

To our lord the king Adam Kereseye and Joan, his wife, show that when they impleaded Sir John de Ferrers and Avis, his wife, of the manor of Alnescote before Sir Ralph de Hengham [CJCB, 1301-9] and his companions of which Henry de La Mare, cousin of the said Joan whose heir she is, died seised in his demesne as of fee, and the said John and Avis pleading said that our lord the King, who now is, gave the manor aforesaid to Sir Robert Muscegros and his heirs and that they are seised [of it] as of right and heritage [of] the said Avis, daughter and heir of the said Robert, and they showed a charter of our lord the King about it and said that they could not reply without him, for which the parties went quit without day. Wherefore they pray the lord our King, if it pleases him, that the justices proceed in the plea according to the law and usage of the realm notwithstanding the aforesaid charter such that their right not be further delayed nor the said Joan disinherited. [Dorse, in Latin:] If the charter contains a warranty let them supersede, if not, let them proceed and thus let it be commanded to the justices by a writ from the Chancery. // Copied. // Caen [the receiver] // Enrolled.

D. ENGLAND UNDER HENRY III, 1216-1272

in C. BROOKE, FROM ALFRED TO HENRY III, 871-1272
The Norton Library History of England (1961) 224-36

13. HENRY III, 1216-72

WHEN his father died Henry was a boy of nine. His position was exceedingly weak, and it was bound to be a number of years before the new King could rule on his own. But from some points of view his father's early death benefited his cause. Henry had no personal enemies. The Pope found himself guardian of a small child, which strengthened his determination to support John's dynasty. The more chivalrous of the barons gathered round him. Under the shrewd guidance of the legate Cardinal Guala and the experienced regency of William the Marshal, Henry's affairs prospered beyond expectation. Within two years Louis the Dauphin was compelled to abandon his attempt on the English throne and leave the country. The King's supporters had been notably successful, and their efforts to restore order and sort out the confusion caused by civil war helped to make England reasonably peaceful and prosperous.

It is notoriously difficult, however, for a group of regents to act together without friction. The skill of Guala and the prestige of the Marshal kept them in control at first. But Guala left in 1218 and the Marshal died in 1219. In the early twelve-twenties the leading role was played by the Justiciar, Hubert de Burgh, a royal servant well rewarded by John, who had risen from the ranks of the country gentry and was now made Earl of Kent and married to a Scottish princess. But he was not trusted by the greater barons, and his position would have been untenable but for the steady support of Archbishop Stephen Langton. Hubert and Stephen were at this stage very much trusted by the King himself, and they took advantage of this fact gradually to release him from tutelage—thereby in effect strengthening their own position. In 1223 the Pope (acting as Henry's overlord) allowed him the personal use of his own seal, under certain restrictions; early in 1227 Henry declared himself of age and his personal rule effectively began. He was now nineteen and had been king for ten years.

Henry was lavish and artistic: he built palaces and castles and adorned them with the best ornaments, hangings, and furnishings that money could buy. He was also extremely devout. His extravagance, sense of beauty, and piety were especially concentrated on rebuilding and enlarging the Confessor's church at Westminster. He consciously modelled himself on the Confessor; he called his eldest son Edward; and in certain respects he resembled his distant predecessor. Both were devout; shrewd in their way, but lacking the strength and brutality for consistent success in politics or for winning renown on the battlefield. Henry was very self-conscious about his kingship, yet he was never able to throw himself into the essential exercises of kingship as his father and grandfather had done. He had serious weaknesses of character: he could be obstinate, petulant, and mercurial, was extremely sharp-tongued, rather ungenerous. Those whom he trusted, he trusted implicitly; but he was suspicious of most of the world and fearful of treachery. He was shrewd rather than subtle; his piety lacked depth. To compensate for all this, there was a certain quiet simplicity in

his nature which prevented him from being embittered or warped by the miseries and failures of his reign. But he was not the sort of man whom the English barons instinctively admired or trusted.

Henry's adult reign falls into two parts. Down to 1258 he was, on the whole, in control of affairs; after 1258 government was often out of his hands, sometimes controlled by committees of barons, sometimes by the heir to the throne, the Lord Edward. But through it all runs a single theme—conflict between the efforts of Henry to maintain the near absolutism of his predecessors, and the efforts of his barons to control the King, his council, and his ministers. There was never any question of abolishing the monarchy, even when the King himself was in prison and Simon de Montfort was acting in his name. Everyone assumed that government was the King's government. Indeed, the royal court was becoming increasingly the centre of English life, the key to power and wealth. Profound changes in society, and growing concern with the way in which the great power of the Crown was wielded, led to constant unrest; failures in royal policy from time to time gave excuse and opportunity for unrest to express itself. But the unrest was political. With the exception of the brief periods of open civil war, the reign was a prosperous time for England at large.

