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MEDIÆVAL LONDON

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Содержание

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CHAPTER I
A COMPREHENSIVE SURVEY

What are the Historical Limits of "Mediæval London?" – Derivation of "London" – The Roman City – Outlying Districts – Decay of Ancient London – Renewal after the English Conquest was Complete – London Christianised – King Alfred's London – Its Gradual Rise to Supremacy – St. Paul's Cathedral – William the Conqueror's London – London in the days of the Plantagenets. – Foundation of Westminster Abbey – Rebuilt by Henry III. – St. Clement Danes – Watling Street – The Folkmote Ground – Cheapside and its Surroundings – The Pageants – The Arches Court – London Wall, the Gates and Towers – City Trees – The Religious Houses – Monasteries – Priories – Colleges – Hospitals – Episcopal Residences – London Outskirts – Notes of Remarkable Events under the Successive Dynasties – Aggas's Map of London, temp. Queen Elizabeth.

Mediæval London – it is a perfectly distinct and real subject, though it might be difficult to give exact dates of beginning and

end. Historical periods glide in, and run their course, and fade away or take fresh shape. Yet we may venture to approximate, and to say with some confidence that Ancient London changed into Mediæval in the days of King Alfred, and passed into Modern with the accession of the Stuarts. The Great Fire of 1666 made vast changes not only in the city itself, but in the surroundings thereof, but modern London had begun nearly a century before that.

London is not mentioned in Cæsar's account of Britain, but we know from Tacitus that it existed and was a place of importance. In a lecture of Dean Stanley delivered in Exeter Hall, entitled "The Study of Modern History in London," he follows the etymology accepted in his time, and interprets the name "The City of Ships." That derivation was disproved by Dr. Guest, and the meaning now, so far as I know, universally held by scholars is "The Fortress by the Lake." The "lake," so called, was the river spread out in a wide marsh on the Surrey side, and the "fortress" was a palisaded ground round the neighbourhood of the present Cannon Street Station. When the Romans took possession in the first half of the first century, they fortified it with a tower and a wall. Parts of the Roman wall are still standing; most of it remained in the days of Mediæval London. Substantial fragments of the later wall taken from around Bishopsgate are preserved in the Guildhall Museum. They include portions of handsome Roman buildings and sculptured ornaments. Evidently some, having fallen into decay, were in the course of ages used by

mediæval Londoners for the repairs of their walls. And there are further remains of elaborate furniture, and other proofs of high civilised life in London. But the written history of the city during the Roman occupation is a blank. It was certainly the largest port in the country, but of written records there are none. Traditions there are of visits of Apostles and other Christian missionaries, and one church in the city has a brass plate stating that it stands on the site of the mother church of London, the foundation of King Lucius. But this is a sheer myth, King Lucius and all. That during those years of Roman dominion there were Christian congregations we may feel confident, but there are no proofs. Beyond the city were swamps and marshes on all sides. A dreary tract covered with reeds and thorns, and formed into an island by a river which came down from the hills and enclosed it by forking off into the Thames, is now occupied by the fair City of Westminster. I myself can remember when a large part of Belgravia still consisted of fields. A somewhat eccentric Hertfordshire baronet, who seconded the Reform Bill of 1832, once brought up a bag fox and a pack of hounds, and hunted him through those fields. The swamp continued all the way to Fulham on the west, and over Finsbury on the north. Beyond the marshes all round rose a region of thick, well-nigh impenetrable forest.

The departure of the Romans was followed after a brief interval by the English Conquest, and London decayed – we may even say fell into utter desolation. For her greatness had been entirely commercial; she had had large trade with the Continent,

which was now broken to pieces. She had received her food from ships which came both up and down the Thames, but the poor Britons who were fighting for existence had no more to send her. The rich traders and merchants had no longer any occupation, and left their luxurious homes to find it elsewhere. And so the once flourishing London became deserted.

But when the English Conquest was accomplished, and peace for a while followed warfare, a population also reappeared in London, consisting of traders who saw the great advantages of its situation. Prosperity began to return. London became once more a city of merchants. It was again flourishing when the heathen English were converted to Christianity by Augustine, so much so that in 604 one of his companions, Mellitus, became its first bishop, Sebert being then king. Sir Walter Besant sees in the identity of the Cockney dialect ("lydy" for lady, &c.) with that of Essex, a proof that the new population were chiefly from the East Saxons.

