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The Economics Effects of the
Black Death.

A Thesis

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Degree of Bachelor of Arts

by

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Chapter One.

The economic condition of England in the first half of the fourteenth century.

During the last century of the middle ages England was undergoing a series of changes which affected the whole face of the country. In the latter part of the thirteenth and the first half of the fourteenth centuries these changes were not very apparent owing to the slow processes through which they were passing yet there was a gradual development in the political and social views of the times. And by the middle of the fourteenth century there was a strong feeling among the peasants, or lower classes, that they were not having the advantages and comforts of life that rightfully belonged to them. They began to think more of themselves and their families. They began to think that they existed for a different and better purpose

than to do the bidding of a lord or master. That they should be free and independent with rights similiar to those of the lords and should be able to rise above their status as slaves. To acquire a higher plane in society, to obtain an education, and to live, to think and act as freemen.

Many times these bondsmen struggled forward to freedom, only to fall back into serfage. Their attempts in that direction proved unsuccessful for the lack of united effort which could not be effected at that time owing to the conditions which existed throughout the country in the life ^{of the} manors. One manor with its peasants was kept in total ignorance of what was going on in the neighboring manor. So one group of peasants was unable to talk of their condâtions with those of a neighboring manor. In fact the serfs were kept so ignorant of their surroundings that they were afraid to leave the manor on which they had been born and raised for fear that they could not

find something to do in the surrounding country. What was needed to aid them to gain their personal freedom was something that would bring them together. It was not until the middle of the fourteenth century that an event happened that enabled that to be done. This event was the plague of 1347-51 which visited the country liberating the serfs from the soil and enabling them to act as a unit against their foes and masters. This plague, The Black Death, stirred such a feeling of freedom among the serfs that it led to the Peasants Rebellion.

When the fourteenth century opened the agricultural system of England which William the Conqueror had found established throughout the country in 1066 was still in existence, though its decay had already begun. This system was based on serfdom and was called the manorial system. And upon it rested the social organization of the rural districts of England. The land was divided into a number of large estates or manors for the

purpose of cultivation and submission. At the head of the manor was the lord who held possession of the land either directly from the king or indirectly through a mesne lord. These manors differed in size: in the way in which they were managed and in the relation of each to the owner and the cultivators, yet they conformed more or less to a general type. The average manor was a peice of land containing some five or six thousands acres of land, on which was the manor house, occupied by the owner, or lord or by his bailiff. The manor house varied greatly in size, when occupied by the lord it was usually a large and well fitted house with the best improvments of the time, when by his bailiff it was the very simple structure not much better than that of the villeins. Then grouped around this mansion were the loads' outbuildings and garden and houses of the vill~~ains~~ens, which numbered from ten to fifty or more, and were very small and low often containing but one room. The buildings

which sheltered the live stock and the granaries were either connected with or under the same roof with the villeins house. Each manor had its church which was located as close to the houses as was possible. Then around this little village was the arable lands, meadows, pastures and woods which reached out in all directions until they intercepted the confines of the neighboring manors. The arable land was divided into three divisions or fields, and each field was in turn sowed one year with the winter crop, the next year the spring crop and the third year lying idle. This mode of farming was known as the Three Field System. The waste land and the wood land could be disposed of as the lord saw fit. A portion of each of these three fields was reserved by the lord for his own use and was called the demesne or home farm the remainder was distributed among the freeholders or villeins who were bound to render certain services to the lord, "The owner, or lord of the manor might be the king

himself, or one of the great barons who had many other manors besides, and who appointed bailiffs and other agents to manage them for him: he might be some private individual who, having no other land, lived on the manor and managed himself: or the lord might be no individual person but some religious house, or again the ownership might be divided between joint heirs of a former lord. Still the average manor was held together as an agricultural unit: and accounts were kept for it by the lord's bailiff as separate whole." (Page p. 7.)

The land was poorly cultivated and Cheyney says that eight or nine bushels of wheat or rye were considered a good crop while the same land now will produce thirty. This was due to the crude machinery with which the land was worked.

