The enforcement of the laws against heresy in England in the fifteenth century

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THE ENFORCEMENT OF THE LAWS AGAINST HERESY IN ENGLAND IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

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CHAPTER I

LEGISLATION AFFECTING HERETICS

The first legal action having at all the force of a statute, aimed directly at the particular form of heresy known as Lollardy, was passed in 1382, in the reign of Richard II. Before this, however, the church had made an effort to check the spread of the error. In February, 1377, Sudbury, Archbishop of Canterbury, at the earnest solicitation of several bishops, summoned Wyclif to St. Paul's for examination. For some years Wyclif had been a prominent scholar at Oxford where he had taken a stand in respect to certain questions of the day which endeared him to the university and to the laity, but made him extremely unpopular with the clergy. John of Gaunt, the Duke of Lancaster, and other powerful men had allied themselves with Wyclif. When he came to London at the request of the prelate, popular feeling ran so high that a crowd literally forced its way into the Lady Chapel where the case was under consideration. There was much angry disputation and threatening, but the mob caused such complete confusion that the trial could not proceed, but broke up without accomplishing anything.¹

Wyclif's activity had called fourth a number of papal bulls from Gregory XI. A communication to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the bishop of London in May, 1377, contains the substance of

¹Chron. Ang. The narrative is given with considerable detail on pages 117-121. The attitude of the nobles and the people is well shown.
all of them. In this letter\(^1\) the Pope states that England had long been famous for the "piety of faith" and had been "wont to produce men gifted with the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures," but that in recent times the clergy have become quite remiss in their duties. He has heard with much grief that John Wyclif "is said to have broken forth into such detestable madness"\(^2\) as boldly to assert false, pernicious, and erroneous doctrine. He says that the clergy ought "to be covered with due shame" because they have permitted such gross violation of the Christian faith, and directs that if the accusations against Wyclif be found true, he be arrested, examined, and that the results of the examination be forwarded to Rome,\(^3\) while the culprit is to be held in prison pending further orders. No attempt was made to execute this mandate until the following winter, when the bishops requested Wyclif to appear before them at St. Paul's again. Although the proceedings on this occasion were more orderly than in the preceding February, the crowd broke in and Wyclif went free. It is possible that the archbishop himself was not unfavorable to the heresy; certain it is that public sentiment was so strong for the accused that the Pope's order to imprison him could not be executed.\(^4\) The strong anti-papal movement of the preceding half century, and the general discontent which came to a head in the upheaval of 1381, doubtless

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\(^1\) Gee and Hardy, Documents Illustrative of Eng. Church Hist., 105-106. This is a translation of course. The author here cites W. Sudbury's Register f. 45 b; cf. Wilkins III, 116. The original is found in Walsingham's Histona Anglicana, I, 350-352, and in Chron. Ang.178-80.

\(^2\) Gee and Hardy, 106.

\(^3\) Ibid, 107.

\(^4\) Chron. Ang., 178-83 gives parts of the episode.
contributed somewhat to the issue of the affair.

These efforts were directed at Wyclif personally. It was probably fortunate for him that matters of a more urgent nature attracted public attention. There were many grievances in the years immediately before the uprising of 1381. Suffering from the bad social conditions overshadowed most other unpleasantness. Wyclif and his followers have been accused of active participation in the agitation before that crisis. Stubbs\(^1\) says that there were Lollard emissaries "spreading through the country perverted social views in the guise of religion." Trevelyn, and Ramsay deny this.

Whether it be true or not, formally persecuted until quiet was restored after the violence of that eventful year.

In May, 1382, the convocation of Canterbury condemned\(^2\) certain heresies attributed to Wyclif. These had been drawn up by the new archbishop, Courtenay, who appeared to be a more vigorous persecutor of heresy than his predecessor had been.

On May 26 of the same year, Parliament passed a law affecting heretics, aimed at Lollards in particular. It is a commentary on the contempt in which the orders of the church were held. "It is openly known," the measure states\(^3\) "that there be divers evil persons within the Realm" who go about preaching without licence in church yards, churches, and also in the markets and fairs; that the subject matter taught in such preaching is heretical "to the great peril of the Souls of the People;" that their work disturbs

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\(^1\) Const. Hist. of Eng., III, 451.

\(^2\) Fasciculi Zizaniorum, 275, 282. The archbishop here discusses the circumstances briefly, and appends a list of the heresies condemned.

both the temporal and the spiritual welfare; that the preachers when cited or summoned before the Ordinaries of the Places, there to answer to that whereof they be impeached, will not obey to their Summons, and Commandments, nor care not for their Monitors, nor Censures of the Holy Church but expressly despise them."

According to the requirements of this bill, the sheriff is to arrest such persons on the order of the prelates and to hold them in prison "till they will justify them according to the Law and reason of the Holy Church."¹

By letters patent² in 1384, the king recounts that he had at some time before, probably in 1382, given authority to the Archbishop of Canterbury "and his suffragans to arrest all and singular those who should wish secretly or openly to preach or maintain" certain erroneous and heretical conclusions pointed out by the prelate. He now, December 8, 1384, "from zeal for the same faith" extends this power to Alexander, Archbishop of York, and his suffragans. It is evident from this that the enactment of 1382 had not had the desired result. Indeed it is known that the Commons had not given their assent to the measure at all, and that when they protested against it, it was practically set aside.³

This seems quite in harmony with the bold steps taken by the Lollards in 1394 and 1395. The letters patent proved inadequate to frighten the offenders into submission; on the contrary,

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¹ Statutes of the Realm, II, 26.

² Gee and Hardy, Documents, 110-112 gives a translation of this letter. (Refer to Tr. Pat. Rolls, 8 Rich. II, pt. 1, m 7.)

³ Capes, A History of the English Church in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries, 141.
Lollardy was rapidly spreading; many eminent persons had allied themselves with the movement, the most notable being the queen herself.\footnote{1} Millman quotes Knighton as saying that "every second man you met was a Wyclifite," but reminds us that Knighton lived in the immediate vicinity of Wyclif, where his followers were doubtless more numerous.\footnote{2}

The best and most conclusive evidence of the spread of the heresy, was the presentation of a petition to Parliament in the eighteenth year of the reign of Richard II.\footnote{3} This was introduced by two members of the House of Commons, namely, Sir Thomas Latimer and Sir Richard Stury.\footnote{4} It embodies in the main, the teaching of Wyclif respecting the eucharist, endowments, celibacy, pilgrimages, images, clerical lordship, auricular confession, and adds that such arts as those of the goldsmith and some others are unnecessary, and a direct violation of the New Testament. This radical action so horrified the orthodox clergy that Courtenay sent for the king post haste. Richard was in Ireland at the time. He hurried home and swore vengeance against all who refused to abjure their belief in the heresy.\footnote{5} Although the petition came to nothing, it is significant that it was even presented in view of the activity of the clergy to secure legislation against the very heresies embodied in the prayer.

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\footnote{1}{Millman, Hist. of Latin Christianity, VII, 404.}
\footnote{2}{Ibid.}
\footnote{3}{Fas. Ziz., 360-369. A translation of these conclusions is found in Gee and Hardy, 126-132.}
\footnote{4}{Capes, A Hist. of the Eng. Ch., 149.}
\footnote{5}{Capgrave, Chronicle of Eng. Several prominent Lollards}
Anne of Bohemia was queen of England. Richard, in spite of his threats, was a half-hearted Lollard. The Commons were openly favorable to the heresy. So long as this condition existed, the most orthodox and strenuous archbishop would be helpless. A big change came. Courtenay died in 1396, and was succeeded by the tireless Arundel. Richard was dethroned in 1399, and was followed by Henry IV. The church, and particularly Arundel, was most influential in elevating Henry to the throne, and he naturally felt kindly toward it. He knew that his security depended largely upon holding the good will of the body to which he was so much indebted.

It had become evident that imprisonment of offenders at the command of the church was ineffectual as a remedy. The feeling of the masses of the people against the wide secular activity of the clergy was so strong, and the revolt of large numbers against certain doctrines was so obstinate that a crisis seemed imminent, and the outlook was ominous for the church. Some radical action seemed imperative. Heretics had long been burned on the continent, but not in England. Theoretically the church could not take the life of a human being. The continental magistrate simply obeyed the bishop. In England the heretic could not be burned legally without a statute. This statement involves the question of the burning of Sawtre which will be considered further on. Arundel was well aware that respect for the mandate of the church was so

are mentioned as having participated in posting most obnoxious doctrines on the door of St. Paul's in London.

2 Ibid, 410.
3 Ibid, 410.
far lacking as to nullify his authority without the support of the
"secular arm."

It seems strange that so soon after the events of 1394 and
1395, a statute so violent as that De Haeretico of 1401, could be
passed by Parliament. There had been several changes each of which
in some measure accounts for the condition. Naturally, the
personell of the House of Commons had changed materially in that
day when members were elected for but a year or so. Another
change has already been stated, that of the new king and his
relation to the church. Henry IV was surely a more loyal church-
man than Richard II. It must be borne in mind, too, that the
king was much the most powerful factor in legislation. Parliament
was not the strong force it is to-day. Arundel knew that he had
in practically won his point, if, his proposed measures he could
strike a bargain with the king. This he proceeded to do.¹ The
monarch needed money, as monarch are wont to. He had no machinery
for compelling the clergy which controlled much property to bear
its share of the financial burdens of the state. Convocation did
or did not vote subsidies to the king as it pleased. Arundel
wanted legislation against the Lollards. He doubtless gave Henry
to understand that the clergy would more surely make the desired
grant if they, in turn, were assured of aid against their enemies.
The details of a financial bargain seem not to be recorded anywhere,
but suspicion is very strong. The clergy granted a tenth and a
half to the king, March 11, 1401, only a few days after the statute

¹ Stubbs, Const. Hist. of Eng., III, 32. The author here
refers to Wilkins' Concilia, III, 254.
was passed. Another factor of which Arundel took advantage doubtless was the strong sentiment against Richard II and his followers. Whether justly or not, Lollardy was connected, in many minds, with the evils of Richard, and a resistless tide had set in against them, partly on account of this alleged association.

Whatever may have been the contributing causes, the significant fact is that a petition, presented this time by the clergy, was granted by the king and the lords, and a somewhat similar one by the Commons early in March, 1401. The substance of the petition was inserted as a clause in the statute of the year. The act differs essentially from all the other attempts to control heresy in ordering the impenitent offenders to be burned. Other provisions were not fundamentally different from former documents which had set fourth charges against the heretics. Unlicensed preaching was forbidden; no one was to write or preach against the Catholic Church; all persons having heretical writings were to deliver such to the clergy to be burned; persons convicted of heresy were to be imprisoned to allow time for recantation. One clause of the statute is similar to part of the measure of 1382. It invokes secular force, "because the said false and perverse people go from diocese to diocese and will not appear before the

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4 Ibid. 5 This is found in both the original and translation in Statutes of the Realm, II, 125 et seq. Gee and Hardy, 133-137 also has a translation.
said diocesans, but the same diocesans and their jurisdiction spiritual, and the keys of the church, with the censures of the same, do utterly disregard and despise. . . . . to the utter destruction of all order and rule of right and reason."¹

This was really the first ruling of the English people, having all the proper forms of law, on the subject of heresy, in this case being aimed especially at Lollardy. Although reference is frequently made to the action of 1382 as a statute, it is inaccurate because the Commons disclaimed any part in it, and upon their protest, the king and lords allowed it to be withdrawn. There was, however, a short time that year when it did appear to have the force of law. There is no question as to the legality of the work of 1401. The course of the petition in the hands of the king and in both houses of Parliament was perfectly proper, and the law remained unchanged on the statute books of England throughout the century. It was found to be inadequate, and there were subsequent rulings of the church and action of Parliament to support it, but it remained as the method of dealing with heretics for more than a hundred years.²

This statute seemed to be the expression of a very pronounced return to zeal for orthodox doctrines. Antipathy to the encroachment of the clergy in secular fields of activity was unabated, however. The same Parliament which passed the famous law De Haeretico Corburendo enacted measures to secure a more rigid

¹ Gee and Hardy, Documents, 134.

² Gee and Hardy, 133, note introducing the document. Statutes of the Realm, Ill, 454.
enforcement of the regulation concerning provisors.\(^1\) Parliament, in 1403, and again in 1404, was much embarrassed and agitated on account of a proposal to force more money for the clergy.

It is practically impossible to isolate material which may be branded as unquestionably heretical. One of the criticisms of the statute for the burning of heretics, made in the reign of Henry VIII, was that people could not protect themselves against the law because the points which it covered were not specified.\(^2\) Wyclif and his followers had long taught that the clergy held too much land for the spiritual well-being of themselves and their flocks and for the financial well-being of the government. This protest, which had occurred so repeatedly in the last twenty-five years, was surely, by the letter of the law, a heresy in the sense that the term seemed to be used a little later. However, the church was either unable to enforce its will, or by a liberal interpretation of its laws such action was not held to be so. It was certainly a part of the anti-papal and anti-catholic thought of the day.

The king needed money as usual in 1403. In Parliament the speaker "answered that swech summes myte not be rered so ofte in the puple, but if the Cherch shuld be put fro her temporalities."\(^3\) This officer was "Ser Jon Chene, knyte" who was in disfavor with the clergy because he had taken the order of subdeacon, and had

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\(^1\) Stubbs, Const. Hist. of Eng., III, 34.

\(^2\) Statutes of the Realm, III, 454.

