

CHAPTER VII.

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THE reign of Richard is passed over very rapidly, and with little loss to the purpose of this book. It has been my effort to trace and set forth all those important acts of the people and the kings, which in any manner influenced or enforced the granting of the Magna Charta. Many other acts of historical importance, while interesting, are necessarily omitted, for unless they had some pronounced influence upon the subject, they would only tend to make this one volume many.

Richard did nothing that in any way influenced the granting of the great charter, nor was anything done during his reign that can be said to have a particular influence upon it. He was not in England when his father died, and went there only to be crowned and to raise money with which to make an expedition to the holy land. The means he took to raise this money are not

particularly creditable to him, for he sold civil offices and dignities, as well as churches and ecclesiastical benefices, but he did not levy any tax. When he obtained this money he went away, and that is the last England saw of him for four years, when he returned to stay but two months. His reign lasted nine years, and of this time he was in England in all but four months. Consequently there was a complete suspension of all proceedings upon laws and charters during his reign. The government his father had built was too strong to waver. His courts were too firmly established to go to pieces themselves, so things remained peaceful and quiet till John came upon the scene, which he did in May, 1199. The following seventeen years are years full of interest and excitement and years that will never be forgotten.