

CENTURY-ENDS.



IT is a solemn thing to feel that as the early sunsets fade one after another into twilight the tale of years that has been ushered in so long by Dame Eighteen Hundred is coming to an end, and soon our lips will frame the unfamiliar sound Nineteen Hundred.

Perhaps to girls as much as to any part of the community this century has brought width of horizon and happiness, freedom to develop in mind, and limb, and heart, and work. I should like some of the many readers of THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER to think with me for

a few minutes of the world lived in by other English girls as the shadows fell round other and younger centuries.

Let us start on our journey with a glance at Queen Victoria's happy home. Why should we think of the Court before taking a view of past conditions of life? Because, however far we may penetrate into the mist of the past, a strong light generally beats on the throne so that we can see in the dimness. It does not matter how fiercely the light beats on our good Queen, we see her with

"All that should accompany old age,
As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,"

with a country to honour her, children to love and care for her, and a present which is such that it has never left its past behind.

Though we look at the Court right back to the time when 1099 closed amid the revels of the wild set of companions who formed the bachelor court of "the Red King," we shall never find such heart's-joy and home-peace on the royal hearth.

In 1799 we had indeed a good King and Queen in George III. and his plucky wife, Queen Charlotte. But what clouds rested over the picture! It was not long ago that the kind old King had been suffering from madness, and the horrors of the French Revolution and the execution of the unhappy Louis and Marie Antoinette must have been often present in his mind. The quarrel between the old couple and their son George and his total separation from his unfortunate wife Caroline of Brunswick add other dark touches to the picture.

We have only to think of Fanny Burney, Queen Charlotte's maid of honour, to have in a nutshell the difference between the opportunities of girls in last century and girls now. The authorship of Fanny's novel of *Evelina* had been kept as secret as though it were a crime, and it was only its immense success that had led to her disclosure of her part in it. By 1799, however, she had gained by her pen enough money to build Camilla Cottage at West Hamble, where her beloved husband, Monsieur d'Arblay, whom she calls "her mate," spends his days like Adam in digging his garden. Alas, 1799 was a cold winter, and when Fanny and her husband came home in March, this is how she describes the wreck of the little crop: "The horses of our neighbouring farmer broke through our hedges, and have made a kind of bog of our

meadow, the sheep followed, who have eaten up all our greens, the swine have trod down all the young plants. . . Our potatoes, left from our abrupt departure in the ground, are all rotten or frost-bitten and utterly spoilt." Poor Monsieur d'Arblay!

Now we will skip back to 1699 and take a peep at a royal and a humble interior.

The century that ran from 1600 to 1700 had been a stirring one. Instead of the thick and coarse atmosphere of the Georges, the air was full of zeal and battle. Think of the stern civil war, when men fought for loyalty on one side and principle on the other—the tragedy of the King's death—the gloom and bigotry of the Commonwealth—the giddy whirl of the Restoration. But by 1699 those are all past. The golden age of literature, too, is over. Dryden still lives, old and crippled, but the great manner does not hold the public ear, and the little sickly boy, wandering in the glades of Windsor Forest, will soon rule a world of letters which is content for its highest with the glitter of Pope. The days of the bloodless revolution are here, and Dutch King William is on the throne, and we must be content with Chancellor Somers as a real though not romantic hero. Poor Queen Mary's short thirty-three years ended six years since. If she was an undutiful daughter, she had her punishment in never knowing the joy of children. We must try not to think too hardly of the irritable widower whom she loved so well. He grudges the semblance of a Court to Mary's sister, the Princess Anne, who is holding some little state this winter at St. James's Palace, with her passionately loved little son, the Duke of Gloucester, not yet gone to join his brothers and sister in the silent country. I expect that many girls go now to visit the old red palace at Kensington, which we love so much because our Queen was a child there. When you next go there on a holiday, think of it in its un-mellowed early days, when the widowed King tramped up and down the lofty rooms: recall him in his very kindest moment, when little Lord Buckhurst, aged four, "wanted him as a horse for his coach," and the cross man became quite gentle and trotted round and "geed up" at the bidding of the small tyrant.

We shall find these are rough days for young girls, if we peep into the childhood's home of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. The little girl is eleven years old and has no mother. She has already passed an hour of ecstasy when her father, Lord Dorchester, had her fetched to be fêted as one of the toasts of the year at the Kit-cat Club. Very soon after we get another glimpse of the beautiful gifted girl having lessons in carving from a master that she might soon preside at her father's great public dinners at his country seat of Thoresby, in Notts. Experiences such as these gave us the women of those days, in whom wits and ability were more manifest than refinement.

Our journey through time to 1599 brings us face to face with good Queen Bess, and much as we must admire her courage and genius, we feel strongly the contrast between her solitary and loveless old age, and the beautiful home-life of Queen Victoria. It had been her lot to reign through the most stirring of our centuries, and to be in the prime of life during the great struggle of the Reformation, the birth of our noblest literature, and the unfolding of the riches of the New World. In these great circumstances and under her guidance England became the great nation she is.