At first the Christianising of London seemed to be a failure. Mellitus built a cathedral, but had to flee before the heathenism into which the king's sons relapsed. The failure, however, was but temporary, and the Church became altogether triumphant. The intense sense of nationality, which has always characterised the English people, comes out in the names given to the London churches. The greater number of them were dedicated to English saints, and the names continue to this day. One of these saints – Botolph – who had endeared himself immensely to the

Londoners, went forth to N.E. England and established a great mission there, and there he died. The noble tower of Boston (== Botolph's town) preserves his memory in Lincolnshire. But the Londoners, in love and veneration to his memory, built churches bearing his name at all the four gates which led towards his burial-place; three of them still remain, and the name of the fourth survives in Botolph's Lane, by Billingsgate.

When King Alfred had delivered the country from the Danish invaders and restored peace, he put forth his energies to strengthen London and enlarge its prosperity. It had been growing almost uninterruptedly, while it had been subject, now to one of the kingdoms of the Heptarchy, now to another. Alfred made it really the chief city of his dominion. Winchester in some respects was held to be the royal city, but London became in fact the capital of England. It was the richest and the most influential city. Under the Danes, on their second invasion, it retained its influence, and added at least two churches with Danish names, Olaf and Magnus.

Mediæval London had thus begun, but still the recorded details of its history for a while are scanty; and there are few remains of Saxon London either. The first cathedral of Mellitus, probably of wood, was burned in 961; so was its successor in a great fire of 1084. There are here and there a few Saxon churches remaining in England, such as Bradford-on-Avon in Wilts, and Corhampton in Hants. It is not to be wondered at that there is not one in London, though there were then many.

Maurice, whom William the Conqueror made Bishop of London, began a new cathedral in 1086, of course in the usual Norman style, with round arches and heavy pillars, such as may still be seen in the transepts of Winchester. But two hundred years passed before it was completed, and as it was always the custom in the Middle Ages to carry on building, or to make repairs and restorations, in the style of architecture in vogue at the moment, St. Paul's became, like nearly all our English cathedrals, a composite building, exhibiting not only Norman, but Early English and Early Decorated. This cathedral was enclosed by a wall in which were six gates. The names of two of these are preserved in the names of "Paul's Chain" and "St. Paul's Alley."

London's importance became more and more fully established. She had struggled successfully for her rights against the Danish King, Cnut. London from the first stood high in favour with the Conqueror. It had not resisted him, and he remembered that, and lost no opportunity of showing his gratitude. The city had hitherto struggled between adversity and prosperity, but the Norman brought her halcyon days, and from his time her greatness was assured. In the Guildhall Charter-room is a manuscript beautifully written, six inches by one inch, and this is what it contains: —

Charter of William I. to the City of London

"Will'm kyng gret Will'm bisceop and Gosfregð

portirefan, and ealle þa burhwaru binnan Londone, Francisce and Englisce freondlice. and ic kyde eow þat ic wylle þat get beon eallra þœra laga weorðe þe gyt wæran on Eadwerdes dæge kynges. and ic wylle þæt ælc cyld beo his fæder yrfnume. æfter his fæderdæge. and ic nelle geþolian þæt ænig man eow ænig wrang beode. God eow gehealde."

Of which document the following is the translation: —

"William the king greeteth William the bishop and Godfrey the portreeve, and all the burgesses within London, French and English, friendly. And I acquaint you, that I will that ye be all those laws worthy, that ye were in King Edward's day. And I will that every child be his father's heir, after his father's day. And I will not suffer that any man do you any wrong. God preserve you."

It is a very intelligible piece of worldly wisdom to have to note, that he followed this charter up by building "the White Tower," the chief feature in our imposing fortress, the Tower of London. In the year 1100, his son, Henry I., gave the city a fresh charter, distinctly enumerating the privileges of the citizens, which had been hitherto merely prescriptive; and he granted to the Corporation the perpetual Sheriff-wick of Middlesex.

But the greatest instance of the influence which London displayed, and which she has ever since exerted on the national history, was the fact that in the fierce contest for the crown, between Stephen of Blois and Matilda, it was the citizens of London who decided the question in favour of the former. By

that time the population of the city had received a very large foreign element. Not only Danes, but Normans and Gascons had been welcomed with readiness and admitted to full citizenship. Of course the Norman Conquest had done this. The rich merchants of Rouen and Caen were a strong acquisition to London commerce. It was the Norman element which turned the scale in the contest for the crown, and there were two causes which operated on the Normans. Matilda had married Geoffry, count of Anjou, and there was a traditional jealousy between the Normans and Angevins. But further, the Londoners were now under the spell of a strong religious movement to which I shall have presently to refer, and the Angevin princes already bore, and continued to bear, the character of blasphemers of God and His Church.

