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THE BEGINNING  
OF  
THE MIDDLE AGES





THE BEGINNING  
OF  
THE MIDDLE AGES

BY THE LATE

R. W. CHURCH, M.A., D.C.L.

SOMETIME DEAN OF ST. PAUL'S, RECTOR OF WHATLEY  
FELLOW OF ORIEL COLLEGE

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## PREFACE TO THE ORIGINAL EDITION

THE present volume must be considered as an introduction or preface to the series of "Epochs of Modern History," rather than as an integral member of the series. The other volumes are narratives, and enter into detail. This one is a mere general sketch, necessarily one of the barest outline, faint and vague where they are full. My aim has been little more than to disengage the leading lines in the history of five most important and most confused centuries, and to mark the influences which most asserted themselves, and which seem to have most governed the results as we see them in subsequent history. In this summary view I have confined my attention mainly to the West, saying little of the great nations of later times in the North and East—Scandinavia, Poland, Hungary, Russia. The reason is, that the course of modern history was determined in the

West, and what happened in the North and East took its start and course from what had happened and had taken permanent forms in the nations of the West and South.

In compiling this slight sketch, in which notes and references are not allowed, I need not say that I am under obligations of the most varied kind to others. Every one who writes of these times finds much of his work done for him in Gibbon, Merivale, Hallam, Milman, Guizot, in the older French books, such as Fleury's great compilation, the *Ecclesiastical History*, and in the lively and picturesque narratives of the later ones.\* I have been much assisted by the first two volumes of Sir F. Palgrave's prolix but very instructive *History of England and Normandy*. Besides these, we have a younger race of English historical scholars, who have amply kept up the reputation of their predecessors for honesty of research and breadth and vigour of thought, and have removed the reproach that though English historians were skilful architects, they were careless of the quarries from which their stones came, and easy in passing slovenly and unsound work. The debt is great which all students of the early times of Europe owe to Mr. Freeman, Professor Stubbs, and Mr. Bryce, whose remarkable *Essay on the Roman Empire* placed in a clear light an important but

obscure and ill-understood link of connexion between the ancient and modern world. I have tried to remember, as far as I could, that no one can really take in and judge of the meaning of events, without going from even the best secondary authorities to the ultimate, and, if possible, contemporary sources of our information. In doing this, and in all other ways, it would be unpardonable not to say how much I have been helped by the laborious and sagacious works of recent German and French scholars. For everything connected with the early condition and the wanderings of the new races, I have referred to Zeuss, Dahn, and to Pfahler's Handbook of German Antiquities, for the Germans, and to Schefarik and Jirecek for the Slaves. I have found especial assistance in a series of works suggested by Leopold Ranke, in which the materials of history for the times of Charles the Great and his followers are collected, compared, and arranged with admirable skill and completeness, by writers of great ability, Bonnell, Abel, Dümmler, and others—the *Annals of German History* (*Jahrbücher der Deutschen Geschichte*). The care, the comprehensiveness, the resolute tenacity of research, the fearlessness of trouble in investigating, shown by the distinguished writers who have lately in Germany thrown themselves with characteristic interest on the early history of Europe,

are, besides the value of the results, a perpetual lesson of conscientious faithfulness and industry. We in England owe much to the diligence and sagacity of German investigators of our own history, like Dr. R. Pauli. And the French, who are usually credited with the power of brilliant generalisation, and also with incapacity to resist its temptations, are beginning to tread on the heels of the Germans, and to remember that they are the countrymen of the old Benedictine scholars and critics of St. Maur.

In a sketch of this kind I have not pretended to be careful as to scholarly accuracy in the forms of names. This is a book in which explanations cannot conveniently be given as to the reasons of change from old-fashioned ways of writing them ; and for the most part I have written them as they are commonly written in our popular histories. Students when they begin to enter into the details of history for themselves will find the reasons in many instances for a change from the traditional form, and also the frequent difficulties of making it.

R. W. C.

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- 337 Division of Empire between the three sons of Constantine.
- 353 Reunion under Constantius the survivor.  
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 376 Goths driven by the Huns into the Empire.  
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- 382 Emperor Gratian (375-383) last *Pontifex Maximus*, i.e. head of the heathen state religion.
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	500 Clovis defeats Burgundians.
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	511 †Clovis. Fourfold division of <i>Frank kingdom.</i>
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	631 Dagobert, sole king of Franks. Pipin the Elder, mayor.
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	638 Division of Frank kingdom, <i>Austrasia and Neustria</i> , pp. 103, 104.
	632 †Mohammed. Saracen conquests begin, p. 129.
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	640 Alexandria taken. Conquest of Egypt
641 †Heraclius. Constantine III. Constans II.	647-709 Conquest of Africa.
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668 Constantine IV. (Pogonatus.)	668-690 Theodore of Tarsus, archbishop of Canterbury, p. 84.
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711 †End of family of Heraclius, p. 131.	711 <i>Battle of the Guadalete.</i> End of Gothic kingdom, p. 98.
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	755-756 Lombard war: Franks assist the pope, p. 115.
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	771 †Carloman: <i>Charles, sole king,</i> p. 141.
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780 Constantine VI. and Irene.	786-809 Haroun al Rashid, caliph.
797 Constantine VI. deposed by Irene.	787 Images restored at seventh general council of Nice. Danish ships first mentioned in A. S. Chronicles.
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A. D. 802	<i>East.</i> Irene deposed. Nicephorus I.	A. D. 800 <i>West.</i> <i>Charles, king of the Franks.</i> Coronation of Charles as Emperor at Rome, by Pope Leo III. (795-817), p. 150. Egbert, king of Wessex, king of England †836, p. 211.
811	Stauracius. Michael I.	811 Northmen begin to alarm the Franks, p. 146.
813	Leo V. the Armenian.	814 Bulgarian kingdom begins.
820	Michael II. the Stammerer.	†Charles the Great.
829	Theophilus.	823 Arab conquest of Crete; 827 and of Sicily.
		833 The "Lügenfeld": deposition of Louis by his sons, p. 183.
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		840 †Louis the Pious, p. 179.
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842	Michael III. the drunkard.	843 <i>Partition treaty of Verdun</i> , p. 186.
		845 Danes sack Paris, p. 200.
		846 Saracens sack Rome. Pope Leo IV. Danes first winter in England.
		858 <i>Nicholas I.</i> Pope †867.
		861-866 Count Robert checks the Danes, p. 200. Bulgarians converted, p. 127.

<i>Emperors.</i>		<i>Events.</i>	
<i>East.</i>	<i>West.</i>	A. D.	
867 Basil I. the Macedonian. ( <i>Basilian</i> , or <i>Macedonian</i> line to Constantine X. †1054), p. 133.	875 Charles the Bald.	868	Eighth general council. Photius deposed.
		870	Treaty of Meerssen. Partition of Lotharingia.
		871	Danes conquer Mercia: attack Wessex. Alfred, king of England †901, p. 221.
		876	Rollo in the Seine, p. 202.
		877	†Charles the Bald, p. 194.
		878	Alfred defeats the Danes. Peace of Wedmore, p. 219.
		879	Boso, king of Provence or Arles, p. 195.
	881 Charles the Fat.	884	Charles the Fat unites all the Frank realms; deposed †888.
		885	Great Danish siege of Paris, p. 200.
		888	Count Odo, p. 200.
	888-924 Berengarius (?).	900	Rodolf, king of Transjurane Burgundy.
	889-893 Guy (?).		Edward, king of England, 900-924, p. 223.
	892-898 Lambert (?).	904-999	Degradation of the Papacy in the hands of Italian nobles.
	896-899 Arnulf.	911	<i>Treaty of St. Clair-sur-Epte; creation of Normandy</i> , p. 203.
	901 Louis III. of Provence.		†Louis the Child, king of Germany, <i>last of the Eastern Carolingians</i> , p. 194.
866 Leo VI. the Philosopher.		912	Rollo baptized, p. 203. Conrad of Franconia, king of Germany, p. 245. Charles the Simple, king of (West)
866 Alexander and Constantine VII. (Porphirogenitus)			

<i>Emperors.</i>		<i>Events.</i>
A. D.	<i>East.</i>	A. D.
916	Berengar †924.	918
919	Romanus Lecapenus.	919
920	Const. VIII. (usurpers).	922
928	Five claimants.	923
935	Constantine VII. restored.	925
959	Romanus II.	926
		936
		937
		943
		954
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Henry the Fowler, king of Germany, p. 245. (*Saxon line.*)  
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 Robert, Duke of France, Count of Paris, crowned King.  
 Robert slain. Rodolf of Burgundy, king of France.  
 Charles deposed, restored, dies in prison.  
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*Otto, king of the Germans.* Slave and Hungarian ravages from 902, p. 245.  
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 Murder of William Longsword, D. of Normandy.  
 Richard the Fearless †996.  
 Lothar, king of France at Laon †986, p. 206.  
 Otto defeats Hungarians at *the Lechfeld* near Augsburg, p. 246.

<i>Emperors.</i>		<i>Events.</i>	
A. D.	<i>East.</i>	A. D.	<i>West.</i>
963	Nicephorus II. (Phocas.)		
969	John Zimisces †976 (regent?). Basil II ("Slayer of the Bulga- rians"), †1025. Constantine IX. †1028 (brothers). (End of the Mace- donian line.)	962	<i>Otto I. the Great.</i>
		973	Otto II.
		983	Otto III. †1002. (End of Saxon line.)
955-956		958	Alliance of Dukes of Normandy and Paris against Carolingian kingdoms.
958		961	Edgar, king of England †975, p. 224. Otto in Italy: defeats Berengar II. p. 248.
962			<i>Otto</i> crowned king of Italy, p. 249.
966			Micislav, king of the Poles, baptized, p. 256.
967			Boleslav II. king of the Bohemians, baptized.
972			Geisa brings Christianity into Hungary, p. 247.
978			Æthelred the Unready †1015, p. 226.
986-987			Louis le Fainéant, <i>last Western Caro- lingian</i> , p. 207.
987			<i>Hugh Capet, duke of Paris, elected king of France</i> , p. 207.
997			St. Stephen, king of Hungary, spreads Christianity †1038, p. 247.
999			Gerbert, Pope Sylvester II. †1003, p. 261.
1013			Danish conquest of England by Swend. †1014, p. 225.
1016			Edmund Ironside, p. 226.
1017			Cnut, king of England †1035, p. 226.

BEGINNING  
OF  
THE MIDDLE AGES

INTRODUCTION

MODERN HISTORY is separated from ancient by two great and unparalleled catastrophes; and from the changes occasioned by these catastrophes in the materials and conditions of society in Europe modern history took its beginnings. One was the destruction of the Jewish State and temple. The other was the break-up of the Roman Empire. These two catastrophes, though divided by a considerable interval of time, and altogether different in their operation, were in various ways closely combined in their effects on the state of the world. They were catastrophes of the same order: the overthrow and passing away of the old, in things most deeply concerning human life, that the new might come. Without them that new settlement or direction of human affairs, under which the last fifteen centuries have been passed,

would have been inconceivable and impossible. The fall of Jerusalem was the evident close of a theocracy which, up to that time, had for ages counted on a divine guarantee, and which looked forward, without doubt, to ending only in the consummation of a Messianic triumph. It was the apparent extinction of the visible kingdom of God on earth: the doom pronounced by the course of events on claims and hopes which, to those who lived under them, seemed the most sure of all things. The fall of the Roman Empire was the overthrow of the greatest, the strongest, and the most firmly-settled State which the world had ever known: the dislocation and reversal of the long-received ideas and assumptions of mankind, of their habits of thinking, of the customs of life, of the conclusions of experience. The one cleared the ground for the Christian religion and the Christian Church, to which ancient Judaism, if it had still subsisted, unhumiliated and active, with its wonderful history and uncompromising pretensions, would have been a most formidable rival. The other made room, and prepared materials, not only for new nations, but for new forms of political and social order, then beyond all possibility of being anticipated or understood; for the new objects and ambitions, the new powers and achievements, which have distinguished modern times, at their worst, as well as at their best, from those of all ancient civilisations.

The world in the West, as known to us in history, was surrounded by a vague and unexplored waste of

barbarism. During the first three centuries of the empire all in the South seemed settled, all in the North was unstable and in movement. In the eyes of civilised mankind there were in the world two great empires of very unequal force: the eternal empire of Rome, secure as nature itself, and the Asiatic Empire of the East, at one time held by a Parthian, then by Persian dynasties, often troublesome, but never a real rival to Rome for the allegiance of the nations around the focus of civilisation, the Mediterranean Sea. India was still wrapt in mystery and fable. Outside the Roman and Persian borders, northwards and north-eastwards, there was a vast, dimly-known chaos of numberless barbarous tongues and savage races, from which, from time to time, strange rumours reached the great Italian capital of the world, and unwelcome visitors showed themselves in the distant provinces, on the Rhine and the Danube; and contemporaneously with the beginning of the empire had begun a shaking of the nations, scarcely perceptible at first, but visibly growing in importance as time went on. But *there*, in what seemed to the majestic order of Rome a mere seething tumult of confused and unimportant broils, was maturing the fate of the empire, and the beginnings of a new world. It was the scene of that great movement and displacement of the masses of uncivilised mankind, to which the Germans have given the name of the "Wandering of the Nations" (*Völkerwanderung*). Long before it can be traced in history,

this perpetual shifting of races, accompanied by the extermination of the weaker and longest-settled by the stronger new-comers, had been the rule of the northern world. The causes which produced it became soon after the beginning of our era unusually active, and it went on for centuries, till the great social and political changes which it produced in the West brought it to a final condition of stable repose. An impulse, apparently, had been given from the heart of Asia, which added force to the natural struggle among the barbarian tribes for better and more convenient abodes. When the movement came to its height, it began to be sensibly felt on the frontiers of the empire. About the middle of the second century it called for serious efforts on the Danube; towards the end of the third it overleaped the barrier of the Rhine. By that time fresh internal changes had taken place in the Teutonic tribes themselves, first known to the Romans. Their early names become merged and lost in new ones; smaller bodies are fused together into larger ones. Tribes first heard of on the shores of the Northern Sea and the Baltic, Goths, Vandals, Herules, Burgundians, Lombards, next appear, after an interval of obscurity, on the Euxine, the Danube, the Rhine; instead of the Chauci, the Cherusci of the campaigns of Drusus and Tiberius, or the Marcomanni of M. Aurelius, there appear great confederacies, sometimes with old names like the Suevi, sometimes with new, as the Alamanni of the Upper, and the Franks of the Lower Rhine.



In 250, the Goths, who in their migrations had come in contact with the Huns, and had fled before them, were becoming dangerous on the Danube ; a Roman emperor, Decius, was defeated and slain by them. During the whole of the third century the confederacy, then known as that of the Alamanni, was putting to the severest strain the efforts of emperors like Maximin, Claudius, Aurelian, and Probus to keep them from the Upper Rhine ; and they ended by establishing themselves there, in spite of the victories, in the following century, of Julian and Gratian. In the year 240, the Germans of the Lower Rhine, no more known as the Chatti, Chamavi, Bructeri, and only in rhetoric as Sigambrians, appear for the first time as the Franks, more furious, more enterprising, and more terrible in their ravages in Gaul than even the Alamanni. And the Burgundians, once settled between the Oder and the Vistula, then in their migrations driven westward before the Goths, pushed themselves in between the Alamanni and the Franks. By the fourth century the presence of the barbarians had become recognised in its real proportions as a new and alarming feature in the condition of the world. Constantine, Julian, Valentinian, Theodosius, could defeat them, and attempt to terrify them by bloody punishments, as Constantine exposed two Frank kings to the wild beasts, in the amphitheatre at Treves ; but the Roman victories were in vain. The advance of the barbarians was as certain and powerful as the rising of the tide.

The Roman State, which was thus assailed without, was slowly undermined from within. The gloomy pages of Tacitus present the picture of a mighty empire, established apparently on foundations which could not be moved, yet wrung and tortured by evils for which it seemed hopeless to look for end or remedy. The recovery and health of this great but deeply-diseased body seemed inconceivable; yet its subversion and disappearance seemed equally so amid the then forces of the world. But, as time went on, its fashions of corruption and vice increased in variety and enormity; a general degradation of character and a lowering of level, in thought, in strength of action, and in customary morality, set in; political decay, ill-success, and disaster grew greater and more familiar to men's minds. And the remarkable thing is, that neither exceptional virtue nor exceptional wisdom from time to time in its chiefs could overtake the increasing degeneracy and danger. There were no better rulers than the Antonines; there were no abler ones than Trajan and Hadrian. Nothing could be nobler than the integrity and public spirit of soldiers and administrators like Julius Agricola, the type, we cannot doubt, of other great and high-minded Roman governors, the shame and condemnation of the crowd of base and cruel ones. And there is no more majestic monument of human jurisprudence than the system of law which grew up in the Roman law-courts. But the springs and principles which govern society had become so fatally tainted that no

temporary reaction towards good, and no concurrence of beneficent institutions, availed to turn back the strong tide of evil tendency.

Still up to the end of the fourth century nothing gave reason to anticipate the actual overthrow of that last and highest concentration of civilised life conceivable at the time, which the genius of Julius Cæsar had imagined, and which Augustus had made a reality. It was still looked upon as part of the eternal order of the world. Serious and eventful changes had come about in the course of three centuries. The one visible danger to the empire, the increasing pressure of barbaric tribes on the north and east, was more and more felt. It was becoming certain, not only that Roman armies might meet with ill-success in barbarian wars, but that barbarians were losing that awe of the empire which had kept them at a distance, and were becoming more audacious in their enterprises. There was an undoubted loosening of the bands, the customs, the political and civil instincts, the forces of authority, which had kept the empire together. Among the greatest innovations was the division of power between two or three emperors, and, even more serious still, the creation of a new and permanent capital, necessarily the rival of the hitherto unique centre of the power and majesty of the empire. But even with two emperors, and two or more seats of government, the constitution and unity of the empire seemed unimpaired and indestructible, whatever trials it might

have to undergo. While the Roman Empire lasted on its old footing, no idea could have seemed more wild to most men than that it should ever cease to exist, or that society could be possible without it; and it was still apparently standing on its ancient foundations at the end of the fourth century.

But with the fifth no one could mistake the signs of change. It began to be evident that what had up to that time seemed the most incredible of all things was about to happen, and was in fact taking place. The empire, in one portion of it, was giving way. The invaders could no longer be kept from Italy, from Gaul, from Africa, from Rome itself. Where they came and as long as they chose to stay, they became the masters; they took, they left, they spoiled what they chose. They began to settle permanently in the territories of the western portion of the empire. Finally its political power, especially in the West, began to pass into barbarian hands. Barbarian chiefs accepted or assumed its offices, chose or rejected, set up, deposed, or slew, its shadowy and short-lived emperors, and quarrelled with each other for the right to nominate to the name and title of Augustus. Like an army whose line has been cut, the different portions of the empire found their enemy interposed between them, and the West, detached from the East, and enveloped and pressed upon by its foes, offered a field where the struggle went on with the best chances for the invaders. All that had been done to accommodate the defensive resources of the empire to new

and increasing dangers had been in vain. Desperate efforts, and efforts of the most varying and opposite kinds, had been made to uphold the State, by Diocletian, by Constantine, by Julian, by Theodosius. Fresh and elaborate organisation of the public service, civil and military; adoption of the growing popular religion; return to the old one; careful examination and revision of the law; an elastic policy towards the barbarians, which, according to the emergency, sometimes resisted and beat them back, sometimes tempted them off, sometimes took them into service, sometimes accepted and tried to educate or incorporate them as recognised allies of the empire—all these expedients, adopted and carried out by rulers of strong and commanding character, failed to avert what seemed to be the irresistible course of things. All that they succeeded in doing was to attract and divert to the East what was most characteristic of the later empire, and to narrow the area over which its old traditions of government could be maintained. But the original seat and source of Roman greatness was left to its fate, and the phenomenon which the West more and more presented was that of the joint occupation of its lands and many of its cities by Teutonic and Latin, that is, by barbarian and civilised, populations. The barbarians were the masters, without as yet taking the trouble or having the knowledge to be rulers. The older civilised inhabitants were neither subjects nor equals, but only in all trials of strength distinctly the weaker. And yet their civilisa-

tion, maimed and weakened as it was, and naturally suffering loss more and more under such rude and unfavourable conditions, was never finally extinguished. Even in its decay and waste it presented a contrast, felt by both parties, to the coarseness of barbarian manners and the imperfection of barbarian resources, and excited, when the races continued together, the interest, the unconscious or suppressed admiration, and at last the emulation, of those who had done so much to crush and extirpate it.

The fifth century opened with an increased activity and spirit of enterprise among the barbarian tribes which had been pressing on the empire, and had even gained a footing within its bounds. Three great waves of invasion may be distinguished: foremost and nearest were the Teutonic races; behind them came the Slaves; behind them again, and pressing strongly on all in front, were the Turanian hordes from the centre of Asia, having in their front line the Huns. In 395 the great Theodosius died. His death closed a reign of sixteen years, the last reign of the ancient undivided empire, in which its old honour was maintained in arms and legislation. His death marks the real, though not the nominal, date of the fall of the united empire, and of the extinction, from henceforth inevitable, of the Western division of it.

As soon as he had passed away the change set in with frightful rapidity. He left two young sons, Arcadius and Honorius, under whose names the empire was governed in the East and West respect-

ively ; he left a number of generals and ministers, all of provincial or barbarian origin, to dispute among themselves for the real power of the State ; and not only on all the borders of the empire, but within its provinces, there were tribes and leagues of barbarians of many names, often beaten back and terribly chastised, but ever pushing forward again in fresh numbers, and now in some cases under chiefs who had learned war in the Roman service. The name of Alaric, the Visigoth, rises above those of the crowd of barbarian chiefs who tried their fortune in this moment of the weakness of the empire. The Visigoths, or West Goths, were a Teutonic tribe which had fled for refuge from their implacable enemies, the Huns of the Tartar steppes, into Roman territory. They had received reluctant and doubtful hospitality from the Imperial Government in the lands south of the Danube ; and through vicissitudes of peace and war, friendship and treachery, they had become better acquainted with their Roman neighbours and hosts than any of the barbarian races. First of the Teutonic races, they had in large numbers accepted Christianity ; they had learned it from their Roman captives, or at the Court of Constantinople, and at last from a teacher of their own race, Ulfila, the first founder of Teutonic literature, who in translating the Bible gave the barbarians for the first time a written language, and invented for them an alphabet. The Court religion at the time was Arianism, the doctrine of the Egyptian Presbyter, Arius, which denied the true

Godhead of Jesus Christ. It was an important and formidable departure from the belief of the Christian Church, as to the chief object of its faith and worship ; the first of many which marked these centuries. From Constantinople the Goths adopted it. On the death of Theodosius, Alaric conceived the idea of carving out for himself a kingdom and an independent State from the loosely-connected provinces of the empire. He invaded first Greece, and then Italy. Alaric was a soldier not unworthy of his Roman masters. For a time he was confronted and kept in check by another general of equal genius for war, like himself of Teutonic blood, Stilicho, the Vandal, the trusted soldier of Theodosius, who had left him guardian of Honorius, the Western emperor. Stilicho, after putting forth for the last time the vigour of a Roman general on the German frontier, concentrated the forces of the State for the defence of Italy, leaving the distant provinces to themselves. The garrisons were withdrawn from Britain. Goths and Huns were enlisted and disciplined for the service of the empire which their kinsmen were attacking. Against Stilicho's courage, activity, and coolness, Alaric vainly tried to force his way into Italy and to Rome. At Pollentia, on the Tanaro, south-west of Milan, Stilicho, on Easter Day 403, gained a bloody though incomplete victory. Alaric saved his broken army by a daring and successful retreat, but only to meet with another overthrow at Verona. At Florence (405) Stilicho foiled another and fiercer Gothic or Slavonian



irruption into Italy under Radagais. But the Western empire was not to be saved. Rightly or wrongly, the victorious and perhaps ambitious soldier awakened the jealousy of rivals and the suspicions of his feeble master. Stilicho, Alaric's most formidable antagonist, had, for whatever reason, more than once allowed his foe to escape, and with the obscure and tortuous policy common to the time kept open negotiations with him, even at the moment of his own success. He had even proposed to the Roman Senate to buy off Alaric's hostility by honours or payments of money. Stilicho's enemies persuaded Honorius of his general's designs against the State; a mutiny was created against Stilicho in the army; his friends were murdered; and finally Honorius consented to condemn and to put to death, on the charge of treason, the great chief who within five years had won for him the three greatest of recent Roman victories. Then the invaders sprang in on every side. Alaric, hanging on the north-eastern frontier among the Julian Alps, had been watching the intrigues of the Italian Court, now removed from Rome and Milan to the protection of the marshes of Ravenna. These intrigues were to deliver him from his great enemy. On the 23rd of August 408 the head of Stilicho fell under the executioner's sword. In October Alaric was under the walls of Rome.

He came three times in three successive years; and twice he retired. The first time he spared the city for an enormous ransom. The second time he

imposed on the city and empire a puppet mock-emperor, whom a few months afterwards he degraded as unceremoniously as he had set him up. Alaric's brief stern words were remembered as well as his deeds. To the hermit who bade him in the name of religion retire from the great city, he replied that it was God's will and call that drove him on. To the Romans who threatened him with the numbers of their population—"the thicker the hay," was his answer, "the easier mown." When, astounded at his enormous demands, the Romans asked him, "what then would he leave them?" he answered "your lives." But the third year, 410, the imperial city, the sacred, the inviolate, which since the almost mythical visitation of Brennus and his Gauls had only once seen a foreign enemy from her walls, and never within them, beheld the amazing, the inconceivable sight—her streets, her palaces, broken into and sacked by barbarians whom of late days she had, indeed, seen among the mercenaries who served her, but whom of old she knew only as the slaves who fought with one another to make her sport in her gladiatorial shows. The end of the world must have seemed at Rome to have come when the city of Cæsar and Augustus, with its gold, its marble, its refinement, was given over to the Gothic spoilers. She might have seen her revenge in the death within a few weeks of the assailant who had first dared to break through the vain terror of her presence, and the idle guard of her walls.

But the blow had been struck, though Alaric had died who struck it. From that day forth the Teutonic nations, whom the Romans classed together under the common name of barbarians, looked upon the lands of the Western portion of the empire as given over to them in possession. From that day forth their chiefs arrived on the scene, not only to play the customary game of war, not merely to ravage and plunder, but to carry out the idea of Alaric—to become kings, to win kingdoms, to create nations. For a while the new condition of things seemed incredible to those accustomed to the old Roman central sway. There were fierce, even for a time successful, attempts to dispute and resist the change. The name and the authority of the Roman emperor had too fast a hold even on the Teutonic mind to be more than weakened: the Roman Empire lasted on more than fifty years in the West; and at Constantinople it had always to be reckoned with as a power which in strong hands was a formidable one. How strong was still the idea of the empire, and how obstinate the customary awe and respect for its authority, is shown in two phenomena which are continually appearing in these times of confusion. One is the weight with which the imperial name, even when borne by so weak an emperor as Honorius, was seen to press upon local rebellions on the part of subjects of the empire. In spite of his personal insignificance, in spite of the deep humiliations of his reign, in spite of the destruction of Stilicho, the Gothic

conquest, the sack of Rome, no rival emperor, and there were seven in the course of five years, could maintain his title against the son of Theodosius. The other is, that the barbarian chiefs who attacked the empire asked for and were proud of its honours and titles. Alaric, King of the Goths, insisted at the same time on being recognised as an officer in the Roman service, the Master-General of Illyricum. His successor, Athaulf, while conquering in Gaul, and Wallia, while conquering in Spain, professed to restore these provinces to the obedience of Honorius. But nevertheless the great revolution, which was to override all resisting forces, and the deeply-planted habits of ages, had come. From Alaric and his victorious policy two things date, which speedily altered the condition of the Latin world. One was the intrusion and interference of the barbarian power as a recognised political element in the Roman State. The other was the planting within its borders of new nations, each of them growing in its own way into an independent State, with its own interests, and customs, and policy, and coming less and less to acknowledge, even in the most shadowy form, the authority or even the existence of the empire in the West.

## CHAPTER I

### TEUTONIC SETTLEMENTS IN THE WEST. FALL OF THE EMPIRE IN THE WEST. (406-476)

THE impulse given by the enterprises and successes of Alaric showed itself in the invasion of the Western provinces by various Teutonic tribes, who henceforth held possession of what they invaded. On the last day of the year in which Stilicho destroyed the Vandal Radagais and his mixed army before Florence (405), another portion of the Vandals, with their confederate tribes, Sueves, Burgundians, Alans, found their way into Gaul, perhaps, as Gibbon suggests, across the frozen Rhine, partly ravaging, partly settling, partly pushing to further conquest, but seldom returning to their former seats. In the year in which Alaric set up and then degraded his mock-emperor Attalus, after the siege of Rome (409), Sueves and Vandals, a part of this host, under Hermanric, crossed the Pyrenees into the rich and peaceful province of Spain. Three years after the sack of Rome and the death of Alaric, the Bur-

gundians (413), who, in company with the Vandals, crossed the Rhine in 406, had occupied the left bank of the middle Rhine; thence they gradually spread westwards and southwards into Gaul; and the result, after many vicissitudes, was the foundation of a kingdom of the Burgundians under Gundachar (411-436), Gundeuch (456-463), and the more famous Gundobad, the lawgiver (472-516). It was the first of the many Burgundies that were to be, fixing a famous name in the new geography of the West, and impressing a distinct character on the population which bore that name. No limits and no political conditions varied so much as those of the "Burgundies," kingdoms, dukedoms, counties, provinces, long striving after an independence, which could not be maintained. The first Burgundy of Gundachar and Gundobad comprised the valleys of the Rhone and the Saone, with western Switzerland and Savoy, from the Alps and the Jura as far as the Durance, and even at one time with Avignon and Marseilles. Almost at the same time a confederation, or rather two confederations, of German tribes, whose name was to fill a yet greater place in history, the Franks, who had finally settled from the Main along the lower Rhine, and in what is now Belgium, appear defending the Roman frontier against the invading Vandals. They had long disturbed the empire by their ferocity and spirit of adventure. They had by this time gained room within its borders, and become its allies; and they even suffered severe losses in fighting for it.

But, as the defence of the empire became hopeless, they soon followed the invading movement, and pressed on to the valleys of the Moselle, the Meuse, the Scheldt, and the Somme, and the plains and cities of what is now Champagne. And immediately after the death of Alaric, who had sacked Rome and occupied Italy, the Goths, under their new leader Athaulf, a name which has been softened and Latinised into Adolphus, adopted the momentous resolution of relinquishing Italy, and seeking their fortune in the West. Bearing with them the treasures of Alaric, they marched into Gaul; they occupied step by step, in the course of the century, nearly the whole of the South between the Rhone, the Loire, the Mediterranean, and the ocean; and they poured into Spain, driving before them or subduing the earlier invaders, Vandals, Sueves, Alans. The Roman city of Toulouse became their capital. Before the middle of the fifth century, the kingdom of the West Goths had become the mightiest among its neighbours. It stretched from the Loire to the mouth of the Tagus and the Columns of Hercules. It possessed the great cities of Aquitaine, Narbonne, Bordeaux, Toulouse. It had absorbed the last fragment of independent Roman Gaul, Auvergne. In Spain it had cooped up the earlier invaders, the Sueves, into the mountains of Asturias and Gallicia. It had driven the Vandals into Africa. It had rapidly assumed an organised shape, with its peculiar polity, its half Roman legislation, its national councils. It

had replaced the empire in the West, and it seemed as if a State had been founded which was to unite in one Gaul and Spain, and take the lead in the new order of things; as if a Gothia or Gothland was to supplant the name of Gaul or Rome. This magnificent prospect was not to be fulfilled. The lands north and south of the Pyrenees were not to continue united, and the Goths were not to be the leaders of Western Europe. But from the Goths of Toulouse sprang a line of kings which ruled in Spain, and shaped its fortune and history till the Mahometan Conquest (711). It was to be long indeed before the kingdoms, as we know them, of France and Spain began to appear above the confusion; but the first rude courses of the foundations on which, through such various changes, they were to rise were laid in the Teutonic movement, in which Alaric led the way.

Another invasion, more fatal in its consequences to the empire, though itself transient as a conquest, was the consequence of the Gothic invasion of Spain. The Vandals in Spain, the forerunners of the Goths, pressed by the combined power of the Gothic kingdom and the Roman provincials, and tempted by the invitation of a Roman governor, Count Boniface, who had been stung into treason by the intrigues at Ravenna, passed into Africa under Genseric, the most crafty, the most perfidious, the most ruthless of the barbarian kings, and of all of them the most implacable foe of Rome and its civilisation. The late repentance and the resistance of Count Boniface



could not avert the Vandal conquest and the desolation of Africa. The death of St. Augustine during the siege of his city, Hippo, in 430, and the surprise of Carthage in 439, mark the date of the ruin of Roman civilisation on the southern shore of the Mediterranean; a civilisation that had retained more unalloyed than that of any other province the peculiar Latin type, the roughness and original force of the Latin mind and character. The Vandal conquest, short-lived as it was compared with other barbarian occupations, dealt a far heavier blow than they to the weakened stability of the empire. It was not only the severance from it of a great province, a second home of Latin letters and habits; but during the long reign of Genseric (429-477) Rome and Italy were made acquainted with two new forms of suffering. To the ordinary plagues of barbarian invasion, were now added starvation and piracy. Africa had been, with Egypt, the great storehouse from which Italy had drawn its usual supplies of corn; Africa was now in the hands of a deadly enemy, Egypt in those of the rival and unfriendly Eastern emperor. And next, the possession of Carthage suggested to Genseric the ambition of being master, not of Africa only, but of the Mediterranean. The Vandal fleets ravaged and tormented the Mediterranean coasts, like those of Haireddin Barbarossa and the Barbary rovers of later ages. "Whither shall we sail?" asked Genseric's pilot. "Sail to those, with whom God is angry," was the reply.

Thus in the first half of the fifth century the empire was broken up in the West. Everywhere out of Italy, in Gaul, in Spain, in Africa, the new comers were the masters. The separation from the empire, at the beginning of the fifth century, of the island of Britain, and of the Continental province which afterwards bore the same name, neither of which was again to be united to it, rather marked than contributed to the decline of Rome. In the anarchy of the West, the soldiery in Britain, or those of them who had not been withdrawn by Stilicho, long accustomed to claim a voice in the choice of emperors, set up a succession of candidates for the empire, one of whom, with the famous name of Constantine, disputed for a time the imperial title with Honorius, and the possession of Gaul and Spain with the Goths (407-411). The Goths, professing to serve the empire, united with the soldiers of Honorius, and overthrew the last Western Constantine, and, after him, all the other provincial rivals of Honorius, who, in the universal confusion, ventured to strike for power (411-416). But the empire finally retired from the island of Britain. An obscure interval of troubled independence succeeded; and in the middle of the century Jutes, Saxons, and Angles were beginning their conquests.

Yet the empire, as has been said, in the opinion and feeling of men, still lasted under these strange conditions. The Teutonic invaders for the most part professed to acknowledge its existence and

authority, to respect its laws, though claiming to be themselves exempt from them, to serve it after their own manner as its officers and soldiers, to call themselves its "guests," or its "confederates," even in the possessions which they had either seized, or acquired by a forced sale. Its civil administration still went on, at least for the Roman population, side by side with the customs and royal jurisdiction of the military occupiers. The position of the Teutonic conquerors and settlers was analogous to that of the early English conquerors in India, under the Mogul Empire. They were in it, but not of it. Its paramount title and supremacy were supposed, where these did not come into collision with the interests of the conquerors. Its sanctions, when convenient, were sought for, and made useful to give legitimacy to what the sword had won. In stronger hands, and under more favourable circumstances, the empire might have lasted on, as in the East; and, suiting itself to its altered circumstances, have perhaps recovered its ground, by incorporating and assimilating to itself, according to its old favourite and successful policy, its new subjects, who, with all their fierce vigour, were not unwilling to be civilised. But in the course of the century, two things, a fresh and more tremendous irruption of barbarians, and a fatal innovation in domestic policy, finally shattered for the time the imperial system in the West. The irruption was the invasion of Attila and the Huns. The innovation was the adoption, as a settled custom, of what Alaric

had thought of as a temporary expedient,—perhaps, had only done in mockery. A foreign soldier, master of the military force of the empire, claimed, and was allowed, to make and unmake the emperors of the West.

The invasion of the Huns was the appearance of entirely new actors in the great tragedy. Between the Roman world and the German invaders there were affinities, though they might be subtle and obscure, of race, of language, of thought, and moral ideas; and there had grown up between them the long familiarity of alternate war and peace. They had even met half-way in religious ideas, and Goths, Vandals, Burgundians, under the form of Arianism, had embraced Christianity with sometimes fanatical zeal. But the Huns were not like Goths and Vandals, a Teutonic or even a Slave people. They belonged to that terrible race whose original seats were in the vast central tableland of Asia; who under various names, Huns, Tartars, Mongols, Turks, have made it their boast to devastate for the sake of devastation, and from whom have sprung the most renowned among the destroyers of men, Attila, Genghiz, Timour, the Ottomans. It is a race which long experience has shown to be less than any other in sympathy with Western civilisation, and more obstinately intractable to its influence. The Huns themselves, impelled westwards by the wars which agitated the vast deserts stretching from the Volga to China, had driven before them in frantic terror the many tribes of the German

stock which had shaken the empire ; and they had been for some time hovering on its eastern frontier, taking part like other barbarians in its disturbances and alliances. Emperors paid them tribute, and Roman generals kept up a politic or a questionable correspondence with them. Stilicho had detachments of Huns in the armies which fought against Alaric ; the greatest Roman soldier after Stilicho—and, like Stilicho, of barbarian parentage—Aetius, who was to be their most formidable antagonist, had been a hostage and a messmate in their camps ; and he had followed a common practice of the time when he invited the Huns to the frontiers of Italy to support a candidate for the imperial dignity. About 433, Attila, the son of Mundzukh, like Charles the Great, equally famous in history and legend, became their king. Attila was the exact prototype and forerunner of the Turkish chiefs of the house of Othman. In his profound hatred of civilised men, in his scorn of their knowledge, their arts, their habits and religion, and, in spite of this, in his systematic use of them as his secretaries and officers, in his rapacity combined with personal simplicity of life, in his insatiate and indiscriminate destructiveness, in the cunning which veiled itself under rudeness, in his extravagant arrogance and audacious pretensions, in his sensuality, in his unscrupulous and far-reaching designs, in his ruthless cruelty joined with capricious displays of generosity, mercy, and good faith, we see the image of the irreclaimable Turkish barbarians who ten cen

turies later were to extinguish the civilisation of Eastern Europe. The attraction of Attila's daring character, and his genius for the war which nomadic tribes delight in, gave him absolute ascendancy over his nation, and over the Teutonic and Slavonic tribes near him. Like other conquerors of his race, he imagined and attempted an empire of ravage and desolation, a vast hunting ground and preserve, in which men and their works should supply the objects and zest of the chase. The one power on earth was to be the terror of Attila's name. The one penalty of disobedience and opposition was to be the edge of Attila's sword. He humbled and made subjects of the barbarians round him. He insulted and ravaged the Eastern empire up to the walls of Constantinople. He revived the old feud with the Visigoths. Then he picked a quarrel with Valentinian III. and the Court of Ravenna. He claimed some Church spoils, said to have been stolen. He claimed Honoria, the sister of the emperor, as his betrothed bride. Keen and shrewd in his views of policy, he entered into an alliance with Genseric and the Vandals of Africa, who were to attack Italy. And at last, affecting to be the soldier of the empire against the rebellious Visigoths, at the head of the ferocious horsemen whom for years he had been gathering round him in the plains between the Theyss and the Danube, where his wooden city and wooden palace were built, he burst with the speed and terror of a tempest on central and western Europe.