Mr. Martin Hume, the most recent student of her policy, speaks of her as "perhaps the

greatest sovereign that ever occupied the English throne." Yes, she fought a brave cheerful fight, and must have been supported in the knowledge of how she had "helped England," in these lonely days of 1599, when her beauty is gone and her friends—Leicester and a hundred others, and even trusted and aged Burleigh—are all dead. We may easily imagine her now from the minute description of the German Hentzner. Her skin is still fair though wrinkled, her little eyes are still black and pleasant, and her hooked nose and narrow lips give the strong expression so characteristic of her face. In those days art had no substitute for her black teeth, though the Queen could cover her spare grey locks with hair to recall the long Tudor tresses of red gold of younger days, which she had shown to Andrew Melville, when she asked him if the Queen of Scots could boast such a head of hair. Her neck is very bare, and her white silk dress with pearls the size of beans must have contrasted strangely with her sixty-six years. No wonder she was ruffled in September, 1599, when her disgraced favourite, Essex, burst into her tiring-room at ten in the morning while her ladies were dressing her, and when she had not yet chosen which of her eighty wigs she was going to wear. He covered her long white hands with kisses, and for the moment she was melted, but the September breath of graciousness soon faded after the nonsuch visit, and his many disobediences, and failure to quench in blood Tyrone's rebellion led to that winter of her discontent which kept him confined so long, and no doubt chafed him to the rebellion which caused his death in 1602. The poor old Queen had a heart hungry for love. Can we wonder that Essex's reckless plots and his bitter words, that the queen was "crooked in mind and in body," steeled her heart against him? He was the son of her rival, Lettice Knowllys, who had vexed her so long ago by marrying her old favourite, Dudley Lord Leicester.

Which of the many dazzling ladies of that Court shall I choose for my readers to peep at? Shall it be Mary Fytton, whose gorgeous portrait can be seen to-day in Lady Newdigate's *Gossip from a Muniment Room* in a gown fretted all over with gold and jewels? No, this lovely maid of honour, who led in the masque on the occasion of Lord Herbert's marriage to Mrs. Anne Russell in June, 1600, belongs to the giddier ones among the young girlhood of that day.

It is amusing to hear of her "skirt of cloth of silver and mantell of carnacion tafleta, and rich waistcoat wrought with silkes of gold and silver," and how "she went up to the Queen and wooed her to dawnce; her Majestie asked what she was. 'Affection,' she said. 'Affection!' said the Queen. 'Affection is false.' Yet her Majestie rose and dawnced." Her games in which she and her companions used to "frisk and hey about" were a great interruption to her father's friend, Sir William Knowllys. The indiscretion she showed lodged her for a time in the Tower.

I think you will agree with me that the letters Sir William wrote to Mary's sister, Lady Ann Newdegate, give us a peep into a more wholesome life. She is a very fond nursing-mother to her babies in her home at Arbury, close to the farm where George Eliot was to be born so many years afterwards. Lady Ann's home is described in *Scenes from Clerical Life* as Cheverel Manor. Here Lady Ann's friends could never persuade her "to be eased from the bondage of that pretty Nursery" and come to Court. When Ann's little daughter is christened, the Earl of

Essex's uncle, Sir William Knowlys, consents to help "in making youre little one a Christian soule." Ann had been married when she was a child of twelve, but she and her husband went on living at her old home at Gawsorth in Cheshire, and she did not go to preside over his home at Arbury till she was twenty-one.

These two sisters show us a gay lady and a domestic lady, but we must not forget the numbers of learned ladies who flourished in this reign when Queen Elizabeth startled Jaline, the Polish Ambassador, in 1597 by answering his long speech of remonstrance for encroachments at sea by a round scolding in Latin. "I have been enforced this day," she said, "to scour up my old Latin that hath lain long in rusting."

Few women have been so conversant with Latin, Greek and modern languages as the wonderful daughter of Henry VIII., and she set a fashion that was largely followed. Both in mental grasp and in temperament she was like her father. Sir John Harrington says of her in her late years, "she put forth such alterations when obedience was lacking, as left no doubtings whose daughter she was."

A lady who was like her both in temper and learning was Lady Katherine Berkeley, of whom you may read at large in that delightful and rambling biography by John Smyth of Nibley, who might well be called "The Boswell of the Berkeleys." He describes her great state at Callowden near Coventry, how himself as a lad had presumed "to present her with a running legge or curtsey," and how "she called me back ere I departed to make to her at least one hundred leggs." On one occasion her finger had "to be launched all alonge to the bare bone. Her surgeon desired her to sit and that some of her strongest servants might hold her, for the paine would be extreame: to whom she replied, 'Spare not you in performing your part, and leave the rest to mee.' Shee held out her hand, hee did his office, she never blenched or so much as seemed to take notice of the paine."

This brave lady was the daughter of Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, the herald of Elizabethan poetry. Her father was beheaded, and in her later life the like fate befell her brother, the Duke of Norfolk, who had dared to aspire to the hand of Mary Queen of Scots. After this last blow, her high spirits were chastened, and "in her elder years she gave herself to the study of natural history and astronomy." She also learnt Latin with John Smyth, and writes to him in 1597, "I have sent you here enclosed ros. to buy Ciceroe's *Sentences*, bound faire and of a good print. Be careful of the rest of my books."

But we must not linger longer over the Court of the sad old Queen, though it is very interesting to see her planning to marry her young "mayds" to Muscovy princes, or receiving gorgeous presents of diamond wreaths and silken robes from the Sultan's mother at Constantinople. In a short three years grief holds her mute, and her ladies cannot make her put on her gawds. Her poor heart longed for love, and we think she must have gladly welcomed it when she reached the country to which so many of her brave Englishmen had passed before her by a glorious death. She must have lived among a noble set of people, for they were the people of Shakespeare's plays, and where can we find sweeter, merrier, deeper women than Juliet and Rosalind, Beatrice and Viola, and all those fresh creations which breathe the breath of life and are not the pageant of a dream? By this winter of 1599 *Much Ado* was already written.

