

full sovereignty over Aquitaine and Calais. King John was to pay a huge sum for his ransom. Three years before this, Edward had acknowledged the independence of Scotland, and had released King David on the promise to pay a ransom of sixty thousand pounds.

The terms of the treaty of Bretigny were not observed and the war again broke out. This time, however, it was very disastrous to the English, for the French, under the leadership of the heroic Bertrand du Guesclin, were everywhere successful. The English were forced to give up all the territory they had gained, with the exception of a few towns along the coast.

83. **England's new idea.**—England was exceedingly proud of the victory at Crécy; but this battle gave her more than glory, it gave her a new idea. When the people saw that the battle of Crécy was won by men who had neither coat of mail, nor spear, nor horse, they discovered that in battle a yeoman was as good as a knight. Before this, people had thought that the only way for poor folk to live was under the protection of a baron or an armed knight. The new idea that had come to England was that even people without horse or armour could protect themselves.

84. **The Black Death.**—This fact alone might not for a long time have made any general change in the way of living; but two or three years later, while people were slowly beginning to take in this new thought, a terrible pestilence, called the Black Death, swept over Europe, coming last of all to England in 1349. It is thought that nearly half of the population died. In some of the cities so many were dead that grass grew in the principal streets; and, in the country districts, matters were even worse, for sometimes nearly all the people on a manor died. What caused the disease is not known, but it was much more severe than it would otherwise have been had not the houses been so dirty and small and dark, with so few windows. Piles of rubbish and puddles of filthy water were allowed to gather just outside the doors. In the city, the streets were narrow, there was no drainage, and there was not even the good air of the country.