\(^3\) Capgrave, Chron. of Eng., 287.
later "aspired to the order of wedlak."\(^1\) At this the archbishop rose and said, "now se I weel whidir thi malice walkith. Thow renegate and apostate of theyn Ordyr, woldist put the Chercch al undirfote. But while this hed stant on this body, thou shal nevyr have thi entent."\(^2\) A highly dramatic scene followed in which the archbishop threw himself at the feet of the king and besought him to fulfil his coronation oath, and protect the church. He seemed to strike fire when he claimed that tho money had been to refused A the French monks "the Kyng is not amended thereby half a mark be (year); For ye (the knights) amongst you have it, and dispende it youre plesauns."\(^3\)

In some form more or less emphatic, resolutions and petitions were presented for Parliamentary consideration in the years from 1403 to 1406, but nothing of permanent value to any faction came of any of them, except perhaps the creation of uncertainty and so a practical neutralization of the obnoxious statute of 1401. The issue with its many complications came up with renewed demands in 1410. But this time an elaborate scheme was prepared by which property was to be taken from the church and used in the endowment of "fifteen earls, fifteen hundred knights, six thousand two hundred squires, and a hundred hospitals."\(^4\) It was a bold proposition, but was not new;\(^5\) nothing came of it. Workman says,\(^6\)

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\(^1\) Capgrave, Chron. of Eng., 287.
\(^2\) Ibid.
\(^3\) Ibid, 288.
\(^4\) Walsingham, Historia Anglicana, II, 282, 283.
\(^5\) Fas. Ziz., 393. It seems that John Punvy had suggested the same, and more almost ten years earlier.
"this petition, perhaps the result of a snatch vote, was an attempt to obtain the relaxation of the law De Heretico Comburendo."

The same another states that in the Parliament, however, there was an amendment to the law by the terms of which the person arrested for heresy should be imprisoned in the king's, and not in the archbishop's wards.

It appears that in the Parliament of 1412 the "lords spiritual and temporal" offered a petition to King Henry asking particularly that schools of heresy be suppressed. There are other charges against the enemies of the church, but the resolution is leveled at the schools because, it is claimed, these institutions teach that property should be taken from the church; the argument was that if this contention be allowed "they will also excite the people of your kingdom to take away, from the said lords temporal, their possessions and heritages, so to make them common to the open commotion of your people." This was an effort to frighten the lords. If they could be made to feel that the Lollard doctrine of lordship jeopardized their holdings as well as those of the clergy, a big point would be gained for the church. They refused, however, to be moved.

A "most blasphemous and cruell acte" became a law in 1414. Despite the complete statute of 1401, Lollardy had flourished right in the churches themselves. The clergy had been totally unable to bring many offenders to justice. For one thing, the

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1 Geikie, The Church History of Britain, 481-482. The author adds in a footnote, "Contracted by myself (exactly keeping the words) out of the original" but does not state what the original was.

2 State Trials, I & II, column 48.
mechanism for executing the law was inadequate; the process of apprehension was too slow; the clergy could not do the work. Then, although Henry IV had been placed on the throne by Arundel, he was not the ardent supporter of the church which the archbishop wished; he was never willing that action be taken against some of his best Lollard advisers. When Henry V succeeded, however, there was a change. He gave permission to proceed against the very leaders of the heresy. The result was the Oldcastle rising. There is little doubt that the king seriously feared the Lollards. The unfortunate affair at London turned many people against Cobham and his party and doubtless had more to do with the enactment of the statute than any other one thing. This measure required civil officials to make an oath "in taking of their Charges and Occupations to put their whole Power and Diligence to put out ... all manner of Heresies and Errors commonly called Lollardy," from the districts in which they have jurisdiction. As a further extension of authority it is stated that certain judges in the secular courts may proceed against suspects without the order of the ecclesiastical courts. The property of condemned offenders is to be confiscated, part of it going to the king; if an accused person escape from prison, all profits accruing from his possessions from the day of his escape was also to go to the king; if, however, the offender dies unconvicted his heirs shall not be barred from their inheritance. The importance of the statute was the authority given to civil officers to initiate action against

1 Statutes of the Realm, II, 181-184.

2 Ibid, 181.

3 Ibid, II, 182.
suspects.

Bishop Stubbs\(^1\) says that there was some futile effort in 1422, in 1425, and again in 1468, to secure further legislation against Lollardy, but that the act of 1414 was the last statute.

Following the personal effort of Wyclif, we have seen the church bring to bear its most powerful and authoritative influences to suppress his teachings. We have seen the effort of the clergy for a statute on the subject crowned with success in the law of 1401 which legalized burning the obstinate offender; and we have seen this law supplemented in 1414 by an adequate mechanism for the enforcement of the original statute. It is now in order to inquire to what extent the laws were applied.

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CHAPTER II

INDIVIDUALS AFFECTED BY THE STATUTES

A number of considerations must necessarily arise in the minds of the men whose duties it became to administer the new rulings, if they had the qualities of sympathy and charity, more or less universal in the human heart. Just what heresy was; just what the individual really meant by what he said; to what extent he was responsible for the views he held:—these circumstances and probably others must inevitably modify the actions of the executive officers. The church had not at this time specified its doctrine. When entire congregations and communities held to a belief, could it be called heresy? The fact that the situation had gone beyond the power of the church to control, would indicate vast discord. Perhaps a majority of the clergy and, certainly those who held their positions from Rome, were of one mind that any tenet not authorized by synod, or pope, or council, or all, was heresy; many other persons, however, even in that savage day, would prefer to allow some latitude in faith, to giving a decision which might take a human life. Then, too, ecclesiastics themselves would hesitate to decide against an accused person if they knew that the sentiment of the community was with the alleged offender.

Some of the Lollard leaders were skillful in the use of words. By involved circumlocutions they could confuse the questioners and produce vague and uncertain impressions upon the basis of which any sane mind would hesitate to give a verdict involving death, tho he might feel confident that the culprit before him
deserved some punishment. In such cases the law of the church which required the imprisonment of the offender until he was ready to abjure, was applied in place of the statute for burning. In any social movement which sweeps a country, there are a few leaders who know exactly what they are doing, and what they believe, and to what extent they are at variance with the traditional custom and orthodox doctrine. There are many more, not so well informed who still are firm and loyal followers. Then there is likely to be a great multitude who only half way understand the proposed plans, who are ready to desert if danger threatens. With the vast body the issue is not vital. They do believe in it and feel that it offers larger liberty, and yet, with them it is not a matter of life and death. If the followers of Wyclif, as a body, had been as loyal to the principles as a few of them were, it seems altogether probable that the Reformation would have come about a century earlier. There is good evidence that very large numbers, perhaps a hundred thousand\(^1\) at one time, openly espoused the cause of Lollardy. It is certain that some such considerations as those just indicated, operated to prevent the wholesale application of the law to the full extent of its penalty or we should have record of more deaths from it. The list of individuals who suffered is all too long, yet it seems short in view of the number of Lollards and the temper of the church.

There seems to be complete agreement that William Sawtre was the first victim of the spirit of the famous statute De Haeretico.

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\(^1\) Capgrave, Chron. of Eng., 303.
Referring to this law, Capgrave says, "this statute was practiced in a prest, that sone aftir was brent at Smythfeld." An interesting question has arisen in connection with the case of Sawtre. Capgrave says that this law "was practiced," which seems to imply that it was in existence at the time of the burning. Shirley gives the date of Sawtre's trial as April 30, 1399, which Workman says "cannot be correct." Sawtre was an offender of long standing; he had been examined, it seems, several times before his conviction. The royal writ for the execution is dated February 26, 1401. For the date of the statute, Workman gives March 10, 1401, and that of March 2 for the writ. If the act was not a law until March 10, and Sawtre was executed March 2, the question arises, by what law he was burned. Maitland is confident that the execution was by neither the statute nor the common law of England, but by canon law operating thru a decree of Boniface VIII, who was extending an edict of Frederic II, involving the death penalty, to all the world. The writ states that the convicted man "ought to be burnt in the flames, according to law divine and human, and the canonical institutes customary

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1 Capgrave, Chron. of Eng., 277.
2 Fas. Ziz., 408.
3 The Dawn of the Reformation, I, Appendix, p. 306.
4 Gee and Hardy, Documents, 139.
5 The dawn of the Reformation, I, Appendix, 306 and 359.
6 Roman Canon Law in the Church of England, 80.
7 Ibid.
in that behalf!"¹ There is at the most no reference whatever to
the statute of 1401. A reasonable inference from this is that
the statute was not in existence. Besides, there is the positive
statement that the man ought to be burned according to law "divine
and human, and the canonical institutes." Workman² states that
the action was considered to be radical, and a dangerous precedent,
"so a few days after Sawtre's death Parliament passed the Black
Statute De Heretico Comburendo."

His conviction was based, apparently, on his belief concerning
the eucharist, worship of the cross, relics, preaching of priests,
and vows and pilgrimages.³ So far as the records show, all the
burnings of this century were inflicted upon Lollards. While
their views varied with different individuals their conviction
came, in most cases of which we have available records, upon a
few points which approximate those which were the undoing of the
first martyr to their cause.

Sawtre was a priest, and before the secular arm could touch
him he must be stripped of all ecclesiastical authority. Fuller
says he was "solemnly degraded in the order as followeth:— 1. From
the order of Priest; by taking from him the patin chalice, and
plucking the chasuble from his back. 2. From the order of Deacon;
by taking from him the New Testament and the stole. 3. From the
order of Sub-deacon; by taking from him the alb, and the maniple.
4. From the order of Acolyte; by taking from him the candle-stick,

¹ Translation of writ in, Gee and Hardy, 139.
² The Dawn of the Reformation, I, 259.
³ Fas. Ziz., 408-411.
taper, uncoolum. 5. From the order of Exorcist: by taking from him the book of conjurations. 6. From the order of Reader; by taking from him the book of church legends. 7. From the order of Sexton; by taking from him the key of the church-door and surphee.”¹

Ramsay² thinks that in justice to Arundel it ought to be stated that for several hours on two different days he worked hard with Sawtre to induce him to return to the orthodox faith.

The royal order by which this Englishman, probably the first, gave up his life for religious conviction, directed that he be burned in an open place as an example to the others of his kind.³ The "example" seemed to have served the desired purpose for there is no word of any further burning until 1410, just about nine years later. It is not to be assumed that the heresy had died out, however. Indeed it was very active, but according to the records every one accused of the crime abjured and so escaped the awful death.⁴ All thru this period there was a strong faction working to nullify the law, and as we have seen, proposals, the purpose of which was a practical revocation of the statute, were made. John Bradby was burned March 5, 1410.⁵ Capgrave says "he

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¹ Church Hist. of Britain, I, 476. His work was published in 1837. It reads well but he gives no sources for the most of it. In discussing the question of degradation Ramsay, in Lancaster and York, I, 35, cites Wilkins, 257-60.

² Lancaster and York, I, 34. He does not tell where he got this information.

³ Gee and Hardy, 139.


⁵ Capgrave, Chron. of Eng., 297; Walsingham, Hist. Angl., II, 282; Ramsay, Lancaster and York, I, 125, 126.
held this conclusion, that the Sacrament of the Auter is not Cristes Body, but a thing withoute soule, wers than a tode, or a ercyne, which have lif, and whan he would not renonus his opinion, he was take to the secular hand, for to be spered in a tunne in in Smythfeld, and to be brent."

The same chronicler speaks of him as a "smyth," and Walsingham refers to him as "arte faber." Just what sort of artisan he was is not evident from this, but it is clear that he was not of any clerical order; he was probably of humble rank. Perhaps the most remarkable feature of his case, is the part which the young Prince of Wales took. Happening along just when the executioners were ready to apply the fire, he made a futile effort to secure a recantation; then when the fire was consuming the poor man, the Prince, mistaking a moan for a cry for mercy, ordered the fagots withdrawn, only to be rewarded with the same obstinacy. Badby refused to relinquish a word of his conviction. It is worth mentioning that this smith was haled for trial before an august body composed of both archbishops and eight bishops, besides the Duke of York and Sir Thomas Beaufort.

By this time it had become evident to the zealous Arundel that the man "higher up" than a humble priest or an unlettered smith must be attacked if the heresy was to be eradicated. Many prominent Lollards had recanted in the first year or two following the first burning, and for a time there were few or none in Parliament, but the repeated efforts in favor of Lollardy indicate surely that the sentiment was there; it was only smouldering. The

1 Capgrave, Chron. of Eng., 297. He refers here to Ramsay, Lancaster and York, I, 125, 126. Wilkins, III, 325; Poed., VIII, 627.
2 State Trials, I & II, Columns 37 and 50.
effort in 1410 to secure a modification of the act De Haereticis shows the presence of a considerable number of Lollard sympathizers in the Commons, and there was one of outspoken conviction in the House of Lords. The man who did more than any other to attract attention to the heresy was Sir John Oldcastle. By marriage he had become a lord. He had not hesitated to sow broadcast among his tenants the seeds of his own religion. That an attack had not been made sooner upon prominent Lollards was due to the attitude of Henry IV, Oman thinks. He says that the king permitted a "certain amount of persecution of insignificant persons in order to conciliate the churchmen to whom he owed his throne." He states that Henry rather liked the Lollards and would allow no general attack upon them. This seems plausible since as soon as the new monarch ascended the throne, vicious persecution began, and the laws against heresy were made more effective, and the archbishop was authorized to proceed against Lollards of the highest social and political standing.