Our last picture shall be the Court and

time of Elizabeth's grandfather, Henry VII. Have we escaped from shadows now that we come to a married home and a nursery ringing with children's laughter? No, fair-haired Elizabeth of York did not have a very happy life. Her reserved husband knew that he owed to his wife half the stability of his throne, and he does not seem to have felt happy under the obligation. She, however, had a sweet and gentle disposition, and seems to have been always kind and "comfortable" to him, not resenting slights, or the extreme shortness of money which was her portion.

We must remember that the curtain which rises on 1499 reveals the end of a century of bloodshed and horror for royal people. In her unresponsive husband, Elizabeth had had a happy release from the other husbands who had been proposed for her, and contemporary records speak of no unkindness on the part of Henry, though tradition has described him as making his wife unhappy.

One partisan historian, Bucke, has ascribed to Elyzabeth a letter in which she expressed a desire for the horrible marriage contemplated between her and her uncle, Richard III., the murderer of her brothers. Happily, however, so learned an authority as Mr. Gairdner, of the *Paston Letters*, disbelieves in the authenticity of this letter, and nothing else in the whole career of the Queen makes it appear conceivable. We read in a contemporary chronicle how the gentle Queen Anne had "always treated Elizabeth as a sister"; and we cannot imagine her wishing to take that sorrowful lady's difficult position. Rather from her she may have learnt how to steer a wise course through shoals. Imagine her difficulties, with her strong and clever mother-in-law, Margaret of Richmond, and her vain and foolish mother, Elizabeth Woodville, constantly about her path. We hear no word of quarrels, and yet the number of her penniless sisters who surrounded her—Elizabeth, Cecily, Anne and Katherine—must have needed a woman with an amiable disposition, if matrimonial quarrels were to be avoided. The Queen seems to have found money to spend on them by the economy with which she had her old gowns rebraided, and her dress-bodies sewn over! In her youth she had been taught French and Spanish to fit her for a life as Queen of France. Edward IV. had meant her to marry Charles VIII., son of wicked Louis XI., our acquaintance in *Quentin Durward*. Perhaps the early education led her safely through some stormy hours, and served her as well as though she had remained through life Madame la Dauphine and Queen of France.

As the two centuries met in 1500 there had been war and disquietude. The strange claim of Perkin Warbeck to be Elizabeth's murdered brother Richard had led to much anxiety and warfare. He had been defeated at Exeter in 1497. He had escaped from his company at Taunton. The people of the little town of Langport and the neighbouring village of Kingsbury seem to have been heavily implicated in the rebellion, for they were fined £426 13s. 4d., only £15 less than Taunton itself. But Perkin was captured only to escape and plot again, so that at last King Henry had him hanged at Tyburn in November, 1499. A few days later Elizabeth's cousin, the poor half-witted Earl of Warwick, was beheaded on Tower Hill. It must have made a sad Christmas for the Queen, whose own health was tried by ague and the sure approaches of consumption. Perkin Warbeck's wife, "The White Rose," was one of Elizabeth's own favourites, and the young Earl had been her companion in confinement at Sherif Hoton Castle before she became the King's wife.

But the picture is not all gloom. The

Queen has not yet lost her eldest son Arthur, and we know from the visit paid by Erasmus and Sir Thomas More in this very month, what a beautiful nursery group of Henry, Margaret, Mary, and Edmund, were always present to delight her eyes at their tutor's house at Croydon. It is refreshing to think of Henry VIII. as a handsome boy, the delight of his fair-haired mother after whom he called his own daughter Elizabeth in 1533.

We often read how private feuds and public warfare left little room for sentiment in the fifteenth century. I think, however, that the *Paston Letters* show us as many traces of tender love and warm affection as we could wish. Margaret Paston not only conducted operations for her husband during the siege of Gresham, but when he is sick in London she writes to express her yearning to nurse him, and says she had "lever do so than have a new gown, tho' it were of scarlet."

Her daughter-in-law, Margery Brews, who married John Paston the younger in 1477 and died in 1495, shall be our typical woman for the end of the fifteenth century.

