Peace being made, the Earl is rather shy of Ghent, and takes up his quarters at Bruges, no doubt playing his old game of setting the towns against one another. The citizens of Ghent (one may suppose the respectables chiefly) are anxious for their Feudal Lord to come amongst them, so that they may be sure that the peace is really kept. After much persuasion, the Earl comes ungraciously enough, and the very first thing he says to "the men of the Law," as Froissart calls them— that is, the municipal chiefs, who go out to meet him—is thus given by Froissart: "Sirs, good peace requireth nothing but peace; and I would that these White Hats were laid down and amends made for the death of my Bailey, for I am sore required therein of all his lineage."

Here is the smouldering fire stirred again. "The men of the Law" answer humbly enough, and beg the Earl to come into the great square the next day and "preche to the people"; but the White Hoods make up their minds to be part of his audience. Well, he comes, and looks very angrily at the White Hoods; then from a window with a red cloth before him he makes a speech nearly as long as one of Mr. Gladstone's, winding up with a demand for the disbanding of the White Hoods. "At all these words that he spake before every man held their peace; but when he spake of the White Hats there was such a murmuring and whispering that it might well be perceived that it was for that cause."

In short, he took himself out of the town in a day or two in the worst possible temper.

The Ghentmen did not deceive themselves as to his intentions, and fell to victualling the town for a siege. Here Froissart moralises: "The rich sage and notable persons cannot excuse themselves of these deeds at the beginning. For when John Lyon first began to bring up the White Hats they might have caused them to have been laid down if they had lyst, and have sent other manner of persons against the pioniers of Bruges than they: but they suffered it because they would not meddle, nor be in no business nor press. All this they did and consented to be done, the which after they dearly bought, and specially such as were rich and wise: for after, they were no more lords of themselves, nor they durst not speak, nor do anything but as they of Ghent would. For they (the men of Ghent) said that neither for John Lyon nor for Gilbert Matthew nor for their wars nor broiles they would never depart asunder: for whatsoever war there were between one or other
they would ever be all one, and ever ready to defend the franchises of
their town. The which was well seen after; for they made war which
endured seven years; in the which time there was never strife among
them in the town: and that was the thing that sustained and kept
them most of anything, both within and without: they were in such
unity that there was no distance among them, as ye shall hear after
in this history."
An outrage and reprisals follow. The kindred of Roger Dauterne, the slain Bailey, come upon forty ships of the Ghentmen in the Scheld, and put out the eyes of the mariners and maim them, and so send them home to Ghent. In return for this horror John Pruniaux, Captain of the White Hoods, marches suddenly on Oudenaerde and beats down the two towers and gates of that town looking toward Ghent and the wall between them. The Earl of course is or feigns to be greatly enraged; though the rulers of Ghent refuse to avow the deed, but after some coming and going a sort of a peace is patched up again; Oudenaarde is given up by the Ghentmen, John Pruniaux on the one side and the maimers of the mariners on the other side are banished: and on these terms of peace the curtain falls again.

It rises on a lordly act of dastardliness on the part of the Earl, who gets John Pruniaux delivered to him by the Duke of Burgundy and strikes off his head. Also, "Then the Earl went to Ypres and did here great justice, and beheaded many evil-ruled people such as had been at the death of his five Knights there slain and had opened the gates to them of Ghent."

This lordly fashion of keeping the peace was not well seen to by the Ghentmen, and the war began again more sternly than ever, and also now took more definitely the aspect of a class struggle. "Then Peter du Bois¹ said: Sirs, if ye will believe me there shall not a house stand upright of never a gentleman in the country about Ghent. That is truth, said all the other. Let us go forth and beat them all down."

Which was not a mere flourish of speech, as the White Hoods, who are now identified with the town of Ghent, set to work at once: so that "when the gentlemen knights and squires being at Lysle with the Earl and thereabout heard tidings how their houses were burnt and beaten down, they were right sore displeased, and not without good cause." In short, the Earl let loose his chivalry on Ghent, his bastard son the Hase of Flanders at their head, and there was plenty of hard skirmishing after the fashion of the time.