Mr. J. R. Green vividly points out how, on the vacancy of the throne, the Londoners, in the absence of noble and bishop, now claimed for themselves the right of election. "Undismayed by the want of the hereditary counsellors of the Crown, their aldermen and crier-folk gathered together the folk-mote, and these providing at their own will for the good of the realm, unanimously agreed to choose a king. The very arguments of the citizens are preserved to us as they stood massed doubtless in the usual place for the folk-mote at the east end of Paul's, while the bell of the commune rang out its iron summons from the detached campanile beside. 'Every kingdom,' urged alderman and prudhomme, 'was open to mishap, where the presence of all

rule and head of justice was lacking! It was no time for waiting; delay was in fact impossible in the election of a king, needed as he was at once to restore justice of the law.' But quick on these considerations followed the bolder assertion of a constitutional right of pre-election, possessed by London alone. '*Their* right and special privilege it was, that on their king's death his successor should be provided by *them*;' and if any, then Stephen, brought as it were by Providence into the midst of them, already on the spot. Bold as the claim was, none contradicted it; the solemn deliberation ended in the choice of Stephen, and amidst the applause of all, the aldermen appointed him king."

It will be convenient to pause at this point to look at the great change which had taken place westwards. The stately Abbey of Westminster had arisen on what was once a thorny waste. Originally founded by Sebert, the first Christian King of the East Saxons, it had been rebuilt by King Edward the Confessor in the Norman style, of which he was the real introducer into England. It was consecrated only a week before his death, January, 1066, and the ill-fated Harold was crowned in it immediately after, as was William the Conqueror before the year had ended. From that day to this Westminster Abbey has been the scene of the Coronation of all the English monarchs. Later on, Edward the Confessor was canonised, and his remains were removed from their original resting-place, and laid in a stately shrine prepared by Henry II., who was present, along with his Chancellor and Archbishop Becket, at the "translation." This was on the 13th

of October, 1163. It was in consequence of the honour thus conferred upon it that the Abbey was declared by the Pope exempt from the jurisdiction of the Bishop of London, and subject only to the authority of the Pope and the King of England. Its Abbot was "mitred," *i. e.*, he was privileged to wear the Episcopal habit, and to claim a seat on the Episcopal bench in the House of Lords.

The thirteenth century saw a yet further honour for the Abbey. Henry III., who always held the memory of Edward the Confessor in "prodigious value" (which he showed by naming his eldest son after him), resolved on rebuilding the Abbey in the beautiful style which we commonly call "Early English," though he had seen it in France, and at once became, not unreasonably, enamoured of it. The present beautiful church is, in large measure, his work, though later abbots continued it: the material additions since have been the Lady Chapel, commonly known as Henry the Seventh's, he being the founder, and the western towers, by Sir Christopher Wren, at a date outside our limits. It is hard to realise, until one has seen similar buildings on the Continent, that there was a partition wall entirely dividing the choir, which belonged to the monks, and the nave, to which the general congregation was admitted. This wall was removed in the time of Henry VII.

The road between London and Westminster passed amidst detached houses and farms. The monks of Westminster cultivated their produce in the Convent Garden – the name lives

on, though the "n" in the first word is gone. After the peaceable settlement of the Danes, a portion of territory was set apart for them to dwell in between London and Westminster. As they were seafarers, they naturally took the sailor's saint for their patron, and the church which they built for themselves is known to us as St. Clement Danes.

But it is time to return to our City. We have seen that the Cathedral of St. Paul's was now a noble building, worthy of the capital of the kingdom. The Bishop lived on the north side of the Cathedral, his palace and gardens extended back to Paternoster Row; the chapter house, and the cloisters round it, lay on the south side of the nave; fragments of it may be seen to this day. Adjoining the S.W. wall of the nave was the church of St. Gregory-by-St. Paul. The parish still exists. In that church the body of St. Edmund, King and Martyr, lay for some years before it was buried at the town which bears his name. On the east side of the churchyard was a large grass-grown space, just such a spot as we still see so constantly on the borders of country towns and villages – the "village green," in fact. Across it came the great Roman road, which started from London Stone, passed along what we now call Newgate Street, and went away to Cheshire, following, as we may say, the course of the N.W. Railway. This, after Roman times, received the name of Watling Street, *i. e.*, "Atheling Street" (== High Street). It does not, indeed, so far as the city is concerned, answer to the present Watling Street, for after leaving what we call Budge Row, which was part of

