

86. **Death of Edward III.**—While the labour trouble was going on, the reign of the third Edward was drawing to a gloomy close. The Black Prince had met with disaster in the French war, and, after losing many of England's possessions, had come home to die. Good Queen Philippa was dead, and the old king was quite under the influence of bad advisers who plundered him and then left him to die, alone and desolate.

SUMMARY

Edward was forced to acknowledge the independence of Scotland; but he laid claim to the throne of France, and this claim led to the Hundred Years' War. The English won the battles of Crécy and Poitiers, but before the death of the king they had lost almost all of their possessions in France. The victory won by the yeomen at Crécy showed that a villein need not depend upon a noble for protection. The Black Death gave the peasant's work on the land a greatly increased value, while the manufacture of fine woollens in England gave him a greater chance to support himself. Owing to the laws passed by Parliament in the interests of the landowners, there was general discontent among the peasantry at the end of Edward's reign.

8. RICHARD II. 1377-1399

87. **The Peasants' Revolt.**—Although Edward III left several sons, the crown passed to Richard, the son of the Black Prince. As the young king was only ten years old, the real power was in the hands of a Council appointed by Parliament. A variety of troubles now threatened the kingdom. The French attacked the coast. The Scots, acting with France as usual, plundered the border, and to make matters worse, the peasantry were on the verge of an outbreak.

There were many causes for the great rising of the peasantry in 1381. They were angry at the attempts of the landowners to make them work for small wages and to restrict their freedom. They felt that all their grievances were caused by the ruling classes, who passed laws always in their own interest. At last a tax imposed to meet the cost of the French and Scottish wars brought the discen-