He passed through Germany into Gaul, sweeping along with him in his course, as confederates or subjects, a mixed multitude of many races, and visiting with impartial havoc and slaughter the Roman cities and the Gothic settlements. Romans and Goths forgot their own quarrels in their panic and distress. The ablest of Roman generals, Aetius, and the most powerful of the Gothic kings, Theodoric of Toulouse, joined their forces, and were only just in time to save Orleans, and prevent the host of the Huns from bursting the barrier of the Loire. Attila retired and waited for them in the plains of Chalons, plains made by nature, and used in our own days, for the encampment of great armies. The wild and tremendous battle of Chalons stayed the advance of the Huns into Gaul. But it did not stay the raging torrent from pouring over Italy. There was no one to relieve Aquileia as Orleans had been relieved. Aquileia perished, and many of its sister cities of the north of Italy. This absolute destruction of homes and cities, and the searching and unsparing keenness of the sword of Attila, from which there was neither refuge nor mercy, drove the miserable remnant of the population of the mainland to seek their only escape in the islands and lagoons. The fugitives knew not what they were preparing; out of this scattered remnant and the lagoons which sheltered them, Venice arose. Attila advanced towards Rome. The conqueror of Chalons, Aetius, hung on his march, but was unable to arrest him. But Attila's army

was suffering from exhaustion and disease, and he yielded, at least for the time, to the supplications and offers of the Roman ambassadors, one of whom was the great Pope Leo. One of the conditions of peace, and the most shameful one, was that he should add a Roman princess of imperial rank to the crowd of his innumerable wives. But it was not to be. He retired to recruit himself in his wooden village in the open plains between the Theyss and the Danube, and he was cut off by a sudden and mysterious death. His empire had no territorial basis, and fell to pieces at his death. His sons were less able robber chiefs than their father, and they soon disappeared from history. German legends softened him into the King Etzel of the Nibelungen Lied. The Latin traditions of Gaul gave him the name of the *Scourge of God*, and supposed that he gloried in it. The remains of his horde retired eastwards, to reappear in the sixth century under the name of the Avars, and, perhaps, the Bulgarians.

But, in the desolations of Attila, the empire had learned a new experience of its helplessness. Aetius and the victory of Chalons could save a province that in its chiefs and its interests was already more barbarian than Roman; but they could not avert the humiliation of ransoming Rome by the most ignominious conditions. And what Attila had left for the time uncompleted, Genseric finished. In the respite gained by Attila's departure, the Court of Ravenna was desolated by domestic outrages, and



fierce quarrels. As Honorius, jealous of Stilicho, had put to death the conqueror of Alaric and Radagais, so Valentinian III., as incapable and even more vindictive than Honorius, was provoked by the pretensions of Aetius, and murdered with his own hand the vanquisher of Attila (454). The death of Stilicho had been followed by the sack of Rome by Alaric. The death of Aetius was followed not only by the assassination of the emperor and its train of usurpations and murders, but by a second sack of Rome, this time by the Vandals of Genseric. A Roman Count, to avenge his wrongs, had invited Genseric to Africa. A Roman Empress, Eudoxia, to avenge her wrongs, invited the pirate-king of Carthage to assault Rome. In the very year (455) in which the superstitious looked for the completion of the fated twelve centuries of Roman power, a year after the murder of Aetius, the Vandal fleet from Carthage occupied the mouth of the Tiber. Genseric succeeded where Hannibal had failed, and completed Alaric's terrible chastisement of the sacred city, from which Attila himself two years before had shrunk. The intercession of Pope Leo, which had availed with Attila, did not stay Genseric. It availed to prevent slaughter, but the pillage was more unsparing, and the havoc more irremediable, than that under Alaric half a century before. Genseric sailed away with the spoils of Rome, with the Empress Eudoxia and thousands of captives, with trophies of his victory over all that was most venerable in the ancient world ;

the gilded tiles of the Capitol, the golden table and the golden candlestick brought by Titus from Jerusalem. Two great armadas were fitted out, one by the Emperor Majorian in the West (458-460), the other by the Emperor Leo in the East (468), to crush the Vandal power, and avenge the sack of Rome. Both were surprised in harbour, and destroyed by the fleets and fire ships of Genseric. The genius and more than the fortune of the old Carthaginian heroes seemed revived in the barbarian king. For nearly fifty years he insulted and humbled Rome; and he lived to see the extinction of the empire of the West.

But this extinction of the Western empire was ultimately determined by fatal changes in the State itself. There, too, finally and irrevocably, though at first under the disguise of ancient forms, the barbarian had forced his way, and established himself first in the control, and then in the possession, of what political power still remained to Italy and Rome. The emperors had derived their titles either from hereditary claims, or from their own bold enterprise, or from the choice of the senate or army, or from the nomination of an imperial colleague. But in the course of the last twenty years of the Western empire, this power of choosing the emperor passed into the hands of the barbarian "Patricians" in the West, a title of high dignity invented by Constantine, and now given to the chiefs of the foreign troops, mostly recruited from the tribes of Germany and the

Danube, who were the strength of the armies of Rome, and had become its real masters. In the last years of Theodosius, Arbogast, the Frank chief of the military levies of the West, after murdering his master, the boy-emperor Valentinian II., had attempted to make an emperor of his own creature, Eugenius; but Theodosius was still alive, and the attempt was signally punished. After the second siege of Rome, Alaric had imposed an emperor, Attalus, on the Roman Senate as the rival of Honorius. The step was intended to put a pressure on Honorius; but Alaric used his nominee as if to make sport for himself; and the majesty of the greatest of earthly names suffered its last and fatal indignity, when the Emperor Attalus, at the caprice and convenience of a barbarian patron, was, to use Gibbon's words, "promoted, degraded, insulted, restored, again degraded, and again insulted, and finally abandoned to his fate," the contemptuous revenge of his rival.

The precedent set by Alaric was not lost. After the death of Valentinian III., the unworthy grandson of the great Theodosius, the first thought of the barbarian chiefs was, not to destroy or usurp the imperial name, but to secure to themselves the nomination of the emperor. Avitus, chosen in Gaul under the influence of the West Gothic King of Toulouse, Theoderic II., was accepted for a time, as the Western emperor, by the Roman Senate, and by the Court of Constantinople. But another barbarian, Ricimer the Sueve, ambitious, successful, and popular,

had succeeded to the command of the "federated" foreign bands which formed the strength of the imperial army in Italy. Ricimer would not be a king, but he adopted as a settled policy the expedient, or the insulting jest, of Alaric. What Theoderic the Visigoth had given at a distance in Gaul, Ricimer the Sueve, the master-general of the Italian armies of the empire, claimed to give on the spot, at Rome. He deposed Avitus, and probably murdered him. Under his direction, the Senate chose Majorian. Majorian was too able, too public-spirited, perhaps too independent for the barbarian Patrician; Majorian, at a moment of ill-fortune, was deposed and got rid of. Ricimer's next nominee, Severus, seems to have been too feeble and incapable for his impatient master; at any rate, he is reported to have been made away with. Then, at a moment of extreme danger, in the hope of assistance from Leo, the Eastern emperor, against the attacks of Genseric, Ricimer accepted an emperor, chosen at Constantinople, the Greek Anthemius, whose daughter he married. But Anthemius was not content to be simply the tool and the screen of the Patrician. Coolness and jealousies followed; Ricimer determined on a quarrel, and all attempts to reconcile them failed. Ricimer set up his fourth emperor, Olybrius, and at the head of a barbarian army attacked and slew Anthemius. For the third time Rome was stormed and delivered over to a foreign soldiery, in this case nominally in her own service.

Ricimer and Olybrius both died a few months afterwards, and the empire in the West was left without its nominal or real head. A refugee Burgundian king, Ricimer's nephew, Gundobad, whom Ricimer had protected, and who cared little for anything but his lost Burgundian inheritance, found himself successor to Ricimer as Patrician in Italy. The Patrician Gundobad, following Ricimer's example, conferred the title of Augustus on an officer of the imperial guard, Glycerius. It is hard to imagine anything more grotesque in circumstances, and more tragical in its substance, than the chance of a Burgundian fugitive having, by the accident of the moment, the business thrust upon him of disposing of the majesty of the empire, and of looking out in Ricimer's mixed host for a successor to the honours of the mighty line of men who had ruled from Augustus to Constantine. But the extravagance of ignominy was not exhausted. A rival emperor, Julius Nepos, compelled Glycerius to exchange the inheritance of the Cæsars for the bishopric of Salona; again, the bishop of Salona in due time found his fallen rival Nepos in his power, and murdered him. In the next turn of fortune, a former secretary of Attila, Orestes, had become Patrician, and general of the barbarian troops; like Ricimer, not caring or not venturing to become emperor himself, he proclaimed his son emperor, to whom by a strange chance, as if in mockery of his fortune, had been given the names of the first king and the first emperor of Rome, Romulus Augustus,

soon turned in derision into the diminutive "Augustulus." But Orestes failed to play the part of Ricimer. A younger and more daring barbarian adventurer, Odoacer the Herule, or Rugian, bid higher for the allegiance of the army. Orestes was slain, and the young emperor was left to the mercy of Odoacer. In singular and significant contrast to the common usage when a pretender fell, Romulus Augustulus was spared. He was made to abdicate in legal form; and the Roman Senate, at the dictation of Odoacer, officially signified to the Eastern emperor, Zeno, their resolution that the separate Western Empire should cease, and their recognition of the one emperor at Constantinople, who should be supreme over West and East. Amid the ruin of the empire and the state, the dethroned emperor passed his days, in such luxurious ease as the times allowed, at the Villa of Lucullus at Misenum; and Odoacer, taking the Teutonic title of king, sent to the emperor at Constantinople the imperial crown and robe which were to be worn no more at Rome or Ravenna for more than 300 years.

Thus in the year 476 ended the Roman Empire, or rather, the line of Roman emperors, in the West. Thus it had become clear that the foundations of human life and society, which had seemed under the first emperors eternal, had given way. The Roman Empire was not the "last word" in the history of the world; but either the world was in danger of falling into chaos, or else new forms of life were yet to

appear, new ideas of government and national existence were to struggle with the old for the mastery.

The world was not falling into chaos. Europe, which seemed to have lost its guidance and its hope of civilisation in losing the empire, was on the threshold of a history far grander than that of Rome, and was about to start in a career of civilisation to which that of Rome was rude and unprogressive. In the great break-up of the empire in the West, some parts of its system lasted, others disappeared. What lasted was the idea of municipal government, the Christian Church, the obstinate evil of slavery. What disappeared was the central power, the imperial and universal Roman citizenship, the exclusive rule of the Roman law, the old Roman paganism, the Roman administration, the Roman schools of literature. Part of these revived; the idea of central power under Charles the Great, and Otto his great successor; the appreciation of law, though not exclusively Roman law; the schools of learning. And under these conditions the new nations—some of mixed races, as in France, Spain, and Italy; others simple and homogeneous, as in Germany, England, and the Scandinavian peninsula—began their apprenticeship of civilisation. But the time of preparation was long. The world had long to wait for the ripening of the seed which was so widely sown, and which was in due season to bear such rich fruit. In the first five centuries after Western Europe had passed from Roman to barbarian rule, two great

stages are perceptible in the course of events. In the first stage, we see the confusion and disturbance attending on the new settlement, which everywhere took the shape of invasion; but the materials were being gathered and made ready to form the new society which was to arise. In the second stage, we see the attempts to organise these materials, to give distinctness to the different forms of national life, to introduce order, law, and fixed constitutional habits in the new nations, attempts which culminated in the revived empire of Charles the Great. To trace the course of European history through these two stages is the object of the following sketch.



## CHAPTER II

### THE NEW NATIONS

THE disappearance of the emperors of the West did not mean the complete and immediate disappearance of the laws, ideas, and political organisation of the Roman Empire in Europe. These went on, for a time, in appearance almost unchanged, and it was only by degrees and by successive shocks, that the old order gave place to the new one, which was now beginning. Odoacer was the most powerful man in Italy, without even a nominal rival. But Odoacer was not emperor. He was only a Teutonic king, without even a special and national, much less a territorial title. He was a "king of nations," of a mixed army, among whom he had divided the third part of the lands of Italy; while to the Italians he was the Roman "Patrician," appointed by the distant emperor at Constantinople over the "diocese" of Italy. The name and place of emperor were void in the West. But there never was a time, from 476 to 800, when the Roman Empire was supposed not to

exist. There was still for some time the Roman Senate, the Roman Consulship, the Roman Prætorian prefect ; the Roman municipal and financial administration, the Roman law, by which life was ruled, when this law did not come into conflict with the policy, the usages, the will of the new masters. And though there was no longer an emperor in the West, there was still a Roman emperor, the emperor who ruled at Constantinople, the greatest and most majestic personage in the world, who, though far off, and busily occupied with affairs of his own, had not relinquished his claims to recognition and allegiance in the West, and continued to assert them, sometimes with strength and success. But though at the time the greatness of the change was obscured by the stubborn tenacity of many surviving parts of the strong Roman organisation, the old imperial system had really passed away, and the new national system, which was henceforth to prevail in Europe, had come into existence. The empire had begun to give place to a number of new kingdoms, or attempted kingdoms, which though they sometimes sought a formal recognition from Constantinople, had no longer to reckon seriously with the central authority, but only with one another, for their limits and power. When they encountered, as they did sometimes with fatal result, the forces of the Eastern Empire, the barbarians were no longer the invaders but the invaded, protecting what had become their own from a foreign foe, not really resisting the authority or

encroaching on the dominions of the successors of the Cæsars.

In the hundred years which followed the fall of the empire, years of wild confusion and havoc, amid which are seen the first efforts after reorganisation and order, two great questions emerge and give interest to a scene in which we should otherwise see nothing but the shock of conflicting barbarisms. One was the question which of the two great Teutonic races, the Goths, or their rivals, the Franks, should be the ruling race of the West. The other, depending on the first, was, which should be the creed of Europe, the Catholic faith, or Arianism. In the decision of these two questions, so eventful and so critical, the whole significance of the history centres.

Odoacer, the chief of an army composed of several Teutonic races, was, in fact, though not in name, the first king of Italy. But in him the barbarian chieftain hardly rose above the level of a successful soldier; the qualities of a statesman first showed themselves in his conqueror and successor, the famous Theoderic. Theoderic was the hereditary chieftain of a tribe of the Eastern Goths, whom the easy success and prosperity of Odoacer tempted from their wasted seats by the Danube, to dispute with him the great prize of Italy. The Gothic race had the start of all the barbarians in culture, in apparent aptitude for civil life, in gentleness of manners. They had been longer than any others established in

portions of the provinces, as allies and subjects of the State ; and it might have seemed that of all they were most adapted to reinvigorate and restore, without destroying, what had become degenerate and enfeebled. Theoderic added to the daring and energy of a Gothic chief the knowledge gained by a civilised education at Constantinople. He was the head, not of a chance army of mixed races, but of a homogeneous tribe which revered in his family, the race of the Amals, a royal line. And he was the first of the Teutonic conquerors who attempted to carry out the idea not merely of administering a conquest, but of founding and governing a state. His distinct policy was to unite Goths and Italians into one people, without breaking down the customs or the special privileges of either. If Goths were his soldiers, Latins were his counsellors and administrators ; and he chose these among the best and ablest of the Latins, men like Boethius, Symmachus, and Cassiodorus. Theoderic fixed his royal residence sometimes at Verona, but mainly at Ravenna, the capital of the last Western emperors since Honorius. The first of the Teutonic kings, he caught from the Romans their taste for that great art in which the Teutonic family was in time to become so famous, and which was to preserve the Gothic name when the Gothic nations had disappeared. In the churches which he built at Ravenna, in his palace, in his tomb, he emulated the massive grandeur of the Roman builders. The kingdom of Theoderic, of which the

seat was in Italy, while its more loosely governed borderlands stretched from Gaul to the Danube, exercised a new and commanding influence in the group of Teutonic States which were growing up in the West. In Theoderic we have, perhaps, the first example of a definite policy of domestic alliances for public ends. He connected his house with all the German kings of the West, West Goths, Burgundians, Franks, Vandals, Thuringians. We have a curious and instructive picture of the internal administration of the new Gothic kingdom, in its various departments, preserved in a large collection of the business letters of Cassiodorus, Theoderic's Latin secretary and minister. Theoderic's reign of thirty-three years, stained though it was at its close by strange outbreaks of suspicious cruelty, was the first example of a real effort on a large scale, made by the Teutonic conquerors, to pass from barbarism to civilisation, to create, out of their conquests, "a fatherland, a city, and a state." It was an attempt to give body and form, however rudely and imperfectly, to the new idea of a Christian kingdom and country, which was to supplant the idea which had hitherto held exclusive possession of men's minds, that of the Roman Empire.

In the other Teutonic kingdoms which had come into existence in the fifth century, though in none of them were seen the statesmanship and large attempts of Theoderic, the same tendency was at work towards distinctness and consolidation. Gundobad (491-516),

the Burgundian refugee in Ricimer's camp, whom a strange chance had once invested with the power of giving an emperor to the West, had, after bloody domestic quarrels, returned to introduce some kind of law and order in his kingdom on the Rhone and Saone. The Vandal kingdom in Africa, founded, and so long sustained, by the crafty and relentless policy of Genseric, still retained the impress given to it by its founder, in being the most oppressive to the Roman population of all the barbarian kingdoms, and by being least influenced by their civilisation. The kingdom of the Western Goths, the people of Alaric, settled in Spain and Aquitaine, with Toulouse and Bordeaux for their capitals, had grown in power and extent during the last disasters of the empire. One of the last acts of the imperial government, in the very agony of its dissolution, was to surrender to the Gothic king, Euric, the volcanic highlands of Auvergne, the last refuge in the midst of his dominions of Latin culture and independence. Euric ruled over the greater part of southern Gaul and a part of Spain, and in renown and pretensions, and in a measure, too, in his attempts to adjust, by definite law, the relations of conquerors and conquered, was a counterpart, though an imperfect one, of the great king who was to create the sister kingdom of the East Goths at Ravenna.

These were all Gothic kingdoms, or were connected with the Gothic migration and settlement; and to the Gothic race, on the extinction of the

empire, the inheritance of its power seemed to have fallen. And besides the tie of race and neighbourhood, these first founders of the nations of the West and South, who had not only broken up the Roman Empire, but had parcelled it out as colonists and settlers, were also bound together by the tie of religion. Goths, Burgundians, Vandals, were already Christians, when they conquered and divided the lands of the empire. They had mostly been converted beyond the limits of the Western Empire; and they carried with them their own bishops, and their Gothic Bible, the translation of Ulfila (310-380), the oldest written literature in any Teutonic tongue. But they had been converted and had received their Christianity on the borders of the Greek provinces of the empire, at a time when the court religion at Constantinople, under Constantius, was Arianism (337-361). The earliest Teutonic kingdoms of Christendom were Arian, either tolerant, as under Theoderic, or systematically and unsparingly persecuting, as with the Vandals, and sometimes the West Goths. In either case, they were attached to their creed, if only as a national distinction from the Roman population. In these Gothic kingdoms, not only new political powers were forming, but a new religious power, the rival of the Catholic Church, was making its appearance in the West. This new religious power, Arianism, came into conflict with religious beliefs which had already taken the firmest hold on the Latin populations in the West and in

Africa, and it threatened whatever was deepest and most cherished in their convictions. But this Gothic supremacy was soon challenged. While their Arian creed placed them in permanent opposition to the Catholic bishops, who, in the break-up of the empire, had become the real leaders of the Latin population, other Teutonic tribes, later in the race of conquest, fresh from their old habits of savage war, and still retaining their heathen religion and their untamed ferocity, came into the field to claim their part in the spoils of the empire. In the revolutions which followed, it was no longer simply the Latin race against the Teutonic, but different members of the Teutonic stock against one another. And to the rivalry and feuds of races, nearly allied, but strongly opposed in interests and habits, was added also the opposition of creeds.

A race, not new to the wars and troubles of the later empire, was rising into importance in the north-east of Gaul, which was to dispute, and finally overthrow, the predominance of the Goths, and give a different turn to the course of Western history. This race, the Franks, was also a Teutonic one. Up to the middle of the century, they had made comparatively but little figure in the events of the time. They had been loyal to the empire, they had furnished some of the best soldiers to the armies of Stilicho and Aetius; they had suffered in the rush and pressure of the invading Vandals, and still more of the Huns; but when the empire could no



longer defend itself, they had not thought it necessary to keep within their earlier limits. The Salian Franks had pushed down from the Batavian and Frisian marshes, to the rivers and valleys of north-eastern Gaul. The Ripuarian Franks advanced to the country of the Meuse and Moselle. The Salian Franks had even associated a Roman or a Romanised Gaul, Aegidius, with their native chief in the leadership of the tribe. But in the year 481, the native leadership passed into the hands of a chief who would not endure a Roman colleague, or the narrow limits within which, in the general turmoil of the world, his tribe was cramped. He is known to history by the name of Clovis, or Chlodvig, which, through many transformations, became the later Ludwig and Louis. Clovis soon made himself feared as the most ambitious, the most unscrupulous, and the most energetic of the new Teutonic founders of states. Ten years after the fall of the Western Empire, seven years before the rise of the Gothic kingdom of Theoderic, Clovis challenged the Roman Patrician, Syagrius of Soissons, who had succeeded to Aegidius, defeated him in a pitched field, at Nogent near Soissons (486), and finally crushed Latin rivalry in northern Gaul. Ten years later (496), in another famous battle, Tolbiac (Zülpich), near Cologne, he also crushed Teutonic rivalry, and established his supremacy over the kindred Alamanni of the Upper Rhine. Then he turned himself with bitter hostility against the Gothic power in Gaul.

The Franks hated the Goths, as the ruder and fiercer of the same stock hate those who are a degree above them in the arts of peace, and are supposed to be below them in courage and the pursuits of war. There was another cause of antipathy. The Goths were zealous Arians; and Clovis, under the influence of his wife Clotildis, the niece of the Burgundian Gundobad, and in consequence it is said of a vow made in battle at Tolbiac, had received Catholic baptism from St. Remigius of Reims. The Frank king threw his sword into the scale against the Arian cause, and became the champion and hope of the Catholic population all over Gaul. Clovis was victorious. He crippled the Burgundian kingdom (500), which was finally destroyed by his sons (534). In a bloody battle near Poitiers, he broke the power of the West Goths in Gaul; he drove them out of Aquitaine, leaving them but a narrow slip of coast, to seek their last settlement and resting-place in Spain; and when he died, he was recognised by all the world, by Theoderic, by the Eastern emperor, who honoured him with the title of the consulship, as the master of Gaul. Nor was his a temporary conquest. The kingdom of the West Goths and the Burgundians had become the kingdom of the Franks. The invaders had at length arrived, who were to remain. It was decided that the Franks, and not the Goths, were to direct the future destinies of Gaul and Germany, and that the Catholic faith,

and not Arianism, was to be the religion of these great realms. Burgundy, which was half Teutonic, was united like the Latin Aquitaine and Provence, to the fortunes of the Franks. In Spain only did the Gothic conquest, the Gothic power, the Gothic civilisation, and for a time the Gothic Arianism, maintain themselves.

In the middle of the sixth century the Eastern Empire, under one of the greatest of its rulers, Justinian, once more put forth its still enormous strength, and maintained its unabated claims by a revival of military enterprise and prowess, not unworthy of the most famous days of Rome. Belisarius showed that Roman generalship was not extinct. By him the Vandal settlement in Africa was broken up and destroyed (534). While Theoderic lived, the Gothic kingdom of Italy was respected by the emperor; but the discord among the Goths themselves which followed his death showed how much the Gothic power in Italy had depended on one man. The empire revived its claim to the allegiance of Italy. The Gothic chiefs were defeated or slain, and the kingdom of Theoderic finally overthrown by another of Justinian's victorious generals, the Armenian Narses (553). Under these great soldiers it seemed as if the Teutonic settlements in the West were about to be rudely shaken. Roman soldiers taught their old terrible lessons not merely to the Vandals of Africa and the Goths of Italy, but to the invading Alamanni from Germany, and the warlike Franks from Gaul

(556). In Italy, at least, for fourteen years (553-567), till after Justinian and Belisarius were dead, the authority of the Roman Empire, exercised by Narses under the name of the Exarch of Italy, or, as it is sometimes called, of Ravenna, was once more established and obeyed. And though neither the limits of the Exarchate, nor the power of the Exarch, were afterwards what they had been under the first Exarch, Narses, the name, which continued for nearly two centuries, designated the last remaining territory, with the exception of the great Mediterranean islands, and for a time, of some portions of Spain, which the Roman emperors could claim as their own in the West.

The conquests of Justinian's generals were brilliant but barren triumphs. They were the last efforts of the empire in the West, and there was not enough in the conditions of its society and government, apart from the accidental and personal qualifications of its rulers and generals, to sustain them. The course of the Teutonic invasions and settlements was interrupted and disturbed,—diverted, but not arrested. The victories of Belisarius and Narses, and the overthrow of the Goths in Italy, were immediately followed by the irruptions and conquests of the Lombards.

The Longobards (softened into the Lombards) were the last of the Teutonic invaders who settled in the western territories of the Roman Empire. They were a German tribe, whom the usual causes of

barbarian migration had brought from the banks of the Elbe to the great stream along which so many barbarian races and federations had halted, and from which they had started on their final conquests. On the Danube they had, like the Goths of Alaric and Theoderic, met other rival barbarians and the powers of the Eastern Empire. Like Alaric and Theoderic, Alboin, the adventurous king of the Lombards, instead of pursuing the course of feuds, alliances, and rivalries with his barbarian neighbours, sought a new field for his ambition in a reconquest of Italy to the Teutonic occupation. The Gothic kingdom had been finally beaten down and destroyed. Belisarius was dead (565). Narses, suspected and superseded, if he did not invite the Lombard invaders, no longer commanded the Roman armies, and died about the time of the invasion (568). Alboin, with associates from many German tribes, attacked, overran, and occupied a great portion of Italy. Ravenna, and the maritime cities as far as Ancona, with Rome, Naples, and Venice, were still preserved to the allegiance of the emperor, and acknowledged the authority of the exarch at Ravenna. But the rest of Italy came under the dominion of the Lombard king; his numerous "dukes," almost independent chiefs, seized each his city or large territory; the Teutonic ascendancy, overthrown in the overthrow of the Gothic kingdom, was again established in Italy. Lombard kings reigned, legislated, and administered at Pavia, as Theoderic had done at

Ravenna and Verona ; and the kingdom of the Lombards, set up in the very home of the Latin race, took for two hundred years the place which the Gothic kingdom, founded by the genius of Theoderic, had only been able to keep for sixty.

But Italy was never completely subdued, like Gaul, Spain, or Britain. To the last, there were three capitals, centres of national feeling and influence. Besides the Lombard capital of Pavia, and the Greek capital of Ravenna, there was the Italian capital of Rome, nominally acknowledging the Greek emperor, but for the most part isolated, and growing under the popes into a sense of exceptional independence. The Latin population of Italy was more obstinate than those of Gaul and Spain, in its aversion to foreigners, and in its national pride. The Lombards are said to have been the harshest and most cruel of the barbarian conquerors of Italy. The Lombards, as long as they were there, always stronger than the Greeks and Italians, were yet never strong enough to get the land and the people into their grasp. They broke up, soon after Alboin's death, into thirty-six independent dukedoms, mostly in single cities ; and though the confusion and anarchy resulting from this drove them after ten years again to make one of these dukes their king, the Lombards failed to establish a settled kingdom. They were always less closely connected with their subjects, and more loosely united among themselves, than their Teutonic neighbours. With Rome, preserving the

Italian traditions and keeping up Italian memories, they continued to be barbarian and oppressive strangers, as despised as they were hated and feared. Not even their conversion from Arianism, under Agilulf (590-615), begun under the influence of a religious queen like Clotildis and Bertha, the Bavarian Theudelinda, and seconded by Pope Gregory the Great, could reconcile the two races. There was a semblance of organisation; a division into provinces, an Austria and a Neustria, as among the Franks, a Tuscia, as in Roman times. The Lombard kings collected the "laws of the Lombards," and promulgated regulations on the relations between Italians and Lombards. But the real masters were the great Lombard dukes, dukes of Spoleto, Benevento, Friuli, who made war among themselves and on the king, and who with the king harried and tormented whatever was not in their domain. The Lombard history had its romantic adventures, but was void of political interest or success. There is no sign, even to the last, of their hold on Italy. The Lombards gave their name permanently to one of the noblest of Italian provinces, and they left their mark deeply on the laws, the customs, the manners, the familiar names of Italy. And in Italy their line of kings bridged over the interval from the days of Justinian, Belisarius, and Narses, to those of Charles the Great. But the Lombard settlement in Italy, like the Gothic state of Theoderic, fell before a foreign conqueror; and after having lasted longer than the

Gothic and Vandal kingdoms, like them, it ultimately failed.

Thus began the newer ages of Western Europe. They began in the ruins of the old state of things. The change was not a gradual passage, such as is always going on in the ordinary course of history. The times from the fifth to the eighth century, offer an example of a real catastrophe of strange and rare violence in the progress of mankind. On such a scale and with such results it has only happened once. It stands alone, as far as we know, among the revolutions and changes of the world. Islam, which was most like it, though it was the change of a religion, yet left Asiatic civilisation, and, for the most part, the populations of Asia, where it found them. Changes as great have been since, but they have been gradual. Convulsions almost as terrific have also happened ; but they have been partial. But then, for more than three centuries, it seems as if the world and human society had been hopelessly wrecked, without prospect or hope of escape. And what gave to this misery additional bitterness, was that there was always a considerable number of persons, sufficiently imbued with the ideas and imagination of a happier time, to be alive to the contrast, and to feel more acutely the wretchedness and despair of the present. The language of the Psalms alone adequately represents such feelings : "The earth is moved, the hills are carried into the midst of the sea. All the foundations of the earth are out of course."



Just as the present crust of the earth on which we dwell is built up of the ruins of former ones, as our mountains and plains are the remains and wreck of an elder world, so nations stand on the relics and survivals of older natural and political organisations, broken up and shattered, but not annihilated. We plant our corn and wine on the débris of primeval rocks. Ancient sea bottoms are our fields, and the sites of our cities. The clay of which our bricks are moulded was poured forth in subglacial streams from long melted glaciers. The stones of which our homes are built are cut out of *strata* deposited in oceans which have vanished, and beds heaved up and down in tremendous jars and shocks, far beyond our experience. So modern Europe has arisen out of three main elements: 1. Distintegrated and ruined nations formed under the civilisation of Greece and Rome; 2. Altered, and, to use a geological term, "metamorphic," Teutonic races, more or less modified by contact with the Roman world; 3. The organisation and ideas and usages of the Christian Church. With the older civilisations of the world, India, Persia, Egypt, we have to do only indirectly. With the three elements present after the destruction of the Roman Empire, we are in immediate relation; we touch them.

## CHAPTER III

### CONDITION OF THE TEUTONIC SETTLEMENTS IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

THE new settlers brought with them certain outlines of organisation. They came for the most part, not merely as armies, but as tribes; and the tribal character became prominent in proportion as they settled. They came for the most part under kings, sometimes, apparently, of an ancient line, like the Amals among the Goths, sometimes chosen to conduct a war or to reward a conquest. The tribe consisted of freemen, with their dependents, and in time their slaves, though the course of events gradually caused changes in the power, the wealth, and the rank of individuals; and freedom of person and of vote was long at the basis of Teutonic usages, though tempered by limiting customs and by accidental differences of strength and influence. They divided the land as they settled, either adopting the old divisions, like the *Pagus* (*Pays*), or the *Civitas*, with other indeterminate subdivisions in Gaul, or creating

new ones of their own in the more purely Teutonic districts, the *Gau*, and the *Mark* in Germany. And as soon as they were settled, a hierarchy of chiefs grew up; *Duces*, "leaders of the host" (*Heerzog*), over the larger provinces, *Comites* (*Graf*), over the subordinate ones, leaders in war, magistrates in peace. The king had his special companions and faithful men, out of whom, as well as out of the local chiefs who were not dependent on the king, a nobility arose. The gathering once or twice a year of the freemen, in the divisions of the kingdom and in the kingdom as a whole, brought them continually together, either to make war, or to sanction laws and decisions. And the land was partly public, held in common by the inhabitants of the district, whether great or small; partly held in special occupation and tenancy from the community, but not as property by individual members; and partly held by full right of property, subject or not to claims on it, public or private. In each Teutonic settlement, there were the old inhabitants and the new comers. Under varying conditions, often in the proportion of two-thirds to one-third of land or produce, the original population shared the soil with the conquering minority. And for the most part conquerors and conquered lived each under their own law.

But the Teutonic nations, which, in the fifth century, had not merely invaded the empire, but had made permanent settlements in it, found themselves under new conditions of life. They had exchanged

their forests and wastes for a land of ancient cities and established cultivation, in which they were still, indeed above all things, warriors, whose trade and pride was fighting, yet no longer mere foes and destroyers, but settlers, or, as it was said, "guests." The Germans, with all their barbarian rudeness and wildness, were not, like the Huns, and the Turks afterwards, hopelessly alien in mind and spirit from the Romans whom they had conquered. They had also become more or less familiar with the more civilised races for whom, in the trial of strength, they had been too strong. Some of the German tribes, especially those of the Gothic stock, had come into constant contact with the Romans, as soldiers in the imperial service, and sometimes in the court; and further, most of these Gothic tribes had listened to the teachers and missionaries of Christianity, and had, in a partial and imperfect way, received it as their religion.

When, therefore, they founded their new kingdoms in Gaul, in Spain, in Italy, the things about them were not absolutely strange to them. Still, when the time of comparative repose succeeded the excitement of conquering and of taking possession, the conquerors found themselves under altered conditions of life. They found themselves continually in the presence of three new sets of circumstances, which were from day to day impressing their minds, forcing on them new ideas, affecting their actions, favouring or interfering with their purposes; and these, whether resisted

or welcomed, were insensibly subjecting them to processes of change, gradual, prolonged, and sometimes intermitting, but very deep and very eventful. These changes were the beginnings, out of which by long waiting and painful steps, and dreary reactions of anarchy and darkness, the new and progressive civilisation of the European nations was to spring.

The first of these influences was, the presence of the Christian Church ; the second, was the presence of Roman law and its administrative system ; the third, was the atmosphere of Latin language and conversation in which they lived, and its rivalries with their own Teutonic speech.

1. At the period of the Teutonic settlement, the Christian religion was rooted in the Latin world, and the Christian Church had insensibly attracted to itself the authority with which men spontaneously invest that which they reverence and trust. The moral and social power, which was slowly but surely slipping out of the hands of the empire, and even some measure of the political power which its officials were abdicating, was passing over to the chiefs of the religious society which the empire had vainly combated, the Christian bishops. Amid the ruins of the greatest pride and the greatest strength that the world had known, the Church alone stood erect and strong. In days when men relied only on force and violence, yet only to discover, time after time, that force alone could not give and secure power, the Church ruled by the word of persuasion, by example, by knowledge,

by its higher view of life, by its obstinate hopes and visible beneficence, by its confidence in innocence, by its call to peace. The Church had faith in itself and its mission where all other faith had broken down. It might be afflicted and troubled by the disasters of the time, but its work was never arrested by them nor its courage abated. It still offered shelter and relief amid the confusion, even after war had broken into its sanctuaries, and the sword had slaughtered its ministers; it still persisted in holding out the light from heaven, when the air was filled with storm and darkness. In the Latin cities of Italy and Gaul, while public spirit and the sense of duty were failing, and the civil chiefs of society shrank from the dangerous burdens and troubles of office, the Christian bishops, chosen by their people for qualities which men most respect, were, by virtue of these qualities, ready to accept the responsibilities which others gave up, and were taking informally the first place. It added to their influence that they were permanent in their office, and some of the most remarkable of them held it for a very long period, through rapid changes in the world without. Avitus, Bishop of Vienne for thirty-five years, from 490 to 525, helped to order the Burgundian kingdom, and witnessed its fall. Cæsarius of Arles, in his forty years' episcopate (501-542), saw the power of the West pass from the Goths to the Franks, and the Gothic kingdom, built up by Theoderic in Italy, overthrown by Belisarius; and both Cæsarius and Avitus

exercised great influence on the new society and its new masters. Remigius, who, in 496, baptized Clovis and his Franks, in his episcopate of more than seventy years (461-533), saw the last days of the Western Empire, and the victorious beginnings of the Merovingian line. In times of strife the bishops were mediators, ambassadors, peace-makers. In times of imminent danger men looked to them to face the peril, to intercede for the doomed, to cross, with no protection but their sacred character, the path of the destroyer. With the terrible and inflexible barbarians, who were deaf to Roman envoys and contemptuous of Roman soldiers, with Ricimer, with Alaric, with Attila, with Genseric, the last word, the only word listened to, was that of a fearless bishop, like Pope Leo, asking nothing for himself, but in the name of the Most High that his people should be spared. Representatives, not of religion only and the claims of God, but of moral order, of the rights of conscience and the sympathies of men, of the bonds and authority of human society, the Christian bishops were, when the barbarians became settlers in the empire, the only trusted guides of life.

Besides these majestic and commanding forms which were continually meeting the new comers, in questions of peace and war, in council, in the intercourse of civil life, as ministers of peace, justice, and self-control, there were also the influence and the results of the religion which they professed. It was a religion which allied the most overwhelming wonders

and mysteries with the plainest and most uncompromising rules of action ; which, to the inquisitive, opened thoughts undreamt of concerning the love, the greatness, the terrors of an unknown God, and which taught men to be daring, heroic, and enduring, in the new way of severity to themselves, and boundless kindness and service to others. The barbarians coveted Roman wealth, they despised Roman strength ; but these bold and manly races could not but be awed by what the Christian Church had saved and incorporated of ancient Roman force and greatness of mind, heightened by the spirit of a Divine teaching and purity, in her charity, her discipline, her self-devotion and public spirit. And this was embodied in a compact and steady organisation, which, while all else was reeling and changing, showed the world the strange spectacle of stability and growth. Barbarian chiefs, like Clovis the Frank, or Gundobad the Burgundian, dimly understood the spectacle before them, and the influences which acted on them ; and, doubtless, the spectacle was a confused one, and the influences were mixed ones. But it was plain to them, in that rude and wild time, that whatever there was on earth stronger than force and greater than kings, was in that Kingdom of Righteousness which the Christian Church proclaimed, and attempted to reflect. Wayward and intractable disciples, they broke without scruple its laws in their moments of passion, and trampled on its most sacred sanctions. Low and high notions were grotesquely intermixed



in their efforts at duty. But they saw clearly and truly that in the Christian Church and religion they had encountered a power of a different order from any that they had yet met with ; a power which they must take account of, which was not afraid of them, and would always be in their path ; which they must either accept and make terms with, or else at all hazards resolve to destroy and root out. For the most part they chose the former alternative.