The Ghentmen for their part summoned their vassals "the knights and squires of Heynault" to come and do them service for their holdings under pain of forfeiture; as also their Constable or Burgrave, Hervé Dantoing. It was a matter of course that the gentlemen did not come, and that the Constable sent an insolent and threatening answer. The Ghentmen retorted by destroying the houses of their
disobedient vassals, who had legally forfeited their rights. This incident is a curious illustration of the mediaeval status: the burgesses of Ghent, who were not noble, yet in their collective capacity could claim the services of noblemen, who held lands under feudal service to the town, and legally punish them for disobedience.

Well, on the part of Ghent the war went on briskly enough; but though they were still in nominal alliance with the other cities, yet in the latter, and especially in Bruges, the mean crafts had not the same power as in Ghent, and any defeat was certain to detach Bruges, and likely to detach Ypres and Courtray from the popular cause. Bruges fell off first; there was a struggle between the respectables and the mean crafts in the town, in which the former were victorious, and they at once sent to invite the Earl among them. To Bruges he came nothing loth. "At the Earl's coming were taken all the principals of them that had their hearts Ghentoise, and such as were suspect, and so were put in prison more than 500, and little by little their heads were stricken off." After this stroke of resolute government Bruges became the headquarters of the Earl, and the war began to go heavily against the Ghent men.

The Earl marched with a considerable army to attack Thorout and Ypres, and the Ghentmen sent two bodies of men for the relief of those towns under the command of Peter du Bois, John Bull, and Arnold Clarke. But the affair was ill-managed; the two corps missed supporting each other, and that commanded by John Bull fell into an ambuscade, and one of those curious mediaeval routs took place, which some of us may the better understand after the sights of Bloody Sunday.

Peter du Bois, cool and wary as usual, held his men together and retreated to Ghent; but the fugitives from John Bull's corps, who with him had got into Courtray, in their rage and terror slew their captain, and both Ypres and Courtray fell. The Earl massacred 700 of the mean crafts in Ypres "to encourage the others," and sent off 300 hostages to prison in Bruges, and afterwards 200 from Courtray. 3,000 of the Ghentois fell in the combat before Ypres.

The Earl then besieged Ghent, but loosely enough, as the Ghentmen were able to get supplies from Brussels, Brabant, and Liege, and generally from the whole country behind them, where the people were in complete sympathy with the rebels, especially in Liege.

A sharp combat took place before Nivelles, where the Ghentmen
were again defeated, with the loss of two of their captains, Rafe of Harselles, a man of noble blood, and John Launoy. Of this matter Froissart, telling how the Ghentmen retreated into the church at Nivelles, says: "John de Launoy all abashed and discomforted entered into the minster to save himself, and went into the steeple, and such of his company as could get in, with him, and Rafe de Harselles abode behind him and recoiled his company, and did great feats of arms at the door, but finally he was stricken with a long pike through the body and so slain. Thus ended Rafe of Harselles, who had been a great captain in Ghent against the Earl; and the Ghentois loved him greatly because of his wisdom and prowess, but for his valiantness this was his end and reward."

The Earl bade his men set fire to the church, and I give you the

1 Peter Bush would be his due English name.
end of this tragedy in Froissart’s own words as a dreadful little picture of mediæval war: “Fire, faggots, and straw were set together round about the church; the fire anon mounted up to the covering of the minster. There died the Ghentois in great pain, for they were burnt quick, and such as issued out were slain and cast again into the fire. John Launoy who was in the steeple, seeing himself at the point to be burnt, cried to them without ‘Ransom! Ransom!’ and offered his coat which was full of florins to save his life. But they without did but laugh and scorn at him, and said to him, ‘John, come out at some window and speak with us, and we shall receive you; make a leap in like wise as ye have made some of us to leap within this year; it behoveth you to make this leap.’ When John Launoy saw himself in that point, and that he was without remedy and that the fire took him so near, that he saw well he should be burnt, he thought it were better for him to be slain than to be burnt, and so he leapt out at a window among his enemies; and there he was received on spears and swords and cut all to pieces. Thus ended John Launoy.”

Peter du Bois was posted so badly at this battle that he was kept by a marsh from helping. He once more drew off, and got into Ghent in good order, and it was a near thing that he did not share the fate of John Bull at the hands of the enraged people. But after all the Earl raised the siege and went back to Bruges. Skirmishing, however, still went on, and the Ghentoise, after some successes, had another body of men cut up, 1,100 out of 1,200, says Froissart, and Arnold Clarke slain.

(To be continued.)

William Morris.