

England, at this period, was a poor and almost depopulated country; devastated by the Plague that carried off more than half its people, and often left once flourishing towns a total solitude. Crime went unpunished: rapine, violence, slavery and pauperism prevailed. The people, crushed by their woes, became victims of warrior Knights and Barons, and the enormous levies of the King for his wars. The Nation had dwindled to less than two million souls: and the land, in large part, was dense forest; the haunt of beasts of prey, and the armed and titled robbers, often fierce as they.

From their smoky and squalid huts, meanly clad in wool or leather, and scantily fed, the people looked to the Court and Aristocracy, issuing from castles of little more comfort, in vain for relief; but, as the scourged slave in his dungeon, they brooded on their wrongs, and wondered if the Baron's act that in 1215 had wrested from weak King John the vaunted Magna Charta, could minister to their relief against these Barons and Royal oppressors.

Such is the truth only in part; the full details of the actual social condition of our ancestors at this period, in their depths of pollution, are too repulsive for repetition.

Court, Aristocracy and People were alike more barbarous than the Franks under Charlemagne, (A. D. 800); and like the modern contrasts of Abyssinian to Western Civilization, when compared with the luxurious grandeur and glory of culture of Saracenic Spain, or of Venice and the other Republics of Italy.

Of the antecedents of this first Patentee we know nought beyond the recitals in the Patent. Neither is he knighted or graced with rank or coronet: like many more he won estates and broad Manors, with their dignity, in the lands of the Border in Scotland, yet unsubdued, the reward then frequently given for successful service in the army of the King. It may well employ the diligent Antiquary to trace the general Lineage from this early and fortunate soldier down to the first emigrant of our name for America: WILLIAM DODGE, of 1629. ✓

His research in England would be for the books of Pedigrees and records of the old settled families who claim descent from this same Cheshire stock. Although our name is said often to occur in the Lowlands, of which one instance will be given further on, it is not probable that the Patentee ever entered upon his Scotch Barony and Lordship.

In that lawless age, when Scotch National hostility to the English was implacable by reason of constant invasions; it would have re-