

105. **Printing is introduced into England.**—The most important event of this reign was, perhaps, the introduction of printing into England. In 1477, William Caxton set up a press at Westminster. He was a native of Kent, and had travelled in Germany and Flanders, where he learned to be a printer. Printing from movable types had been invented in Germany about thirty years before it was introduced into England. In all Caxton issued about sixty volumes, many of which he translated himself from the French or the Latin. The people of that time looked upon the printing press as a curious toy, little dreaming of the wonderful changes that it was destined to make in the history of England before the close of the next century.

106. **Literature.**—During the one hundred and thirty years preceding the end of Edward's reign, there had been too much fighting going on for a people to write; but they were interested in many more subjects than in earlier times, and every one that could afford such luxury had bought books, though these had been so expensive that a collection of thirty volumes was looked upon as a valuable library for even a wealthy gentleman to possess. People were still composing ballads; for while few felt like writing books, yet the excitement and the sudden changes did arouse people to compose short, strong ballads, which tell a story in so few words that each one seems almost like a sudden battle-stroke. But the people continued to sing the old ballads over and over again, frequently changing some of the words, and that is the reason there are often several versions of the same story.

SUMMARY

The Wars of the Roses continued, and Henry was taken prisoner, but Edward's quarrel with the "King-maker" led to the temporary restoration of Henry. At last Warwick was slain, Henry was again imprisoned, and Edward was on the throne. To obtain money for his pleasures, he originated "benevolences." The great event of the reign was William Caxton's introduction of printing into England. Few books were written, but many ballads were composed.