Capgrave, in his quaint English tells part of the story well tho briefly. At this time, in the year 1414, the Lollards placed bills on the church doors in which it was set forth that there were 100,000 "redy for to rise and destroye alle hem that wold not consent to her secte and her opinions." They depended upon the leadership of a "certyn knyte thei cleped Ser Jon

1 Political Hist. of Eng., IV, 233, 234.
3 Capgrave, Chron. of Eng., 303.
Oldcastle." He had wedded a woman "ny of the lordis kyn" and so had become a peer. Henry, the king, had sent him on a military expedition; "a strong man in bataile he was, but a grete heretic."  

He had been guilty of sending out unlicensed preachers, he had listened to them preach, and had even threatened with the sword any who should "seide ageyn his prestes." On account of this state of things the archbishop had "gaddered" a council at London. Cobham was a knight of Henry's household, therefore the primate complained of him to the king. "Aftir mech laboure to his amendment, the Kyng wrot to the archbishop, that he shuld somoune him to appere and answere."  

Oldcastle denied the authority of the church to summon him, and refused to go. He was cursed for contumacy, but this was of no avail. Not until Henry the king ordered him would he appear. When he at last came he was offered pardon on the condition that he "wold mekely submitte him to the Cherche."  

Oldcastle was not of the type which "mekely submitte." Instead he produced a paper containing a statement of his religious faith on a few subjects. The archbishop was not satisfied with this and proceeded to interrogate Cobham on some matters not contained in the "bille." It appears that questions were prepared and the accused man given time to think them over. When the time appointed for the interview came, Oldcastle stood firm on the

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1 Capgrave, Chron. of Eng., 304.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid, 305.
5 This statement is given in the English of the time in Fas. Ziz, 438, 439. Also in State Trials, I & II, C.40-1.
6 State Trials, I & II, col. 41.
mooted points. He denied transubstantiation; he said that "contricion without confessione purgith al synne;" that he would worship the body of Christ which hung on the cross but not the cross itself; that he would not worship the image but would "wipe it and keep it clene," concluding with the fearless charge that "the pope is antichrist, bishops be his members, and freres be his tayl."¹

Naturally, such irreverence would not be tolerated. "The archbishop say no othir amendment in thir man, condempned him for a heretik," and turned him over to the secular arm. He asked the king, however, to grant some forty days in which the prisoner "mite do penauns," "but this indulgens turned onto great mischief; for within the XL dayes he brak outhe of the house, and sent letteris onto his secte."² After this, the chronicler says, the fugitive sought to take the king's life. He made a special effort at Christmas time, when the king was at Eltham; Henry was warned, however, and fled to Westminster. Oldcastle then planned an attack on London and ordered his men to meet at St. Giles field just outside the city, for there "shuld com to hem outhe of London L thousand, as was behite here."³ Henry sent out spies, it seems, who succeeded in confusing his enemy, as a result of which Capgrave declares, "thus were take and slayn thousands."⁴ Cobham and

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¹ Capgrave, Chron. of Eng., 306.
² Ibid.
³ Ibid., 307
⁴ Ibid.
many of his followers escaped, but "many of his were take, and hang, and drawe, and brent."

Oldcastle was ascribed the leadership of a seditious uprising in 1415 while the king was on the continent, and he is pictured as fleeing with causeless and precipitate haste from a small force of pursuers. In his deserted hiding place his persecutors found banners elaborately decorated with emblems of Christian doctrines which the chronicler says "wer mad for to make simpil folk to suppose that he was a trew zelator of the Feith." Cobham appears here in a very undignified role. Capgrave leaves the story incomplete, but states that in the year 1417, "in every in of Seint Albone, in Reding and in Northampton, were founde billes of gret malyce agene God and the Kyng," the circulation of which he attributes to Oldcastle.

It remains to be said from other sources, that Oldcastle was accused of stirring up sedition in the Welsh marshes, of intriguing with the Scotch, and in short, of implication in almost every alleged plot against the government within the remainder of his life. He escaped capture in the wilderness of the north and west of England and in Wales, until 1417, when he was taken, brought to London, subjected to great indignity, and condemned as a traitor. He had been pronounced a heretic in 1431. He was hanged as a traitor and then burned as a heretic.

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1 Capgrave, Chron. of Eng., 307.
2 Ibid, 309, 310.
3 Ibid, 410.
5 The story is incomplete in Fas. Ziz.
There are several interesting features in the case of this "Lollard Lollardaum," only one or two of which may be noted here. So far as the records indicate, Cobham was the most powerful politically, and the most scholarly of Wyclif's followers. Purvey had done much in the translation of the scriptures into English, but he recanted and so became harmless. Oldcastle had corresponded with Huss in Bohemia; he knew the church fathers; he had apparently written a volume himself; he stirred all England with joy and fear. Perhaps the best evidence of his popularity and standing with the people is shown by an incident which occurred after his condemnation, while he was imprisoned in the Tower. Some of his friends had published abroad the religious principles stated by Oldcastle in his trial. These met with such wide favor that "after thys the byshops and pryestes were in moche Olequie," and even went to the extreme of issuing a fraudulent abjuration of the powerful convict.

Under the date of July 14, 1429, there appears in the Calendar of Patent Rolls, a statement of the estate which Cobham left. A commission was appointed to hold inquisition in the county of Hereford as to the matter of a petition which has been presented to the king and council by Henry Oldcastell. It appears, from records cited, that at the time of his execution, Oldcastle held.

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1 State Trials, I & II, column 43.
2 Ibid, column 47.
3 Ibid.
4 Calendar of Patent Rolls, Henry VI, 1422, 1429, pp. 546-548.
5 Ibid, 546.
"the site of the manor of Almaly with a grange built thereon, and at Almaly in the same county three carucates of land containing 180 acres of arable land, certain meadow called 'Amburmedewe,' and 'Locrehammedewe,' 'Oldecastellas' medew,' 'Tweybrokesmedew,'\(^1\) and much more grass land. A court was to be held on one every three weeks. A water mill; numerous rentals in cash; shops, gardens and living rooms in towns; and many small holdings in lands, which must have aggregated thousands of acres, made up a vast total all of which "ought to descend to the petitioner, as son and heir of the said John Oldcastle."\(^2\)

There were some deaths at the time of the attempt against the king at London, but it is impossible to say how many of these were on account of heresy. Capgrave must be in error when he says, "thus were take and slayn thousands."\(^3\) It is altogether probable that he exaggerated, and if he did not there is no way of knowing how many of these would have abjured when brought to trial. There were complications which make it quite possible that men were implicated in the conspiracy who had had no connection at all with Lollardy; the fact remains that in an uprising led by a Lollard men lost their lives. No one would claim certainly, however, that they came to their death thru the operation of the statute against heretics in 1401. In discussing the events following the efforts to capture the king, Ramsay says, "sixty-nine persons were condemned of treason; some by the special

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\(^1\) Calendar of Patent Rolls, Henry VI, 1422,1429, 548-9.
\(^2\) Ibid, 546.
\(^3\) Chron. of Eng., 307.
commission at the Tower, some by the regular courts at Westminster. Of those so convicted, thirty-seven were drawn next day from Newgate to St. Giles' Field, and there hanged; seven of them were also burnt 'gallows and all.' The inference is that they were all hanged as traitors and the seven burned as heretics. Bale, however, says "in January next following was the aforesaid Sir Roger Acton, Master John Browne, Sir John Beverley and more (of whom the more part were Gentlemen of Byrthe) convicted of heresy by the Bishops and condemned of treason by the Temporalte, and according to the Acte were fyrste hanged and then bren in the sayde Saint Gyles Feld." Judging from this statement, there is no reason to separate seven and say that they alone were burnt. Ramsay does not give his authority for his word, although in the general discussion of which this figures as a part he refers frequently to Rymer and Wilkins. He states that thirty-seven were convicted while Bale says thirty-six besides the three whose names he gives. Ramsay mentions the three also, indicating that Beverly was a priest, Brown a squire, and Acton a knight. He does not say whether these three were burned as heretics, his statement being simply that they were"executed." Bale states specifically that all of them were first hanged and then burnt. His total is thirty-nine, who died on account of heresy, as well as from treasonable acts, while Ramsay's is seven, and that only

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1 Lanc. and York, I, 180.

2 State Trials, I & II, col. 49.

by implication.

If a further statement from Bale may be taken to refer to
the Oldcastle affair, there were still others who died as a
result of affiliation with the arch heretic. "In that same Yeare,"
he says, "also was one Johan Cloydon a Skinner, and one Richard
Turmin a baker, both hanged and brent in Smythfilde, by that
vertuous act; besides that was done in al other Quarters of
Ingland, which was no small number if it were not thoroughly
knowen."¹ The writer here adds two more by name to the list of
victims, tho he does not state explicitly that they were allied
with Cobham; the logical inference from the context is, however,
that they were, because he has just stated that the thirty-nine,
before mentioned, were executed. A further inference from "in
al other Quarters of Ingland," is that throughout the land the
Cobham conspirators were hunted out and punished; it would be
absurd, however, even to guess at the number.

It is strange that among the large number which Cobham was
able to assemble about him, so little is known of them personally.
Beyond the fact that they died at the time, practically nothing
is known. Bale says that most of them were gentlemen of birth,
tho that is not very illuminating. Sir Roger Acton must have been
a person of some prominence or he could not have held the title
he did. It is possible that he had a part in securing the escape
of Oldcastle from the Tower;² this is not an established fact,

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¹ State Trials, I & II, col. 49. Also Ypodigma Neustria, 449.

² Ibid.
however.

Oldcastle has been caricatured and represented as a most undignified person. The available records of his acts do not warrant this characterization. In his trial he showed himself the intellectual peer of his inquisitors. It goes without saying that he was more independent of traditional authority. His object was to establish Lollardy in the land. Instead of accomplishing this purpose, he did more than any other score of persons to drive it underground. It did not die out, however, but after his execution it was not, for eighty years at least, the aggressive force it had been before his famous trial. The clergy used the attack upon the king as a leverage to secure the enactment of more ample mechanism for enforcing the statute of 1401. The verdict to-day seems to be that Cobham over-estimated the numerical strength of his followers, and that the whole affair was ill-advised, tho showing the zeal of the anti-clerical party. Trevely's seems to catch the spirit of the martyrs when he says, "but it is idle for armchair philosophers, living in the nineteenth century with the old-established privilege of believing or disbelieving in any religion as they choose, to condemn as fools and knaves men who dared to stake their lives and fortunes on one desperate throw for freedom of conscience. They cared intensely for the mission that they had undertaken, they believed (and with reason) that little good would come until it succeeded, they saw that the

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1 Capes, The English Church in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries, 187.

2 England in the Age of Wyclif, 337.
existing government was determined to crush it, so they determined to be beforehand and crush the government."

Walsingham¹ mentions one Willelmus Murlee as one of the followers of Oldcastle, burned in 1414. It would appear that he had been knighted by his leader, tho the authority Cobham had to confer this honor might be questioned. It is stated that he had been especially annoying to orthodox churchmen; he is charged with participation in a design against the monarchy at St. Albans. He may have been one of the number executed immediately following the attack at London, but this does not seem probable.

Chronologically, the next death reported was in September, 1416. The chronicler says, "in this tyme on Benedict Woolman, a citecyn of London, a grete Lollard, whuch had set up bills of grete errors, was takyn, hanged, and drawe on Myhilmesse day."² In recording this, Ramsay adds;³ "Another Lollard was executed on the eighth of October." Apparently this "other" Lollard was Richard Parchmeyer,⁴ who Gairdner states, "suffered a like fate" with Wollman, but he claims that Wollman was not burned as a heretic tho he admits that he was charged with being a great Lollard. In his discussion of these cases he refers indirectly to Devon's Issue Rolls but does not state definitely the source of

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¹ Ypodigma Neustriæ, 448-449.
² Capgrave, Chron. of Eng., 316.
³ Lanc. and York, I, 254. He says in a footnote, "See the Inquisition, Riley, Memorials of London, 639."
⁴ Gardiner, Lollardy and the Reformation, I, 93. This is where he refers indirectly to Devon's Issue Rolls, 330-332.
Within the decade following the death of Oldcastle, the more determined Lollards kept out of reach of their persecutors, while those of lighter conviction recanted. "Out of the twenty-five heretics of whose trials we have record during these ten years, eleven were in Holy Orders, but only one, a priest called William Taylor, had the resolution to go to the stake."¹ Taylor, "magister in artibus et presbyter,"² was burned at Smithfield, March 2, 1423.³ He was condemned chiefly because of his belief in respect to prayer, clerical lordship, divine right of kings, religious mendicancy, worship of the cross, and saints.⁴

In 1428, two priests and a layman were burned at Norwich.⁵ Amundesham gives Hugo Pye, and Whyte as the names of two of them, but fails to tell us who the third was. Ramsay says that it was Whaddon.⁶ White was a priest, but which of the other two was the other ecclesiastic does not appear. White's trial is amply recorded,⁷ but beyond the mere fact of the death by burning, available sources yield little concerning Pye and Whaddon. White came for examination, charged with heresy, before the bishop

¹ Trevelyn, Eng. in the Age of Wyclif, 340. The author gives no indication whatever of the source of this information.
² Fas. Ziz., 412.
³ Ibid.
⁴ Ibid, 412-413.
⁵ Johannes Amundesham, Annales Monasterii, St. Albani, I, 29.
⁶ Lanc. and York, I, 437, footnote 2. He refers here to Rogers Prices, III, 676.
⁷ Fas. Ziz. 417-432.
of Norwich and others, September 13, 1428. The date of his death is not given but it was probably within a few days as nothing appeared to impede the progress of the case. A long list of heresies is laid at his door. Among them are, auricular confession, penance, power of the keys, worship of relics, adoration of images, infant baptism, and celibacy. He denied transubstantiation; he was accused of giving undue praise to the Lollards. He was an old offender for he had been on trial before this, but had satisfied his accusers by abjuration. After this he had gone to the extreme in disregarding all church law, and had married.