The main food product was bread made from wheat and rye. Vegetables were used very little while the root crops were unknown. Many of the manors had orchards planted on them. The animals

of the farm were fed mostly from the hay from the meadows, those peas and beans were often planted for winter forage. Thus the supply was very much smaller for this kind of food than the demand and hence it was hard to keep the stock through the winter. And for this reason most of the meats were cured in the fall, and to this is attributed ~~th~~ a great deal of the sickness which was common during ~~the~~ winter and spring. (Cheyney p.37)

The work of the manor was done by the serfs who were bound to the soil. These were of different classes ranging from the freeholder who held a considerable amount of land, down to the cotters who owned simply a little cot in which they lived. Of the first two classes the freeholders and villeins there is not much difference. Both had to attend the lords court and the same justice was meted out to both classes alike, yet the lord could only compel the villeins to serve as a juror while the freeman did not have to do so unless he wished. Both worked on the

lord's demesne doing similiar kind of work, performed duties of the manorial court and helped each other in their own lands . Yet in most cases the services from the freeholders were much lighter and in some cases they were exempt from work of any kind.

" The essence of the villeins status consisted in the subjection of the person and the personality of the villein to the uncertain will of his lord, a subjection that manifested itself in three ways.

"First the villein was bound to remain on the manor til his lord consented to his departure."

" Second, he was bound to render services to his lord in the manner and to the amount that his lord should command."

" Third He was bound to surrender to his lord any or all of his personality if his lord saw fit to seize it ". (Page.11 p)

The villeins were the largest class and included the greater part of the cultivators of the soil. Then came the half or quarter villein

whose holdings amounted to only a half or quarter virgate and lastly the cotters, who held very little if any land.

By the middle of the fourteenth century this subjection was to a certain extent relieved, yet it still remained a very unsettled question as to just what the lord might require of the villeins. And owing to this uncertainty it was impossible for the king's court to determine the extent of the villeins' subjection, so that the only protection he could hope for from the law of the realm was protection "in life and limb". The lord could beat his villein, could put him in the dudgeon or drive him from his home and the law afforded him no protection but he could not maim or kill him. The small freeholder lived on the manor under conditions similar to those of the villeins, being subject to the manorial court. He worked on the lord's demesne and shared the produce of this land and the increase of his animals with his lords, but he could not go out from under the lord's holdings whenever he pleased.

While the freeholders remained on the lord's manor their payments and services were specified and were not subject to the will of their lord and so the court was able to afford them protection. The villeins had to pay the lord to get permission for the marriage of his daughter, or ~~or~~ if he wished to sell any of his stock he must first pay his ^{LORD} a sum of money before he would be allowed to sell. If he ran away his lord obtain^{ed} an order to bring him back. The only way that he could leave his lord's manor was to pay a periodical sum which was called "chevage" or head money. he had no property and could own none under the law. (Page p 12)

All these tenants made payments and performed services in return for the land which they held from their lord. The freeholder usually made money payments at certain periods of the year, yet they were sometimes asked to make payment in kind. It was not uncommon for the freeholders either in person or through some one hired in their place to work one or

more days during the busy season on the lords demesne. The work due the lord from his villeins was usually divided into four classes by most of the bailiffs, winter work, summer work, work at harvest time and "boon" work. The first, winter work, which was done during the winter season and in most cases lasted three days, was taken up in the thrashing the grain, making stakes for hedges, and such indoor work. The summer work consisted of outdoor work such as making gardens, hedges, mowing the hay and putting it in barns, digging ditches and other agricultural labor. The hardest time was during the harvest season which came in August and September. The villein not only had to work himself four or five days a week for his lord but he must also hire other men to help him and pay them out of his earnings. The fourth class "boon" work was formally done as a favor to the lord but it soon became to be regarded as one of the obligations of the villein. During the busy time the villein was made to

work all the family except the females of age on the demesne. He received for his labor merely the use of the land and if he failed to do the work satisfactorily he was fined. (Page p 23)

Agriculture was the principle occupation but manufacturing and trading were extensively carried on. In order thoroughly to understand the way in which trade was carried on it is necessary to look at the town life. There was a number of large towns scattered over the country ranging in population from one thousand to twenty-five thousand, the average size being from two to four thousand. All of these towns were engaged more or less in manufactures and trade and these furnished the livelihood of most of the inhabitants. The trading in nearly every case was carried on by gild merchants. A gild was an organization of the citizens of the town who made trading their business and was formed for the purpose of controlling the mercantile business of their community. If any

one carried on trade in a town where there was a gild without belonging to it he did so only by restrictions imposed by the gild. So in this way the gild was a monopoly. The members worked together and shared the losses and gains together. They had their officers and held regular meetings in which they transacted their business. (Cheyney p 81.)