The immense influence of Christianity and the Church on the new nations is one of those mixed and complicated facts which it is hard adequately to exhibit, much less to analyse completely. It was the source of good and the guarantee of progress to them ; it carried with it the promise and hope of a nobler future. But the immediate effect of this contact of the barbarians with Christianity was to lower and injure Christianity. Christianity raised them, but it suffered itself in the effort. The clergy, and those responsible for the care of religion, in rude and disordered states of society, are often hardly judged by those who live later in calmer and more experienced times. During the worst of the wild days which followed the Teutonic conquest, there were always to be found men deeply impressed with the sense of right, and with the truth and greatness of the Divine government, full of zeal for righteousness, and disinterested love for their brethren ; men who taught these lessons, and men who received them in sincerity. Socially, the Church, as such, was always on the side

of peace, on the side of industry, on the side of purity, on the side of liberty for the slave and protection for the oppressed. The monasteries were the only keepers of literary tradition ; they were, still more, great agricultural colonies, clearing the wastes, and setting the example of improvement. They were the only seats of human labour which could hope to be spared in those lands of perpetual war. In the religious teaching of the clergy, the great outlines and facts of this Christian creed were strongly and firmly drawn, and they were never obliterated, though often confused by lower and meaner admixtures. It was impossible to forget the Cross of Christ ; the appeal to Our Father went up in numberless tongues and dialects all over the West, from the ignorant and the miserable, from the barbarian warrior, and perhaps his victim. But the religious aspect of the West was to be, for many centuries after the conquest, a dark and deplorable one. From the moment that the barbarians became masters in the West, an immediate deterioration becomes manifest in the clergy, in their teaching, in their standard of conduct. There is a vast change from the generation of Churchmen in Gaul who had felt the influence of the powerful writers and earnest teachers of the fourth and fifth centuries—St. Hilary, St. Jerome, St. Leo, above all St. Augustine, and St. Augustine's strong and subtle antagonists, Faustus and Pelagius. Even from men like Prosper of Aquitaine, Avitus of Vienne, Cæsarius of Arles, the descent is great to the next generation in the sixth century, with

their coarse and superficial religion, their readiness to allow sin to buy itself off by prodigal gifts, the connivance by the best men at imposture, its direct encouragement by the average. In the Church in Gaul under the Franks, of which Gregory of Tours (540-595) has left so curious a contemporary picture, the hold of discipline on the people is seen to be of the slightest, the irregularity of all acts among the clergy is of the greatest. And these evils increased as the bishops increased in dignity and wealth. The breadth of land held and tilled by the clergy was a benefit to the country, but not to themselves. Their secularity and wide-spread corruption were the heavy price at which their hold on the barbarians, the only visible hope for the ultimate improvement of society, was purchased.

2. Further, the Teutonic settlers found themselves in the midst of a population long accustomed to the elaborate and fully developed system of Roman law, which had grown up out of the varied experience and the practised forethought of a great people, and which provided naturally and easily for the numberless questions of human life and intercourse. It is clear that Roman law greatly impressed them. They had brought with them their own unwritten customs from the other side of the Rhine, or from the banks of the Danube, according to which the rough justice of a rude and inartificial state of society was administered. Each tribe had its own customs; and earlier or later after the settlement, in some cases very early, these

customs, expressed in Latin, were reduced to writing, and became, in contrast to the general Roman law, the peculiar law of each tribe or kingdom—the “law” of the Burgundians, Visigoths, Salian and Ripuarian Franks, Alamanni, Bavarians, Lombards. These were at first rude attempts, mainly lists of offences and penalties, the penalties being for the most part money fines or compensations, according to the nationality or social rank of the injured person. But they expressly recognised for the Roman population, that is, for the larger part of the population, the Roman law. Some of the Teutonic kings, as Alaric, the West Goth (506), and Sigismund, the Burgundian (517), republished and resanctioned the Theodosian code, or selections from it, for the guidance of their Roman subjects. The next step was to incorporate in their own laws, as fresh cases arose and new questions had to be adjusted, provisions adopted from the Roman law. The great Theoderic, the East Goth, about 500, drew up, by the help of his Latin counsellors, his *Edictum*, in which, borrowing from Roman principles of law, he laid down rules for barbarians and Romans alike, intended to teach respect for right and order, to protect the weak against the strong, and to guard the civilisation (*civilitas*) which he so valued. And, finally, as in the law of the West Goths (642-701), after they were confined to Spain, the two elements, Teutonic and Roman, were fused together into one general code of *territorial* instead of *personal* law, for a nation in which Goths and Romans had

come to be looked upon as one people. Even while the special customs of each tribe were defined and maintained, there was yet always the consciousness of a larger and more universal law all round them—the vast system of laws, decrees, and judicial decisions which came down from the republic and the empire, and which, compared with the local laws of Franks or Goths, seemed like the general law of the world, as contrasted with the by-laws of some local association. This vast scientific apparatus of jurisprudence was in the hands of the Latins, understood by them, still worked and administered by them, accomplishing ends which the rough barbarian rules could not reach. The Teutonic settlers without fully understanding the great instrument, were able to appreciate its power and advantages. Latin clerks put their Teutonic customs into the universal language. Latin experts interpreted to their kings the Roman codes. In Spain, Latin-speaking bishops, in the councils of Toledo, compiled and arranged the law of the West Goths. In the north, under the Franks, the Roman municipal system, with its magistrates and its forms, continued to act, only adjusted to a state of things in which the Teutonic count or bishop took the place of imperial presidents or consulars; and the close Latin municipality gradually passed into a more popular body, which was to become the “commune,” the “commonalty,” of later times. In proportion as the Germans settled down to the conditions of civil life, bought and sold, built and planted, claimed rights or

disputed them, made wills and inherited property, they came upon the Roman civil order, waiting for them ready made in all questions, with its strong principles and established rules. They found themselves, as Guizot expresses it, "caught in its meshes." Its influence varied greatly; but its traces are seen everywhere. And it was one of the chief means by which, in the union of the two races in the West and South, the Latin element gained more and more the ascendancy.

3. Again, all these Teutonic settlers, Goths, Burgundians, Franks, Lombards, found themselves in daily contact in the business of life with a Latin-speaking population, the leaders of which were more cultivated, and the inferior classes more numerous, than themselves. Whether as masters or as fellow-citizens, whether profiting by Latin knowledge, or employing the labour of their new dependents and slaves, they were forced to know something of Latin; not, of course, the literary Latin which we have in books, even in the books of the time, but the Latin spoken in daily life, as it must have existed even in the days of Cicero and Virgil,—the Latin spoken by the humble, coarse, and ignorant; the Latin of soldiers, husbandmen, mechanics, foreign slaves, with its vulgar idioms and pronunciation varying in different localities, and with its varying admixtures of rude and outlandish expressions. The new masters could not deal with their woodsmen, their carpenters, their masons, on their possessions, without acquaintance

with the provincial dialect in which the Latin of common life happened to be spoken on the spot. And whenever they had need of learning—political, legal, or ecclesiastical, in the services of the Church, in the courts, or in the lawyer's office—they found that learning had not attempted, and was hardly able, to speak in any other than the imperial speech of Rome. There was not yet strength enough in the German dialects, still reputed barbarous even by those who used them, to break the prescription of custom in favour of Latin, in business, in diplomacy, in all solemn and formal transactions. Their ancient speech, among Franks and Goths, remained the cherished sign of a conquering and dominant race. It was the language of the nursery and of the family, as long as the family kept itself Teutonic; it would have the preference in easy and intimate intercourse, as long as the boast of ancestry and blood remained in the court, or in the service of the court. But, besides that Franks and Goths, by degrees, married Latin wives—Gallic, Italian, Spanish—it was more and more the case that if the imported Teutonic was the language of predilection, the local Latin was the language of necessity or convenience. When one of the conquering race wanted to show temper or inflict insult, he might say that he did not understand Latin; but he was in reality far too shrewd and too wise to cut himself off from what he knew to be one of his indispensable instruments of power. For centuries, in the lands of the Teutonic conquests, two languages went

on side by side, in proportions varying in different districts and different orders of society. Each acted on the other ; but each remained distinct, borrowing words, or even forms, but keeping its own fundamental structure and elements. Where Goths, Franks, Lombards settled, the population must have been, in parts of it at least, more or less, bilingual. Two languages were in use, running a race for the mastery, as now in Wales and in Brittany, in many cantons of Switzerland, in parts of the United States and Canada, in Hungary and Bohemia, and in India ; till, at last, convenience, policy, accident, gave one or other the victory. So, unperceived at the time and silent, the struggle went on between the Teutonic and Latin languages. The Teutonic had on its side the pride, not merely of rank, but of race and blood. On the other hand, the Latin had three advantages. It had numbers ; it had, what the Teutonic had not yet, a written literature ; and it had the Church, with its services, its schools, its legal forms, and its clerks. And, in a large portion of the Teutonic conquests, these were decisive, though the struggle was long. The end has been that victory has remained with the Latin, and its derivative languages, in the west and south of the continent of Europe.

Thus, under influences such as these, helping or checking each other, a new society began to rise out of the ruins and fragments of the old. Germans and Romans each ceased to be what they had been, to become something new and different. The slow and



often imperceptible process of change began which was to build up again in many ages the order and stability of life which in the fall of the Roman Empire seemed to have foundered ; the process which, often broken off, often ill-directed, often disappointing in its results, was yet at last to fit the new nations to take the place of the empire, which their fathers had destroyed. And one remarkable feature of the change was the final prevalence of the Latin element, wherever it had originally established itself, over the Teutonic. It was steady and certain, however protracted. There was a reconquest to Roman habits and sympathies,—to what a convenient mediæval word designated as *Romanitas* or *Latinitas*—of the Latin provinces which the German conquerors had seized and made their own. It is plain that, from the first, no exclusion or principle of separation prevailed. The two races early began to work together, in war and in political administration ; and the Germans were willing to employ, even in places of high trust, the services which Latins were willing to render. In Gaul especially, as far as can be judged from names which occur in the history of his times by Gregory of Tours, the proportion of Latins to Germans among the dukes, counts, patricians, and other officers of the Frank kings, especially those connected with the revenue, seems to be something more than two to three ; among the bishops and clergy, the names and the origin are at first almost exclusively Latin, and to the end of Gregory's history barbarian names among

the high ecclesiastics are the exception. The character of the Franks, as he portrays it, lent itself readily to this gradual mixture and fusion with the Latin provincials. As warriors, they were among the most impetuous and formidable of the German invaders. But they were eminently vainglorious, light-minded, unsteady, and self-indulgent; and as they passed from the privations of their barbarian life, to an abundance and luxury unknown before, they would be singularly exposed to the fascinations and flatteries of a new form of society which had opened to them such new enjoyments. Still it was to be a long time before the Franks ceased to be, in spite of all Roman influences, a Teutonic race. In Spain the Goths yielded earlier to these influences. In Italy, the intrusive German element, more completely alien, and more passionately resisted, was vanquished or absorbed after the defeat of the Lombards. In Gaul, in the provinces south of the Loire, studded with great Latin cities, Bordeaux, Toulouse, Lyons, Vienne, Arles, Nismes, with the half Greek and half Latin Massilia, the latinising of the Franks went on faster and more completely than to the north of that river; and it went on faster between the Loire and the Meuse than between the Meuse and the Rhine. But though the end was a long way off, yet in the end Gaul passed, through many intermediate steps, from the *Franks*, the most Teutonic of Teutons, to the professed leaders of the Latin race, the chiefs of "the Romance" family of nations, the *French*. Rome

which had latinised her conquered provinces, ultimately latinised also her German conquerors.

But the transformation was a long one, and accompanied with many disasters and many losses. In the civil as in the religious order of things, the downfall of Latin ascendancy, at the time of the Teutonic conquests, was the beginning of a dreary period of confusion, violence, and ignorance. While the Franks and Goths were learning the rudiments of civilised social life, the Latins were losing it from the contact and predominance of a ruder people; and the Latins were losing much more than at the time the Germans were gaining. In the sixth century, Latin literature, which had recently seen a real poet like Claudian, a philosopher like Boethius, and which scarcely a century before had seemed to be reviving in new power and life under the originality and the eloquence of Augustine, rapidly sank into a darkness which was to last for ages. The generation which saw the fall of the empire saw the sudden extinction of classical culture, and of all strong intellectual efforts. In the wild and turbulent days of the Frank, the Gothic, the Lombard kings, men had neither leisure nor heart for serious thought and study, much less for literary trifling and pastime, such as that which amused a student of the Latin classics, like Sidonius, while Auvergne was quiet under the protection of Rome. What writing there was, was for the immediate calls of the day. It was very abundant; it was often forcible and genuine;

but the sense of order and beauty, the care for strength and grace, the power of handling language with a mastery over its resources, the discrimination of the weight and proportion of words, had passed away, along with the interest in all the deeper forms of intellectual inquiry and enterprise. Gregory of Tours laments quaintly and pathetically his bad grammar and unskilfulness in writing—his false concords and wrong cases. Latin reading and writing were practised by none but those to whom they were the necessity of their profession, or the road to advancement. All but the monastic or cathedral schools seem to have disappeared in the barbarian conquest. These guarded the records of literature; and a great deal of composition proceeded from them. But it was composition which in its subjects was very monotonous, confined in range, and meagre in ideas; while in execution, it became more and more coarse and rude, and in all but the most direct and primitive forms of expression, childishly helpless. There, indeed, in telling some terrible story, in recording some memorable words of deep passion or emotion, it preserved much of strength and sometimes of precision. But in the presence of the lawlessness and insecurity of the times, men's interest was absorbed by the actual calamities which they saw, by the vicissitudes and crimes which surrounded and oppressed them. They did not care in such days to cultivate the powers and refinements of language, and they soon lost what they had inherited of these powers and

refinements ; they lost, too, with this, the generalising and comparing faculties, the value for exactness, for proportion, for adequacy of statement. The Teutonic conquest was followed by centuries in which we see an increasing literary depression, and a universal incapacity for efforts of strong and fruitful thought. But dark as the times were, they were the beginnings of better days ; the preparation for improvement was never intermitted. The ancient culture of the classical days was gone, with its wisdom, its grandeur, its wickedness. It had failed in the trial to lead men to improvement. And the new order had not yet begun to know its strength and power of growth. The men of the new world were, like children in the nursery, in profound unconsciousness of what they were, and of what they were doing. They thought that they were but living from day to day in a world which was growing old and perishing. The monks, with their hard labour, and their fairy tales of saints, knew not, any more than the rough soldiers and lawyers, that they were making their first but necessary steps in a great progress. What they did was deformed by all kinds of evil and ignorance. But there were really good and even great men among them ; and the best of them did what they could at a time when in the nature of things it was impossible to do much. And when we watch their attempts, poor and weak as they might be, we are reminded perpetually that, at least, they were "faithful in little."

## CHAPTER IV

### CONQUEST OF BRITAIN BY THE ANGLES AND SAXONS

IN almost complete contrast with the course of things seen in the Teutonic settlements on the continent, was the Teutonic conquest of Britain. It was more protracted and gradual ; it was more thorough and complete ; and it was much less affected by the preceding conditions of life and society in the conquered race.

The Teutonic conquerors of Britain came by sea. This of itself distinguished their invasions from the barbarian invasions of Italy, Gaul, and Spain, where whole nations, or armies as great as what were called nations, moved in vast swarms over the plains of Europe, poured across the Danube and the Rhine, or made their way over the Julian and Rhætian Alps, into the provinces of the empire. To Britain they came only in such numbers as could be carried in a few ships of no great size, across the North Sea, from the fiords of Scandinavia and Denmark, or from the mouths and marshes of the German rivers, the Elbe and the Weser. Instead of a great horde led by

Alaric or Theoderic, parties and expeditions of adventurers, unconnected with one another, seeking plunder and the excitement of a freebooter's life rather than new homes, visited continually, as they had done under the empire, different points of the eastern and south-eastern coast of Britain. When favourable circumstances led them to settle, they still only settled in small and isolated bodies. Once settled they were fed from their original seats. Smaller bands coalesced into larger ones, and these again grew into separate kingdoms, separately pushing their boundaries against the Britons, or against one another, sometimes fused together, sometimes united for a time under the supremacy of one of them. But all this took time. The invaders gained a new fatherland by a series of sporadic conquests. In the long and bitter struggle between English and "Welsh," no one battle decided the result of the strife; no one great victory, as so often on the continent, saved the land, or delivered it to a new master.

The conquerors of Britain, the founders of the English people, came straight across the sea from one small corner in the wilderness of nations, where three obscure tribes, unheeded at the time when the world was full of the name and terror of Goths and Huns, were loosely united in one of the leagues common at the time among the barbarians. Jutes, Angles, and a tribe of old "Saxons," whose fathers had moved over Europe from east to west, till they were stopped by the broad mouth of the Elbe, and by the bleak

and dreary shores of the North Sea, had learned that the ocean, though very terrible, offered a useful war-path to the warriors who dared to trust it. According to our earliest traditions, a band of these rovers, hovering about the coast as many other bands had for many years done before them, was invited, amid the anarchy left in Britain by the retirement of the Roman legions, to help Romanised Britons against their wilder kinsfolk. What followed was on a small scale the same as that which so often happened on a large one in the empire. From allies the new comers became invaders, and the first invaders became masters of Kent. The English settlers in Kent were Jutes. Others from the same region followed. A few years later, a band of Saxons, in three ships, we are told, planted themselves on the coast of what they made Sussex. Another band in five ships landing more to the westward, laid the foundation of the great kingdom of Wessex. On the east coast, Angles and Saxons continued to land, to invade, to occupy, from the Thames to the Wash, from the Wash to the Humber, from the Humber to the Tweed. Then, up the rivers and along the Roman roads, the different bands pushed forward into the interior from the south coast, and from the east, with chequered fortune, but with unabated stubbornness. They encountered equal stubbornness. The native resistance was of that kind which a weaker but tenacious race offers to a stronger one; unobservant of opportunities, slack and ineffective at critical moments, but obstinate,



difficult to extinguish, always ready to revive, and sometimes bursting out into a series of heroic and victorious exploits. The name of King Arthur, whatever historical obscurity hangs about it, has left its indelible mark in our national traditions. Through continued ill-fortune, with intervals of success, but with general failure, this resistance was protracted and fierce. But it was in vain. The advance of the tide was slow but continuous, sometimes arrested but never retreating; bit by bit the land was covered; fragment by fragment of British territory broke away, and was swallowed up in the rising flood, which came not in one channel but in many, and from many different sides. The first attempts at occupation by the Jutes in Kent were, according to the English chronicles, about the middle of the fifth century, the years when southern and central Europe were trembling before the terrible king of the Huns. About fifty years later, in the times of Theoderic and Clovis, began the West Saxon advance under the house of Cerdic from the Hampshire harbours. In another half century, while Vandals and Goths were falling before the sword of Belisarius, there was an English kingdom set up in the north, and English settlements on the east coast, and along the rivers which run into the North Sea. We see the British boundary driven inwards, and forming an irregular semi-circle from the Clyde to the Land's End, flanked for a great portion of the line by the English settlements on the east, and broken into and deeply indented by the en

croachments of English conquest along the course of the Severn. Another fifty years, and the great English kingdom of Northumbria emerges under Æthelfrith, and the line of the British territories is again severed and broken up into separate districts. Then began the second stage of the great change. The converging lines of advance met in the central part of the island. The struggle for new ground began between English tribes and kingdoms; wars for dominion were waged by one kingdom against its neighbours; supremacy, more or less wide and undisputed, was won by personal qualities in one king, was lost by the want of them in another, was exercised for a time, extinguished for a time, transferred from one kingdom to another, as each was the more fortunate in its men, its circumstances, and its wars. But this continual alternation of peace and war among the English kingdoms, this perpetual trial of strength and this fluctuation between subordination and independence, was the process by which the tribes which had been a loose confederacy by the banks of the Eyder and the Elbe, were again to become one nation in England. The centre of power moved from the north, through the midland, to the south; from Northumbria to Mercia, from Mercia till it became permanently fixed in Wessex. And by that time, three centuries and a half from the first Kentish inroads, by a progress most irregular and turbulent, but never interrupted, the English nation had grown into permanent form and character out of

the detached bands and tribal settlements and petty kingdoms, among which the island was at first parcelled out. It had organised institutions, a language, a spirit of its own, which it owed to no foreign source. The new people which had arisen in the West, and changed Cæsar's name of Britain to Egbert's England, was, as has been truly said, "the one purely German nation that rose upon the wreck of Rome."

But, perhaps, because so slow and gradual, the English conquest was complete, in a sense in which the Teutonic conquests on the mainland were not. It was the complete displacement of one race by another. How this was done, we have but imperfect accounts. We have no such record as we have of the Gothic wars, in the Latin writers, Orosius and Jornandes, in the Greeks, Zosimus, Procopius, and in the valuable fragments of reports made by Byzantine envoys and officials. We have no such almost contemporary record, confused and unsatisfactory though it be, as we have of the Frankish conquest in Gregory of Tours. But so much is certain, that whereas in the fifth century the language of Britain was Celtic, with an admixture of Latin in the towns where the Romanised population was gathered, in the course of two hundred years, Celtic had disappeared, and Latin had been introduced afresh. From the Tamar, the Severn, and the Tweed, a new language, purely and unmingledly Teutonic, in structure, genius, and for the most part in its vocabulary, had become the speech of the country; the speech of all freemen;

the speech of all but slaves, bondmen, and outlaws ; the speech which gave names, if not to the rivers and the hills, or to the great walled cities remaining from the Roman times, yet to all the present divisions of the land, and to all the new settlements of men. The English conquerors, unlike the Gothic and Frankish ones, had not suffered the old population to subsist around them. Saxons and Angles,—it is the only way in which the result is to be explained,—carried their conquests to extermination. They slew, they reduced to slavery, or they drove off the former inhabitants ; they cleared them away, as the Red Indians were cleared away in America. No trace of intermixture appears between the “Saxon” and the “Welsh,” who hated one another with the deepest and most irreconcilable hatred. No British names appear among the servants of the English kings. No vestiges survived of British political, or social life. Romanised cities, villas which showed the marbles and mosaics of the south, Welsh hamlets and hill forts, all perished amid sack, fire, and massacre. Some lines of indestructible Roman roads, like Watling Street, some massive Roman walls, such as the fragments in London, Lincoln, and Caer-gwent, some Anglicised Roman names of cities survive, to show who were masters of the land before the English came.

The Teutonic conquerors on the continent had long been familiar with the Romans, whose masters they at last became. They admired their civilisation,

or, at least, its fruits. The nearer they came to it the more they were fascinated by its splendour, its order, its honours; like Alaric's successor Athaulf, who began with the ambition of substituting a Gothic empire for the Roman, and ended by declaring that this was a dream, and that his highest glory must be to restore the Roman Empire of law by Gothic valour. Moreover, most of them had already received Christianity, and were accustomed to hear its lessons in their mother-tongue, before they settled in Gaul and Italy. The subtle power of civilisation enthralled and transformed them, willing and proud as they were, in spite of all their northern sense of high blood, of strength, and freedom, to yield to its influences. It was not so in Britain. Angles and Saxons, Jutes and Frisians, fresh from the sea and pirate life, or from the bleak flats and sand-hills of the German or Danish coasts, knew nothing of the great civilised empire from which they were separated by the breadth of Europe. They might possibly have seen Roman soldiers in the garrisons of the British shore. They knew nothing of Roman service, of Roman cities, of Roman policy and law. And they knew nothing of Roman religion, and owned no reverence for it. When, therefore, they settled in their new homes, there was nothing to enter into competition or conflict with the customs, ideas, moral and social rules, which had governed them in their old ones. Of all things Latin, as of all things British, they made a clean sweep; it was

foreign to them, it was "Welsh," and they would have none of it. Other German invaders had bowed before the majesty of Christian bishops, and had often, even in the storm of an assault or the sack of a captured town, respected Christian churches. The English conquerors were fiercely heathen, and hated Christianity as the religion of those whom it was their work to destroy from off the land which was to be the land of the English. Clergy and monks perished with their brethren in the fury of the invasion, and the planting of the English nation was the utter destruction of the Christian religion within its borders.

It was under no indirect influences from a subject population that the English were to unlearn their ancient barbarism. Roman laws, which retained so much of their power on the Continent, did nothing here. Out of their own customs, their own strong and broad notions of right, their own spontaneous efforts after a reasonable and suitable order of life, unaffected by foreign schooling or by imitation of foreign ways, losing perhaps some of the benefits of foreign experience, the chiefs of the new English kingdoms worked out principles and institutions which were to be the foundations of a political organisation as solid, as elastic, as enduring as that of Rome. And with respect to their religion, they did not take it by a kind of contagion from a surrounding and conquered race, more instructed and more elevated in its nobler specimens, but more corrupted in its average ones. England was an

untouched field for the teachers of Christianity ; its religion had to be begun from the very beginning, as in our day among the heathen tribes of Africa and New Zealand. The English were converted, as afterwards the Germans, Scandinavians, and most of the Slave races were converted, entirely from without. A century and a half had passed, and from adventurers and invaders they had become at home in their several shares of England, before Christianity appealed to them. Its appeal came from many and different quarters. It was the appeal almost entirely, not of force, but of persuasion and example, and it gained its hold on them with singular rapidity and power. Augustine, a missionary ambassador from Gregory the Great, the far-off bishop of Rome, the venerable but dimly known person who, in religion, answered to the Roman emperor in things worldly, won the ear, after hesitation and serious thought, of one of the English kings, Ethelbert of Kent. In the same corner of the island where the heathen invasion had begun, Augustine made good a footing in the court and among the people, and laid the foundation of the great see of Canterbury, destined to be the second see of the West (597-601). Paulinus, another Italian companion of Augustine, preached in the north, and in 627 baptized Edwin, the powerful king of Northumbria, at York. In the north the missionaries and teachers came also from the wonderful Irish Church, at this time—the sixth and seventh centuries—keeping up its peculiar traditions, cherish-

ing learning and a high enthusiasm, in complete isolation from the rest of Christendom, and sending forth its missionaries far afield, with a spirit unknown elsewhere. It sent forth, not only St. Columba (565) to the Picts, and St. Aidan to the English Northumbrians (635), but St. Columban (595) to the Burgundian Jura, the Helvetian Zurich, and the Italian cloisters of Bobbio, St. Gall (614) to the Alamans of the lake of Constance, and other less known comrades and friends to the lands of the Franks and Bavarians, to Glarus and Chur, and the highest sources of the Rhine—the apostles at once of the gospel, and of settled life, of husbandry and tillage. In the great kingdom of Mercia, with its frequent dependency the land of the East Saxons, it was bishops of the school of Iona and their English disciples who founded and built up in the middle of the seventh century the Church. The Burgundian Felix (627) preached to the East Angles. A bishop from Italy, Birinus (635), sent by Pope Honorius, converted the English of Wessex. A teacher from the north, Wilfrid of York (664-709), was the apostle of the South Saxons. In the second half of the seventh century, these separate efforts began to present the aspect of an organised unity under the twenty years' vigorous rule of Archbishop Theodore (668-690), the Greek of Tarsus, who, with his friend Hadrian the African, had been sent from Rome, "the first archbishop," says Bede, "whom all the English Church obeyed." Like the conquest, the



conversion of England spread from different independent centres; the work began from them at different times, and went on in different ways, and with varying rates of progress, till at last boundaries met and became confluent, and the separate kingdoms found themselves prepared to be fused into one people. And the unity of religion, attained earlier, though not without difficulties of its own, than the unity of the nation, contributed most powerfully to make Northumbrians and Mercians and West Saxons into Englishmen. With fluctuations of success and reaction, with one great and terrible struggle in the middle of England against the new religion, under the Mercian king Penda (624-655), the English kingdoms had within a century after the landing of Augustine, become Christian.

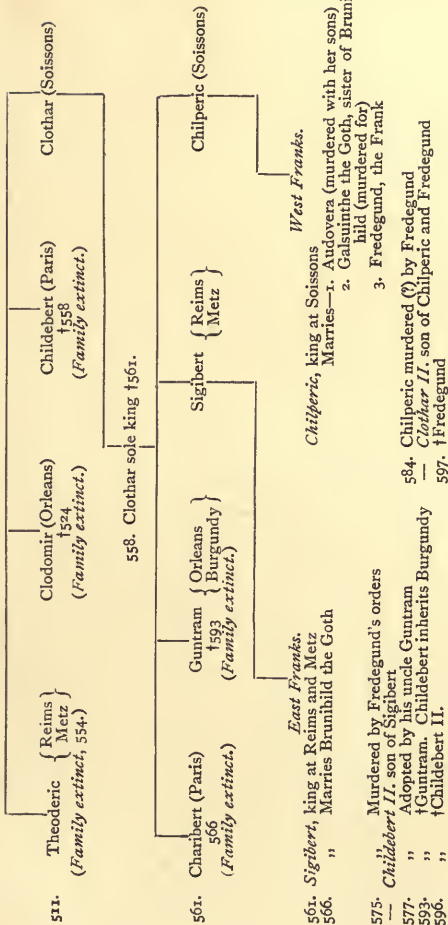
Of this great change and its incidents, a singularly curious and interesting account is given in Bede's History. The causes of it were of more than one kind; but in the forefront must, undoubtedly, be placed the breadth and greatness of Christian ideas, and the purity, courage, enthusiasm, and indefatigable self-devotion, though not always innocent of superstition, of the Christian teachers. Supposed miracles, and, alas! sometimes evidently fraudulent ones, played their part in recommending the divine message. The sanction and authority of chiefs who were trusted and honoured, doubtless went for much with their people. But at bottom it was the teaching itself, with the evident truth of much of it, its noble-

ness, its high solemnities, its promises, and the consistency of its teachers, which conquered to its obedience a people whose customs and whose circumstances were strongly against it. In England, as abroad, Christianity won its way, not merely and not mainly by the support of kings, not merely, though, unhappily, in part, by the worse aid of superstition and fraud, but because it was a gospel for the poor, the slave, the miserable, the ruined, a defiance to the proud, a warning to the great, a bridle to the mighty.

And once received it was received with no half a mind, or half-hearted allegiance. The Anglo-Saxon Church had its strange anomalies, its deep blots, its repulsive features. Like other churches, it had to deal in its course both with grave questions and with petty quarrels. It had its rise and prime and its deep decline. But in its best days it had a straightforward seriousness of conviction and purpose, and a fire and thoroughness of faith among its early converts, which are very much its own. Bede, like Gregory of Tours, reflects a state of society which is wild, uncontrolled, violent, full of battle and death. But the characteristic passages of Bede are passages which are full of genuine religious or moral interest, and which bear the mark of deep feeling and sympathy in the writer. The characteristic passages of Gregory's history of the Franks are tragedies of dark and dreadful crime, to which the stories of *Œdipus* and *Lear* are tame, and they are told with unmoved calmness and composure.

THE MEROVINGIANS. 481-752.

481. Clovis †511



*West Franks.*

Chilperic, king at Soissons  
Marries—1. Audovera (murdered with her sons)  
2. Galsuinthe the Goth, sister of Brunibild (murdered for)  
3. Fredegund, the Frank

*East Franks.*

Chilperic, king at Reims and Metz  
Marries Brunibild the Goth

Murdered by Fredegund's orders

Chilperic II, son of Sigibert

Adopted by his uncle Guntram

†Guntram. Chilperic inherits Burgundy

†Chilperic II.

584. Chilperic murdered (?) by Fredegund

— Clothar II, son of Chilperic and Fredegund

597. †Fredegund

## THE MEROVINGIANS (continued).

*West Franks.*  
584. *Clothar II.*

*East Franks.*  
575. *Childebert II.* †596

596. *Theudebert II.*  
(Austrasia)

612. Theudebert, overthrown and murdered by Theoderic

*Theoderic II.*  
(Burgundy)

613. †Theoderic II.  
Theoderic's children, with Brunihild, slain by Clothar II.

613. *Clothar II.* sole king of Neustria, Austrasia, Burgundy

622. Associates his son *Dagobert* as king of Austrasia

628. †Clothar II.

†638. *Dagobert*, sole king of Neustria, Austrasia, Burgundy

Charibert  
(Aquitaine)  
†631

638. *Sigibert II.* (Austrasia) †656

line extinct in Dagobert II. †680

687. *Battle of Testry*, victory of Austrasian

Mayors of the Palace, Pipin

Mayors of the Palace (*Pippin* family)

supreme in Austrasia and Neustria.

638. *Clovis II.* (Neustria)

Merovingian family continued in Neustrian line till the Rois Fainéants end.

752. *Childeric III.* last Merovingian deposed.

## CHAPTER V

### SUPREMACY OF THE FRANKS IN THE WEST—THE MEROVINGIAN KINGS, DESCENDANTS OF CLOVIS —THE MAYORS OF THE PALACE—RISE OF THE CAROLINGIAN FAMILY

AT the end of the sixth century, somewhat more than a hundred years from the abdication of the last Western emperor (476-600), the great change had been accomplished, by which, in all the western lands occupied by the empire, the public prerogatives, and the indirect powers of a ruling people, were transferred from the Latin to the German race. The Romans in the time of the empire had, in a degree unknown in the world before, moulded the subject populations to their own likeness and model. They Romanised the whole West, more or less. Everywhere as time went on, in increasing measure, from York to the Columns of Hercules, on the Rhone, on the Seine, on the Rhine, even in the valleys of the Alps, their institutions, their laws, their education, their language, their buildings, their monuments, at last—when they

adopted it—their Christianity, were the silent and continuous influences which assimilated life and thought and habits to the Italian type, as it had been developed by the marvellous history of Rome. It is scarcely possible to express the greatness of the change produced by the interruption of this process. It was interrupted by what is called the invasion of the barbarians. Barbarians they certainly were, who broke in upon the Roman Empire, and destroyed it in the West. But it was not because they were barbarians that their victory was so fruitful in consequences. It was because they were conquerors of a new and special race. It was because it was the substitution, temporary in one land, permanent in another, of the Teutonic race, one and the same race in all its manifold varieties—Goths, Franks, Saxons, Angles, Lombards—for the preceding Latin rule and supremacy. No greater and more decisive crisis has ever happened in the history of the world than the settlement of the Teutonic peoples in the lands which the Latins had filled with their ideas and their language, their manners, their spirit, their names, their customs. Nor is the importance of this change diminished, because in so many parts the German conquerors were greatly influenced and at last absorbed by the Romanised population amid which they settled. We cannot tell what the course of history would have been if the Latins had kept the Germans out, in Gaul, in Italy, in Spain, in Britain ; but, assuredly, it would have been very different.

The transfer of power in the West, from the Latin race to the German, in the fifth and sixth centuries, constitutes the first act of modern history.

But it was only the first act of a long and troubled drama, not even yet played out. The German settlement took many shapes. In England it was exclusive and homogeneous. In Gaul it was greatly affected by the circumstances round it, and it allowed its own distinctive features to be by degrees impaired and obliterated by foreign influences. In Spain it directly aimed at a policy of fusion between the two races, under the direction of the Church. In Italy, under the Lombards, it was throughout uneasy, oppressive, antagonistic, too strong not to leave deep impressions, but not strong enough to master and assimilate the obstinate counter element of Latin character in its native home. Teutonic institutions and feelings grew more and more vigorous in England. In Gaul, after efforts of resistance, German France gradually melted into Latin and "Romance" France. In Spain, under a "Romance" and Latin language, the old feeling and temper of the Goths largely survived; the basis of Spanish character was Teutonic, and under the long strain of the national and Christian war against the Moors, it issued in that singular mixture of strength and weakness, of loftiness and baseness, which has so often shown itself in Spanish history. In Italy, the Lombard power, though not the Lombard element, after lasting for two centuries, was thrown off as the Gothic power had been, but, as

in the case of the Gothic power, only by foreign aid. In Italy, throughout the middle ages, and down to our own time, the Germans were never, in the judgment and feeling of the Italians, other than what they were at the first—barbarians, whom the Italians were not strong enough to keep out ; while to the Germans, the Italians never ceased to be “Welsh,” the Teutonic equivalent for “barbarian” or “foreigner.”

Thus, at the beginning of the seventh century, the new Teutonic settlement appears everywhere established. From the empire, as it existed in the East, it had little to fear. The emperor at Constantinople was still, in moments of convenience or in moods of courtesy, acknowledged by the Teutonic kings as invested with a majesty without rival or peer on earth, the source of honours, of legitimate titles, of high dignities, who might still be dangerous on the fringe of their dominions, but who was too far off, and too busy with troubles of his own, to cause disquietude in the West. There was still a certain amount of intercourse with Constantinople. The Lombards, hated by the Franks, the Greeks, and the popes, were assailed by occasional alliances, in which the Frank kings intrigued with the emperor, and sometimes overreached him. The real dangers of the new races arose, first, from their own intestine discords, and their intractableness to order and law ; and, next, from the habits of aggression and pillage lingering in the tribes of their own blood, who remained in their old seats in Germany and on the Danube.



In England, in the following century, this last danger appeared in a most formidable shape. The British race had been exterminated or crushed into insignificance in England. Through fierce wars among themselves the separate kingdoms learnt one another's strength. The smaller ones became attached to the larger, and a tendency to union began, strengthened by the strengthening influence of the Church. First, and partially, under Northumbria, then under Mercia, and at last more completely under Wessex, a single kingly supremacy embodied the growing fact of the unity, in its laws and its fortunes, of the English nation. But then the new nation began to suffer from the repetition of the process by which it had itself come into being. Just as the fathers of the English had come first with a few pirate ships, then with more, first only for a summer ravage, then to winter in the island; first only to carry back plunder to their eastern homes on the Weser or the Elbe, then to settle and gain a new home in England,—as they began by making swift inroads into an enemy's country, pushing up the rivers with the tide, or scouring the land far and wide with troops of horsemen, and ended by besieging towns, subduing kingdoms, challenging the submission of the Britons,—so came the Danish rovers, "vikings," upon England. But the Danish settlement never became what the earlier Anglo-Saxon one had been. It did not create a new people. The Danes won a footing in England, a large and lasting

one. For a time, they became the masters there, and their princes wore the English crown; but they were too late to found a nation. In spite of the tremendous miseries and losses of the Danish invasion, the English people had become too strongly constituted to be broken up by it, or even to be greatly altered in character and policy.

