

PENNY WISE!

A PENNY, a groat, half a pound, and a pound
That man shall possess who all the year round
Saves a penny a day.
A penny, a shilling, a crown, and a pound

At the close of the year in his purse shall be found
Who each working day puts a penny away.
I commend very much the man who does either,
But I can't say so much for the man who does neither.
W. G.

ROYAL PRISONERS.

JOHN II. OF FRANCE.



THE admirers of a king sometimes bestow upon him a title the very opposite to that of his character; it was so in the case of King John II. of France, who was surnamed *The Good*. Historians who have impartially reviewed his life and reign say that the word *Good* should, in this instance, be interpreted the foolish, extravagant, and over confident. He was proud, revengeful, wasteful, ignorant of the simplest principles both of government and war, and careless of the welfare of his subjects; his great aim was to be considered a valiant knight, a model of chivalry; he had personal qualities which gained him friends, for he was courteous, gay, and liberal; he prided himself on always keeping his word, and originated the saying, "Honour, though banished from the rest of the world, should be found in the hearts of kings." But in acting up to his character and realising his ideal he neglected his duties and sacrificed his people's interests.

When King John succeeded his father, Philip VI., on the throne of France the country, being in a most deplorable condition, needed both a wise head and a firm hand in the ruler. The long and ruinous war waged between Philip and Edward III. of England, who claimed the crown, had exhausted the revenues; that terrible pestilence known as the *Black Death* had swept like a scourge over the land, depopulating whole towns and villages; in many districts the ravages of war had prevented the cultivation of the soil, and the wretched inhabitants were actually starving for the common necessities of life, their only food consisting of herbs and roots of the field and wild fruits of the forest. John was not the man to remedy these evils; he inflicted heavier burdens upon his poorer subjects, but allowed his nobles to postpone the payment of their debts; he

debased the coinage and founded a new order of knighthood called the *Order of the Star*, which was to consist of three hundred members, for whom a magnificent palace was erected at St. Denis, where all invalided members of the order were luxuriously maintained at the expense of the nation. His reign was inaugurated by an act of cruelty for which he had no justification—he put to death his father's chief adviser, the Constable d'Eu, substituting a worthless favourite in his place. When this favourite was shortly after assassinated by the King of Navarre, John was very wroth, vowing to punish the murderer; but being too weak to do this openly he had recourse to an artifice unworthy of a monarch—he invited the King of Navarre to a grand banquet, where he was seized by armed men, who conveyed him to the Château Gillard, and there imprisoned him.

When John had reigned five years war with England recommenced. The English army, under the command of the celebrated Edward the Black Prince, invaded the South of France, a district where the people were comparatively rich and had little or no knowledge of war, making them fall an easy prey to the invaders, who, with fire and sword, ravaged the country far and wide, plundering and burning villages and towns, and laying waste large tracts of country, eventually returning to Bordeaux with five thousand waggon-loads of booty. To meet and check, if not utterly destroy, this successful warrior, great preparations were made by John and his nobles. Fifty thousand men were gathered together; the king, taking with him his favourite son Philip, then a mere stripling, took the command, and the mighty host set forth to give battle to the English.

The Black Prince having turned his conquering steps northwards, entered the province of Poitou, and at Poitiers was overtaken by the French, who succeeded in cutting off his retreat. With a force numbering at the very utmost only

one-fifth of those opposed to him, the Prince found himself somewhat critically situated; but, like a wise and skilful commander, he took care to post his men in the best position the nature of the country afforded, choosing a wooded hill, the only approach to which was a narrow and rugged pathway; here he awaited the attack of the enemy. Had King John been a prudent and sagacious general the result might have been far different. He had only to wait patiently for a few days, watching the English, carefully surrounding them that they might not escape, when the whole would have been starved into submission and compelled to surrender themselves prisoners; instead of doing this, however, thinking perhaps only of his reputation as a knight, or that nothing could withstand his overwhelming numbers, he determined on an attack, and foolishly ordered his cavalry to charge. The French galloped to the foot of the hill, but finding it too steep for their horses to climb fell back in confusion, which confusion was further increased by the incessant clouds of arrows shot at them with fatal precision by the English archers. While the disorder was at its height the command was given, and the English cavalry thundered down the hill, charging into their very midst. Seeing the disastrous rout of his men and the rapid approach of the foe, John committed another error in dismounting from his horse, and ordering his men to do the same and fight on foot.

