

Princes of Wales were safely in his power, and the weather did not admit of his chasing any of his numerous rivals in the field, he stayed in London and thought over his next move.

Happy the idea presented itself to his mind that, if he wished to secure the nation in the enjoyment of those benefits which his powers had won for it, the best way to do so would be to call the nation into council, and to strengthen his own power by drawing fresh upon the source of it,—the will of the people.

And thus the Christmas of the year 1294 is justly great in the fact that then first the people of England were called upon to state how they would be governed, and to come, by their representatives, to London, there to decide what should and what should not be law.

Richard II. "The shipping king, who ambled up and down, With shallop jesters and rash hawin' wits Soon kindled and soon burnt."

was very extravagant in his mode of keeping Christmas, and is said not only to have been prodigal in respect of his own dress and equipment, but to have borne the daily expense of ten thousand men feeding at his cost during the whole festival.

A plot, which was discovered only by accident, proved nearly fatal to Richard's supplanter, on his first Christmas as king, and to the throne. The Duke of Hereford, the Earl of Kent, Surrey and Gloucestre, who had been favorites of the late king, and who were, by consequence, in disfavor of Henry, conspired to seize the king at Windsor Castle, where he was to spend Christmas, and to murder him under pretence of jousting.

Everything was arranged, the time drew near, and the king knew nothing of the danger that threatened him, till accident revealed it to him a few days after Christmas Day. One of the conspirators wrote to the Earl of Rutland, in London, to remind him of his engagement, the letter got into the hands of the Duke of York, Rutland's father, who instantly sent it, with his son, to the king.

Henry would not believe the news, till the Mayor of London, having got scent of the same thing, prevailed upon Henry to go back with him to London. Scarcely had they got clear of the town ere the conspirators, ignorant of the Earl of Rutland's capture, came to the castle, which they occupied with four hundred men and expressed great chagrin at the king's escape.

The heads of the leaders were soon garlanding the gates of the principal towns of England; but the spirit of conspiracy survived, for in a few months' time there was a rising in the king's bedchamber, and a young man, standing upright, laid there by some traitor, yet when the king should have laid him down, he might have thrust himself upon them.

It was at Christmas time, sixteen years later, that Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham, was hung in chains over a slow fire, kindled on the spot where St. Giles's-in-the-Fields now stands, and burned to death, as a punishment for the compound crimes of heresy and treason.

Had the captive monarch been gifted with foresight to peer into the future, he might have seen, eleven years onward, a sight which had gone far to console him for the plight in which he was.

He might have seen General Monk at Christmas, 1659, preparing to march his northern army on London, bending his energies to the task of undoing the work so laboriously accomplished by Protector Cromwell.

Yet had his vision been extended still more, he would have seen a sight to bring all his feelings to the solution of a question which he would have seen General Monk at Christmas, 1659, preparing to march his northern army on London, bending his energies to the task of undoing the work so laboriously accomplished by Protector Cromwell.

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