it, it went straight on over ground which is now covered with the streets south of Cheapside. It became necessary, later on, to change its course, owing to difficulties connected with the enlargement of St. Paul's Churchyard, and the new Watling Street is the substitute. But to return to the "Green" by St. Paul's. This, after Norman times, was the site of the Folkmote, of which the present "Common Council" are the elected representatives. The citizens met on this green in the open air, seats being plentifully dispersed about, and here the public business of the city was carried on. Nor must we omit mention of "Paul's Cross," at the east corner of the north transept of the Cathedral, the site of which was discovered by Mr. Penrose, and is now marked by an inscription on the ground. At the east end of the green there was a short, narrow street, passing through which you came (just where is the fine plane-tree) into Cheapside. But it will tax the imagination of the reader considerably to realise how different was this locality from that which bears the same name to-day. "*Side*" means "place," or "part." Cheapside means, therefore, "Market-place." It was as much the London market-place as that of any provincial town of to-day. It was a large square, reaching back as far as the present Honey Lane, and other streets in a straight line with it, and with booth-decked streets branching away as far as the Guildhall and Basing Hall.

Here, then, we have the two centre places of Old London: the Cathedral, with its ecclesiastical surroundings (a large, populous, and important district in itself), and the Chepe, into which, north

and south, ran streets, the names of which indicated the nature of the commerce carried on there. Thus there was Bread Street, where the bakers congregated, and to which were brought the supplies of corn landed from the river close by, having been conveyed thither chiefly from the great cornfields which covered the whole Isle of Thanet. The name of St. Mildred's Church in this street is a relic of the respect paid to her as being the tutelary saint of that bread-growing island. Ironmonger Lane, Wood Street, Milk Street, and the Poultry tell their own story. Budge Row was so called because here were sold robes of Budge, a kind of fur, for Aldermen and other public officers. Milton talks of the "budge doctors." Friday Street, in close contiguity with St. Paul's and some of the other great religious houses, was so called because it was devoted to the sale of fish for fast-days, &c. At a later time it became necessary to have an additional market-square, and it was found in the *East Cheap*.

All through the Plantagenet times, the "golden age of chivalry," the great square of "the Chepe" was the scene of tournaments and martial pageants. Adjoining the church of St. Mary-le-Bow was a scaffold projecting into the street, which it was the privilege of Royalty and the courtiers to occupy on such occasions. Once, in the reign of Edward III., a sad accident occurred by the falling in of this scaffold, whereby some not only of the occupants, but of the spectators in the street beneath, were killed. It is said that the King, with true Plantagenet violence, ordered the head carpenter to be hanged, and was turned from

his purpose, as at Calais, by the intercession of the Queen. It led to an alteration. The Royal gallery was firmly fixed to the wall of the church, and so remained. Years later, after the Great Fire, when Wren rebuilt the church, and surmounted it with its present beautiful spire, there was a stipulation that there should be a "Royal gallery." And there it is still, the passer-by can see it from the street. I doubt whether Royalty in our time has ever mounted into it, but it is an historical relic of the ancient pageants of Cheapside.[1] Nor is this the only relic of the past in that church. In ancient times there was a great chamber, resting on arches, in the tower, and the church was called the Church of *Sancta Maria de Arcubus*; hence its present name of "St. Mary-le-Bow." That chamber was the rightful possession of the Archbishop of Canterbury, who held it as his court for the trial of ecclesiastical causes brought before him as Metropolitan. Hence came the title of "Court of *Arches*," the Spiritual Court of the Metropolitan. Strangely altered as the office has become in the course of years, it still exists; the judge of ecclesiastical cases is still known as "the Dean of Arches." And when this St. Mary's Church was rebuilt after the Fire of 1666, Wren placed its magnificent spire on an arched base – a memorial of the ancient ecclesiastical dignity.

We are now in a position to look back, and take a comprehensive survey of our great city in the Middle Ages.

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[1] One of the "properties" still remains in Ironmongers' Hall, an ostrich on which a black boy was seated in a seventeenth-century Mayoralty pageant. The beautiful drawings of Anthony Munday's "Chrysanaleia," a pageant prepared for Sir John Leman's Mayoralty procession in 1616, are preserved at Fishmongers' Hall.