It is true the parents on both sides "haggled" long over the money to be settled regarding the marriage of John and Margery. None the less, when John visited her at her father's home at Topcroft in Norfolk, Margery fell deeply in love, and her mother writes to John Paston, "Ye have made her such advocate for you, that I may never have rest night nor day for calling and crying upon to bring the said matter to effect." She bids him come to see Margery "upon Friday which is St. Valentine's Day and every bird chooseth him a mate." John pays the visit, and Margery then writes to him as "to her ryght well-beloved Valentine," that "if he had not half the livelihood that he hath she would not forsake him." She beseeches him that this "bylle" be seen of none earthly creature save himself. John himself is very deeply touched, for he writes to his brother that "carpenters of this crafte that I use now have not alderbest their wits their own!" Difficulties were many and great, but before the sweet yellow elm-leaves had fallen on the autumn grass, John has taken Margery home to Oxnead. By December she is writing him a simple tender letter, saying, "I pray you that ye will wear the ring with the image of St. Margrete that I sent you for a remembrance until ye come home." Next year a "fair son" Christopher is born. As the years pass there are scattered letters in which Margery generally begins dutifully "Right reverend and worshipful Sir," but sometimes her love overflows the bounds and we have "My owne swete hert." It is delightful to read one letter from the husband, written many years after the early days of marriage, begging Margery to send him a large plaister of her *flose ungraentorium* for a friend who has "an ache in his knee." "He is the man," says John Paston, "who brought you and me together, and I had lever than £40 you could depart him and his pain. But when you send me the plaister you must send me writing how it should be laid to and taken from his knee, and how long it should abide on his knee unre-moved," etc. From this letter we see that Margery, happy woman, had known how to make John rejoice in their union, and that besides their skill in sewing and every kind of brewing and baking, the maidens of the fifteenth century had some good knowledge of binding wounds and tending sickness. As we wander backwards along the paths of time we shall see very plainly that in the girls of the past there have always been present powers for good of every kind. Let us be very grateful that under the reign of our dear Queen such wonderful opportunities for developing these powers have been generously opened up to us. CLOTILDA MARSON.

The ballade, "no less admired than a gyant in a paggeant," had no effect.

At last we lifted out more than a quart of still smooth cream, and, heigh presto! the butter came. But it was a butter very different from my usual yellow hard mass of "glycerides of the fatty acids." It was pale of complexion and weak in its substance—all from want of air.

After the butter has "come," all butter-milk is poured off into one of our big earthenware crocks. Then a little cold water is added to the churn, the lid replaced and a few quick turns of the handle given. This squeezes the remaining drops of thin milk out of the, by this time, solid block of "stearin, palmitin, and olein" which we call butter, and leaves less work for hands and wrists—wooden hands I mean, as butter must never be touched by human digits or palms.

Pure, dry, fine salt is next added, one ounce to every pound. It is pressed in and then washed. We know that the curious patch-work of salt streaks and fresh butter so often seen is no mark that wizards have bewitched

the milk. We do not need to add rennet to an eggshellful of the left liquid in order to discern the witchcraft. We soon learn to recognise that uneven manipulation of the salt has thus resulted.

Now there is only left to weigh, print and pat. The work is done, and a delightfully easy, interesting and cleanly work it is. I do not object to it in the least. No lady need do so on the score of dirt, difficulty, exertion or time. An apron tied over one's everyday dress does away with any damage to clothes. The difficulties are only initial ones and soon surmounted. The exertion is trifling—the time spent is three-quarters of an hour to actually churn and make up, say, twice a week, and a few seconds night and morning to set the new milk and skim the old.

Butter, however, is not the only thing we make in the dairy of mine house. When cream is plentiful we put dribbles of it into a muslin bag and let it drip and hang for several days. With it we place a handful of salt to keep it. When it no longer drops milky tears we place it under a weight, and

in a short time have cream cheese ready to pack in nettles and place on our table. Also, when the "oleagenous compound" is scarce, we lift a pan of fresh milk on to the range, and bring it to nearly boiling point. When the surface thickens, the pan is removed carefully without shaking the top, and when it is cold, behold, we skim off a pot of Devonshire clotted cream—made in Bedfordshire, however.

Now, in conclusion, I would say that "What is worth doing is worth doing well." It is no economy to dispense with a dairymaid and have to put up with bad butter. So there must be one visitor strictly excluded from the dairy in mine and every other house. No, I don't mean the cat. No well-bred feline would degrade herself by stealing from her mistress's domain (especially if her saucer of cream is provided without stealing). I mean chance. Everything in a dairy depends on perfect accuracy, scrupulous cleanliness and strict punctuality. Then the balls, shells, cows, pats, prints, swans, scrolls and rolls of butter will indeed be invariably very good.

WHERE CENTURIES MEET.



Nourbackward journey we have now reached the year 1400. We said good-bye to England when Dean Colet and Erasmus were heralding the New Learning in the days of Henry VII. We reach the year 1400 across a century

in which the towns indeed were growing to a fuller life, but in which the homes of the country were devastated by the Wars of the Roses. We may look upon the year as a half-way house between the noble age of Edward I. and the Renaissance that filled the time between 1500 and 1600.

Let us take a peep together, girls, at the Mediæval England of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and Wycliffe's Bible. The great-nephew of the historian Macaulay has just written a brilliant book called *The Age of Wycliffe*, which is bringing before folks' eyes the stirring times of Wat Tyler's revolution of 1381, when the peasants from half England came tramping up to London full of hopes to be rid of villain's bondage. Some sore mischief they did, for they killed the good Archbishop Sudbury and the Flemings who could not pronounce "bread and cheese" with an English accent. Yet, mighty host as they were, they dispersed for the most part quietly to their homes, when the fair-headed boy-king Richard II. rode to Mile End through the orchards of Whitechapel, and promised them on his own account to commute service dues for a rent of fourpence an acre. Try to get a sight of that stirring book, and of William Morris's beautiful romance of *John Ball, Priest*, and the *Stories from Froissart*, which Wells, Gardner and Darton have just published for Mr. Henry Newbolt, and then you will have some other idea of a great time than the cold string of facts you learnt at school. I want to suggest to your minds some pleas for that mediæval England which we are so ready to call the Dark Ages. We sometimes forget that "the child is father of the man" in the history of great religious reforms as well as of individuals. Mr. Trevelyan is full of scorn for the abuses of the age of Wycliffe, and well he may be, but does he always remember that the Church which