From 1227 until 1232 Hubert de Burgh remained Justiciar, and his power was undisputed. But his position depended on royal favour, and when the King grew weary and jealous of him, his fall was assured. In 1232 he was removed from office and imprisoned, and his place taken by another old servant of John, Peter des Roches, Bishop of Winchester, whose son or nephew, Peter des Rivaux, became effective head of the royal administration. The new government was, so to say, purely bureaucratic: it consisted of trained civil servants. But the system was short-lived; in 1234 the two Peters were disgraced, and a largely baronial council, of which Hubert de Burgh was again a member, was re-established. The civil servants and the baronial council represented the two elements from which the royal council was selected. The King's attempt to rule entirely by the counsel of officials of his own choice, and the reaction against it which established a council of barons, were portents of greater events to come.

The next twenty-four years, from the crisis of 1234 to the crisis of 1258, witnessed no serious outbreak of trouble, but a succession of minor crises which failed to mature. The relations of Henry and the barons at large were never free from suspicion. Henry's minority had taught the barons what it meant to have a government which regularly consulted them; his later attempts to rule almost entirely through his own servants reminded the barons that they wished to be regularly consulted. The term 'royal council', applied at any date in the Middle Ages, is ambiguous. In the period covered by this book it might mean two things: it might mean the body of immediate councillors, barons, and royal servants, who attended regularly on the King and advised him on day-to-day affairs; or it might mean the Great Council, in which the leaders of the kingdom, lay and clerical—who regarded themselves as the King's natural advisers—met and advised the King on great issues of state. The composition of the Great Council was far from fixed; the King always had a fairly free choice as to which of the barons should be summoned, and although its deliberations were a traditional part of English government, strictly speaking there had been no obligation on the King to consult the barons on affairs of state. Henry III tended to arrange royal marriages and transact important business without consultation; and this was the more aggravating because the King's closest associates included several of the 'foreign' relations of his wife, Eleanor of Provence, who were thought to encourage in Henry excessive concern for his claims in France, which threatened to commit the English kingdom to expensive adventures in which the English baronage had no interest.

Through the minor crises of Henry's middle years we can see developing something like a programme of reform, which the baronial leaders pressed on the King with growing insistence. Their first demand was usually for the re-issue of Magna Carta, which was quite readily granted. Their second demand was that they should be regularly consulted on important matters of state; that is, that meetings of the Great Council should be frequent and effective. They had come to see that the Charter alone was not enough; the baronial leaders never trusted Henry III, and they had slowly come to recognise the implication of this, that the King must be kept under constant surveillance. But the demand, in this precise form, was novel; and it was not until 1258 that it was pressed by a large party among the barons with any consistency of purpose; even then the demand was a temporary one, only intended to last for the lifetime of one impossible king.

The third demand of the barons was to have a say in the control of the great offices of state, the Chancery and Exchequer. Although the English monarchy had passed through several vicissitudes since the death of Henry II, the royal administration and the royal courts had developed steadily in authority and effectiveness. Government was a more elaborate thing, and the organs of state more powerful, than had been dreamed of even two generations before. The Chancery had followed the example of the Exchequer, and become a department with a fixed headquarters—it had gone ‘out of court’. Developing power made the offices objects of suspicion to the baronage, and gave them many motives for wishing to have some say in their control; and their growing independence gave the barons some excuse for intervening in their working. It was much more difficult to object to the king’s managing the affairs of his own household; and although the household itself was developing fast at this time, and an increasing share of royal revenue was being administered by the royal Wardrobe (a financial department which travelled with the king and was not under the control of the Exchequer), the barons attempted to interfere with household administration only in the major crises of 1258 and 1264. Thus the claim to a say in the appointment of Chancellor and Treasurer became a regular feature of baronial schemes for reform; and the barons sometimes tried to interfere also in the appoint meant of tile head of the judiciary, the Justiciar. But before 1258 Henry never submitted to such proposals. He would pay lip-service at least to the principle that the Great Council should be consulted on important issues; but he insisted that he must be free to appoint his own officers.