The craft gilds sprang up in the early part of the fourteenth century. They admitted those that were engaged in a certain kind of trade. They endeavored to regulate their specific line of work in a town and not all the trade in general. These gilds not only dealt in goods shipped in from different parts of the country and from abroad but also in the surplus products which came in from the manors in the way of food, bread, meat, fish etc while the foreign trade consisted of cloth, guns, and ammunition, different kinds of metal and leather.

Trade between towns was carried on only by means of fairs which were held weekly or semi-

weekly. When the fair was over at one town it would advance to the next town and open there. So it was in this way that the home trade was carried on. But when it came to foreign trade these gild merchants were bitterly opposed to it, and as they composed the majority of the citizens of the town they were able to make restrictions on all foreigners while in their towns. They allowed them only a short time to stay in the towns, limited the class of goods to be sold, made them stay in the homes of merchants and levied tolls on their merchandise. But the kings and those of the nobility of England looked upon the foreign trade as a great need and benefit, and granted certain privileges to foreign merchants with the hope of getting them to come to England to trade. Foreign merchants were allowed protection and guarantee of the government to stay in a town any length of time, to ^{to} sell ₁ all whom they pleased both wholesale and retail, provided they pay tolls to the government.

This opened the way and a considerable foreign trade arose and it was well that it did for England was favorably situated for foreign trade. She was quite well protected by the channel from the invasions of the more powerful foes, and she had as compared with her neighbors, a strong central government and a well established system of justice and police. Also her kings, with a wisdom far in advance of the age, had maintained the purity of the currency, and large supplies of silver were drawn to the country and made available for the mint by the wool trade of the Easterling merchants.

It was this wool trade which sprang up about this time and which both aided England in her war with France. Wool was one of the products of England which had a great foreign demand. It was exported mostly to Flanders where it was made into cloth and fine fabrics. This was a great source of revenue. Edward during his war with France received from this

alone in a single year more than 30,000 pounds. England also dealt extensively in the exportation of tin, lead, hides, leather, grain and dairy products. The importations were mostly from the tropical countries through Italian merchants and consisted in dried fruits, spices, nuts, wines sugar, drugs, cotton and dyes.

Such was the economic basis upon which the society of England rested in the early part of the fourteenth century, such were the means by which the ground was tilled, such were the relations which existed between employee and employer. For many centuries it served England well for it was an organized system which prevented anarchy and perpetual ^{CIVIL} war, if it gave the lords rights it gave villeins rights too. The latter owed only certain fixed services, he was not a slave to do the lords biddings at all times of the day and for any purpose.

Chapter II.

The Black Death.

In the middle of Edward the Third's reign, fell the calamity of the Black Death. So pregnant were its results for the villeins, so disastrous to the old system of manorial organizations and therefore of such influence on the future development of the country, that it deserves to be regarded as one of the chief turning periods of Economic History.

This was the most terrible plague the world has ever witnessed. It advancing at this juncture from the east and after devastating Europe from the shores of the Mediterranean to the Baltic, spread in the fall of 1348 to England. It was about Christmas that the plague first appeared at Westminster and its vicinity and increased alarmingly in London and elsewhere. by the beginning of March 1349. On the first of January 1349 the king wrote to the Bishop of Winchester informing him that altho. parliament

had been summoned to meet on the nineteenth of that month it had been prorogued to Monday the twenty seventh of April because of a " sudden visitation of deadly pestilence had broken out at Westminister and the neighborhood". Two months later the situation had increased so seriously that the king on the tenth of March prorogued the meeting of parliament indefinitely. (Trevelyan p 187.)

This bubonic plague, for such it was, was apparently introduced in England through her trading with the far East, coming in as it did from the south west and traveling northward and eastward. It was a new thing in England the like of which was unheard of. It seemed to take England by localities or counties and lasted but a short time in each one passing on to the next. Its course with the individual likewise was very rapid. The person attacked with it either died in from one to three days or began to recover after the third day. The

proportion of cases which resulted fatally was extremely large. The number of those who perished in the imaginable horror of that year has sometimes been estimated at a third, sometimes at a half, of the whole population. In nearly every manor throughout the country- for the marked characteristics of the plague had been its ubiquity- the ranks of hired labor had been alike mowed down. Yet its ravages were fiercest in the greater towns, where filthy and undrained streets afforded a constant haunt to leprosy and fever. The close arrangement of houses in the villages and the crowding of dwellings along its narrow streets, and promiscuous life in the monasteries and inns, universally prevalent, all helped to make possible this sweeping away of perhaps a majority of the population. (Green p 248).