First. We have the Tower on the east side, guarding the approach from the sea, and the high and spacious wall surrounding the whole city. Fitzstephen, a monk of Canterbury, gives an interesting picture of the times of Henry II. He describes London as bounded on the land side by a high and spacious wall, furnished with turrets and double gates. These were Aldgate, Bishopsgate, Cripplegate, Aldersgate, Newgate, Ludgate, and probably Bridgegate. But see Stow's comment (Ed. Thoms, 1842, page 11). There was also a postern near the Tower. The latter he calls "the Tower Palatine," and also names "two castles well fortified" in the west, Baynard and Montfichet. The former stood at the western extremity of the city wall on the site of the present Castle Baynard Wharf, and adjoining Carron Wharf. The name survives also in the name of "Castle Baynard Ward." It was built by Baynard, a follower of William the Conqueror, and though it was burnt more than once, it was duly restored, and lasted till the Great Fire. It became a Royal palace, and in it Edward IV. assumed the title of King. Henry VIII. made it one of his residences. So did Edward VI., on whose death Queen Mary was here proclaimed Queen. Montfichet Tower was between the site of Ludgate Hill Station and Printing House Square. A bastion of the London Wall still remains in the churchyard of St. Giles', Cripplegate.

Secondly. The great market-place – the Cheap – with the principal streets all leading into it, represents the commercial magnitude of the city. The residences of the merchants and

traders had, for the most part, each its garden, large or small. It is a commonplace saying that there is not a street in London from some part of which you cannot see a tree. This was more true a few years ago than it is to-day. Thus, there was a beautiful plane-tree in front of Grocers' Hall, in Princes Street, but exigencies of building-space led to its destruction but lately. Cheapside still rejoices in its fine tree at the corner of Wood Street, which has found a great poet to write pleasantly about it. Down in secluded streets the London saunterer comes on more of these trees, relics of old citizens' gardens and resorts, as well as those in closed churchyards. The parish of St. Martin Pomeroy preserves in its second name the memory of the ancient orchard which once gladdened the Londoner's eyes.

Then, *thirdly*, there were the Religious Houses. Fitzstephen says that in his day (*temp.* Henry II.) there were thirteen conventual churches and 126 parochial. Some were of pre-Norman times, like the Collegiate Church of St. Martin's-le-Grand, founded by one Ingelric in 1056, and confirmed by a charter of William the Conqueror in 1068. Though this stood in the heart of the city it was independent of civic control; the Mayor and Corporation often endeavoured in vain to exercise authority over it. Criminals on their way to execution now and then managed to slip within its boundaries, in which case they were safe in sanctuary. It was from this church that the Curfew Bell for London tolled out each evening, a signal for closing the city gates, as well as the taverns.

An event of vast importance in the religious life of this nation was the great Cistercian movement in the beginning of the twelfth century. This is not the place to tell the history of the origin of it, the mighty endeavour to reform the decadent Benedictine order made by Robert of Molesme, who settled himself in the hamlet of Citeaux (Cistercium), near Dijon, and set up the first reformed monastery. The movement soon found its way to England, the first Abbey being founded at Waverley, near Farnham; and before long it had its devotees in London, the most noteworthy of whom was Gilbert Becket, a wealthy trader in Cheapside. It was the excitement of this which was upon the Londoners when, as we have already had to note, they chose Stephen for king against the supposed irreligion of the House of Anjou. Under the influence of this religious revival a new impulse seemed to come upon the Church, which bound it closer than it had ever been before in the affections of the people. Gilbert Becket's son, Thomas, became known to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Theobald, for his intense religious earnestness, became his right hand in administration, guided him unfalteringly through the troubles which came out of the dreadful civil war between Stephen and Matilda, and finally gave peace to distracted England. How the eager young Londoner himself became Archbishop, and how he came for many a year to be regarded as the very chief of English saints, we need not tell here. And this new religious impulse told in the city to the extent of changing its very aspect. The Cathedral which Bishop Maurice

had begun seemed for a while to be languishing. Now barges came up the river with stone from Caen for the great arches which excited the popular wonder. Rahere, the king's minstrel, raised his noble Priory of St. Bartholomew in Smithfield, of which enough still remains to make it the finest Norman building in London. Alfune, in 1090, built St. Giles's, Cripplegate. The dissolution of the Cnichten Guild (a body of thirteen knights as old as King Edgar, which continued to hold land on fanciful tenures down to 1115) was followed by the bestowal of their property on the Priory of the Holy Trinity in Aldgate, and out of this arises an interesting episode. The first prior, Norman, built his cloister and church, and bought books and vestments on so liberal a scale that there was nothing left to buy food. The citizens, visiting the place on Sundays according to custom, saw that the poor canons were famished with hunger. "Hic est pulcher apparatus, sed panis unde veniet?" exclaimed somebody. "It is a fine show to be sure; but where is the bread to come from?" The women present, Becket's mother among them, vowed to send a loaf every Sunday, and soon there was enough and to spare. Very pretty is the story of the early life of the future martyr, how his mother, Rohese, used to weigh him on each birthday, and send money, clothes, and provisions, according to his weight.