A minor crisis in 1238 brought to the front of the stage two of the leading figures of Henry’s later years: his brother, Richard, Earl of Cornwall, and a notable from the south of France called Simon de Montfort, who was trying to claim the earldom of Leicester as his inheritance. In this year Henry consented to the secret marriage of his sister to Simon; and the protest against the secrecy of the proceedings was led by Earl Richard. Henry agreed to amend his ways, and from that date had in Richard a steadfast supporter of great value to him; an able financier of immense wealth who on more than one occasion saved Henry’s finances from disaster.

For a time, he also had a faithful supporter in Simon, who duly became Earl of Leicester in 1239; but a series of difficulties gradually alienated the brothers-in-law. Simon de Montfort was one of the most remarkable personalities of his day. He had many friends and many enemies in his lifetime, and he has had many of both since his death. There can be no doubt of his great ability and self-confidence, of his clear imagination, and of his skill as a soldier. He began as a foreign adventurer who won the liking of Henry III and married his sister. Like all the king’s close associates, he found Henry an exasperating master. From 1248 to 1252 Simon was in charge of Gascony, which had been in a condition bordering on anarchy. He performed a difficult task with great energy and some success, and inevitably made enemies in the process. Henry expected (or claimed to expect) success more rapid and complete; feared (not wholly without cause) that Simon’s tendency to arrogance was increasing the number of his enemies; and suspected Simon’s semi-independent position. In due course Henry began to listen to Simon’s enemies; and finally, in 1252, Henry summoned Simon home to answer his accusers in a trial at Westminster lasting five weeks. Simon in return was exasperated by Henry’s failure to stand by him in his difficulties, and regarded the trial as an act of treachery. The trial opened, after a preliminary accusation by the Gascon representatives, with a violent attack on Simon by Henry himself. In the end the King was compelled to admit that the evidence told in Simon’s favour; but he did not restore Simon to his command, nor could there be friendship between them again. Henry feared Simon, we are told, more than thunder and lightning; and Simon could never trust the King to act with sense and consistency or to stand by his friends.

The differences between Henry and Simon were enhanced by the fact that Simon, like many foreign-born settlers, had a much sharper vision of the true state of England, and a natural dislike of the muddle and confusion of Henry’s mind. Simon was Henry’s brother-in-law; he had no wish to see royal government abolished or even circumscribed; he wished to see it effective. In this he resembled Henry’s son, the Lord Edward: both wished to see government conducted in an orderly and rational way, on the basis of a harmonious understanding between king and notables. The difference was that Edward wished to keep the ultimate initiative in the King’s hands, while Simon was prepared if necessary to imprison the King and act in his name. All this lay in the future in the early twelve-fifties: Edward was still a boy (he had been born in

1239), and Simon's views were only slowly forming. But it is clear that Simon was already one of the leading figures in a group of magnates who were seriously discussing methods of curbing the King's misgovernment. Simon's friends included Robert Grosseteste, the eminent and saintly Bishop of Lincoln; and there are fascinating hints in the letters of their mutual friend, the Franciscan friar, Adam Marsh, that Simon was privy to some great scheme propounded by Grosseteste for the reformation of morals in England. Apparently the scheme had some bearing on secular as well as ecclesiastical affairs, though probably not, directly, on how government should be conducted. These glimpses of Simon's relations with Grosseteste show that Simon had a mind large enough for great schemes; just as a wealth of other evidence shows how precise a grasp he had on the practical details of government and administration and how well calculated was his cool, firm, sardonic manner to rouse Henry's temper.

In 1250 the Emperor Frederick II died, and the intrigues which followed his death involved the English royal family in endeavours even more grandiose than those of Richard I. Frederick II had been king both in Germany and in Sicily, and the popes were determined to prevent the two kingdoms from being united again; they were equally determined to complete the destruction of the Hohenstaufen dynasty. Complicated manoeuvres by the Pope and by the leading subjects of the two kingdoms led Henry III in 1254 to accept the kingdom of Sicily for his younger son, Edmund, and Richard of Cornwall in 1257 to accept the kingdom of Germany for himself. Richard spent a number of years fruitlessly pursuing his phantom kingdom. Germany was relapsing into chaos, and a foreign potentate, however rich and able, had little hope of resolving its factions. Edmund amused himself for a while distributing titles and properties of his kingdom, but by the end of 1257 the whole of Sicily was in the hands of the Hohenstaufen Manfred, and Henry was left with nothing to show for the affair but an immense debt which was the pope's price for the kingdom. The Sicilian adventure, however, had two consequences of greater moment than itself: it persuaded Henry to prepare the way for a definitive peace with Louis IX of France, and it led to his surrender to a committee of barons in England in 1258.