There is conclusive evidence that in 1428 the three persons just discussed were burned for heresy, and that two years later, 1430, three others suffered the like fate. The details of the cases of most of them are so meager as to make anything more than a mere chronicle almost impossible. William Caleys, a Lollard priest, was one of the trio of martyrs of 1430. He was given opportunity to recant but preferred to continue in his iniquitous opinions. The chronicler of St. Albans narrates the death of a Lollard on Tower Hylle in 1430, but gives no name. He also states that another was burned at Maldon, Essex in the same year. He

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1 Fas. Ziz., 417.
2 Ibid, 417-432 passim.
3 Ibid, 432.
4 Amundesham, I, 51.
5 Ibid, 46.
6 Ibid, 50.
solemly records that on account of the vindictiveness of the
heretic, a neighbor who had been slightly wounded by a bone
sliver from the dead man was brought almost to death by infection. Ramsay gives "R. Hunden or Hoveden" and a nameless tiler as the other two victims of the year. Hunden was a London wool-packer and he was buried on Tower Hill, January 20.

The contagion of the years 1428 and 1430 was carried on to
1431 when there were several more martyrs. Thomas Bagley was one of the sufferers. He was a vicar of Manewden in Essex also. He declared himself quite ready to suffer in the face of all effort to move him from his perverse opinions, saying that he believed Wyclif to reside higher in heaven than St. Thomas of Canterbury. It is worth noting that the case seemed to be
important enough to require the presence of the Duke of Lancaster in person. The other deaths of the year came as a result of the "Jack Sharp" rising. Sharp, whose right name was Maundevyle, had deliberately circulated inflammatory pamphlets through London, Oxford, and Coventry. His proposition was an appropriation of church property by the king, to be used for creating "15 earldoms, 1500 knights, 6200 squires, and 100 houses of almes" that "eche
town wyth ynne the reme kepe hys owne beggeres, that may nat

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1 Amundesham, I, 50.
3 Gregory's Chronicle, 171.
4 Gardiner, Loll. and the Ref., I, 159-160. Both Fabyan and Gregory are here discussed with respect to a controversy as to the date of Bagley's death. Cf. Gregory, 172.
travayle for here owne mete."\(^1\) It was an elaborate scheme some what like those proposed in 1395 and again in 1410. He had a following at Abingdon of such numbers as to frighten the Protector into action. The name of Wigmoresland was coupled with that of the heretics and that boded evil. Gloucester took instant and vigorous action against Sharp, with the result that the leader and seven\(^2\) others were captured, tried, and hanged. The captain's head was impaled on London Bridge as a warning. According to the chronicler, these persons were not burnt, yet the chief cause assigned for their death was their doctrine of clerical lordship. The "de Wygmoreland" was too nearly a threat from a mortal enemy of the reigning house to be passed by, yet scarcely sufficient cause for taking eight lives. It has seemed best to include Sharp and his followers among the heretic martyrs for these reasons.

One William Warbelton,\(^3\) in the year 1431, put in a claim to the English government, for a reward which he states had been offered on behalf of the king for information leading to the arrest of "Jack Sharp." He informs the "high and myghty Prince my lord of Gloucester" and "alle the lorde of the counseill" that he had given such aid to the Chancellor of Oxenford and that the said William Perkyns that same night was "arest and kept til execucion was doon of hym after his desert;" he "humbly

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\(^1\) Amundesham, Annals, app., I, 453.

\(^2\) Ibid, I, 63.

\(^3\) Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England, IV, 107, 108.
besechith" such recompense as his service seemed to warrant. It is stated that twenty pounds was awarded him.

There is another record still of this year which seems to have a bearing on the subject, yet it leaves such uncertainty as to be without value in compiling statistics.\textsuperscript{1} John Hals, a justice of the king's bench is to be allowed eight pounds, thirteen shillings, and fourpence, for expenses incurred, and five marks, for labor for himself and clerks in proceeding at the command of the Duke of Gloucester to the "execution of certain insurgents against the king, and other Lollards and traitors at Coventry and the parts adjacent."\textsuperscript{2} A strictly literal construction of the text would say that there was an insurrection against the king and Lollards and traitors, but this can certainly not be the meaning. It seems that some Lollards were executed, but the information is too scant to state definitely that any at all were, much less how many.

In the two periods 1413 to 1417, and 1428 to 1431 almost all the burnings for heresy occurred of which we have available records. Within the fifty years after the conviction of 1431 there is account of but five burnings. In fact there are no more to the end of the century, but there are some suggestions which seem to indicate that after 1485 there was a vigorous prosecution of Lollards. According to Gregory, John Gardyner was "ibrent in Smethfeyld" on May 14, 1438, apparently because, when he "shulde --o--

\textsuperscript{1} Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England, IV, 89.

\textsuperscript{2} I have quoted here from the Chronological Catalog, page XV of Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England, IV.
have benne houselyd he wypd hys mouthe withe a foule clothe and layde the oste there yn."¹

In 1440² Richard Wyche and his servant were burned. The case of Wyche is unusual. Sometime at the very beginning of the century, a Lollard by the name of Wyche was tried.³ Workman says that this can not possibly be the man who was executed in 1440 as that would make the victim too old a man.⁴ Gardiner says that he was one of Wyclif's early followers and that he "must have been not far from sixty"⁵ at the time of his death. In any case the Wyche of the first of the century had a long drawn-out trial, in which the usual charges concerning image worship, mendicancy, power of the priest and of the pope, pay of the clergy,⁶ were made against him. He also claimed that the orders of friars and nuns should not exist and hold some other heretical opinions. It is known that he made a full recantation and that he accepted the Catholic doctrine in positive statements, framed by his accusing bishops.⁷ There seems to be no record of his servant beyond the statement that he was burned at the same time. Gairdner says that Wyche had been known to the people for a long time, and that he had many sympathizers; and that after his death

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¹ Chronicle, 180.
² Gairdner, Loll. and the Ref., I, 171. The author here cites Fabayan, 613.
³ Fas. Ziz., 370, 382.
⁴ Dawn of the Ref., I, Appenxix Z., 310.
⁵ Loll. and the Ref., I, 172.
⁶ Fas. Ziz., 370, 376.
⁷ Ibid, 501-505.
many people made pilgrimages to the place of his execution. This was done to such an extent that the civil authorities of London prohibited it, but still the people came and some were imprisoned because they persisted.¹

The next Lollard having the martyr's courage was William Barlowe,² who met his death in 1466, a quarter of a century after the execution of Wyche. He and his wife had abjured, it seems, at some former examination but the man refused to confess to a priest and died for his opinions. The last burning of which there seems to be any record was eight years after this, in 1474. This was the case of John Goos³ who was burned at Tower Hill as Barlowe had been. After his conviction he seemed perfectly calm, even asking to be allowed to eat, for, he said "I shall passe a lytell sharpe shower or I go to souper."

There is fairly conclusive evidence that all of the foregoing suffered death in application of the various statutes against heresy. There are several others who really ought to be put in the same category, yet who "upon a technicality" must be barred. The spirit of the law was applied in a sort of ex post facto manner to Wyclif himself. He had been dead more than sixteen years when the famous law of 1401 was enacted. The Council of

¹ Gairdner, Loll. and the Ref., I, 171. The author gives no authority for this. It is also said that Wyche wrote a letter to some friends while he was in prison and that this communication has been found, recently by Professor Loserth, while doing some work at the library of the University of Prague. It is given in full in the Eng. Hist. Rev., V, 530-544.
² Gregory, 233-234.
³ Ramsay, Lanc. and York, II, 455. He is apparently quoting here from MS. Vitellius, or R. Fabian, 663.
Constance, May 4, 1415, condemned his works and ordered his remains to be exhumed, burned, and the ashes scattered to the four winds. The pope was unable to enforce the decree for a decade. In 1428, however, the order was executed by the bishop of Lincoln. In December, 1427, the pope had written to bishop Fleming of the diocese of Lincoln, requesting him to publish the decree of the council and to proceed to its fulfillment. Some idea of the anticipated opposition to this task is seen in the numerous demands, which the pope made, of responsible officials for co-operation with the bishop. In the same month he wrote to the "royal councillors of Henry, king of England," to the Archbishop of Canterbury, and to the regent Humphry, requesting them to give proper aid to Fleming. Early in the January following he addressed messages to the mayors and aldermen of Exeter, of London, of Coventry, of Winchester, and to the mayors, aldermen, and commonalty of the towns of Northampton and Leicester, making similar requests of them. The deed was done in the same year. While this was not a case in which a life was taken, it was one in which the animus of the law was as fully shown as those in which the culprit was first hanged as a traitor and then burned as a heretic.

Another case which perhaps comes nearer getting into the

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1 Calendar of Entries in the Papal Registers Relating to Great Britain and Ireland, VII (1417-1431), 23.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
4 Gregory, 163.
list of martyrs, is that of William Thorpe, whose trial took place in July, 1407, before Archbishop Arundel.¹ This is a complete record of a trial. The accused man is brought into a great chamber with "moch people" about, though these are all excluded as the trial proceeds, except a few. After stating the charge of heresy against Thorpe, the archbishop asks him to swear loyalty to the church and receive pardon. Thorpe requests permission to state his beliefs. This is granted, and he recites his faith in the trinity, immaculate conception, and some of the events of the life of Christ. This is not satisfactory to his persecutors who demand that he renounce Lollardy and agree to help eradicate the sect. Long argument on both sides follows to no avail. The accused man reasons that men and women whom he has directed towards Lollardy, would be confused if he should recant. He seems much devoted to his cause and laments that some, among them Purvey, Rampenton, and Hereford, "feine and hide and contrary the trewthe wich before they taucht out plainly and trewly,"² and prefer to deny themselves than to endure the bodily pain and torture. He fails on the points on which most Lollards failed, the sheriff is called "and so then I was led forth and brought into this foul unhonest prison where I came never before."³ This is the last word from Thorpe. It is

¹ State Trials, I & II, col., 15,16. According to the statement at the head of the work, Thorpe while in prison after his conviction wrote the account of his trial. It is given in full in columns 15-36.


³ Ibid, col., 35.
presumed that he was allowed to die in confinement.

In the year 1427, William Wawe, who had robbed a nunnery, was hanged. It is not clear just what the basis of the execution was. He is charged with heresy, and his pillage was thought to be in some manner, the outcropping of Lollardy. Vickers says that the account is so one-sided that it is impossible to judge of the correctness of the verdict. Wawe seems to have had a wide reputation as a robber; he was brought before Gloucester for trial, the charge of heresy being only one of several, and perhaps not the most serious.

It is a well authenticated fact that Margery Jourdemain, known as the "Witch of Eye" was burnt. She was widely advertised as a witch; was implicated with Eleanor Cobham in a disturbance in 1441, against both of whom charges of heresy and witchcraft were made. Whether she was executed as a heretic or a witch is not evident, yet the peculiar kind of penalty laid upon the duchess leaves the impression that the charge of heresy was perhaps paramount in her case, and it may also have been in the case of the "Witch of Eye." The best evidence is, however, somewhat against this. Associated with the woman as accomplices, there were two men, an astrologer, Roger Bolingbroke, and a priest, Thomas Southwell, all of whom were accused of practicing the

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1 Amundesham, Annals, I, 17.
2 Humphrey Duke of Gloucester, 195.
3 Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1422-1429, 422.
5 Gregory, 184.
Black Art against the young king. Bolingbroke was hanged, beheaded, and quartered; Southwell died after a short imprisonment; the duchess, after public penance of a most humiliating character, was banished for life.¹ These attending circumstances seem to indicate that heresy was of less consequence than witchcraft in all four cases.

The list of "near" martyrs might be extended considerably, but in most other cases there is less room for question. Some feigned a recantation, and were silenced; some disappeared, possibly were executed, allowed to die in prison, or they escaped to the marshes.

The total of those known to have been burned in full execution of the statute of 1401, is remarkably small in view of the claim of the Lollards that they could muster a vast number in arms.² The purpose of the law was the salvation of souls. The church was not so blood-thirsty as it has been pictured by some. The long-extended trials of Thorpe and Oldcastle³ are not surely exceptional. Ample time for reflection was given in most cases, it seems; priests labored with the condemned to bring them back to the faith, and in the most instances the death penalty was employed only as a last resort. There were some ecclesiastics who seemed eager to burn, but these were the exception. Recantation was most surely one of the reasons for a relatively short list of

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¹ Gregory, 184.
² Capgrave, Chron. of Eng., 303.
victims. This was what the church wanted. Of the accounts of
the trials which are accessible, the vast majority\(^1\) indicate an
abjuration of the objectionable belief sufficient to satisfy the
accusers. The awful spectacle of a human being consumed by
flames, must have struck terror to the hundreds of half-hearted
heretics, silencing them or effecting a recantation.

