

## CHAPTER V

### THE BLACK DEATH AND THE PEASANTS' REBELLION

#### ECONOMIC CHANGES OF THE LATER FOURTEENTH AND EARLY FIFTEENTH CENTURIES

**27. National Affairs from 1338 to 1461.**—For the last century or more England had been standing with her back to the Continent. Deprived of most of their French possessions, engaged in the struggle to bring Wales, Scotland, and Ireland under the English crown, occupied with repeated conflicts with their barons or with the development of the internal organization of the country, John, Henry III, and the two Edwards had had less time and inclination to interest themselves in continental affairs than had Henry II and Richard. But after 1337 a new influence brought England for the next century into close connection with the rest of Europe. This was the "Hundred Years' War" between England and France. Several causes had for years combined to make this war unavoidable: the interference of France in the dispute with Scotland, the conflicts between the rising fishing and trading towns on the English and the French side of the Channel, the desire of the French king to drive the English kings from their remaining provinces in the south of France, and the reluctance of the English kings to accept their dependent position in France. Edward III commenced the war in 1338 with the invasion of France, and it was continued with comparatively short intervals of peace until 1452. During its progress the English won three of the most brilliant military victories in their history, at Crécy, Poitiers, and Agincourt, in 1346, 1356, and 1415. But most of the