The Treaty of Paris [of 1259] marked the formal end of the Angevin Empire. Henry renounced his rights in Normandy, Anjou, and Poitou; Louis acknowledged Henry as his vassal in Gascony and other lands in the south. The treaty was on the whole generous to Henry; but its terms were so complex as to leave room for future trouble. For the rest of Henry's reign, however, France and England were at peace.

In domestic affairs, the events of 1257–8 started a crisis which lasted until 1265. Seven years of strife were followed by seven years of peace and restored royal government, ending in the King's death in 1272.

When Henry surrendered to the baronial opposition in 1258, a new system of government was established by the famous Provisions of Oxford, which reduced the King to little more than a *primus inter pares*. A new Council of Fifteen was established, consisting of seven earls (Simon de Montfort included), five leading barons, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of Worcester, and one royal clerk; in all affairs of state the King had to consult the council. The three great officers of state, Justiciar, Chancellor, and Treasurer, were to be appointed by the Council and to be responsible to it; a baron was made Justiciar. In addition, the Provisions included a number of administrative reforms, particularly designed to ensure the Council's control over sheriffs, castellans (i.e. governors of castles), and lesser officials, and to reform abuses. The leaders in 1258, as in 1215, were a group of powerful magnates, and as in 1215, they needed to win allies by providing benefits for other classes than their own. But the reforms outlined in the Provisions of Oxford showed a far more coherent notion of how government was to be conducted than John's barons ever attained.

The Provisions of Oxford, supplemented by the Provisions of Westminster of 1259, remained the basis of English government until 1262. But government by a Council was too novel and elaborate an idea to win easy acceptance or to work smoothly. The Provisions of Oxford had been the fruit of co-operation between a number of leading magnates; gradually, as the years passed, they fell out among themselves. Personal differences divided Simon de Montfort from the Earl of Gloucester, the other dominating figure; Gloucester and others could not accustom themselves to ruling in evident disregard of the King's real wishes; and some of the reforms which had been instituted compelled the barons themselves to submit to unwelcome

investigations of their own subordinates' abuses. In 1259 and early 1260 Henry was in France completing his settlement with Louis; Earl Simon, meanwhile, was coming to hold an increasingly dominant position in England. He had even come to an arrangement with the Lord Edward, who first appeared in 1259 as an important figure in English politics. Edward had put himself at the head of a group of young men, mostly of baronial family, who accepted his views or his leadership, and who came to form a small but important party. They were hardly a faction: they did not imagine that government could lie wholly in the hands of this or that group of barons—they knew it must be more widely spread; they respected the law and Magna Carta. In Edward they had a leader who would one day be king, and who would restore to the monarchy the kingly virtues, the prowess in tournament and battle which Henry so patently lacked. Unlike Henry, Edward would be trustworthy, competent, and a soldier. It was possible at this time for Edward and Simon to come to terms: both were prepared to maintain the Provisions of Oxford, even if Edward regarded the Council as essentially an advisory body, while Simon wished it to control the King.

The alliance between Edward and Simon aroused Henry's deepest suspicions; he seems to have suspected Edward of a plot to betray him, perhaps even to usurp the throne. Henry returned to England, asserted himself, and sent Edward into exile; and then set to work to undermine the Provisions. Most of their makers were now lukewarm in their support, and by the turn of 1261 and 1262 Richard of Cornwall and a group of bishops were able to organise an arrangement between the King and the leading barons. In 1262 the Pope absolved Henry from his oath to the Provisions; Earl Simon went into exile; and Henry was king again in fact as well as in name.

Henry's triumph was exceedingly short-lived. He failed to re-establish order in England, and he failed to come to terms with Simon. The barons who had welcomed a return to the more normal regime quickly remembered the distrust of Henry which had inspired the revolution of 1258. Discontent was widespread, but as in 1640–2 men differed on the distance to which it was possible or desirable to carry resistance to the King; and it was far from clear how many of the barons would support the King, how many oppose him if it came to war. The issue was decided by the prompt action of Simon de Montfort in 1263. He returned to England, put himself at the head of the insurgents, and forced the King to promise a return to the Provisions. Late in the year Earl Simon's supporters and the King agreed to submit their case to the arbitration of the King of France; and in January 1264 St. Louis, who was every inch a king, declared for Henry on every count and condemned the Provisions root and branch. This judgment, known as the 'Mise of Amiens', left the opposition barons no alternative but to submit or to fight for their cause; its effect was civil war, with both sides well supported.