bred Wycliffe and his poor preachers must have had great nobility and life in it to bring forth such strong sincere children? Does he lay enough stress on Wykeham, the good Bishop of Winchester, who was spending his thousands on beautifying the nave of his cathedral, and in this very year of 1400 adding bells to his lovely "New College" at Oxford entered seven years since, for the first time, by the seventy scholars drafted on from his other great foundation at Winchester? The abuses were, no doubt, very real, but so was the religious life which had no share in them, and that which was determined to cleanse them at all costs. I have a fancy, girls, for seeking out the beautiful works of the Holy Spirit in every age of English History, and though, as Bishop Stubbs says, the fourteenth century was the age of chivalry, and not, as was the thirteenth, the age of heroism, yet it had in it the great battles of Crécy and Poitiers, the wonderful poets Chaucer and Langland, and stone poems such as St. Stephen's Chapel and Wykeham's Round Tower at Windsor.

I want to beg you to read Professor Skeat's little half-crown edition of *The Vision of Piers Plowman*, and then you will agree with me that very noble thoughts could come in those days not only to courtiers like Chaucer, but to a poor clerk who lived in poverty in Cornhill with his wife Kitte and his daughter Calotte. "How can we read it?" you will answer me; "it is like a foreign language!" So it may seem at the first glance, but remember how hard you worked over your French and German when you were at school, and believe me that when you have looked at the notes and glossary a few times, this poem will emerge for you as written in your own mother-tongue, and you will delight to notice that your fathers said "wanhope" when they meant "despair," and that the very words of the poem you are studying are themselves poetry.

It is wonderful that the gaunt tall man who earned such a poor livelihood by singing the seven psalms for men's souls, should have seen all the abuses of his time as clearly as Chaucer did, and yet should not have turned coarse and bitter. Again and again comes over the refrain that he puts into the mouth of the Church—

"When all treasures are tried truth is the best,"

and no one has ever sung in a more inward way of love—

"... the levest thing, and most like to heaven,
And also the plant of peace";

how

"Heaven might not holden it, it was so heavy of hymself,
Till it had of the earth eaten his fill."

You must read for yourselves how, because of this incarnation,

"Love is leader of the Lord's folk of heaven."

Also

"Love is leech of life, and next our Lord self,
And also the graith-gate that goeth into Heaven."

The "graith-gate" means the "direct way," and surely Long Will of Cornhill found that way. We all know from Green's *Short History* how Piers Plowman fell a-dreaming on the Malvern Hills, but the unfortunate system of cramming for examinations generally leaves us contented with a phrase. If you read the book itself you will be the richer for a life-time.

But England not only contained the poems of Chaucer and Langland, it was a country full of beauty and colour and very free from the ugliness which presses into every corner of modern life. I have beside me a copy of the will of that Richard Earl of Arundel whose head was cut off in 1397 by Richard II, for attempting to resist that king's assumption of despotic power. The will gives a picture of great beauty in household goods. He leaves to his dear wife Philippa "the hangings of the hall which was lately made in London, of blue tapestry with red roses, with the arms of my sons"; to his son Richard he leaves "a standing bed called Clove, and a blue bed of silk embroidered with griffins"; to his brother the Archbishop Arundel, who was banished by Richard and restored by Henry IV., he leaves "a cup enamelled with a stag at the top." Had we space we might tell of a hundred costly objects such as fretted head-dresses of pearls, and rich books, and "nouches" or buttons of gems. One of the many failings which ruined what was nobler in King Richard's character was his extravagant love

of dress, and the horned and towering head-dresses of the ladies, and the long peaked shoes or cracowes of the men must have given a strangely picturesque appearance to the streets of those days. In this very year of 1400 Wykeham appoints in the statutes for his seventy scholars at New College, Oxford, that they must not wear green or red gaiters or peaked shoes. A few years since he enjoined severe punishments on the monks and nuns at Winchester because some of the sisters dressed in Calabrian furs, and the brothers in silk belts and gold and silver ornaments.

William Morris, who would certainly never minimise the hardships of the poor, yet insists that their dress, though of coarse material, was beautifully finished, and that the inns and taverns in which they met were beautifully built and adorned by rich friezes and frescoes.

In THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER a few months since Mr. Brewer told us how, in the reign of Edward III., Adam and William Bota began the lovely red-stone tower of St. Michael's, Coventry, the highest of any parish church in England, and took twenty-five years to build it. Think of the art of a country in which this lovely thought in stone was the work of a local architect.

Beauty then was the common heritage of all, and a certain amount of rough comfort probably went along with it. Men who are half-starved seldom have the courage to rebel, and we may feel that the poor probably had some sort of physical well-being when Froissart says of the peasant rebels of 1381 that their action was due "to the ease and riches that the common people were of." This is no doubt a very class-prejudiced view, but yet we must remember the forests and marshes of the England at that time, and the wild-fowl, etc., that were to be had for the poaching in those days of powerful outlaws and unorganised police. Remember that the religious houses extended kindness of every kind to the poor. In this reign we read of the "Sustern Spital" at Winchester, where, at the prior's bidding, fifteen sisters went out to nurse the poor of the neighbourhood.

