any manner engaged in productive labour who may enter the building; these are called building the national museum of industrial arts.

The selection and use of this text is a circumstance which fairly indicates the true state of feeling on the part of the idle and other

restless classes, including the working classes, to bring to mind thoughts of the condition of mines and ships; remembrances of tragic identity before which a merely written defiance is all emptiness; nevertheless the text should be regarded, for it is the official expression of the relations the "government of the people" is to maintain towards the overwhelmingly millions of the country.

**FEUDAL ENGLAND.**

(Continued from page 274.)

The Great Council of the Realm was purely feudal; it was composed of the feudalities of the realm, theoretically of all of them, practically of the great ones only. It was, in fact, the council of the conquering tribe with their chief at their head; the matters of the due feudal truce, aids, relics, fees, seignage, and the like,—in short, the rights which were vouchsafed to them,—were decided in this council and in the lump. But the inferior tribes, though not represented there, existed, and, as aforesaid, was growing rich, and the king had to get their money out of their purses directly; which as they were not represented in the council, he had to impose it at his own will, and means of the sheriff (the shire sheriff) dealing with them one after another, which was a troublesome job; for the men were stiff-necked and quite disinterested to the point of cruelty; and the robber was going to be driven from his spot, so to say, encountered all sorts of opposition, and, in fact, it was the money needs both of baron, bishop, and king which had been the chief instrument in furthering the progress of the towns. The towns would be pressed by their lords, king, or baron, or it might be, and they would see their advantage and strike a bargain. For you are not to imagine that because there was a deal of violence going on in those times there was no respect for their persons, no, on the contrary, it was a quite exaggerated respect for it if it came within the four corners of the feudal feeling, and the result of this feeling of respect was the constant struggle for status on the part of the townships and other associations throughout the Middle Ages. The burgesses would say, "This hard to pay this money, but we will put ourselves out to pay it if you will do something for us in return; let, for example, our men be free to travel, and the women of one of our families instead of wages of battle," and so forth, and so forth. Well, all this sort of detailed bargaining was, in fact, a safeguard for the local liberties; so far as they went, of the towns and shires, and did not suit the will of the king's hand; and order at all, the sheriff, the king's officer, who had taken the place of the earl of the Anglo-Saxon period) summoning the burgesses to the council, which burgesses you must understand were not elected at the whole of the various towns which might be needed to help the king in a siege, or in a corner way by a few of the bigger men of the place. What the king practically said was this: "I want your money, and I cannot be for ever whinging you, you stinking barons at home there, and listen to all your stories of how poor you are and what you want; no, I want you to be represented. Send me up from each one of your communites a man or two whom I can bully or castrate or bribe to sign a way your substance for you." Under these circumstances it is no wonder that the towns were not very eager in the cause of representation. It was no easy job to get those to come up to London merely to consult as to to what their towns had which they were to be eaten. However, they did come in some numbers; and by the year 1230 something like a shadow of our present Parliament was on foot. Nor need there be much said about this institution; as time went on its functions did not extend by the petition for the reprieve of grievances accompanying the granting of money. But it was generally reckoned on as subservient to the lower orders, as it was when the Hundred Years' War period played some very queer tunes on this constitutional instrument. Edward I. gave place to his son, who again was of the type of king who had hitherto given the opportunity to the barons for their turn of advancement in the constitutional struggles; and in earlier times they doubt they would have taken full advantage of the circumstances; as it was they had to gain. The king did his best to throw off the restraint of the feudal constant, and by this means to make things simpler; or, if he had not been able to completely, he had been sufficiently the people to have his rights. If we compare his case with that of Charles I. we shall find this difference in it, besides the obvious one that Edward was held responsible to his feudalities and Charles towards the upper middle classes, the squires, as represented by Parliament: that Charles was condemned by a law created for the purpose, so to say, and evolved from the principle of the representation of the privileged classes, while Edward's deposition was the real logical outcome of the confirmed feudal system, and was practically legal and regular.

The ancestor of the deposed king, the Third Edward, whose in the complete and central period of the Middle Ages in England. The feudal law was the basis of all law, the complete constitutional form of England was developed into a condition if not quite independent, yet quite different, on the one hand the ideas and customs of the Celtic and Teutonic tribes which had left their mark on the English; and on the other, the Middle Ages have grown into manhood; that manhood has an art of its own, which, though developed step by step from that of Old Rome and New Rome, and embracing the strange mysticism and dreamy splendour of the Gothic period, yet stands alone triumphant, the loveliest, brightest, and gayest of all the creations of the human mind and hand. It has a literature of its own too, however devoid of the grand passions. In all its art, you may there is a double stream in it. On the one hand, the Court poet, the gentleman, Chaucer, with his Italianising metre, and his formal recognition of the classical stories; on which, indeed, he builds a superstructure of a quaint and unattractive kind. It was the gay and light and the architecture which his eyes beheld and his pen pictured for us, so clear, defined, and elegant; a sunny world even amidst its trials and ills. On the other hand, the Middle Ages were the worst of them an amusement rather than a grief to the lookers on; a world that scarcely needed hope in its eager life of adventure and love, amidst the sunlit blooming meadows, and green woods, and white beguiled manor houses. A kindly and human nature is Chaucer's, and his human and dainty, and amusing, and life all, but of her very nature devoid of strong aspirations for the future; and that all the more, since, though the strong devotion and fierce piety of the Middle Ages had by this time waned, and the Church was more often lighted merely through the lips of a poet that had a truly beautiful, and more fully condoned; and when this world is over we shall still go on living in another which is a part of this picture. Note all, and be as merry as you may, never forgetting that you are alive and that it is good to live.

That is the spirit of Chaucer's poetry; but alongside of it existed in the ballads, the poetry of the people, whom untouched by courtly or with a slight taste for the beautiful, the elegant and the classical, the public poetry. But, after all, it was the public poetry which had the slighest differences of language from our own daily speech, is not moved by it, does not understand what true poetry means nor what its aim is.

There is a third element in the literature of this time which you may call Lollard poetry, the great example of which is William Langland's "Piers Plowman." It is not bad corrective to Chaucer, and in many cases it was the barrier the public had begun the habit of examining with and love the poetry of the Middle Ages. The sermon of today; and he who, when he has mastered the slightest little language of his own, is not moved by it, does not understand what true poetry means neither what its aim is.

William Morris.

(To be continued.)

Who would have thought that Mr. Bradlaugh would ever become popular with the masses? Yet Earl Warrington, who looks upon Lord Salisbury, towards the upper middle classes, the squires, as represented by Parliament: that Charles was condemned by a law created for the purpose, so to say, and evolved from the principle of the representation of the privileged classes, while Edward's deposition was the real