In 1263 the Lord Edward finally decided that Simon's paths were too extreme, and when civil war broke out in 1264, Edward commanded the King's forces. On 14th May Earl Simon's army fell on the King's at Lewes in Sussex, attacking down a long slope into the town. Simon's left, consisting mainly of the Londoners, was broken and pursued by the Lord Edward; but the rest of Simon's army quickly overwhelmed the bulk of the royal force. When Edward returned from his pursuit, he found the day lost. The King surrendered, and Edward became a hostage for Henry's good behaviour. From May 1264 till August 1265 Simon de Montfort was effective ruler of England.

Simon was in intention no dictator. He honestly believed that a return to the Provisions of Oxford was possible, and he strove to achieve it. Meanwhile, he and two colleagues, the young Earl of Gloucester (whose father had died in 1262) and the Bishop of Chichester, governed in the King's name, and chose to assist them a Council of Nine, with functions very similar to those of the Council of Fifteen of 1258–62, but more widely representative of the English upper classes. Simon had no wish to govern as the head of a clique, and for discussion of important matters of state he relied more than hitherto on the Great Council, at the same time trying to increase its solemnity and representative character.

The Great Council was reckoned to be a meeting of the leaders of the kingdom, lay and clerical; but the King had always had a fairly free choice as to which of the barons should be summoned. In the first half of the thirteenth century groups of lesser men, representatives of the knights and burgesses who were becoming increasingly active in the management of shires and towns, might be called to attend a council for a special

purpose. Their presence was exceptional before the fourteenth century. But three times in Henry's later years, in 1258, in 1264, and in 1265, knights were called to represent the shires, and on the last occasion burgesses also attended to represent the towns. The dates are significant: one of these was the council which issued the Provisions of Oxford, and the others were the councils in which Earl Simon and his colleagues tried to reconstruct the government of the realm. The notion of the 'community of the realm' was gathering force. It was the strength of Earl Simon's position that he had won a considerable following among the 'gentry'. The weakness of his position was that his following among the barons was dwindling.

From the middle of the thirteenth century it became common to refer to the more important sessions of the Great Council as 'parliaments'. It was precisely in the years 1258–65 that the word 'parliament' was first commonly used. Originally the word simply meant a 'parleying', a conference between king and notables. It was not an institution, but an occasion; an occasion when a meeting of a Great Council gave the king the opportunity to discuss with the magnates important affairs of state—the levying of taxation, the solution of tricky legal cases—or to receive petitions. Gradually men came to draw a distinction between Council and Parliament, to see Parliament as an institution, to know (or think they knew) who ought and who ought not to be summoned to it, how its procedure was to be organised, what kind of business it should transact, what powers it had. All this lay far in the future. In 1272 nobody knew or could have guessed that these conferences in Council were to grow into the central institution of English government. What Simon and his followers—and the Lord Edward—did know was that within the royal Council, and by broadly based discussion, vital aspects of royal government, jurisdiction, and administration could and had to be conducted.

Through the spring and summer of 1265 Earl Simon's position weakened. His chief associate, the Earl of Gloucester, had decided that royal government conducted by Simon could lead to no good result in the end. Late in May the Lord Edward escaped, was joined by Gloucester, and gathered an army in the Welsh march. On 4th August Simon's army was caught at Evesham in Worcestershire and quickly beaten. Simon himself was killed, and the King was once more restored to effective government.

Simon de Montfort's achievements were not buried with him. It is true that the idea of limited monarchy was a temporary expedient to deal with a crisis. But the idea that important affairs of state should be regularly discussed in Great Councils, and that there must be more continuous co operation between the king and all the groups and interests among the English ruling classes had been firmly implanted in Edward himself, in his own followers, and in many others. The revolution of 1258 and the events of the following seven years had created precedents and started experiments which were not to be forgotten.