In Chaucer we get vivid pictures of the dress of the ladies. You will remember the scarlet stockings, "full fine y-tied," of the Wife of Bath, and of the prioress how

"Of small coral about her arm she bare
A pair of beadës gauded all with green;
And thereon hung a brooch of gold full
sheen,
On which was first ywritten a crownèd A,
And after Amor Vincit Omnia."

The ladies were by no means ignorant. They learnt in the convent-schools and from "the Mother of the Maids" in the castles, where they span and worked their tapestry, both letters and manners. An A B C book was bought for the five-year-old daughter of the Earl of Derby, and her mother was proficient on the viol and the harp. We read in Chaucer how sweetly the prioress could sing the service and talk French after the school of Stratford attë Bowe, and how her manners at table were so delicate that—

"Her overlippë wipéd she so clean,
That in her cuppë was no fërthing seen
Of greasë, when she drunken had her
draught."

She would weep if she saw a mouse caught in a trap, and had many "smallë houndës" that she fed with roasted flesh or milk or wastel bread. You remember how often such little dogs are carved in stone at the feet of ladies on their tombs. Although at dinner-parties gentlemen and ladies cut off a piece from the joint which the servant brought them on a spit, yet they were very

particular about the way they did it, and the music the minstrels played the while. There is a delightful description in Froissart of how he walked up and down the vine-covered alleys at Eltham Palace in 1395 while Sir Henry Christead described to him the barbarous manners of the four Irish kings, and his difficulties in teaching them to "behave properly at table."

Again we must not forget that education is to be had in other places than at school. One of the advantages of the ladies of these times was the frequency with which they went on pilgrimages to shrines in England or Spain, as to St. James of Compostella, and even to Italy and Jerusalem. The Wife of Bath was a simple middle-class woman, and yet she says quite casually of her fourth husband—

"He died when I came from Jerusalem,
And lieth in grave under the roodë-
beam."

It did not need immense riches to make such a pilgrimage, for pious souls could join some company such as that of the Canterbury pilgrims, and receive hospitality by the way at the religious houses.

In the next century one of the books Caxton printed was *Informacion for Pilgrymes into the Holy Londe*, which has been described as a sort of fifteenth century Baedeker. In the many curious wills extant that belong to this period books are often bequeathed to ladies, as when Margaret de Courtenay, Countess of Devon, leaves two primers and a book called *Arthur de Bretagne* to her daughter Katherine. This old countess died in 1391, and you may see her beautiful tomb now in the south transept of Exeter Cathedral. She was the granddaughter of Edward I., and a very great lady, but you must not therefore argue that her education or her daughter's would be very much above the average. Other ladies besides the highest were reared at the convent schools, among them the wife of Chaucer's miller at Trumpington. Nobles were only allowed in the proportion of one in seven, at their own expense and as a great favour, at Wykeham's New College at Oxford.

But we must leave our peeps at large into that Mediaeval England which is so full of interest that every scrap of knowledge concerning it adds to the thirst for more. Is it not March of 1400 A.D.?

"For God's sake let us sit upon the ground
And tell sad stories of the death of kings."

Yes, stories they are and must remain, for it is very hard to be perfectly certain that the pale regular features of the dead man soldered in lead except from brow to chin, and borne upon a black chare by four black horses, were really those of Richard II. The story of his murder by Sir Piers Exton at Pontefract is very circumstantial, but there was no sign of violence upon the skull found in the grave at Langley, and it is not wholly impossible that the King escaped to Scotland and was kept prisoner there by Robert III., dying at last in 1419.

A certain clerk called Maudeleyn had impersonated Richard in the late insurrection at Cirencester, and was there taken prisoner. Some have conjectured that the pale face on the bier was his. It is, however, recorded that in February, 1400, a hundred marks were given to the Keeper of the Wardrobe for the conveyance of the late King's body from Pontefract to London, and this seems to incline the weight of proof to the side which holds that the delicate Provençal-reared Richard II. succumbed to hardship, and was "pyned to death" or "forhungred," as Sir James Ramsay says was the contemporary view. Froissart says that twenty

thousand spectators—was Long Will of Cornhill among them, I wonder?—came to look at the Corpse in the Chepe and at St. Paul's, and had the dead man been the clerk Maudeleyn, surely someone would have been found to cry "foul play," and declare that this was not the King but his confessor.

In any case, as Pater says, "the graceful wild creature was tamed at last," and since October, 1399, Harry of Derby, the Londoners' favourite, has been sitting on an uneasy throne. The country had lamented in 1377 when the ten-year-old Richard became King, and people quoted to each other from Ecclesiastes, "Woe to the land whose king is a boy." Yet spite of his unblushing attempt to establish a despotism, his wilful extravagance and his wild outbursts of rage, Richard's is not a character which leaves us cold as does that of his secret-faced supplanter. In his early days he had tried to use despotism in behalf of the peasants when he attempted at Mile End to abolish villeinage with a word. If seven thousand of those peasants fell victims to those who trod out the sparks of rebellion, we may believe that the King's uncles and the Commons themselves—landlords for the most part—had more to do with the deaths of Hob and Piers than their boy leader of Smithfield. If Richard caused the deaths of Gloucester and Arundel, they had shown scant mercy on his early favourites, Tressilian and Brembre, and the other victims of the Merciless Parliament. We must not forget that the boy Richard inherited from both parents the fierceness of the Plantagenets and the ungovernable fury of the Angevins. Though his father was the hero of Crécy, he was also the Black Prince who bid slay and spare not, when the women and children were butchered in the siege of Limoges.