In Spain the national history was more tragic. The policy of the great Theoderic, of which scarcely a trace appears in the sons of Clovis, seems to have been continued among the Gothic kings of Spain. There also, though in a very different way from the English, the Goths through all the disturbances of the time, were on their way, apparently with a deliberate aim, to political unity and constitutional order. After the death of Euric, the conqueror and legislator (484), the Gothic power in Gaul fell before the Franks, and its main seat was transferred to Spain, under a constitutionally elective kingly rule, which, as with the Lombards, the chiefs always tried to keep elective, and the kings usually but not always tried to make hereditary. But, in contrast with the Lombards in Italy, the Gothic kings, in spite of bloody changes and fierce opposition from their nobility, succeeded in identifying themselves with the land and the people whom they had conquered. They guided the fortunes of the country with a distinct purpose and vigorous hand. By Leovigild (572-586), the power of the rebellious nobility was broken, and the independence and name of the Sueves of Galicia

extinguished. The still more dangerous religious conflict between the Catholic population and the inherited Arianism of the Goths was put down, but at the cost of the life of his son, Herminigild, who had married a Frank and Catholic princess, and who placed himself at the head of the Catholics. But Leovigild was the last Arian king. This cause of dissension was taken away by his son Reccared (586-601), who solemnly abandoned Arianism, and embraced with zeal the popular Catholic creed. He was followed by the greater part of his Arian subjects, but the change throughout the land was not accomplished without some fierce resistance. It led among other things to the disappearance of the Gothic language, and of all that recalled the Arian days, and to the destruction in Spain of what there was of Gothic literature, such as the translation of the Bible, supposed to be tainted with Arianism. But it determined the complete fusion of the Gothic and Latin population. After Reccared, two marked features of the later Spanish character began to show themselves. One was the great prominence in the State of the ecclesiastical element. The Spanish kings sought in the clergy a counterpoise to their turbulent nobility. The great Church councils of Toledo became the legislative assemblies of the nation; the bishops in them took precedence of the nobles; laws were made there as well as canons; and seventeen of these councils are recorded between the end of the fourth century and the end of the seventh. The other

feature was that stern and systematic intolerance, which became characteristic of Spain. Under Sisebut (612-620), took place the first expulsion of the Jews. The Jews of Spain, whose settlements were numerous, rich, and of old date, had to choose between baptism, or else exile with the loss of their possessions. This legislation was renewed with continued severity, and the kings took a special oath to enforce it. The Spanish nation, meanwhile, was being knit together; the garrisons of the Greek Empire were gradually driven to the coast, and, under Suinthila (620-631), finally expelled from the peninsula. The Gothic kings, mostly elected, men, for the most part, of energy and purpose, sometimes of relentless purpose, who still retained amid Latin influences their peculiar Teutonic names, governed with a statesmanship unknown among the Franks. To break the restless and rebellious spirit of the nobles, which Gregory of Tours thought peculiar to the Goths, Chindasuinth (642-652), an old man of eighty, banished at a stroke from Spain two hundred nobles and seven hundred freemen, confiscating their estates, and reducing their families to serfdom. It produced profound peace, while the Franks under their feeble kings were distracted by the fierce rivalry of Brunihild and Fredegund, and the rising Mayors of the Palace. Equally resolute in encountering the natural turbulence of their warriors and attentive to the political condition of the kingdom, the kings, for the most part, till the last showed themselves a match

for their formidable nobility; and, under their care, the legislation of the West Goths attained a methodical form and a comparatively judicious and equitable character peculiar to it. Under Chindasuinth (642-652), the laws of the two races were fused into one, and for the first time among the Teutonic nations, *personal law* was changed into a *law of the land*. Under the kings who succeeded him down to Egika (687-701), and from the councils of Toledo, grew up the *Forum Judicum*, the Gothic Code, "the first law-book in which the Roman and German law was attempted to be harmonised into a systematic whole": the first Western legislation which aims at exhibiting the philosophical idea of law. The Gothic realm of Spain was the most flourishing and the most advanced of the new Teutonic kingdoms. It was rich and powerful, and though there was still much that was barbarous, ungovernable, corrupt, and dangerous, the powers of the country were in strong hands; and the kings, the nobles, and the clergy, all who could represent the nation, were learning to work together in their public assemblies.

But however the Goths in Spain might have worked out their political career, their course was rudely arrested. The little cloud, which, in the beginning of the seventh century, had risen in Arabia, had, by the beginning of the eighth, swelled and spread into a devastating storm, sweeping round all the coasts of the Mediterranean. In 622, the flight of Mahomet from Mecca to Medina had fixed a new

era in history—the *Hegira*. In the ten years which intervened between it and his death (632), he had established a new religion in Arabia, and converted the tribes of Arabia, or the Saracens, into its armed and enthusiastic apostles. While the Goths had been settling their laws, while their kings had been marshalling their court after the order of Byzantium, the Saracens had been drawing nearer and nearer. At the time that Chintila (636-640) was driving out the Jews, the Saracens were taking Damascus and Alexandria; while the fierce old man Chindasuintha was crushing rebel nobles and reforming the law, they were making their next step and invading Africa. While his son was ordering the offices of the court of Toledo after the imperial model, they were beginning their first nine years' siege of Constantinople (668-677). Their fleets had begun to attack the Spanish coast, though they had always been repulsed. But in Spain they had two allies: the Jewish race, there and in Africa smarting under their persecutions; and the factions, the ambitions, and the corruption of the high clergy and nobles. A traitor, it is said, Count Julian, invited the Saracens, and they came, burning their ships behind them. The tremendous battle of the Guadalete, near Cadiz, lasting a whole summer week, from Sunday to Sunday, decided the fate of the kingdom and the course of its history. It was to Spain what the battle of Hastings was to England. The Gothic nobility perished in large numbers. King Roderick, the last Gothic king, was never seen again.

In ten years' time the Saracen invasion had overwhelmed almost the whole country, and there was nothing left in Spain to Christianity and the European races, but the mountains of the Asturias and Old Castile. Spain was the only one of the new Teutonic nations which was beaten down by an entirely alien power. It did not finally succumb. In the northern provinces, the Christians not only rallied, but from their mountain fastnesses began a series of unintermitted attacks on the Mahometans. Behind the screen of the Spanish highlands new kingdoms were organised: Asturias (718); Oviedo (737); Leon (914); Navarre (905); Aragon, Castile (1035). At length the tide of invasion began to roll southward till the Moors were swept away; but several centuries of the early national life of Spain were consumed in that most terrible and demoralising discipline, in which unsparing hatred is elevated to a heroic virtue—the discipline of a religious warfare.

Of all the new nations, the Franks alone, though perpetually troubled with intestine quarrels, maintained their comparative exemption from the external shocks and disasters which fell on their neighbours. Strong enough to keep together and to hold their own, they deepened the foundations of their power over Gaul and the lands of the Rhine, enjoying their own rich and magnificent heritage, asserting their supremacy over the heathen tribes of the German border. For more than three centuries after the Teutonic conquest, the Franks held the foremost place among the new

nations. "When Rome fell," says Otto of Frisingen, a German chronicler of the twelfth century, "Francia"—the Frank race and kingdom, for we must not yet begin to translate by the later and narrower *France*—"arose to take the crown." The phrase is of course exaggerated: but it expresses with truth the comparative prominence of the Franks. It is the more remarkable, because the kingdom of Clovis, instead of continuing in the hands of a single ruler, was immediately broken up under his descendants into separate kingdoms, acknowledging a loose tie of unity, and from time to time brought together, but always ready to fly apart again. And, further, in the family of Clovis, the Mervings or Merovingians, there is no sign, with one inconsiderable exception, the Austrasian king Dagobert (628-638), of the political aims, or of the military capacity, which appear among the Goths of Spain, and the English in Britain. The history of the Frank kings, in Gregory of Tours, is a sickening story of lawless and unbridled self-indulgence, of domestic hatreds, treachery, and cruelty. Brother was ever ready to assail and conspire against brother, to take him at advantage, to exterminate his children. Their attempts at enlarging their domains at one another's expense were usually as feeble and stupid as they were unscrupulous. Their prevailing and monotonous brutality was only checked by superstitious fears of the wrath of St. Martin of Tours. It was only varied by good-natured licentiousness and perfidy such as that of King Guntram of Orleans, or



by pedantry like that of King Chilperic of Soissons, "the Nero and Herod of our time," as Gregory calls him, but who also dabbled in heresy, tried to add new letters to the Latin alphabet, and wrote Latin verses which would not scan. But the Frank race with their territorial chiefs, still Teutonic in the main, though in the west and south becoming less so in each successive generation, preserved the vigour, the audacity, the fighting qualities of their blood. They occupied a land of great natural wealth, and great geographical advantages, which had been prepared for them by Latin culture; they inherited great cities which they had not built, and fields and vineyards which they had not planted; and they had the wisdom, not to destroy, but to use their conquest. They were able with singular ease and confidence to employ and trust the services, civil and military, of the Latin population. There is no appearance of any native rising to take advantage of their internal discords, till late in the decline of the family of Clovis. Then, at last, and too late, the great south-western province of Aquitaine, with its natural riches and its flourishing cities, its Roman and Gothic memories, its turbulent and warlike native tribes—the tribes which have left their names in portions of it, Vascones, Gascony, Basques—struck boldly and obstinately for independence, and gave much trouble to the successors of the Merovingians, the mighty founders of the Carolingian dynasty. The bond between the Franks and the native races was the

clergy. From the time of Clovis their kings had deliberately favoured the Latin clergy. Their patronage was deeply mischievous to the purity of the Church, but it helped forward the alliance and the fusion between Germans and Latins. The forces of the whole nation were at the disposal of the ruling race ; and under Frank chiefs, the Latins and Gauls learned once more to be warriors. Thus strengthened, the Franks not only repelled any pressure from beyond the Rhine or the Alps, but they kept invasion at a distance by being themselves assailants. They were the one race whom the spirit of invasion carried backwards over their old steps and to their old seats : the one nation which after settling in the West flowed back across the Rhine, and attempted again and again from Gaul the conquest of Italy, first from Narses, and then from the Lombards. Narses defeated them ; the Lombards for a long time held their own. While the family of Clovis ruled, the Franks ravaged Italy, but never subdued it. But over the German nations, Frisians and Saxons, Thuringians, Bavarians, and Alamans, the Frank kings asserted an imperfect and contested but persistent supremacy. Frank kings, allied in blood though perpetually quarrelling, were felt to be the heads of the Teutonic nations, from the Frisian marshes between the mouths of the Rhine and Weser, to the valleys and lakes of the Alamans, in what is now Switzerland.

But among the Franks, as among the other nations, two opposite tendencies were continually at work ; the

tendency to aggregation and national unity, and the tendency to dispersion and independence. There were further, among the Franks, though they were so friendly to Latin culture, conflicting dispositions to gravitate in the Eastern lands towards what was German, and in the Western lands towards what was Latin. One of these conflicts was represented by the continual division and reunion of the kingdom of Clovis. Divided at first among his four sons, the different portions were merged or shared, as death removed one or more of the partners, till all the shares came into the hands of a survivor, Clothar of Soissons (558), who again began the division among his children, with the same result. Eight times in the course of a century and a half, East and West Franks, Burgundy and Aquitaine, had been divided; three times, but only for a few years, they had been reunited under one king. But further, in these divisions, with great fluctuations of boundaries and possessions, two distinct centres of different national influences gradually disclose themselves. The *Francia Romana* and the *Francia Teutonica*, the "Frankland," surrounded by a Latin population, and the original "Frankland," bordering on the Rhine, and recruited from beyond it, came by natural and necessary causes to be more and more contrasted with one another. From the middle of the sixth century, the Teutonic or Eastern division became more distinctly defined; it became known as *Auster*, *Austrasia*, with Reims, and then with Metz for its capitals; in speech and

feeling it was thoroughly German, and there was the focus of German influence. The land of the Western Franks acquired, in opposition to Austrasia, the name of *Neuster*, *Neustria*, a name the origin of which is not clear, the *New*, or *Younger*, or *Western* kingdom, and which is also found with a corresponding *Austria*, a western and eastern division, among the Lombards of the north of Italy. Clovis's old capital, Paris, was its natural centre; but Paris was sometimes claimed as a joint possession by his descendants, and then Soissons or Tournay were the residences of its kings. Burgundy, still a separate province, and sometimes a separate kingdom, with Orleans or Chalons-sur-Saone for capitals, gradually became joined to Neustria. Aquitaine, with its wealth and its Latin cities, was at first shared by the different brother kings, and then became the prize of the strongest. But while Austrasia continued German, the Franks of the West were acquiring more and more a Latin character. Still, with wide and increasing differences, these great divisions formed one and the same Frank kingdom, —Frank, in opposition to Roman, as well as to Gothic, Lombard, Saxon, or Slave. For a long time it seemed uncertain whether what Clovis had conquered was to be one realm or many; it seemed equally doubtful whether German influences and German languages were not to prevail to the Atlantic, the Pyrenees, and the Mediterranean. Three centuries passed before this great question was settled. But very slowly and by an insensible change, not easy to

trace in detail, the two great countries, which the Frank settlement had for a time partially united, were again finally divided; and Gaul, though under a new name, derived from the German occupation, drifted back into its Latin sympathies, and its opposition to Germany.

The family of Clovis, the Mervings or Merovingians, fast degenerated. They lost their father's strength; they retained, almost to the last, their father's cruelty and unscrupulous perfidy. They became unequal to the contest for power, not with the conquered people, but with the great men of their palace and retinue, their own companions and warriors; the men whom they created dukes of provinces, and counts of great cities, who, though as yet hereditary only through the accident of personal qualities, were growing up round them into a powerful nobility. They were governed during the last part of the sixth century by terrible queens,—two rivals, equally famous for their beauty, their audacity, and their crimes,—Fredegund, the low-born Neustrian Frank, the wife of Chilperic of Soissons (561-584); and Brunihild, the Gothic princess, the wife of his brother, Sigibert of Metz (561-575), the daughter of the Gothic king of Spain, Athanagild. Brunihild's sister, the Gothic wife of Chilperic, had been murdered to make way for Fredegund; and the hatred and ambition of the Frankish and Gothic sisters-in-law filled the royal houses with intrigue and murder. Chilperic and Sigibert, Fredegund's

husband and brother-in-law, both perished by her plots; Brunihild, as ruthless in her crimes, but leaving a more royal memory in the local traditions of France, was torn to pieces by a wild horse, in her old age, by Fredegund's vindictive son, the second Clothar (613): she had been the murderess, he said, of ten Frank kings. Then there appear at the side of the king, and at the head of their administration, officers who are known in history as the "Mayors of the Palace" (*Majores Domûs*), elected by the great men, or appointed by the king, according as each happened to be the stronger. Under their feeble masters, they rose into a position, new among Germans, but analogous to that of the barbarian Patricians, such as Stilicho and Ricimer, in the last days of the Western Empire, and perhaps imitated from the usages of the imperial court. Their office has contributed to the vocabulary of politics a new phrase for indirect or illegitimate power, just as a phrase for political nullity derives its origin from the decayed and helpless family of the fierce Clovis, the *Rois Fainéants*. The Mayors of the Palace make their appearance amid the ferocious quarrels kept alive by Fredegund and Brunihild, of whose purposes and crimes they are the instruments or the victims; but after the sacrifice of Brunihild to family vengeance and to the fears and hatred of the Frank nobles, the Mayors of the Palace assume a new importance, as representing the rival interests of the Austrasian and

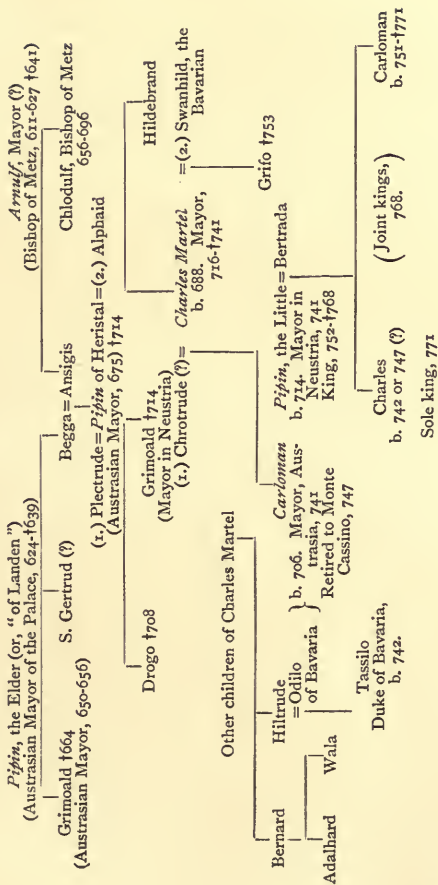
Neustrian kingdoms. After a number of insignificant names, men at length appear who concentrate in their hands the whole power of each state, and play with the last Chilperics and Childeberts like the pieces in a game of chess. In the beginning of the seventh century, the eastern Mayors of the Palace, the dukes of Austrasia, all of them united by kindred or family ties, Arnulf, afterwards Bishop of Metz, Pipin of Landen, Pipin of Heristal, established a character for wisdom and virtue which gave them a popularity and influence new in Frank history. Their natural antagonists were the Neustrian mayors, one of whom, Ebroin (656-681), was a formidable and dangerous opponent. For more than twenty years the struggle for supremacy went on. Each side was supported not merely by the lay chiefs of each kingdom, but by great bishops, some of them since canonised, who threw themselves into the quarrels and intrigues of the contest, and sometimes, like St. Didier of Vienne and St. Leger of Autun, perished in it. After various turns of fortune, Ebroin, bold, resolute, and cruel, had at last broken the Austrasian power, and established the superiority of Neustria. But in 681 he was murdered; and six years later Pipin of Heristal won the battle of Testry, between Peronne and St. Quentin, over the Neustrians (687). The result of the contest was the decisive victory of Austrasia, the victory for two centuries of the German element among the Franks over the Latin, a revival and restoration of the

original Teutonic character in the Frank kingdom, for the next period of its existence.

The line of Clovis lingered ingloriously after the battle of Testry, reigning but not ruling, for more than sixty years. The new masters of the Frank kingdom were the dukes of Austrasia, Pipin of Heristal, and his sons, a vigorous family, German in blood, ecclesiastical in their relationships, with strong and clear political purposes. The founders of the race were the elder Pipin of Landen (†639), and St. Arnulf (†641), who, like so many of the bishops of the time, had been first a soldier and statesman, and who, before he was bishop of Metz, was Duke of Austrasia and Mayor of the Palace. One of Arnulf's sons became, like his father, bishop of Metz; another married a daughter of Arnulf's friend, Pipin of Landen, also Mayor of the Palace. The grandson of St. Arnulf and of Pipin was Pipin of Heristal (†714). To reunite under one strong hand the dominions which the sons of Clovis had allowed to be broken up, was the policy of the long rule of Pipin of Heristal; and, like Clovis, he cultivated and used the friendship and good offices of the Church, but on a larger scale—allying himself with the pope as Clovis had allied himself with the bishops of Reims and Tours. Pipin's policy was carried out with success by his famous son, Charles Martel, "the Hammer." The German nations beyond the Rhine were more and more compelled to admit the supremacy of the Franks; and Pipin



## FAMILY OF THE PIPINS.



warmly encouraged the missionaries from England, St. Boniface (680-†755), and his companions, who about this time were beginning to penetrate among the heathen tribes, and were laying the foundations of some of the most famous German sees on the Rhine — Utrecht, Mainz, Worms, Spire. His son, Charles Martel (716-741), after a decisive struggle with domestic anarchy, encountered and beat back the greatest danger that ever threatened Western Europe. At the great battle, named of Tours, not far from the fields near Poitiers, where Clovis vanquished the West Goths, Charles Martel routed the invading Arab host, and slew their formidable leader, Abderahman (732). This great overthrow, followed by the expulsion of the Arabs from Narbonne five years later, was the final and decisive check to the Saracen invasions of the West. Aquitaine, which had begun to aspire to independence, was once more recovered to Frank supremacy. Charles Martel shrank not from incurring the displeasure of the Church by using its property for political ends, and to maintain in efficiency the armies which he needed. Its increasing secularity and wealth invited spoliation. Bishops had degenerated into courtiers and soldiers; and Charles Martel had no scruple in giving even such bishoprics as Reims and Treves, Paris and Rouen, to be held by his warriors and dependants. But if he dealt roughly with the Church at home, he was its patron abroad. By the novel relations which he was the first to establish between the

Franks and the Pope, he laid the foundations of that central power of the Church in Western Christendom, which in the middle ages grew to such vast proportions. Charles Martel was the first of the new princes beyond the Alps who was invited by the bishop of Rome to interfere in the affairs of Italy. There had been a long and increasing wrangle between the Lombards and the Italians, in which the popes usually represented at once the national spirit and pride of the Italians, the traditions of the Catholic faith, and their own high pretensions to stand in the very place of St. Peter. The Lombards, probably faithless, certainly oppressive and encroaching, had, without any great coherence among themselves, made themselves the torment and the terror of Italy. They seemed unable to grow into a nation; they still, after 200 years, were as far as ever from peace with the Italians. At length, under Liutprand (712-744), the ablest of the Lombard kings, there first appeared a chance of consolidation for the kingdom, and friendliness with the Italians. For once he allied himself with a vigorous pope, Gregory II. (715-731), against the Greeks of Ravenna; and he is said to have been the first donor of a city and territory (Sutri) to the pope. But the Iconoclastic controversy, on the use of images and pictures in worship, raised by Leo the Isaurian, had begun to divide Greeks and Latins. Liutprand shifted about from one side to the other, seeking only his own advantage in the quarrel. The

Lombards outwitted themselves. The next pope, Gregory III. (731-741), despairing of peace, much less of help from the Lombards against the Greeks, turned to the Franks beyond the Alps. Charles Martel was occupied, and near his end. In 741, Pope Gregory, Charles Martel, and the Emperor Leo died; in 744, Liutprand followed them, and left a series of weak successors. But the foundation of the Frank alliance had been made; from that time the Franks came to be looked upon as the natural protectors of the popes, and a well-understood reciprocation of benefits began. It was a new position for the Franks to find themselves courted and flattered by the spiritual head of Roman Christianity; it was a new position for the Roman bishop to find himself leagued by a community of interest and by an interchange of services with the rising power of the West.

Without the name of king, Charles Martel was the second founder of the Frank kingdom. He left his power and office to his two sons, one of whom, Carloman, soon voluntarily resigned his rank and retired to a monastic life at Monte Cassino. His brother, the third Pipin, Pipin the Short, or the Little, resumed his father's task of consolidating the Frank power. But he advanced a step beyond his father's policy. He resolved that the Merovingian dynasty should come to an end. Nothing is more remarkable than that at that early period of political forms and organisation, and in an age of such ready

and unscrupulous force, the name and the reality of power should have been, by a kind of constitutional fiction, not merely in different hands but in different families; the name uninterruptedly in the family of Clovis, the reality in the hereditary Dukes of Austrasia and Mayors of the Palace. It is still more remarkable that this should have lasted undisturbed for more than half a century. A writer, almost a contemporary, Eginhard, the biographer of Charles the Great, has left a description of the forlorn and silent helplessness of the last descendants of Clovis. All the wealth, he tells us, and all the power of the State belonged to the Mayors of the Palace. "Nothing was left to the king, except the kingly name; with long hair and flowing beard, he sat on the throne to receive envoys from all quarters, but it was only to give them the answers which he was bidden to give. His kingly title was an empty shadow, and the allowance for his support depended on the pleasure of the Mayor of the Palace. The king possessed nothing of his own but one poor farm, with a house on it, and a scanty number of attendants, to pay him necessary service and respect. He went abroad in a waggon drawn by oxen, and guided by a herdsman in the country fashion; thus was he brought to the palace or to the annual assemblies of the people for the affairs of the realm; thus he went home again. But the government of the kingdom, and all business, foreign or domestic, were in the hands of the Mayors of the Palace."

That with such a race as the Franks this state of

things should at last have come to an end is not surprising. What his father and grandfather had shrunk from, Pipin found himself in a position to undertake. He was sure of the help of the popes with whom his family had already established a firm alliance, and who looked to the Franks as their deliverers in their troubles with the rival Teutonic race which ruled in Italy. Pipin appealed to the pope (Zacharias) to say, whether it was right that he who had no kingly power should have the kingly name. Pope Zacharias gave the answer which it was intended he should give. He sanctioned the deposition of the last Merovingian king. Childeric III., the last of the line of Clovis, passed without a struggle—a monk with his hair shorn, and so incapable of any secular dignity—from his palace or his farm, to a monastery. In the annual assembly of the bishops and great men at Soissons, Pipin was proclaimed king of the Franks (March, 751, or 752), and he received from the English apostle of Germany, Boniface, archbishop of Mainz, the consecration of the Church. Two years later, a pope (Stephen II.) for the first time crossed the Alps, and was seen in the West. He came to press again for aid against the Lombards. The help was promised; and then from his hands, at St. Denis, in 754, Pipin and his two sons, Charles, a boy about twelve years old, and his younger brother Carloman, received the anointing which hallowed their kingship, and which, as the pope held, made them true kings.

The deposition of Childeric III., whatever was the form of the pope's sanction to it, was at any rate the first instance of such interference on the part of the popes. The pope's sanction, probably very vague at the time, and very obscurely recorded, was the subject at a later period of fierce debates, as to its authority and real bearing. But the whole transaction was the first exercise, on the part of the popes, of a claim to change the allegiance of subjects, to authorise the removal of one king and the election of another. Pope Zacharias and his successors acted, apparently, in this first instance, as arbiters, the most venerable that could be found, consulted on matters deeply important to the Frank nation; they exercised a power which in this case they were prompted to claim and were invited to use. Unfortunately they were not disinterested arbiters. Their decision was influenced by their own advantages and hopes; the coronation of the new king was the result of a bargain; and for the service which they rendered they were paid in cities and provinces. Pipin, having in his company the pope who had crowned him with a solemnity new among Teutonic kings, crossed the Alps, humbled Aistulf the Lombard king, and forced him to give security that he would respect the rights and property of St. Peter. Aistulf evaded his engagement, and Pipin compelled him, after a second overthrow, to become tributary to the Frank kingdom, and to cede to his conqueror all that he had recently won of the territory still left to the Greek emperor in

the north of Italy: the exarchate of Ravenna, and the Flaminian "Pentapolis," an expression for the lands and cities between the Apennines and the Adriatic, from Ferrara to Ancona. This territory the Frank king presented as a donation to St. Peter; it became, with some additions, south of Ancona and west of the Apennines, the Papal State. The real donation of the Frankish king was shortly afterwards supported by the production of what purported to be a still older donation: the famous forged "donation" of Constantine. Thus, from the anointing at St. Denis of the second kingly line of the Franks, arose, in the first place, the temporal dominion of the popes, held in the beginning as a temporal lordship under the overlordship of the king or emperor, then claimed by them as independent princes in absolute sovereignty: and next, their pretensions, broadening out indefinitely from this precedent, to interfere in the political and civil affairs of Christendom, to dispose of kingdoms, to set up and degrade kings.



## CHAPTER VI

### THE ROMAN EMPIRE IN THE EAST

WHILE in the West civilised order was disturbed and broken up, to be reconstructed on a new basis, in the East it went on continuously from the days of Constantine till its temporary interruption by the crusaders (1203-1261), and its destruction by the Ottomans (1453). Constantine had transplanted the Roman name, the centre of Roman power, and much of what was Roman in ideas and habits, to Byzantium, the New Rome. There, without losing its deeply impressed imperial character, it also became Greek, and it became Christian. The result was that remarkable empire, which, though since its fall it has become a by-word, was, when it was standing, the wonder and the envy of the barbarian world, the mysterious "Micklegarth" "the Great City, the Town of towns" of the northern legends. It inherited and it retained the great Roman traditions of centralisation, of scientific jurisprudence, of elaborate and systematic administration. It worked upon an unbroken experi-

ence of government, on unbroken habits of organisation, as familiar and easy to it, as it was difficult in the West. It improved and perfected the great legacy which it had received of republican and imperial law. It often exhibited what seemed to be hopeless feebleness and decay ; but beneath these appearances were the permanent elements of vast and enduring strength. Amid the convulsions and changes of the West, it lasted unchanged for more than ten centuries, almost the same in language, in spirit, and even in its ways and forms, under the last Constantine as under the first. For ten centuries, in spite of terrible disasters, bloody revolutions, loss of provinces, domestic misrule, itself maimed, weakened, unprosperous, it yet maintained itself, the unaided outpost of Christendom, against the fiercest assaults, not only of swarming barbarian hordes, but of the victorious enthusiasts of Islam. It had, indeed, in full measure, the vices of an over-cultivation, which is not braced by a corresponding moral force and elevation. Much in it was degenerate, hypocritical, effete, corrupt, degraded ; it had many of the faults of European civilisation in the eighteenth century. But it is idle to talk of mere weakness in an empire which for 1000 years preserved civilised society, laws, institutions, commerce, arts, amid the most tremendous shocks and dangers ; which could bear to be so badly, cruelly, feebly governed, as certainly it often was, without falling to pieces before its enemies. In truth, during all the dark days of trouble in the West, contemporary with

its rude attempts and beginnings of social order, there was on the Bosphorus one of the most magnificent cities that the world has seen. In it, as at Rome and at Venice, was centralised a power, strong in its resources of government, in its experience and skill to use its vast materials and its varied populations, in the great wealth created by an extended and active commerce, in the knowledge how to apply it, in the possession of all the mechanical and scientific experience of those ages. In it ruled a succession of men, most various in character and fortune, many very bad and very incapable, but among them a large proportion who were of the stamp and force of those who save states. In it, the literary tradition, inherited from Antioch, from Athens, from Alexandria, still survived, and though taste and power might decline, they never failed as they did in the West, and they sometimes rose to a respectable standard. And in it, the visitor from the rude West might find a court, with its pomp and luxury, its refinement, its politeness, its etiquette, which, long after the days of Charles, Alfred, and Otto, was to the courts of the Franks and English, what the Court of Versailles and St. James were to the Court of Peter the Great.

The Eastern Empire did not at once, either after the partition between the sons of Theodosius (395), or after the deposition or abdication of the last Western emperor (476), lose its connexion with the West. Long after the separation in fact had come, the idea of the unity, the *unanimitas*, of the empire

lasted. The Eastern emperor, Zeno (474-491), had received from Odoacer the insignia of the dethroned Augustulus, in token that the world only needed one emperor; and he was acknowledged, in form and courtesy, at least by Goths and Franks, as the head of the Roman world. Further, he was so acknowledged by the popes, who were becoming more and more the centres of genuine Roman influence, amid the visible triumph of the new races. And it was long before the hope and purpose of exacting real obedience were abandoned at Constantinople.

In one signal instance this purpose was victoriously carried out. This was the reconquest of Italy, Africa, and part of Spain, under Justinian. In the year after the great Theoderic died (526), the most famous in the line of Eastern emperors, since Constantine, began his long and eventful reign (527-565). Justinian was born a Slavonian peasant, near what then was Sardica, and is now Sofia; his original Slave name, *Uprawda*, was latinised into Justinian, when he became an officer in the imperial guard. Since the death of the second Theodosius (450), the Eastern emperors had been, as they were continually to be, men not of Roman or Greek, but of barbarian or half-barbarian origin, whom the imperial city and service attracted, naturalised, and clothed with civilised names and Roman character. Justinian's reign, so great and so unhappy, was marked by magnificent works, the administrative organisation of the empire, the great buildings at Constantinople, the last and

grandest codification of Roman law. But it was also marked by domestic shame, by sanguinary factions, by all the vices and crimes of a rapacious and ungrateful despotism. Yet it seemed for a while like the revival of the power and fortune of Rome. Justinian rose to the highest ideas of imperial ambition; and he was served by two great masters of war, foreigners in origin like himself, Belisarius the Thracian, and Narses the Armenian, who were able to turn to full account the resources, still enormous, of the empire, its immense riches, its technical and mechanical skill, its supplies of troops, its military traditions, its command of the sea. Africa was wrested from the Vandals (534); Italy from the successors of Theoderic; much of Spain from the West Goths. The Vandals were absolutely swept away, though Africa never recovered from their century of misrule. Italy was more fiercely disputed (535-553). According as Belisarius was absent or present, the contest swayed backwards and forwards. Rome was more than once taken and retaken. Totila, the Goth, able, brave, and dangerous, at one moment had it in his power, and had actually taken the momentous resolution, to destroy the city of Rome from the face of the earth. But what Belisarius began, Narses finished. Totila was slain; the Gothic power perished (553). Yet the reconquest was transient. After Narses came the Lombards (568), and then the Saracens. It was not the destiny of Byzantium to rule the world, or to govern alien and

distant provinces. It retired within its eastern borders. But it long kept a hold on maritime districts in Italy, Ravenna, the Pentapolis, Calabria, and Naples. For a still longer time it held Sicily. It gave titles to barbarian kings like Clovis, and legalised their conquests. And till the great change in the opening of the ninth century, it kept not merely its Exarch at Ravenna, but its Count at Rome, and claimed and sometimes compelled the allegiance of the popes.

The emperor, regarded as invested with an almost divine commission, inherited the despotic powers of the line of Augustus and Constantine; and according as he used this vast power with ability or weakness, the fortune of the empire rose and fell. Yet the empire itself was held together by great networks and scaffoldings, of long date, and of immense strength and tenacity, which subsisted, independently of what the emperor did or suffered, and which to a certain degree limited his absolute power. There was a great system of local government, and another of civil administration; and there was a powerful and popular Church, identified with the interests and sympathies of the people, and much mixed up with them, even in its monastic elements. And whatever might become of the emperor, there was in the empire itself a stability and solidity, of which there is yet no trace in the West. It had all the vices, the weaknesses, the failures of a despotic government of the modern type; but it had also the experience, the trained habits of

order and industry, the enlightenment and the resources, which distinguish civilised governments, whether free or absolute, from the unpractised apprenticeship of those whose political history is yet beginning, and which, under ordinary circumstances, impart firmness and strength unattainable without them.

What is certain is, that the Eastern Empire was able to withstand the continued pressure of its ever-renewed enemies with continued success. It suffered fearfully in the effort. The Avars, the Turkish Bulgarians, the Hungarian Magyars, the many tribes of the Eastern Slaves, the Persians, and at last the Saracens, the Moguls, the Seljuks, and the Ottomans, assaulted, insulted, maimed the empire. Besides them came enemies equally formidable, the rough Frankish and Norman counts and barons who led the first crusade (1096); the more ambitious ones who, with the merchant princes of Venice, led the fourth (1203). The empire passed through the greatest vicissitudes of prosperity and disaster. Province after province was rent away from it. Its population was thinned, its wealth destroyed by ravages which it could not check. It lost Africa, Spain, Egypt, Syria, Asia up to the Bosphorus. It was hemmed in by Bulgarians and Slaves in Europe. Yet during these centuries of defensive war and often of misfortune, the empire resisted; and, in spite of all, it cultivated the arts and industries of peace, as they were cultivated nowhere else in Europe, and showed in Constanti-

nople a capital which in splendour and magnificence no other realm could rival.

This continuation of the old traditions of civilisation amid the turbulence and the uncertainties of Western Europe, is the characteristic feature of interest in the Eastern Empire. It had, indeed, as a finished despotism, much that was evil, much that involved ultimate ruin; but besides its natural coherence and toughness, the mischiefs which endangered it were continually arrested by rulers of high and strong character. Time after time, when its fall seemed at hand, when faction, or mutiny, or vile court intrigues had shaken it, when the wickedness and folly of some tyrant, or the madness and cruelty of some ambitious woman had coincided with the strength at the moment of some foreign barbarian to threaten its existence, it was redeemed and saved by some great or some able emperor. Fortune, as we call it, doubtless, in its ten centuries, must have counted for much in its wonderful escapes, in its many deliverances. But much was owing to the preponderance, in spite of all drawbacks, of superior civilisation, experience, and intelligence. Terrible and revolting stories are common both to East and West, of bloodshed, treachery, and passion; but Byzantine vices as well as virtues, unlike those of the West, are those of a society which has inherited a long training and cultivation. No writer of the tenth century in the West, certainly no emperor or king, could possibly have written on politics, history, geo-



graphy, statistics, military tactics, agriculture, as the Byzantine emperor, "born in the purple," Constantine Porphyrogenitus. The difference between East and West, in all that comes by long familiarity with the resources of cultivated intellect, and by inherited skill, cannot be better measured than by comparing his writings with the vigorous, but rude, compositions of the court of Charles the Great, or the efforts of Alfred, noble as they were, to begin an English literature.

Yet the Eastern Empire suffered even more than the West from the neighbourhood of its barbarian enemies. The tribes of the Hunnish or Turkish stock, and the Slave races which had taken the places left vacant by the great Teutonic movement of the Vandals, Goths, and Lombards to the West, pressed continually on the Eastern Empire, as they did on the Franks, Bavarians, and Saxons, and with more disastrous effects. The countries to the south of the Danube, between the Eastern Alps, the Adriatic, the Euxine, and the mountains of Greece, gradually became filled with the Slave races, which, unlike the earlier Gothic tribes, became rooted there, and have kept hold of them till this day. As usual, they began by ravaging, and ended by occupation and settlement. But their restless and predatory habits long gave trouble to the empire. Its policy varied between keeping them quiet by annual subsidies,—settling them as colonists to hold one another in check, as Heraclius (630-638) brought down the Servians and Croats against the Avars,—taking them into pay as

soldiers,—or inflicting chastisement by military expeditions. The Slaves, however, were many of them agricultural communities, and they colonised. But behind the Slaves were the more destructive and untamable Turks, in their various forms,—Turks proper, first known by that name in the sixth century, with whom, in the heart of central Asia, the Byzantine emperors kept up an interchange of ambassadors,—and the nearer and more dangerous tribes of the same stock, the Avars and the Bulgarians, who had been conquered and fled before their Eastern kindreds. All these tribes, Turkish or Slave, pushed their expeditions sometimes to the walls of Constantinople, and no province of the empire was safe from them. Its military power, when fairly brought against them, was in the long run too strong for them. The Huns of Zabergan were driven off in the last victory gained by Belisarius (559). The Avars and their Slavonian allies were humbled by the generals of the Emperor Maurice (589-600). But the control of the empire never became strong enough to enforce peace and order in the countries on the Danube. Barbarian kingdoms, like that of the Avars and then of the Bulgarians, rose and fell. In spite of all the insecurity and ruin, new nations, agricultural as well as pastoral, grew up in a rude fashion, yet with definite traditions, and with peculiar institutions, in the rich plains and the highlands between the Adriatic and the Euxine. Such were the Western agricultural Slaves, whom Heraclius planted between the

Danube and the Adriatic, and who became the Croats, Servians, and Bosnians of later history. In time the Slave races, and those which, like the Bulgarians, adopted their language and became fused with them, received Christianity. The German missionaries from the Frank Empire encountered among them the Greek brother apostles of the Slaves, Cyril and Methodius of Thessalonica (860-885), the translators of the Scriptures, perhaps the inventors of the Slave alphabet, certainly among the most indefatigable missionaries of the Christian Church. Partly in concert, partly in rivalry, the German bishops and the Greek monks laboured to teach and humanise the Slaves. The Latin and Greek Churches strove and often intrigued for the allegiance of the Slave converts. In the Western countries they became obedient to the pope. In the territories of the empire, Bulgarians and Servians, as after them, the Russians, accepted the teaching of the Eastern Church, brought to them in their mother tongue. But the northern border of the empire was a land in which disorder and lawlessness became chronic. And a great state, of which scientific law was one of the characteristic features, was powerless to leave the impression of law on the barbarian settlers within its territories.

On its Eastern border, the hereditary war with Persia, under the dynasty of the Sassanian kings, the destroyers (226) of the Parthian kingdom, and the inheritors of its long feud with the Republic and the

Empire, continued to damage and sometimes to menace the empire, till it gave place to one still more formidable, the long struggle with the Mahometan invasion, first under the Arabs, then under the different Turkish dynasties. Justinian had been succeeded by a series of emperors, men of unusual excellence but not fortunate. The last of them, the Cappadocian Maurice (582-602), was murdered by a worthless and cruel soldier, the Cappadocian Phocas (602-610); but the hopes of the empire were restored by the accession of a man of Latin nurture and sympathies, the African, Heraclius (610). Under Heraclius, it seemed as if the empire, reformed and reinvigorated, were to retrieve its fortunes. He met his difficult and threatening circumstances with courage, judgment, and masterly ability. The stress of war had lately gone heavily against the empire. The Persians, under a famous king, Khosrou, or Chosroes Nushirvan, had broken through the Roman line of fortresses. Khosrou had stormed and ruined Antioch and other cities of Syria, and, in spite of the successes of Belisarius, imposed a tribute on Justinian, as the price of a fifty years' truce (540-562). Under Justinian's successors, with one short interval under Maurice, the Persian ravages had been uninterrupted, and were drawing nearer and nearer to the capital. Heraclius, at his accession, found himself with an empire in disorder, between two formidable enemies, sometimes in alliance—the Avars on the north, and the Persians, under a second Khosrou, on the east.