The Cistercian is the first of the great religious movements which have wrought an enduring effect upon our national life. The Crusades, which have also left their mark in London, made a second; and within the period we are considering we have also

to place the preaching of the Friars, the Lollardism of Wyclif, and the Reformation. Later on, past mediæval times, came the Puritan Rebellion, the preaching of the Wesleys, the Oxford Tract Movement, and the work of F. D. Maurice and the "Broad Church."

But it will be well to set down in order the principal religious establishments which grew up with the years. Here is a list of them as they existed at the time of the Reformation: —

Friaries and Abbeys. —*The Black Friars* (Dominicans) between Ludgate Hill and the Thames, extending from St. Andrew's Hill to the Fleet River. Their house was founded by Hubert de Burgh, earl of Kent, in 1221. It had a church and precinct with four gates. In this church Archbishop Courtenay was condemning the writings of Wyclif, when "a great earthquake shook the city." Here Charles V. lodged when he was visiting Henry VIII. The latter king held a Parliament here, but transferred it to the house of the Black Monks of Westminster, hence it was called "the Black Parliament." At the Dissolution the church was given to the parishioners (St. Anne's, Blackfriars). The *Grey Friars* (Franciscans) had a noble house on the site of what is at this moment, though it will soon cease to be, Christ's Hospital. Parts of the old buildings remained as late as 1820 (see *Gentleman's Magazine*, May, 1820), indeed, there is a small portion even now. The noble church of the *Augustinian* (Austin) *Friars* (founded in 1253) still exists off Broad Street, the nave being used by the Dutch Protestant Church. The *White*

Friars (Carmelites) had their church east of the Temple, founded 1241. It was pulled down at the Dissolution, and houses were built on the site, but it still preserved the right of sanctuary, and was consequently a haunt of thieves and fraudulent debtors. The privilege was not abolished till 1697. The *Crutched* (== crossed) *Friars*, so called because they wore a cross on their backs, had their church on the site of St. Olave's, Hart Street; the *Carthusians*, on that of the Charterhouse; the *Cistercians'* New Abbey was in East Smithfield; and the Brethren *de Sacca*, or "Bonhommes," were a small community under Augustinian rules in Old Jewry.

Then there were the Priories, religious houses subject to greater abbeys or religious bodies. That of St. John of Jerusalem, at Clerkenwell, was founded in 1100 by Jordan Briset and his wife Muriel, and was endowed in 1324 with the revenues of the dissolved English Knights Templars. Its ancient gateway remains, the only one left of all the old London monastic houses. In the Wat Tyler rebellion (1381) the prior was beheaded in the great courtyard, now St. John's Square. Of the Priory of Holy Trinity, Aldgate, we have already spoken, as we have also of St. Bartholomew's, Smithfield, the noble chancel of which priory is still one of the finest buildings in London. Across the river the beautiful church of the Augustinian Priory of *St. Mary Overy* was built by Giffard, bishop of Winchester, in 1106, at the expense of two Norman knights. At the Dissolution, Henry VIII. gave it to the parishioners of Southwark for their parish church, and the

name was changed to that of St. Saviour. How part of it tumbled down; how it was rebuilt in Brummagem Gothic; how this also, happily, went to pieces, and has been replaced within the last few years by a handsome restoration, we all know.

Of Nunneries, we note St. Helen's, Bishopsgate, the church of the Priory of the Nuns of St. Helen, founded in 1212 by "William the son of William the Goldsmith." The church formerly had a partition dividing the nuns' portion from that of the parishioners. It was taken down at the Dissolution, but plenty of remains of the old arrangement are still evident in the church, which is in many features one of the most interesting in London. Until the year 1799 the old Hall of the nunnery was standing, having been bought by the Leathersellers' Company at the Dissolution for their Hall. *Holywell*, Shoreditch, was so called from a sweet well there, which was spoiled as the population came to increase in that part. There was here a Benedictine Nunnery, dedicated to St. John Baptist, founded in 1318 by Gravesend, bishop of London. In later days the famous Curtain Theatre was built on the site, which again has given place to St. James's Church, Curtain Road. Edmond, earl of Leicester, brother of King Edward III., founded an Abbey of nuns of the Order of St. Clare, commonly called the Minorites, in 1293, in a street between Aldgate and the Tower. On the Dissolution, Henry VIII. gave the chapel to the people for a parish church (Holy Trinity, Minories); the rest of the site was built over. The Benedictine Nunnery of St. Mary, Clerkenwell, was contiguous to the Hospital or Priory of St. John.

