visions so repealed shall remain in force until the sub­stituted provision or provisions shall come into operation by force of the last Act (§ 6). Numerous interpretations of particular words are contained in Acts of Parliament, either general, as “ month,” “ county,” “ land,” and other words in 13 and 14 Vict. c. 21, § 4, or for the purposes of the Act, as “ settlement ” for the purposes of the Settled Land Act, 1882.

The earlier Acts are generally simple in character and language, and comparatively few in number. At present the number passed every session is enormous ; in the session of 1885 it was 80 general and 190 local and personal Acts. Without going as far as to concede with an eminent legal authority that of such legislation three- fourths is unnecessary and the other fourth mischievous, it may be admitted that the immense library of the statutes would be but a trackless desert without trust­worthy guides. Revision of the statutes was evidently regarded by the legislature as desirable as early as 1563 (see the preamble to 5 Eliz. c. 4). It was demanded by a petition of the Commons in 1610. Both Coke and Bacon were employed for some time on a commission for revision. At times Consolidation Acts in the nature of digests of law (generally amending as well as consolidating) were passed, such as the Merchant Shipping Act, 1854, and the Criminal Law Consolidation Acts of 1861. The most important action, however, was the nomination of a revision committee by Lord Chancellor Cairns in 1868, the practical result of which has been the issue of an edition of the *Revised Statutes* in eighteen volumes, bringing the revision of statute law down to 1878. This edition is of course subject to the disadvantage that it becomes less accurate every year as new legislation appears. An index to the statutes which are still law is published about every three years by the Council of Law Reporting.

The principal statutes may be classified under various heads according to the matter with which they deal. It should be remembered at the same time that many of them—Magna Carta, for example—might fall with equal correctness under more than one head. A division, con­venient, if not exhaustive, would be into historical, con­stitutional, legal, and social.

*Historical.—*Under this head would come those Acts which to a greater or less extent mark important epochs in the national history, such as the Statute of Rhuddlan, the Acts of Union defining the relations of Wales, Scotland, and Ireland to England, the Act of Settlement, the Stamp Act of 1765—the proximate cause of the revolt of the American colonies,—the Acts abolishing the slave trade and the corn laws, and those defining the position of dependencies, such as the Act for the Better Government of India, 1858, and the British North America Act, 1867.

*Constitutional.—*The principal Acts of this class would be Magna Carta, the statutes *De Tallagio non Concedendo* and *De Praerogativa Regis* and those dealing with mort­main and treason, the Petition of Right, the Bill of Rights, the Septennial Act, the Royal Marriage Act, the Mutiny, Militia, Naval Discipline, and Foreign Enlist­ment Acts, and the Acts affecting the parliamentary franchise from the time of Henry VI. to the Redistri­bution of Seats Act, 1885. Under this head too might be placed the numerous Acts dealing with the question of religion. Some of the more interesting of these are the *Articuli Clem,* the Statutes of Provisors, the Acts of Henry VIII. abolishing monasteries, the Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity of Henry VIII., Elizabeth, and Charles II., the Toleration, Catholic Emancipation, Tithe Commuta­tion, Church Discipline, Public Worship Regulation, Irish Church, and Scottish Patronage Abolition Acts.

*Legal.—*The most important of this class are perhaps

the Statutes of *Quia Emptores* and *De Donis,* the Statutes of Uses and of Wills, the Statutes of Limitation, the Statute of Frauds and its amendments, the Fines and Recoveries Act, the Conveyancing, Settled Land and Settled Estates, and Married Women’s Property Acts, and the Acts for the amendment of procedure, *e.g.,* the Chancery Amendment, Common Law Procedure, Judica­ture, and Appellate Jurisdiction Acts.

*Social.—*Social legislation (other than mere sumptuary laws) is of comparatively modern introduction. Among earlier instances are the Statute of Labourers of Edward III. and the Poor Law of Elizabeth. More modern examples are the Factory, Public Health, and Artisans’ Dwellings Act, and, perhaps greatest of all, the Education Acts. Besides these there are the Acts dealing with patent, copyright, summary jurisdiction, friendly and building societies, trades unions, savings banks, theatres, commons preservation, and agricultural holdings. Acts which have trade for their special object are the Bank Charter, Merchant Shipping, Bills of Lading, Bills of Exchange, Crossed Cheques, Factors, Stamp, Licensing, Bankruptcy, and Trade Marks Acts.

The chief editions of the statutes are the *Statutes of the Realm* printed by the queen’s printers, Ruffhead’s, and the fine edition issued from 1810 to 1824 in pursuance of an address from the House of Commons to George III. The safest authority is of course the *Revised Statutes.* Chitty’s collection of statutes of practical utility is a use­ful compilation. Among the earlier works on statute law may be mentioned the readings on statutes by great lawyers, such as the second volume of Coke’s *Institutes,* Bacon’s *Reading on the Statute of Uses,* Barrington’s *Observations on the more Ancient Statutes from Magna Carta to the 21 Jac. I. c. 27* (5th ed. 1796), and the Introduction to Blackstone’s *Commentaries.* Among the later works are the treatises of Dwarris (2d ed. 1848) and Sir P. B. Maxwell (2d ed. 1883) on the interpretation of statutes, and Sir H. Thring’s *Practical Legislation, or the Composition and Language of Acts of Parliament.*

*Scotland.—*The statutes of the Scottish parliament before the Union differed from the English statutes in two important respects, —they were passed by the estates of the kingdom sitting together and not in separate Houses, and from 1367 to 1690 they were dis­cussed only after preliminary consideration by the Lords of Articles. An Act of the Scottish parliament may in certain cases cease to be binding by desuetude. “To bring an Act of Parlia­ment like those we are dealing with ” (*i*.*e.*, the Sabbath Profana­tion Acts) “into what is called in Scotch law the condition of desuetude, it must be shown that the offence prohibited is not only practised without being checked, but is no longer considered or dealt with in this country as an offence against law” (Lord Justice General Inglis in Bute’s Case, 1 *Couper's Rep.,* 495). Acts of the imperial parliament passed since the Union extend in general to Scotland, unless that country be excluded from their operation by express terms or necessary implication.

*Ireland.—*Originally the lord deputy appears to have held parliaments at his option, and their Acts were the only statutory law which applied to Ireland, except as far as judicial decisions had from motives of policy extended to that country the obliga­tion of English statutes. In 1495 the Act of the Irish parliament known as Poyning’s Law or the Statute of Drogheda enacted that all statutes lately made in England be deemed good and effectual in Ireland. This was construed to mean that all statutes made in England prior to the 18 Hen. VII. were valid in Ireland, but none of later date were to have any operation unless Ireland were specially named therein or unless adopted by the Irish parliament (as was done, for instance, by Yelverton’s Act, 21 and 22 Geo. III. c. 48, i.). Another article of Poyning’s Law secured an initiative of legislation to the English privy council, the Irish parliament having simply a power of acceptance or rejection of proposed legislation. The power of the parliament of Great Britain to make laws to bind the people of Ireland was declared by 6 Geo. I. c. 5. This Act and the article of Poyning’s Law were repealed in 1782, and the short-lived independence of the parliament of Ireland was recognized by 23 Geo. III. c. 28. The application of Acts passed since the Union is the same as in the case of Scotland.