The Persians were carrying all before them. For ten years (617-627) they were masters of Egypt. For ten years they were encamped within view of the palace of Constantinople. They had plundered Jerusalem, and carried off the sacred relics and the Christian patriarch to Persia. They were masters from the Black Sea to Cyrene. They would not hear of peace. So dark seemed the prospect that for a time Heraclius meditated the transfer of the seat of empire from Byzantium to Latin Carthage. But the thought was a transient one. He never really lost heart. Without hurry, with undaunted patience, with steady and perfect skill, he spent his first years in restoring order in the empire and the army. Then confident in the strength which he had left in Europe, he sprang forth on the Persians. In a series of brilliant and triumphant campaigns (622-628), he recovered the provinces and the boundaries of the empire, he penetrated into Persia and captured the royal palace, bringing back in triumph the spoils of Jerusalem (627); and from the terrible blows inflicted upon it, the Persian power finally sank. Its next assailants were the Mahometan Saracens, just starting in their career of conquest, and it fell at once before them. But the vanquisher of Persia had also to encounter the Saracens. And, whatever be the explanation, whether from the treachery of his officers, or from political or religious disaffection, Heraclius, who had rescued the eastern provinces from the Persians, was helpless to prevent them from falling a prey to the

soldiers of Abubekr and Omar. The end of the reign of Heraclius saw the beginning, the alarming beginning, of that invasion of the Mahometan powers of Asia, which was to become henceforth the standing peril of the Eastern Empire, which was to cripple it and cut short its borders, and which, at last, was to destroy it. Peace was hardly made between Heraclius and the Persians, before the Arabs appeared in Syria (628-633). With Heraclius, the great captain and conqueror, still on the spot, they took Damascus before his eyes (635). Jerusalem, Emesa, Aleppo, Antioch fell one after another. He had to fly from the scenes of his glory; and before he died, he heard the portentous tidings of the capitulation of Alexandria, and of the conquest of Egypt by Amrou and the enthusiasts of the new religion. The reign of Heraclius, which had promised to re-establish the civilisation and majestic peace of Rome, the fame of which was recognised and embellished with fables at the court of the Frank king Dagobert, ended with the sudden appearance of an irresistible power in the East which was to extinguish those hopes for ever.

But the final catastrophe was not to be for more than 800 years. The family of the great Heraclius furnished a succession of degenerate emperors, some of them mischievous and cruel tyrants, whose reigns coincided with the later Merovingian times, and the rise of the Mayors of the Palace. It was a time in the East, as well as in the West, of public confusion

and decline. During the hundred years of the rule of the family of Heraclius, the Saracens extended their conquests round the Mediterranean, and at length into Spain and Gaul, and twice laid siege to Constantinople itself. But if they were rending away the provinces of the empire, and even daring to strike at its heart, they learned also how great, even in its time of distress and defeat, were its defensive resources and inherent strength. It could bear, without giving way, the vices and weakness of its government, even in this hour of extreme danger, and before the most formidable of assailants in the very flush of their triumph. Nothing had yet arrested the Saracens. Before them all the great cities of the East had fallen. Neither the sea nor the deserts had been a barrier to them. They had overthrown the Teutonic Goths of Spain as easily as Persians and Syrians. They were unchecked for a hundred years, from the death of Mohammed till the victory of the Franks and Charles Martel at Poitiers (632-732). Their power was acknowledged from the Oxus and the Indus to the Atlantic. But they twice recoiled from the walls of Constantinople. After the rapid changes of emperors which took place on the extinction of the family of Heraclius, another of those foreign soldiers, who, while the constitution of the empire went on unaltered, made the most vigorous chiefs of the executive power, was proclaimed emperor by the troops of Asia, and he founded an imperial line which lasted till the days of Charles the Great. This was the Isaurian, Leo III., known as

the Iconoclast—the Image-breaker. He, like Heraclius, received the empire in an hour of great peril. The Saracens, with the fame of their astonishing conquests, were now a second time before Constantinople. But Leo deserves with Charles Martel the glory of daring to believe that they were not irresistible. He forced them to retire from before Constantinople (716-18), and thus checked them definitively in Eastern Europe. Under Leo's vigorous government, the empire rose from the decline into which it had fallen under the degenerate family of Heraclius. Few imperial lines had more repulsive features than the Isaurian. But it was a line of able and resolute men. The empire under them assumed a narrower compass, and, having lost Africa, Egypt, and Syria, passed into its more distinctive "Byzantine" phase. But if its pretensions were lowered, its power was more concentrated. Greater vigour was thrown into the administration; population increased, and with it commerce and wealth; the Slave agricultural settlements thrived only too well for the older inhabitants; the cities were thickly peopled; the army was well organised and trained; the administration of the provinces was systematically carried out, and in spite of frequent arbitrary and cruel acts of power the ordinary rule of the law was maintained. Notwithstanding the incorrigible vices and inconsistencies of the court, an improved moral tone became discernible both in lay and ecclesiastical society; and, to quote the latest and most careful historian of the Eastern



Empire, Mr. Finlay, "in the times of the Isaurian emperors, and their successors of the Macedonian line"—a period which corresponded to the renewed Frank kingdom under Pipin and Charles, and the first Carolingians—"a declining empire was saved by moral vigour in society, and the strong efforts of the central power." But every expression of praise in these ages of the world must be comparative. When the administration was wisest, the law most just, the army most in order, commerce most thriving—when the condition of the people was most prosperous, and the public enemy on the north or east most successfully repelled—yet, with scarcely a variation, the court was corrupt and vicious, and frequently infested with fashions of hypocritical, or grossly inconsistent, devotion. And the ancient and widely-spread vice of cruelty, not yet, and not for many ages subdued by its natural enemy, Christianity, was still, in forms of the most atrocious barbarity, the regular resource not merely of those who feared and hated, and of those who punished, but of those who had to compel obedience, or to anticipate and guard against danger, whether as soldiers, or as civil rulers. Some of the most dreadful incidents of horrible ferocity ever recorded, mark the history of the Eastern Empire, under the conduct of its ablest and most successful rulers.

The political and military events of the East did not much affect things in the West. Embassies passed to and fro; once, in these times, an emperor (Constantin II. 641-668) appeared at Rome, and even

exiled a Roman bishop (Pope Martin I. 649-655); and there were a few royal marriages, especially when there came to be emperors in the West. But the Eastern Empire was of much importance in its influence on the ideas of kingly power, as they developed themselves in the contemporaneous society of Western Europe. The great emperor, *Augustus, Basileus*, at Constantinople, was the type and standard looked up to with admiration and envy by the kings of the Franks and even of the English. His dignity was an example and precedent of boundless power, and of extravagant homage to the person of the prince. In civil matters there was much in the rooted national ideas and habits of the West to tone down these exaggerations; but his prerogatives suggested great pretensions in regard to religion. At Constantinople, the theory of a divine and sacred supremacy in the sphere of religion, was carried out to mischievous lengths. Constantine's (311-337) policy, high-handed as it was, had been really to leave the Church to settle questions itself, to speak its own mind and to define its own belief by its legitimate organs. His successor Constantius (337-361) reversed this. He claimed to be the arbiter and judge of religious controversies. He claimed for the emperor the right of prescribing creeds, and he imposed Arianism on the empire. A belief which was not the real belief of the Church, in due time was shaken off. But the bad and tempting precedent had been set of bringing the secular power, though in conjunction with the recognised organs of

the Church, to interfere in questions of pure theology. These questions at the beginning of Church history excited the profoundest interest, for they related to the object of Christian worship, and to the central truths and real meaning of the facts of the Christian redemption. Instead of leaving them fairly to the only possible authority, the great councils of the Church, and its natural representatives—for, if they were not of authority, there was no other—the emperors took on themselves more and more to make their own judgment the law of public belief, to direct the issues of the conflicts of religious opinion, to dictate the terms of comprehension, to enforce unity of conviction and language by stringent and penal laws. And the usurpation became constitutional by the readiness of the bishops of the Church to accept and authorise the interference of the emperor, when it was on their side and directed against opponents, and by giving a sanction, tacit or express, to the detestable and fatal violence which too often accompanied controversies so momentous. With the later emperors, such as Justinian and Heraclius, it was less a strength of personal belief, than an impatience of disputes and contradiction, and a fear, sometimes not an unreasonable fear, of political troubles, that directed their policy. Constantius attempted to impose a dogma; his successors, to express and enforce a compromise in which great controversies were to end. The rude barbarian soldier, Zeno, by a formula of his own, attempted vainly to put an end to

the divisions of the Church arising out of the rival heresies of Nestorius and Eutyches, as to the consequences which flow from the idea of the Incarnation. Justinian exercised his imperial supremacy in religion in the most extravagant and the most fruitless manner (527-565). And in the subtle but dangerous controversy which followed, on the reality of the moral constitution of our Lord's human nature, the Monothelite controversy, Heraclius tried, like Zeno, and like Zeno in vain, to impose terms of his own by the imperial authority on the consciences and convictions of those who felt the interest of the question. Under Leo the Isaurian and his line, the imperial claim was extended from doctrines to the usages of the Church (717-792). Superstition had without doubt gathered round the customary use in worship of devotional pictures and images; and it is possible that the taunts of the victorious Mahometans may have made them more odious to the rude and impatient soldier. But on the strength of his claims as supreme ruler of religion, he attacked the abuses with an unintelligent and intemperate violence, which was mischievous in itself and gave the utmost advantage to the defenders of what was indefensible. He, and still more his son Constantine V., arrayed against themselves the self-respect, the good sense, the conscience, the piety, of the time, as well as its prejudiced bigotry and superstition. After the most abominable cruelties and persecution, they utterly failed in checking the abuses they aimed at; and they brought about a reaction

which hindered any reasonable settlement of a matter which reason was eminently competent to settle, and which the soberer temper of Charles the Great showed the way to settle with moderation and wisdom.

The tyranny with which the emperors enforced their authority and their own personal opinions aggravated the violence and mischief of the disputes. It led in more than one case to great and lasting schisms. It was copied by those who suffered from it. Worse still, it became accepted as part of the royal prerogative, when Charles the Great came, though with greater moderation than the Eastern emperors, to carry out his office as guardian, reformer, and overlooker of the religious interests of his kingdom. And it led to confusions between the domain of conscience, and the powers of the State, which have caused infinite harm and misery in civilised society, and which have not yet been got rid of. Not the least of the irreparable mischiefs which it occasioned under the successors of Leo the Iconoclast was the impulse which it gave to the rising ambition of the popes to claim a rival and universal supremacy, and to the quarrels, accidental and comparatively insignificant in themselves, which ultimately determined the permanent separation of the Eastern and Western Churches. Under the tyranny of the emperor, patriarchs and bishops were deposed and replaced at his will. In one of these many transactions, a deposed and ill-used patriarch, Ignatius, hopeless at Constantinople, appealed against his rival Photius, to the pope. It

was an appeal for justice against wrong—for protection and countenance abroad, where none could be had at home. Such appeals had been often made; it was a time when men appealed to whatever power within reach seemed likely to help them. But the judge who was now appealed to as arbiter in this personal quarrel, was the first pope of the type afterwards to be so frequent, the daring and imperious Nicolas I. (858-867). Supporting a just cause against intrigue and despotism, he put his own claims to redress it, and to punish the wrong-doers, on assumptions of authority as extravagant as those of the emperor. The dispute gradually became complicated with doctrinal questions, and got into a shape in which it became irreconcilable. The pope excommunicated Photius (863), and Photius excommunicated Nicolas (867). It might have seemed but a conflict which would pass away, as more than one such conflict had passed, with those who were parties to it. Nicolas died soon after (867), and Photius, after many falls and restorations, lived to be at last acknowledged by a pope, John VIII. (879). But the wound in fact proved to have been a fatal one, and could not be healed. And the great schism of East and West dates from the high-handed assertion of Roman spiritual superiority, provoked by the wanton insolence of imperial despotism.

## CHAPTER VII

CHARLES THE GREAT, KING OF THE FRANKS, 768-800  
—EMPEROR OF THE ROMANS, 800-814

THE change in the Frank line of kings in the middle of the eighth century (752) was an event of great and wide importance. Under the race of Clovis, the history of the Franks, though they were the leading nation of the West, was, with the exception of their chronic struggle with the kindred German tribes on the border, and occasional and aimless inroads into Spain and Italy, confined within their own limits. Their dealings with other nations, and even with the pope, the centre of the ecclesiastical system, were few and unimportant. But with Charles Martel and his sons the range of Frank history widens, and it begins to affect the general course of European history. The first care of these able rulers was to consolidate once more the strength of the Franks. Conscious how great it was, they gathered up again under a firm hand the loosely-compacted and fast-dissolving elements of the Frank power. They maintained the

claim of the Franks to supremacy over their ruder kindred in Alamannia, Bavaria, Thuringia, and even, though with more trouble, over the Saxons. By their vigour and determined perseverance, they beat down at last the obstinate and dangerous revolt of Aquitaine, which, under a line of powerful dukes, Teutonic in name, but southern in feeling, was fast assuming the character of a war of national independence on the part of the Latin South against the Teutonic North. Pipin, at his death (768), had reunited once more under one king all the conquests of Clovis and his successors. And having done this, the Frank kings departed from their former isolation, and entered into new relations with the world outside them. They did three things. 1. Carrying on the alliance of Charles Martel with the popes, they founded and built up, as has been already said, the temporal dominion of the papacy, and gave a new importance to the political influence of the popes in Europe. 2. Next, as a consequence of their close relations with the popes, they revived in their family the name of the Roman Empire and the dignity of the Roman emperor, long suspended in the West, which were to pass, after them, through many hands and many lines, but were never to be extinct again until the beginning of our own century. 3. And lastly, they laid the foundations of modern Germany, and decisively reclaimed it from its primitive barbarism to Christendom and to civilisation.

What Pipin had begun, and begun with sagacity and force, was carried on by a yet stronger hand, on



a larger scale, and in the course of a longer reign. Pipin died in 768, and the kingdom of the Franks, according to a Frank rule of inheritance, or an idea of expediency which no one then dared to break through, was, with the consent of all the Franks, shared, or, more properly, governed in partnership, by his two sons, Charles and Carloman, who with their father had received the dignity of kings from Pope Stephen in 754. The risks of dissension between them were averted, and the course of history determined, by the early death of Carloman. In 771 Charles became the sole king of the Franks. In our materials for knowledge, as well as in the character of the events, we pass into a new stage with the appearance of Charles, whom his own age, at least after his death, was to name the Great. We at once acquire a mass of contemporary information, meagre, indeed, compared with more recent records and with many older, but in comparison with those of the preceding times, both full and trustworthy. Of Charles we have a contemporary biography, the first instance of a lay or secular biography in Christian times, his life by Eginhard, or Einhard. For public events, a series of annals begins, not improbably originating under Charles's orders, which give details of time and place with a care unknown before. We have a large, though incomplete, collection of his acts of government and legislation; and further, a considerable number of important letters, both public—such as those of the popes', collected by Charles's command;

and private—such as those of Charles's friend and adviser, the Englishman, Alcuin or Alcwin.

The name "Charlemagne," by which he has been so long known, is one of those popular names which ought to be abandoned; not from considerations of scholarly accuracy, but because it helps so much to keep up a completely false idea of what he was. We in England ought to hold, at least, to our traditional form "Charlemain," which has Milton's authority. He has been represented by French historians as in some sense a French king, the most illustrious and wide-ruling of the second dynasty, one in the same line of kings as St. Louis and Henry IV. It cannot be too clearly and firmly borne in mind that this, rooted as the conception has become, is absolutely misleading. France, as it was to be and as we know it, had not come into existence in his days. What was to be the France of history was then but one province of the Frank kingdom, and one with which Charles was personally least connected. Modern France, again, is a nation in which the Latin or Latinised races have won the ascendancy. But Charles, king of the Franks, was, above all things, a German. He was in language, in ideas, in policy, in tastes, in his favourite dwelling-places, a Teutonic, not a Latin or Latinised king; and it is entirely to mistake his place and his work to consider him in the light of a specially "French" king, a predecessor of the kings who reigned at Paris and brought glory upon France. Modern France is a fragment, made

up of fragments, split off from the original Frank kingdom long after Charles's death; the kingdom which he inherited and enlarged was as different, in spirit, in constitution, in national characteristics, as it was in boundaries, from that portion of it which ultimately retained the Frank name in the West. Charles did nothing to make modern France. The Frank power on which he rose to the empire was in those days still mainly German; and his characteristic work was to lay the foundations of modern and civilised Germany, and, indirectly, of the new commonwealth of nations which was to arise in the West of Europe.

The necessary condition of a great ruler in those days was that he should be a great warrior. Charles, whose real claim to greatness lies in the clearness with which he discerned the need of order and law, and sought their sources and securities in the deeper springs of human nature, was, first of all things, in the eyes of his own generation, a king who was always at war, and always victorious. In his warlike habits he was not different from the Frank kings before him. Children of invaders, they had perpetually to repel invasion, to cope with rivals, to prove their prowess and strength. The special feature of Charles's wars was the indomitable pertinacity with which he carried them to the end, and the untiring alacrity and rapidity with which he moved from one point to another of his wide frontier of war. Among the turbulent populations which on all sides beset the

Frank kingdom, two heavy and permanent masses of hostility hung like storm-clouds, never removing and always threatening, on his north-eastern and his southern borders: the heathen Saxons between the Rhine and Elbe, pressed upon by the heathen Slaves beyond the Elbe; and the Saracens in Spain. The Saracens he pushed back to the Ebro, adding the Spanish "march," or borderland, beyond the Pyrenees to his kingdom, and claiming, though not without continual dispute, the great cities of Saragossa and Barcelona. The Saxon war was far more serious and troublesome. It was chequered by grave disasters, and pursued with undismayed and unrelenting determination, in which he spared neither himself nor others. It lasted continuously, — with its stubborn and ever-recurring resistance, its cruel devastations, its winter campaigns, its merciless acts of vengeance, — as the effort which called forth all Charles's energy for thirty-two years (772-804). The subjugation of the Saxons more resembled in its systematic completeness the policy followed by the kinsmen of the Saxons in Britain than anything which had been seen on the continent. But it decided, finally and for good, the question in Germany between heathenism and Christianity, between continued barbarism, or the first steps, the only ones then possible, to civilisation. The Saxon lands, so rudely reduced to obedience, so rudely Christianised, were planted not only with castles, but with towns and mission stations — Osnabrück, Paderborn, Münster, Minden, Halberstadt, Bremen

—bishoprics along the course of the Lippe and the Weser—monasteries, like Fulda, which were both agricultural colonies and schools of learning. The tribes of Upper and Middle Germany—Bavarians, Alamans, Thuringians, Hessians—longer accustomed to the assertion of Frank supremacy, and partially converted by the English and other missionaries whom Pipin had encouraged, were fast becoming states, organised, or ready to be organised, into dukedoms of the Frank kingdom; and any signs of restlessness, as in the frontier dukedom of Bavaria, were vigorously put down (788). But beyond the refractory Saxons, and the more settled German lands, was a second line of barbarism from the Elbe to the Danube, stretching without defined limit far back towards the East, from which it was recruited. There were the Huns or Avars, in the plains between the Danube and the Save; there were Slave races of many names, from the shores of the Adriatic, the Eastern Alps, and the mountains of Bohemia, to the havens of the Baltic; and there were the yet more threatening Northmen, who had access to the still unsettled Saxon lands by the isthmus which is now Slesvig, and to whose ships the whole sea-board of the Franks, from the mouth of the Weser to the mouths of the Rhone, lay open. With all these Charles carried on persevering and, for the age, scientific war. Military bridges, sometimes double ones, were thrown across rivers like the Elbe and Danube, and their approaches duly protected. An attempt was made, though in

vain, to facilitate military communications by a navigable canal, connecting affluents of the Rhine and Danube. His operations were conducted on mutually supporting lines of march, converging on the threatened point ; definiteness of purpose, great patience, caution, celerity, appear in them. His most brilliant war, in the eyes of his contemporaries, was that in which the power of the Hunnish Avars—no longer terrible as of old, but still able to give trouble—was broken. Their “Ring,” or palace camp, was forced and destroyed ; their “Chagan ” or chief acknowledged the supremacy of the Frank king, and was baptized ; and the spoils of the Avars, the collected plunder of their old forays, were said to be so great as to bring down the value of silver by a third. The Slave races, quarrelsome and rapacious, were kept in awe by chastisement, or were involved by his policy in wars among themselves. The Northmen, even to Charles, were the most formidable of his foes. They fomented Saxon resistance ; and its fiercest leader, the Westphalian Witikind, ever had a ready refuge, when hard pressed, in neighbouring Denmark. The Danish king, Godfrid, became, in Charles’s later years, more and more daring in his acts of aggression ; and, after obtaining from Charles the honour of a conference on equal terms between Frank and Danish chiefs, was preparing to measure his strength with the great emperor in a pitched battle, when he was assassinated and Denmark was involved in civil war. But the tide of Northern invasion was rising, and before Charles died it was beginning to

break with alarming violence on all the coasts of his realm. He was fully alive to the danger. The northern coasts were visited and inspected by the emperor himself. Fleets were built; Boulogne and Ghent were made his harbours and arsenals. He died before his fortune at sea was tried. But the growing insults and ravages of the Northern pirates in Friesland, of the Moorish pirates over the coasts and islands of the Mediterranean, and of the Greek fleets in the Adriatic, threw a shade at the close over the splendour of his wars, and disquieted his last years with well-grounded anxiety.

All these wars were part of a connected and persistent plan to reduce and keep under control the dangerous barbarism which hemmed in and pressed upon his kingdom. But the Lombard war was a political one, waged less even for the conquest of Italy than for its indirect results. The ill-compacted and turbulent kingdom of the Lombards, with its almost independent dukedoms—Tuscany, Spoleto, Benevento, Friuli, Trent—had usually been, in later times, an inoffensive neighbour to the Franks, but often, though it had ceased to be Arian, a troublesome one to the popes. We have seen how a pope prevailed on Pipin to undertake the defence, as it was called, of the Church, and how Pipin had answered the appeal, and had transferred some of the fairest provinces of the Lombard kingdom to the popes. But the quarrel still went on. Letter after letter from the popes (Stephen III. 753-757, Hadrian

I. 772-795) brought the most lamentable complaints of Lombard injustice and oppression. St. Peter was made to speak in his own name, promising heaven to those who should deliver him from wrong, and denouncing divine vengeance on those who should be slack in assisting him. Charles had, indeed, set at nought a threat of excommunication from Pope Stephen IV. (769) to be pronounced if the Frank king dared to marry a daughter of King Desiderius, one of the "foul and horrid" race of the Lombards. But when the serious work of his reign began, he seems to have thought it wise as early as possible to arrange his relations with the pope. In 773, leaving the Saxon war, he crossed the Alps, and by the Mont Cenis and the St. Bernard threw the whole power of the Franks into Italy. The passes were forced, and no stand was made in the field. There was a winter siege of Pavia. It capitulated; the last Lombard king, Desiderius, was carried captive and placed in a Frank monastery; and the Lombard power came to an end. The king of the Franks became also king of the Lombards, the lord of all Italy, except the Venetian islands and the south of Calabria, still held by the Greeks. Thus, by German hands, the internal ascendancy of the German race in Italy, which had lasted, first under the Goths, and then under the Lombards, for 281 years, was finally broken. A German was still king over Italy, as for ages Germans were still to be. But Roman and native influence reconquered its supremacy in Italy, under the



management and leadership of the bishops of Rome. The Lombards, already becoming Italianised, melted into provincial Italians. The Teutonic language disappeared, leaving a number of words to Italian dialects, and a number of names to Italian families. The last king of the Lombards bore an Italian name, Desiderius. The latest of Italian national heroes bears the Bavarian and Lombard name of Garibaldi.

But the overthrow of the Lombards and the gift of provinces and cities to St. Peter had even more eventful results. The alliance between the king of the Franks and the bishop of Rome had become one of the closest kind. With Pipin and Charles begin the titles, given them by the Roman chancery, of "Most Christian King," and "Defender of the Church." The German king and the Italian pope found themselves together at the head of the modern world of the West. But the fascination of the name of Rome still, as it had done for centuries, held sway over the Teutonic mind. It stood for power, for knowledge, for the perfection of civil life, for the purity of religion. The barbarians despised Romans, but they venerated Rome. It was not unnatural that the idea should recommend itself, both to the king and the pope, of reviving in the West, in close connexion with the Roman primacy, that great name which still filled the imagination of the world, and which, in Roman judgments, Greek Byzantium had wrongfully stolen away—the name of Cæsar Augustus, the claim to govern the world. There was a longing

in the West for the restoration of the name and authority, "lest," as the contemporary writers express it, "the heathen should mock at the Christians if the name of emperor had ceased among them." And, at this moment, the government at Constantinople was in the hands of a woman, the Empress Irene. Charles's services to the pope were recompensed, and his victorious career of more than thirty years crowned, by the restoration at Rome, in his person, of the Roman Empire and the imperial dignity. The same authority, which had made him "patrician," and consecrated him king, now created him Emperor of the Romans. On Christmas Day, 800, when Charles came to pay his devotions before the altar of St. Peter's, Pope Leo III.—without Charles's knowledge or wish, so Charles declared to his biographer, Einhard, and, it may be, prematurely, as regards Charles's own feeling—placed a golden crown on his head, while all the people shouted, "To Charles, the most pious Augustus, crowned of God, the great and peace-giving Emperor of the Romans, life and victory." By all round him, the pope and clergy, the Roman chiefs and people, the great men of the Franks, he was chosen and thrice proclaimed emperor, "at Rome the mother of empire, where Cæsars and emperors were wont to sit." And by the pope himself, he was "adored" "after the manner of the emperors of old." All saw in his matchless power, and in their own unanimity, the hand of God.

Thus a new power arose in Europe, new in reality

and in its relations to society, though old in name. It was formally but the carrying on the line of the successors of Augustus and Constantine. But substantially it was something very different. Its authors could little foresee its destinies ; but it was to last, in some sort the political centre of the world which was to be, for 1000 years. And the Roman Church, which had done such great things, which had consecrated the new and mighty kings of the Franks, and had created for the mightiest of them the imperial claim to universal dominion, rose with them to a new attitude in the world. Humble as she was in outward bearing to the terrible warrior she had crowned, she drew from the act her vast pretensions to be the interpreter of Providence, the giver of kingdoms, the mistress of nations, the arbitress of the allegiance of mankind. What might not that authority bestow or take away, which had renewed and given the Roman Empire ?

The coronation of Charles at Rome, in the face of an imperial line at Constantinople, finally determined, though it did not at once accomplish, the separation of East and West, of Greek and Latin Christianity. This separation had long been impending, perhaps, becoming inevitable. The old tradition of the necessary unity both of the Church and the Empire had resisted it. But on the other hand, there were the separating forces of distance, of difference of language and race, of antagonist and irreconcilable claims. There was also diversity of interests and

dangers, between Rome and Constantinople, between East and West. The emperor at Constantinople, while he was the only emperor, kept a nominal but feeble hold on the West. He had a footing, though a precarious one, in Italy. Rome acknowledged or defied him, according to the turn of events, or the balance of strength. He had the pope as his subject, and was sometimes able to make him feel, when refractory, the penalties of resistance. But besides the natural uneasiness of the Romans under the supremacy of Greek and modern Constantinople, there was the growing alienation of East and West in religious thought. The Eastern Church had been the scene of a series of fierce dissensions, and great schisms. The Monophysite controversy in the sixth century, under Justinian, had led on to the Monothelite controversy in the seventh, under Heraclius and his family; and these were followed in the beginning of the eighth by the great strife about the use of images, provoked by the reforming zeal of Leo the Isaurian, and his successors. In all these controversies, the emperors had interfered with a high hand, both as rulers and as theologians, and had imposed their statements of doctrine and their laws, sometimes not without violent resistance, on their bishops and people. In the West, there was far less learning and subtlety, but there was a steadier and less variable tradition of teaching. The popes found themselves in constant conflict with the East. They sometimes submitted, and found them-

selves entangled in heresy for their compliance ; more often they opposed or moderated. But the result was increasing suspicion and jealousy, increasing irritation on both sides ; and an increasing desire on the part of the popes, as heads of the Western Church, to shake off all dependence, political, as well as ecclesiastical, on the East. It was this growing estrangement, as well as the desire to call back authority if not greatness to Rome, which prompted Pope Leo III. to crown the king of the Franks. He accomplished more than probably he intended. He meant to throw off a galling yoke, to free his own hands from inconvenient and mischievous shackles ; but out of the rift which he made grew the greatest and most hopeless schism in the Christian Church. It is possible that Charles may have had designs for uniting East and West under himself, by family alliances or otherwise. He certainly negotiated, and he wished to disarm Eastern jealousy. Ultimately, he was content with a recognition of his title by the Greek emperor. But the rivalry was too distinct and formidable for negotiations to disguise. "Have the Frank as a friend, but not as a neighbour," was the Greek saying. One Roman Empire was still the only received theory. But *one* Roman Empire, with its seat in the West, or *one* Roman Empire governed in partnership by two emperors of East and West, had become impossible in fact. The theory of its unity continued for ages ; but whether the true successor of Augustus

and Theodosius sat at Constantinople, or somewhere in the West, remained in dispute, till the dispute was ended by the extinction of the Eastern Empire by the Turks on May 29, 1453.

Charles's military successes, his good understanding with the Church, and finally his assumption of the place of Roman emperor, strengthened and developed his strong bent towards political organisation and social improvement. In that early stage of political experience and knowledge, the work was very limited which the ablest and strongest man could do in securing order, and giving a better direction to the wild and ungovernable forces round him. But in Charles we see, for the first time since the Goth Theoderic, and in more favourable circumstances than his, the strong purpose to restrain disorder, and to foster all that seemed healing and hopeful in the state of things round him. If his unresting activity turned out afterwards to be, in many respects, fruitless or even mischievous, this is but what might be expected in times when the wisest measured imperfectly the real facts about them, and the consequences of what they did. Results are at all times apt to fall short of intentions. It is eminently the case, when society is emerging out of the inexperience of barbarism into the efforts of civilisation.

Charles was an administrator rather than a legislator, though his laws, and his revisions of former laws, were numerous. His system of govern-

ment was simple, and he aimed at combining with the exercise of his own authority the sanction of publicity and popular concurrence. The force of his administration consisted in the method and energy which he infused into the public service, the steadiness and activity which he required of his agents, and the patient vigilance with which he watched over the whole; though it is more than probable that in that rough time these agents carried out but inadequately and unequally his attempts, to establish some sort of discipline in the vast and wild world over which he presided. His officers were of two classes. There was the local hierarchy: dukes governing provinces, some of which have since become kingdoms; bishops with extensive domains, enjoying great immunities; counts and inferior chiefs, either territorial, or, in the great cities, removable at pleasure, though with the natural tendency to become hereditary. All were bound both to the military and political service of the kingdom. And, next, there was a central system of special commissioners, envoys, delegates, *Missi* as they were called, deputed with ample powers from the king himself to different parts of his realm, to superintend, and if necessary to take into their hands, the administration of justice, and generally to inspect, examine, reform, report, and thus to bring the whole of the kingdom under the superintendence, and, as it were, within the touch of the central authority. Further, besides that he was incessantly moving about in different parts of his

kingdom, he brought himself twice every year face to face with his chiefs and people in the general assemblies (*Malli, Placita*), which, according to the Teutonic custom of doing all important things in stated gatherings of chiefs and freemen, were held in spring and autumn, for public business. The place of meeting varied, but it seems to have been always in the Eastern and German part of the Frank kingdom. The meeting was sometimes held, as in the Saxon campaigns, in the heart of the enemy's country, and served as the gathering point for the summer's war. But the spring meeting especially brought together all that was most powerful and important in the kingdom round the king; and though his authority was paramount, and his policy was his own, all was done in public, and derived strength from public cognisance and assent. Of the mode of holding these assemblies we have a contemporary account from Adalhard, Charles's relative and minister, which shows how in them Charles came into contact not only with his bishops and great men, but with all classes of his subjects, and how in a rough and informal way their opinions were brought before him, and he learnt from the best information the tempers and conditions of the distant parts of his kingdom.

Of the business done in these assemblies, we have records in the collection of public acts, called the "Capitularies" of the Frank kings. They are a vast and most miscellaneous accumulation of laws, regula-



tions, judicial decisions, moral precepts, literary extracts, royal orders, articles of inquiry civil and ecclesiastical, circulars and special letters, down to inventories of farm stock, household furniture, and garden stuff and implements, in the king's residences. All these documents emanated from the king, and were communicated by him to the assemblies. They cover the whole field of life. With scarcely an attempt at order, they show the confusion with which matters of every sort, political, religious, economical, were all thrown together in the attempt to regulate them. But they also show the strong instinct of early days as to the moral and spiritual laws, which underlie and animate the outward framework of civil society. Few collections of laws contain such curious materials for a picture of the ideas and habits of the time. Charles's efforts had but a partial influence on the disorder of his age. The existence of his laws does not necessarily imply their actual effect. This, which must always be remembered in any attempt to illustrate history by legislative records, is specially true of times like his. But his legislation marked where the disorder was; and it left on men's minds a stronger impression than any of which the trace is to be found before his time, of the public rights of the State, and of the obligations towards it both of its rulers and its members. The Capitularies first exhibit with some distinctness that idea of the public interest, as distinct from the rights and claims of individuals, which is the one germ of

civilised order, and which gives the measure of its progress. Lastly, in the Capitularies are to be found in their earliest form the legalised beginnings of some of the most characteristic institutions belonging to modern Europe. We see the rudiments of that feudal system which so powerfully influenced its political growth, its social ideas, its customs as to the tenure of land, its industry, and the distribution of its wealth. We see, too, the earliest outlines of the manifold relations between Christian kings and the Church; of the whole system of benefices and endowments, civil and religious; and of the widespread law of tithes.

The order which Charles tried to establish in his kingdom, he tried to establish in the Church. He found in it two opposite conditions. On the one hand, in its public character and in its high places, it was lapsing deeper and deeper into that worldliness and license which were the fruits of the favour which it had received from its coarse and brutal Merovingian patrons. Its chiefs, the bishops and abbots, had become a privileged and powerful order in the State; but along with this had come a decline in all learning, in their sense of their real duties, and in public sentiment about these duties. Bishops, like dukes and counts, rode to battle and fell in the wars, and often lived as carelessly and selfishly as the courtiers and soldiers, from whom they were often taken. Even the sainted bishops of the seventh and eighth centuries were often men engaged in the quarrels of the

Merovingian courts, like St. Arnulf or St. Leger ; or they were pious and skilful craftsmen, devoting their art to religion like St. Eloy, and adding to it earnest but very humble teaching. It was no wonder that Charles Martel invested a good soldier with the two archbishoprics of Reims and Treves, and his nephew with the bishoprics of Paris and Bayeux, and the archbishopric of Rouen, besides two great abbeys. It is no wonder to read of a pope asking Charles's son to punish a faithless Roman envoy by making him a Frank bishop, in order to keep him in exile. The schools of the monasteries barely kept alive the knowledge of Latin, the only access to the inherited wisdom of the world, the only access to Christian teaching. Of all the Christian centuries, the seventh is in the West the most barren of literary effort and spiritual greatness. In that great see which had become the centre of Western Christendom, the bishops of Rome had begun to travel fast along that downward road which was to lead them step by step, from the nobleness and devotion of the first Leo and the first Gregory, through a miserable greed after provinces and cities, to the incredible scandals of the tenth century. At Rome, too, in the pursuit of worldly greatness and power, learning, together with better things than learning, perished. In the letters of the popes to the Frank kings, in the eighth century, adulation and servility, the servility of a beggar who whines and threatens, are sometimes expressed in Latin which defies the most elementary rules of ordinary grammar.

But though much belonging to religion, and everything relating to literature, was at the lowest level, there was another side to this. There were, in this age of deep degeneracy, good and earnest men, who could act if they could not write. That very seventh century, which saw the Frank episcopate so widely corrupt, was the age of one of the purest and boldest missionary efforts on record. The seventh century was the age of the conversion of England, the age of Augustine and Theodore of Tarsus, of Aidan, and Chad, and Aldhelm. It was the age of the missions of the Irish monks, Columban and his followers, in Burgundy and in the vast unknown heathendom beyond it, in the plains and forests of Central Europe, in the Alpine valleys, and on the Danube and the Rhine. A Frank missionary, Enimeran from Poitiers, was the apostle and martyr of the Bavarians. Towards the end of the seventh century, when Christianity had taken root in England, and its firstfruits had appeared in the piety and learning of the Northumbrian Bede of Jarrow, a burst of missionary zeal carried English teachers, emulating their Irish forerunners, to win to the Gospel the lands from which their fathers had come. Willibrord of Ripon preached to the heathen of Friesland, and founded the see of Utrecht. His greater follower, the Devonshire Winfrid, afterwards known by the Latin name of Boniface, the first archbishop of Mainz, devoted his life, in the first half of the eighth century, first as a preacher and then as a martyr, to

the conversion of the Germans—Frisians, Saxons, Hessians, Thuringians, Bavarians. He not only preached but organised. Armed with authority from the two greatest powers in the West, the king of the Franks and the pope of Rome, he mapped out the new missionary conquests into dioceses, he founded sees where the conquest was still to be made, he held the first German councils (about 743). He also founded monastic schools like the famous Fulda—families of earnest men devoted to a definite work, the work of evangelising. The effect was great of Teutonic preachers coming to Teutonic populations from lands of Teutonic occupation, and with the tie of a common language. Some of the oldest specimens of the languages of continental Germany are the translations made for the use of the German converts; the baptismal forms, the Lord's prayer, the Creed.

Charles, like his father Pipin, was too much of a statesman to be indifferent to the good and evil in the Church, and to the great and increasing place which it occupied in the growing society of the new nations. The Irish and English missionaries were pioneers of Frank influence in central Germany, in some cases, its forlorn hope; and they were instruments of keener temper than the sword for the permanent conquest of barbarism. Both for this reason, and from a genuine sympathy for their dauntless courage, and severe and thoroughgoing religion, they were warmly encouraged by the new Frank kings.