The name Clerkenwell (*Fons Clericorum*) was derived from a well, at which once a year the Parish Clerks of London assembled and performed a religious play. It was at the S.E. corner of Ray Street. A pump marked the site until less than fifty years ago, when the water was found to be so polluted that it was removed. When the "Black Nunnery" was dissolved, the site was given to the Earl of Aylesbury, hence the present Aylesbury Street, Clerkenwell.

Of Colleges, *i. e.*, communities of religious men, were (1) *St. Martin's-le-Grand* (already mentioned); (2) *St. Thomas of Acon* (alias Acre), a military sanctuary founded by Agnes, the sister of St. Thomas Becket, over her brother's birthplace. It was on the site of the present Mercers' Hall, and was much regarded by the Corporation of London in the Middle Ages. Richard Whittington, Mercer, thrice Lord Mayor (last time, 1419), founded the College of "Saint Esprit and Mary," in the Vintry Ward, and the Almshouse for Mercers. The site still bears the name of College Hill. Mercers' School was removed from hence to Barnard's Inn, Holborn, a few years since. The College of St. Michael, Crooked Lane, was founded by Sir William Walworth, who was buried within the church. This church was removed to make room for the approach to new London Bridge, in 1831.

Of Hospitals, note *St. Giles's-in-the-Fields* for Lepers, founded by Matilda, queen of Henry I.; *St. James's Hospital* "for leprous maidens," now St. James's Palace; *St. Mary of Rounceval*, a

priory of the Abbey of Roncevalles in Navarre. It stood on the site of Northumberland Avenue at Charing Cross. *Elsing Spital*, by Cripplegate, was founded by Wm. Elsing in 1329, for the sustentation of a hundred blind men. The site was afterwards occupied by Sion College; but when that was moved to the Thames Embankment the ground was built over. Sir John Pountney founded and endowed a College in his own house in Candlewick Street, calling it *Corpus Christi*, to maintain a master and twelve mission priests. Their chapel was attached to the Church of St. Lawrence Pountney, which was burnt in the Great Fire and not rebuilt. The *Papey*, a house for worn-out priests, was in Bevis Marks. *St. Bartholomew the Less* is now the Chapel of St. Bartholomew's Hospital precinct. The *Lock Spital* was for the reception of lepers, the derivation being *loques*, rags. The old Hospital of *St. Katharine's by the Tower* was removed, in 1828, to make room for St. Katharine's Docks, and set up anew by the Regent's Park.

Episcopal Residences were those of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, at Lambeth and Whitehall respectively; of the Bishop of Durham (Durham House, Strand); of those of Bath, Chester, Lichfield, Llandaff, Worcester, Exeter, Carlisle, all in the Strand; of Hereford, on Fish Street Hill. The Bishop of Ely dwelt in Ely Place, Holborn: the chapel still exists, in the possession of the Roman Catholics. Readers of Shakespeare will remember how the bishop grew strawberries in his garden. The Bishop of Salisbury's house was in Salisbury Square; of

St. David's, near Bridewell; of Winchester and Rochester, in Southwark. Parts of Winchester House still exist there.

As the Thames on the south side of the city did noble service as the principal highway for its commerce and its corn supply, so the fields on the north furnished large pasture-land for its cattle. Across these fields a road led away to the village of Islington. In the Moor Fields were the Artillery Butts, whither young London resorted to be trained in the use of the bow. Readers may remember the description of them in the opening portion of Lord Lytton's novel, *The Last of the Barons*. Within the walls adjacent to this part the manufacturers of bows and arrows were settled. Very strange and curious have been the various associations of the name "Grub Street." Grobes were feathers for arrows, and originally Grub Street was that in which arrows were finished. That manufacture died out, and the street, being in a Puritan neighbourhood, in the days of Elizabeth became the publishing place for violent attacks upon the bishops. "Martin Marprelate," the well-known series of that class of publication, was issued from this street. Then, by a natural transition, scurrilous lampoons in general, and not merely theological, came to be called "Grub Street tracts," because the phrase had become current; and the name stuck, and was applied to literary rubbish of any kind, Pope having endorsed the title in his satire. The name has, unfortunately, disappeared from the street within the last decade. The authorities, because the name had become obnoxious to fastidious ears, have changed it to

Milton Street, the poet having been borne down it from Bunhill Fields, where he died, to be buried in St. Giles's Church.

