

serious revolutions in all ages ; and, at the same time, that the districts which he controlled, after his first victories, were well-governed and contented. The story that he pretended to be Mortimer is manifestly an invention, and had he succeeded in getting possession of the king's person, it is more than probable that our political history would have taken a different course. The temporary success of the insurrection, the admirable government of London, as admitted by his enemies, and the peaceable dispersion of Cade's army, on the promise of reform by the Parliament and the king, proves that it had the sympathy of the people. Cade, as his proclamation and demands show, was much in advance of his time ; there is certainly nothing whatever to prove that he was the mere empty-headed demagogue represented by the paid scribes of the nobility, but rather that he was the vigorous leader of free, vigorous men. The barons, indeed, were far greater disturbers of the public peace at this time than the people, and the economical effects of the Wars of the Roses were very serious in the following century, though little noted at the time.

A great noble of this period, or even a baron of lower degree, held an enviable position in many respects. Secure of his dignity, surrounded by a number of retainers and dependents who looked to him for leadership, alike in peace and in war, with sufficient income as a rule to maintain his household in comfort, and to go in full equipment to the wars, taking part in the festivals of the people, and enjoying the sports and jousts of his own class, the baron of the fifteenth century, though often rough and uncultured, put forward the best side of feudalism. The Wars of the Roses swept away very nearly the whole of the old nobility. During their continuance the number of retainers was