On the other hand, the disorder in the Church invited from so strong a ruler as Charles the most uncompromising policy of interference and correction. His ecclesiastical administration was unswerving in purpose and absolute in its claims. Never in modern Europe has the union of Church and State, exhibited in the supremacy of the king, been carried to so high a point. The pope was there recognised, doubtless, as the highest religious authority ; he sanctioned and consecrated Charles's power ; but the pope was too completely dependent for his Italian dominions on his alliance with the Franks, to venture seriously to thwart his protector. In the Capitularies, we find laws on ecclesiastical and spiritual matters placed exactly on the same footing as the strictly political and civil laws. The rebellious Saxons were baptized as a proof of their submission to the king, just as in later times the other sacrament has been used as a test of loyalty to government ; and, in their case, to depart from the religion of their conquerors was punished with death, as if it were treason. Bishops and abbots were peremptorily recalled to their duties. They were forbidden to ride forth to the wars, carry arms, and shed blood, and to live as laymen. The king's interference extended to matters strictly belonging to their province. By his own authority he altered, corrected, and, as he believed, reformed and improved the offices of the Church. In the controversies of the day, he formed his opinion and ruled the conclusions of councils, cautiously, indeed, and

with ecclesiastical learning to back him, but by authority of his own. In the question about images, which was so complicated by political difficulties, and had so much to do with finally separating the Greek and Latin Churches, he took his part, the part, it must be said, of moderation and sobriety. He rejected a council claiming to be œcumenical (Nicæa II. 787), and opposed the pope who had accepted it; while he boldly attempted in a Frank council of his own (Frankfort, 794), and by the pen of his scholars and divines, to fix the opinion and usage of the Western Church. The most unceremonious proclamations of strict and unsparing discipline were addressed to the bishops; and articles of inquiry were sent about, detailed and minute, as to their knowledge of the elements of religion, the morality of their lives, their diligence in preaching, their capacity and that of their clergy to perform the offices of religion. They are to be asked, he says, in one of these visitation circulars—and the question is to be driven home—“What is the meaning of the apostle’s saying (2 Tim. ii. 4), ‘No man that warreth, entangleth himself with the affairs of this life’; and to whom do the words apply?”

Charles’s idea of his office as king was deepened and enlarged when he became emperor. He then rose from being the king of the Franks and Lombards, to what the world of his day, and after it, the middle ages, supposed to be the unique and transcendent supremacy inherited from Cæsar Augustus. As em-

peror of the Romans, he claimed to govern the Roman world, and all persons and things in it. As emperor, he claimed the pope himself as his subject. The pope was his father and guide in religion, and governed the Church by power not derived from man and according to a legislation of its own, yet subject to his own visitatorial control. At the pope's hands he received his own imperial crown and anointing. But the election of the pope required the emperor's confirmation; the pope like every one else had to take the oath of fidelity to the emperor; the pope went through the ceremony, as it is expressed in unsuspecting contemporary language, of "adoring" him at his coronation, after the custom of the emperors of old. Pope Leo III. pleaded before him; and Charles, in bidding his envoys exhort the pope to live honestly, to observe the canons, and to avoid simony, used the same force and freedom with which he exhorted his bishops. Charles's claim to interfere in religious matters, which he had put high as king of the Franks and Lombards, was sensibly raised, both in extent and peremptoriness, when he became emperor. He conceived, and his age with him, that he had received from God, together with the inheritance of the Cæsars, the duty and office of the Jewish kings, not only of protecting the Church of God, but of purifying it from evil, and making every one in it, from the highest to the lowest, do his duty, and submit to the imperial authority and rebuke.

This broad claim to superintend and regulate the



policy, the government, the practice, and even the belief of the Church, with which the East had been long familiar, was new among the Teutonic rulers of the West. In Charles appeared for the first time, realised and complete, the mediæval idea of the Roman Empire. According to this idea, "the unity of the Christian empire reflected the unity of the Christian Church," and the empire had its supreme head, Cæsar Augustus, as the Church had the successor and representative of St. Peter. In Charles's interpretation of the idea, the ultimate control of this twofold realm rested with the divinely appointed Cæsar; where there was a conflict of judgment it was for his authority to prevail. The revival of the empire was the pope's doing, and for a long time the popes sought in vain to undo what in a time of need they had too hastily sanctioned. But to undo was beyond their power. Men took different sides in the great question which arose out of the idea of the empire; but the idea had struck deep root; it was the idea at once of Frederick II. and Dante, and of Gregory VII. and Boniface VIII. The precedent set by Charles, and the fierce debates arising out of it, affected the whole history of the middle ages, and even of the centuries which followed the Reformation; nor is its eventful significance exhausted yet. In the great conflicts between Church and State both parties have sought arguments from it. The governments of Europe have found in it an armoury of precedents to limit or to extinguish the liberties of the Church:

while in the origin and incidents of the revived empire, and in the new place of the papacy which followed on this revival, the champions of the pope have seen proofs of the theory which made him the master of kings and laws.

Charles was keenly alive to the depressed state of knowledge and of general cultivation in his age, and to the contrast in regard to literature and theology between his own times and the great days before him. Early in his reign he collected about him in his palace the best scholars he could attract, and made them his familiar friends. The most considerable of them was—like the great German missionary of the previous generation, Boniface—an Englishman. Alcwin came over from the school of York in 782, and remained, with a short interval, on the continent till his death in 804. By such help Charles tried to improve his own knowledge, and to raise the standard of acquirement round him. Records of the conversations and discussions which went on between the king and his “palace school” have been preserved in Alcwin’s writings. They show the almost childish confusions and affectations of reviving knowledge; but they also show the manly interest felt in the task of inquiry and self-improvement. The king and his companions furnished themselves with names, partly from the Bible, partly from Latin literature; Charles was David, and there was a Nathanael and a Bezaleel; Alcwin was Flaccus Albinus, with a Homer, a Mopsus, a Flavius Damoetas; and for the ladies of the palace,

the sister and daughters of Charles, there were the names of Lucia, Columba, Delia, Eulalia. They employed their mother wit and their curiosity on such learning as was within their reach relating to the processes of thought and the powers of speech, the laws of numbers and sound, the motions of the heavenly bodies ; and they called it logic, grammar, rhetoric, arithmetic, music, and astronomy. Charles learned to speak Latin with facility, and he understood, better than he spoke, Greek ; in his native Frankish German he was a vigorous and impressive speaker, and the splendour and usefulness of Latin did not shake his allegiance to his mother tongue. He was passionately fond of the old German songs and lays. He attempted a German grammar, which means probably that, like Otfrid, the translator of the Gospels in the next generation, he attempted the then hopeless task of grasping, under rules like those of Latin, the varying spoken dialects of his kingdom. He tried late in life, but without success, to acquire what was then the professional art of writing. He was a severe critic of the reading and singing in his chapel. It was his custom to be read to at meals ; and his favourite book was St. Augustine's *City of God*, which, with its grand sweeping generalisations, and its religious sense of the presence of God in the history and development of mankind, answered to his own lofty view of the work to which he had been called.

In promoting the improvement of learning, Charles

showed the same eagerness of purpose as he did in politics, or war, or hunting. Utterly disregarding of trouble, and untiring in what he did himself, he called on his bishops and abbots both to learn themselves and to enforce learning among their subordinates. Ordinances were issued calling for schools to be set up in the great sees and monasteries. They arose, or were quickened into activity where already founded; and they produced their fruits in the next generation, and kept hope alive amid great disasters. Colonies were sent from the schools and monasteries of Gaul into Germany; thus New Corbey in the conquered Saxon land was founded by converted Saxons, who had been trained at Corbey on the Somme. At Osnabrück, in view of greater intercourse with Constantinople, Greek was specially ordered to be taught. The increasing list of learned names which begin to appear from this century, almost all of them pupils of the new German schools, shows that Charles's efforts were not altogether vain. But it was easier to command and even show the way, than to be obeyed; and even to be obeyed, than to alter the inherited conditions of his age. Yet Charles was as practical as he was enthusiastic and resolute. In this, as in other things, the wants of men, and the necessity of supplying them, were insisted upon by the master spirit of the time, with such manifest truth and reason, that, though the change was imperceptible and was thwarted by countless adverse influences, a great change had

really set in. And encouragement was given to those who, in those wild and perplexed times, believed that men were meant for something better and higher than a life of fighting, of personal rivalries, and of coarse enjoyment.

Charles's great qualities were alloyed with great faults. With the excellences of a strong nature, he had the failings and self-delusions of the strong. Great as he was, both in what he aimed at and in what he accomplished, he could not be above his age; he had the rudeness of a barbarian endeavouring to rise above barbarism. Rude, as Peter the Great in like circumstances was rude, yet Charles's was the rudeness of a larger and more genial nature, and of a nobler ambition. But Charles was one of those who think that they know enough, and have strength enough, to mould the world at their will. With strong affections and wide sympathies, he was imperious and masterful. He saw no limits to his power to correct and mend, and no limits to his right to exercise it; and his too ambitious and sometimes unscrupulous attempts sowed the seeds of mischief to come. Clement and placable as he was in peace, his wars were ferocious, and his policy after conquest unsparing; yet it was the ferocity which often since his time has been judged the only weapon to extinguish obstinate and dangerous resistance. He was in earnest in his religion, and there was much in it not only of earnestness but of intelligence. But it was not complete or deep enough to exclude that

waywardness and inconsistency of moral principle, and that incapacity to control passion, which belonged to the time. We do not hear of the foul murders and treasons of the Merovingian times ; but his court was full of the gross licentiousness of the period. He was not superior to it himself ; there were many evil stories about him ; and tenderly attached as he was to his children, he was not happy in their training and fortunes.

The Frank kingdom which Charles had received from his father included Gaul from the Loire to the Rhine, with an ill-established sovereignty over the German tribes between the Rhine, the Elbe, and the Upper Danube, and over the impatient Latinised population of Aquitaine. During the forty-seven years of Charles's reign it had grown into a resemblance of the dominion of the Cæsars. When Charles died, its borders were the Ebro in Spain, the Elbe in Germany, or beyond the Elbe, the Eyder, and the Bavarian Enns, if not the Hungarian Theiss, to the south-east. All of what is now Germany west of the Bohemian mountains, not merely acknowledged in him an over-lord, but was really won to his rule. He secured, what his father had only fought to secure, the submission of Latin Aquitaine, and the submission, at last complete and sincere, of the stout-hearted and obstinate Saxons. There had been one independent Christian kingdom on the main land of the West, that of the Lombards at Pavia ; it had disappeared. He had wrested from them all Italy,

which was beginning to be called by their name, from the Alps to Calabria, and the king of the Franks preserved the memory of his conquest by adding to his title that of king of the Lombards. His more indefinite claims to sovereignty or tribute extended beyond these limits—to Corsica and perhaps Sardinia, to the lands between the Danube and the head of the Adriatic, to the barbarous tribes of Slaves, eastward of his proper border as far as the Vistula. From the ocean to the mountains of the Bohemians and the plains of Hungary and Poland, from the Baltic till he met the Arabs in Spain, the Greeks in Calabria, Sicily and Dalmatia, the continental Europe of that time owned his sway and formed his empire. He seemed to be the centre of all authority, the bond of union among the nations.

Charles was one of those men who, in person and outward bearing, answer to their place. Tall, robust, well-proportioned in body, with great strength and activity, simple in dress, bright and keen-eyed, clear but shrill in voice, commanding in feature, hale in his old age, he lived with unbroken health till his last few years, greatly despising physicians and remedies. He was a great eater, but sparing of wine, and relied on starvation as his only medicine. He was a great rider and swimmer, passionately fond of bathing, and delighting in the hot springs and pools of his favourite Aachen. To the very last he was a mighty and untiring hunter. After an autumn spent in violent exercise, the winter of 813-814 was at length too

much for him. Fever and pleurisy attacked him, and he would only meet them by starving himself. On the morning of January 28, 814, he died. He was buried the same day in the stately basilica which he had built hard by his palace at Aachen or Aix-la-Chapelle, and adorned with marbles brought from Rome and Ravenna. He was laid in the tomb which he had made for himself. On the gilded arch beneath which he lay, was his effigy and the inscription: "Under this tomb is laid the body of Charles, great and orthodox Emperor, who nobly enlarged the kingdom of the Franks, and for 47 years reigned prosperously. He died, being seventy years old, in the year of our Lord 814, the 7th Indiction, the fifth day before the Kalends of February." There, in the vault below, he was left, sitting as in life on a marble throne, dressed in his imperial robes, with his horn, his sword, and his book of the Gospels on his knee. And there, says the legend, in the last years of the tenth century, he was found by Otto III., who ventured to open the tomb, and who beheld the undecayed form of the great emperor of the Franks.

For the first time since the fall of the Roman Empire in the West, a king, an emperor, had arisen in the new nations, to rule with glory; a conqueror, a legislator, a founder of social order, a restorer of religion. His unbroken success, his wide dominion, his consecrated authority, his fame spread to the farthest bounds of the world, recalled the great

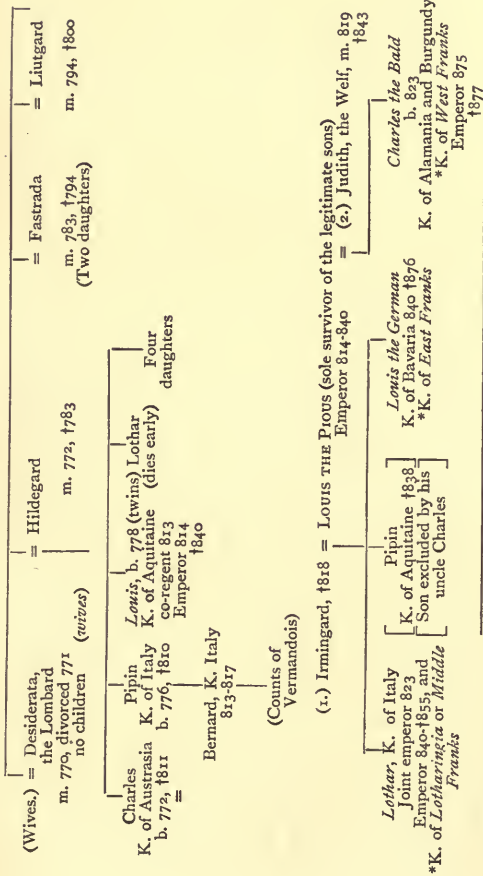


kings of the Bible, the great Cæsars of Rome. What made him so great was, that his aim was not only to conquer, and overthrow, and enjoy, but that he laboured so long and so resolutely with deliberate purpose for the benefit of men. It was all the more wonderful and impressive, from the disorder which had been before, from the disorder which for a long time followed. His reign was a romantic episode, interposed in the midst of what seemed normal and irremediable anarchy. The unique splendour of his reign, which even we with our cooler judgments see to have been so remarkable, naturally dazzled the imaginations of his age. The haze of legend and poetry soon enveloped his image in the memory of the nations. The great German king and Cæsar was transformed into a Latin hero of romance, the theme of the Norman *Chant de Roland*, and of the Italian poets of the court of Ferrara, Bojardo and Ariosto. More strangely still, as the great champion and legislator and benefactor of the Church, he grew, though personally so lax in his rules of life, into the reputation of a saint. He was never formally canonised; but his name and his doings appear in the catalogue of the saints; his altar was frequent at one time in Germany and the Low Countries; and to this day, his title to saintship is still acknowledged by altar, and image, and festival, in the churches of the Lower Valais.

His glory was the prelude to strange reverses in the fortunes of his posterity. Strong as he was, the

times were yet stronger ; and the children of Charles proved even less worthy of their origin than the children of Clovis. For they started from a higher point ; and they sank at last almost as low as the Merovingians.

## CHARLES THE GREAT †814.



\* Division of the Frank empire between the three brothers by the *Treaty of Verdun*, 843. Lothar's male line extinct in 875 (Louis II.); dominions *Italy*, *Lotharingia* (*Treaty of Meersen*, 870), *Provence*, parted between Louis the German and Charles the Bald.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE CAROLINGIANS

1. Louis the Pious and his sons—2. The Northmen—
3. Fall of the Carolingian lines

IT seemed as if under Charles the Franks were to be to the new world of Christendom what the Romans had been to the old world of heathendom. It seemed so. But before Charles died, he showed that he felt it was hardly to be, and that his image of empire had been but his own personal achievement, and was linked to his character and life. Two forces opposed the continuation of his empire, and he recognised them both: the permanent conditions of nationality, and the accidents of his own family. He saw that his dominion was made up of discordant elements, the German, the Gaul, and the Italian; the true German Frank of the East, the Frank of the Main and Rhine, the Moselle and Meuse; and the Romanising Frank of the West, the Frank of Paris and Rouen, of Orleans and Tours, with the Romanised Celt of the South, of Bordeaux, Toulouse, and Lyons.

Three sons, the sons of one of the earliest of his wives, Hildegard, had grown up in the companionship of his wars, and had shared with him in his enterprises of conquest and rule. That the eldest should succeed to his position, by right of birth or by national choice, was not the assumption of those days among the Franks. The ideas and precedents of the kingdom prescribed a division of the inheritance; and Charles accepted, as of course, the parting of his empire. His one care was that it should be a peaceable one; but he never seems to have thought of keeping it together, as he had held it, in one hand. Eight years before his death, in order to avert discord and quarrel between his sons, he made a solemn act of partition (806). Charles, the eldest, was to rule in the North over the old kingdom of the Franks, from the Elbe to the Loire, Neustria and Austrasia, and the German lands beyond the Rhine, with North Burgundy, the Valley of the Rhone, and Aosta, one of the southern keys of the Alps. Pipin, the second, had the East and South-east, Bavaria, and "Italy, which is also Lombardy," with the southern bank of the Danube, and up to the sources of the Rhine. Louis had the South, Aquitaine and Gascony, the Spanish March, Provence, and Southern Burgundy, and the valleys of the Western Alps, Savoy, Maurienne, and Tarentaise. To each—that each, it was said, might aid the other, really that each might have his own access to Italy and Rome—was assigned his own pass over the Alps; to Charles by the St. Bernard, to Pipin by Chur and

the Septimer, to Louis by the Mont Cenis and Susa. The contingency of the death of any of them was provided for; and rules were carefully laid down for the questions which, in the existing state of society, were the most usual causes or pretexts of quarrels. In making this arrangement, Charles must have acknowledged to himself that the great achievement of his own life was not likely, except from unforeseen chances, to be repeated, and that he was in truth founding three great and separate kingdoms, for which all that he could do was to try and keep them allied and at peace. Yet he might have thought that the Germans, in the great race of Franks, were henceforth to lead the world.

But none of these things was to be, not even peace in his family. In the few years between the act of partition and his death, two of the three sons among whom he had so carefully divided his realms, had died, and left their claims to be a source of endless strife, feud, and war to a younger generation. And that leadership which the Germans had held during the last three centuries, and which seemed secured to them by the revived empire, was, by the results of the policy of the greatest of German leaders, finally checked and abolished. By the destruction of the Lombard, which meant a Teutonic ascendancy in Italy, by the decisive separation of the Western Frank kingdom from the Eastern Franks, and by the creation of a great Italian power in the reconstructed papacy, the independence, and then the preponder-

ance and triumph of Latin influences in southern Europe were made sure. Charles aspired to put his Germans at the head of the rising civilisation of the West. But they were still too rude for the task. And exactly as his own efforts to awaken a desire for order and cultivation were successful, it was felt that not force, but trained and experienced reason, not the gifts which had made the Germans irresistible, but those which were the inheritance of the weaker Latins, were the foundations of power, and the guardians of peace, law, and hope, in society.

The wild world which Charles the Great had tried to tame broke out again into disorder under his son, Louis, named *Pius, der Fromme, le Débonnaire*, the kindly and religious, as we should perhaps name him, "the Good." Charles's aim had been to create a strong central power, which, leaving each land with its own institutions and laws, should everywhere moderate and control, should enforce justice, should support religion and civilisation, and should encourage learning; and he thought that he had done so by reviving the Roman Empire in the West, and placing it among the Franks. Still holding the authority of emperor, Charles, as has been already said, towards the end of his reign (806), following both imperial and Merovingian precedents, appointed three of his sons, Charles, Pipin, and Louis, to be kings under him; laying down provisions for maintaining the peace and unity of the one Frank Empire. But his foresight was of no avail. Pipin in 810 and Charles

in 811 both died before him. Then he devolved his imperial dignity, by his own authority, in 813, a year before his death, on Louis of Aquitaine, the survivor of his three kingly sons. Thus, at Charles's death (814), Louis came at once into his father's place as emperor, and was welcomed in it by the unanimous consent of the Franks. Two years after he was crowned at Reims by the pope, Stephen V. (816).

Louis followed his father's example by associating his eldest son, Lothar, as emperor with himself, and by appointing his other two sons, Pipin and Louis, and his nephew, Bernard, over the outlying portions of the empire—Aquitaine, Bavaria, and Italy, or, as it was sometimes called, Lombardy. For sixteen years all went on, as in Charles's times. Louis, popular with his subjects, gentle-minded, for the most part a lover of mercy and justice, but also active and brave, sedulously followed in his father's steps in legislation and government. He was busy with reforms both in Church and State. His ordinances swell the Capitularies. From all quarters ambassadors came to him, with presents, proposals for peace, demands for assistance—from the Greeks, the Saracens, the Bulgarians, the Danes, the Eastern Slaves, the popes. The old success attended for the most part the military expeditions of the Franks. An attempt to make Italy independent under young Bernard, his nephew, was at once and pitilessly suppressed (817). Bernard's eyes were put out, and he died soon afterwards (818). More formidable revolts in the border-



lands beyond the Elbe, in the Slave countries beyond the Inn, on the Drave and the Save, in Brittany, in Gascony, were vigorously met and put down. And yet in the midst of his power and glory Louis was mindful of the frailty of human greatness, and the imperfection of human action. More than once his conscience smote him. At a great meeting at Attigny, near Laon, 822, like the Emperor Theodosius, he voluntarily humbled himself before his assembled chiefs and bishops, publicly confessing his offences against those whom, like his nephew Bernard, he had treated unjustly and cruelly. Thus, with a milder and purer character, Louis seemed to keep up the vigour of his father's rule, and to have inherited his father's power and fortune. Never had the boundaries of the empire been so extended, or its authority appeared so commanding. Without his father's faults, he had reached to more than even his father's greatness. But it was the illusion of only sixteen years. It was true that he had not his father's faults; but it was proved at last that he had not his father's strength. The show of prosperity and success during the first half of his reign was in the latter half to end in gloomy and hopeless confusion.

The explosion came at last. Louis, left a widower in 818, married, in the following year (819), the fair and ambitious Bavarian Judith, the daughter of Welf, Count of Altorf, on the lake of Lucerne, the ancestor of many famous lines: among them those of Este, of

the Guelfs of Bavaria and Saxony, of the Plantagenets, of the House of Brunswick. In 823 she bore a son, named after the great emperor, Charles, and to be distinguished from him afterwards as Charles the Bald. This roused at once the jealousy of the emperor's first family, the three sons who shared his government. The empire was henceforth filled with their intrigues and revolts. Their counsellors and partisans, the turbulent nobles of their kingdoms, threw themselves into the quarrel with rancour; and the attacks on the Empress Judith have been compared to the insults of the revolutionary parties in Paris against Marie Antoinette. The emperor was bent on carving out a kingdom for his youngest and favourite son; but the partition between the elder sons was regarded by them as final, and whatever was given to Charles must be given at their expense. In 829 the emperor took from the portion of one of them, Louis, "the German," Alamannia, Rhætia, and Burgundy beyond the Jura, corresponding roughly to Suabia and Switzerland, and created it into a kingdom for Charles, a child of six years old. From that time the empire of Charles the Great began to break up. In the following year, 830, the elder sons, with Lothar, his father's trusted associate in the empire, at their head, set up in Paris the standard of revolt. Louis was surprised by his sons, and together with the empress was imprisoned, threatened, ill-treated. He was restored as suddenly; for the brothers distrusted one another, and the feeling was strong for the

emperor in the Eastern and German provinces. His rebellious sons were lightly punished, and again they rose up against him. This time they had won over the pope, Gregory IV., to their side; and he accompanied their united armies against their father (833). The two hosts for several days faced each other in the plains of Elsass, near Colmar. Neither side would attack; but communications freely passed between them, the pope offering himself as mediator. The end was that the emperor's adherents were persuaded to desert him. His army broke up without fighting. Bishops and counts passed over, one after another, to his sons, and he was left with the empress and her son to the mercy of the rebels. The name of this long-remembered scene of treachery was changed from the "Rothfeld" to the "Lügenfeld," *Campus Mendacii*, the "Field of Lies." The sons endeavoured to force their father to abdicate; but he was resolute in his refusal. They imprisoned him in the monastery of St. Medard, near Soissons. At length, in an assembly of bishops and nobles, he was formally deposed. But the sentence had scarcely been pronounced before the reaction began. The brothers, as usual, quarrelled. As before, the Germans of the Eastern provinces were ready to support him, though they had deserted him at the Lügenfeld. Once more Louis was released, his deposition cancelled, and he was again emperor; once more he forgave and made peace with his rebellious sons. But confidence and quiet were not restored. Partition

after partition—ten are counted during his reign—showed the emperor's unscrupulous eagerness to increase the share of his youngest son; he added to Alamannia, Neustria, and, on Pipin's death, Aquitaine. Father was still in arms against son, and brother against brother. The empire, so prosperous while united, began to suffer from external attacks. Northmen and Slaves became more troublesome and audacious. At length, still victorious, but victorious over his own children, with a threatening future, and amid natural calamities and portents, Louis the Pious, the Kindly, died in one of his palaces on the Rhine, and was buried at Metz, leaving discord among his sons, and his great heritage shaken and in confusion.

The last ten years of Louis' empire had made it clear that the power to govern its turbulent elements had departed with its founder. And from this time (830-840), the artificial force which had kept it together being removed, the contrast and opposition between its great national divisions became more and more distinct and sharp. The process of disintegration began, and it was probably in the nature of things inevitable. But it was greatly helped forward by violent and incurable dissensions between the brothers and their children, to whom Louis had left his empire. Lothar, the eldest, his associate in the empire, and already crowned at Rome, ambitious, cunning, unscrupulous, claimed for himself the whole imperial inheritance, and the supremacy which his father and grandfather had held. He was the centre

of the old Frank interest, the local Frank allegiance, the old Frank claims to rule. He held the north, the Rhine, and Italy; he was master at once of Aachen or Aix-la-Chapelle, and of Rome, the capitals of the new and the old empire. But in the east and west, German Bavaria and Latin Aquitaine, always impatient of Frank supremacy, had each now their own king, sons, like Lothar, of the late emperor. In Bavaria and the neighbouring lands Louis, named the German, had been able to defy his father; his power and influence had become strongly rooted. In the west, Charles the Bald, though his claims in Aquitaine were disputed by a cousin, was gradually becoming formidable in the countries between the Loire, the Seine, and the Rhone. The trial of strength, in such conditions, could not fail to come. There was the usual prelude, like as of feints in a game, of treacherous negotiations and feeble conflicts. At length, Louis the German and Charles, with the Latinised forces of the West, united in earnest against their elder brother. The bloody battle of Fontenailles, or Fontenoy (*Fontanetum*) near Auxerre, a year after their father's death (June 25, 841), a battle famous in those days for the fierceness of the fighting, and for the greatness of the slaughter, ended in the overthrow of Lothar, and made it clear that his brothers could hold their own against him. The battle of Fontenailles was the decisive proof that the unity of Frank dominion, shaken under the Emperor Louis, was hopeless under the Emperor Lothar. The two

brothers, Louis and Charles, with more steadiness than was then usual, maintained their alliance, and confirmed it the following year (842) by the memorable "oath of Strasburg," taken by themselves and their two armies, by Louis' army in German (*Teudisca, Deutsch*) by Charles in "Roman" (*Romana*), a language no longer Latin, but not yet French. The result of their success was at length acknowledged and sanctioned by the Treaty of Verdun (843), the most important and substantially permanent of the numberless partitions which had been and were to be. For it was the starting-point of the new arrangement of Western Europe, following on the dissolution of the fabric which the great Charles had built up. Changes, redistributions, subdivisions, unions of the most varied kinds were still to be attempted. But, henceforth, the broad lines of division were traced, which the subsequent history of Europe, in spite of all attempts to obliterate them, has only deepened.

Speaking roughly we may say that by the treaty of Verdun, and by the confirmations of it, at Thionville (844), and Meerssen (847), Louis the German took the Eastern and German Franks, and Charles the Bald, the Western and Latinised Franks. Lothar, besides the imperial dignity and whatever claims went with it, had the Middle portion of the Frank kingdom, between the Rhine eastwards, the Scheldt, Meuse, and Rhone westwards, with Italy, the emperor's special share. The realm of Lothar, the emperor, was, says Palgrave, "built upon Italy."

The two imperial residences, Rome and Aachen, "the centres of the two great Cis-Alpine and Trans-Alpine crown lands," were conjoined by "an unbroken and continuous territory, including all varieties of soil, climate, and production, the wine and oil of the South, the harvests and pastures of the North." Once, and once only, again, after the disruption of Verdun, the three realms were for a short time under one emperor, Charles the Fat (884-887); but his hand was too feeble to hold them. The inherent tendencies to separate national life were irresistible. The new world grew too fast, and became too large, for any constitutional authority of those days to manage, and for anything but the rarest personal qualities to keep together. Charles the Great's design was more than once attempted, but was never again accomplished. "The history of modern Europe," says Sir F. Palgrave, "is an exposition of the treaty of Verdun."

With the breaking up of the West into these great national divisions, occasioned by the family feuds of the Carolingians, the interest of their history is exhausted. For a time they continued at the head of these divisions. They gave their names to some of them; we hear of a *Karlingia*, and a more enduring *Lotharingia*, now narrowed down to Lothringen or Lorraine. Each member of the family was for ever endeavouring for his own advantage to undo the partition of Verdun, in whole or in part. But to this their efforts were confined. The political

and administrative aims of the founders of their house, of Pipin and Charles, disappear. The legislative record, the Capitularies, so full under Charles the Great and Louis the Pious, thins out with a few important documents under Charles the Bald, and after him comes to an end, leaving less trace than the legislation of the later Merovingians. Their history becomes a dizzy and unintelligible spectacle of monotonous confusion—a scene of unrestrained treachery, of insatiable and blind rapacity. No son is obedient or loyal to his father; no brother can trust his brother; no uncle spares his nephews. Members of the same family, their greedy envy of each other's possessions kept them in an unvarying round of attempts at unscrupulous spoliation, successful or unsuccessful. There were rapid alternations of fortune, rapid changing of sides; there was universal distrust, and universal reliance on falsehood and crime. But nothing, not even the barbarians of the North and East desolating their cities and provinces, could interrupt the infatuated passion to overreach and encroach. While the Northmen were piercing to the heart of Neustria by the Seine, the Loire, and the Garonne, Charles the Bald, unable with his utmost efforts to check them, never could resist the temptation, when it offered, to filch a province from a neighbouring kinsman, and he in like manner, when his hands were full, became the natural victim of their greediness.

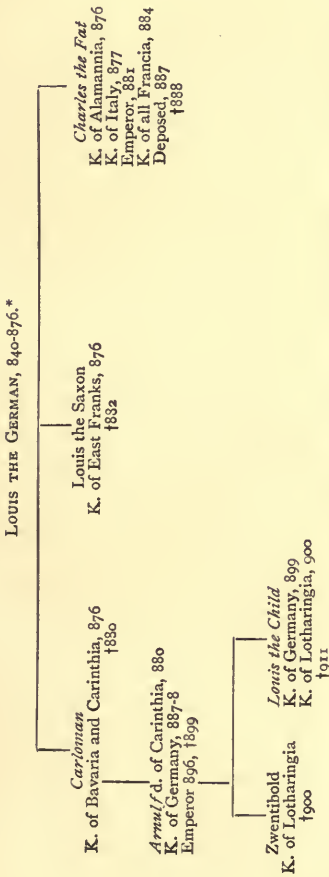
Yet the men themselves, some of them at least,



such as Louis the German, and even Charles the Bald, were of a higher stamp than the Merovingians ; and, to the last, we find among them men of spirit and vigour, capable of striking a heavy blow and winning a success over a powerful opponent. But their energy was fitful and ill-applied. They had lost sight of all high aims and large purposes. The times were against them, and were too strong for them ; and there were too many of them. Their rival pretensions were extravagant and irreconcilable. The dream of reuniting their great ancestor's empire was ever before their eyes, and their capacity never reached to this. They were but able to balance and check one another. And thus their history became a repetition of the disorder and dislocations of the Merovingian times. Pretenders struck in, carving out new kingdoms or dukedoms from the older divisions. The imperial, and then the kingly title, and at last the family itself, dies out, in one line after another, first in that of the Emperor Lothar (Louis II. †875), next in that of Louis the German (Louis the Child †911), at last in that of Charles the Bald (Louis the Lazy †987); and each line ends in some feeble representative, who passes away, unhonoured, perhaps deposed and imprisoned. The family, more numerous than the Merovingians, confined themselves, like the Merovingians, to but a few names. In the house of Clovis, almost every one was a Clovis, a Clothar, a Theoderic, a Childbert, a Chilperic, a Sigibert, a Dagobert. In the

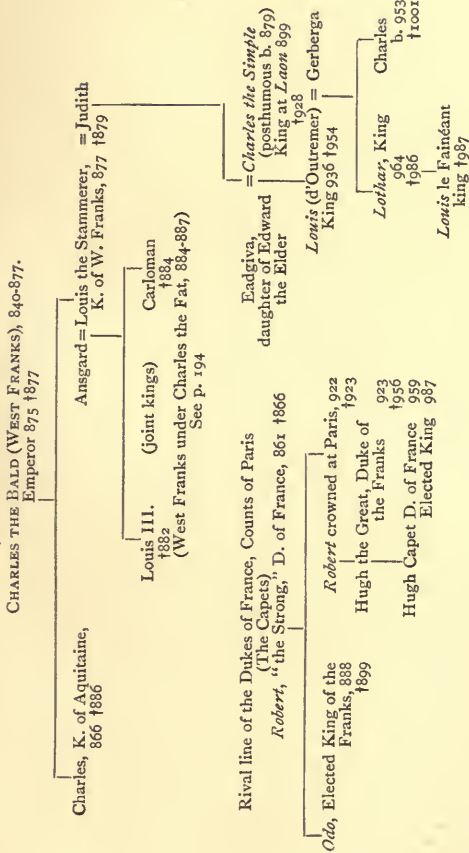
house of Pipin, almost every one was Pipin, or Charles, or Carloman, or, with the altered or modernised forms of the older names, a Ludvig (Louis), or a Lothar. But after the glory of their founder had departed, history can only distinguish them at last by some scornful nickname—Charles the Fat, Charles the Simple, Louis the Stammerer, Louis the Child, Louis the Lazy, the “Do-nothing.”

Of the three sons who survived Louis the Pious, Lothar, the emperor, died first (855), and his family was extinguished within the twenty years that his two brothers outlived him. His kingdom was divided between three sons: Louis II. the Emperor, Lothar, and Charles. The three brothers quarrelled among themselves, and were assailed by their uncles. They all died without male heirs, the elder, the Emperor Louis II., being the survivor; and at each death, whether of brothers or nephews, and whether children were left or not, the moment was seized by the others to snatch or divide the vacant share, which usually had been contested in life. The middle portion of the Frank dominion, to the northern part of which, along the course of the Meuse and the Moselle as far as the Scheldt, the second Lothar gave the name of Lotharingia,—that middle kingdom which the great Charles supposed could arbitrate between East and West, and the idea of which, after repeated vain attempts, was revived, again in vain, in the fifteenth century by the French house of Burgundy,—was, immediately on Lothar's death, torn in two by his uncles,



\* Shares with Lothar and Charles the Bald in the *threefold* partition of *Verdun*, 843. Shares with Charles the Bald the portion of Lothar II. (*Lotharingia*), Treaty of Meersen, 870.

Louis the German and Charles the Bald (870). At the death of Louis II. the Emperor (875), Charles the Bald succeeded in anticipating Louis the German, and seized what was specially the imperial portion, Italy, gaining from Pope John VIII. the imperial crown (875), which he received like his great namesake on Christmas day, at St. Peter's. But he wore it only for a short time. Three successive years (875-877) saw the extinction of the line of the first Lothar, and the deaths of his two brothers—Louis (876), and Charles (877). One of the main lines of the Carolingian stock was gone; two were left. The house of Louis the German, who is said to have been the wisest and most just of the brothers, ruled at last over all the German lands to the eastward of an irregular boundary line, drawn from the mouth of the Scheldt to the Jura. According to the custom of his race, he had to encounter the rebellions of his three sons, who had been invested with the government of different parts of his kingdom; but he was able to hold his own against them. The survivor of them, Charles the Fat, for a moment raised the hopes of his subjects. For a brief interval he was emperor, and united under his rule all the realms of Charles the Great. But the promise of reviving power was a treacherous one. Health and vigour gave way before the difficulties of the times and the intrigues of younger kinsmen; eleven years after his father's death he was deposed (887) and he died in prison in the monastery of Reichenau, in an island of the lake of Constance



(888). The line of Louis the German was continued only by an illegitimate nephew Arnulf, duke of Carinthia, who took from his uncle Charles both the kingdom of Germany and the imperial dignity; and it finally died out in Arnulf's feeble son, Louis the Child (899-911).

Thus within a century from the death of Charles the Great, one main branch alone survived of his house: the line of Charles the Bald, among the Western Franks in Gaul. It dragged out a longer existence, but with no greater glory than the two which had failed. Charles, his father's youngest born and favourite son by his second marriage with the ambitious Welf princess, Judith, was early taught not to trust even his brothers. He had to win his way through great difficulties to the kingdom which at last he secured. He was not without some of his famous namesake's gifts. He inherited Charles's literary tastes; perhaps, some of his ideas of law and government. But all high political aims were subordinated to his restless and unscrupulous eagerness to enlarge his borders. While he could not save them from the ravages of the Northmen, his reign was spent in trying to add to dominions which he could not govern. Like Charles the Fat after him, he seemed for a moment to have succeeded, only to prove the impossibility of success. For two years he bore (875-877), amid humiliation and disaster, the coveted name of emperor. But he left no stronger or more fortunate posterity than his brothers. His

son, Louis the Stammerer, his successor in Gaul, died two years after him (879). The two elder sons of this Louis saw their Western realm broken up, and a new kingdom created in Burgundy and Provence (879), by a stranger Boso, who had married a Carolingian princess. They both of them passed away, amid disaster and ill-fortune, within seven years from their grandfather's death; the kingdom of the West Franks was for a moment transferred to the German, Charles the Fat; and after his death the claims of their younger brother, the posthumous son of Louis the Stammerer, Charles, named the Simple, were set aside by a powerful party among the Franks, in favour of a new man. This was the deliverer of Paris from the Northmen, Count Odo or Eudes, the son of a warrior of unknown origin, Robert the Strong, the ancestor of the line of Capet. On the death of Odo, Charles was again acknowledged (899); but the allegiance of the Franks to the Carolingian house was shaken, and the family and realm of Charles the Bald had to bear the brunt of the great revolution in Western Europe, caused by the intrusion of a new barbarian element into the civilisation of Charles the Great.

The date of the treaty of Verdun (843) marks also the beginning of a series of events, only second in importance to the empire of Charles the Great, and of lasting influence not only on the history of Gaul and the Franks, but on the history of Europe and the world. This was the second stage of the barbarian

invasions, the assaults and settlements of the Norsemen, or, as we call them in England, the Danes, which were coincident with the break-up of Charles's empire. They were not the only barbarian invasions of the time. On the Mediterranean coasts, the Saracens were, and long continued to be, threatening and sometimes dangerous. On the Eastern border, the heathen Saxons, the more numerous Slave tribes, with some tribes of the Turanian or Turkish stock, had long been formidable. The great military achievement of Charles the Great had been to subdue them. The German tribes had been more or less Christianised and assimilated to their more civilised Frank brethren. The Slaves long continued to be refractory and troublesome ; and the irruptions of the Tartar Magyars or Hungarians brought back the terror of Attila's Huns even in the heart of Gaul and Italy. But the Eastern barbarians, though causing terrible misery and loss, and long defying the efforts of the Carolingian kings to bridle them, never accomplished a settlement in the West. They were kept within their own borders ; and the vast plains north and south of the Danube were finally occupied by the Hungarian and Slave populations which were definitely to inherit them.

