough to marry, and he and his wife lived very happily together.

In 1802 his only son was born, and christened Robert. But two years after, his wife died, and the poor father was left alone with his baby boy. He sent the child to his father and mother to be brought up, and went to Scotland to manage a large engine in some spinning works. But there he only stayed a year. His longing to see his child again was intense, and he returned home to Killingworth to find that his aged father was totally blind. For some time George supported him entirely, and worked at his old engine again.

His boy Robert was a great comfort and delight to him, and the little fellow loved to watch his father's engine, and see him taking clocks to pieces. The cottage was well worth seeing, being filled with models of machines, and wheels, and engines. Stephenson was a great favourite, especially with the women, for he used to connect the babies' cradles to the smoke-jack, and so make them rock themselves.

Once he and his son Robert made a sun-dial to place over the cottage door, and there it still hangs, silently marking the hours, when the sun shines bright.

Now at this time there were no trains such as we see puffing along now, there were few railroads such as we see everywhere now all over the country, and there were no steam-engines which would go along at a good rate.

The great waggons full of coal had to be drawn from place to place by horses. Several things had been tried to get the heavy waggons about faster. One clever man made a tramway—that is, put down iron rails, put the waggon on them, and then hoisted a sail on the waggon, hoping the wind would take it along like a ship on the water. But that did not answer very well.

At last somebody thought of making an engine that would go along by steam. He made it very cleverly with very heavy wheels, but the chief objection to it was that it would not move! Somebody else made one to go upon four legs, and these iron legs were to move like a horse; but the first time he tried it, the boiler burst, so that was a failure.

Then one was made that would move, and did not burst, but went along at the rate of a mile an hour.

All these trials and failures Stephenson knew about, and he now resolved to set to work and invent an engine that was not quite so clumsy, and would move faster than one mile an hour.

For ten months he and a number of workmen worked hard at the new engine. At last they finished it, and to their joy found it would go four miles an hour with a weight behind it. Still it was very clumsy, moved often by jerks, and made a rattling noise as it went along. The following year he made a better one.

There had been several explosions lately in the coal mines near Stephenson's home, caused often by the lighted candles that the miners used underground coming in contact with gas in the air.

After much thought Stephenson made a safety-lamp which was covered in, and yet would burn brightly without lighting the explosive air. It required the stoutest heart to try this lamp. One night Stephenson with his first lamp went down the mine, entered the most dangerous part, and held out the lighted lamp firmly in the foul air. In one moment it might have exploded and left Stephenson dead, but he was brave, he would risk his life to save others. The lamp was a success, and Stephenson was doubly repaid by the thankfulness of the miners.

Besides this he received a sum of £1,000 for this life-saving invention, which was known as the "Geordy Lamp."

His own engine still went on, but little was known of it as yet.

One day Stephenson heard that a railway was going to be made from Stockton to Darlington by a Mr. Pease. As soon as he heard it, he set off to see Mr. Pease, and to offer his help in the proposed railway.

He described himself as "only the engine-wright at Killingworth," and Mr. Pease liking the "honest, sensible look about him," readily engaged him.

"Come over to Killingworth and see what my engine can do, sir," he said; "seeing is believing."

Mr. Pease was indeed delighted with it, and intrusted Stephenson with the plans for the new railway. He set steadily to work, and in the year 1825 the railway was opened.

An immense crowd was assembled to see the opening of the first public railway, some to rejoice, some to see the "bubble burst." But it did not burst. Far from it. Stephenson drove the engine himself. "The signal being given, the engine started off with an immense train of carriages," and went at the rate of four or five miles an hour.

Such was the success of this railway that it was resolved to open another from Manchester to Liverpool, both large trading towns in Lancashire. At first people did not like this idea. Some said the noise, and hiss, and smoke of the engines was dreadful, others said engines were a bad invention, and the peace and quiet of the kingdom would be quite destroyed. The engine would burst, and the passengers be killed, the animals in the fields would die of fright at the noise!

"Suppose now," said a member of the House of Commons to Stephenson, "Suppose now, one of these engines to be going along the railroad at the rate of ten miles an hour, and that a cow were to stray upon the line, and get in the way of the engine; would not that be very awkward?"

"Yes," replied Stephenson, in his broad dialect, with a twinkle of his eye, "very awkward—for the cow!"



After a time, however, people gave way, and the plans were drawn out. This was more difficult than the last, and many a time would the men have given up if their stout-hearted master had not kept bravely on. At one place they had to make a long bridge over a marsh, called Chat Moss, before the rails could be laid down at all.

There was then a long dispute as to what engine should be used. It was to be settled by competition, and a prize.

On the appointed day four engines were produced, Stephenson's engine among them. Crowds were assembled, and a grand stand was put up, so that the ladies might have a share in the exciting scene. Stephenson's engine went first, the other three followed. Loud were the cheers as Stephenson's engine was declared to be the best and fastest.

In 1830 the railway between Liverpool and Manchester was opened. People of rank flocked from all parts of the country to see the wonderful sight, the Duke of Wellington, then prime minister, amongst them. The train was cheered by thousands, as it sped along over bridges and through tunnels at the rate of twenty-four miles an hour.

After this railroads were made everywhere, and even now new railways are opened yearly. For it is only a little over fifty years since the first railway was opened, and there are many, many people living now who remember well the days when journeys had to be made in a stage-coach, and trains were unheard of.

After this Stephenson left all the active work to his son Robert, though he still continued to plan railroads and do a great deal of work.

Although greeted by all as one of the greatest men of his time, George Stephenson was still the simple, true, modest workman of thirty years before. His career was drawing to a close, and his last years were spent in rest and quiet. All his early love of birds and animals came back. He kept dogs, and cows,

and horses. There was not a bird's nest in the country round that he did not know. Books wearied him, and sent him to sleep, he said. The young men loved him, and always came to him for help. He was ever ready to give them good advice, ever ready to listen to their trouble. The tears would stream down his brown cheeks, and he would end by opening his purse and help them "to make a fresh start in the world." He never forgot his old friends. Sometimes he went to see them, and finding they had retired into their cottages, he would go in, strike his stick on the paved floor, and "holding his noble person upright, he would say in his own kind way 'Well, and how's all here to-day?'"

He died at the age of sixty-seven, beloved, admired, honoured by all who knew him, leaving to all the example of a simple workman, who, from keeping cows in a field, rose to be one of England's greatest men.