In 1394 Richard's good genius, the wise and cultured Anne of Bohemia, fell a victim to a sudden illness, which was probably the plague. He remained a widower for two years, and then at All Hallows-tide he married the eight-year-old daughter of the mad King Charles VI. of France in St. Nicholas' Church at Calais. He is said to have dearly loved his child-wife, but she could not help him as Anne had done with "mutual society and comfort." No doubt in the long task-hours at Windsor she watched for his coming, but it was only that the handsome man might pet and caress his child playmate.

Not one short year ago, at the end of May, 1399, King Richard had bid farewell to Isabel, by then eleven years old, before he sailed from Bristol on his ill-fated voyage to Ireland. He was going with his usual impulsive generosity to avenge the death of his cousin Roger Mortimer, and he left his little Queen in charge of Roger's widow. Before quitting Windsor Richard chanted a collect in the church, and then partook of wine and comfits at the door with the little Queen, and, lifting her up in his arms, repeatedly said, "Adieu, Madame, till we meet again."

I wonder which of the lovely gowns mentioned in the old records she was wearing at the time. Was it the "robe of red velvet embossed with birds of goldsmith's work," or the one of "murray-mezereon velvet embroidered with pearl roses"? In any case, no doubt her dark eyes looked tenderly at her husband, whether or not Monstrelet was right in ascribing to her a personal beauty which was undoubtedly possessed by her youngest sister Kate, who was to delight the eyes of Henry V. twenty-one years later, and be the ancestress of all the Tudors. It was intended by each of these marriages to put an end to the Hundred Years' War, but in each case the end was only temporarily attained.

There seems no doubt of the truth of the

stories of Isabel's grief over her husband's deposition, and the death of which she was long kept in ignorance. Spite of Shakespeare's beautiful scene of meeting, it is doubtful if the pair ever met again after the parting at Windsor. On Henry's usurpation the little queen was taken from Windsor and established finally at Sunning Hill, near Reading, quite bereft of her French ladies, who brought the sad news to the French Court.

A plot had been laid by King Richard's friends, notably his half-brothers, Thomas Holland, Earl of Exeter, and John Holland, Earl of Huntingdon, to murder Henry IV. at a tournament at Oxford, in January, 1400. News, however, of the plot reached Henry at Windsor, where the widower's Court was presided over by another child of eight, King Henry's eldest daughter Blanche. The King escaped to London, and the rebels marched to Reading, where the captive Queen Isabel hailed them with delight and herself pinned on her husband's badges of the White Hart and tore away the Lancastrian Swan. But beloved as he was in Wales and Cheshire, "sweet Richard's" party found small following in the rest of England, and one by one the leaders fell victims to the mob or to Henry IV. Thomas Holland was lynched and beheaded by the mob at Cirencester, whilst his brother John escaped down the Thames, but was caught in the low ground at Prittlewell, near Southend. John Holland's wife was Henry IV.'s sister Joan, and he might therefore have hoped to save his head, but he sought an unlucky refuge at Pleshy, the home of the old Countess of Hereford. The mob lynched him on the spot in the courtyard, where he had seen Gloucester taken by his nephew, King Richard, two and a half years ago. The old Countess of Hereford was mother of the murdered Gloucester's wife, and perhaps she would not save John Holland, who had had no small share in his death at Calais. She had every reason to hate the name of Richard, for she was born a Fitzalan and was sister to Richard's life-long foe, the Duke of Arundel, from whom that king had drawn blood in a quarrel in Westminster Abbey on the occasion of Queen Anne's funeral, and whom he had finally beheaded. When I add that the Countess's other daughter, Mary Bohun, was Henry IV.'s first wife, you will believe that Richard's half-brother, John Holland, had small cause to look for mercy at her hands.

We need not go into all the horrors of that year 1400. Henry IV. purchased but little peace with the throne he had usurped, and illness made him an old man even earlier than his father, who had been called "time-honoured Lancaster" before he was fifty-seven. Queen Isabel would have none of his young son, Prince Hal, though the usurper tried hard to force him upon her as a husband. Richard II. had indeed been kind to the boy, and had knighted him on the ill-fated journey to Ireland, but still he was the son of her husband's supplanter, and that was a crime Isabel could not forgive. Until May of 1402 the young widow was kept a prisoner at Havering-atte-Bower with the old Countess of Hereford as one of her attendants. In the will we were looking at a short time since the Duke of Arundel had left to this "dear sister Joan" a "cup with hearts." We fear her heart had few motives to gentleness towards the girl-widow of the man who had caused her brother's death.

By July, 1402, Isabel had returned to her mad father, Charles VI. of France, and her wicked mother, Isabeau of Bavaria. Henry IV. robbed the poor child of all her rich jewels and her large dowry. Until the year 1406 Isabel maintained her widowhood, but in that year Court policy obliged her to a tearful

betrothal with her cousin Charles, son of the Duke of Orleans, a boy much younger than herself. Horror seemed to tread in the footsteps of Isabel, for in a winter night of 1407 France was shaken by the news that Isabel's father-in-law, the king's brother Charles, Duke of Orleans, had been set upon and murdered in the Rue Barbette, at the instigation of Jean sans Peur, Duke of Burgundy. This murder lit flames of civil war which were not quenched until rivers of blood had been shed. Isabel had a distinguished man for her second husband, for in later years he became the poet Charles of Orleans, who is still the pride of French literature. In 1410 "Madame de France," as our English "Isabella the Little" was now called, died in the great castle at Blois at the birth of her infant daughter. Her poet-husband mourned her loss in some plaintive verses, of which I will quote one.

