

of Parliament over the king's ministers, as shown in the right of impeachment first exercised by the Good Parliament (1376). The growth of national feeling was shown by the anti-Papal legislation culminating in the famous statute of *Præmunire* (1353). But there was a dark side to the reign as well. England, in common with the rest of Europe, suffered terribly from the ravages of the Black Death (1348). The whole of the agricultural organisation was thrown out of gear, and the attempts of Parliament to check the demands of the labourers for higher wages led to bitter class feeling.

Before the end of the reign the king had sunk into dotage, and the government was in the hands of corrupt and unscrupulous favourites.

In the minority of his young grandson Richard II. the discontent of the people blazed out into the Peasants' Revolt (1381). The rebellion was quickly suppressed, but there is still much uncertainty as to its exact causes, organisation, and results. Great uncertainty, too, exists about the enigmatical character of the king. At first, when he took the reins of government into his own hands, he ruled as a model constitutional sovereign—then, suddenly, he seemed to rule as a despotic tyrant until he was deprived of his throne by his cousin, Henry of Lancaster. "Richard II. was deposed," it has been said, "for doing too much," that is for governing tyrannically, while "Edward II. had been deposed for doing too little," that is for neglecting the work of government.

The title of Henry IV., the founder of the Lancastrian dynasty, was purely parliamentary, for he was the descendant of John of Gaunt, the third son

RICHARD
II.
1377-1399

HENRY
IV.
1399-1413