John Purvey stands out as perhaps the most notable case of
those who renounced Lollardy. It is said that Purvey even more
than Wyclif himself is responsible for the famous English Bible.
He was most intimately associated with the great scholar, and
of all men would be expected to hold to his convictions. He had
been imprisoned in 1390, and while confined, wrote a commentary of
considerable value, just from his memory of Wyclif's lectures,
and he had later been influential in the Lollard party when it
demonstrated such strength in 1395. He was brought up for trial
with Sawtre, was accused of unorthodox belief on many points,
but hadn't the courage of his more humble fellow. A few days
after Sawtre was sentenced to be burned, Purvey confessed his
error and was forgiven.\(^2\)

Purvey's name is frequently associated with those of several
others in the end of the fourteenth century, as prominent
followers of Wyclif, or perhaps rather as Lollard leaders.\(^3\)
Among them are John Aston, Philip Rampenton, Nicholas Hereforde,

\[^1\text{Wilkins, Concilia, seems to be the best source of this.}\]
\[^2\text{Fas. Ziz., 400.}\]
\[^3\text{State Trials, I & II, col., 20.}\]
the Earl of Salisbury, Richard Story, Lodewick Clifford, Thomas Latymer, and John Montagu.

John Aston, after a long, stubborn, resistance finally yielded to the demands of the clergy, acknowledged his errors and renounced them. Rempenton or Repyngdon and Hereford abjured. Salisbury was beheaded, tho probably more for his implication in a rising against the king, than for his part as a Lollard. Capgrave says that of these leading heretics, John Montagu was "werst of alle;" that in his irreverence he received the sacrament, but instead of partaking of it in the usual manner he "bore it hom and ete it with his oysters." Most of these men found life in the cause of Lollardy too unpopular and made a renunciation before the statute of 1401 was passed. Some of them relapsed, however, but they were never the conspicuous leaders that they had been in their earlier life. Rempenton became an arch persecutor of heretics. To another of these early Lollards belongs the unenviable distinction of executing the pope's order to exhume and burn the remains of Wyclif. This was Richard Fleming, bishop of Lincoln in 1428. It is said that he had opposed Arundel after the condemnation of Wyclif's works in 1402, and that for several years the Archbishop stormed at him and others, and had

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1 Of the last four Capgrave, Chronicle of England, 260, says "thei were principal instructoris of heretics."

2 Fas. Ziz., 329-333.

3 Part of the trial of these men is given in Fas. Ziz., 318-329.

4 Chron. of Eng., 245.

5 See ante, 38, note 1.
vowed that if they did not "give in within ten days, they would pay the penalty of their disobedience." Fleming did "give in" about 1412, for he succeeded Repyngdon as bishop of Lincoln and became a willing tool in the hands of the higher ecclesiastics in Lollard persecution.

A number of persons of lesser note require a word. In 1428, Archbishop Chichele assembled Convocation, as he states, "for the tranquility of the church, the conservation of the faith, and the destruction and weakening of heretics who are now increasing in strength more than usually." Before this body in its several sessions within the following months, several cases of suspected heresy came. These indicate some of the less serious charges, and show to what absurd length the persecutors could go. John Jourdelay was accused of keeping unapproved books; Katharnie Dertford was accused of hiding from the authorities, and, from her secret place, of directing a campaign against the orthodox faith thru her followers; William Harvey had been in conventicles with persons suspected of Lollardy; John Calla had a condemned book; these all abjured, or evidence against them was found too scant for conviction. Ralph Munger, a priest, was before the

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1 Workman, The Dawn of the Ref., I, 244. The author speaks as tho he were sure here but gives no authority.


3 This is quoted by Gairdner Loll. and the Ref. but he does not indicate his source.

4 Gairdner, Loll. and the Ref., I, 145. No sources are cited.

5 Ibid, 147.
assembly several times. He refused to abjure and was recommitted to prison, was haled again before the accusers who, getting no definite statement of renunciation, put two specific propositions to the accused man, both of which Munger answered satisfactorily. Sixteen articles were then presented to him. He hedged considerably but absolutely refused to abjure. Gairdner rather leaves the impression that the man was imprisoned for life, but Capes states it specifically. Richard Monk was accused and agreed to recant; Thomas Garenter had a like experience. Light punishment was very frequently inflicted upon persons of whom it was fairly well known that they had heretical leanings, yet against whom nothing could be positively proved. So late as 1497, it was a common sight to see Lollards standing at Paul's Cross doing penance.

The Lollard heresy was so overshadowing that in this discussion no other form of unorthodox faith has been noticed. It seems that while heretics did differ in their faith, they usually had enough in common with the followers of Wyclif to be considered as Lollards. There was, however, one case, that of Reginald Pecock, so exceptional as to require a brief separate statement. The great mass of later Lollards were of the humble classes and

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2 A Hist. of the Eng. Ch., 189.
3 Gairdner, Loll. and the Ref., I, 149.
4 Ibid, 152. Gairdner seems to take this report of the convocation in 1428 from some authentic source, but he fails to state what it is.
so not given to intellectual pursuits. Pecock was a scholarly man; he was independent in his thinking. He was made bishop of Norwich in 1450. He very elaborately refuted many of the chief contentions of the Lollards. Indeed his Repressor is mostly filled with this one-sided debate. He agrees with them in one or two minor points, but his own big heresy lay in his contention that reason¹ and not faith should be the guiding principle in religion as well as in other matters of life. This teaching of course is directly against inspiration and consequently opposed to the doctrine of infallibility of the church and so would tend to undermine its authority. Pecock labored and wrote for seventeen years after his appointment to the bishopric, but in 1457 he was brought to trial. Many charges were brought against him. He seems to have been innocent of any deliberate intention to weaken the power of the church. He accepted a principle for controlling his life in all matters, which placed the mind and its working above blind, heedless faith. Incidentally, it affected the very foundation of the mediaeval ecclesiastical structure and could not be tolerated. Pecock's case is like Abelard's in the feature that both made a sort of half-way recantation and so lived physically but almost died intellectually. Pecock renounced his errors in elaborate style, and his works were burnt. The church could not burn him, it seems. Babbington says that he was confined, given sufficient food and other necessities but forbidden paper and books, in the abbey of

¹ Pecock, Repressor of Over Much Blaming of the Clergy, I, 25, 26.
Thorney, in Cambridgeshire, 1 where it is supposed his last days were spent and his "dust reposes." 2

It would be folly to attempt a summary of those who were tried and who recanted; of those who actually suffered death the task is more simple, tho even that work has insuperable difficulties. It seems fairly certain 3 that Sawtre in 1401, Badby in 1410, Brown, Acton, Beverley, and Murlee in 1414, Woolman and Parchmeyer in 1416, Oldcastle in 1417, Taylor in 1423, White, Pye, and Whaddon in 1428, Hunden, a tiler, and Calais in 1430, Bagley, "Sharpe," and seven followers in 1431, Gardiner in 1438, Wyche and his servant in 1440, Barlow in 1466, and Goos in 1474, making a total of thirty, suffered death within the century as a result of the laws against heretics. About "Sharp" and his men there might properly be a question. Besides these there is fair agreement that seven more were burned following the Oldcastle rising, and Bale says explicitly that there were thirty-six. 4 In any case seven should be added to the thirty, making thirty-seven, and if Bale is correct, thirty-six should be added which would increase the total to sixty-six. It is almost equally certain that Thorpe died in prison; it is stated by Capes that Munger was imprisoned for life. 5 These two cases are possibly as

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1 Pecock, Repressor, Introduction, LVII.
2 Ibid, LVIII.
3 That is if the sources are reliable. Some of these have been cited thro secondary works. References as complete as available sources would permit, have been made to each case where it is discussed in the body of the chapter.
4 State Trials, I & II, col., 49.
5 A Hist. of the Eng. Ch., 189.
well authenticated as some of the others, but in the absence of
definite reference to a source, it has seemed best not to include
them in the list of martyrs. Imprisonment for life was not the
extreme penalty of the law, and many, perhaps thousands, were made
to do penance under church laws older than the statute enactments
of the early part of the fifteenth century. There was an old
law of the church that heretics should be imprisoned until they
were ready to renounce their obnoxious faith. If they positively
refused, and died in prison, however, they would as surely suffer
death at the hands of the church as those did who were burned.

There are three statements in the trial of Lord Cobham, which, added
if taken literally, would an indefinite but very large number to
this list. In his account of Oldcastle's case, Bale\(^1\) says,
"beside that was done in all other quarters of England, which was
no small number, if it were now thoroughly known." Cobham,
in answering his accusers asks, "where do ye find in all God's
Lawe, that ye shuld thus syt in Judgement of any Christen Men, or
yet sentens anye other Man unto Death, as ye do here daily."\(^2\)
The first statement is absolutely indefinite. The speaker feels
sure that many more died but seems to have no idea of how many.
Oldcastle used the word daily, and it is fairly clear that he
means that his accusers are sentencing man to death daily. Even
if this is a gross exaggeration, Cobham would certainly not make
a charge for which he had utterly no basis in fact. The records
to which we have access indicate that only one had suffered the

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\(^1\) State Trials, I & II, col., 49.
\(^2\) Ibid, 43.
death penalty in 1410 and one in 1401, with the big question as to in 1414.

some thirty-six others. There must, however, have been some
truth in his statement. A third statement is equally as vague
as the first. It follows a discussion of the statute of 1414
were wherein the writer says "for than many take in divers Quarters,
and suffered most cruel Death." 1

Further than this, Trevelyn, who usually speaks guardedly
states, "in the reign of Henry VII a spirit seemed to be moving
on the face of the waters. An ever increasing number of men
burnt for Lollardy was only one of the signs of the times." 2

Without citing a specific instance he continues, "the strength of
revived Lollardy is displayed in the Register of the persecuting
Bishops, which afford us evidence of various Lollard congregations
between 1490 and 1521." 3 This word of Trevelyan's seems to be
substantiated somewhat by that of one of the secretaries of
Henry VIII, writing in 1511. He appears to say in jest, that he
does "not wonder that wood is so scarce and so dear; the heretics
cause so many holocausts; and yet their numbers grow—nay,
even the brother of Thomas, my servant, dolt as he is, has
himself founded a sect, and has his disciples." 4 This evidence
is simply bewildering. After making full allowance for all
prejudice, and exaggeration, however, it must be that many more
were burned than the available records show.

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1 State Trials, I & II, col., 43.
2 England in the Age of Wyclif, 347.
3 Ibid, 348.
4 Workman, Dawn of the Ref., I, 286. The quoted words
seem to be taken from Erasmus, Ep CXXVII. (Leyden
edition 1702)
CHAPTER III

THE APPLICATION OF THE LAW

Our purpose now is to inquire briefly whether the statutes against heresy were enforced or not, and to see, if possible, what agencies conspired to accomplish or prevent their application as the case may be. It seems altogether probable that a movement of such transcendent importance as Lollardy, having its beginning in the last quarter of one century, living thru the vicissitudes of another, and extending itself well into a third, numbering among its adherents some of the leaders of social and political England, with a total of scores of thousands, would have within the ranks of its supporters more than thirty-six of sixty-six or even a hundred persons who held their convictions sufficiently sacred as to be ready to give up their lives lather than renounce their faith.

In the enforcement of almost any law there is more or less difficulty. If the law is unpopular among a considerable class of people or even a considerable section of country in which it should operate, the enforcement of the rule becomes harder, and indeed well nigh impossible. This is well illustrated in the evasion and violation of the Fugitive Slave Law and the act importation of prohibiting the slaves in the United States before the Civil War. People find ways to circumvent unpopular laws, particularly if they deem them unjust. It is many times true that a suspicion amounting almost to a certainty that a statute is being violated, cannot be substantiated when a real test comes; that is, positively
convicting evidence cannot be secured.

In spite of all complications, nevertheless, it is possible to see clearly that in some instances the law was applied and that in some it was not. From the sources available it does not appear to what extent local conditions affected the enforcement of the law, but it must have been so very considerably.

Archbishop Arundel wanted more stringent laws against heresy long before he got them. It has already been stated that because Richard's queen was Anna of Bohemia, the king could not consistently give his assent to a law to burn offenders, lest the first lady of the land should be one of the earliest victims; besides this, Richard's own convictions must have been favorable to Lollardy, if we may judge anything from the fact of his having a number of knights of that sect about him in war and in peace. He held his position quite independent of any ecclesiastical power. It was otherwise with his successor. Henry IV had small claim to the throne of England, and he must show some gratitude to the party which had elevated him to that eminence. Besides this Henry was more loyal to Rome than Richard had been.

Notwithstanding the revulsion of feeling against Richard and his associates, which resulted in the exclusion of many Lollards from Parliament, there remained a strong faction in politics which favored the heresy. The best proof of this is seen in the repeated efforts in the form of resolution and appeal, the purpose of which was to nullify the statute of 1401, presented to Parliament in the eight or ten years following the enactment of the law. This indicates a lay strength of magnitude sufficient to offset the work of the most zealous ecclesiastics. While the
king at this time could secure practically any legislation he desired, the knights, tho some of them had renounced Lollardy, still favored it so strongly that in the main the church was powerless.

The Oldcastle rising seemed to show that not so many persons of rank were advocates of the cause as even the people thought, since only two or three of such were apprehended. Others may have escaped. Trevelyan claims that these persons of high standing very much disliked the wealth and privilege of the clergy, yet they were not ready to share the "lot of the proscribed and rebel party."\(^1\) He continues, "the defection of wealthy patrons is also to be partly attributed to the characteristic poverty which marked all the priests of Wyclif's sect, in accordance with his sweeping denunciation of church possessions."\(^2\) He and Workman agree that after 1415 or so, the religion became one more "for the lower classes of the country and the tradesmen of the towns."\(^3\) Somewhat as an extenuation of the condition, Trevelyan says that their founder's books had been destroyed; their schools broken up; they were forbidden the Bible on which their faith rested; and that "persecution had forced them to become an unlearned body."\(^4\) He adds "it is not for the Catholic Church which deprived them of their literature to scoff at the Lollards as illiterate."\(^4\) The truth seems to be that the knights and others of power supported

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1 England in the Age of Wyclif, 338.
2 Ibid, 339.
3 Ibid. Also, Dawn of the Reformation, I, 268.
4 England in the Age of Wyclif, 348.
the Lollards in the attack upon clerical possession on a practical financial basis, but most of them did not hold the doctrinal points of the sect with sufficient fortitude as to suffer persecution and death. Lollardy, after all, was only an expression of general revolt against existing conditions;\(^1\) it was, however, revolt and would be more or less strongly approved by the insurgent party, yet when it was singled out for vicious persecution, the progressives would direct their efforts to some other line. It remains in any case that the first ten or twelve years following the enactment of the statute of burning, the power of the knights was probably the greatest nullifying agency, and that it was felt somewhat much longer.