John did not lack courage; he fought valiantly, but one arm, however brave and skilful, could not retrieve the fortunes of the day. His knights fell fast on every side, while numbers yielded themselves prisoners. Now, when the king dismounted from his horse, he desired his young son Philip to keep close at his side and he would protect him; this the young prince did, and when he saw his father surrounded by the exultant enemy and in danger of receiving a wound, he cried out, telling him where to strike: "Father, strike left! Father, strike right! Father, strike front!" and whatever point the brave lad indicated, down came the ponderous battle-axe of the king, and a foe bit the dust. At last, wearied with the fight, and hemmed in on every side, he was obliged to yield himself prisoner. So many knights thronged round to claim the honour of his capture that he would have fared ill had not the Black Prince interfered. He gave his glove, in token of surrender, to a French nobleman who had been banished from France, and was fighting on the side of the English. Besides the king and his son, eight thousand noblemen and knights were also taken prisoners; no such battle as this of Poitiers had been fought

on French soil since the ever memorable one of Crecy, ten years before.

The Black Prince conducted his illustrious prisoner to Bordeaux, where he was surrounded by a brilliant host of courtiers, who, like himself, were captives of war. The lieutenant-general in Languedoc no sooner heard of the disaster which had overtaken his royal master than he immediately dispatched to him an ample store of provisions, together with a quantity of plate from which to eat them. The states of Languedoc levied imposts upon the people, the produce of which was also forwarded to the king. Other provinces of France were not so favourably disposed towards their monarch, feeling that his indiscreet valour had dragged the country into great misery; while his son Charles, who was now regent, made no efforts to purchase his ransom. Seeing this was the case his captor determined to remove him to England.

On the 11th of March, 1357, John, with his captive followers, embarked on board ship under the guardianship of the Black Prince, and set sail for England. The voyage from shore to shore proved very tedious, the ancient port of Sandwich not being gained till the early part of May; the travelling by road was equally slow, for it took almost three weeks to reach London. At Canterbury the prisoners made offerings at the shrine of St. Thomas à Becket; here also a deputation waited upon them from the metropolis for the purpose of condoling with the monarch on the misfortune which had befallen him. When the capital was finally reached, crowds of nobles with their retainers, priests, and citizens thronged the streets to catch a glimpse of the captive king as his guard conducted him to the old Palace of Savoy, in the Strand, then the residence of the Duke of Lancaster. Here he was immediately visited by Edward III. and his queen.

Although a prisoner, King John enjoyed great freedom of action. The Palace of Savoy was his nominal place of residence for nearly two years, but he made frequent visits to Windsor and other parts of the country, to partake of both kingly and baronial hospitality. He became quite a favourite with the English barons and titled ladies, who were enchanted with his courtesy, and the liberality with which he squandered his money; they even made him presents of game and other gifts for his table. He made full use of the liberty accorded him to engage in any and every pursuit promising pleasure, especially those of hawking, hunting, and other field sports, as well as the pleasures of the table. He bore his captivity gaily, seldom troubling himself with the affairs of his own kingdom, little heeding the misery of his own people. So long as

he enjoyed himself the whole world might go wrong.

Meantime things were growing worse and worse in France. The eight thousand nobles and knights taken prisoners at Poitiers wished to pay their ransoms and be once more free; to effect this they *wrung the money* from their already poverty-stricken and starving tenants, and where none was forthcoming they resorted to torture to compel the poor creatures to reveal hidden treasures existing only in their own imaginations. At last, driven to desperation by their intolerable wrongs and sufferings, the peasants, like hunted animals, turned upon their oppressors, and broke out into open rebellion. This rebellion was called the *Jacquerie*, so named from the words *Jacques bon homme*, a term of reproach used by the nobles when speaking of the peasantry, or else from a jacket or short coat worn by the lower classes. Many and fearful were the outrages committed on the oppressive nobles by the desperate people, and it was only after torrents of blood had been spilt that the rebellion was finally crushed.

In the third year of his captivity the liberty of King John was more restricted, and he was compelled to limit his pleasures to the confines of the Savoy Palace, which was carefully guarded by Roger of Beauchamp and sixty men; here he signed the preliminaries for a treaty of peace between England and France, after which he was conveyed in close custody to the castle of Hertford. The king now hoped speedily to gain his liberty, but so humiliating for France were the terms of the treaty, that the Dauphin positively refused to adhere to them, much to the chagrin of his father, who, upon hearing his son's decision, exclaimed, "Ha! ha! my fair son Charles, you take counsel with the King of Navarre, who deceives you, and would deceive forty such as you." Increased severity was now exercised towards the royal captive; Edward III. ordered thirty-five of his French followers immediately to leave the kingdom, while he limited the personal attendants of John and his son Philip to twenty persons. This excited the indignation of the prisoner, who loudly protested against the degradation, as he deemed it, imposed upon him, by which means an additional nineteen were granted him. From Hertford he was shortly after escorted to the castle of Somerton; here no visitors from over the sea were allowed access to him; so strictly was he guarded that even his private secretary—who had been on a mission to Paris—was unable to approach the castle without special sanction, and could not even then enter it unless one of the other servants was dismissed. The king discharged his minstrel, and for the

future had to exist as best he could without having the weariness of his captivity charmed away by the enlivening strains of music. These restrictions told sorely on his temper; he chafed and protested against them in vain, grew irritable and passionate, and finally submitted to the inevitable with a very bad grace.