The plague visited Lords, clergy landholders alike. In many cases the deaths among the clergy was so rapid that learned men could not be had to fill the vacancies and the places were filled

by those who were not competent. And in the great majority of the smaller monasteries, and indeed in any religious house where there were chaplains to do the routine work in the church, there was nothing to prevent an absolutely illiterate man or woman from becoming monk or nun.

Sometimes a whole manor would be smitten. The lord, his bailiff and the landholders with their families, a man's whole household would be swept away young and old, sister and brother and aged mother and wife, and children, and servants and friends. The steward of the manor was not concerned with any but the head of the house - the tenant of the manor was he missing? Then who was his heir? Any sons? Dead of the plague! Wife! Dead of the plague, children? Kin folks? All gone.

Chapter III.

The Effects of the Black Death.

When at last pestilence and terror ceased their baneful work, the whole face of the country had been altered, neglect was written large in the landscape. There were few districts where were well tilled fields had not been given place to the wilderness, and rich meadows relapsed into their primeval conditions of swamp or fen. The old organization was indeed broken down. The bailiff trusted and respected both by the lord and the tenants alike, on many manors had died. The wise and older members of the village community who had interpreted the customs of the manor, and whose influence was strongest on the decisions of the manorial court had also died.

These places were vacant or filled by new men laudless men who had formerly eked out a

scanty existence as the hired laborers of those whose houses they now occupied, careless of the rights of their new lords and ready to join with anyone in efforts to throw off the burdens that the villein class had borne for centuries. This period of disorder was the opportunity of those villeins that were left alive, and they did not lose it. The land lord and his bailiff were forced to offer double and sometimes treble wages to procure hands for the demesne, which would have fallen to waste had they not did so. For the peasant was fully alive to his advantages, he did not even wait until the national calamity was over before pushing his claim. In the autumn of 1349 while the destruction was still going on, wages had risen in full proportion to the increased market value of a day's work.

It was upon the rural organization and the arrangement of its classes that the greater results of this pestilence were manifested.

During the pestilence the lords derived a good revenue from the heriots collected from the tenents, from the reliefs paid by the heirs and the land which escheated to them. But these results were only temporary. After the plague had passed away and the population had decreased there were fewer tenents to till the soil, to make periodical payments for their land and to use the mills from which monopoly the lords make a good profit. In many places the demesne was uncultivated, because there were no villeins left.

Again the lords suffered as employers of labor. The same amount of land to be tilled before the Black Death, still remained, but there was not an equal number of peasants to till the land. So that the demand for laborers remained the same while the supply was greatly decreased and the lords eagerly sought the villeins for aid. Naturally the latter took advantage of their position and demanded higher wages. Hence there

was a rapid rise of wages, at the very time that most of the usual sources of revenue of the lords of the manors were crippled, the expense of carrying on their farms was largely increased, and their position from the stand point of income ^{WAS} not an increase but ^A a decrease after the plague.

The freeholders were benefited more than any of the rural classes. The rent which they were accustomed to pay had been reduced for the reason that land could be had more plentifully and a threat to give up their holdings and go to others where they could get land on easier terms enabled them to obtain many concessions where they were. But the villein did not have this advantage and could not threaten the lords with demands for better terms. Yet they were benefited in many ways by means of this step on the part of the freeholders. They could have more land and their tenure would be improved. In many cases their work

was lightened and sometimes commuted.

It was at this time that the king issued an ordinance to meet this emergency ordering the price of labor to remain as before. But the increase of labor was not due to the arbitrary demands of the freeholders and villeins. It was merely the natural results of the economic changes. It was merely the compliance with the law of supply and demand. The panic was scarcely over when the sudden rise of wages consequent on the enormous diminution in the supply of all free labor though accompanied by a corresponding rise in the price of food rudely distributed the course of industrial employment, harvests rotted on the ground, the fields were left untilled, not merely from scarcity of hands, but from the strife which now for the first time revealed itself between capital and labor.

The next year parliament was able to meet and immediately proceeded to convert the Royal command into a statute - the famous Statue of Labourers.