Desperation is shown in the provisions of the statute of 1414. From this it is very clear that Lollardy was not being suppressed to the satisfaction of the Archbishop of Canterbury. This enactment did succeed in driving the movement to greater secrecy in operation, yet both before and after this date a most determined and stubborn resistance is shown in the "common people" themselves. The earliest good illustrations of this spirit are in the two attempts to bring Wyclif to trial when a veritable mob deliberately broke into the court room and stopped the trial. A form of resistance is shown in the case of several trials when the accused is permitted to say most inflammatory things of the church and clergy.\(^2\) When Wyche was burnt, people made pilgrimages to the place of execution as to that of a saint, and this despite the

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\(^1\) England in the Age of Wyclif, 352.
\(^2\) Thorpe's case in State Trials, I & II, 188, 189.
fact that he had been condemned and burnt by the church as a heretic, whereas no one was a saint until created such by the proper ecclesiastical authorities. Jack Sharp was a man of no rank, yet he had, with full knowledge of the possible consequences, circulated pamphlets in three of the most populous cities of the realm, and even had a considerable following. Arundel was resisted when he attempted to make an inspection of Oxford University.¹

There is little doubt that a lenient clergy accounts in part for the lack of enforcement of the law. Walsingham² complains that the bishops had been most negligent in allowing Lollards to become so active. He commends the bishop of Norwich for his zeal in threatening the offenders with death. It is reported that the vicar of All Hallows in whose parish the burning of Wyche had occurred, was arrested, apparently by order of the Mayor of London, because he had strewn spice powder with the ashes in order to get larger offerings from credulous people who mistook these sweet odors for the fragrance of the martyr's remains.³ It must be that the gross corruption of the clergy would tend to make them careless in most matters. Leniency on the part of the prosecuting ecclesiastics is surely shown in the very long trials of which record remains.⁴ Had they been eager for blood, they would not

¹ Wyche's trial in Fas. Ziz., 370-382. Capgrave, Chron. of Eng., says that one reckless fellow had dared to use an old image as firewood with which "cook his greens." This was before 1400.
³ Gairdner, Loll. and the Ref., I, 171, 172.
have allowed disrespectful controversy to drag out over several days. They hoped to secure recantation rather than death, in most cases at least. "The gentleness with which the movement was met is probably explained in the general high character and moral efficiency of the Lollard preachers."¹ This fact doubtless commended itself to the people, and had its effect upon the prosecutors, especially in the early part of the century. In July, 1411, the pope wrote a letter to the bishop of Ely in which he says that one William Denys, a friar preacher, has accused Bishop Alexander of Norwich of heretical tendencies, and claims that uncatholic doctrine is spreading in the diocese with the favor of the bishops.² The pope directs the bishop to call Denys and others and inquire into the matter.

When the head of the church ordered the remains of Wyclif to be burned, he took the elaborate precaution to request the aid of the Archbishop of Canterbury, of the Duke of Gloucester, of the royal councillors of Henry, and the officials of Coventry, London, Exeter, Winchester, Northampton, and Leicester.³ This proceeding against the dust of the founder of the sect was indeed very unusual, but the pope must have been aware of the strong sentiment in England against the action, or he would not have invoked so much aid.

"In the year 1431 the persecution ceased, at least for a long time; why, it is not very easy to explain. Probably out of sheer

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¹ Poole, Wyclif and the Movements for Reform, 115.
² Calendar of Entries in the Papal Register, VI, 299.
³ Ibid, VII, 23.
weariness on the part of the persecutors, and despair of ever fully attaining their object; while yet the strength of Lollardy was so far broken as no longer to threaten the very existence of the dominant Church.¹ The same writer says that Lollardy was not dead, but that its aggressive force was spent. To what extent "sheer weariness" and "despair" of obtaining the desired end affected the zeal of the inquisitor, is impossible to say, yet it is quite conceivable that it might have had no small effect, when it becomes so evident that Lollardy seemed to pop up at almost any time and any place.

Workman² emphasizes an influence of a somewhat negative character, the measure of which it is hard to take. He states that guilds, which came into prominence about the end of the fourteenth century supplanted Lollardy in a larger way. These were not the trade guilds, but were organizations of a religious, social, economic, nature. "They combined the advantages of a social club with the benefits of insurance, and assurance against fire, water, poverty, disease, and death. They provided dowers for portionless girls; they furnished school fees for promising lads; above all they made the "Merry England" of our fathers by reason of their incessant 'mumming', miracle plays, mysteries and the like."³ They were closely affiliated with the church, each organization associating itself with some "saint or chapel" for whose well being and equipment they had a care. The author says, "the guilds

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¹ French, Lectures on Mediaeval Church History, 321.
² Dawn of the Ref., I, 269, 270.
³ Ibid, 269.
crushed out Lollardy as something alien to their spirit, impossible for their working." It is frequently impossible to judge of the influence of a counter movement, because there is no way of knowing what would have happened if the opposing force had been absent. This argument of Workman's sounds plausible, however, and the guilds may have been the large negation which he makes them but this would be difficult to prove unless those organizations took some aggressive action against Lollardy. In the application of the law, this material is usable only as showing that there was no occasion for its exercise, if these organizations were as large a factor as they are represented to be. Bale, in relating the trial of Lord Cobham, says that on account of the law of 1414, "many fled out of the Lande into Germany, Bohem, Fraunce, Spain, Portugale, and into the weld of Scotland, Wales, and Yreland, working their many Marvels against this false Kingdom to long to wryte." Just as within modern times, men and women have left England in whole colonies on account of persecution, so they did in the fifteenth century. This, of course, put them beyond the pale of the statutes of England. It is impossible that the Hundred Years' War of the first fifty-three years of the century, and the War of the Roses extending over thirty-two more, could be waged without some result to Lollardy. There is no way of knowing to what extent there was a reaction either for or against the sect. Archbishop Chichley is said to have encouraged

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1 Workman, Dawn of the Ref., I, 270. The author states that a full discussion of the guilds will be found in Wylie, III, c., 75.

2 State Trials, I & II, col. 49.
Henry to renew the struggle in France, so that he might be free to persecute heretics while his chief was abroad. It would seem, however, that generally the war would operate in the interest of the movement rather than against it, since all the men and money and effort available would be needed to fight with arms and so could not be used against a religious body.

It is fairly clear that most of the influences just discussed were more or less effective in securing a mitigation of the harsher features of the statute against heresy. In the death of those of whom we have reliable account, we have the best evidence of the effective operation of the law, and if the word of Cobham, and Bale, and Trevelyon, is to be given any weight, it must have been applied more widely than the records indicate.

It goes without saying that officials of the church were most aggressive, both in securing statutes and in enforcing them. The defense of the faith was no small part of their work. Milman says that, "Henry IV to strengthen himself on his usurped throne, Henry V to obtain more lavish subsidies for his foreign wars, Henry VI from his meek and pious character entered into close and intimate alliance with the Church." There is little doubt that Henry IV gave his assent to the famous statute, in part at least thru a willingness to favor those who had had a large part in making him king. To what extent he felt himself obliged to the church, cannot be stated, but if the death of two offenders is to be taken as the measure of it, this influence was not so strong.

1 Geikie, The English Reformation, 60, 61.
2 Hist. of Lat. Chris., VII, 408.
after all. His son, Henry V, deliberately set about to secure the extermination of Lollardy by allowing Arundel to proceed against the most powerful man in the party, Oldcastle himself. It seems that Henry IV would never permit this. The determining influence in the case was the personal attitude of the monarch. The movement out in the open was not so strong again within the century, as it had been before the Oldcastle case came to a head. It is mere conjecture to speculate as to what would have been had Henry IV lived, but it seems safe to assume that had his policy of refusing to grant permission to attack men in high rank, been followed by Henry V, Lollard teaching would have become more and more the prevalent philosophy of life. Instead of this the movement was practically driven underground, and doubtless was deprived of the support of other persons of influence and rank. The personal animus of Henry VI is not so apparent. "That the new dynasty and the hierarchy stood or fell together," Poole says was the feeling at the time. There was at least some truth in this statement. Richard had persecuted the heresy only slightly, while the new house must take the responsibility for allowing the persecution, which, while in the absolute may not have been much, had the effect of suppressing a movement, considered by later generations to have been wholesome in its results.

The peculiar doctrine of lordship held by Wyclif and many of his followers could easily be construed to be an attack upon the social system. In a word, the doctrine seemed to be that only

1 Wyclif and the Movements for Reform, 116.
Christians according to the Lollard standard, were entitled to hold land. This was aimed especially at the clergy, and while there is little evidence that the Lollards ever designed an attack upon the lay lords, it seemed to make that class uncomfortable. Geikie says that Arundel, 1 in the effort to secure more as legislation in 1406, argued to Parliament, that the Lollards had already questioned the right of the temporal clergy to hold so much wealth, they would soon question that of the layman. If this was true, it had no perceptible result.

Doubtless the underlying cause of the Oldcastle episode was Lollard teaching, and it does appear to have been an attack against the government. The association of the name of Oldcastle with that of Richard II, the Jack Sharp rising, and earlier, even the Peasants' Revolt of 1381, seem to connect Lollardy with conspiracies against the government. There were in all, no less than half a dozen attempts at resistance, with all of which, in the public mind this heresy was associated, and whether this was true or not it was sufficient to array the government against the sect. There was a vague notion floating about that Richard II was not dead, and that Oldcastle was more or less in collusion with him, and consequently against the reigning House. Vickers says that Humphrey even punished a Lollard because of his opposition to the Lancaster line. 2

There is then to prevent the application of the law against heretics: the power of the knights, and the resistance of the

1 The Eng. Ref., 57.
2 Humphrey Duke of Gloucester, 224.
people themselves, as aggressive forces; a lenient and corrupt clergy, despair of complete subjugation, accused offenders fleeing to other lands, the rise of guilds, and distraction in the way of war, as negative influences. As a counter force working for the application of the statute there is: a strenuously persistent archbishop assisted by many equally ardent bishops, abbots, and other lesser ecclesiastics; a line of kings considerably devoted to the interests of the church by personal inclination, and bound to support it as a political policy; the fear on the part of some that Lollardy was after all a movement against lordship, and on the part of others that it was allied with the enemies of the Lancastrian House.

That both of these forces had some degree of success and some of failure has been indicated in the foregoing pages. There were relatively few deaths, but just by that number too many. The law had the desired result most surely, not when the obstinate offender was burned, but when he abjured. There is small doubt that the great mass of heretics honestly renounced their belief or feigned a recantation. In either case their aggressive influence was curtailed, and in the latter case their word would lose its value. John Purvey, in any society, could never have had the respect of his fellows, recanting as he did after years of earnest devotion to the principles of Wyclif; it must have been fear in his case which the people could not forgive. What was true of him was doubtless true of many others. The influence of such persons would be gone, neither party trusting them. Many who had never been strong in the cause just let the matter drop and found other interests. Many more held their views to themselves.
or congregated quietly and unobtrusively. Silence was what the church wanted, and was fairly well satisfied to secure that at whatever cost to the individual.

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CHAPTER IV

LOLLARDS—BACKGROUND OF MOVEMENT, FAITH OF SECT, GEOGRAPHIC EXTENT

We have seen what the law affecting heresy was in England in the fifteenth century, what individuals were affected by the law, and the influences which wrought for and against its application. The discussion would be incomplete without a word concerning some of the general aspects of the particular species of heresy against which the statutes were aimed. Chief among these are: the conditions of society in which Lollardy grew up, what the sect really taught, and its geographic distribution.

It is inconceivable that a movement of such magnitude as to call forth legislation, would be wholly without foundation in its genesis. It is not hard for the modern man to see much that justifies the general contentions of the Lollards. There seemed to be a wide-spread unrest, a good illustration of which is seen in the revolt of 1381. That a chief cause of the dissatisfaction lay in what were considered to be the abuses of the clergy, is seen, not alone in the activity of Lollards, but also in the attitude of the barons in urging the king to take possession of the property of the ecclesiastics, and devote it to the interests of the state. Lollards were antagonistic to the church on the doctrinal side; barons on the side of the government. One of the doctrines of the Lollards affected the church government, hence the two parties agreed at this point, but might disagree in others.

There is no better evidence of clerical abuse than is
expressed in the two statutes of Provisors and Praemunire of the fourteenth century. They show intolerable presumption, and perversion of right on the part of the pope in respect to the two matters which these laws attempt to regulate, namely; bestowal of benefice, and trial of criminals. This action was aimed at foreign influence as expressed by the church. It was also an effort to keep money at home, which thru the system of provisors and church trials, flowed in a constant and big stream to Rome. Now the contention was that too much money still remained in the control of the church. When it is seriously proposed again and again, that the clergy from their abundance, be required to meet deficits amounting to many thousands of pounds besides making their fairly regular contributions to the support of the government, we get some idea of the relative wealth of the class, without knowing absolute amounts. Add to this condition the fact of gross vice and criminality among the clergy and it is seen that there is at least cause for severe criticism.