These seven years had also raised feuds and violent dissensions which it took many years to settle. Immediately after Evesham Simon's supporters were deprived of their lands, and the long guerrilla warfare against the 'Disinherited', as they were called, began. They took refuge where they could, in fen and forest. Some of them organised bands of outlaws, and one of these (with its headquarters in Sherwood Forest) may have given rise to the famous legend of Robin Hood; but Robin more likely belongs to the early fourteenth century.¹ Eventually a fair settlement was devised and carried out on the basis of the firm but moderate document known as the Dictum of Kenilworth (1266) which was followed by the more elaborate Statute of Marlborough (1267). This settlement was a triumph above all for the papal legate, Cardinal Ottobuono; but he found allies in Edward himself and in the Earl of Gloucester, neither of whom wished to see the positive achievements of the baronial plan of reform destroyed. Initiative in government was restored to the King; he was to be free to choose his servants and councillors; but Magna Carta was to be enforced and responsible government ensured by regular 'parliaments'.

The legate was not solely concerned to restore peace and good order to the kingdom; he had also come to preach a Crusade. The Sultan of Egypt was engaged in the piecemeal conquest of the surviving Christian outposts and principalities in Syria and Palestine. Although the crusading movement had lost the popular

¹ See Powicke, *King Henry III and the Lord Edward*, II, pp. 529–30.

appeal which it had had in the twelfth century, the great effort of papal propaganda of the late twelve-sixties had quite a substantial effect. The Crusade, however, got under way very slowly. Ottobuono left England in 1268; it was not until 1270 that the English contingent, led by the Lord Edward himself, set sail. In the same year St. Louis of France also set out on Crusade, to meet his death in Tunis before he ever reached the Holy Land. Louis' death severely weakened the Crusade, and Edward had to content himself with leading some raids on the Syrian coast, and helping in negotiations for peace with the Egyptian sultan, under which the coastal settlements round Acre and elsewhere were preserved until the sixteenth century. Late in 1272 Edward set out on his return journey, and had only reached Sicily when he received news that his father had died on 16th November 1272.

Edward's journey home was extraordinarily slow: it took him nearly two years to travel from Sicily to England, a space of time occupied in formal visits to the Pope and the King of France, in taking part in his last tournament, and in settling the affairs of Gascony. England, meanwhile, was securely held by his friends. Edward had been accepted as king by hereditary right and by the will of the magnates immediately on his father's death. But it was not until 19th August 1274 that he was crowned in his father's choir in Westminster Abbey.

E. ENGLAND UNDER EDWARD I, 1272–1307

in G. HOLMES, *THE LATER MIDDLE AGES, 1272–1485*
The Norton Library History of England (1962) 102–10

6. THE POLITICS OF ENGLAND UNDER THE THREE EDWARDS

(1) *Edward I and England to 1294*

WE HAVE seen something of Edward I's struggles with Wales and Scotland. It is now time to turn to the internal politics of the kingdom of England and to the wars with France, which imposed a much greater strain on royal resources than fighting in Britain and had therefore a more critical effect on the relations of the monarchy with its subjects at home. When Henry III died in November 1272 his son, Edward I was in Sicily on his way back from Syria. The last English king to go on Crusade was thirty-three years old and already a famous man in the European world. His early manhood had been passed in a time of adventurous politics which had given him the opportunity to establish a reputation as a successful soldier. He had saved his father's kingdom from the rebellion of Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, in 1265. Then he had taken the Cross and led an army to Acre. Crusading projects remained alive and, after his conquest of Wales, Edward intended to lead an army again to the Holy Land. But enterprises nearer home claimed his attention. He never went to the East again but spent his long reign in Britain and France. Edward I did not repeat his more romantic father's mistake of allowing distant possibilities in the Mediterranean to divert his attention from the problems and opportunities of his own dominions. The persistent effort at expansion and defence on his own borders—in Wales, in Scotland, and in Gascony—is the first thing for which his reign is important.

Its second great importance lies in the remarkable development of institutions, and this, too, undoubtedly owed much to Edward's character. Medieval writings do not give us much insight in depth into the characters of kings, for they were represented as far as possible as embodiments of traditional virtues. In Edward I's case this may have been less misleading than usual. He was, outwardly at least, a magnificently successful conventional man. He was a great and active fighter from youth to death, 'erect as a palm, he maintained the lightness of youth in mounting a horse or running.' In politics he lived as expected of a king of his time, but much more effectively than most, for the utmost exaction of his rights. The man who expelled the Jews from England and Gascony to pay for the ransom of his ally, Charles of Salerno, by the forfeiture of their property,¹ was neither merciful nor particularly scrupulous in exacting his pound of flesh when he thought he had legal right on his side—as he did in his Welsh and Scots policies. 'By God's blood

¹ H. G. Richardson, *The English Jewry under Angevin Kings* (1960), pp.213ff.