"Las! je suis seul sans compagnie.
Adieu, madame, ma liesse*
Or est notre amour déparié :
Non pourtant : je vous fais promesse
Que de prières à largesse
Morte vous servirai de cœur,
Sans oublier aucunement,
Et vous regretterai souvent
En peine, souci et douleur."

The fortunes of the house of Isabel were strangely linked to England though she died in France. Henry V., whose hand she had so stubbornly refused, captured her widower, Charles of Orleans, at the battle of Agincourt in 1415. Large ransom was offered for him by the French, as he was the next heir to the throne after the Dauphin. Neither Henry V., however, nor his son, would let their prisoner go, and he was detained in England from 1416 to 1440. What a thrill we feel as we read in Sir Henry Ellis's *Original Letters* that among the places where the Duke of Orleans was a prisoner was Pontefract Castle, the very spot where his wife's first husband probably met with his sad death.

There is still preserved in the British Museum, where you and I, girls, may see it if we like, the beautiful illuminated manuscript of this Duke of Orleans' sonnets which he wrote while imprisoned in the Tower. In it there is an illumination which shows him sitting writing in his room in the White Tower, surrounded by guards. This manuscript was prepared for Henry VII., and it preserves for us the earliest known view both of the Tower and of the City. There was another royal prisoner confined from 1406 to 1424 at Windsor and the Tower. This was King James I. of Scotland, whose "King's Quhair" forms with the sonnets of Charles of Orleans, his fellow-prisoner, the only first-rate poetry of the 15th century. Assuredly

"Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage;
Minds innocent and quiet take
That for an hermitage."

Whom shall we choose for our typical Englishwoman of the century which ended in 1400? The sweet and brave saint, Catherine of Sienna, flourished at this time in Italy, but I can find no more detailed account of an English lady than one in our old friend John Smyth's *Lives of the Berkeleys*. This book will furnish outline, but we must go to Chaucer if we want detail of the period.

Lady Margaret, the wife of Thomas, fourth Lord Berkeley, died in 1393, and therefore she does not come exactly into our year 1400, but her brief career is as characteristic of this century-end as any I can find. It was a

common practice in those days for children to be married very early. Death was a dreaded tyrant in this century of the Black Death, when so many families had been swept away so completely as to leave no heirs. Remember that in Bristol a contemporary record states that in 1348 only one in every ten remained alive. Accordingly, when old Sir Maurice Berkeley felt that the wound received twelve years since at Poytiers was bringing death at the last, he arranged for his son Thomas to be married at Wengrave in Buckinghamshire, to the eight year old Margaret de Lisle. The old man was too sick to go to the wedding, but he sent three knights and three squires, the knights in fine cloth of ray furred with miniver. The young bridegroom was dressed in scarlet and satin with a silver girdle. The old father at home has a new suit of cloth of gold, and lets forty shillings be given to the minstrels on the wedding-day.

The little bride seems to have remained with her father till she was about seventeen, for it was not till 1382 that Lord Thomas brought her with her father to Berkeley Castle. The Lady Margaret was here surrounded by a splendour that was almost regal. John Smyth says of her husband that "he was the most magnificent and given to sports of his ancestors, as we may tell from his yearly charges of keeping of hounds, grey hounds, hawks," etc. He had a barge for his recreation on the Severn, and journeyed from manor to manor in a kind of Royal Progress. Of his wife, the Lady Margaret, John Smyth says, "The course of her life went with her husband's in often removes from one of their houses to another, which then (contrary to the proverb that the rolling stone gathers no mosse) was held the greatest honour, as at Berkeley, Wotton, Portbury, London, and at Ffulham." Lady Margaret had one little daughter, Elizabeth, who became the wife of that noble Earl of Warwick, who was tutor to Henry VI. It was a sad misfortune for the house of Berkeley that the Lady Margaret had no son, for the law-suits and feuds over the inheritance caused such terrible quarrels between Elizabeth's three daughters and her cousin James, that they amounted to a miniature civil war.

Smyth says of Sir Thomas and the Lady Margaret that "they lived together in a most sweet and contented society." Though she brought him no male heir, Sir Thomas never re-married after the Lady Margaret's death in 1393. That same year Richard II. visited Berkeley Castle, and was entertained by Lord Thomas with royal state. Soon afterwards Margaret's widower went on pilgrimage, "perhaps," says Smyth, "to avoid the danger of Court storms which now began to bluster with an hollow wind."

This happy marriage reminds us of the lovely picture in Chaucer's "Frankleyn's Tale" of the marriage of Arviragus and Dorigen. As we read it, it makes us feel as we did in reading the *Paston Letters*, that in those days true love in marriage was not uncommon in spite of parental depotism and *mariages de convenance*. No modern poet could give more wise and tender advice than Chaucer does.

But we must say good-bye to the time that centred round the year 1400. Before its last years were past Chaucer was carried from his house in St. Margaret's Churchyard to the Abbey hard by, where his tomb became as a shrine for all lovers of English poetry. Does it all seem dim and long ago, girls? And yet when you kneel next Sunday in your old village church you will be praying to the same Father of us all the same old prayers that heartened the girls of those days in the long struggle against sin and evil.