There is little doubt that the long residence of the popes outside of Rome, most vitally decreased the power of the church as an impartial world power. Other nations came to look upon the papacy as a creation of France. The authority of the church on the continent was thus so weakened as never to be regained. The Great Scism scandalized the Christian world. However credulous and submissive the mass of the people had been and still were to the awe-inspiring mandates of Holy Church, they now argued that word purporting to emanate from Jesus Christ could scarcely rest with two fiercely combatant successors. It was inevitable that respect for the head of the church could no longer
be secured. Include with all this the gross corruption of the papacy itself, the ease, luxury, and self indulgence of many of the clergy, and it is easy to see why there was an unanswerable protest on the part of serious minded people. That there were extravagant demands is to be expected; that persons favoring these demands formed a small minority was the case, however.

What the Lollards believed is difficult to say, because the body of their faith was not the same throughout the century, nor was it the same with different individuals. In the case of a considerable number of persons, the whole or a part of whose trial a record is available, there are a few points in which there is fairly unanimous agreement. Chiefest among these, are the eucharist, image worship, auricular confession, pilgrimage, authority of the Scripture. Quite commonly they are examined as to their belief concerning the authority of the pope, clerical lordship, celibacy, and many other matters.

It seems best here to go back a little for a brief survey of the teaching of Wyclif himself. He has covered such a multitude of subjects, however, that the mere matter of enumeration would take more space than is allowed him here. He is clearly at variance with the church on the points of the eucharist, function and authority of the hierarchy, private confession, authority of the Scripture and of Christ, the keys, lordship, indulgence, pilgrimage, friars, the papacy, public preaching, non-residence, and image worship. Most of these subjects must be dismissed with a word or two; some require more.

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1 State Trials, I & II, col. 15-58; Fas. Ziz., passim.
Indirectly he disapproves non-residence of the clergy when he condemns the higher ecclesiastics in calling the lower ones away from their duties.\(^1\) He feels that the work of the priests does not include enough preaching, citing Christ, who preached much, as an example.\(^2\) The worship of images he contends is without value, and in direct violation of God's law as expressed in the first of the commandments.\(^3\) Pilgrimages, while in themselves not bad, are attended by such possibilities of evil in the mingling of sexes, as to be a source of danger.\(^4\) Private confession is good if the person is sorry for his sins, but there is also possibility of evil, for priests may "foyle hem many weies by coveitise and lecherie."\(^5\) Absolution and indulgence have elements of value when properly exercised; but ecclesiastics are so avaricious that they do not fulfil the condition. Instead of absolving as would be done in heaven, they do it as it would be done "binethe the erthe."\(^6\) They perform this sacred service for money;\(^7\) besides this only God can forgive and so the absolution of the priest is not needed.\(^8\) Concerning the doctrine of the keys he thinks it good if "they han cunynge to acorde with the keyes above."\(^9\) The pope, too, should teach that he binds men above the earth as God will and not for money, "but this wole

\(^1\) Arnold, Select English Works of John Wyclif, III, 335.
\(^2\) Ibid, III, 144, 334.
\(^3\) Works, III, 83.
\(^4\) Works, I, 81, 83.
\(^5\) Ibid, II, 87; III, 358.
\(^6\) Ibid, II, 77.
\(^7\) Ibid, I, 237.
\(^8\) Ibid, II, 199.
ho nevere teche biforn that Gabriel blowe his horn."\(^1\) Closely linked with these matters, is the discussion of the subject of endowment. He holds that the example of Jesus Christ should control in this, and that as Christ ordered his disciples to renounce property,\(^2\) so priests should be poor and not rich; he even goes so far as to say that priests misuse such funds.\(^3\)

Virginity, to Wyclif's mind was a higher state than that of the marriage relation,\(^4\) but since men and women were so weak, "God ordeyned priests in the olde lawe to have wyves and nevere forbode it in the newe lawe." But both St. Paul and Christ rather approved of it,\(^5\) since the apostles were married. He strikes a severe blow at the fundamental tenets of the church when he claims that the clerical function of ecclesiastics is nullified if they are living in unchastity.\(^6\) In many things, Wyclif's idea appeared to be that reform was needed and that it was possible without overthrowing the existing system; in some other matters, his conclusions, if put into practical operation, would most certainly have effected a complete revolution. With him, Scripture, and not popes and councils, was the ultimate authority. There is no need of orders, he contends; God's rule is enough for men.\(^7\)

True preachers have their commission direct from Christ;\(^8\) no word of man being sufficient guarantee for action affecting the well-being

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1 Works, III, 355.
2 Ibid, III, 233; I, 308.
3 Ibid, II, 213.
5 Ibid, III, 190.
6 Ibid, II, 224.
7 Ibid, I, 84.
8 Ibid, I, 185.
9 Ibid, II, 1.
of souls, unless it be approved by God. These seem, on the face of them to be innocent statements, but when we recall to what extent the power of the papacy alone had been exercised for hundreds of years, it is seen that they are revolutionary in character.

Wyclif's writings show that he did not at all times indicate the same belief on some subjects; he seems to be evolving certain material, and forming certain conclusions which are finally stated with clearness. The nature of the eucharist was a much debated subject, altho the church stood firmly for transubstantiation. Wyclif, in his earlier work, apparently held the orthodox view. He said that on several occasions Christ had stated that the host was God's body, and Wyclif deplores the heresy on the subject.\(^1\) If this ever represented his view, it was not for a very long period, surely, for most of his utterances are against it, and this forms one of the chiefest subjects on which he was attacked. That the bread is "God's body in figure"\(^2\)seems to be somewhat near his final belief. The host is Christ's body in the form of bread; "as Christ is God and man so this oost is breed and Goddis bodi."\(^3\) He could not believe that the mere words spoken by a priest could transform bread into the actual flesh of Christ and the wine into the actual blood.

Lordship was another subject on which Wyclif's plan would have overturned, not only the church but society in general. He said it is not right for "worldli men" to have

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\(^1\) Works, I, 248.  \(^2\) Ibid, II, 12.

\(^3\) Ibid, II, 42.
"meche goodis" and argued that poor men do now have "alle goodis of this world; but this havying is now hid, and it is unknown to men." This was his theory. In practice he seemed willing to submit to the existing order and to allow wicked men to control lands. His famous statement that "God ought to obey the devil" do now seems to mean that so long as morally bad men have control of things, Christians must submit to existing conditions and allow the wicked to rule them, but the actual operation of the plan would have turned all Christian men out of control of land and have installed real Christians in their stead. It was due to this doctrine in no small degree that the support of many persons of wealth was withdrawn from the Lollards. The very essence of his wrath he reserves always for friars, the hierarchy, and the papacy. The orders, he thinks, are like wolves because they fight eternally for money. That they do not follow Christ, and even prevent others from doing so; that they urge men to engage in war, in a most unchristian spirit; that they deceive and spoil the laity, are only a few of the criminal charges he brings against them. The prayers which they offer for the dead are valueless, and beside men should, while living, themselves pray to Christ. He advises that goods be withheld from them in

1 Works, I, 260.

2 His works do not give a good statement of his view on the subject. Poole in his Illustrations of the History of Mediaeval thought, 282 et seq. has a good discussion.

3 Works, I, 139.


5 Ibid, II, 42, 43.

order that their spiritual life may be improved.  

His works are full of most vehement attacks upon the hierarchy. His characterization includes all gradations of disapproval from mild rebuke when he says in his quaint English "devocioun wanteth in clerkis," to sweeping condemnation when he makes the charge that "these prelates that shulden be salt and make Goddis law savory. . . . thei ben now fresh, brotal and stinkinge, and turned al fro thes kinde of salt." He boldly asserts that they are false to the king and to the realm; that they are, covetous, simonical, gluttonous, proud, exclusive, worldly, avaricious, hypocritical, and that whereas they ought to be an example to their flocks "feith and good religion stendith in secular men and in preestis ben wordis withouton good dede." Nothing more incriminating could be said than that they exact large sums for probating wills and that they misappropriate endowments. The papacy he likewise fearlessly denounces, with the bold assertion that Christ and not the pope is the head of the Church. He says plainly that popes and prelates give "stoonys eddris, and scorpions, inside of thingis that shulden fede the soule." He refutes the claim that the pope is infallible in judgment,

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1 Works, II, 353.  
2 Ibid, I, 291.  
3 Ibid, I, 268.  
4 Ibid, III, 298 et seq.  
5 Ibid, III, 150, 151.  
6 Ibid, III, 156.  
7 Ibid, III, 315.  
8 Ibid, II, 189.  
9 Ibid, II, 36.  
11 Ibid, III, 305.  
12 Ibid, III, 342.  
13 Ibid, II, 155.  
14 Ibid, II, 231.
stating that Peter and the other disciples sinned and so the pope is not free from sin.\(^1\) Christ gave his life for many but antichrist (the pope) gives many lives for his "foule lyfe."\(^2\) He holds that Peter was a captain and not the head of the church.\(^3\) The same charges of avarice and corruption for money, goods, and position which he lays at the door of the hierarchy, he makes against the papacy. Some apply the epithet "abomination of desolatiion" to this institution which is the richest, most selfish, and most simonical in the world.\(^4\) It is needless to multiply instances of Wyclif's denunciation of the papacy.\(^5\) Several years before the end of his life he came to feel,\(^6\) if we may judge from what he said, that the papacy was an institution which was wholly deceptive, utterly useless, and corrupt beyong all hope of decency.

There is small wonder that so uncharitable an age condemned his works, and then disgraced itself by exhuming and burning his bones. It is most significant, and perhaps prophetic, that the

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\(^1\) Works, II, 415.
\(^2\) Ibid, I, 138.
\(^3\) Ibid, II, 412.
\(^4\) Ibid, II, 395, 396.
\(^5\) Almost every page contains some caustic attack upon the friars, hierarchy, or papacy, and some are filled with war upon all of them.
\(^6\) It is interesting that so untrammeled a scholar as Wyclif should feel the claim of Mediaeval mysticism. He shows, however, that he does in the interpretation of the word \(VIX\). He says that \(V\) means five, \(I\) represents Jesus, and \(X\) represents Christ. The whole shows that man shall be saved by the five wounds of Jesus Christ. Works, I, 337.
church with all its authority over the individual both before and after death, was unable to withstand the murderous force of this man's fearful denunciations. His claims must have found a strong approval with a great mass of people.

Lollardy was a varying quantity, and to speak of its creed is to speak of something which did not exist. This statement is not wholly correct because there must have been, and there were, several primary points on which the majority appeared to agree. Lollards were persecuted on account of their peculiar belief respecting some of the doctrines of the great founder. The eucharist, private confession, pilgrimages, worship of images and crosses, and clerical lordship, were the five or six points most commonly brought against the offenders. Besides these, celibacy, power of the keys, endowment, the papacy, the hierarchy, excommunication, and pay of the clergy were also common points of departure from the orthodox view. Aside from these still, were insignificant individual differences which do not need attention.

The importance given the eucharist in the Lollard trials was so large as to suggest the question whether any lives would have been lost.

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1 In Fas. Ziz., 360-369 is a body of doctrine which fairly represents their belief at about 1395. It consists of the "conclusions" which were embodied in their famous petition to Parliament.
been taken at all had there not been heresy on this one point. Of course this would not apply to such cases as Sharpe and others where there were complications. This subject recurred repeatedly in a single trial. There was some circumlocution, but it came out always, that transubstantiation was abandoned as unreasonable and absurd by all, the records of whose trials we have access to. The great majority recanted, it is true, but it is doubtless true also that they held the same views as before abjuration only they kept quite. Just what this belief on the subject was, is not always plain; some seemed to hold the view that the elements of the sacrament symbolized Christ’s blood and body; others that there was present apparently both the actual body and blood, and bread and wine. Oldcastle held it to be Christ’s body in the form of bread. Sawtre thought the same. So late as the time of Pecock, the attitude of Lollards, as he saw it, was most bitter against all of the sacraments and that of the eucharist in particular. He says, "thei not oonli scornen it, but thei haaten it, mys called it bi foule names, an wolen not come here thankis into the bodili chirche whilis thilk sacrament is halewed, tretid, and used in the masse." The positive scorn with which some persons treated the host is told by Capgrave where he narrates:

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1 This is shown in the trials of Thorpe and Cobham in State Trials, I & II, col. 15-58; and in several trials of Fas. Ziz.
2 State Trials, I & II, col. 40.
3 Fas. Ziz., 410.
4 Pecock, Repressor, II, 563. The subject is mentioned briefly or treated at length in many places in Fas. Ziz. Some of them are Purvey, 383, 385; White, 418, 423,424; Aston, 330; and in State Trials, Thorpe’s case, col.23-4.
that as the archbishop on a given occasion went into the street he saw a priest bearing the elements to a sick man. "The archbishop and othis many did reverens to the Sacrament, as it was her dute. Many of the puple in the strete turned her bakks, and avaled not her hodes, ne ded no manner of reverense." It is worthy of remark that when the king heard of this "he ded in this mater dew correccion, for many of hem were of his house." Wyclif argued against private confession on the ground that it gave opportunity for sensuality. Oldcastle held that he had direct access to God and so had no need for the services of a priest. When, as he was going to his death, a priest offered to shrieve him he scorned the suggestion with contempt and said that even if Paul and Peter were there he would not confess to them.

The famous "conclusions" of 1395 contained a protest against this custom, and White is charged with being heretical on this point.