But in the North and West it was different. The movement in Denmark and Scandinavia towards the beginning of the ninth century had disquieted the mind of Charles the Great. A Danish king had stirred up war and defied him on the Elbe ; and the



ENGLISH KINGS.	NORTHMEN IN ENGLAND.	FRANK KINGS.	NORTHMEN IN FRANKLAND.
Offa of Mercia 755-794	787. Appear first on coast. 797. Plunder Jarrow and North- umberland.	Charles the Great 768-814 { Charles the Bald 840-877 { Louis the German 840-876	845. Plunder Paris. Dane- geld.
Egbert . . . . 802-839	832-853. Ravages in East and South.		857. Again at Paris. De- stroy St. Geneviève.
Æthelwulf . . . 839-858	855. First winter in Sheppy. Ravages in Mercia and Wessex.		
Æthelred . . . 866-871	878. Athelney, Edington, peace of Wedmore, the <i>Dane- lagh</i> .	Louis & Carloman (West) . . . . 879-887 Arnulf (E.) . . . . 887-899	876. Rolf or Rollo on the Seine.
Alfred . . . . 871-901	Comparative peace in Eng- land.		881. Northmen on the Somme, Saulcourt.
Edward the	893. Danes back again; Hast- ing in the Thames; Hast- returns to the Seine. Efforts to set up separate Danishry foiled.	Charles the Simple (W.) . . . . 893-922	891. Defeated by Arnulf at Louvain.
Elder . . . . 901-925	Danishry foiled.		893. Retire to England.
Athelstan . . . 925-940	937. Brunanburh.		911. Treaty of St. Clair- sur - Epte. Rollo's Normandy.
Edmund . . . . 940-946	941. The "Five burghs" subdued		925. Death of Rollo. 925 (or 7) - 943. William Longsword.
Edred . . . . 946-955	948. Attempted Danishry in Northumbria.	Louis d'Outremer 936-954	
Edgar . . . . 959-975	Eric Bloodaxe foiled.		
Edward Martyr 975-979	First Danegeld.		
Ethelred the	991. Sweyn and Olaf. Peace and Danegeld.		
. Unready . . . 979-1016	1002. Danegeld. St. Brice's day, Nov. 13.		
Edmund Ironside 1016	1003. Sweyn returns.		
Knut . . . . 1016-1035	1013. Æthelred flies to Norman- dy, 1014 † Sweyn.	Louis Fainéant . . 986-987 Hugh Capet . . . 987-996	943-996. Richard the Fear- less.

barks of the Northmen were beginning to scare the coasts of Gaul, as they had already begun to burn churches and plunder monasteries, on the English coasts. They were the forerunners of a tremendous tempest—of a descent of the barbarians, which in its wide-spread havoc, in its obstinate continuance, in its aims and consequences, was as eventful as the invasions of the Goths and Franks, or the conquests of the Angles and Saxons. It caused the last great change in the population of Western Europe, till the expulsion of the Moors from Spain. We are familiar with the Danes in England; and we know that the Northmen created the great province of Normandy. But the Danes and the Northmen were the same; and what they did in England and in Gaul were but parts, simultaneously carried on, of one great system of adventurous exploring, of plunder, and attempted conquest. The havoc that they made in Gaul was as wide, as terrible, and as unintermitted as their havoc in England. In Gaul they had a yet wider field, and they ravaged wherever rivers could float their ships, from the Rhine to the Seine, the Loire and the Garonne; and up the Rhine and Moselle as far as Coblenz and Treves, up the French rivers far into the interior, to Paris, Orleans, Bourges. The attempts of the Frank kings to arrest or limit the mischief, even on the Rhine, and much more in Gaul, were unavailing. Summer after summer, as the ninth century wore on, and as the next began, the Northern adventurers came with increased force,

with more daring leaders, with larger designs, with more clear superiority. Even if defeated, they only changed their object of attack. Discomfited and beaten off in England, they crossed over to Gaul. If the local resistance was too strong for them in Gaul, they tried their fortune on the opposite shores. The deepest discouragement and terror took possession of the populations of Gaul, who seemed for the most part helpless. We are hardly accustomed to the thought that it was within but a little that half France should become a Normandy, and that Danish kings should rule in the land of the Franks, as they did in the land of the English. Things pointed in that direction towards the end of the ninth century, under Charles the Bald and his children. Perhaps what prevented it was the comparative smallness of the numbers of the invaders, consequent on their mode of access. The largest of their fleets could not transport the barbarian hosts who marched by land.

The first serious danger from the Northmen in Gaul coincided with the outbreak of intestine dissensions in the family of Louis the Pious. Just after the catastrophe of the Lügenfeld (833) they appear burning churches and plundering monasteries at the mouth of the Scheldt, and even threatening the cities of the Rhine. In May, 841, amid the civil broils between the Carolingian brothers, a month before the fight of Fontenailles, Osker the Northman entered the Seine, which was soon to be specially the Norman river, plundered and burned Rouen, and retired, ran-

soming or destroying towns and monasteries, on his way back to the sea. From this time the Northmen learned that the broad rivers of Gaul were more worth exploring than the coasts. The Seine, because it was nearest, and led up to Paris, now becoming a place of great importance in the new West Frankish realm—the Loire and the Garonne, because they led, through corn lands and vineyards and the richest cities, deepest into the heart of the country, became the scenes of periodic visitations from the Danish adventurers and pirates. Before the eyes of Charles the Bald, who was powerless to hinder them, the Danes (at Easter, 845) pillaged the monasteries of Paris, and then extorted the Danegeld, the tribute paid for peace, or rather respite. They came again, twelve years later (857), this time burning the monasteries, and scattering the bones of Clovis and Clotildis. Their third Easter visit (861) was followed by a partial settlement under a leader who, like Guthrum in England, received baptism, and by the creation of a barrier and bulwark against them, a frontier duchy, of which the chief seat was Paris, and the holder a valiant soldier, Robert the Strong. From the duchy of Paris and from the house of Robert the Strong, proceeded the line which was to displace the Carolingians, and to become the kings of France. Paris was fortified; the great siege of 885, in which kings and emperors did so little to relieve the city, and Duke Odo, Robert's son, kept the Northmen so gallantly at bay, was the turning point

of deliverance and hope to the Franks, and the title, in due time, of Odo, to supplant the Carolingian king. But the Northmen still prevailed. The county of Flanders, created like Paris as a frontier defence (862), could not prevent an invasion of the Frankish rivers (881, 882), in which the Danes pillaged and burnt the most famous cities, Maestricht, Cologne, Coblentz, Liege, Antwerp, even Aachen, Soissons, and Reims. But in Germany they were at length checked. Gaul was an easier prey, and they began to occupy their conquests. Three times had the Frank kings granted to Danish chiefs the Countship of the Frisian shore, from the mouth of the Meuse to the Weser. The lands where they settled began to receive their name, in France Normandy, the "land of the Northmen" (*terra Normannorum*), answering to what in England was called the *Danelagu*, the land of Danish law. Besides the Normandy which they founded on the Seine, other Normandies were attempted on the Loire, round Amiens, in Burgundy and in Auvergne, round Chartres, in Brittany. Even in Germany, on the western bank of the Rhine, as far as Coblentz, Godfrey, the Danish count of Friseland, would have created a Danishry, if he had not been murdered by Charles the Fat (885), who had himself made a grant of the territory. It was in vain that they were beaten, and that songs of triumph were made over some rare victory of the Franks. One of these songs has survived, in the German tongue of the Franks of that

time, the *Ludwigslied*, in honour of a victory won by Louis III., king of the West Franks. But the Danes reappeared, and the continual Danegeld was the proof of their success.

At length, amid a crowd of chiefs, some of the same name, we hear of Rolf, or Rollo. At first he is hard to distinguish. But he is, apparently, to be discerned in those disastrous days, when Charles the Bald, unable to restrain the Northmen, yet found leisure to attack his brother's children, and attempt the imperial crown (876). Charles was defeated ignominiously at Andernach by his nephew, Louis the Saxon (October 8); and a month before the battle (September 16), Rollo sailed up the Seine, just as Osker had first led the Danes to Rouen, a month before the murderous battle of Fontenailles, between the grandsons of Charles the Great. Charles, humbled on the Rhine, thinking now only of Italy, and on the eve of a miserable end, confirmed a treaty by which Rollo, besides having his Danegeld, was to occupy Rouen. Rollo was henceforth, under Charles's successors, master of Rouen and the Seine. This did not prevent him from joining his countrymen in their ravages; but his name is not prominent till, amid the strife between Charles the Simple, the grandson of Charles the Bald, and the Dukes of Paris, he reappears. He had then become strong enough to be worth bargaining with as an ally. Charles the Simple, and Duke Robert of Paris, joined in giving Rollo a legal position in the lands which he occupied.

A formal conference took place between the Northman with his chieftains, and the Frank king, on the banks of the Epte, afterwards the boundary stream of Normandy. Rollo demanded, and after some bargaining obtained, all from the Epte to the sea westwards, including Brittany. A doubtful story says that he also received King Charles's daughter. For this territory he performed homage; "he placed his hands between the king's hands, and became the king's man"; and the next year he was baptized at Rouen. The "land of the Normans" had become a part of the Frank kingdom; the "Duke of the Normans," though long sneered at as a "Duke of the Pirates," took rank with Dukes of Paris and Counts of Flanders, and was in time to be the premier duke of France. The treaty or agreement of St. Clair-sur-Epte was probably at the time not different from many transactions of the same kind. But it was the starting-point of great changes. It formally introduced into the Latin world a new Germanic race which rapidly unlearned its old habits and language, becoming more Latin than the Latins round it. And it added to western France a state which was to be its most powerful element; a people of singular strength, versatility, and ambition, who were to exercise an influence without example on the fortunes of all their neighbours.

When the settlement of Normandy had been finally recognised, and had attained, as it did in another generation, its full limits, northwards and

westwards, the Danish attempts to settle elsewhere in Gaul gradually slackened, though their ravages continued for some time longer. The Northmen received some severe lessons. Twice in their efforts to penetrate to the central highlands of Auvergne and Burgundy they were defeated with great slaughter. In time the Danishry on the Loire and the Somme melted into the surrounding population. But the great result of their invasion, Rollo's almost royal dukedom, grew and prospered. It held the balance between Frank parties and kings. Vainly, by force or intrigue, the king of the Franks, Louis d'Outremer, son of Charles the Simple, endeavoured to undo his own and his father's work. Ignominious failure was the result. And twice, within two years (943-945), the Normans held the king of the Franks a prisoner in their hands.

From the time of Charles the Simple and the establishment of the Norman duchy, the Carolingians played a varied but a losing game against the rising house—the counts and dukes of Paris, the descendants of Duke Robert. The royal authority was undermined by the growth of great local potentates; and among them the lords of Paris and the adjoining territory were the most formidable, from the remembrance of their exploits against the Northmen, from their ambition, and from their ability. They had their rivals on the North and East; the new Danish masters of the valley of the Seine; the counts of Vermandois, descendants of the great Charles. These rivalries, though at times they gave advantages



to the king, also marked his weakness and shattered the unity of the realm. The Carolingians had henceforth to fight for their kingdom with their great nobles. They were overthrown, driven into exile, supplanted by strangers, restored. They were not without gallantry and spirit, but they owed their crown, when they held it, less to their own power than to the jealousies of the great territorial princes round them, whom a few more turns of tightening custom and stiffening precedent were to change into the great feudatories of the later ages. Charles the Simple, after a life of vicissitude and fruitless conflict, perished miserably in prison, by the treachery of one of the great rival nobles, Herbert of Vermandois (928). His infant son, nephew of the English Athelstan, saved with difficulty, and brought up in England,—Louis the Stranger, Louis “d’Outremer,” “from over sea”—owed his recall from exile (936) to the mutual suspicions of his father’s enemies, Herbert of Vermandois and Hugh of Paris, who both counted on being able to use him for their own purposes. He came back to waste a gallant spirit and a reign of eighteen years (936-954) in fruitless efforts, fruitless even when he was victorious, to shake off the crushing pressure of the great dukes and counts, who in Paris, Normandy, Flanders, Vermandois, Lotharingia, Burgundy, Poitou, Aquitaine, hemmed in the king of the Franks in his fortress of Laon and its narrow surrounding district—all that remained besides the name of king to the family of Charles the Great:

Nothing proves more certainly the failing powers of the Carolingian house, than the contrast between Louis, and the German king of the new Saxon line, Otto or Otho (951-973). Both were equally surrounded by the formidable rivalry of powerful local chiefs, by confusion, selfishness, treason, by terrible outbreaks of barbarian invasion. But what the Carolingians could not do, Otto did. He asserted his mastery over the turbulence round him; he conceived and carried out worthy political aims; he attempted and partly accomplished the reform of abuses in government and in the Church; and with no more advantages than Louis, he left a great name as a king and a ruler, the founder, a second time, of the new Roman Empire. Louis' son, Lothar, inherited the kingdom on the same terms as his father (954-986). The great duke of Paris claimed, as in his father's case, to be the protector of the king. He still preferred to make, control, despoil, torment the kings of the Franks, than to be king himself. Lothar's reign was wasted, like his father's, in ignoble and unprofitable trials of strength. There was much fighting, much crime, much intrigue, much vicissitude of fortune; but everything contributed to the growing strength and the independence of the duke of the Normans, and of his ordinary ally the duke of Paris. Louis and Lothar between them reigned for fifty years, but in vain. At length the time of the Carolingians was exhausted. Hugh the Great (†956) who would not be a king himself, left a son, Hugh

Capet, for whom he prepared a kingdom, and who was ready when the last Carolingian became king to follow the example of the founder of the Carolingian line. The last Carolingian, boyish, profligate, restless, reigned but a year (†987). He died, probably poisoned. The great line ended in a Louis, whom the historians have nicknamed, "le Fainéant," "der Faul," "the Good-for-nothing." His death was followed by the election of Hugh Capet. In vain did Charles, Louis' brother, from the impregnable rock of Laon, the last refuge of the Carolingians, strike desperately for his inheritance. The great interests round him, the political and ecclesiastical treachery of the time, were against him. After an obstinate struggle he was at last entrapped by the Bishop of Laon, betrayed, and delivered into the hands of Hugh Capet. He died in prison; and the Carolingians disappear from history.

With the end of the Carolingian line, and indeed long before it was extinct, came the end of that Frank power which, after the fall of Rome, had for four centuries played the foremost part in the West, and which had culminated in Charles's empire. The Franks had outstripped and defeated all their great rivals, the Gothic and then the Lombard race, in the competition for the leadership of the new world. They had been the conquerors and tapers of their kindred barbarians—Alamans, Bavarians, Frisians, Saxons. Their manifest superiority, their brilliant successes, seemed to themselves and to their con-

temporaries to raise them to the greatness of the ancient Romans. The popes are never tired of celebrating their glory; and their own feeling about it breaks out with a kind of lyrical enthusiasm, in the barbarous Latin of the prologue to the collection called the "Salic law." "The illustrious race of the Franks, created by the hand of God, mighty in arms, deep in counsel, stable in the bond of peace, in body noble and stalwart, in fairness and beauty matchless, daring and swift and stern, newly come to the Catholic faith, free from heresy! While it was still in the barbarian state, yet by God's inspiration, it sought the key of knowledge, and according to the bent of its own qualities, desiring righteousness and holding fast piety, its chiefs dictated the Salic law. . . . Long live (*vivat*) whoever loves the Franks. May Christ keep their realm, and fill their rulers with the light of His grace; may He protect their host; may He grant them the memorials of the faith, the joys and the felicity of peace. May Jesus Christ the Lord of lords, by His mercy guide their times. For this is that race which, when it was little in number, yet being mighty in valour and strength, broke off, by fighting, the tyrannous yoke of the Romans from its neck; and after it had made the confession of baptism, by it the bodies of the holy martyrs, which the Romans had burned with fire or slain with the sword, or cast forth to be torn by wild beasts, were magnificently enshrined with gold and precious stones."

But their day, as a race, was over. As that single and foremost nation which had controlled and directed the fortunes of all around them, they were to dissolve and disappear. They were merged and lost in the two great rival peoples which arose after them, and partly *from* them, and who divided their heritage. It was long before they learned that they were no longer one, that they were to be divided. Long after the treaty of Verdun (843), and the death of the last legitimate Carolingian emperor (888), even the Saxon kings of Germany claimed to interfere in the affairs of Gaul as representing the old kingdom and leadership of the Franks. But their claim no longer answered to the realities of the case. There was still to be a great *Francia*, appropriating the name and fame of the Franks of Clovis and the great Charles; but it was to be no longer German, but Latin. There were still to be Franks who were Germans, from whose dukes and kings were to come emperors of the Romans; a *Francia* in the heart of Germany, and on both sides of the Rhine, retaining the name when it shrank up to the "Circle of Franconia" of later times. But the Franks who had ruled in Europe and established the power of the popes, the Franks who prepared the way for the middle ages, the Franks on whom for a time seemed to devolve the Roman Empire, the united Franks of Charles the Great, broken up and separated, are known no more in history after the failure and extinction of the family of their greatest man.

## CHAPTER IX

### CONSOLIDATION AND UNITY OF THE ENGLISH PEOPLE UNDER THE KINGS, CHIEFLY OF WESSEX—THE NORTHMEN IN ENGLAND

DURING the years which saw these great changes on the Continent—the establishment, the glory, and the break-up of the Frank Empire—the English nation, through a history outwardly as turbulent and confused as that of the Continent, was slowly but distinctly becoming one, and preparing to endure one of the severest trials which can come upon a people—that of foreign conquest, and foreign conquest twice repeated within half a century.

The progress of consolidation which was going on from the eighth to the tenth century, in what were to be separate states on the Continent, in the Scandinavian and Slavonic countries and in Hungary, as well as in Gaul and Germany, was going on steadily and visibly, though with frequent interruptions, in England; and the process is not difficult to trace. The bands, or tribes, or leagues, or settlements, which in

the preceding centuries had gradually become confluent, first in larger or smaller districts, and then in separate kingdoms, the so-called Heptarchy, had come, through war or agreement, to acknowledge the superiority of one or other of the kingdoms, and the overlordship, temporary or hereditary, of its king. This overlordship, which was sometimes but not always expressed by the term *Bretwalda*, after being won and held by Oswald of Northumbria, and still more strongly by Offa of the great English midland, Mercia, finally passed to the kings of the line of Cerdic, the kings of south-western Wessex. Roughly speaking, the end of the seventh century, the time of the first Frank Mayors of the Palace, is the time of the predominance of Northumberland; the eighth, the age of Charles Martel, Pipin, and Pipin's great son, is that of the superiority of Mercia; the ninth, the age of the Carolingians, is that of the superiority of Wessex. And with Wessex and Cerdic's house it remained. Egbert of Wessex, during the days of Offa's power, had, like other English princes, found refuge for thirteen years from the dangerous king of Mercia at the court of Charles the Great. In that school of statesmanship, of war, and of awakening intellectual activity, he saw and probably learned much; and he forms an important link between England and the Continent. On the death of Offa he returned to England, and was chosen king of Wessex. Egbert became king in England a year or two after the great Frank Emperor had been crowned

at Rome. Egbert represents the beginning in England of that new state of things, the advance from the old-fashioned barbarism of the Merovingian and early Anglo-Saxon times, which on the Continent is represented by the ideas, the aims, and the achievements of the great Frank king and emperor. In the course of his long reign of nearly forty years (802-39), Egbert established his supremacy over the other English kingdoms, which in the case of Mercia and Northumbria retained their subject kings. He was not only king of the West Saxons, but king of the English, as Charles was king of the Franks, having kings as well as dukes under him ; and the idea of the unity of the English nation and the English kingdom, to which Egbert first gave expression, was never again to be lost.

Thus, left to itself, unaffected by the political shocks and rearrangements of the Continent, and but partially influenced by the developments there of social ideas and forms, the nation which had now become English, gradually worked out its own union, its own institutions, and its own character. Its society rested on the class distinctions, in one shape or another common to all the Teutonic races, except, perhaps, the Franks : the nobles, the freemen—free but not noble—and the large and vaguely-determined class of the half-free, or unfree, whether farmer, tenant, dependant, labourer, serf, or slave, bound to the land, or bound to the household ; the *Eorls*, *Ceorls*, and *Læts* of the laws of Kent ; the *Edhelingi*, *Friilingi*, and *Lazzi* of the Saxons of the Continent ; the *Nobiles*, the *Ingenui*,



and *Liti* of the Capitularies. These classes are distinctly marked, as in all the Teutonic laws, by the difference of their "wergild," or the fixed compensation payable for personal injury or death. Its land tenure grew out of the old Teutonic system, in which a community, usually allied in kinship, had its defined territory, its *Mark*, or, afterwards in the German lands, its *Gau*, in which the land, in the first instance the public land of the community, and in larger or smaller portions of it long remaining so, became in other portions more or less absolutely appropriated to persons, and then to families; appropriated by early occupation, by clearing and building, by grant, by custom, by violence. The tendency to absolute ownership is a natural and strong one, and it would be increased when a tribe became part of an army, conquering and settling. Among the English the traces of the old *Mark* system were seen in the *Folcland*, the public land of the township, used in common, or rented by individuals, but not alienated. But besides this there was the estate of private and inherited property, held by public witness, the *Ethel*, afterwards called the *Alodial* land; and there was also the land, carved originally out of the public estate, and held by written charter, the *Bocland*, but soon confused with, or becoming equivalent to, the Alodial portion, the patrimony and heritage. The political centre was the king; the necessity, in the first instance, of war and conquest, in each original division of the new settlers, but a necessity heartily and readily

adopted in peace, the uncertain and fitful peace of those days, as thoroughly congenial to the Teutonic spirit; the king of the men, the folk, to whom as a community the land belonged. The king had his special "companions," his "friends," "thegns," "ministers," "loaf-eaters," bound to his person by benefits and privileges, and growing by degrees into a formally recognised class of nobility, which at length overshadowed the older nobles who were noble by race and blood. The larger divisions of the land had their governors, "caldormen," taken from local potentates, or from the king's "companions" or his kinsmen. Besides these, another class of persons gradually grew up, bound to the king or to other chiefs, by a voluntary and formal tie of personal allegiance: those who had, according to the usage of the time, *commended* themselves to a *lord* as his "*men*," and to whom the lord gave protection in return for service. With these high persons, according to their personal qualities, more than by any definite rules, lay the power of government and the impulse to action. But, as in all the German nations of the time, power was habitually exercised very much in public. The king or ruler was continually and periodically face to face with assemblies, more or less large, of his people, to whose approval he appealed in legislation and policy, and whose concurrence and support he really needed. The public assembly, including all freemen, if not also some portion of the only *half-free* class below them, and having at its head

the chief and most venerable persons of the community, whether kingdom, shire, or township, was the place where public matters were heard, and opinion, however rudely and imperfectly, was yet expressed. This institution of the public assembly, under different names (*Mall, Thing, Moot*, in Latin, *Placitum*), accompanies everywhere the advance and settlement of the tribes of the German stock, whether the Goths in Spain, the Franks in Gaul, the Lombards in Italy, or the Saxons and Angles in Britain. As the kingdom enlarged in compass, the character of the central assembly necessarily altered; even if all freemen might come to it, all could not; it became, without purpose or rule, a more selected and representative body; representative not by design or election, but the nature of the case. In addition to this, perhaps growing out of it, there was the "assembly of the wise," a king's council of those whose place made them his natural councillors, and the people's spokesmen—bishops, ealdormen, king's thanes—attended, it might be, on great occasions by larger gatherings of freemen or warriors on the spot. Meanwhile, the local assemblies remained. "The *folkmoot* was left to the shire; the *witena-gemot* was gathered round the king." All great public transactions, such as the election or acceptance of a king, made in the first instance by the select *witan*, were also witnessed and approved by some kind of general assembly of the nation. The legislation and charters of the king, ostensibly, often really, the personal acts of the king,

bear on their face the concurrence of the *witan*; and our documentary evidence exhibits the chief men of the nation in general as parties, more or less really, according to the infinite variations of character and circumstances, to all the acts of government, administration, and policy.

In indistinct and ill-defined forms, the elements of the various constitutional arrangements which were to be—feudalism, or popular government, monarchy personal or parliamentary—were all present; but none, in that age of confused and uncertain beginnings, had assumed a full-grown and consistent shape. The power of the king was great and increasing; yet it grew side by side with great personal freedom and strongly marked personal rights all round him, and with great weight and great power supposed to exist in high bodies and assemblies, with which he had to deal. The relation of lord and “man,” or vassal, was increasing; the king could add to it gifts of land, “benefices”; but the king was still thought of as the king of the people, and not as the owner of the land, though the disposer of the public part of it, the *folc-land*. It lay in the course of events, what these elements were to work out, and how they were to affect, and be affected by, the character of the nation. For a long time two counter processes went on: the amalgamation of distinct national divisions, with their various forms of power and rule, under strong kings; and then the loosening of the new fabric under weak ones. It was what went on under the Frank kings

on the Continent : and Milton compares these tribal strifes, to the wars "between kites and crows." But in these strifes and trials of strength, lay the process and discipline by which, in those rude conditions of society, a nation learned the necessity of becoming one.

But just as the Anglo-Saxon settlements were beginning to coalesce into one kingdom, a new form of trial was coming on them. A terrible enemy broke in from without. In common with the rest of Western Europe, England was assailed on all sides by the fleets of the Norse sea-rovers. Their first appearance in England is chronicled in the year 787, when the crews of three strange pirate barks, rovers from the North, slew a king's officer who tried to seize them. It was the threatening thunder shower, which announced the most fearful and prolonged storm : a storm which tried to the utmost the force and endurance of the English race. It burst at once on the Continent and on England. The Northmen, who, in the weakness and divisions of the Frank empire, had learned to use the great rivers of Germany and Gaul as highways, and who in the middle of the ninth century were burning or pillaging their most flourishing cities, had also learned the way to England, had vexed the last years of Egbert, and under his son Æthelwulf had stormed and plundered Canterbury and London. In the year 855, the year in which Biorn Ironsides is said to have established a permanent military post on the Seine, the Danes,

who had hitherto landed, plundered, and sailed away, now for the first time wintered in Kent. They began to settle, and from their settlements to co-operate with their countrymen from the sea. It was the Anglo-Saxon invasion over again, with its stages of wide and desolating rapine, and then of occupation and encroachment by heathen barbarians in a Christian land. The resistance was obstinate and persevering. Yet at one time it appeared as if resistance would be in vain. Within a hundred years after their first appearance, the Danes seemed masters in the north and east. The bulwark of English power had fallen before them when the young king of Wessex, Alfred (871-901), was driven into the marshes, the "water fastnesses," of Somerset. It seemed as if the civilisation and Christianity of England were to perish. The heathen advance was stayed, and the fortunes of the English race were saved, by Alfred's victory on the edge of the Wiltshire downs at Edington. But though the Danes were for the moment checked and humbled, Alfred had to submit to the hard condition of allowing them to settle in the largest half of England. By the agreement and partition of Wedmore (878), Guthrum, their leader, acknowledged Alfred's supremacy, and he and his chiefs received baptism. But the land was divided by the line of Watling Street, running with an outward curve from the Thames and the sea to Shrewsbury; and all outside of it to the north-east became the *Danelagu*, the land of Danish law—Essex,

and East Anglia, and Northumbria, and half of the midland Mercia. The Danes were kept out of Wessex and the other half of Mercia, including London; and these were knit together the more closely in the presence of their restless foe. In this refuge and core of English feeling, Alfred laid the foundations of a policy of recovery. Danish attacks from within and from abroad did not cease with the peace of Wedmore. The weight of their visitations fell alternately on England and France; the peace of Wedmore was followed by more systematic and determined war in the north of Gaul, on the Scheldt, the Somme, and the Seine. Two years after (880), the Northmen revenged their defeat in the Ardennes, from the German king Louis, by a great overthrow and slaughter of the Saxon nobles at Luneburg. Four years after (882), in spite of the valour of another Louis, the West Frank king, the hero of the *Ludwigslied* already mentioned, they were ravaging the north of Gaul, from Amiens and Arras to Soissons and Reims. And while Alfred was comparatively at peace the great siege of Paris was going on, in which Count Odo's heroic defence laid the foundation of the fortunes of the Capetian house. Again, the great defeat of the Danes on the Dyle near Louvain, by Charles's successor, Arnulf (891), threw them once more on England to prove by a harassing and perplexing warfare, Alfred's great qualities, his promptitude, his skill, his vigour, his indefatigable rapidity of movement. But by patient resolution, Alfred's suc-

cessors up to King Edgar (959-975) were able gradually to bring under subjection, more or less complete, the Danish settlements in England ; while assailants from abroad were kept at bay by vigorous and persistent fighting. The Danish invasions, though mischievous and cruel, disturbed, but did not arrest, the national growth. It is indeed remarkable how readily the Danish new-comers, after a generation or two, became fused with the English stock ; how readily they received the English religion, and accepted the English speech. When once settled down in peace, the adventurous intruders were gradually tamed among the English population round them, and became in England undistinguishable from Englishmen, except as English provinces were distinguished from one another.

The great and remarkable feature of English history, when it is contemporaneous with that of the followers of Charles the Great abroad, is the succession and influence of a singularly able line of kings. The kings of the house of Cerdic in Wessex were unlike, in their continuity of policy and energy, to any other series of kings of the time. They were different in their qualities, and even in their fortunes. But they were all men with a distinct purpose, which in different ways they carried out : the purpose to give unity, strength, and elevation to their English people. For the space of nearly a hundred and eighty years (800-975), the kings of Wessex steadily pursued, in the face of the most adverse circumstances, and even



with great sacrifices, their practical object of binding together and consolidating the various divisions of the Saxons and Angles, which left to themselves would have readily grown into the evil habits of internal and local animosities, so common at the time. They did this, doubtless, by the strong hand, yet by no exercise of despotic tyranny, and apparently with the full concurrence of their own chiefs and leaders. Egbert laid the foundation, by establishing a supremacy over the northern and midland kingdoms. For thirty-five years after Egbert, his successors were occupied in the desperate task of protecting the land against the Danish ravages; their success was chequered, but they never lost heart, and their resistance to the strangers bound the English to one another and to the royal house. The danger and the resistance came to their height under Alfred (871-901); and Alfred was the flower and type of the Wessex kings. Sober, dauntless, resolute, patient, he met his circumstances, dark or bright, as they came, with the same steady temper, the same high public spirit. Receiving his kingdom amid calamity and disaster, overpowered and overmatched, he retired, biding his time, but not losing hope, till his opportunity came, and he was able to win and enforce a peace. By the peace of Wedmore, which allowed the Christian Danes under Guthrum to settle and live by their own law in the east of England—the *Danelagu*, a very faint kind of English Normandy—he abated, though he could not entirely check, the pressure of the Northern rovers

for nearly a hundred years, and thus gained a breathing time for the works of peace. Alfred, serious in his religion as in all he did, and in this as in other things full of sympathy with his people, applied himself to raise and improve them. He set on foot reformation in the Church. He rekindled the lost learning of Bede and Alwin; he awakened what was equally precious—greater in this than the great Charles—the faith, the confidence of Englishmen in the powers and worth of the English tongue. He wrote, he translated, he edited in English. He represents in the highest degree all the humanising tendencies of the time, the efforts to bring out what was excellent and noble in the national spirit, and to cast off what was barbarous. In this he was like Charles the Great; but in Alfred there was more soberness of aim and purity of life, with more care for justice and mercy. Alfred is the father of the English navy; he saw, like Edgar after him, that England to be safe, must be powerful on the sea. He was a legislator, reverencing and holding to the past, but owning the changes of the present, and not venturing too much to bind the future. He was sparing of his laws, because, as he writes in the preface to his “Dooms,” “I durst not risk of mine own to set down much in writing, seeing that to me it was unknown what part of them would be liked by those who were after us.” Alfred set the standard of an English ruler; one who thought not of himself, but of his charge and duty; who did nothing for show, and sought not his own

glory, but gave himself, and his credit too when necessary, to the interest of his kingdom, and the work of his place. He was followed in the first years of the tenth century (901-925) by his son, Edward the Elder, who followed the same policy of uniting the nation together. He waged war for it with energy and success, quelling revolts and bridling the troublesome Danish settlers with fortresses which were to grow into towns. He incorporated Mercia, governing it by his famous sister Ethelfleda, the "Lady of the Mercians." He received homage from the "Welsh" princes of Scotland, Strathclyde and Wales, who saw in the English king their bulwark against the Danes. Athelstan (925-940), his son, the hero of the earliest surviving English war-ballad, the battle of Brunanburh, followed in his father's steps—crushing rebellions, teaching the English by fighting to feel themselves one, beginning to be famous even across the sea. Sisters of Athelstan were the wives of Western kings and princes: of Charles the Simple, and of his antagonist, Duke Hugh of Paris, of Boso, king of Provence, of Otto the Great, king of Germany. The widow and son of Charles the Simple took refuge with Athelstan, and Athelstan's influence counted for much in the restoration of his nephew, Louis d'Outremer, who brought some of the vigour of the line of Wessex, but not its ability or its fortune, into the failing race of Charles the Great. Through trouble and hard fighting, not without reverses, his two brothers, Edmund and Edred, and his nephew Edwy,

carried on the work of amalgamation, defence, and government (940-959); and when another nephew, Edgar (959-975), received the kingdom of the English, he received it compact within itself, a kingdom in which he was really master on each side of Watling Street, over the Danish settlers as well as over his Englishmen, while his supremacy was acknowledged all over the island, in Northumbria, and by the Celtic Scots and Welsh. He was king of the whole of Britain, and of all its kings. The scribes of his Chancery delight to style him by the Western term *Imperator*, and the Eastern *Basileus*. He seemed the island counterpart of the Great Otto, crowned emperor at Rome in 962. The story told by Florence of Worcester, of King Edgar's barge rowed on the Dee by eight vassal British kings, expresses what was thought and remembered about him. "Throughout many nations," chants the old English chronicler, "and over the sea, the 'gannet's bath,' kings honoured him far and wide." "No fleet," he declares, "was so bold, nor host so strong, that could tear away the prey among the English kin, while that noble king held his throne."

In Edgar the Peaceful the great political and social work of the kings of Wessex reached its height. His reign of peace for seventeen years, troubled only by insignificant local outbreaks, but by no serious wars, is one of the most remarkable phenomena of the time. Under it the English felt themselves one people, with a destined place among the nations. West Saxons

and Mercians, Northumbrians, East Anglians, and men of Kent and Sussex, were content to be united members of the great English "kin" and realm. They had taken the definite mould and stamp, which they were henceforth to keep. Tremendous disasters awaited them. They were to measure their strength in vain, once and again, against foreign invaders. Their enemies were growing in power and union as well as themselves. Contemporary with the kings of Wessex, from Alfred to Edgar, the successors of Rollo the Norman (876-927), William Longsword (927-943), and Richard the Fearless (943-996), were creating Normandy. Contemporary, too, with them, the Scandinavian tribes, from whom both Danes and Normans came, were growing up, like their kinsfolk, into nations and kingdoms, under chiefs of strange names—Gorm the Old (883-935), Harald Bluetooth (935-985), Sweyn or Swend of the Forked Beard (985-1014), Olaf, the Christian king of Norway (994-1000?). The English were to be ruled weakly and faithlessly, to be defended by fitful and useless valour, to be betrayed by their chiefs, and preyed upon by strangers. But England was already England; the nation had already become constituted and had "taken its ply," before the storm fell upon it, and its fortunes came into the hands of the weak and the traitors.

Edgar the Peaceful was hardly four years in his grave, before its woes began under Ethelred the Unready (979-1016). The Danes came back this

time, not to ravage or to colonise, but to conquer. Ethelred the Unready, the king without counsel, brave and stirring, but wanting his father's good sense and statesmanship, was a king after the kind of the later Carolingians. When he failed to check the Danes by fighting, he adopted the fatal foreign policy of buying them off, and thought to frighten them by the shameful and fatal massacre of St. Brice's day (13th November 1002). But the Danes themselves were no longer what they had been. From a swarm of separate adventurers, like the Ragnars, and Rollo, and Hastings of a hundred years before, they, too, had grown, by their successes, into organisation at home. It was now the king of Denmark, Sweyn, the son of Harald, who brought the strength of the Northmen to avenge St. Brice's day, and further, to add England, as a kingdom, to his kingdoms in the North. He drove out Ethelred from England; and after the death of Ethelred's nobler son, Edmund Ironside (1016), Cnut, the Dane, became king of the English, and England became a dependency of Denmark.

What the Danes began, their Latinised kinsmen, the Normans, continued. For two hundred years, from Cnut's accession, with one short interval, the reigns of Edward the Confessor and of Harold, foreigners were kings of England—Danes, Normans, Angevins. Yet two things are observable during this time of foreign ascendancy. One is, that the kingdom of England, conquered though it be, is the

proudest honour and most important portion of the possessions of its foreign king. The other is, that through Danish, Norman, and French rule, the English speech, the English usages, the English slow, resolute sturdiness of temper, are absolutely proof against the strong influences of a foreign court and a foreign territorial nobility, and even of foreign tribunals and a foreign clergy. The people had reached a toughness and consistency of character, and a strength of common ideas and habits, which enabled it to bear the rough assault. It did not become Danish, it did not become Norman or French. It was strong enough to absorb the genuine Norsemen fresh from the sea and forest; it was strong enough to absorb the altered and more civilised Northmen of William the Conqueror. For this education of the English nation, incomplete undoubtedly, but so distinctly marked, so deeply rooted, and so enduring, we are indebted mainly to the kings of Wessex, from Egbert to Edgar the Peaceful.

The strong personal influence of the West Saxon kings had much to do with uniting the English people. Personal influence, powerful at all times, was indispensable for any great national progress then. But there was another influence continually at work, not so manifest in historical incidents, but diffused through the society of the time, without which the policy of the kings would have had more to contend against. The great agency of fusion and unity was the Church. Its archbishops and bishops

were in immediate relation with the king and his chiefs, their fellow councillors and authoritative advisers ; its priests and monks were in close contact with the various classes and local subdivisions of the people, sharing their fortunes and their ideas, the one source of instruction to them and of culture. The Church had its fluctuations of vigour and decline : of efforts after learning and goodness, and of corrupt stagnation ; and, like everything else, it savoured of its age, its rudeness, its incompleteness, its ignorance. But the Anglo-Saxon Church was eminently a popular Church. Its leaders were deeply concerned in the public interests of the State. More dispassionate and better-informed history has recognised in Dunstan, whose name was once the by-word for priestly arrogance and cruelty, a genuine patriot and reformer to whom amends are due, the chosen friend and councillor of the Wessex kings, especially Edgar. Its saints appealed to popular sympathies, as sufferers at the hands of the heathen foes of England. And it not only spoke, but it wrote in the mother tongue. The Anglo-Saxon New Testament, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, the Anglo-Saxon homilies of Elfric, are all so many evidences of the way in which, in a manner scarcely known abroad, the English churchmen, acting it may be under the impulse given by Alfred, did honour to their own language, and tried to popularise knowledge, both religious and secular.