He was still in durance at Somerton Castle when the alarming news spread that the French were preparing to invade England for the special purpose of liberating their captive monarch, and even while this was being discussed, and measures adopted for his greater security, intelligence reached Edward that the French had actually made a descent upon the coast, and partially destroyed the town of Winchelsea; this immediately aroused the English Government. "Our adversary of France," as the King of England called him, was instantly hurried off to London, and closely confined in the Tower, where it was thought he would be more safe. His detention, however, in this new prison, was not long. Two months after, the usher of the Queen announced to the captive that the Treaty of Bretigny had been signed, and that he was at liberty to depart home. The joy of the king was great, and in his satisfaction upon receiving the good news, he bestowed a right royal bounty on the messenger. Perhaps he would not have been so liberal had he known that the enormous sum of three millions of gold crowns was the price to be paid for his ransom.

Leaving two of his sons as hostages for the payment of the money, in a few weeks King John set out for Dover, no doubt glad that he was once more to regain his own kingdom. His progress was not rapid, for at the end of the second day he had only reached the town of Dartford, fifteen miles from London, and it was not till the sixth day that he arrived at Dover. Persons of all characters, professions, and callings thronged to the high roads to see him pass on his way, all begging for largess; and to every one the king gave with a liberal hand, unmindful of the ransom he had yet to pay.

King John remained at Calais for three months trying to gather together some portion of his ransom money, a task he found somewhat difficult, as his own exchequer was exhausted, and his country impoverished.

France regained her king, but the poor people were no gainers by their monarch's freedom. He maintained the same heedless and reckless course of expenditure, thinking far more of his own pleasures than of their welfare, viewing them as creatures created solely to minister to his own requirements, and not as subjects whom it was his duty to rule wisely and well. After three years of liberty he determined to set out on a crusade against the

infidels, and for this purpose, as he said, went over to England to induce Edward III. to join him in the expedition; others said he went to repair his honour, broken by the escape of one of his sons, who had been left as hostages, to France. The English king received him in a magnificent manner, and for three months held a succession of brilliant entertainments in his honour.

The gaiety, ease, and freedom from business which he now enjoyed in the land of his former captivity made him forget France and his intended crusade. He gave himself up to a career of ever-varying and never ceasing pleasure, in the midst of which illness overtook him, and after severe sufferings, he died, in the fifty-fourth year of his age, in the old Savoy Palace.



THE MASTER PAINTER.

HE has the boldest touch of all;
To him his taller playmates yield;
They think he knows how shadows
fall,

And sunbeams glint across a field.
In haste to work, the brush he tries—
His cheeks aglow, and in his eyes
The light of genius dawning:
A stroke of brown, a dash of green,
The tree with straggling branch is spread;
A maiden comes upon the scene
In garb of cheerful blue and red;
Her pets she leads where flowery meads
Lie sparkling in the morning.

The sketch completed, many a day
Will have its praise and promise sung,
And then for pictures fresh make way,
Or drawn by hand, or lived among;

Into a carven desk 'twill go,
And wait there for a graver show.

For some far time, when guests have met
And gone, and one is missing yet;
Or when the house is strangely still,

Or memory of things loved best
Will slumber not, a hand will thrill
To take it from its hallowed rest.

Upon the summer scene hath smiled
A little, guileless, happy child!
And quickly, for sweet thought of him
Will shine again the eyes so dim,

With looking back, or longing;
The tiny sketch lies comforting;
Nor sweeter, holier tears could bring
The picture of his ripened years,
In glory hanging with its peers
Where eager crowds are thronging.

WHAT ARCHIE SAW THROUGH THE MICROSCOPE.

AT THE SEA-SIDE.



AS the summer days went on, Archie's parents took their little boys to the sea-side. Archie's principal occupation there, after the daily dip in the sea, which he looked on rather in the light of a penance than of a pleasure, was the building of sand fortresses on the shore, in which he was assisted by a great many other bare-legged, short-kilted children, whose mothers and nurses sat

placidy by, reading or working, in the comfortable assurance that their young charges were happily employed, and not likely to do any mischief, except to their clothes, which everybody knows must wear out in one way, if not in another.

On one particular morning the tide was remarkably low, and a castle, on which a great deal of time and pains had been spent, was ruthlessly destroyed by the gambols of a black retriever, who, after losing sight of his little masters and mistresses for some time, came upon them just as the moat round their mimic edifice was filled and the draw-bridge completed. The poor fellow did not know