Fundamental to the Lollard view of image worship, pilgrimages, and worship of the cross, was the superiority of God as an object of adoration, over all material things and localities. The worship, preposterous as it seems, was a bone of contention throughout this period. Cobham said boldly that it was nothing less than idolatry to worship such lifeless objects, and that the only value of the images was to remind the worshipper of the suffering

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1 Chron. of Eng., 288. This is about 1403.
2 State Trials, I & II, col. 50.
4 Ibid, 422. See also 351, 352.
of Christ and the good lives of the saints. The conclusions of 1395 contain the prevailing Lollard view. Wyche, White, Thorpe, and others were infected with the false doctrine. It is not probable, however, that many approved of the irreverence of the wag who said, "these images might warm a man's body in cold if they were set upon a fire." Pecock considers it worth his time to refute the heresy of image worship in about forty pages. Thorpe answers the accusation that he had misconstrued the doctrine of pilgrimages, in a long discussion in which he teaches that all persons are on a pilgrimage, either to bliss or pain. Oldcastle gives the same interpretation and adds that he is not in any way indebted to holy places and saints and relics, that he refuses to go to any shrine that "it were best ye swept them bayre from Copwebs and Duste... or els to bury them faire in the Ground as ye do other aged Peple which are God's Ymages." Sawtre was condemned on this point. Pecock combats the Lollard

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1 State Trials, I & II, col. 40.
3 Ibid, 270.
6 Workman, Dawn of the Ref., I, 254, 255, and note I, 255.
7 Repressor, I, 136 et seq.
8 State Trials, I & II, cols. 26, 27.
9 Ibid, col. 40.
10 Ibid, col. 45.
11 Fas. Ziz., 409.
contention in a lengthy argument. The worship of the cross is scarcely a separate subject, and yet it was very prominent in itself. The heretical view was set forth in the conclusion of the sect at the end of the fourteenth century. It is to be expected that Cobham was vehement in his denunciation of the doctrine and determined in his personal attitude.

It would appear that the Lollard doctrine of lordship was not prominent, if we may judge from the treatment the subject receives in the records of trials. The conclusions and the trial of Taylor, indicate a rather weak verdict against the orthodox view, but there must have been a most powerful and controlling sentiment at the time of Pecock, as he gives long and much involved arguments deduced from the history of the church. It seems that the Lollards rather restricted their teaching on the subject of lordship to apply to rich clergy and endowments and such things. Pecock, in fact, argues the matter from this point of view. The very first article in the conclusions is a protest against endowments, and both Purvey and White were against the existing

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1 Repressor, I, 175, 273.
2 Fas. Ziz., 364, 365. For Taylor cf. 413; for Sawtre 408.
3 State Trials, I & II, col. 45.
4 Fas. Ziz., 363.
5 Ibid, 423.
6 Repressor, I, 275; II, 415.
7 Fas. Ziz., 360.
8 Ibid, 393.
9 Ibid, 419.
The papacy and the clergy were severely attacked by Wyclif's followers. Purvey was obliged to confess that he had been guilty of accusing priests of evil living.\(^1\) The most awful condemnation was given by Cobham. To his examiners he said of the papacy, "he and you together maketh whole the great Antichrist, of whom he is the great Heade; yow Byshops, Priestes, Prelates and Monkes, are the Body and the beginning Friars are the Taile, for they couuer the Filthiness of you both with their subtyle Sophistrye."\(^2\)

Pecock was a Lollard on the point of celibacy,\(^3\) his statement being practically theirs, namely, that marriage was authorized by Scripture. White held that the priesthood was corrupted thru enforced celibacy\(^4\) and he, a cleric himself, had even dared to marry.\(^5\) The Register of Papal Letters\(^6\) is loaded with dispensations legitimatizing candidates for ecclesiastical offices many of whom are sons of the clergy. That the priesthood did not observe the vows of celibacy, is a well established fact; whether the Lollard contention that the abolition of the vow would have the been corrective, might be open to criticism.\(^7\)

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\(^1\) Fac. Ziz., 403.
\(^2\) State Trials, I & II, col. 45.
\(^3\) Repressor, II, 375.
\(^5\) Ibid, 420.
\(^6\) Cal. of the Entries in the Papal Reg., VII, 6 and passim.
\(^7\) Capgrave, Chron. of Eng., 280.
It is out of the question to attempt to name all the minute differences or to discuss all the chief ones; a few more ought to be at least mentioned, however. They thought that prayer for the dead was unavailing;¹ that infants need not be baptized;² that the mendicant orders, against which Wyclif railed, should be suppressed;³ that Scripture and not the church was the final authority;⁴ that there should be much more preaching;⁵ that the clergy was not entitled to tithes.⁶ Many questions would logically arise as a result of their fundamental tenets, not all of which would appear in any one trial; in fact of some of them there is a single available record, but it is surely the application of the general principle to a particular case. Pecock gives only a passing notice to a few other subjects. Among these are: prayer to saints,⁷ use of costly equipment for churches, as bells and banners;⁸ oath-taking;⁹ and capital punishment.¹⁰

If there is much evidence indicating that the Lollards were in any way arraigned against the state, it does not appear in the

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¹ Fas. Ziz., 363.
² Ibid, 421, and Capgrave 280.
³ Fas. Ziz., 372, 328, 413, 419.
⁴ State Trials, col. 43, and Repressor, I, 5-51.
⁵ Fas. Ziz., 409, 390.
⁶ State Trials, col. 28, 29.
⁷ Repressor, II, 561.
⁸ Ibid, 562.
⁹ Ibid, 563, 564.
¹⁰ Ibid, 564, 565.
records of the trials. The nearest approach to an attack upon the state was the effort of Oldcastle to forestall the state in an attack upon the heretics. Stubbs claims that they went about teaching perverted social views under the guise of religion. Ramsay says that the armed resistance under Oldcastle was treasonable, "but of any prior design of a revolutionary or socialistic character-- apart from the movement for disendowment of the church-- the reader may be assured that no evidence whatever is forthcoming." Trevelyan says that he has been able to find among the records of trials in the years from 1382 to 1520 "only one case of a Lollard accused of holding communistic theories, and not a single case of a Lollard charged with stirring up the peasantry to right their social wrongs." Workman says that the Lollards lacked scholarship when Wyclif died, and that they were led into excesses thru ignorance. The tenor of Pecock's elaborate argumentation implied ignorance on the part of his opponents. It is to be expected that many changes would come; it is likewise to be expected that without a leader they would become radical. The wonder is that they were as conservative as they were.

The geographic extent of Lollardy can be determined only by examination of local sources of information. From material available as sources for this discussion, it is possible only to

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2 Lanc. and York, I, 178.
3 England in the age of Wyclif, 340.
4 Dawn of the Ref., I, 273 et seq.
make statements of isolated cases and of presumption. For instance Bale states that Parliament could not meet at London at a given time, because the advocates of Cobham's cause were too strong in that city. This is a record of events following the trial of Oldcastle. It would indicate either that Cobham was personally popular, or that the principles for which he stood were approved by a large number of persons in London. Capgrave says that 50,000 persons were expected to come out of London to join Cobham in the attack upon the king. If even half of that number of men capable of bearing arms could have been mustered in the city at that date to support Lollardy, the sect must have been exceedingly strong there. Capgrave is also authority for the boast of the party that at about 1414, they could muster 100,000 persons to fight for their cause, and for the statement that at about 1395 they were bold enough to post on the doors of Westminster and St. Pauls, a vicious attack upon the church.

The period from 1395 to that of Cobham's trial is about eighteen years. From what has been said, it seems logical to conclude that the heretics were strong in London within this period, and that it was even the center of their influence. Over what territory the 100,000 men were distributed is not stated at all. Thorpe refers to Hereford, Purvey, Repyngdon and others

1 State Trials, I & II, col. 48.
2 Chron. of Eng., 307.
3 Ibid, 303.
5 State Trials, I & II, col. 20.
who are known to have lived, at the time to which Capgrave refers, in the western region about Leicestershire and Herefordshire. Oldcastle was hidden in this section and that further west. That the people were favorable to him, and that physical features made a good hiding place seems true. It appears to be a safe deduction from all this evidence that the movement was at least tolerated about Wyclif's old home, about Worcester, and Hereford, and that it had many advocates in those sections. Further than this there is no basis for so much as presumption. Trevelyan refers to various more or less local records which substantiate the inferences just stated but he gives much more. He is able to trace the source of the movement sufficiently to construct a map showing the sections of territory over which Lollardy had spread itself by the time of the Reformation.

"During this important period, there were cradles of Lollardy in the neighborhood of Leicester, the west of England, and the capital." Swinderby and Purvey were intimately associated with Wyclif himself. Swinderby recanted in 1382, and went to Coventry for a year, when, after more persecution, he went further west. Shortly after Wyclif's death, Purvey also went to the west. There these two men had built up a constituency that had strength to continue long after they had gone. "According to the Leicester monk every second man you met in these parts was a Lollard."

1 Because his work is so complete I have thought best to give a brief review of his discussion found in Eng. in the Age of Wyclif, 313-350, adding a few other sources.
2 Eng. in the Age of Wyclif, between 352 and 353.
3 Ibid., 313.
5 Eng. in the Age of Wyclif, 319.
While this is not to be taken literally, it doubtless does show a powerful sentiment for Wyclif's doctrines.

For some reason not wholly explainable, most of the leaders of the heresy found their way to the west country. The cause may have been the antagonism of bishops in the east; it may have been the laxity of those in the west; and it may have been that the rough west land afforded better hiding places, or all of these conditions may have contributed to the result. It was not long, however, until all of these more prominent leaders had abjured, but not until their doctrine had found permanent acceptance by a large number of people.

Stury, Clifford, Latimer, and Montague were prominent among Lollard leaders in London. It was these men who agitated the question of taking church property, and who directed the petition to Parliament in 1395. It was against this band of Lollards that Richard swore vengeance, if they gave any more trouble, when he hurried back from Ireland at the call of Arundel. They were frightened into silence by the wrath of Richard. According to Trevelyan, at the close of the century Lollardy had a large following in Leicester, Northampton, Worcester, Hereford, Gloucester, Berkshire, Wiltshire, Sussex, and London and its immediate vicinity, with a sprinkling at Canterbury.

That the movement was increasing is shown in the desperate

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1 Accounts of these recantations are found in Fas. Ziz., passim.
2 Trevelyan, Eng. in the Age of Wyclif, 327.
3 Capgrave, Chron. of Eng., 259, 260. He gives the date of 1393 or 1394. He is probably in error in this.
4 England in the Age of Wyclif, map on 352.
effort of Arundel and others to secure legislation to suppress it. That the law of burning was ineffective is shown in the pathetic admission of the clergy of their utter inability to control the situation.\(^1\) They lamented that the spiritual jurisdiction, authority, power, policy, laws, rites, ceremonies, curses, keys, censures, and canonical sanctions of the church were had in utter contempt,\(^2\) and that on account of Wyclif's opinions, and the influence of Cobham, there were contentions, rumors, tumults, uproars, slanders, schisms, dissensions, disunions, differences, discords, harms, sects, seditions, perturbations, unlawful assemblies, variance, strife, fightings, rebellions, rufflings, and daily insurrections.\(^3\) To admit its own powerlessness to suppress the movement was a humiliation too deep to be suffered except in extreme need. After admission of such inadequacy to cope with the situation, and such complete and varied characterization of the movement, the only conclusion is that Lollardy was making head against the forces which for a thousand years had snuffed out similar error. To ascribe to it such dreadful results is sure evidence at least that it was not local in extent.

From Bristol the heresy spread southward through Somerset.\(^4\) As late as 1447\(^5\) in Somerset a priest was driven away from his charge, and the people performed the necessary functions of the

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\(^1\) State Trials, I & II, col. 48.

\(^2\) Ibid, col. 48.

\(^3\) Ibid.

\(^4\) Trevelyan, Eng. in the Age of Wyclif, 340.

\(^5\) Correspondence of Bekynton, II, 340, 341.
church themselves, to the great scandal of the bishop. The writer implies that these things are being done with the knowledge of the Duke himself. In the east counties, Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk, and Lincoln, the movement made its way retarded somewhat, apparently, by the vigilance of the bishops. Special campaigns against heretics in the east section proved effective in driving them to secrecy but by no means in eradicating the trouble. It appears from the records that some of these sufferers were convicted on the most trivial account. Some were charged with studying the New Testament; one with being able to read well; another had committed the awful crime of having "a brass pot standing over the fire with a piece of bacon and oatmeal seething in it" within the Lenten season.¹

In a note appended to his map, Trevelyan says that the record of pardons granted Lollards indicates that some of those who participated in the Oldcastle rising came from "Yorks, Beds, Chester, Derby, and County of Oxford."² He states, too, that Mr. J. H. Wylie had called his attention to another document which adds Rutland, Herts, Salop, Devon, Southampton, and Dorset, to the region in which it is rather implied that Lollards were found.

The evidence is fairly conclusive that Lollardy had extended itself over most of southern England, and well up along the east coast. Just what localities within this area were not affected by it, would be difficult to say. Cornwall, Kent, Surry, Hampshire, --o--

¹ Trevelyan, Eng. in the Age of Wyclif, 342.
² Ibid, map at 352.
and Cambridge appeared to be most nearly free. There was none of it apparently in Wales, and particularly none in the northern counties of England. It seems to have been strongest in Leicester, Hereford, Gloucester, Somerset, Northampton, about London, Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex.¹

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¹ See map in England in the Age of Wyclif at page 352.

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