## CHAPTER X

RESULTS OF THE BREAK-UP OF THE FRANK EMPIRE—  
ARRANGEMENT OF EUROPE: THE PAPACY; NEW  
KINGDOMS OF FRANCE AND GERMANY; ITALY;  
THE SCANDINAVIAN AND SLAVE NATIONS

THE effect of the break-up of the empire of the Franks under Charles the Great was twofold. It produced at once immense disasters; and it led ultimately to new and healthy national divisions, adapted to the changed condition of Europe, and fruitful in great results. The disasters were great. For the moment the West relapsed into the confusion and lawlessness from which Charles had partially reclaimed it. Within its borders all was incessant war, a universal scramble for territories and dignities among great and small, kings and dukes, bishops, counts, and abbots. There were vicissitudes of success or overthrow, continual changes of borders and lordship, continual and vain efforts after peace and law. Without, new and formidable forms of barbarian attack appeared. As we have seen, the second great

tide of barbarian invasion had begun more and more to distress and alarm the West, now entering on the early stages of its civilisation. Besides the Northmen, increasing in numbers and in their enthusiasm for adventure, who were the terror of the sea coasts from the Elbe to the Mediterranean, where the work of ravage and plunder was taken up by the Saracens, a strange and terrible foe had appeared on the Eastern border towards the end of the ninth century. This was the horde of the Magyars, the Ugrians, *Ungri*, like the Huns, of the Turanian and Turkish stock, and like the Huns, whose name they inherited, or with whom they were confounded, described as frightful and ferocious savages, sweeping like a destroying storm over the lands which they visited. Germany and Italy were most exposed to their desolations. They were sometimes called in with reckless and disloyal selfishness to assist one German or Italian duke or count against his rival; and once tempted into Germany, they rode—wasting, burning, slaying—through Germany even to the heart of Gaul. The Hungarians, or Magyars, were, after the Northmen, the great scourges of the ninth and tenth centuries. The power, the union, and the military capacity of the Carolingian kings were unequal to the work of controlling these savages. The fatal policy was adopted, with the Magyars as with the Northmen, of buying them off for the time, a policy which ensured their speedy return, more eager and audacious than before. With internal division and anarchy,

and the fury of Northern and Eastern savagery let loose besides, the times were bad. The hopes and comparative order of Charles's days were departed. "In that time," says one of the annalists, "the kingdom of the Franks was very desolate, and the unhappiness of men was multiplied daily. In many ways wretchedness and calamity increased among men."

Amid this misery and confusion the internal condition of society fell back. Charles's policy for strengthening the influence of the Church held its ground, but not his plans for reforming and purifying it. Great ecclesiastics were among the most powerful personages in these times, and some of them, like Hincmar of Reims (801-882), were not unworthy of their power. But with power and great place came in worldliness and corruption in increasing proportion as time went on; and though as statesmen these great bishops were probably not worse councillors, and often were more intelligent ones, with a natural leaning to order and peace, than the rough dukes and counts with whom they acted, yet the meaning and consciousness of their religious office became more and more lost in their secular greatness. They were not only bound to military service for their vast domains, but in spite of the stringent prohibitions found in the "Capitularies," they went to war themselves. "Within thirty years," we are told, towards the close of the ninth century, "two archbishops and eight bishops died on the field of battle by the side

of counts and lords." It is no wonder that their offices came to be regarded as temporal dignities which the king had a right to bestow, and by which he rewarded and bound his adherents. And it is no wonder that, as in the days of Charles Martel, only with increasing freedom, the revenues and titles of archbishoprics and great abbeys were accumulated on some great lay potentate, like the duke of Paris; some formidable warrior, like the lay abbot of St. Riquier; or some child of a powerful noble, like Herbert of Vermandois. The steps so remarkably gained for culture and for intelligent study of religion under Charles, were not absolutely lost. In the great German schools, founded or encouraged by Charles the Great, Fulda, St. Gall, and Reichenau on the lake of Constance, at Old Corbey on the Somme, and its Saxon colony, New Corbey on the Weser, and in Gaul, at Reims and Orleans, the habits of study and the taste for learning were kept up. German unwritten tradition was rich in legend and songs of war and adventure; but German literature began in these cloisters, in the ninth and tenth centuries, with Latin and German glossaries, in translations of the Psalms, and paraphrases of the Gospel story, such as the version of Tatian's Harmony, the metrical harmony called "Heliand," the prose one of Otfrid, and Notker's Psalter. Nor was there wanting bold and subtle thought, well or ill-directed, on philosophy and theology, in men like John Erigena, Gotteskalk, Paschasius Radbert, and

his antagonist Ratramn ; and the firstfruits of German erudition are seen in Raban Maur, the archbishop of Mainz, and his scholar Walafriid Strabo, all of them men of the ninth century, and most of them pupils of Fulda, Corbey or Reichenau. But no proportionate advance was made. Missionary enthusiasm, which had done such great things under Pipin and Charles, sensibly waned, though it still achieved some new conquests among the Norsemen and the Slaves. And that which was the dark side of Charles's character and times, loose ideas of the sanctity of marriage and the obligations of purity and self-control, grew into increasing lawlessness and disorder, in the times which followed him. Except in the strict discipline of the cloisters, when the cloisters were well governed, license reigned ; and the families of the great bishops were as scandalous as the courts of the kings and dukes.

There was a power in the Church which might have been expected to bridle this flagrant laxity ; the more so as its claims to supreme authority were at this very time rising to their full height. The fall of the Carolingian power is marked by a remarkable and coincident expansion of the central power in the Church. The power of the popes, which Charles the Great had done so much to encourage and strengthen, which had depended on his aid and had lent itself in return to his great plans, grew into a hitherto unknown strength, as the imperial system which he had founded broke up in the hands of his successors. From being submissive and obsequious

under Charles, the popes became imperious and exacting under his children; and their enormous pretensions, spiritual and temporal, were supported by the appearance and reception of the great forgery known by the name of "False Decretals," a collection of precedents, professing to belong to the early centuries, and establishing the uncontrolled power of the popes, not only over the whole organisation of the Church, but over every other earthly authority. In Pope Nicholas I. in the middle of the ninth century (858-867), this idea of the popedom found its determined and energetic exponent; and though met and resisted with equal boldness, as by Hincmar of Reims, he undoubtedly established the foundations on which by natural sequence the pretensions of Gregory VII.—noble in purpose, though extravagant and mischievous—and those of Boniface VIII.—extravagant and mischievous, but not noble—were afterwards to be built. The growth of papal interference was aided by the anarchy and license which prevailed in every department of life. That interference might have been more justified, if it had been wisely and righteously exercised. The laxity of the marriage tie, and the monstrous facility of divorce, had long been one of the plague spots of the Frank kingdom. The popes, as Nicholas I., did sometimes interpose their rebukes and their menaces. But their interposition was rare and partial; it passed over the strong and dangerous, and fastened on those whom it was not unsafe to attack; it entangled itself with

the political hostilities of the time ; and it too readily accepted hollow compromises to save appearances. The quarrel of Nicholas I. with Lothar II. of Lotharingia, about the ill-treatment of his wife, was made up under his successor, Hadrian II. (869), by an arrangement of which all parties must have known that its basis was falsehood.

But this was not the worst. Much inefficiency and some compromises were not unnatural and almost inevitable in those confused times. But the century which saw the pretensions of the popes growing to their most audacious height saw at its end the popes themselves reduced below the level even of the blood-stained and licentious princes of the time. Rome, the city, the sacred office, had been fought for, had been won and lost, by fraud, by corruption, by violence, by murder, more than once in the recent times. But now for more than half a century the influence of three women of infamous character, in league with ambitious nobles and profligate churchmen, was paramount over the throne of the Vicar of Christ. In the hands of the marquises and dukes of Tuscany, of the two Alberics, lords of Camerino, of the consul Crescentius and the Roman democracy, and at last of the counts of Tusculum, the popedom, bought and sold and rapidly passing from hand to hand by bloody revolutions or political intrigues, was treated as the inheritance or prize of whatever family or adventurer happened at the moment to be strongest in Rome. The wicked-

ness and vileness which gathered round the Roman see in the ninth and tenth centuries are, with one exception, and that is the repetition of them in a more enlightened time, under Sixtus IV., Alexander VI., and Leo X., one of the most revolting profanations recorded in the history of the world.

It seemed as if the popedom would share the fate of the empire of Charles the Great; that the great office with its venerable traditions and its overweening claims would sink under the weight of its degradation and shame, and that the system of which it was the keystone would break up and perish. Two things saved it at this turning point of its history. One was the revival, under Otto the Great and his successors, of the imperial authority, with claims to chastise and correct abuses, to crush anarchy, and enforce order. At the price of the independence and the political hopes of Rome and Italy, the emperors of the Saxon line, by imposing their yoke on the papacy, prevented it, at last, after a hard struggle, from becoming the heritage of the petty nobles of the neighbourhood of Rome. They did not reform the popes, but they preserved the European character of the popedom. The other cause that saved it was a moral one; it was the growth and spread of a strong spirit of austere reform of manners in the Church itself. This was specially embodied in the great monastic order or "congregation" of Cluny, at the beginning of the tenth century, which had for its object the revival of purity and strictness in ecclesiastical life, and



which spread with strength and rapidity throughout Europe. It was from men imbued with the spirit and severity of Cluny, Leo IX. and Hildebrand, afterwards Gregory VII., that the internal reform came, which not only saved the papacy from becoming an Italian prince-bishopric, but made it, at once for good and for evil, the great centre of spiritual power in the middle ages of Christendom.

The undisguised rapacity and ambition which were turning great Church offices into private possessions were acting equally in the political sphere. The dislocation of the empire extended much farther than merely to its great divisions. The instability and changefulness of the times opened a wide field for the aims and efforts of private and local interests. What the king was doing for his kingdom, what the duke and the count were each doing for his duchy or county,—separating it off according to his opportunity and for his own advantage, enlarging, overreaching, stealing at the expense of his neighbours,—that the petty lord or the military retainer did according to his humble measure, in his own neighbourhood. There was a general loosening of the public bands which kept men together. There was a strengthening of the separate centres and local seats of authority and power. The pretensions, just or unjust, of the small were of course swept away by the superior claims of the great, when the great were strong enough to enforce them. But on a large scale and on a small one, the tendency at this time to divide

and dissociate was greater than that to aggregation and union.

The times were unhappy and evil; when no one could feel safe from war with his next neighbour, from opposite and irreconcilable claims on his allegiance, from the hopeless terrors of barbarian invasion; when religion seemed to have exhausted its power to restrain men from evil and had degenerated in its highest places into the vilest profanation; when universal distrust reigned, and no man felt secure from his brother's dagger and his wife's poison. Yet, though faint and weak, there were the gleams of a better hope. There had come in with Charles the Great the dim idea of the public interest, the claims of the *res publica*, the common weal, as distinguished from the pleasure or the ambition of kings and great men. There had passed into the opinions and language of men, though it was over and over again rudely set aside, a notion of the duty of princes to consider the good of their subjects, and in their quarrels to remember the sufferings of the widows and orphans whom they made by their wars. The writers of Charles's own period, Eginhard his friend, and Nithard his grandson—who write like men accustomed to affairs and who have not read for nothing their Roman models—are indeed more alive to these ideas than those who immediately follow them. But a step had been taken out of barbarism, and a beginning of better things made, when the idea of the public interest had been planted, at whatever

disadvantage, and however feebly, in the growing society of Europe. With Charles the Great, the turn of things had distinctly come. Henceforth, though there was long to be, as much as ever, confusion, misrule, and wretchedness, and weary ages of crime and war, a progress is discernible, in some point or other, in each generation. There are steps backward, but the whole movement, though intermittent and slow, is forward. A footing for Christian civilisation was made for good. It was Christian civilisation which was to have Europe—French, Italian, German civilisation; not the uncouth heathendom of the Slave tribes, Wends, Obotrites and Czechs—not the desolating barbarism of the Magyars—not the unfruitful civilisation of Cordova and Bagdad, the seats of the rival Caliphates of the Mahometan Empire.

And the same disintegrating tendency which favoured the growth of a multitude of petty local powers, rejoicing in their isolation and independence, had also a larger and more beneficial result. It created a swarm of little counts and lords. But it also helped a wholesome division between the naturally distinct portions of the Carolingian Empire. It made the great nations. On the break-up of the empire, its parts sought, each according to its natural or inherited affinities, to group themselves into larger or smaller aggregations, marked off from one another by history, traditions, interest, and language. To the west of the Rhine we henceforth see the beginnings and the growth of modern France; on the Rhine,

and to the east of it, the beginnings and growth of modern Germany.

A memorable document, known as the bilingual "Oath of Strasburg" (842, a year before the partition of Verdun), preserved to us in Nithard's contemporary history, is a measure of the degree in which, in point of language, the Western and Eastern portions of the Frank kingdom had gone asunder. When Louis the German and Charles the Bald exchanged solemn promises of mutual aid against their brother Lothar, these promises were confirmed by the oaths of their soldiers; and that each army might be witness of the transaction, these promises and oaths were pronounced in two languages, the languages of each host, German (*Teudisca, Deutsch*), and Roman (*Romana, Romance*), a language which has ceased to be Latin, and stands in the relation of an elder sister to the modern languages of the West and South,—Provençal, Italian, French, Spanish,—which are known, in opposition to the Teutonic languages, by the common name of "Romance" languages. There are older fragments of German; but of the Romance class of languages the oath of Strasburg is the earliest known example. It indicates that by this time, the middle of the ninth century, the land of the Western Franks was preparing to become Latin "France," and its people, not Franks, but French. The Latin element, always predominant in Southern Aquitaine and the Roman "Province," Provence, and along the valleys of the Saone and Rhone, rapidly recovered its

ascendancy north of the Loire, in Neustria, the land of the Seine, the Somme, the Oise, and the Marne. As soon as the strong constraint of the Eastern Franks and their great king was removed, Gaul began steadily and surely to break away from the union with Germany, which Clovis had first forced upon it. It broke into separate and independent, or almost independent, portions—kingdoms, dukedoms, countships; all of them now, deeply and irrevocably, Latin. When the last of the great barbarian conquests, the settlement of the Northern sea-rovers at Rouen, gave a new province to Gaul, and introduced into it the new name of Normandy, the language which the new-comers at once adopted, in exchange for their ancestral Scandinavian dialect, was not the Teutonic one of the old Franks, but the Romance tongue of Latinised Neustria. Then began the history of modern France; and the history of France was, for many centuries, the history of the aggregation and union of fragments: their attraction to a central nucleus, and the natural grouping round it of the nearer, the gradual annexation of the more distant. The new nation began with a new dynasty. The long and obstinate struggle between the expiring but gallant Carolingians, the descendants of Charles the Bald, and the dukes of Paris, the sons of its deliverer, Count Odo, ended in the establishment of the new line, which was to hold the royalty of France for 800 years. But it was the new line which made France. In the assembly of the states at Senlis, in May, 987,

Hugh Capet, amid intrigues and treachery, and premature and suspected deaths, became king. In May, 1787, the first assembly of the Notables, bringing with it the doom of Hugh Capet's house, met at Versailles. Between these two dates lies the history of the growth of the French nation, the development of French character, and the fusion into one realm of the French provinces. But the kingdom which Hugh Capet and his descendants created out of the ruins of the Carolingian Empire of the Franks, monopolising the Teutonic name of France, while it drove out the Teutonic language before the Roman, and fixed Latin ascendancy in Gaul, was far from being at once what it was to be. It was made up at first merely of the lands lying round its centre, Paris. Hugh was indeed crowned "king of the Gauls, Britons, Danes, Aquitanians, Goths, Spaniards, Gascons." When his son Robert was made king with his father, he is described as reigning over the West from the Meuse to the Ocean. And the style of "king of the Franks" was still maintained. But Brittany was unsubdued. Normandy, at the very gates of Paris, was but a nominal dependency, in the hands of the strongest ruling family in Europe. Aquitaine was far off and held its own. The banks of the Saone and Rhone, the slopes of the Jura, and the valleys of the Southern Alps, were occupied by the absolutely independent kingdoms of Burgundy and Arles. The kingdom of France was still to be made when Hugh Capet became king; it was then only taking its rise in small

and insecure beginnings. The kingdom of the tenth century was to modern France what Wessex was to England before the days of Egbert.

But while in the west of Europe Teutonic language and ascendancy had definitively failed to establish itself, and was retreating before the reanimated Latin and Celtic influences, Germany—though the Latin name of Tacitus for the nation hardly appears yet in contemporary history—was, in fact, constituting and shaping itself in the centre of Europe. It claimed both banks of the still Teutonic Rhine from source to mouth, though the west bank, Teutonic as it continued to be in language and character, was long to remain a debateable land, fiercely contended for by the eastern and western divisions of the Franks, and itself often inclining to the west. Three great central dukedoms, Saxony in the north,—Alamannia in the south up to the Alps of the St. Gothard and the Bernina range,—and between Saxony and Alamannia, the Eastern France, the later Franconia, the land of the Main and Neckar, together with the Thuringian and Swabian lands,—formed the nucleus of the great country which was to fill so large a space in history. It was flanked westwards, from the mouths of the Weser and the Scheldt to the sources of the Moselle on the western slopes of the Vosges, by the dukedoms of Friseland, of the Riparian Lotharingia between the Rhine and Scheldt, and of Lotharingia proper on the Moselle: that middle portion of the old Frank kingdom, the future Netherlands and

Lorraine, which, though Teutonic in language and race, was continually shifting its allegiance and changing its masters. To the south and south-east Germany spread out into the almost royal dukedoms of Bavaria and Carinthia; and it was fringed eastwards by a chain of borderlands, the "*marks*," or marches between the Germans and the Slaves, and, behind the Slaves, the Poles, and the Turkish race of the Magyars. On the north of this broad border, between the Elbe and Oder, were the Nordmark and the Ostmark and the marches of Merseburg and Meissen, the lands which were to become Brandenburg and Silesia; to the south, the Mährenmark, the Ostmark, and the Steyer mark, the Moravia, Austria, and Stiria of later geography; between these marchlands was the great dukedom, which was in due time to become the kingdom, of Bohemia. These lands were the later acquisitions of Germany. The process by which the Latinised Franks of Neustria were transforming Danish *Northmen* into French *Normans*, was going on equally in the ninth and tenth centuries in these German marchlands. Out of the Germanised Slaves of the north and south, and the infiltration of German settlers in these outlying regions, were formed the races from which were to grow Prussia and Austria.

The Germans, as we have seen, first had a separate king in the grandson of Charles the Great, Ludvig, or Louis the German, "the wise and just" (817-876), appointed, in the early divisions of the



empire, king of the Bavarians, who at the partition of Verdun (843) took all the lands and nations east of the Rhine. The kingdom of Germany was united for a moment with the Western kingdom under his son Charles the Fat (884-887); but when the two portions finally broke asunder at his death, the Germans chose for their king another of the Carolingian line, Arnulf, who also received the imperial crown at Rome in 896. The direct line of Charles the Great in Germany ended in the grandson of Arnulf, Louis the Child (911). Then by election of chiefs and people, "the people of the Franks and Saxons," the kingdom passed to popular and powerful dukes, first, Conrad of Franconia (911-918), then to his rival, Henry of Saxony (918-936), both of them connected by the female line with the Carolingians. Under them, in disaster, in success, in wars with the Western kings and dukes for the borderlands on the Rhine, in fierce conflicts with Slave Obotrites and Wends on the Eastern marchlands, in common resistance to the terrible Hungarian ravages, the Teutonic nations, distracted as they were with internal feuds, yet grew together, and were from time to time united. But the greatness of the kings of the Germans—kings of the Franks they were still called—began with Henry's son and successor Otto (936). Not unworthy to share the title of the great ruler in whose steps he trod, Otto the Great was the renewer of the Empire of the West, the deliverer of Christendom from the barbarian scourge, the tamer of the tribes of

the Eastern border, the reformer, in some measure at least, of the monstrous abuses which had grown up under the ecclesiastical rule of the worst of the popes. Under Otto, king and emperor, Germany may be said to have taken definitely the place which it was to hold in modern Europe in the middle and later ages. Otto, ambitious and imperious, yet noble-minded, generous, and a hater of wrong and disorder, became, like Charles, the type of a new kind of king in Europe. He was unsuccessful in his interference with the affairs of the Western Frank kingdom,—happily unsuccessful, for his success would only have hindered the natural course of growth in the Latinised population of Gaul. But he grappled strongly and successfully with internal disloyalty. He put down the mischievous restlessness of the Slaves of the Eastern marches with a firm and stern hand, and sometimes with the pitiless rigour with which civilisation meets the dangers of barbarian faithlessness. And he delivered Europe from the misery and shame of the Magyar desolations by a great victory which may rank with that of Aetius at Chalons over Attila, and that of Charles Martel over the Arabs at Poitiers. In the tremendous battle of the Lechfeld (August 10, 955), near Augsburg, the Magyars learned in a bloody overthrow the strength and determination of the Germans and their king. Otto was saluted on the field by his army as the Father of his land and Emperor. The victory which delivered Germany broke the Magyars of their habits of plundering and

ravage, and was the first step to make them the Hungarian nation. Christian missionaries penetrated among them. King Geisa became their Ethelbert or Clovis. Fifty years later they had an anointed Christian king, a saint, St. Stephen; and the sacred crown of St. Stephen, received from Pope Sylvester (1000), became the emblem of one of the most famous of the kingdoms of Christendom.

Italy, imperial Italy, within whose borders it was ever held that an emperor must receive his crown, had acquired from the policy of Charles the Great an increased importance among the new nations. It awoke at his death to the desire of independence: a desire never to be extinguished, but which it was to take long ages to fulfil. Italy was still divided, as in the days of the Lombard kings, into a number of lordships, great and small. Each of the three grandsons of Charles the Great, either personally or in their children, had with the dignity of emperor claimed to hold Italy; with Charles the Fat (888) it was lost to the Carolingian family. Then it seemed as if the days of the Lombards, whose name had not yet perished from the style of the kings of Italy, were coming back again. The dukes of two of the old Lombard dukedoms, Berengar of Friuli in the north, Guido of Spoleto in the centre, became rival claimants for the kingdom of Italy, such as it had been before Charles overthrew the Lombard Desiderius. For sixty years of turbulence and war the kingdom was fought for by pretenders, Italians, and foreigners

from Provence and Burgundy. Rome was either in the hands of the popes, or of the people of Rome, or of some daring lords of the neighbourhood, who called themselves Consuls or Patricians. In this disorder Italy was but in the same condition as Germany or Gaul. But no Hugh Capet or Henry of Saxony was to arise and lay the foundations of a national kingdom in Italy. At Rome lay the spell which drew the invader ; at Rome were the great universal interests which gave him good reason or pretext for coming. Rome was the seat "where emperors were wont to sit," and it was the emperor's first business to protect, to purify, to do right at Rome. And at the end of the Carolingian times, and the beginning of the tenth century, Rome was at the lowest depth of disorder and shame. Charles had come to deliver Rome and the popes from the oppression of the Lombard kings. In the middle of the tenth century, Otto, the greatest of German kings since Charles, claiming Charles's place and title, descended from the Alps to deliver Rome from scandalous popes and tyrannous nobles. More romantic than Charles, he came also to deliver and to marry a distressed and widowed queen, the good and beautiful Adelheid of Provence, whom the Lombard usurper, Berengar, as he is called, wished to force into a distasteful marriage. Otto extinguished again, as Charles had done, the power and claims of the Italian or Lombard king of Pavia and Verona, Adelheid's enemy, the second Berengar. Crowned king of the Italians at

Milan (961), he was crowned Emperor of the Romans by the pope at Rome (962); he confirmed the rights of the Roman see, but he asserted in large terms those of the empire; and he had his young son Otto II. also crowned emperor by the pope (967). But his coming, though it brought with it something of restored order, and also prepared the way for a reformed popedom, destroyed the chance of an Italian state. His coming riveted Italy to the empire, and the empire was henceforth to be kept in German hands, as the papacy was for the most part kept in Italian. By the coronation of Otto, the two great powers were finally established, which, as it was supposed then and for ages afterwards, were indispensably necessary to govern the temporal and spiritual order of the world: the Holy Roman Empire, the Holy Roman Church. Instead of governing the world between them, as Charles and Otto dreamed, they were soon to meet in irreconcilable and fatal conflict. Between them Italy was torn to pieces by domestic strife, and became the natural and accustomed prey of the strangers, coming of their own accord, or invited from within. For a short interval there arose the turbulent and brilliant liberty of the cities. Then came the tyrants, the Scaligers, the Visconti, the Sforzas, the Medici, the Borgias, the Farnesi; and then the day of the foreign dynasties. But never since Otto clenched the work of Charles, till our own times, has it been possible for Italy to be what her sister nations were. Modern

nations were consolidated and bound together in their early stages, not always by the power, but by the idea and the presence of the crown. And the crown of Italy, the Iron Crown of Lombardy, the Golden Crown of the Empire, was always in the keeping of a stranger.

What the fifth and sixth centuries were to the Teutonic nations, Goths, Franks, Burgundians—the period of the beginnings of their settled national life—this the ninth and tenth centuries were to the second great line of the barbarian movement, the Scandinavian and Slave nations. It was the time which brought them to rest in the seats which they were henceforth to occupy. From wanderers, marauders, invaders, they did not indeed at once pass into citizens, but they became settlers, finding homes and founding a country in lands which were for the future to be called after their names. They did not, like the Franks and Goths, or even as much as the Anglo-Saxons, come into a heritage prepared for them by an older cultivation—a land of farms and vineyards, of cities, and the arts of peace; and this, doubtless, affected their history, and caused that comparative rudeness which clings still to the east of North Europe. But they felt the influence of a more fixed order in the organised nations beyond them. From mere tribes and hordes they began to shape themselves into dukedoms and kingdoms. Around the great central state, the empire, mainly German, and in German hands, which

represented the power and law of Western Europe, the names and boundaries and rude political efforts of realms afterwards to be famous begin to appear. But, as in the case of Hungary just referred to, they appear only in very obscure forms and dim outlines. The Northmen, not only in what is now Denmark but in what are now Norway and Sweden, were beginning to be welded together into distinct nations, under the strong and fierce discipline of ambitious kings, like Harald Haarfager, the "Fair-haired," and his family, Eric "Bloodaxe," Hacon, and Olaf (863-1000). The successes of their countrymen, who had won provinces and founded princely houses, the familiarity which their adventures had given them with the state and power of the emperors and kings of Christendom, turned their thoughts from the mere excitement of a rover's life to the desire of founding dominions at home, and bringing under the king's authority not merely the military service but the loose independence and the landed tenure of their wild countrymen. The attempts caused much resistance and great emigrations. But the kings carried their point: they became rulers over subjects. Wars did not cease, but they became more and more national ones, replacing piracy and private adventures. And the three Scandinavian kingdoms, as we know them, were formed—frequently united, more or less, under a conqueror like Cnut, but always separate as nations.

While the Northmen were shaping themselves into

organised states among the mountains and on the fiords of Norway, the lakes of Sweden, and the heaths and islands of Denmark, the same thing was taking place in the vast wilderness of pine-forest, marshes, and boundless plains south and east of the Baltic. We begin to see on the historical map of Europe, amid the crowd of ill-understood and forgotten names with which it is studded from the Oder and the Vistula to the Volga, belonging mostly to different branches of the great Slave family, two designations emerging, which were of no more account at the time than those around them, but which announce the beginning of two of the most famous nations of the modern world. Between Slave races of strange names, who were to become Lithuanians, Prussians, Pomeranians,—Letts to the north, Slovaks to the south, Czechs in Bohemia and Moravia,—another branch begins to change the name of Lechs (*Ljäken*), for that of Polaks, Poles, meaning in their own language “the people of the plains,”—the great plains of the Vistula. In the middle of the ninth century we begin to hear of Polish chiefs: at the end of the tenth there had arisen a Polish kingdom under a powerful and victorious king (Boleslas, 992-1025). Here its history begins—so full of turbulence and incorrigible anarchy within, of aggression and tyrannous insolence without, and, perhaps, of all histories the most pathetic at its close.

Again, in the north-east, another name which was to become that of a mighty people, the natural anta-



gonist of Poland, first its victim and then its destroyer, began to be distinguished. That famous name first appears in Greek and Latin writers of the ninth century, in the shape of an indeclinable word, οἱ Ῥῶς, τὸ Ῥῶς, "the Russ," as if it stood for some unintelligible abstraction. It soon became familiar at Constantinople as the name of sea-rovers, whose fleets from the rivers of the Black Sea insulted and threatened the great capital. The early history of the Russians is dim and vague. But it seems almost certain that the process which created England and Normandy created that which was to become Russia. Scandinavian pirates and adventurers had become known on the Baltic coast, the "Varangian Sea," for their daring, ferocity, and strength. They were called in, or they conquered; they established themselves among the Finnish and Slave tribes; they became masters and rulers; either as a dynasty or a race they gradually adopted, like the Normans, the speech of their Slave subjects. In a corner of that endless plain which stretches from Germany to the steppes of the Tartars and Mongols and thence to China, and of which the natural divisions are not mountains, but the streams, hundreds of miles in length, of deep and broad rivers, we hear of Ruric and his two brothers (about 862). They were Northmen, or, as the Slavonians called them, Varangians, the name by which the Northern bodyguard of the Greek emperors was known, who settled at Novgorod, as the Jutes settled in Kent and then Rollo at Rouen.

The Russian Varangians conquered round about them, like their kindred in England and Gaul ; they pushed southward, driving the Turkish Chazars from Kiev on the Dnieper, and making Kiev and Novgorod their two chief cities. Their northern habits prompted them to use the great rivers for trade and war : by the Dnieper they carried on a brisk commerce with the Greek Empire, and four times (between 865 and 1043) their flotillas sailed to the Bosphorus, ravaging its shores, and were beaten off with difficulty and loss. At this time arose the strange prophecy, vouched for at the time, " that, in the last days, the Russians should become masters of Constantinople." The family of Ruric appears in the dim history as the counterpart to that of Rollo. Chief after chief kept up the inheritance of strength and the tradition of enterprise, and even ill-fortune did not check them. One of them, Swatoslav (955-973), attempted Constantinople by land. He was outmanœuvred and driven back to the Danube by the Greek emperor, the Armenian, John Zimisce. Surrounded on all sides, and without hope of escape, he was forced to capitulate and sign a humbling treaty, just as long afterwards Peter the Great, hemmed in on the Pruth by the Ottomans, was compelled to buy his release by ignominious conditions (1711). But Swatoslav's defeat did not hinder, any more than that of Peter, the growth of the nation under his successors. After a short interval of bloody domestic war he was followed as " Great Prince " by the great Vladimir (973-1015), the conqueror, the

legislator, the builder of cities and founder of schools ; who holds in the traditions of Russia the place held in England by Alfred, and on the Continent by Charles the Great and Otto.

And about this time, the ninth and tenth centuries, had come over all these races a change as great as that of their political organisation, and closely connected with it. "In these centuries," says Gibbon, "the reign of the Gospel and of the Church was extended over Bulgaria, Hungary, Bohemia, Saxony, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Poland, and Russia." Their conversion went along with their introduction to civil life and order. Zealous and self-devoted missionaries, usually monks, from the West or East, carrying their lives in their hands, first came preaching to men who were becoming ashamed and alarmed at their barbarism, in the face of a civilisation of which they felt the strength. In time the chiefs—from conviction, from feeling, or from imitation of the kings of the Franks and the emperor of the Greeks—were baptized. They encouraged the preachers of Christianity, and sometimes enforced the profession of it by violence and penalties. But its spread was certain when it once began. It was brought to Denmark and Sweden by a devoted monk of Corbey on the Weser, Anschar (826-865). The kings alternately protected and opposed it, till at length it was firmly planted under Cnut. Introduced into Norway from England, it was imposed upon their people by the two kings, Olaf Tryggvason (955-1000) and Olaf

the Saint (1019-1033). The apostles of the Bulgarians, Cyril and Methodius (862-885), were also the teachers of the Moravians and Bohemian Czechs. In 966, Micislav, duke of the Poles, was baptized. But among the Slave Wends between the Elbe and Oder, the efforts of the German emperors to Christianise them called forth a fierce revolt (983-1066); and among them the missionaries had met little but martyrdom. Finally, in 988, the powerful Vladimir of Russia, whose grandmother Olga had already brought Christianity from Constantinople to Kiev in 955, was baptized at Cherson, and received as his bride the Greek emperor's daughter. Russia henceforth became the great conquest and strength of the Eastern Church. The conversion of these last formed of the barbarian nations altered their relation to Europe. "The admission," says Gibbon, "of the barbarians into the pale of civil and ecclesiastical society, delivered Europe from the depredations by sea and land of the Normans, Hungarians, and Russians. The establishment of law and order was promoted by the influence of the clergy: and the rudiments of art and science were introduced into the savage countries of the globe."

## CHAPTER XI

### CONCLUSION—RETROSPECT OF THE TRANSITION PERIOD BETWEEN THE ROMAN EMPIRE AND THE MIDDLE AGES

THE history of the five centuries, from the end of the fifth to the end of the tenth, is the history of the efforts of the new nations of the West after organisation, improvement, and power. During this period, the Teutonic races found themselves under entirely new conditions. It had not been new to them to conquer, or to meet other races. They had already, in what we call their barbarous state, definite social usages and a kind of political organisation. But for the first time they found themselves in close and permanent contact with an older and more perfect civil order, and a new religion. They found themselves, in their ignorance and inexperience, in their eager curiosity and vigorous freshness of life, in contact with Roman learning and Roman art, in some parts with Roman institutions and Roman laws. And they found themselves under the spell

of the mightiest, the tenderest, and most wonderful of religions. Thus, all that had been the familiar course of life during centuries of wandering was changed. Wild as they still were, they settled, they became lords of lands and houses, they began to learn and to know, they began to feel themselves becoming a commonwealth and a state.

And by the end of the tenth century, the process, in its broad and essential points, was accomplished. The outlines of the new world that was to be, had become distinctly and permanently laid down. It had been doubtful whether it was to be Goths or Franks who were to be at the head of the new state of things, to give it its tone, to direct and control it. It had been the Franks, and not the Goths. It had been doubtful whether Catholicism or Arianism was to be the religion of the West. Arianism had disappeared, and had left, perhaps, too easy a victory to the Catholic Church. Again, it had been doubtful whether the new nations could stand the shock of barbarian pressure, outside and behind them ; whether Europe might not be, like Africa and Asia, a prey to the Saracens ; whether the Northmen from the sea, and the Huns and Slaves from the deserts, might not desolate and sweep away the homes which Frank, and Goth, and Anglo-Saxon had made for themselves. The deluge had been stayed, not without loss, but for good and all. The Saracen had maimed and wounded Christendom in one of its finest kingdoms ; he had spoilt, though not finally destroyed, the hopes of Spain.

He long continued to annoy and threaten the shores of Italy ; to penetrate even the passes of the Alps. But the Saracen had been arrested for ever by Charles Martel at Poitiers and Narbonne, by Charles the Great at the Ebro. The Northmen, the Slaves, even the Huns or Magyars, had been drawn into civilisation, which they had disturbed but could not overthrow. The imperfect civilisation of the time had proved itself strong enough not only to check them, but to react upon them. It had been doubtful whether the new world were not to be an extension of Germany, from the Rhine over the whole West and South, to the Atlantic and the Mediterranean. Further, it seemed at one time uncertain whether German speech, and German law, were not to prevail in Gaul and Italy, as they had prevailed in Britain, supplanting the older languages and laws, or driving them out into the wastes or the mountains—whether a great German reproduction of the Roman Empire, with its twin capitals of Aachen and Rome, were not to be supreme in the world. But this was not to be. The strength of the older society, and of the races in possession, had reasserted itself. Germany was indeed to be a great and mighty nation ; but it was not to absorb the world. The Frank Empire of Charles the Great was too loosely compacted to hold together as he had created it. It broke up, and was reconstituted in a different and very contracted shape, the Holy Roman Empire of the Saxon, Otto the Great ; the Empire as it was to continue till the beginning of this

century, often a very important, but an ambiguous and uncertain element in the polity of Christendom. The lands where the Romans had been strong, were once more to show the influence of their imperishable language and thought. Italy was once more Italy, and not Lombardy; but its destiny to be kingless, except with the mock title of a foreign, and often hostile ruler, had declared itself. It was no longer doubtful that Western France, so long the battleground between Latin and German influences, was to be Latin and not German. It had finally shaken itself loose from Germany. It took a king out of its own great chieftains, and rejected the half-Teutonic line of Charles the Great; it was to grow and become great under the kings of Paris, and not under the kings of Laon, much less of Aachen. The great Norse settlement on the Seine had become thoroughly Latin. The combination of astuteness and practical good sense with the old adventurousness and daring of their blood, which was to make the Normans seek crowns in England, in Italy, and in the East, had already shown itself in the remarkable line of the dukes of Normandy. And by the end of the tenth century, England had taken its shape and established its internal unity. Angles of the east, north, and midland, Saxons of the west and south, even the intrusive Norse settlers of the Danish districts, had become permanently bound together, under the kings of the line of Egbert — Alfred, Edward the Elder, Athelstan, Edgar; they had become that "English



folk" and "English kin," who were soon twice to be made subjects of foreign conquest, and to be ruled by lines of foreign kings, but who were to turn their conquerors, even Normans, in a generation or two, into Englishmen.

Finally with the year 999, with Gerbert of Auvergne, the austere Cluniac monk, the most learned man of his time—mathematician, theologian, supposed wizard, magician, tutor of a Roman emperor and of a king of France, ecclesiastical intriguer and ecclesiastical victim, the stout opponent, the stout asserter of the claims of the Roman see, placed in it as a reforming pope by the title of Sylvester II. through the influence of the emperor, Otto III.—a new line of popes begins. We have left behind the popes who cringed to the Carolingian princes when they were strong, and threatened them when they were weak. We have left behind the creatures of profligate women, and their associates. There are still some forty years to come of the licentious or simoniacal nominees of the Counts of Tusculum. But the German emperors on the one hand, the monks of Cluny on the other, had already embraced strongly the idea of what the pope ought to be; and this idea, which was to give to the popedom its modern importance, was on the eve of being realised.

Thus the present sketch has been brought down to the middle ages. In 962, Otto the Great was crowned emperor at Rome, and the mediæval empire began. In 975, was the end of the powerful and peaceful reign of Edgar, who left a united England,

which his son Ethelred was to lose through misgovernment, and the stranger was to conquer and spoil, but which neither could destroy nor disintegrate. In 987, Hugh Capet became king of France. In 995 ended the long reign of fifty years of Richard, duke of Normandy, the reign which had seen such great revolutions, in which Normandy had thrown its sword into the balance between Germany and France, and had determined the victory of the dukes of Paris ; a reign which left Normandy the most vigorous province of Gaul, full of intellectual activity and ambition. We are now not far from the crusades. The seeds of feudalism have been thickly sown, and have taken deep root. We are not far from the strife of investitures, the eventful quarrel between pope and emperor, Gregory VII. and Henry IV. We are not far from the beginnings of the scholastic philosophy, from Berengarius and Lanfranc, Anselm and Abelard. We are not far from those massy and solemn churches, in Normandy, Germany, France, and England, in which the architecture of the middle ages took its beginning, and which stand the enduring monuments of what the new nations had grown to be ; of the ideas of power, strength, and grandeur which had been developed among them, and to which they sought to give expression.

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