It was in the summer after the pestilence had ceased (1349) in the southern part of England but was still raging in the northern part that the king issued his orders in regard to wages. This proclamation was issued to all the sheriffs and officials of the towns, declaring that the laborers were taking undue advantages of their circumstances and demanding too high wages from the lords. It went further and prohibited them from asking more than was the custom to be paid in the year before the pestilence broke out or for the preceding five or six years. Further ~~than~~ that every laborer when offered ^{WORK} at this rate of wages must accept it. And if any laborers male or female, bond or free, refused to work when it was offered to them they were to be imprisoned until they gave bail to serve as requested. The king sent officers in to each county to see that this was enforced. But little attention was given this on the part of the laborers. They did ^{not} obey the ordinance

but continued to ask double and treble the wages outlined by it. So when parliament next met in February 1351 it stated this fact to the king in its petition, and as a result appeared the Statutes of Labourers as mentioned before. This famous provision runs, "Every man or woman of whatever condition, free or bond, able in body, and within the age of three score years..... and not having of his own whereof he may live, nor land of his about the tillage of which he may occupy himself and not serving any other, shall be bound to serve the employer who shall require him to do so, and shall take only the wages which were accustomed to be taken in the neighborhood where he is bound to serve", two years before the plague began, imprisonment being the punishment for disobeying. (Green p 249)

This famous statute - and well might it be called so, for it was famous as an experiment, famous because it taught mankind the laws of political economy - undoubtedly was a class

measure passed by the representatives of the lords of the manors, who controlled both houses of the legislature, passed also by the gild merchants of the towns who controlled the trade and employed labor extensively, and whose attitude was all important on industrial and social questions in the lower house.

It was a grand experiment because it attempted to restrain changes, to stop the break up of the old system, to keep the peasant from receiving more for his labor than of old, or paying a higher price for his goods. It was fully tried and proved a complete failure but it seems that such was necessary to teach man the laws of political economy which control that which they were unable to control by legislation. It was fully tried for it remained in force and unaltered in the main down to the year 1444. It completely failed for wages rose greatly and never came down. It must have been literally impossible to enforce

such a law, for wheat had risen to so high a price that a day's labor at the old wages would not purchase wheat enough for a man's support. It must have been impossible to enforce it for its enforcement could only have been attained through the help of the landlord class itself and the landlord was in no position to contend with his tenants or threaten them with the law. For if he offered them the bare legal wage they would go to the neighboring lord who, when his crops were rotting in the fields, would be willing enough to pay them the wage they asked. Of course by so doing they made themselves liable to the Statute, but while the land lord whose land was being abandoned, was putting the machinery of law in motion against the laborers, the harvest season would be over. Men in prisons cannot gather the crops in the fields. There had been no federated resistance on the part of the laborers and the continued rise of wages was due to

competition. Yet the landowners did not flinch from the attempt to enforce the statute.

Though it failed to remedy these conditions, it was successful as a source of revenue to the government for the penalties were inflicted to such an extent that they were considered as a regular income.

But it was soon ^{seen} that it would be necessary to exact more sterner measures if anything was going to be done to check the progress of the laborers. So the statutes were reenacted in 1357 with some changes of the destination of the fines collected for its breach.

In 1361 there was a further reenactment of the law with additional penalties. The runaway laborer was at this time ordered to be declared an outlaw and every sheriff of England was to be notified and when an outlaw was caught he was to be placed in jail until he made amends to the party wronged, " and besides for the falsity he shall be burnt in the forehead with an iron made and formed to this

letter 'F' in token of falsity, if the party aggrieved shall ask it". This last form of punishment was not greatly used owing to its severity. The statutes continued to be reenacted until thirteenth amendments had been added, covering nearly a century from the time the original statute was passed, the last one being made as late as 1444 (Chehney p 109). This repeated reenactment shows the difficulty of applying the law, and the stubbornness of the struggle which it brought about. Necessity of these also show that the attempt to prevent the rise of wages was ineffective.

It is here that the first traces in the form of unions among the laborers of England was manifested. There immediately rose a fierce spirit of resistance through the statutes which strove in vain to repress it. In the towns where the system of forced labor was applied with even more rigour than in the country, combinations and strikes became frequent among the

lower craftsmen. Leaders of these unions and their followers were summoned before the justices. Arnold's indictment stated that, "in a Suffolk village Walter Harderby took of divers persons at reaping time sixpence to eight pence a day, and very often at the same time made various congregations of laborers in different places and counselled them not to take less than sixpence or eight pence" (Trevelyan p. 188.)

Two pence and three pence were the legal wages for reaping, while in many cases they were much higher before the plague for the same kind of work. Labour troubles and the mutual antagonism of classes were inevitable accompaniments of the social changes that took place after the Black Death, but they were unnecessarily embittered by the enforcement of an act which so crudely disregarded the state of the market.