Partly on the site of Liverpool Street Station, and partly across the road as far as the Underground Railway, stood, in mediæval times, the "Hospital of St. Mary of Bethlehem." From early times, certainly in 1402, this religious foundation was devoted to the care of the insane, and at the Dissolution it became one of the Royal Hospitals, with lunatics exclusively for its inmates. It was the Great Fire of 1666 which permanently changed all this neighbourhood. Up to that time the greater part had been fields, but now the poor burned-out citizens came and (literally) pitched their tents here, and stowed within them the goods which they had been able to save. Here they carried on their business, and gradually substituted rough houses for these tents; and thus, by the time the City was rebuilt, a new suburb had arisen, and a well-inhabited suburb from that time it remained. Bethlehem Hospital was removed to London Wall in 1675-6, as the monastic buildings had decayed, and the increasing number of patients required larger room. It found its present home in St. George's Fields in 1812-15. And here we may note that "Finsbury Fields," *i. e.*, Finsbury Circus and the land round it, formed the favourite summer lounge of the London citizens up to the beginning of the eighteenth century. It was laid out in formal style, with paths and bordering trees. Merchants and tradesmen came hither at eventide, as the fashionable world of to-day goes to Hyde Park. Poets and pamphleteers met publishers, and playwrights

made appointments with managers. A large body of spectators frequently gathered here to see a thief whipped at the cart's tail.

And now we will simply name the most prominent events in the history of the city during our period.

In Pre-Norman times, after Alfred had restored the lost prosperity of London, his grandson Athelstan (925-940) established a royal palace and a royal mint, and gave an impulse to the commerce of the city by promising patents of gentility to every merchant who should make three voyages to the Mediterranean in his own ship. His "redeless" grandson Ethelred abandoned London to the Danes, and Cnut levied an impost of 11,000*l.* upon it, a proof of the great wealth which it had now acquired. It was a seventh part of that of the whole kingdom.

Norman Times. – As already mentioned, London is not in Domesday book. It is probable that there was a separate survey, the records of which are now lost. Domesday incidentally mentions ten acres of land near Bishopsgate, Norton Folgate, as belonging to the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's, and a vineyard in Holborn, the property of the Crown.

The founding of the many religious houses during this period we have already mentioned. The building of the first stone bridge by Peter of Colechurch, which also belongs to this period, finds its place in another page.

We note the orders of Henry Fitzailwin, the first Mayor, for the prevention of fires. All houses were to be of brick or stone, with party walls of the same, and to be covered with slates or

tiles. The building of houses round the Walbrook, Oldbourne, and Langbourn had diminished the supply of water, so they sought a fresh supply from Tyburn, and supplied a conduit in Cheapside with water from thence, which they brought in leaden pipes (A.D. 1255). The chronicles of Evesham say that in 1258, 20,000 persons died of hunger through a scarcity of corn, and ghastly stories are told of another famine in 1270. But on the whole London increased and prospered under Norman rule. In 1264 there was a massacre of the Jews on some trivial pretext. They were expelled the kingdom in 1291.

Plantagenet Times. – The division of the city into wards dates from the beginning of this period or earlier. In 1348 came the terrible Black Death. "In London it was so outrageously cruel that every day at least twenty, sometimes forty or sixty, or more, dead corpses were thrown together into one pit, and the churchyard not sufficing for the dead, they were fain to set apart certain fields for additional places of burial… But especially, between Candlemas and Easter in 1349, there were buried 200 corpses per diem" (Barnes's *Hist. of Edward III.*). It is chronicled that more than 50,000 persons were buried, during this pestilence, within the precincts of the Charterhouse alone. The trial of Wyclif in St. Paul's was a memorable event, when John of Gaunt stood forth as his champion.

In 1380 came the Wat Tyler rebellion, and the death of the leader from the dagger-stroke of Sir William Walworth. Hence the long-exploded but hard-dying theory of the "dagger" in the

City Arms. The charge in question is the sword of St. Paul, London's patron saint, and it was borne on the City shield before the deed of Walworth. Smithfield, where the event took place, was then "a great plain field, without the gates," where on every Friday was "a great market for horses, whither earls, barons, knights, and citizens repair, to see and to purchase." Our quaint illustration depicts King Richard II. going forth on his ill-fated expedition against Ireland.

Lancaster and York. – The first recorded illumination of the City was at the Coronation of Henry IV. Ten years later, the Mayor, Sir Henry Barton, ordered that the streets should be lit with lanterns every night.

Jack Cade's rebellion in 1450 seemed at first successful, so far as the city was concerned. He took possession of it, and for a while maintained order among his followers. But they broke out into outrages, slew Lord-Treasurer Saye, and other persons of consequence, and the citizens, with the assistance of the Governor of the Tower, rose up and expelled him. Soon afterwards he was killed. As a rule the citizens inclined to the House of York, and in consequence Edward IV, steadily favoured the Londoners. The setting up of Caxton's printing-press in his reign was a great epoch in the history of the world.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.