The effect of this statute and the reenactment

was to teach the laborer lawlessness, constituted authority became his enemy; and he was finally driven to lead the life of an outlaw and at last to revolt. To the grievances which had been inflicted by this statute was added by Parliament in 1380, the poll tax. This was to raise money to defray expenses of the war with France which had run its disastrous course and had added to the misery and discord at home. This period proved too much for the peasants and when combined with their longings for a right rule for plain and simple justice; their scorn of the nobles and the infamy of the courts, their resentments at the perversion of the law of oppression forced them to take up arms in their own defence. The outbreak began in Kent and spread like wildfire throughout the country; the peasants in Norfolk and Suffolk, Cambridge and Hertfordshire rose to arms; from Sussex to Surrey the insurrection extended as far as Devon.

While Essex men marched upon London on one side of the river, the Kentish men marched on the other. The whole population joined them as they marched along, while the nobles were paralyzed with fear. On their way they fired the house of the lords and threw the records of the manor courts into the flames. Upon reaching London the gates were thrown open by the peasants within, the stately palace of John of Gaunt, the new inn of the lawyers at the temple the house of the foreign merchants were soon in flames. When the king asked what they wanted they replied, "We will that you free us forever". This the king did by giving them letters of pardon and emancipation, and they dispersed to their homes.

But the withdrawal of the peasant armies with their letters of emancipation gives courage to the nobles. Bishop of Norwich fell upon the peasants of Norfolk and scattered them while the king ^{with} 40,000 men spread terror by his

many excursions as he marched in triumph throughout Kent and Essex. But the nobility met such a stubborn resistance from the peasants that it was finally ^{decided} to give them their freedom.

Many of the villeins gained a partial freedom through commutation. This was accomplished by a gradual substitution of money payments by the villeins for the labor that was due on the demesne farm. This manner of securing freedom was equally advantageous to both the landholders and tenants. The villeins, if he had a sufficient amount of land, would be more valuable to himself than to give it to his lord. Then if freed he could hire himself out when it would be best for him to leave his own fields. The lords by commuting their villeins secured money whereby they could hire more skilled and willing men, who could work at any time. And as it worked to an advantage to both it was practiced very much. It had began to be used in the early part of the

fourteenth century but after the pestilence it grew rapidly for two reasons. There was more money in circulation and more free labor, available for hire. It could not have been so successfully carried out before the pestilence because the villeins were not prepared for it. But after the plague there was a very rapid development of the money system. The expulsion of the Jews, the suppression of the Templars the failure of the banking institution of London, had opened the way for the native Englishmen to engage in monetary transactions. The spoils of Calais seemed to have considerably increased the amount of the precious metals in the country, and the new cloth industry promoted the rapid circulation of money in the interior. But it was the Black Death itself that gave the chief impetus to the money system at this time. For by destroying half of the people it doubled the amount per capita of the medium of exchange, and at the same time by

by causing a greater fluidity of the surviving population it made the use of money more familiar in the country districts. The tenants were thus able to offer money payments to their lords in lieu of their personal services.

Along with this commutation of services went a more important change. This was the practice of "farming" the manors, that is of leasing the manors with all the rights and privileges and perquisites derived from them to some man or men for a term of years. It was due to substitution of money payments for the old labor payments of the tenants that gave rise to this form of leasing. The lords who had not lived on their manors had always been willing to let their ^{land} for money, but it was only after it became possible to collect fixed annual payments from the villeins that the lessee could with any certainty raise the necessary sums to meet his yearly obligations. The development of a money system rendered possible both

the abolition of villeinage and the substitution of leases for bailiff farming. The Black Death promoted this developed and gave an impetus to the process^{es} of commutation and leasing.

So it was that the Black Death increased the wages to double and sometimes to treble, raised the relative price of goods, made hired help very scarce, decreased the amount of revenue due the lords from rentals, gave the freeholders more liberty to choose their masters, showed that wages could not be governed by legislation and broke up the old system of villeinage. It established unions among the laborers and taught them how to make use of the strike. Gave serfs their freedom, caused industries to be established and placed money in the rural districts. Finally it changed the manor into a farm.

Thus we see the effects of the Black Death. Though it was destructive to a large part of the population yet it greatly benefited those

who were left. It seemed to give them an incentive to advancement along social, industrial and educational lines. It seemed to stir them out of the old ideas they had fallen into serfdom. It instilled into the minds of the villeins the one essential of happiness, liberty. It taught the nobility that they were unable to circumvent economic laws. It gave rise to the home industries and caused more confidence to be placed in them. And finally it helped to unite all classes under one head and for one purpose, the advancement of England along all lines till she became the foremost nation of Europe.

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